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A student does classwork in Rock City Primary School in Juba, the capital of South Sudan.

2018 EDUCATION THEMATIC REPORT

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Prepared by:

UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO)

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unicef | for every child

CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figures

Tables

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

|	
AfECN	African Early Childhood Network
AU	African Union
BMZ	German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development
C4D	Communication for development
CIEFFA	International Centre for Girls and Women's Education in Africa
DFID	Department for International Development
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DMS	Data Must Speak
ECD	Early childhood development
ECE	Early childhood education
ECED	Early childhood education and development
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
ECW	Education Cannot Wait
EiE	Education in emergencies
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESA	Eastern and Southern Africa
ESAR	Eastern and Southern Africa Region
ESARO	Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office
EVD	Ebola Virus Disease
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FEWSNET	Famine Early Warning System Network
GBV	Gender-based violence
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GRESP	Gender-responsive education sector planning
GRP	Gender-responsive pedagogy
ICT	Information communications technology
IDPs	Internally displaced persons
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IICBA	UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa
IIEP	UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning
INEE	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
IPC	Integrated Phase Classification
KfW	German Bank for Reconstruction
LAYS	Learning-Adjusted Years of Schooling
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
NYHQ	New York Headquarters
OOSC	Out-of-school children
PF4C	Public finance for children
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WCAR	West and Central Africa Region
WCARO	West and Central Africa Regional Office
WinS	WASH in Schools

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UNICEF's work in the Eastern and Southern Africa Region (ESAR) encompasses 21 programme countries collectively home to approximately 273 million children under 18 years. Whilst economies in the region are growing, levels of child poverty in ESAR remain alarming. The region also continues to experience ongoing, multiple and frequent humanitarian crises.

In recent years, ESAR has made considerable progress in access to primary and secondary education. An increasing number of children are enrolled in school, and a higher number are completing a cycle of primary school education each year. However, there are still gaps to achieve universal enrolment: 9 million children in ESAR are still out of school at the primary school level and 8 million at the lower secondary school level. The majority of children in the region continue to be excluded from formal pre-primary education. Although levels of access to education are improving, the region continues to face a 'learning crisis', where a large proportion of children leave school without mastering the basics of literacy and numeracy.

2018 programme results

UNICEF's programmatic work on education in ESAR in 2018 was driven towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 and shaped by the introduction of the new UNICEF Strategic Plan for 2018-2021. ESAR's Regional Priority 3 – *Improving education quality and learning outcomes to prepare children for the future* – is aligned to Goal Area 2 of UNICEF's Strategic Plan which aims to ensure that *every child learns*.

Figure 1: Key education achievements in ESAR in 2018
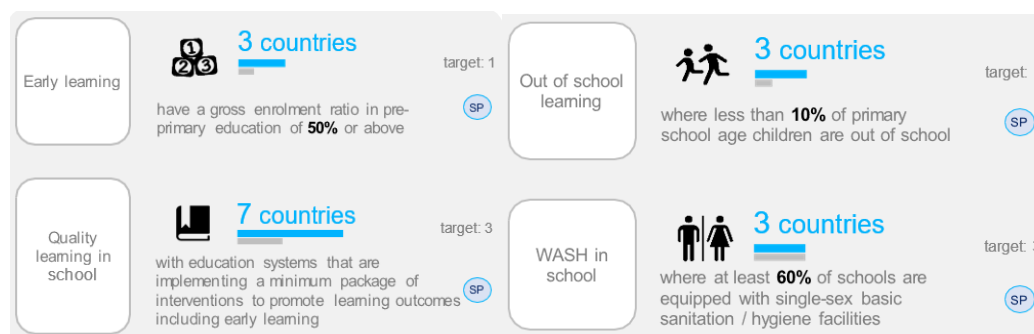
Countries reflected in the graphic are:
- Early learning: Angola, Kenya and Malawi
- Quality learning in school: Comoros, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, South Sudan and Zimbabwe
- Out of School Children: Malawi, Rwanda and Zambia
- Wash in Schools: Eritrea, Namibia and Zimbabwe

Progress was made across all areas of Regional Priority 3. In 2018, ESARO provided education guidance, technical support, quality assurance and programmatic oversight to all 21 ESAR country offices on early learning, quality education and learning, education system strengthening, education in emergencies, data collection and use, and promoting equity and inclusion. Nineteen country offices were provided with on-site technical support through a total of 36 missions. Feedback from country offices confirmed that support provided by ESARO was timely, effective and of high quality.

The Regional Office generated several **research outputs and tools** to strengthen country office programming. These included an education in emergencies online training course; a series of 'Education Think Pieces'; a report on information and communications technology (ICT) for learning; a gender-responsive pedagogy toolkit; guidance on safe and protective learning environments; public finance for children (PF4C) briefs; and the education data intranet portal.

Twelve country offices were provided with support to design **early learning** programmes. ESARO familiarized country offices with the global conceptual framework for pre-primary education which was used in six countries to support government plans for early childhood education (ECE) expansion. ESARO brokered a partnership between the World Bank and UNICEF South Sudan to support ECE analysis. Regional guidance was also developed for country offices on increasing the number of children accessing quality ECE.

Work on **equity in education** was mainstreamed throughout programming. ESARO continued to support country offices to remove barriers to education faced by adolescent girls, children with disabilities and other out-of-school children (OOSC). WASH in Schools (WinS) was scaled up as a focus area in the new ESAR Regional Priorities. ESARO conducted a regional WinS status study and completed a WinS deep dive in three countries, in collaboration with regional gender and WASH teams. Furthermore, the Regional Office drafted a WinS investment case and WinS theory of change template for use by ESAR countries.

ESARO supported country offices to improve **learning outcomes** in primary and lower secondary education through the provision of tools, guidance and evidence on national learning assessment systems, curriculum reform, school effectiveness, teacher management and performance and early grade primary programmes. Research was conducted in eight countries to build the evidence base on how policies and practices influence different types of teacher absenteeism.

As part of efforts to **strengthen education systems**, ESARO assisted country offices and governments to modernize their Education Management Information System (EMIS), improve data collection, and conduct analyses of the current education sector financing situation.

In 2018, ESARO provided multi-sectoral technical assistance in ongoing **emergency preparedness and responses** to drought-related (Horn of Africa and Southern Africa), conflict displacement-related (South Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia and Great Lakes countries) and health-related emergencies (cholera, typhoid, measles and Ebola Virus Disease - EVD). This contributed to 1 million boys and girls living in situations of humanitarian crisis accessing safe and secure education through strengthening the capacity and programming of country offices to deliver uninterrupted learning.

ESARO improved its programme impact and resource mobilization efforts by **strengthening partnerships** and building new ones. Key partnerships in 2018 included: joint advocacy with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); supporting action planning for the implementation of the Djibouti Declaration on Refugee Education (the Intergovernmental Authority on Development - IGAD and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees - UNHCR); improving preparedness and responses in emergency contexts (Save the Children, World Vision, Global Education Cluster); working with the Africa Early Childhood Network (AfECN) to map early learning programmes and networks in the region; and enhancing the capacity of regional education institutions (African Union Commission, the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality - SACMEQ and the Southern African Development Community - SADC). Partnerships were also harnessed for enhancing girls' participation and learning outcomes through gender-responsive education sector planning, and development of the gender-responsive pedagogy teachers' toolkit (the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative - UNGEI, the Global partnership for Education - GPE, the African Union International Centre for Girls and Women's Education in Africa - CIEFFA), the UNESCO's International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa - IICBA and the Forum for African Women Educationalists - FAWE).

Challenges and lessons learned

The major challenge to realizing Goal Area 2 and ESAR's regional priority for education relates to weak national and regional systems for measuring learning outcomes. In addition, few countries have robust systems in place to scale up quality ECE. With increasing populations of children and adolescents and growing urbanization, the robustness of education sectors to expand with quality to meet demand represents an additional key challenge.

The major lessons learned, and opportunities identified in 2018 were:

1. Increased recognition that schools are a crucial, multi-sectoral platform to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children and adolescents, and this proposition is beginning to be tested in the region;
2. There is increased focus on the importance of building human capital from the earliest years, which necessitates increased investment in early learning and early primary opportunities;
3. UNICEF is well placed to advance the agenda for secondary-age education and skills for life and work for adolescents in the region but needs to build internal capacity.

Looking forward to 2019

UNICEF's programmatic work in ESAR in 2019 will continue to focus on the 2018-2021 regional priorities, aligned with the 2018-2021 UNICEF Strategic Plan. Under this framework, ESARO will strengthen its work to improve education quality and learning outcomes to prepare children for the future.

ESARO will also strengthen its focus on secondary-age education for adolescents, and skills for life, livelihoods and work. It will redouble its efforts to support high-quality early primary programmes to ensure all children gain foundational literacy, numeracy and life skills. The scale-up of quality pre-primary education through a comprehensive sub-sector development approach will also be one of ESARO's key focus areas.

In 2018, significant progress has been achieved for children's education in ESAR through quality technical support provided by the regional education team. This was possible as a result of flexible Thematic Education Funds. As such, UNICEF ESARO would like to express its sincere appreciation to the donors, particularly the United States Fund for UNICEF and the Government of Norway, for their contributions to the Regional and Global Education Thematic Funds respectively.

SECTION 1: CONTEXT DURING 2018

1.1 THE REGION

UNICEF's work in Eastern and Southern Africa encompasses 21 diverse programme countries: Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Comoros, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe (see Figure 2).
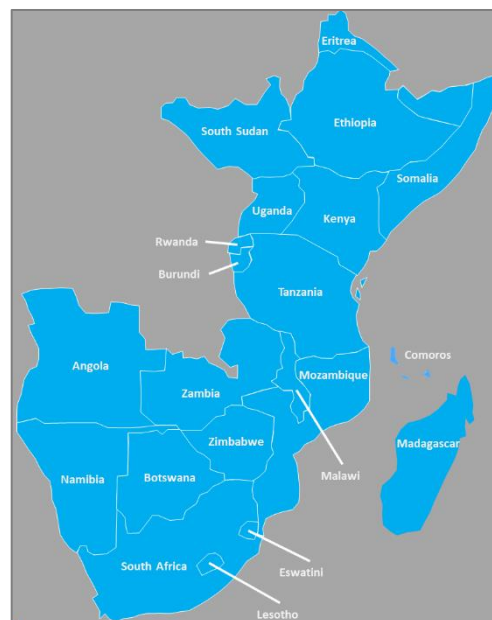
ESAR is home to approximately 273 million children under 18 years of age – a population that is expected to double by the end of the century[1].

On average in 2018, economies in ESAR posted an impressive 14.7 per cent growth in nominal terms.[2] However, when inflation and population growth, two core challenges facing the region, are factored in, real per capita gross domestic product growth was only 0.9 per cent. Economic growth did little to improve the lives of the most vulnerable populations, with the poorest deciles capturing less than 2 per cent of income, on average, compared to around 40 per cent for the wealthiest deciles.[3]

Levels of child poverty remain alarming. Data from new child poverty studies show that approximately two out of every three children in the region were affected by multiple deprivations[4]. This was compounded by the ongoing demographic boom, which resulted in the births of around 17 million

Figure 2: Countries in UNICEF ESAR

babies in the region in 2018.[5] Constant population pressure continues to overwhelm the capacity of governments to provide basic social services, as reflected in increasing numbers of unsafe births, overcrowded classrooms and widespread open defecation in many countries.

The rapid pace of urbanization brings with it potential for faster economic growth, formal employment, and economies of scale in social service provision. However, unmanaged urban growth and insufficient infrastructure and social service investment plague African cities. The growth of slums exposes children and young people to new health and safety risks, diminishing their opportunities to benefit from growth. Adolescents and young people across ESAR continue to face several obstacles to acquiring skills and realizing their potential to deliver on Africa's demographic dividend. The number of adolescents not in education, employment or training remains high across the region.

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[1] Data covers population aged 0–19 years for 21 countries of Eastern and Southern Africa. Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Population Prospects: The 2018 Revision*. http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/DataQuery/

[2] ESARO calculations based on International Monetary Fund *World Economic Outlook* database, October 2018.

[3] ESARO calculations based on World Bank PovcalNet.

[4] UNICEF ESARO child poverty analyses https://www.unicef.org/esaro/resources_child-poverty-analysis.html

[5] UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Population Prospects*: *The 2017 Revision*, medium variant projections.

1.2 EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES

ESAR continues to experience ongoing, multiple and frequent humanitarian crises, including conflict and insecurity, economic shocks, climate change, natural hazards and disease outbreaks. Recurrent disasters undermine the hard-fought development gains of recent years and cause major social and economic setbacks. More than 30 million people,[6] including 17 million children, are in need of humanitarian assistance due to climate-related shocks, health emergencies and displacement. Droughts, floods and cyclones have left more than 27 million people food insecure.[7]

The El Niño-related drought developing in southern Africa is affecting more than 8 million people in the six most-affected countries (Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe),[8] and flooding will likely increase the burden on vulnerable drought-affected communities. In addition, populations in Comoros, Madagascar and Mozambique remain at risk due to seasonal cyclones and tropical storms. The public health risk in the region is also growing, with 10 out of the 21 countries reporting cases of cholera and acute watery diarrhoea in 2018. The EVD outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo continues to threaten neighbouring countries. Other health risks include yellow fever in Ethiopia, plague in Madagascar and typhoid fever in Zimbabwe. The situation in South Sudan remains catastrophic for children, with more than 2.1 million people seeking refuge in neighbouring countries, including 1.3 million children on the move.[9] Political instability in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo has led to growing humanitarian needs for children and their families, who have been forced to flee into bordering countries.

During and immediately after emergencies the right to education is most at risk yet is simultaneously most needed. Children and adolescents may be forced to drop out of school, putting them at increased risk of engaging in harmful labour and child marriage, being victims of sexual and gender-based violence (GBV) or trafficking, and of being recruited into armed militia. While communities are displaced, access to quality education is commonly restricted and in drought situations, children and adolescents are often required by their families to forgo schooling to find water and food, or to generate income. The longer learners stay out of school, the less likely it is they will ever return, thus prevention of disruption to education is critical.

A key challenge for ESARO is that existing education systems are inadequately equipped to prepare for and respond to emergencies, leading to disruption in children's education and contributing to higher numbers of out-of-school children. Even when the education system is resilient to emergencies, the emergency negatively affects children's well-being and consequentially creates a barrier to learning.

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[6]   Figure calculated based on the number of people in need, as highlighted in humanitarian needs overview, humanitarian disaster resilience plan and other needs documents, including Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWSNET) Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) reports.

[7]   This figure is based on the number of people categorized as IPC 3 (crisis) and 4 (emergency), according to FEWSNET 2019 near-term projections.
Food Security and Nutrition Working Group, August 2018; and Countries at High Risk of possible El Niño impact, October 2018 - March 2019, Global ENSO Analysis Cell, 22 October 2018

[9]   Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'South Sudan: 2018 Humanitarian Needs Overview', OCHA, 2017.

1.3 ACCESS TO EDUCATION

In recent years, ESAR has made considerable progress in access to primary and secondary education. An increasing number of children are enrolled in school, and a higher number are completing a cycle of primary school education each year. However, there are still gaps to achieve universal enrolment and some countries are significantly behind in terms of access. It is estimated that 11.5 per cent of children in the region never enter school at all.[10]

Early brain development forms the basis of a lifelong capacity to learn and adapt to change. Young children, especially the poorest and most disadvantaged, who have access to early learning services at the right time are more likely to be healthy, ready to learn, and stay longer and perform better in school. However, it is the most disadvantaged children who are the least likely to participate in good quality early learning programmes. In ESAR, the majority of children continue to be excluded from formal pre-primary education (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Gross Enrolment Rate (%) for pre-primary by gender (from UIS database)[11]
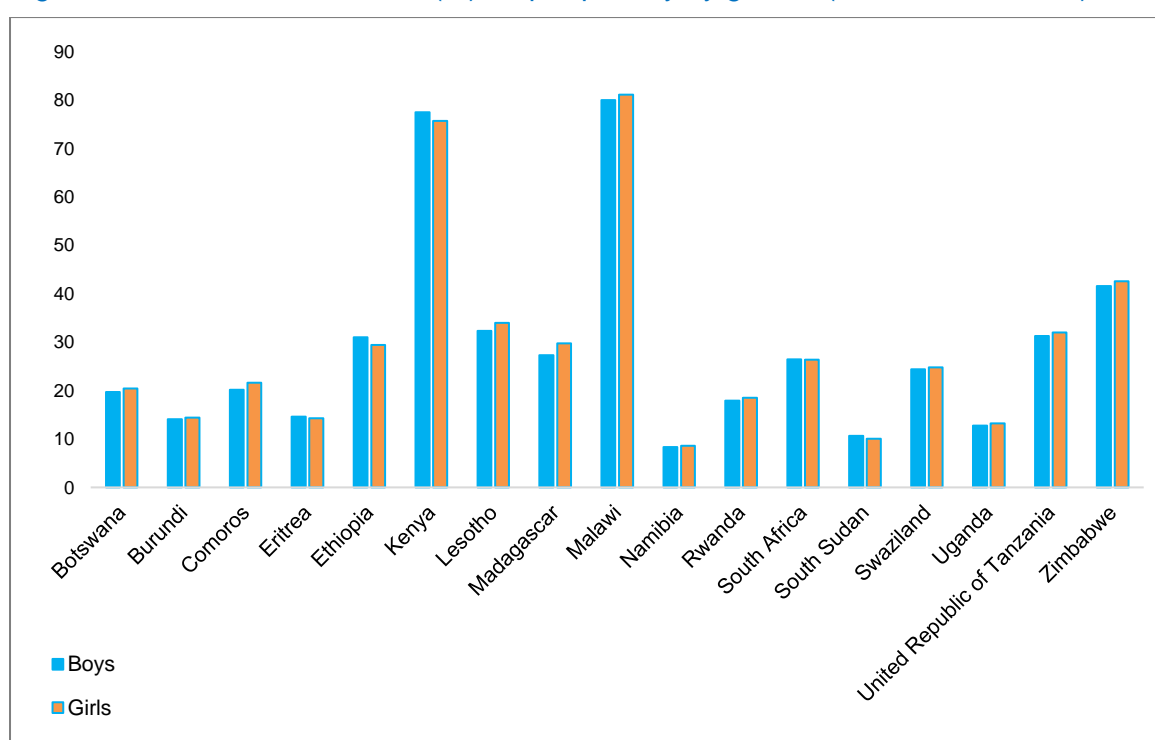
Greater progress has been made in terms of primary school enrolment (see Figure 4). While a considerable proportion, 88.5 per cent, enrol in primary school, only 49.5 per cent complete the five grades of primary education. Transition to lower secondary remains low at 37.2 per cent, with only 18.2 per cent of adolescents completing the lower secondary school level. Enrolment rates for girls and boys in lower secondary are largely similar, except for in a few countries, including Angola, Lesotho and South Sudan, where there is significant gender disparity (see Figure 5). As can be seen in Figure 6, differences between gross (children of any age in lower secondary) and net (children of the expected age for lower secondary enrolled in that level) enrolment rates reveal the significant overage in lower secondary.

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[10]   Pre-primary, primary and lower secondary data referenced is derived from the latest Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) and Demographic and Health Survey (DHS).

[11]   The data for Figures 3 to 6 cover the period of 2012 to 2018 and for each country only the latest available result was used. The original UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) tables were downloaded 4 February 2019 from UIS.Stat.

Figure 4: Adjusted Net Enrolment Rate (%) for primary by gender (from UIS database)
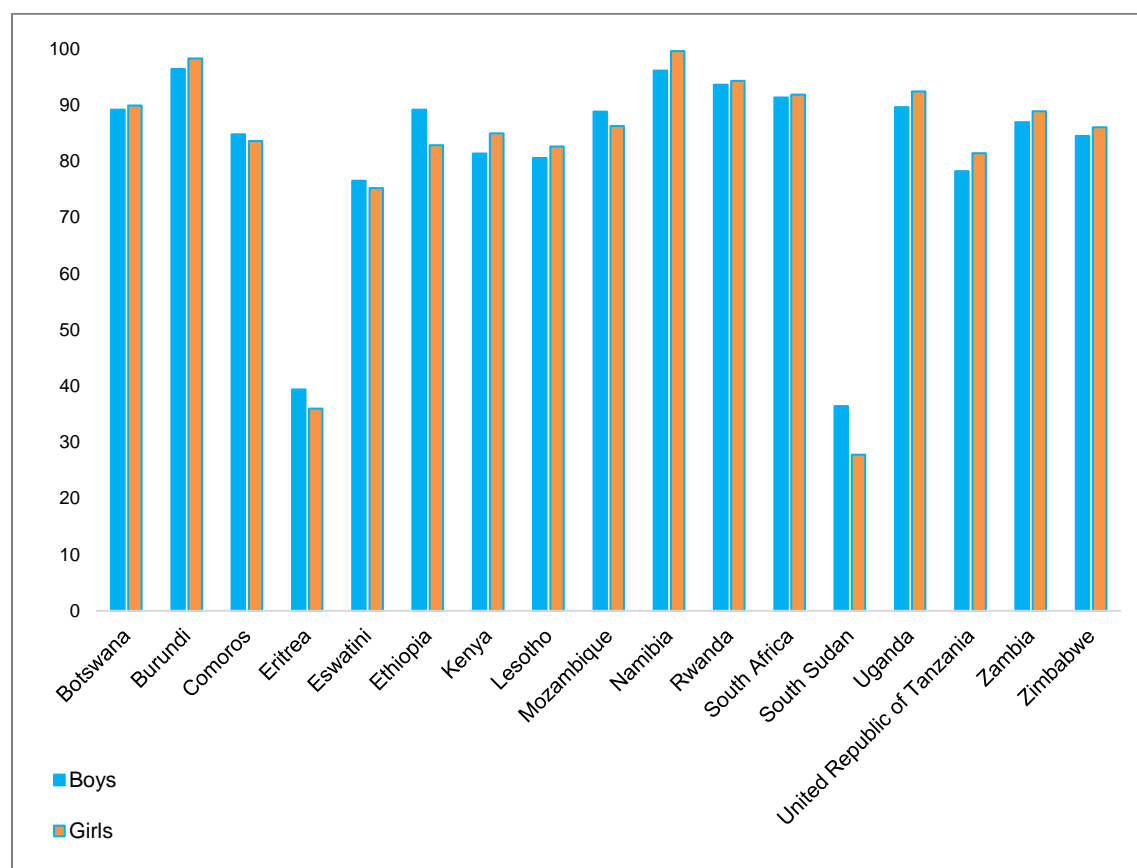

Figure 5: Gross Enrolment Rates (%) for lower secondary by gender (from UIS database)
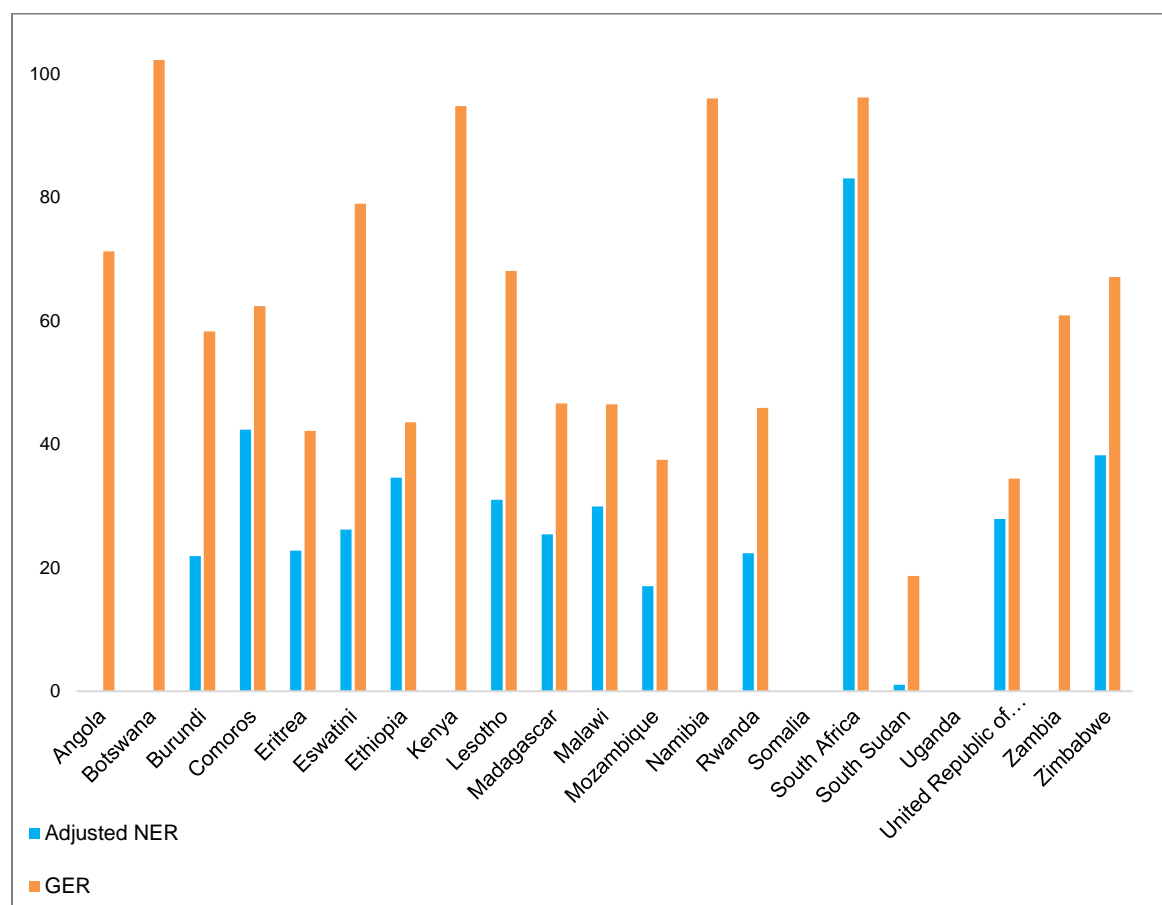
Nine million children in ESAR are still out of school at the primary school level and 8 million at the lower secondary school level[12]. An average of one in five children is not in school, and in countries struggling with conflict, that number rises to two in five[13]. Countries with the highest out-of-school rates in the world include South Sudan (69 per cent) and Eritrea (61 per cent)[14].

The barriers that keep children out of school are numerous and affect equally wide-ranging groups of children, such as children in pastoralist communities, informal settlements, rural areas, and from the poorest families, orphans, girls, working children, children with disabilities, children speaking languages not used in schools, and children affected by HIV and AIDS. Countries where children's access to education is hampered by armed conflict and natural hazards are at particular risk. Over 85 per cent of OOSC in ESAR are located in the 10 most fragile states[15].

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[12] UIS/UNICEF, All Children in School by 2015: Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children, ESAR Regional Report 2014: http://allinschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/140116-ESARO.pdf.

[13] All in School http://allinschool.org/location/eastern-and-southern-africa/.

[14] UIS, Reducing global poverty through universal primary and secondary education, June 2017 http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0025/002503/250392E.pdf.

[15] UIS/UNICEF ibid.

1.4 IN SCHOOL, BUT NOT LEARNING

Access to education is not enough to guarantee that a child learns. While levels of access to education are improving, the region continues to face a 'learning crisis', where a large proportion of children in school cannot master the basics of literacy and numeracy by the end of primary education. The World Bank's Human Development Report in 2018 was dedicated to education and learning and argued that schooling without learning is not just a wasted opportunity, but a great injustice[16].

Target 4.1 of the SDGs demands that all children complete primary and secondary education of sufficient quality to ensure that they have "relevant and effective learning outcomes". To measure progress globally, the international community has agreed to use following indicator: *Proportion of children and young people: (a) in Grades 2 or 3; (b) at the end of primary education; and (c) at the end of lower secondary education achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics.*

Monitoring progress towards this SDG target in ESAR is challenging due to irregular data collection processes and inconsistencies in the tools and metrics used by countries to measure learning outcomes. Based on available and comparable data, a survey of learning outcomes published in 2016 found that "average test scores for literacy and numeracy in international and regional assessments undertaken in ESAR were generally low, with a considerable proportion of students not achieving basic skills in reading and mathematics"[17].

The first global estimates on progress towards SDG 4 paint a discouraging picture for the whole of Sub-Saharan Africa. Data show that 88 per cent of all children and adolescents will not be able to read proficiently by the time they are of age to complete primary and lower secondary education. Across the region, girls of primary school age face the greatest disadvantage. More than 70 million girls – or 90 per cent – will not meet minimum proficiency levels in reading by the time they are of age to complete primary education compared to 85 per cent of boys[18].

The World Bank's Human Capital Index uses Learning-Adjusted Years of Schooling (LAYS) as one of five measures to predict the future productivity of a country. Data is available for 19 of 21 countries in ESAR with an average LAYS score of 5 out of 14 (see Figure 7). Scores in the region range from 7.8 in Kenya to 2.3 in South Sudan (compared to the worldwide average of 7.9)[19] indicating that most children are far from achieving their full learning potential.

There are wide disparities in basic reading and mathematics skills across the region. There are also dramatic in-country variations, with children from lower socio-economic groups, those speaking minority languages, and those with less access to learning resources in the home or school experiencing significantly lower learning outcomes. Increasing learning outcomes continues to be one of the key challenges facing the region, with the need to address pressing issues such as how learning outcomes can be improved at all levels of education, and how children can acquire the required knowledge, skills and capacities for a fulfilled life, become part of an employable workforce and gain sustainable livelihoods based on local economic realities.

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[16]   World Bank. 2018. *World Development Report 2018: Learning to Realize Education's Promise*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

[17]   UNICEF/ Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), p27 Quality education in Eastern and Southern Africa: learning assessments and effective country practices, 2016. https://www.unicef.org/esaro/5481_quality-education-report.html.

[18]   UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Fact Sheet No. 46, September 2017. http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fs46-more-than-half-children-not-learning-en-2017.pdf

[19]   Data access from http://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/human-capital#Data

Figure 7: World Bank Human Capital Index data on LAYS

LAYS score

5.8 or above

5.7 or below

Global average = 7.9

ESAR average = 5
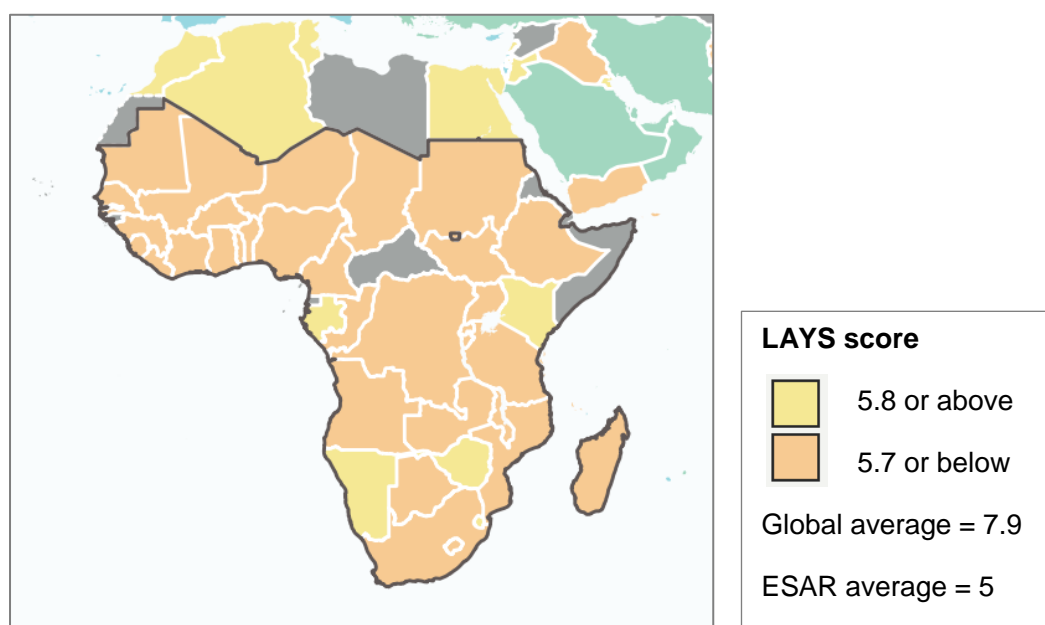
Source: The World Bank (2018) Human Capital Project

SECTION 2: PROGRAMME RESULTS

UNICEF's programmatic work on education in ESAR in 2018 was driven towards the achievement of SDG 4 and shaped by the introduction of the new UNICEF Strategic Plan for 2018-2021[20] and a revised set of regional priorities for the same time period.

Goal Area 2 of UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2018-2021 aims to ensure that *every child learns*. It prioritises learning, placing a strong emphasis on outcomes in education while retaining attention on access, especially for the most disadvantaged children. Similarly, ESAR's regional priorities share a commitment to *improving education quality and learning outcomes to prepare children for the future* (Regional Priority 3).

The programme results in this section respond to ESARO's work within this priority.

2.1 EARLY LEARNING

HIGHLIGHTS

Efforts in early learning by ESARO in 2018 have led to the following results:
- Greater national and continental recognition of the importance of early learning and increased political and budgetary commitment to ECE.
- Action taken by the governments of Angola, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Lesotho and South Sudan to strengthen pre-primary education systems.
- Twelve country offices supported to design and scale up early learning programmes including measurement of early learning quality and outcomes.
- Development of the ESAR Early Childhood Development (ECD) Framework for Action which will support country offices to successfully implement cost-effective early learning programmes.

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[20]   UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018-2021: https://www.unicef.org/publications/index_102552.html

ESARO familiarized country offices with the global conceptual framework for pre-primary education. With UNICEF support, the governments of Angola, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Lesotho and South Sudan have started using elements of the framework to support government plans for building up viable pre-primary education systems. Other countries including Tanzania continue to build up other aspects of the system around data and measurement. Partnerships with the World Bank and GPE are concretely being pursued in multiple countries to build up momentum and support for the sustainable scale-up of quality ECE services.

Shaping global and regional movements for early childhood

Building on the partnership established with AfECN in 2017, ESARO was invited to join the core group advising AfECN on the organization of its first international ECD conference in October 2018. UNICEF provided technical and financial support towards organizing the conference, which was opened by the President of Kenya and attended by 700 delegates[21]. On behalf of UNICEF's three regional offices in Africa, ESARO supported the African Union Commission to introduce a new focus on early learning including the launch a new African Union (AU) Cluster on Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) and provided technical inputs into the Cluster's terms of reference and roadmap of priority actions to improve equitable access to quality ECED programmes and services. ESARO also provided technical inputs to the development of the Commonwealth's new initiative on ECD.

Building the evidence-base

Further analysis of national MICS and DHS data was undertaken to support the generation and dissemination of evidence on early learning opportunities and school readiness instruments. This supported earlier findings on low coverage of pre-primary education and the strong relationships between literacy and numeracy results and access to early childhood/pre-primary education. As part of ESARO's series of 'Education Think Pieces' a webinar and think piece on ECD and early learning[22] was published in May.

Partnerships for scaling pre-primary education

Concrete partnerships have been established with the World Bank on ECE systems strengthening in South Sudan, the United Kingdoms' Department for International Development (DFID) on its new ECD research agenda, and GPE to encourage countries to include pre-primary in their education agenda.

Development of regional guidance

At the end of 2018, ESARO developed the ECD Framework for Action – a document that aims to provide guidance to countries for achievement of the two regional priority outcomes on ECD focused on increasing the number of children that receive stimulating and responsive care from their caregivers and increasing the number of children accessing quality ECE. The Framework is informed by a survey of country needs and situates UNICEF ESAR's ECD work within the new context of the Strategic Plan and the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) regional priorities. Focus areas include building robust ECE systems and creating an enabling environment specifically on financing and workforce development.

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[21]   Conference communique can be accessed:
         https://static1.squarespace.com/static/593d4cce440243665c38b698/t/5be0283bf950b7feaf57e6c1/1541
         417020085/Final+Communique+ENGLISH+.pdf
[22]   https://blogs.unicef.org/blog/every-child-pre-primary-education/

Technical assistance

Twelve country offices (Angola, Botswana, Eritrea, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Sudan, Somalia, Uganda and Zambia) were provided with support in 2018 to design early learning programmes within their country programme documents, include early learning in education sector plans and advocate for greater national investment in early learning. Tanzania was provided with technical support on the Measuring Early Learning Quality and Outcomes initiative which will benefit measurement of school readiness in Tanzania (mainland) and Zanzibar and generate a global public good for this purpose.

Three in-country missions took place in 2018 in Angola, Botswana and Mozambique with a focus on ECE scale-up and strengthened partnerships. Guidance was provided to Eritrea, Lesotho, Mozambique and Uganda on how to use GPE funds for pre-primary education.

The AfECN conference and ECD Focal Points Meeting provided additional opportunities for country offices to receive support and guidance. Steps were taken in the second half of 2018 to develop a regional network of ECD focal points and create a community of practice to enhance knowledge management across ESAR and to facilitate more South-South learning.

2.2 EQUITY IN EDUCATION

HIGHLIGHTS

Efforts in equity in education by ESARO in 2018 have led to the following results:

- Gender-Responsive Pedagogy Toolkit developed jointly with the UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office (WCARO) to advocate and support African countries to mainstream gender-responsive pedagogy (GRP) in teacher training.
- WinS status study and deep dives conducted to support the design and implementation of integrated and cost-effective models.
- Governments and partners from 15 countries informed about strategies to scale up quality disability inclusive education policy, planning and practice.

Work on equity in education is mainstreamed throughout programming. However, there are specific areas which support marginalized and vulnerable groups as follows:

Gender equality

ESARO's work on gender and education focuses on addressing the barriers to education faced by adolescent girls such as GBV, pregnancy, child marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting, and expectations to support the family.

A partnership between UNICEF ESARO and WCARO, FAWE, UNGEI and UNESCO's IICBA was initiated in March 2018 to develop a toolkit that can be used to advocate and support African countries to mainstream GRP in pre- and in-service teacher training and continuous professional development activities of ministries of education. The tool forms a core component of support towards implementation of the AU's Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025.

UNICEF supported the GRP review and validation workshop[23] held from 14 to 17 August in Nairobi, Kenya facilitated by FAWE, UNICEF ESARO and WCARO, UNESCO IICBA, UNGEI and Creative Arts Institute. Creative Arts Institute [24] was contracted to review the FAWE 2005 GRP Teachers Manual with a view to updating and developing a GRP toolkit relevant for teaching and learning in the 21st century, taking into consideration African contexts. In April, ESARO managed the first in a series of 'Education Think Pieces' on girls' education[25].

The importance of accelerating gender equality in and through education was highlighted in the commitments of education ministers[26] at the conclusion of the Pan-African Conference on Education convened by UNESCO and SDG 4 partners including UNICEF, AU and the Government of Kenya in April 2018. UNICEF was part of the organizing team and worked with civil society partners, Plan International and FAWE to convene a Pre-Conference Youth Dialogue with delegates from 12 African countries to ensure young people's voices were captured in the conference. ESARO also facilitated a speaking role for UNICEF in a number of high-level events organized by the AU in 2018 on girls' education.

Out-of-school children

ESARO continued to support country offices to integrate and reintegrate out-of-school children through return-to-school strategies and programmes. Country offices were supported to collect, analyse and disseminate information on OOSC children to strengthen sector planning and budgeting; developing effective return-to-school programmes, tools and evidence to improve data management, including using real-time monitoring technologies.

The education team developed a toolkit and guidance for country offices on enhancing inclusive and protective learning environments, in collaboration with the Gender and Child Protection teams. The pilot and toolkit dissemination will take place in 2019. Development of country baseline data commenced as part of developing inclusive education plans.

In 2018, Eswatini and South Sudan finalized their national study on out-of-school children. Mozambique finalized its report from field work conducted in 2017.

Children with disabilities

UNICEF continued promoting the inclusion of children with disabilities in formal schooling in ESAR through regional information sharing, building upon a 2015 ESARO study on the status of children with disabilities and the 2017 Regional Workshop on Inclusive Education.

The 2018 Regional Education Network Meeting, where 55 education chiefs and specialists from 21 countries deliberated on inclusive education, highlighted that although the majority of ESAR countries have inclusive education policies, current efforts at inclusion are insufficient and many children are still left out. Participants assessed their country's progress and identified required areas of focus to achieve progressive realization of inclusive education.

In October, UNICEF co-hosted a learning event with the World Bank and the U.S Agency for International Development, focusing on strategies to scale up 'Inclusive Education with Learning in Africa'. Delegates from governments, Organizations of Persons with Disabilities and partner organizations from 12 countries, including Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda and

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[23]   Funded through FAWE-UNICEF ESARO SSFA
[24]   Funded through UNESCO IICBA-UNICEF WCARO MoU (Reference Group for all consultancy processes included FAWE, ESARO, WCARO, IICBA and UNGEI)
[25]   https://blogs.unicef.org/blog/girls-education-improving-not-all/
[26]   Nairobi Declaration and Call for Action on Education. Bridging continental and global education frameworks for the Africa We Want. Nairobi, April 2018

Uganda from ESAR, had the opportunity to learn more about quality disability inclusive education policy, planning and practice.

WASH in schools

WinS is a focus area in the new ESA Regional Priorities for 2018-21. ESARO conducted a regional WinS status study and completed a WinS deep dive in Ethiopia, Tanzania and Zambia in collaboration with the regional Gender and WASH teams. The Regional Office also drafted a WinS investment case and a WinS theory of change template for use by ESAR countries. Direct technical support was extended to UNICEF Comoros for scoping studies and investment plans for WASH in schools and health facilities, and to the Kenya Country Office for theory of change and strategy development for WinS.

Technical assistance

Remote technical support was provided to Ethiopia, Malawi and Uganda on the implementation of Gender Action Plans. Support was also provided to Malawi to finalize an operational study on the impact of Communication for Development (C4D) on girls' education and to Ethiopia and Malawi to conduct a life-skills programme review to end child marriage.

Technical support and experience-sharing from other parts of the region were provided to Mozambique to support advocacy to repeal a decree that limits adolescent girls' re-entry after dropping out of school due to pregnancy. ESARO also conducted a technical review of a study on the effectiveness of Ethiopia's Code of Conduct and School Violence Reporting Tool.

Technical inputs were provided to strengthen the Zimbabwe country office strategy on removing the disability barrier to children's potential and aspirations, and support was provided to Eswatini to conclude its OOSC study.

Assistance was provided to strengthen the completion of the Educate a Child projects in Comoros and Somalia and to Kenya in the implementation of their project.

2.3 LEARNING

> **HIGHLIGHTS**
>
> Efforts in learning by ESARO in 2018 have led to the following results:
> - Series of six 'Education Think Pieces' published by leading researchers and practitioners to stimulate fresh thinking on how to improve learning for all.
> - Report published on the opportunities and challenges of ICT for learning.
> - Improving the quality of programming in learning outcomes through technical support on learning assessments, curriculum reform, school effectiveness, teacher management and performance and early grade primary programmes.

ESARO supported country offices to improve equitable learning outcomes in primary and lower secondary education through the provision of tools, guidance and evidence on national learning assessment systems, curriculum reform, school effectiveness, teacher management and performance and early grade primary programmes.

Teacher absenteeism

ESARO worked with UNICEF's Office of Research – Innocenti to successfully conduct 'Time to Teach' research on the causes of teacher absenteeism in eight countries (Comoros, Kenya, Mozambique, Rwanda, Somalia [Puntland], South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda) ahead of the mid-2019 launch of the regional report. This research will build the evidence base on how policies and practices influence different types of teacher absenteeism.

Stimulating fresh thinking on learning

ESARO commissioned a series of 'Education Think Pieces' by leading researchers and practitioners to stimulate debate, within UNICEF and externally, around significant educational challenges facing children in ESAR, particularly in relation to learning.[27] In addition to pieces on gender and early learning referred to in sections 2.1 and 2.2, Think Pieces were also published on the role of caregivers for learning, teacher performance and curriculum reform.

Despite the many opportunities that technological innovations can bring for learning, ESARO and WCARO identified the need for clear guidelines about how and where ICT can add the greatest value for children to achieve improved learning outcomes. The education team commissioned the Innovation Unit, along with the Aga Khan Education Services and the Aga Khan Foundation to undertake research to inform the development of a position on ICT for learning which was published in September[28]. This research project identified 10 issues that UNICEF in ESAR and WCAR should consider as they develop their position and begin formulating a strategy around ICT for learning. The report has been shared through several conferences by UNICEF and the authors.

Technical assistance

Remote and in-country support has been provided to country office on monitoring and improving learning outcomes such as measures to enhance teacher performance and student learning. This included specific support to strengthen early grade primary programmes in the region, such as supporting a rigorous evaluation of Ethiopia's assessment for learning programme; strengthening Zambia's Catch-Up Programme and Botswana's Teaching at the Right Level programme; and supporting South Africa's Early Grade Reading Survey, which is showing major impact on learning of the most disadvantaged children.

ESARO provided technical advice on the use of technology to improve the quality of education in Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe and guided country office approaches on improving teacher performance in Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda and South Sudan. ESARO supported Ethiopia and Kenya to strengthen national curriculum development, and strengthened standardized assessments in Eritrea, Mozambique and South Sudan.

As part of UNICEF's increased focus on adolescents and young people, ESARO supported UNICEF Kenya on the development of young people and education strategy, focusing on the role of education and the new curriculum in supporting young people to gain skills for life and work, in the context of the President of Kenya becoming a champion for the young people's agenda. Additionally, ESARO developed an investment case and clear articulation of the key issues facing adolescents in gaining basic education and skills to be prepared for life and work in the 21st century. This will place ESARO in a strong position to work strategically to improve education for adolescents going forward.

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[27]   https://www.unicef.org/esaro/resources_education-think-pieces.html
[28]   https://www.unicef.org/esaro/UNICEF-AKF-IU-2018-ICT-Education-WCAR-ESAR.pdf

2.4 EDUCATION SYSTEM STRENGTHENING

> **HIGHLIGHTS**
>
> Efforts in education system strengthening in 2018 have led to the following results:
> - A total of 21 country briefs produced on the situation of PF4C in the education sector and the national budgets for education.
> - Improved availability of data on education through creation of online data visualizations, budget briefs and data catalogue.
> - Progress in modernization of EMIS in the region.
> - Support to country offices in the GPE planning or implementation phases.
> - Support to country offices in conducting psychometric analysis of standardized tests.

Public finance for children

ESARO worked with country offices to produce an analysis of the financial situation in the education sector in all 21 countries. Further budget briefs analysing the annual education budget in 10 countries were published and disseminated in 2018[29]. Data generated were used by country offices and partner organizations to influence public financial decision-making processes and leverage domestic resources for children.

To better analyse education budget and financial issues and advocate with government and partners accordingly, the capacity of Chiefs of Education in the area of PF4C was strengthened in a regional workshop, which had a focused education public finance module.

Visualization of indicators and modernization of EMIS

ESARO produced visualizations of SDG indicators as estimated by UIS, OOSC indicators as recommended by the global initiative and support materials to conduct education sector analysis. An Education Data Catalogue was also created in 2018 and made available through the UNICEF intranet. A user interface to make the catalogue and visualizations publicly available is under development. ESARO also assisted five country offices (Angola, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mozambique and Namibia) who are working with their government partners to modernize their EMIS. These actions were complemented by the Regional Office's active collaboration with the Data Must Speak Initiative (DMS)[30] in five countries (Angola, Eritrea, Madagascar, Mozambique and Zambia).

Education sector analysis

A key part of strengthening education systems involved assisting country offices and governments to develop their education sector analyses and plans as part of securing and effectively using GPE grants. ESARO has continued offering support to country offices involved in their countries' GPE planning or implementing phases. In 2018, a gender-responsive education sector planning (GRESP) workshop was convened in partnership with GPE, UNGEI, UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) and AU-CIEFFA for six countries: Eswatini, Kenya, Lesotho, Somalia (Federal Government of Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland), South Sudan and Zimbabwe. To date, 10 ESA countries have undergone the GRESP training, which aims to contribute to more overt gender considerations in education sector analyses and plans.

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[29]   https://www.unicef.org/esaro/resources_budget-briefs.html
[30]   UNICEF's Data Must Speak initiative helps countries improve education through data. DMS produces global knowledge on the use of data to improve equity in education and the role of community participation in improving educational outcomes, through evaluations and research.

ESARO was actively involved in the Global Network of Education Results and Data Specialists, developed with support from thematic funding to build capacity and share knowledge around education system strengthening and results-based management.

Technical assistance

At the end of 2018, 19 partnerships were established with GPE in 16 ESAR countries: Burundi, Comoros, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Somalia (Puntland, Somalia and Somaliland separately), South Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania (mainland and Zanzibar separately), Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. ESARO helped each country to effectively manage the GPE funds. Additionally, Zambia's Education and Skills Sector Plan was reviewed and strengthened.

Technical assistance to develop EMIS system content and analysis and to review EMIS collection systems was provided in Angola, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique and Namibia.

Ten country offices were supported to develop or update Education Budget Briefs analysing the education budget for the year[31].

2.5 EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES (EiE)

> **HIGHLIGHTS**
>
> Efforts in EiE by ESARO in 2018 have led to the following results:
> - One million children affected by humanitarian emergencies were able to remain in or return to school.
> - Education in emergencies online training course piloted by participants from 11 countries.
> - Multiple missions undertaken to support EiE programmes in Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda.

In 2018, ESARO provided multi-sectoral technical assistance in ongoing emergency preparedness and responses to drought-related (Horn of Africa and Southern Africa), conflict displacement-related (South Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia and Great Lakes countries) and health-related emergencies (cholera, typhoid, measles and EVD).

ESARO contributed to the support of 1 million boys and girls living in situations of humanitarian crisis to access safe and secure education through strengthening the capacity and programming of country offices to deliver uninterrupted learning.

Partnerships

ESARO co-facilitated a UNESCO-IIEP crisis-sensitive planning workshop (involving Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda) resulting in country action plans for inclusion of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) into national education planning processes.

Existing partnerships with UNHCR, Save the Children, global and national Education Clusters, UNESCO IIEP, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Education Cannot Wait (ECW) and the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) coordination mechanisms were strengthened.

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[31]   Ibid. Briefings were produced for the following countries: Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda, Tanzania (Mainland and Zanzibar) and Zimbabwe.

Advocacy and fundraising

The ECW[32] global fund to transform the delivery of education in emergencies was launched in 2017 but became fully operational in 2018. ESARO supported country offices in Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda to apply for funding from ECW and provided strategic advice to other countries on navigating opportunities for future fundraising.

In 2018, ESARO liaised with NYHQ, country offices and National Committees to finalize a large, four-year partnership with the Government of the Netherlands, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the International Labour Organization (ILO), UNHCR and the World Bank to enhance access to education and protection for children on the move. Funding for three countries in ESAR namely Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda, was secured as part of the initiative.

E-learning

In response to demands from country offices to build their capacity on EiE, ESARO finalized and piloted an EiE e-learning package including a technical content handbook, facilitator's handbook and other online tools. The content was informed by existing training materials on risk-informed education programming, conflict sensitive education, the INEE harmonized training package, UNICEF's frontline responders, and Inter-Agency Standing Committee Education Cluster materials. The EiE e-learning course was piloted successfully with participation from staff in 11 country offices[33]. Pparticipants from the Humanitarian Aid department of the European Commission (ECHO), WCAR, academia and NYHQ were also involved.

Technical assistance

ESARO strengthened capacity and programming to prepare for and respond to emergencies through provision of technical assistance for EiE planning and coordination during visits to Burundi, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda. Additional EiE support was provided remotely throughout the year, for example to prepare for cyclones in Madagascar, the refugee influx and cholera outbreak in Zambia, and Ebola preparedness in Angola, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

Emergency Preparedness Platform quality and technical checks were undertaken for Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Further, quality assurance was provided for: quarterly situation reports for nine Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) countries[34]; the development of partnership agreements with UNHCR in Burundi and Uganda; the IDP response plan in Ethiopia; and strengthening of the advocacy work of the Education Cluster in Somalia.

Education Cluster support was provided to strengthen coordination mechanisms in Ethiopia and South Sudan; and in Somalia this included support to the initiation of the Education Cluster Advocacy Working Group.

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[32]   http://www.educationcannotwait.org
[33]   Angola, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Malawi, Kenya, South Africa, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
[34]   Angola, Burundi, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Madagascar, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda.

SECTION 3: STRENGTHENING PROGRAMME EFFECTIVENESS

ESARO supports country offices in various ways to create the conditions for effective national and regional education programming. This work involves encouraging innovation, building durable partnerships, mobilizing resources and supporting programming to be scalable and sustainable. ESARO works with country offices to quality assure their education programmes ensuring they are well planned, focus on results, are characterized by good monitoring and evaluation systems, have a robust enterprise risk management framework, and can be shared as good practice to foster South-South learning.

3.1 STRENGTHENING CROSS-SECTORAL STRATEGIES

Improving access to quality and inclusive education can only be achieved through cross-sectoral strategies. Inadequate WASH facilities in school, malnutrition, the direct and indirect costs of education creating financial barriers to access – particularly for the poor, negative social and cultural norms, practices such as child marriage or early pregnancies, and insecure and unsafe environments, all prevent children from attending and staying in school. Hence the need for close collaboration between ESARO sections such as C4D, Child Protection, Gender, Social Policy and WASH, to address transformations in education holistically. In addition, exploring flexible learning options which may be outside of the formal education system, is key to increase access to learning in an out-of-school environment and for overaged children.

Table 1: Examples of cross-sectoral collaboration with ESARO Education Section in 2018

Section	Focus areas of collaboration
C4D	• Collaboration to improve data utilization (as part of DMS) and programming on issues related to children with disabilities. • Scoping study on social norms and schooling of children with disabilities in Eswatini, Kenya and Namibia.
Child Protection	• Mapped life skills for ending child marriage programmes in selected ESAR countries and developed a guidance on 'fit for purpose' programming. • Concept note on implementing safe and protective learning environments developed by Education, Gender and Child Protection.
Communications	• Development of communication and advocacy videos on quality education, EiE and girls' education. • Communications team provided with education references, data links and documents for quality, technically sound social media campaign for girls' education, quality, and education in emergencies. • Social media and advocacy materials improved in collaboration with Gender and Child Protection.
ECD	• Supporting AfECN in the first international conference on ECD. • Systems strengthening for scale-up of ECE and pre-primary education.
Gender and Adolescents	• Coordinated technical assistance to country offices around girls' education and adolescent skills. • Developed advocacy materials on girls' education, which was disseminated over UNICEF social media platforms. • Contributed to the development of analysis and a regional investment case for adolescent programming, with a focus on education and skills.

Humanitarian Action, Resilience and Peacebuilding	• Coordinated technical assistance and quality assurance to emergency planning and reporting requirements, with a focus on Humanitarian Action for Children appeal country offices, and other emergency affected countries.
ICT and Innovations	• Support to Angola, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mozambique and Namibia to review and strengthen EMIS collection systems. • Published the Sub-Saharan Africa ICT for learning research report to support country offices improve their investments in ICT for learning.
Programme Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PPME)	• Joint work to disseminate information and data on education in the region.
Public Private Partnerships (PPP)	• Developed and maintained partnerships to support country office resource mobilization with Mastercard, Dutch government, Hempel and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development/Bank for Reconstruction (BMZ/KfW). • New phase of Schools for Africa initiated and to be launched in January 2019.
Social Policy	• Produced PF4C education briefs and organised a P4FC capacity-building workshop for ESAR Chiefs of Education.
WASH	• Conducted regional WinS status study and completed a WinS deep dive in Ethiopia, Tanzania and Zambia.
AU Liaison Office	• Participation in AU workshop to validate indicators for the AU Continental Education Strategy for Africa. • Facilitated UNICEF representation at AU events on girls' education. • Support for the creation of an ECDE cluster.
UNICEF Headquarters	• Engagement in global network to strengthen use of data, research and evidence.

3.2 PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

UNICEF ESARO works in close collaboration with a range of partners to secure commitment to increase early learning provision, reduce the number of OOSC, strengthen education systems to focus on learning outcomes and respond to fragility, and improve equity. In 2018, ESARO improved its programme impact and resource mobilization efforts by strengthening existing partnerships and building new ones. Key partnerships during 2018 include:

Corporate partnerships

- Hempel Foundation for Rwanda and South Africa to improve the quality of education, particularly for girls.
- Mastercard Labs Partnership on Kupaa/school finances project.
- Safaricom partnership to develop technological solutions to support health and education outcomes.

Global programmes

- Data Must Speak Initiative to improve usage of education data.
- Education Cannot Wait funding for three countries (Comoros, Kenya and Somalia).
- GPE support in 16 ESAR countries: Burundi, Comoros, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
- UNGEI collaboration on a regional capacity building workshop on gender-responsive education sector planning and the development of a GRP Toolkit for teacher training.

Non-governmental organizations

- AfECN to map early learning programmes and networks in the region, and conference.
- FAWE support to ensure gender equality in education is promoted through development of the GRP Toolkit for teacher training.
- SACMEQ to improve data on regional learning assessment, including SDG 4 reporting.
- Save the Children to enhance the EiE responses.

Intergovernmental organizations

- Association of the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) to strengthen technical capacity of the continental education body to improve quality education.
- African Union Commission on monitoring implementation of the AU's Continental Education Strategy for Africa, including supporting the launch of a Cluster on ECDE.
- Collaboration with AU's CIEFFA to enhance girls' participation and learning outcomes.
- IGAD supporting action planning for the implementation of the Djibouti Declaration on the integration of refugees into national education systems.
- SADC partnership initiated for future collaborative work on SDG 4.
- SACMEQ with the possibility of pursuing more substantial partnerships from 2019 to strengthen regional learning assessments.
- UNHCR supporting countries to implement the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, including joint visits to Burundi and South Sudan to build capacity of country actors, and Rwanda for a regional capacity building workshop.
- Collaboration with UNESCO on the Pan-African Conference on Education, SDG 4 M&E conference for Eastern Africa, Global Education Monitoring Report launch, regional workshop on integration of refugees and IDPs into education systems, joint visit to Madagascar and Mozambique for national capacity building initiatives, joint proposal on accessible learning materials for inclusion initiated.
- UNESCO IICBA collaboration on enhancing girls' participation and learning outcomes.
- World Bank to develop scalable pre-primary education models.

Bilateral agencies and donors
- BMZ/KfW on quality education and skills development for adolescents.
- DFID on ECD research.
- Dutch Government to support education for children on the move.
- ECHO to strengthen education in emergency preparedness, response and recovery programming requirements.
- EU resource mobilization for Somalia and South Sudan.

3.3 SECURING RESULTS

To enhance results for children, ESARO also provides essential services to the 21 ESAR country offices to ensure education programmes are evidence-based, represent value for money, are contextually appropriate and well-managed through the life cycle of the Country Programme. The services ESARO provides can be categorized into six areas:

- Cutting-edge **technical support** to refine and enhance education programme design.
- Essential **quality assurance** of key elements and stages of education programmes to sustain high standards of work.
- Critical **oversight** of programmes to ensure they achieve the intended results.
- Generation of **evidence** to inform and strengthen programming.
- Timely and targeted **knowledge management** and sharing to ensure country offices access vital evidence and data to support their programmes.
- Strengthening and expanding **regional and global partnerships** to create the funding and platforms for coun6try offices to be more effective for children.

ESARO provides these support services to improve country office effectiveness in the context of the UNICEF Global Strategic Plan 2018–2021 and the ESA regional priorities.

3.4 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, QUALITY ASSURANCE AND OVERSIGHT

In 2018 ESARO provided guidance, technical support, quality assurance and programmatic oversight to all 21 ESAR country offices in the areas of early learning, promoting equity and inclusion, quality education and learning, education system strengthening and education in emergencies. Nineteen country offices received on-site technical support through 36 missions.

Support to country offices was provided in the following areas:

- Design of **early learning** programmes, guidance on integrating early learning into education sector plans and building partnerships to scale up pre-primary education (Angola, Botswana, Eritrea, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia).

- Equity in education was promoted through **removing barriers to adolescent girls' education** (Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique and Uganda); strengthening national strategies to **improve inclusion of children with disabilities** (Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe); **improving data on out-of-school-children** (Eswatini, Mozambique, South Sudan); and supporting in-depth studies and plans to scale up **WASH in schools** (Comoros, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia).

- Strengthening learning outcomes in ESAR through **improving education quality and teacher performance** (Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe); generating new evidence on **teacher absenteeism** (Comoros, Kenya, Mozambique, Rwanda, Somalia [Puntland], South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda); **national curriculum development** (Ethiopia and Kenya); and **standardised assessments and learning surveys** in Botswana, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mozambique, South Africa, South Sudan and Zambia.

- Management of 19 **GPE partnerships** in 16 countries: Burundi, Comoros, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Somalia (Puntland, Somalia and Somaliland separately), South Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania (mainland and Zanzibar separately), Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Development of **Education Budget Sector Briefs** on the situation of education financing in Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda, Tanzania (mainland and Zanzibar) and Zimbabwe, technical assistance to strengthen **EMIS system content and analysis** and to review EMIS collection systems (Angola, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mozambique and Namibia), and collaboration with the Data Must Speak Initiative (Angola, Eritrea, Madagascar, Mozambique Zambia).

- Strengthening country office capacity and programming to **prepare for and respond to emergencies** (Angola, Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Sudan, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia).

All 21 countries received support for substantive education reviews, on the recruitment of key positions and the quality assurance of major staffing and structural changes, partnership agreements and development of donor proposals. A Regional Education Network Meeting was held in the first week of October 2018 and provided an opportunity to disseminate and discuss key education evidence and identify additional support needs.

3.5 PROGRESS, CONSTRAINTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

The overall assessment of ESARO's progress on education in 2018 is positive. Education targets for Regional Priority 3 were all met or exceeded (see Figure 1). All 21 country offices were supported in humanitarian and development contexts, high quality evidence was disseminated to strengthen programming, and strategic partnerships were supported and developed.

The achievements can further be observed through the framework in Table 2, which highlights ESARO's progress against the education outputs contained in the Regional Office Management Plan, 2018 to 2021.

Table 2: Achievements against Regional Office Management Plan education outputs

Output	Indicator	2017 baseline	2018 target	Status at December 2018
ESAR country offices achieve Programming Excellence (programmes are gender and equity focused, respond to humanitarian and development contexts, deliver and demonstrate results) by 2021	Number of countries that increase enrolment of children in pre-primary education by at least 10%	0	1	**5** Burundi, Madagascar, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania.
	Number of countries in which at least 60% of students achieve nationally-defined learning outcomes	0	1	Data unavailable
	Number of countries that reduce the number of primary school age children that are out of school by at least 25%	0	2	**0**
Quality evidence and partnerships for risk-informed programming and financing to ensure that girls and boys including those with disabilities complete primary and secondary with grade level learning outcomes.	Number of Regional Public Goods developed (e.g., tools, innovations, guidance, strategies, multi-country studies).	3	6	**8** Education in emergency online course; Education Think Pieces; ICT for Learning report; Gender Responsive Pedagogy toolkit; Public finance for children briefs; OOSC country- specific and regional profiles; OOSC country-specific fact-sheets; Education data intranet portal.
Enhanced capacity of COs to design, implement, monitor and evaluate risk informed education programmes that ensure that girls and boys, including those with disabilities, complete early learning, primary and secondary education with grade level learning outcomes.	Number of countries with a well-functioning learning assessment system	1	5	**3** Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia
	Number of countries with EMIS meeting defined quality standards (including equity, gender and disabilities)	0	0	**1** Namibia
	Number of country offices that have adequately designed and implemented education programmes	1	5	**18** Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Comoros, Eswatini, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe

(green = above target; orange = target met, red = below target)

A key area of support was in ensuring programming continuity in the context of staffing changes. ESARO provided additional support to education teams to accelerate recruitments, where there were gaps in staff, especially Chiefs of Education, and to induct new colleagues into the ESAR regional priorities for education and ways of working.

The major challenge to realizing Goal Area 2 of UNICEF's Strategic Plan and ESAR's regional priorities for education relates to weak national and regional systems for measuring learning outcomes, to ensure education systems focus on improving these. In addition, few countries have robust systems in place to scale up quality pre-primary education. With increasing populations of children and adolescents and growing urbanization, the robustness of education sectors to expand with quality to meet demand is an additional key challenge. Additional constraints were the high investment of time required for developing and strengthening partnerships to mobilize resources and achieve results, and turning frameworks and guidelines on the adolescent and skills agenda into programming.

The major lessons learned, and opportunities identified in 2018 were:

1. Increased recognition that schools are a crucial, multi-sectoral platform to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children and adolescents, and this proposition is beginning to be tested in the region;
2. There is increased focus on the importance of building human capital from the earliest years, which necessitates increased investment in early learning and early primary opportunities;
3. UNICEF is well-placed to advance the agenda for secondary-age education and skills for life and work for adolescents in the region but needs to build internal capacity.

3.6 COUNTRY OFFICE FEEDBACK SURVEY

At the end of 2018, ESARO carried out a survey to obtain feedback on the services provided to country offices by ESARO. The survey covered key accountabilities of the regional office: the system of dedicated country focal points, external relations and partnerships, governance and management, knowledge management and intellectual leadership, oversight, quality assurance, strategic representation, technical assistance and United Nations coherence.

Survey feedback showed that country offices continue to appreciate the support provided by ESARO on education. Remote technical assistance was prompt, comprehensive and of high quality. On-site visits were also timely and effective. Areas of support that were particularly valued included quality assurance of documents and materials, support to explore new partnerships and research opportunities, assistance with documenting best practices, and organization and representation at regional events. Country offices also welcomed ESARO's ongoing support with recruitment and resource mobilization. Support for regional initiatives such as PF4C helped to strengthen collaboration between sectors.

To further improve support to education programming in the region, country offices recommended that ESARO intensify collaboration around data and evidence, quality of education, learning assessments and in equity in education, and provide additional support in resource mobilization. Country offices asked for more on-site technical assistance and joint field visits. Advance notification of staff changes in ESARO was also requested.

SECTION 4: FINANCIAL REPORT

In order to implement the ESARO Education Rolling Work Plan, predictable flexible funding is critical to provide a wide range of technical support and expertise in a responsive and timely manner. Thematic funding allows ESARO to support the strategic needs of the 21 country offices in the region, such as resource mobilization and M&E, as well as to respond to emerging or urgent needs, such as in the EiE context and staffing changes. The predictable nature of this funding means ESARO can plan support efficiently to maximize the funds available, including over the lifecycle of vital joint programmes and initiatives in the region.

Thematic funds in 2018 enabled UNICEF ESARO to play a strong oversight and coordination role to support country offices in the region to achieve results around the Strategic Plan Goal Area 2 and Regional Priority 3, both on education.

Table 3: Planned budget by Thematic Sector – Education (in US$)

Programme area	Funding type	Planned budget*
Education	ORR	2,287,956
Total		**2,287,956**

* Planned budget for excludes estimated recovery cost.

Table 4: Thematic contributions received for thematic pool 4 by ESARO in 2018 (in US$)

Donors	Grant number	Contribution amount	Programmable amount
Global Thematic Funds		2,971,353	2,829,860
US Fund for UNICEF	SC1499050278	187,024	178,118
Total		**3,158,377**	**3,007,978**

Table 5: 2018 Expenditures by Key Results Areas (in US$)

Programme area	Expenditure
22-01 Equitable access to quality education	186,294
22-02 Learning outcomes	1,105,362
Total	**1,291,656**

Table 6: 2018 Expenses by Specific Intervention Codes (in US$)

Organizational targets	Expenditure
22-01-08 System strengthening - risk informed programming, including climate, resilience, disaster, conflict, and emergency preparedness	46,322
22-01-12 Education analyses including OOSC Initiative, Education Sector Analyses	3,422
22-01-99 Technical assistance - Equitable access to quality education	136,551
22-02-14 System strengthening - early learning/pre-primary policy, leadership, budget	-
22-02-15 System strengthening -early learning/pre-primary standards and governance	97,104
22-02-16 System strengthening - early learning/pre-primary teaching and learning environment (including curriculum and material design)	1,612
22-02-26 Education sector planning including coordinating role, SDG 4, etc.	161,602
22-02-99 Technical assistance - Learning outcomes	845,046
Total	**1,291,656**

Table 7: Planned budget and available resources for 2019

Programme area	Planned budget	Funded budget	Gap
Education	2,104,186	1,897,504	206,682
Total	2,104,186	1,897,504	206,682

SECTION 5: FUTURE WORK PLAN

UNICEF's programmatic work in ESAR in 2019 will continue to focus on the region's 2018-2021 regional priorities, aligned with the UNICEF Strategic Plan. Under this framework ESARO will strengthen its work to improve education quality and learning outcomes to prepare children for the future.

The regional education team will redouble its efforts to support high-quality early primary programmes to ensure all children gain foundational literacy, numeracy and life skills. The scale-up of quality pre-primary education through a comprehensive sub-sector development approach will also remain one of ESARO's key focus areas in 2019.

ESARO will continue to enhance the capacity of country offices to design, implement, monitor and evaluate risk-informed education programmes; generate quality evidence; and build partnerships to ensure that girls and boys, including those with disabilities, complete primary and secondary education with grade-level learning outcomes.

In line with UNICEF's global prioritization of adolescents and young people, ESARO will expand its focus on secondary-age education for adolescents in 2019. This will include developing guidance on education programming for adolescents based on the Global Skills for All Framework, the Regional Adolescent and Young People Investment Case Framework, and supporting country offices to equip adolescents and young people with skills to succeed in life, livelihoods and work.

To strengthen country office education programming in 2019, ESARO will continue to ensure oversight and quality assurance for ESAR's 21 countries, through support in education programme planning and review processes. Efforts will also be made to continue to disseminate latest knowledge, trends, approaches and tools to improve education analysis and results-based management, and to encourage South-South learning on good practices between country offices.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

ESARO would like to express its sincere appreciation to the donors, particularly the United States Fund for UNICEF for its contribution to the Regional Education Thematic Funds and the Norwegian Government for its contributions to the Global Education Thematic Fund. Contributions to the Education Thematic Funds are particularly valued as they enable ESARO to play the critical role of strengthening country office education programmes in a way that best responds to their needs and requirements. This funding ensures that UNICEF's programming for quality education and learning is equity- and results-oriented.

We would also like to acknowledge the close collaboration with Education Above All Foundation - Educate a Child, ECW, Global Education Cluster, GPE, Hempel Foundation, IGAD, Mastercard, Save the Children, Schools for Africa partners, UNGEI, UNESCO, UNHCR and World Bank. This support has allowed UNICEF to accelerate results to help the most disadvantaged children in ESA to fulfil their right to quality education.

ANNEX 1: STORIES OF IMPACT IN THE REGION

The following is a list of articles that capture a few areas of impact of UNICEF's education work in ESAR in 2018.

Ensuring equal opportunities for refugee and host community children in Ethiopia

Refugee primary school teacher Changkuoth Ter Wal explains the importance of investing in new schools and teacher training diploma programmes. With US$15 million from the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) fund, new schools and trained teachers are on the rise in the refugee-hosting regions of Gambella and Benishangal-Gumuz.

https://www.unicef.org/ethiopia/stories/ensuring-equal-opportunities-refugee-and-host-community-children-ethiopia

'Back to Learning' education campaign to benefit half a million children in South Sudan

The 'Back to Learning' initiative was launched by the Ministry of General Education and Instruction in February 2018 to target the most under-represented communities throughout South Sudan and provide learning opportunities for children currently not attending school, either due to conflict, cultural barriers or obstacles such as distance or family finances.

https://www.unicef.org/southsudan/media_21183.html

Paddling to schools in Zambia

A group of Zambian students lobbied the government and UNICEF to find a solution for Malabo Primary School's closing down during the annual flooding season. The school was reconstructed on a raised embankment to give protection against seasonal flooding. Now the children – all skilled paddlers and swimmers – arrive in canoes and school enrolment has jumped by 50 per cent.

https://blogs.unicef.org/blog/paddling-school-zambia/

World leaders unite under new initiative to provide quality education and training for young people

Rwandan President Paul Kagame was among the group of world leaders who launched *Generation Unlimited* – a new partnership to get every young person into quality education, training or employment by 2030 – at the UN General Assembly in 2018.

https://www.unicef.org/rwanda/media_21903.html

ANNEX 2: REPORT FEEDBACK FORM

UNICEF is working to improve the quality of our reports and would highly appreciate your feedback.

Kindly provide your feedback for this UNICEF ESARO Education Thematic Report 2018 through the following link.

Thank you.