

# Bangladesh Child Protection Thematic Report



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UNICEF Bangladesh  
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**Cover Photo:** The adolescents of the Alo Chaya Adolescent Club are engaged in various activities that teach them about ethics and morality, the right to education, physical education, recreational games and sports, child protection, prevention of child marriage and many other social issues. The photo was taken at Chopdar Para, Ward no. 7, Jessore City Corporation on 31 October 2016.

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## Acronyms

BDRCS	Bangladesh Red Crescent Society
BRIS	Birth Registration Information System
C4D	Communication for Development
CCL	Centralized Call Centre
CFS	Child Friendly Space
CHL	Child Helpline
CPIMS	Child Protection Information Management System
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CWB	Child Welfare Board
DSS	Department of Social Services
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LSBE	Life Skills Based Education
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MoLG	Ministry of Local Government
MoLJA	Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs
MoWCA	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
MoRES	Monitoring Results for Equity System
MoSW	Ministry of Social Welfare
MTR	Mid-term Review
MSST	Management Social Services Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
TOC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

## Executive Summary

In January 2017, UNICEF Bangladesh started a new four-year programme cycle. This report covers results achieved in 2016 under the previous programme (2012-2016) as well as priorities for the new one (2017-2020).

In 2016, UNICEF Bangladesh continued to provide technical and financial support to the Government of Bangladesh for the implementation of the child protection system, as per the Children Act 2013, in selected locations in UNDAF districts. As in previous years, the implementation of the Act observed slow progress throughout 2016, partially as a result of the pending revision of the Rules of the Act by the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs (MoLJA) and final adoption by the Ministry of Social Welfare (MoSW). Nevertheless, the process of scaling up the Child Protection Mechanism, which is an integral part of the Act, continued. By the end of 2016, a total of 98 district and upazila level Child Welfare Boards (CWBs) have been established and are functioning in all 20 UNDAF districts.

Dissemination of the 2015 Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child is ongoing as required. In 2016, UNICEF's support focused on providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) in its efforts to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the Committee's recommendations by line ministries particularly health, education, social welfare, law and justice, finance and local government.

In November 2016, the Child Marriage Restraint Act 2016 was approved by the Cabinet and is with the Parliament for final decision. UNICEF has been continuously lobbying with Parliament members and other CSOs for the removal of a provision allowing child marriage in 'special cases', which is not only contradicting international human rights obligations, but is also a setback to the reinforcement of best practices in changing social norms.

Furthermore, in 2016 the Government enacted the Digital Security Act and its Rules. UNICEF Bangladesh and the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Division signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work jointly on the Act to help ensure 'Online Safety' for children.

Throughout 2016, UNICEF continued to support the implementation of the model of the minimum package<sup>1</sup> of child-sensitive social protection services that has reached around 7,000 children (66 percent girls, 44 percent boys) from targeted areas (slums, tea gardens, haors<sup>2</sup> and disaster prone areas). In October, the Child Helpline 1098 (CHL 1098) – a toll-free and 24-hour service – was officially launched by the Prime Minister of Bangladesh. The line is now fully functional all over the country. Since the extension of the CHL project, 439 child marriages have been stopped across the country. Moreover, between January and October 6,277 vulnerable children have benefited from conditional cash transfers provided by MoWCA and MoSW.

A total of 134,390 adolescent boys and girls of the 3,268,011 (i.e. the total number of girls and boys) aged 15-19 years in UNDAF districts, received training on life-skills and child development to enable them to act as agents of change in their communities to eliminate harmful social norms like child marriage, corporal punishment, violence against children, etc. Building on the positive results of this intervention, MoWCA has decided to expand coverage of the Empowerment of Adolescents Package through the establishment of 5,000 new Adolescent Clubs across Bangladesh from its revenue budget.

At the same time, in 2016 the National Adolescent Cluster (a coalition body led by MoWCA, with membership from national NGOs working with adolescents), initiated the development of the National Adolescent Strategy and Costing Framework. To understand the needs of adolescents, under

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<sup>1</sup> Child Friendly Spaces, Drop in centres, Emergency Night Shelters, Child Helpline, Case management and referral, provision of Conditional Cash Transfers.

<sup>2</sup> A haor is a wetland ecosystem in the north eastern part of Bangladesh which physically is a bowl or saucer shaped shallow depression, also known as a back swamp.

the leadership of MoWCA, divisional consultations with adolescent girls and boys, parents, and stakeholders were conducted to incorporate their suggestions and feedback in the strategy, ensuring their meaningful participation in the process.

Despite the progress made in the establishment and enforcement of favourable child protection policies and strengthening of mechanisms, challenges still remain. MoWCA and MoSW are committed to providing child sensitive social protection services to ensure continuum of care and empowerment of children and adolescents for prevention and response to abuse, exploitation and violence. Nevertheless, their capacity to scale up these services remains limited due to the insufficient child-centred budget allocation. Lack of human resources and, in many cases, no progress in recruitment of professionals such as probation officers who are key to the protection of children has continued to hamper the implementation of the 2013 Children Act. Different perceptions of a child by the society continue to impact the realization of the rights of the child to survival, development, protection and participation in Bangladesh. Throughout 2016, the controversial debate on the legal age of marriage especially for girls was ongoing.

Within the structure of the new Country Programme 2017-20, UNICEF Bangladesh Child Protection programme will continue to focus on strengthening the child protection system in Bangladesh through advocacy and technical support to enhance policy and legislative frameworks, provision of services and capacity building, and foster social changes bringing more integration into sectoral interventions in the office and within government mechanisms.

## Strategic Context of 2016

### Country trends in the situation of children vis-a-vis Child Protection

Bangladesh is home to approximately 160 million people, of whom about 59 million are children under age 18 and 15 million are under age 5.<sup>3</sup> In the last two decades, the country has achieved remarkable development progress and is well-positioned as the post-2015 era of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) starts. Despite progress, the agenda for ensuring the full realization of the rights of all children and their mothers in Bangladesh is still unfulfilled. The significant reduction in poverty from 48.9 (2000) to 31.5 (2010) percent,<sup>4</sup> has been hampered by unequal distribution of progress among income groups and geographical areas. Populations living in urban slums with limited access to quality and affordable services and populations living in locations vulnerable to the effects of climate change are particularly at risk of inadequate social outcomes. In the struggle faced by many families in Bangladesh to survive poverty and overcome their vulnerabilities, children often are deprived of their basic necessities and become victims of violence and exploitation through child labour, early marriage and, in many cases, child prostitution. Moreover, structural gender and socio-cultural inequalities persist in the country, further preventing children, women and the most vulnerable from fulfilling their rights.

In Bangladesh, the Birth Registration Act 2004 provides a legal basis for mandatory birth registration and the use of birth certificate as a proof of age to access services including, admission into school and marriage registration. An online birth registration Information System (BRIS) has been put in place since 2009. Furthermore, in September 2013 the government amended the existing law and announced the establishment of the Office of the Registrar General of Birth and Death. Despite the enabling environment for full coverage of birth registration, between 2006 and 2013 the percentage of children under age five registered had only increased from 10 to 37 percent. Registration within 45 days of birth as mandated by the Act is around 3 percent.<sup>5</sup> It has been identified that parents do not show interest to register the birth of their children within 45 days of birth because registration is not compulsory to get access to services before the age of 5. Moreover, birth registration is strongly associated with household living standards and mothers' education. The lack of adequate knowledge of how to register a child also often is another major obstacle to the fulfilment of a child's right to identity.

Violence against children (VAC), including corporal punishment as an "educational" and disciplinary measure, remains widespread. The 2012-13 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), reveals that 82.3 percent of children 1-14 were subjected to at least one form of psychological or physical punishment by household members. Suicide remains the ultimate form of violence among children themselves, particularly adolescent girls, among whom more than 1 in 5 deaths are due to suicide.<sup>6</sup>

Likewise, violence against women (VAW) remains the most extreme form of the continuing low status of women and girls in the country. The Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) noted that many forms of VAW remain prevalent, including domestic violence, rape, acid throwing, dowry-related violence, fatwa-instigated violence, and sexual harassment in the workplace.<sup>7</sup> A nationwide VAW survey in 2011 identified that some 87 percent of currently married women had experienced any type of violence by their current husband, with 77 percent reporting facing violence during the 12 months prior to the survey. Nearly 1 in 10 women

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<sup>3</sup> Population Projection of Bangladesh: Dynamics and Trends 2011-2061, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, November 2015

<sup>4</sup> World Development Indicators 2017: World Bank (WB) and OECD National Accounts data files.

<sup>5</sup> *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2012-2013*, Progotir Pathay: Final Report. BBS and UNICEF Bangladesh, Dhaka, 2014 and Report of Birth Registration Information System (BRIS)

<sup>6</sup> *Analysis of the Situation of Children and Women in Bangladesh*. UNICEF, December 2015.

<sup>7</sup> Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women: Bangladesh*. New York, February 2011 (hereafter CEDAW 2011).

subjected to violence as an adult also had experienced violence as a child.<sup>8</sup> Importantly, young girls on the way to school also may be subjected to sexual harassment and abuse, often known as “eve teasing.” Levels of reporting are very low compared to the extremely widespread incidence of violence unofficially reported.

Although child marriage has been slowly declining, it continues to be prevalent in Bangladesh. The 2012-13 MICS reveal that among women age 15-49 years, close to one in four (23.8 percent) were married before age 15 and, among women age 20-49 years, about six in ten (62.8 percent) women were married before age 18. At the same time, sexual abuse of both girls and boys represents a largely neglected issue and requires urgent attention, affecting up to 16 percent of girls and 7 percent of boys. Girls who suffer rape and girls who consent to non-marital sexual relationships are similarly considered permanently “stained.” Critically, rape taken to mean loss of “purity” and “honour” applies only to girls, and is an important factor behind the prevalence of child marriage. Meanwhile, both girls and boys also engage in sex work and are subject to sexual exploitation, an issue not only confined to brothels and the streets, but also encompassing new forms of exploitation related to social media. Likewise, human trafficking, frequently resulting from poverty, is believed to be extensive both within Bangladesh and to other countries, including for sex work.

Meanwhile, despite the ban on child labour, children continue to work and are exploited under hazardous and inadequate work conditions with low pay. The Bangladesh 2013 Child Labour Survey revealed that an estimated 3.45 million working children between the ages 5-17 years, of which 1.28 million are engaged in a hazardous form of child labour. The proportion of real child workers (10-14 years old) who are out of school and employed in Bangladesh, as per the Equity Atlas 2013, was at 6 percent in 2011, a drop of a little over 4 percentage points in the last decade when the proportion of child workers was 10.5 percent (2001). The proportion of workers is higher among boys (9.1 percent) than girls (2.6 percent).<sup>9</sup>

Children living in disaster prone and hard-to-reach areas, as well as migrant face acute protection challenges. In addition, most of the services being developed in support of a comprehensive child protection system in Bangladesh also cannot yet address the various barriers faced by children with disabilities, representing an important equity gap.

Bangladesh’s southern district of Cox’s Bazar hosts Rohingya refugees, one of the world’s most persecuted minorities. It is estimated that more than 30,000 registered Rohingya refugees live in official camps, around 55,000 undocumented Rohingyas reside in makeshift settlements and between 300,000 to 500,000 live scattered within the host communities throughout the district and across the country. In 2016, as a result of increasing violence in Myanmar, additional 74,000 Rohingyas have sought refuge in Cox’s Bazar District in Bangladesh. This new influx of refugees not only aggravates the pre-existing crisis of Rohingyas in Bangladesh, but also puts additional pressure on the already fragile social and economic structure of Cox’s Bazar. It is estimated that four percent of newly arrived Rohingya children in Leda and Kutupalong makeshift settlements and two percent in Shamlapur settlement are unaccompanied minors.<sup>10</sup> A recently published OHCHR report<sup>11</sup> reveals serious violations of children’s and women’s rights in the Northern part of Rakhine State in Myanmar. Psychosocial support, family reunification, and protective environments are amongst the most urgent interventions required to provide appropriate assistance to both accompanied and unaccompanied/separated Rohingya children in Cox’s Bazar.

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<sup>8</sup> Op.cit. Analysis of the Situation of Children and Women in Bangladesh 2015

<sup>9</sup> Real Child Workers: Equity Atlas refers to children aged (10 to 14 years) who are employed for the production of market and non-market goods.

<sup>10</sup> Multi-cluster/Sectoral Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA), Inter-agency Coordination Group on Cox’s Bazar, December 2016

<sup>11</sup> Report of OHCHR mission to Bangladesh: Interviews with Rohingyas fleeing from Myanmar since 9 October 2016, February 2017

### **What changes have been observed within the past year?**

The changes observed in 2016 are mainly related to legislative reforms and strengthened coordination among various Ministries, departments and institutions. Data on the present situation of children in regard to child protection is limited at the moment.

In 2013, the Children Act was introduced in Bangladesh as the main legislation for the protection and benefit of the country's estimated 58 million children. Since its enactment and approval, the implementation of the Act has been slow, partially as a result of the pending revision of the Rules of the Act by MoLJPA and final adoption by the MoSW. Nevertheless, progress has been observed in scaling up the Child Protection Mechanism, which is an integral component of the Act. All 20 UNDAF districts have a Child Welfare Board to monitor child rights' protection in the country and coordinate among relevant stakeholders.

Related, in 2016 for the first time, the Finance Division took the lead in preparing the child-focused budgeting report, a sign of the growing institutionalization of child-focused budgeting within the Government. The absolute budget benefitting children increased from USD 4.9 billion in 2015-16 to USD 6.4 billion in 2016-17. The published report, endorsed by the national parliament, was also launched in a child-friendly version.

The reform of the 1929 Child Marriage Restraint Act has been completed and a new Act is due to be enacted in 2017, along with the costed National Plan of Action to End Child Marriage. Moreover, in 2016 the Digital Security Act and its Rules were enacted. This offers an opportunity to strengthen advocacy campaigns to generate mass awareness of "online safety" for children.

A new avenue for communication and advocacy for the full realization of children's rights opened in July 2016, when the first meeting between the Parliamentary Caucus on Children's Rights and UNICEF Bangladesh was held. The Caucus acts as a bridge between Parliament and key external actors (i.e., children, adolescents and civil society), helps to ensure that Parliament responds effectively to the rights of children, and reviews all pertinent legislation and budgets. The first meeting between the Caucus and UNICEF offered the opportunity to discuss work modalities and highlight the support needed from members to move forward the delayed Education Act.

In 2016, a Supreme Court Committee to monitor the implementation of the Juvenile Act has been formed. In addition, video call facilities, as a mechanism to enhance access to justice, have been established at child development centres and District Social Service offices to help children under detention maintain links with their families.

### **A year after the launch of the SDGs, what are the key challenges and changes that are happening in the country (narrative, partnerships, resources)**

Bangladesh's strong commitment to reduce poverty, improve human development and reduce inequality has translated into effective actions that have enabled people across the country to improve their lives and their future prospects. Particularly, Bangladesh attained lower middle income status in 2015 and registered considerable achievements on several Millennium Development Goal targets.

As Bangladesh embarks on the journey to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and given that it aspires to gain upper middle income status by 2021, the nature of development support to the country is starting to shift. Greater support is required particularly in the areas of capacity development and technical assistance for policy and advocacy, management, and data and knowledge generation. Central to this imperative, is to prepare Bangladesh at national level—the government and non-government organizations, including civil society and private sector—to take on greater ownership and responsibility for its own development. Nevertheless, during this transition period, a range of equity focused, environmentally sustainable, accessible and gender friendly service delivery interventions are also necessary for the maintenance and attainment of further equitable results for all children in the country.



In 2016, the government of Bangladesh initiated the implementation of the 7th Five Year Plan 2016-20. The Plan aims at bringing greater and shared prosperity with a higher growth trajectory of 7.4 percent a year during the next 5 years. Importantly, the Plan acknowledges the barriers that are preventing children from reaching their full potential and considers the enhancement of systems to provide children and their families' access to HIV, gender and adolescent friendly services. Child marriage has also been highlighted as a priority issue for the government as it continues to achieve further economic and social development.

#### **How is UNICEF positioned to engage or address these?**

UNICEF Bangladesh Country Programme 2012-16 ended in December 2016. In January 2017, UNICEF Bangladesh started a new four-year programme cycle. The Bangladesh Country Programme 2017-20 follows a life cycle approach and its outcomes reflect the stages of the life cycle (0-5 years, 6-10 years, adolescence), highlighting the need for coordinated multi-sectoral programming to holistically address children's needs. Within this structure, UNICEF will continue to support the strengthening of Bangladesh's child protection system through advocacy and technical support to address issues of neglect, abuse, exploitation and all other forms of violence against children.

The programme will focus on supporting effective decentralized child-focused social and judicial services, reinforcing cooperation mechanisms and partnerships and promoting awareness and behaviour and norm change, in regular and humanitarian contexts. Furthermore, data collection and research will be undertaken on key child protection issues to assist the Government of Bangladesh to design effective strategies and interventions, as well as set measurable targets to both monitor and report on progresses in the realization of child rights in the country.

UNICEF Child Protection will ensure a strong inter-sectoral coordination with other sections to promote approaches coherent to a life-cycle programming. The Central Office in Dhaka will focus on programme design, management and technical oversight, with functional accountabilities for upstream policy work, direct implementation in urban slums and peri-urban activities in the capital. The seven divisional offices will support the planning, implementation and monitoring of interventions at sub-national and community levels. On the basis of lessons learned from the previous country programme, UNICEF Child Protection will also strengthen its engagement on emerging issues, including climate change and urban programming.

It is important to mention that with regard to the situation of Rohingyas in Bangladesh, for the next two years, in line with the UN strategy as well as with UNICEF engagement in Myanmar for this particular population, UNICEF Bangladesh is proposing to provide support to new arrivals, UMN in makeshift settlements and host communities as well as refugees in official camps, based on priority needs and in consideration to level of vulnerabilities, in a way as to strengthen community level resilience and link up with development activities. As living in camps is not an ideal solution in the long term, UNICEF will also advocate and work collaboratively with relevant stakeholders to find durable solutions.

The main programme counterpart is the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA), with durable partnerships with the Ministry of Social Welfare (MoSW), the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs (MoLJA), the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), the Office of the Registrar General, Birth and Death Registration, Bangladesh Supreme Court and City Corporations. Continued cooperation with UN agencies, international and national NGOs, research and training institutions as well as Universities will be key to a successful programme implementation.

### **What are specific challenges?**

A considerable number of laws and acts protect the rights of children in Bangladesh, however the status of children remains deeply rooted in social norms, attitudes and practices: individuals younger than age 18 are not always considered as children, which deeply affects the realisation of children's rights. Importantly, social perceptions and expectations of childhood continue to vary according to age, gender, social class, wealth, disability and other factors. For instance, child labour is perceived as an acceptable coping strategy for families facing daily challenges. Child marriage is justified by the willingness of parents to protect their daughter against sexual abuse or loss of honour due to sexual relations outside marriage, and to ensure their capacity to pay the dowry that increases with the age of their daughter. Corporal punishment is justified as an educative measure to ensure obedience and respect of children to adults.

At the same time, implementation of policy can be slow in Bangladesh as illustrated above with the example of the Rules of the Children Act 2013. At present, the implementation of the Act risks to remain limited because of (1) a lack of dissemination and understanding by concerned professionals; (2) delayed revision and approval of the Rules of the Act; and (3) unprepared systems, a need for strengthened political will, and resistance to undertake needed child protection system reforms. Meanwhile, various provisions in other existing legislation – in particular, the Child Marriage Restraint Act and the Penal Code to raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility – require further harmonisation with international standards. At sub-national level, a key challenge is to ensure adequate coverage of Community Based Child Protection Committees, which are helping to ensure that children at risk and in need of special protection are identified and referred to services at an early stage.

## Results in the Outcome Area

As mentioned above, in January 2017 UNICEF Bangladesh started a new four-year programme cycle. This Thematic Report covers results achieved in 2016 under the previous programme (2012-16). The assessment is organized according to the three outputs of the child protection programme during the 2012-16 Country Programme.

### **1. By 2016, capacity of relevant government bodies enhanced in the area of child protection Information Management System (CPIMS), monitoring of social services, monitoring and reporting on CRC, rules/regulations/policies, human resources development related to child protection**

Dissemination of the 2015 Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child is ongoing as required. In 2016, UNICEF supported MoWCA in its efforts to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the Committee's recommendations by line ministries particularly health, education, social welfare, law and justice, finance and local government.

Following the vetting process by MoLJA, the Child Marriage Restraint Act 2016, with the special provision of marriage under age 18,<sup>12</sup> has been approved by the Cabinet on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016. The bill has been passed to the Parliament for final decision. UNICEF has been continuously lobbying with Parliament members and CSOs for the removal of the special provision, which is not only contradicting international human rights obligations, but is also a setback to the reinforcement of best practices in changing social norms.

As in previous years, the implementation of the 2013 Children Act observed slow progress throughout 2016, partially as a result of the pending revision of the Rules of the Act by MoLJA and final adoption by the MoSW. Nevertheless, the process of scaling up the Child Protection Mechanism, which is an integral part of the Act, continued. By the end of 2016, district and upazila level Child Welfare Boards (CWBs) were established and functioning in all 20 UNDAF districts. The CWB is a multidisciplinary statutory authority formed by officials from different relevant departments and ministries for coordination and monitoring of child rights' protection in the country.

Following the Management of Social Service Training (MSST) of the first cohort of officials from the Department of Social Services and Department of Women Affairs in 2015, it became apparent that the training module and methodology needed revision to ensure alignment with the officials' professional requirements and duties under the Children Act 2013. Consequently, the training and incorporation of the MSST module in the curriculum of the National Social Service Academy has been postponed and further review of the course will take place in 2017.

In 2016, the Registrar General's Office for Birth and Death Registration was established under the Local Government Division. With UNICEF technical support, the Birth Registration Information System moved to a more advanced infrastructure fully owned by Government. By November 2016, more than 150 million births were registered (from 123 million in December 2014). However, timely birth registration continues to be a challenge. In 2016 the percentage of births registered within 45 days in UNDAF districts remained at 3 percent (1.9 percent in 2014).

The condition of children in care and justice institutions remains a concern. Children in these institutions are accommodated in overcrowded spaces with limited services and insufficient number of staff and care givers. Over 800 children, of whom 163 are girls, are in three Juvenile Detention Centres (known as KUK) and adult prisons. Over 9,000 children are in government run formal care facilities. The number of children in NGO run care facilities, religious institutions, boarding schools and

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<sup>12</sup> The Child Marriage Restraint Act encloses a "Special Provision" for any special cause or any special reason, with the consent from the parents/guardians and by taking permission from the Court, to not declare the marriage between a girl who completed the age of 16 and a man over 21 as early marriage.

small group homes remains unclear. In 2016, in addition to the provision of support to deploy social workers and counsellors to eight pilot care and justice institutions as well as to the training of staff therein on case management, UNICEF provided support to improve the infrastructure, in particular the sleeping and play areas as well as sanitation facilities in four of the eight pilot institutions.

In 2016, UNICEF continued to support the MoSW to operate the database for persons with disability. To this end, over 1,200 social services personnel in all upazilas throughout the country received training on the system. The system, which enables users to enter data on persons with disability through a web-based application, offers real time data for planning, programming and monitoring. To date, data of around 1.4 million persons with disabilities has been captured and recorded in the database. Social Workers under the Department of Social Services continuously update the information in the system based on identification of new cases of persons with disabilities.

Following UNICEF advocacy, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) accelerated the appointment of a child affairs police officer in all 600 police stations. UNICEF provided direct support to 42 police stations to follow child friendly procedures for children in contact or conflict with the law as per the 2013 Children Act. UNICEF continued to support a pilot diversion project in two districts, Jessore and Khulna. In 2016, a total of 147 children in conflict with the law were diverted from police stations, and 46 children were diverted by court order.

Through the anti-trafficking cell established in the MoHA and the Rescue, Recovery, Repatriation and Integration Task Force (RRRI) supported by UNICEF, 1,635 children (1,356 girls and 279 boys) from Bangladesh were identified as victims of trafficking in India in 2016. Of these, final nationality verification of 599 was made by the police's Special Branch. In 2016, 35 children survivors of trafficking were repatriated from India and handed over to family members in compliance with the RRRI Standard Operating Procedures developed with UNICEF's technical support in 2011. The fifth bilateral meeting with India in December 2016 identified challenges of the RRRI process. One of the major challenges was coordination between the RRRI Task Forces of India and Bangladesh, and effective management of information for rescue, recovery, repatriation and integration of victims of trafficking in the two countries. To address these challenges, both India and Bangladesh have agreed to increase mobilization efforts of relevant officials as well as NGOs engaged in RRRI efforts.

In 2016, the National Adolescent Cluster (a coalition body led by MoWCA, with membership from national NGOs working with adolescents), initiated the development of the National Adolescent Strategy and Costing Framework. To understand the needs of adolescents, under the leadership of MoWCA, divisional consultations with adolescent girls and boys, parents, and stakeholders were conducted to incorporate their suggestions and feedback in the strategy, ensuring their meaningful participation in the process. Further to the child development and Life Skills Based Education (LSBE) modules, "creating connections" modules were produced on reproductive health, sex and sexuality and gender rights to promote inter-generational dialogue on the issue among girls, mothers, boys and fathers in UNDAF districts.

Furthermore, in October 2016, UNICEF Bangladesh and the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Division signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work jointly on the Digital Security Act 2016 to help ensure 'Online Safety' for children. Going forward, there will be joint advocacy campaigns to generate mass awareness on 'Online Safety' for children in line with the Digital Security Act 2016 and its Rules. UNICEF will also provide technical support to develop child-sensitive content for the Digital Labs in government schools and work on plans to maximize the use of Digital Labs to enable vulnerable children, especially adolescents, to have access to information technology and provide technical training on ICT with a vision to support the Government's "Digital Bangladesh" initiative.

## Results Framework for Output 1.

No.	Indicators	Target (2016)	Status as of 31 December 2016
1	# of child laws/provisions/policies revised to make them compatible with international standards	7	Child Marriage Restraint Act has been approved by Cabinet. UNICEF is working on: Amendment of Children Act 2013 and revision of draft Rules of 2013 Children's Act; Adolescent Strategy; Minimal Age of Criminal Responsibility.
2	Number of Social Services Courses accredited by National Social Service Academy (NSSA)	2 (BSST and PSST)	2 Social Services Courses accredited by NSSA (BSST and PSST)
3	% of new-borns registered within 45 days of birth in UNDAF districts	5%	3% (Best performing district - Sunamganj: 5.27% and worst performing district – Gaibandha: 1.37%)
4	National strategy for adolescents' empowerment adopted by MoWCA	1	Preparation of Inception report of secondary data analysis, for Adolescent Strategy is under way.

## 2. By 2016, children and youth from vulnerable families including those affected by disaster and climate change have access to a minimum package of child sensitive social protection services to ensure continuum of care for prevention and response to abuse, exploitation and violence

UNICEF continued to support the implementation of the model of the minimum package<sup>13</sup> of child-sensitive social protection services that has reached around 7,000 children (66 percent girls, 44 percent boys) from targeted areas (slums, tea gardens, haors<sup>14</sup> and disaster prone areas) throughout 2016.

The Child Helpline 1098 (CHL 1098) – a toll-free and 24-hour service – was officially launched by the Prime Minister of Bangladesh in October 2016. The line is now fully functional all over the country. UNICEF supported the Department of Social Services (DSS) to establish a model of effective emergency response mechanism linked with the CHL 1098 in 10 upazillas and two city corporations, where concerned Child Welfare Boards nominated four to six members to form CHL mobile teams. Led by Upazila Social Services Officers (USSOs) or Probation Officers, the mobile team members are mobilized when a call is forwarded from the CHL centralized call centre to take action. To support decentralized-level operations of CHL, UNICEF facilitated strategic partnerships with international NGOs, such as Terre-das-Hommes, Plan International, and World Vision. UNICEF also provided orientation to 78 percent (494 of 637) of relevant DSS officials at the subnational level across the country to extend the decentralized level operation of CHL in terms of emergency response, rescue or referral to services as appropriate to a particular situation of a child in need of care and protection. Since the extension of the CHL project, 439 child marriages have been stopped across the country.

Between January and October 2016 conditional cash transfers were provided to 6,277 vulnerable children by MoWCA and MoSW. Case management and follow-up by social workers revealed that 98 percent of these children are continuing their education in formal or non-formal schools as well as

<sup>13</sup> Child Friendly Spaces, Drop in centres, Emergency Night Shelters, Child Helpline, Case management and referral, provision of Conditional Cash Transfers.

<sup>14</sup> A haor is a wetland ecosystem in the north eastern part of Bangladesh which physically is a bowl or saucer shaped shallow depression, also known as a back swamp.

that the income of these children's households increased on average by 5 percent and living standards have improved. Parents/care givers of CCT recipients are utilising the money for income generating activities efficiently as per their individual intervention plans prepared and agreed in consultation with the child, social worker and parent/caregiver. Social workers follow-up in a monthly basis on plan implementation and progress to ensure the money and activities are contributing to the reduction of child's vulnerabilities.

In 2016, 76 percent of unions in the 20 UNDAF districts have social workers. Nearly 85 percent of these social workers were trained on the process and tools available to them to effectively conduct case management, including identification of vulnerable children; assessment of situation; planning and coordination to facilitate access to appropriate services; and follow up. As part of the roll-out of the case management system to replace the manual system, 343 social workers received training on Online Case Management and the use of table PCs to input information in an online database. Out of these social workers, 28.7 percent are on-track with implementation of 100 percent of their case plans in UNDAF districts. A multi-disciplinary training package on the Children Act 2013 has been developed and rolled out in 20 UNDAF districts in 2016. A total of 840 professionals from different departments (i.e., Department of Social Services, Law and Justice Division, legal practitioners and Upazilla level Chief Executive Officers) have been trained.

The Child Protection emergency cluster, of which UNICEF is a co-lead, provided 2,326 children (1,530 girls and 796 boys) affected by Cyclone Roanu with protection, psychosocial and recreational support by establishing 22 temporary child-friendly spaces (CFS). Seventy prepositioned recreational kits enabled children to engage in recreational, psycho-social and group educational activities to bring a sense of normalcy in their life.

## Results Framework for Output 2

No.	Indicators	Target (2016)	Status as of 31 December 2016
1	% of emergency responses to natural disaster including child protection component	100%	100% (cyclone and floods in northern part)
2	% of unions in UNDAF districts with social workers and/or probation officers who are on-track with implementation of 100% of their cases plans	50%	76% of unions in UNDAF districts are covered by a trained social worker and of which 28.7% are with social workers who are on-track with implementation of 100% of their case plans
3	Proportion of caregivers living in targeted communities that have completed 13 session of parenting skills training that can state one benefit each of no child marriage, no corporal punishment and no child labour	40%	N/A (L3 monitoring survey to be conducted in 2017 first quarter)
4	Number and proportion of families with children registered in CCT that had received all CCT instalments that continue to keep their children in school and out of child marriage and child labour after their graduation from CCT programme up to 18 years old	90%	93% (8,304 children)

**3. By 2016, adolescents and youth from selected communities act as agents of social change to enhance and facilitate collective action within communities to reduce child labour, early marriage and violence while addressing gender equity**

Community Based Child Protection Committees (CBCPCs) are an integral part of the child protection system and are key for changing harmful social norms such as child marriage. With UNICEF support, in the 20 UNDAF district, 280 CBCPCs were formed in the targeted communities in 2016 (with 2,025 accumulated), and 48 percent of them received basic training on child development: “A Child Rights Perspective” to be active in child protection and completed a road map to eliminate harmful practices including child marriage, child labour and corporal punishment in their communities, identifying children at risks and referring them to social workers for services.

With UNICEF support, the National Adolescent Cluster members and zone-based sub-cluster members continued to coordinate activities through government, NGO and CSO actors in the area of adolescent programming. To encourage around 300,000 adolescents to endorse change within their communities, UNICEF Bangladesh piloted an online child rights monitoring and reporting system called U-Report, as part of the UNICEF Global initiative, A Billion Brains. Through this web-based reporting software young people responded to questions regarding issue related to social protection, health and child protection in their communities. Responses were analysed and results were shared during the High-Level Meeting on Child Rights in South Asia and Asia Pacific held in November 2016. The meeting was attended by Government counterparts from these countries to share and exchange good practices and reinforce renewed commitment to work together to uphold children rights in these countries through strengthened collaborations.

A total of 134,390 adolescent boys and girls of the 3,268,011 (i.e. the total number of girls and boys) aged 15-19 years in UNDAF districts, received training on life-skills and child development to enable them to act as agents of change in their community to eliminate harmful social norms like child marriage, corporal punishment, violence against children, etc. MoWCA has decided to expand coverage of the Empowerment of Adolescents Package through the establishment of 5,000 new Adolescents Clubs across Bangladesh from its revenue budget.

**Results Framework for Output 3**

No.	Indicators	Target (2016)	Status as of 31 December 2016
1	# (or %) of target communities that have publicly confirmed their commitment to end harmful practices	25% of wards	11.9%
2	Number and proportion of adolescent girls and boys aged 15-19 years in UNDAF districts completed life skills based education (LSBE) course	326,801 (10%)	(134,390) 4.1% of 3,268,011 (i.e. the total number of girls and boys) aged 15-19 years in UNDAF districts.
3	Number and proportion of post LSBE adolescent girls and boys aged 15-19 years in UNDAF districts engaged in one civic action (reduce child marriage, BR, etc.)	285,297 (8.7%)	(110,880) 3.4% of 3,268,011

## Financial Analysis

A total of USD 6,410,950.62 was planned for the Child Protection Programme in Bangladesh in 2016, while the funded amount was USD 5,911,929.21. The programme was largely dependent on Other Resources (60 percent of the total planned budget). The largest portion of the budget (around 54 percent) was planned for Output II: a model package of minimum child protection services for the most marginalized children in slums, tea gardens, stone crushing areas, haor areas (water surrounded), disaster prone areas, etc. Table 1 shows the budget planned and funded for each output by funding type and Table 2 provides information on specific Thematic Contributions by donor for the Child Programme in Bangladesh.

**Table 1: Planned for Outcome Area 6**

<b>Outcome Area 6: Child Protection Bangladesh Planned for the Country Programme 2016 (in US Dollar)</b>			
Intermediate Result	Funding Type	Planned Budget <sup>1</sup>	Funded
Institutional strengthening related to child protection	RR	791,264.26	671,692.51
	ORR	205,441.80	179,360.56
Social protection for children	RR	1,270,251.15	1,233,154.72
	ORR	2,160,549.84	1,862,687.54
Social change adolescents & youth	RR	521,976.13	579,250.31
	ORR	1,304,559.95	1,213,685.08
Sub-Total	RR	2,583,491.54	2,484,097.54
	ORR	3,670,551.59	3,255,733.18
	ORE	156,907.49	172,098.49
Total Budget 2016		6,410,950.62	5,911,929.21

<sup>1</sup> RR: Regular Resources, ORR: Other Resources - Regular

<sup>2</sup> Planned budget for ORR does not include estimated recovery cost.

**Table 2: Country-level thematic contributions received in 2016**

<b>Outcome Area 6: Child Protection Thematic Contributions Received for Outcome Area 6 by UNICEF Bangladesh in 2016 (In US Dollars)</b>			
Donors	Gran Number	Contribution Amount	Programmable Amount
Canadian UNICEF Committee	SC1499060064	10,000.00	9,524.00
Norwegian Committee for UNICEF	SC1499060070	117,693.00	112,090.63
<b>TOTAL Country Thematic Contributions</b>		<b>127,693.00</b>	<b>121,614.63</b>



## Financial Implementation

In 2016, UNICEF Bangladesh spent a total of USD 6,482,575 to achieve the planned results of its Child Protection Programme, of which around 20 percent was from Other Resources. The available resources were spent in all seven programme areas of the Strategic Plan with the larger proportion in three programme areas including i) addressing violence, exploitation and abuse (34 percent), ii) strengthening families and communities (38 percent) and iii) strengthening the child protection systems (34 percent). Tables 3 to 5 provide information on expenditures by Key-Results and Programme Areas as well as by Specific Intervention Code.

**Table 3: Expenditures in Outcome Area**

Outcome Area 6: Child Protection Bangladesh 2016 Expenditures in Outcome Area by Key-Results Areas (in US Dollars)				
Organizational Targets	Expenditure Amount			
	Other Resources - Emergency	Other Resources – Regular	Regular Resources	All Programme Accounts
06-01 Data and Child Protection	0	2	103,111	103,113
06-02 Child Protection systems	0	520,582	835,596	1,356,178
06-03 Violence, exploitation and abuse	0	1,030,268	1,188,906	2,219,174
06-04 Justice for children	0	180,621	11,591	192,212
06-05 Birth registration	0		66,668	66,668
06-06 Child Protection and emergencies	63,335	4,563	34,403	102,301
06-07 Child Protection # strengthen families and communities	183,231	1,295,363	964,335	2,442,929
<b>Total</b>	<b>246,566</b>	<b>3,031,399</b>	<b>3,204,610</b>	<b>6,482,575</b>

**Table 4: Thematic Expenses by programme area**

Outcome Area 6: Child Protection Bangladesh Thematic Expenses by Programme Area in 2016	
Organizational Targets	Thematic Expenses Other Resources-Regular
06-02 Child Protection systems	46,478
06-03 Violence, exploitation and abuse	82,008
06-04 Justice for children	-31,518
06-07 Child Protection # strengthen families and communities	21,896
<b>Total</b>	<b>118,862.83</b>

**Table 5: Expenses by Specific Intervention Codes****Outcome Area 6: Child Protection****Bangladesh****Expenses by Specific Intervention Codes in 2016 (in US Dollars)**

<b>Specific Intervention Codes</b>	<b>Expense (USD)</b>
06-01-02 Child Protection and violations # routine administrative data collection and analysis	70,845.01
06-02-01 Child Protection systems strengthening	1,078,007.1
06-03-02 Prevent and address emotional and physical violence (including corporal punishment)	616,186.19
06-03-05 Adolescent development # protection from violence	1,174,513
06-04-02 Diversion programmes and other alternatives to detention of children	188,583.75
06-05-01 Birth and civil registration	45,804.71
06-06-01 Prevent and address violence, exploitation and abuse of children in humanitarian action	91,506.91
06-07-02 Child Protection -Alternative Care	29,8642
06-07-06 Prevent and address child marriage	485,987.83
06-07-07 Child sensitive social protection to prevent, reduce vulnerability and/or exclusion	1,293,759.5
08-01-02 Annual review	6,406.6265
08-02-08 Monitoring # General	48,423.568
08-03-01 Cross-sectoral Communication for Development	198,981.58
08-03-02 Communication for Development at sub-national level	712.1176
08-03-03 C4D # training and curriculum development	193,237.14
08-04-02 Community based child care	44.1628
08-06-01 Building evaluation capacity in UNICEF and the UN system	51,931.746
08-09-06 Other # non-classifiable cross-sectoral activities	43,0626.23
08-09-07 Public Advocacy	39,843.983
08-09-08 Engagement through media and campaigns	24,181.261
08-09-10 Brand building and visibility	77,324.945
09-02-06 CO Advocacy and communication	415.77
10-07-02 Management and Operations support from RO	6,063.61
10-07-12 Management and Operations support at CO	51,442.89
10-07-13 ICT capacity in CO	5,297.17

4031 Child sensitive social protection to prevent/reduce vulnerability and/or exclusion	0.01
Unknown	3,806.76
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>6,482,575.6</b>

## Future Work Plan

As mentioned above, UNICEF Bangladesh started a new four-year programme cycle in January 2017. The Bangladesh Country Programme 2017-2020 follows a life cycle approach and its outcomes reflect the stages of the life cycle (0-5 years, 6-10 years, adolescence), highlighting the need for coordinated multi-sectoral programming to holistically address children's needs.

All the sectoral programmes have formulated a new strategy in line with the new country programme. Within this framework, the UNICEF Bangladesh Child Protection programme will continue to focus on strengthening the child protection system in Bangladesh through advocacy and technical support to enhance policy and legislative frameworks, provision of services and capacity building, and foster social changes bringing more integration into sectoral interventions in the office and within government mechanisms.

Key priorities in 2017 include:

- Continued advocacy for the establishment of a Department of Children under MoWCA and technical assistance to MoWCA in its effort to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child by line ministries particularly health, education, social welfare, law and justice, finance and local government.
- Technical support to development of a National Adolescent Strategy.
- Continued advocacy and technical assistance in the enactment of new Child Marriage Restraint Act in compliance with international standards in relation to the minimum age for marriage and other legal safeguards for girls.
- Expedited adoption and implementation of the Children Rules of the 2013 Children Act and technical assistance in the amendment of Children Act 2013, adoption of rules of Children Act 2013, development of a costed plan for implementation of the Children Act and its Rules.
- Multidisciplinary training on the 2013 Children Act for key professionals in UNDAF and other districts will be continued and further work will be conducted for incorporation of the Children Act into the existing pre-service and in-service curriculum of professional training institutions.
- Improvement of the online Child Protection Case Management System and integration of the system with Child Help Line 1098 database, while strengthening the capacity of probation officers and social workers through on-the-job training particularly through monthly case conferences.
- Awareness campaigns on Child Helpline while strengthening responses through network and capacity building of probation officers and upazila social services officers and NGO partners.
- Sustain continuum of care and services developed under the Child Protection System Modelling and continued MoRES to improve monitoring, quality insurance and evidence building, including on demonstrating results.
- Enhanced participation of adolescents in monitoring and reporting on child rights.
- Improving Birth Registration System, linking the system with Citizen Registration Vital Statistics and other systems relevant for protection of children.
- Awareness campaign to increase birth registration within 45 days of birth.

**Table 6: Planned budget for 2017**

**Outcome Area 6: Child Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse**  
**Bangladesh**  
**Planned Budget and Available Resources for 2017**

Major Output area	2017 Planned		2017 Funded	
	RR	OR	RR	OR
<b>Infants and young children and their mothers</b>	761,766	299,452	761,766	169,452
<b>Boys and girls of primary-school age</b>	782,400	774,000	782,400	565,000
<b>Adolescent boys and girls</b>	1,936,861	1,609,473	1,936,861	1,109,473
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,755,027.00</b>	<b>2,750,001.00</b>	<b>3,755,027.00</b>	<b>1,843,925</b>

<sup>1</sup> Planned and Funded budget for ORR (*and ORE, if applicable*) excludes recovery cost. RR plan is based on total RR approved for the Country Programme duration.

<sup>2</sup> Other Resources shortfall represents ORR funding required for the achievements of results in 2017.

## Expression of Thanks

UNICEF Bangladesh would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the valuable contributions from donors which are critically important to implement UNICEF programmes on the ground, to create a safe and enabling environment for the children of Bangladesh so that they are able to realise their full potentials and enjoy an active and productive life with dignity.

We are grateful to our donors and partners for their continued and generous support without which we could not achieve the desired results for the children. Particularly, flexible support in the form of thematic funds gives unique advantage to support the much needed work, like advocacy for legal reforms and other relevant initiatives, along with the provision of basic services like education and immediate protection.

We sincerely thank government agencies, National Committees, NGOs and other UN agencies for extending their support and collaboration to work in partnership for the adequate and optimal implementation of our programmes.

## Annex: Human Interest Story

### Brief Case Study of Mahfuza

By Sonia Parveen, Social Worker

February, 2017: Mahfuza a 12-year-old girl, lives with her grandmother in a slum in the capital city of Dhaka. She is now studying in standard grade IV and regularly attending classes which was not the case one year back.

In 2015, Mahfuza's mother left her and her father. After a few days, her father married again and Mahfuza went to live with her grandmother who had hardly any income to feed the girl three meals a day. Supporting Mahfuza's education at that time, was also beyond the grandmother's financial capacity. Mahfuza dropped out from school in early 2015 when she was a student of class III.

A Social Worker from the project Enabling Environment for Child Rights (EECR), under the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and supported by UNICEF, learnt about Mahfuza's situation. As she was out of school and was also very vulnerable at that time, the Social Worker registered Mahfuza under the EECR project's case management system which is a child protection tool for diagnosis of children's vulnerabilities. The tool also supports the development and follow up of an intervention plan to contribute to the reduction of the identified vulnerabilities.

Following the care plan developed for Mahfuza, she joined the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme. Through this programme, Mahfuza's grandmother received tk. 12,000 as a first instalment in July, 2015 and began a small business of local cakes in a street close to their home. This was the first step to a sustainable business. At present, Mahfuza's grandmother earns tk. 7,000 to tk. 8,000 per month which allows her to send Mahfuza to school. Mahfuza is now happy as she is going to school regularly and sitting her school exams properly.



She is very good at painting and enjoys this activity during her leisure time. Her aim in life is to become a teacher and contribute to a better society. Mahfuza hopes that someday, she will be able to stand by the poor and destitute people and see her country develop further.

NB: Children who received CCT support have to fulfil three conditions as following: continuation of study, no involvement with economic work that affect child's physical, mental spiritual development, and no marriage before age 18. Social Workers follow up with beneficiaries periodically to monitor the status after receiving the CCT.

## Annex: Donor Feedback Form

Title of Report/Project: Child Protection Thematic Report

UNICEF Office: Bangladesh

Donor Partner:

Date:

**UNICEF is working to improve the quality of our reports and would highly appreciate your feedback. Kindly answer the questions below for the above-mentioned report. Thank you!**

**Please return the completed form back to UNICEF by email to:**

Name: Sheema Sen Gupta, Deputy Representative UNICEF Bangladesh

Email: ssengupta@unicef.org

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**SCORING: 5 indicates "highest level of satisfaction" while  
0 indicates "complete dissatisfaction"**

1. To what extent did the narrative content of the report conform to your reporting expectations?  
(For example, the overall analysis and identification of challenges and solutions)

5	4	3	2	1	0

If you have not been fully satisfied, could you please tell us what we missed or what we could do better next time?

2. To what extent did the fund utilization part of the report meet your reporting expectations?

5	4	3	2	1	0

If you have not been fully satisfied, could you please tell us what we missed or what we could do better next time?

**SCORING:**      5 indicates “highest level of satisfaction” while  
0 indicates “complete dissatisfaction”

3. To what extent does the report meet your expectations in regard to the analysis provided, including identification of difficulties and shortcomings as well as remedies to these?

5	4	3	2	1	0

If you have not been fully satisfied, could you please tell us what we could do better next time?

4. To what extent does the report meet your expectations with regard to reporting on results?

5	4	3	2	1	0

If you have not been fully satisfied, could you please tell us what we missed or what we could do better next time?

5. Please provide us with your suggestions on how this report could be improved to meet your expectations.

6. Are there any other comments that you would like to share with us?

**Thank you for filling this form!**