



Children in a Protective and Safe Environment

DONOR REPORT – Global Child Protection

SC189905 (Grant Duration 01/01/2018 – 31/12/2021)

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TECHNICAL DATA ON CONTRIBUTION

BENEFICIARY COUNTRY

- Mexico

Grant Reference

- SC189905

Total Contribution

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Programmable Amount

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Funds used to date

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Balance available

- US\$ 77,610.41

Period Covered by the Grant

- 01/10/2013- 31/12/2018

Period Covered by the Report

- 01/01/2018- 24/03/2019

Contacts

Christian Skoog
Representative
UNICEF Mexico
<cskoog@unicef.org>

Dora Giusti
Chief, Child Protection
UNICEF Mexico
<dgiusti@unicef.org>

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BACKGROUND

Child protection challenges in Mexico are diverse and include child migration, violence in different forms and settings, children without parental care and their institutionalization, child marriage and limited access to birth registration, among others.

UNICEF Mexico's Child Protection Programme is addressing these challenges through a systemic approach, trying to strengthen capacities of child protection institutions to respond to child rights violations, as well as through prevention, by working on changing norms and behaviors. Also, addressing violence in its different manifestations (from prevention to detection and response services), ensuring protection of migrant children transiting through the country and promoting the development of alternative care options that are in line with international standards are programmatic priorities for the Child Protection Programme.

As far as child migration is concerned, Mexico is a country of origin, transit and destination. Children are taking great risks while migrating, including detention, family separation, physical and psychological harm, marginalization, discrimination and sexual and economic exploitation. According to the Migration Policy Unit of the Mexican Ministry of Interior, since January 2016 to October 2018 a total of 84,257 migrant children were detained in Mexico; of these 33,763 were unaccompanied. Unfortunately, despite the protection measures enshrined in the General Law on the Rights of Children and Adolescents (2014), migrant children are being detained and are often returned to their countries of origin without going through a Best Interest Determination (BID) process.

The prevalence of violence against children and adolescents is related to the normalization of violence, which can be seen through the common use of violent discipline, elevated numbers of child homicides and widespread gender-based violence. Data show that 63 % of children between 1 and 14 years of age have experienced violent discipline within that month (ENIM 2015), while 43.3% of adolescents aged 15-17 have suffered from sexual violence (ENDIREH 2016). On average 4 children are killed every day (elaborated from INEGI 2014-2017).

Violence is one of the main causes for children to be separated from their families and placed in residential care. According to the Census on Residential Care (DIF/INEGI 2015), there are 33,000 children in institutions in the country. This is due to a culture promoting residential care, resistance to change and limited capacity to implement family and community-based solutions.

In this context, UNICEF Mexico has supported actions to strengthen the implementation of child protection and BID procedures for migrant children, enhance capacities of care facilities to provide psycho-social support and develop alternative care solutions in lieu of detention. Further, UNICEF is working on strengthening the capacity of Child Protection Authorities and other services (such as health, helplines, education etc.) to prevent, detect and respond to violence and other violations in a comprehensive way. UNICEF has also been a pioneer in supporting programme development on alternative care.

With this grant, UNICEF is supporting: i) the compilation data on violence against children to influence programming; ii) the strengthening of capacities of care providers on psychosocial care for migrant

children and iii) the development of alternative care options. During the reporting period, a desk review of data on violence was completed and is currently being edited; tutorials for the use of psychosocial materials were developed; and a mental health network of experts was established to support services attending to migrant children.

RESULTS

A. Desk Review of data on Violence against Children and Adolescents

UNICEF Mexico undertook a desk review on available data on violence against. The objective of the study is to map the available secondary data on violence, identify gaps and issue recommendations on how to breach the gaps. The report will be used to: a) guide public institutions in strengthening the administrative data systems; b) identify how to mainstream questions and indicators in existing or upcoming surveys; c) raise awareness of public institutions on the magnitude of violence in different settings; and d) influence programming. The study is a contribution to Mexico's efforts as a pathfinding country of the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children. Through this contribution UNICEF is currently undertaking the lay-out and design of this study. The study will be launched in the first semester of 2019.

B. Psycho-social support for migrant children

UNICEF designed and disseminated a series of tools targeting migrant children as well as professionals taking care of them while in transit in Mexico with an objective of providing psycho-social support. All these tools have been developed following a resilience and child rights approach. Through training on these materials, UNICEF has strengthened the capacities of the staff working directly with migrant children to protect and provide psychosocial support in 30 shelters located along one of the most important migration routes to the USA in Mexico. To ensure that staff could easily use the tools developed, UNICEF started the development of six tutorial videos on the materials. Through this contribution, UNICEF was able to hire the expertise to develop the contents of the videos.



Some of the tools developed: map and journal, back-up with children's kit and game focusing on resilience

Additionally, UNICEF engaged in the setting up of a mental health and psychosocial support network with experts from all over the country. In 2018, through this contribution, UNICEF facilitated the mapping of 200 mental health experts whom were contacted to be part of this initiative. Currently, there are 66 experts in the network. The Ministry of Health, the Academia (UNAM), the National Institute of Psychiatry and PAHO/WHO, among others are active and committed members of this network. A virtual repository has been created to include publications, courses and other material to equip the members of the network with information on psychosocial care of children, particularly victims of violence and migrant children.

CHALLENGES & LEARNINGS

Challenges

- Despite Mexico's data capacity and availability, there are still significant gaps in terms of data on violence against children. In particular, there are limitations in terms of availability of data to determine the prevalence of violence across the life-span of a child.
- Migrant children arrive at residential care facilities in Mexico with a very strong and at times complex set of psychosocial needs. Staff at private and public care facilities are not equipped to respond to the demand. This is combined with scarcity of mental health services specialized on children and these issues which limits the possibility of any referral.
- Alternative care options for children without parental care (due to violence or migration situation) are very limited in the country and therefore are not considered as a protection measure.

Learnings

- Identifying gaps in data is a starting a point to mainstream missing indicators and modules in existing surveys or administrative records and therefore strengthen data capacity in the country as well the its impact on policy and programming. The data will improve Mexico's capacity to measure SDG 16.
- Building capacity by identifying experts and connecting services across the country may support temporary care facilities in dealing with the complexity of psychosocial needs of migrant children.
- Foster care programs are a good entry point to build an alternative care agenda. Bringing experiences from other countries stimulates the interest of authorities and ensure evidence-based programming.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the learnings, the following recommendations for the strengthening of child protection procedures include:

- Disseminate the study and engage in a dialogue with INEGI and other relevant bodies, responsible of implementing the Action Plan of the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children, to build a road map which allows for breaching the data gaps through existing surveys, additional ones or administrative data.
- Establish a mental health strategy which is owned by the Ministry of Health to ensure sustainability of mental health capacity and effective coordination of referrals.
- Develop a de-institutionalization and alternative care policy and roadmap with the Federal Government to set the standard for state governments and gradually reduce the number of children in institutions. The strategy should include alternative care for migrant children.

FINANCIAL UTILISATION

To date, USD 21,531.49 have been utilized.

ACTIVITY	AMOUNT IN USD
Design and layout of the desk review on violence data	\$7,310.25
Development of contents for tutorials on use of psychosocial care for migrant children	\$3,978.04
Establishment of the mental health network	\$10,243.2
Total	\$21,531.49

FUTURE WORKPLAN

The remaining of the grant will be used to strengthen capacities on alternative care, in particular, the development of a roadmap and policy document on de-institutionalization with the Federal Government and the consolidation of foster care pilot programmes in 5 states through distance support in partnership with the Latin American Network on Foster Care (RELAF) and other experts.