

Introduction

This report contains information on the initiatives undertaken by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for the implementation of the Brasilia Consensus and is being submitted for the 47th meeting of the Executive Board of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In 2011, UNICEF, along with UN Habitat and UN Women, launched the Safe Cities programme in San Jose, Costa Rica, Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. UNICEF has been part of the campaign of the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's UNiTE to End Violence against Women at regional and national level, focusing on sexual exploitation and trafficking, and education, among others.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the UN gender thematic groups have been a very important mechanism for UNICEF to advance work on gender equality, and more particularly in favour of women and girls. The Regional Office has produced tools aimed at guiding country offices to work on the links between gender, human rights-based approach and age cycle.

Information on UNICEF activities towards the implementation of the Brasilia consensus is presented below.

1. Attain greater economic autonomy and equality in the workplace

In **Belize**, UNICEF, in collaboration with the UN Country Team and the Population Council, is working in the development of an initiative to reduce the social and economic vulnerability of adolescent girls.

In **Guyana**, UNICEF is supporting national efforts to encourage girls in secondary schools to benefit from non-traditional skills training in the technical and vocational programmes of both regular schools and the New Opportunity Corps (Juvenile Justice Reform Centre). This will be used as a basis for policy and systemic changes in the education system to help find a balance that caters for the strategic and practical orientation of boys and girls with regard to gender stereotypes.

In **Honduras**, UNICEF supported national efforts to reach gender balance in water and sanitation community committees. Most of the committees have achieved 50/50 gender balance.

2. Enhance the citizenship of girls and women

UNICEF ground its support work in both the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the CEDAW Convention. These Conventions are mutually and strongly reinforcing in the realization of UNICEF's mandate for the rights of children and constitute the basis for its strategies aimed at empowering girls and women.

In **Bolivia**, UNICEF is supporting community banks for the empowerment of indigenous women. UNICEF is also supporting efforts to promote political participation of the Guaraní population in municipal governments in close coordination with the Assembly of the Guaraní People (APG in Spanish). This particular effort focused on the empowerment of the Guaraní women. UNICEF is providing assistance to women leaders' of the APG, training them in defending women and children rights among peers and local authorities.

In **Chile**, UNICEF carried out a study "The Voice of Children: Perceptions of Discrimination." The study gave young persons a voice on the right to live free from discrimination. The results will be a tool for advocacy and policy dialogue. It showed common prejudices among children and adolescents related to: the school system, immigrants, family types, indigenous communities, gender equality, persons with disabilities, HIV and AIDS, socio-economic status and sexual orientation.

In **Peru**, UNICEF, in cooperation with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), began the process of elaborating a strategy for gender mainstreaming in education. In addition to enhancing the capabilities of the administrative data systems to collect gender disaggregated data, the strategy includes review of education materials to identify and correct gender bias, training of teachers on gender mainstreaming in education delivery, review and modification of education policies, where necessary, and work with the community to identify girls and boys who have dropped out of school because of gender discrimination and to find ways to reintegrate them.

3. Participation of girls and adolescent girls in decision-making processes

Promoting leadership among adolescent girls is one of the five strategic priorities defined in the United Nations Joint Statement "Accelerating Efforts to Advance the Rights of Adolescent Girls". In this statement, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (Now UN Women) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) call on Member States to ensure that adolescent girls gain essential economic and social skills and that they are supported by mentors and resources to participate in community life.

In **Brazil**, UNICEF supported the participation of adolescent boys and girls in the public debate regarding the social and environmental impact of mega projects and infrastructures, including those planned for the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympic Games. With UNICEF's support, adolescent networks, involving indigenous and afro descent adolescents, have engaged in upholding their rights and voicing concerns to ensure an environmentally-friendly legacy. Over 1000 adolescents (60 per cent girls), including indigenous and afro descents from the semiarid and Amazon regions, took part in capacity building activities, participatory diagnoses and community forums that led to the drafting of 2,000 municipal action plans. In addition, UNICEF carried out a national situation analysis focusing on adolescents, which included a strong assessment of the dynamics surrounding gender equality in adolescence and adolescent participation.

In **El Salvador**, UNICEF is supporting initiatives to mainstream gender, rights and life skills for adolescents within the framework of the inclusive education approach in order to strengthen the capacities of adolescents to participate in the community.

In **Guatemala**, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education to promote intercultural bilingual education, which has helped increase school enrollment of girls. Through providing assistance to the intercultural bilingual schools, *Nueva Escuela Bilingüe Intercultural (NEUBI)*, more space was provided for girls' participation, which led to increased completion of primary education. Additionally, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education for the development of educational materials with a gender perspective and for the elaboration of a study on factors associated with school performance, which provided quantitative data regarding girls' performance and role in school, reflecting a decrease in the gap between girls and boys.

In **Mexico**, over 1 million adolescents aged 15 to 17 in upper high school across the country discussed gender equality and gender-based violence issues through a special domain developed within the Construye-T adolescent development programme, which is supported by the Ministry of Education, UNICEF, UNDP and UNESCO.

In **Panama**, UNICEF has supported efforts of the National Coordination of Indigenous Women in Panama (CONAMUIP) to empower indigenous adolescents to advocate for the full realization of their human rights, including the rights to gender equality and freedom from violence.

4. Address all forms of violence against girls and adolescent girls

UNICEF is a member of the Secretary General's UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign and collaborates in the UN Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women. UNICEF plays an advocacy role in drawing international attention to gender-based violence in humanitarian contexts and it is a lead actor in ensuring that international commitments - including UN Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1882, 1888 and 1889 on women, peace and security and sexual violence in conflict - are brought into operation in humanitarian contexts. UNICEF also provides support for the implementation of the UN Secretary-General's Bulletin on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN staff and related personnel, and honours the humanitarian community's obligations to provide support for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse.

In **Chile**, in coordination with the Ministry of Health, UNICEF supported the elaboration of a Clinical Guide to provide care for children and adolescents younger than 15 years victims of sexual abuse, most of them girls. The objective of this guide is to protect victims of abuse and install a policy of first response, attention, and care in health services across the country. UNICEF supported the UN Secretary General's UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign and worked in partnership with the UN Interagency Group on Gender, the private sector through the Collahuasi Mining Company and the Regional Office of the National Service for Women to build the capacities of journalists from local media on the prevention of gender-based violence.

In **Colombia**, UNICEF promoted the active participation of thousands of girls and adolescents in local processes aimed at having protective environment against violence, abuse and exploitation in the context of the armed conflict.

In **Costa Rica**, UNICEF generated knowledge through the MICS survey on domestic gender based violence, with emphasis on populations at risk of social exclusion. The data will be analyzed in 2012. UNICEF also addressed the issue of aptitudes and practices in child rearing through a baseline study that illustrates the practice of physical punishment. According to the study, 64.5 per cent of parents and caregivers stated that physical punishment is sometimes or always the best way to educate children.

In the **Eastern Caribbean**, UNICEF, in collaboration with child protection departments, launched campaigns targeting mothers to protect their children from abuse and men to address notions of masculinity in relation to child abuse.

In **El Salvador**, UNICEF is supporting the Landivar University to train specialists on research technics on abuse and commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking of women and girls and boys.

In **Nicaragua**, UNICEF supported the design of a strategy to address violence against children and gender based violence, which includes actions in spaces such as community maternal houses, schools, and communities. Empowerment and capacity building on leadership of policewomen of the *Comisaria de la Mujer* in two districts in Managua was an initial activity to start working with National Police to implement its model on gender based violence.

5. Facilitate girl's access to new technologies and promote egalitarian, democratic and non-discriminatory practices by the media

In **Brazil**, UNICEF supported training to adolescents on the use of new media and communication technologies, and conflict resolution skills, among others. In addition, seven Communication Centres were set up in the most vulnerable areas of the semiarid region to be used by adolescents in order to develop specific life skills.

In **Colombia**, UNICEF provided assistance to Youth Development Centres in poor areas to train adolescents in recycling art, multimedia and football.

In **Cuba**, UNICEF supported the government in expanding participation of young people in cultural activities aimed at strengthening Communication for development (C4D)-related concepts.

In **El Salvador**, UNICEF provided technical and financial support to the project "Preventing the Use of Fire Arms". The project aims to be a space where children and adolescents, including girls, freely expressed themselves, and together they planned a communication strategy that becomes a national mass media campaign. In partnership with the Secretaria Nacional de Juventud (CONJUVE) the main messages and results were systemized and presented to authorities.

6. Promotion of sexual and reproductive health

In **Brazil**, UNICEF developed the “Guide on the Rights of Pregnant Women and their Babies” to empower families, communities and members of the Rights Guarantee System to claim their rights for quality health care services. The Guide was incorporated into the national strategy of the Cegonha Network and was launched by UNICEF and the Ministry of Health. UNICEF and its partners in Brazil’s Legal Amazon and semi-arid regions as well as in low-income communities in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, used the guide to train 2,460 multipliers in 475 municipalities. In the Amazon region, the guide is being used by trained professionals to target 700,000 women in childbearing age and 350,000 children (0 to 4 years old)

To stimulate dialogue about the role of adult and adolescent fathers as active parents with key national institutions addressing early childhood and family care in **Chile**, UNICEF hosted a colloquium to discuss findings of IMAGES: The International Men and Gender Equality Survey.

In **Colombia**, UNICEF and UNFPA supported the Ministry of Social Protection to design the national post-degree on the right to sexual and reproductive health for personnel of the health sector working in programmes for adolescents. The course is an innovation at national level, in both its content and its methodology.

In **Dominican Republic**, UNICEF and the UN Country Team supported the Dominican Republic Government in its efforts to reduce teenage pregnancy through the design of a Strategic Plan for Teenage Pregnancy Prevention.

In **Ecuador**, UNICEF in collaboration with UNFPA and PAHO, supported two studies on the social conditions and determining factors for pregnancy among adolescents under 15 years of age and their impact on the bio-psycho-social aspects of adolescents and girls; and on knowledge about the problem of subsequent pregnancies among adolescents, identifying their characteristics and specificities.

In **Guyana**, UNICEF supported national efforts to increase access of pregnant women and nursing mothers to services for prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV and for care and treatment and to improve safe motherhood services and good nutrition practices by pregnant women and nursing mothers.

7. Activities in favour of the rural woman and girl

In **Guatemala**, UNICEF provided assistance for the elaboration of a study to understand the behaviors, attitudes and practices that promote gender-based violence in the home and at the community level, in the three departments of the country with the largest indigenous populations (Huehuetenango, Totonicapán and Quiché). This document will form the basis for the training of mentors who will replicate the findings presented in the study at the community level in order to prevent gender violence. In addition, UNICEF, in collaboration with sister UN agencies, designed a Joint Program to advance the rights of Indigenous adolescent girls in the departments of Totonicapán and Huehuetenango

In **Mexico**, UNICEF along with its UN sister agencies designed a joint programme to prevent gender-based violence in indigenous communities in the states of Chiapas and Oaxaca. UNICEF has focused on building the capacity of local actors to develop and implement inter-institutional protocols in response to gender-based violence and other forms of violence against children and adolescents.

In **Panama**, UNICEF is facilitating training and participation of women's groups and groups of adolescents in local processes in the traditional territories of the Ngäbe-Buglé and the Emberá-Wounaan. For example, the Joint UN Programme on water and sanitation involved training and mobilizing the women and adolescents of the Ngäbe-Buglé communities where rural aqueducts were constructed. The point was to ensure on-going maintenance but also to encourage full community participation in future municipal planning.

In **Paraguay**, UNICEF facilitated knowledge sharing among rural and indigenous women leaders in order to reinforce their awareness of their rights and their capacity for political participation.