

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA REGIONAL ANALYSIS REPORT 2010



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

A
ACSD: Accelerated Child Survival and Development
ADAP: Adolescent Development and Participation
AFS: Adolescent Friendly Services
AIDS: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
B
C
C4D: Communications for Development
CCA : Common Country Assessment
CCC: Core Commitments for Children in Emergencies
CCSF: Common Country Strategic Framework
CDC : US Centres for Disease Control
CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEE/CIS : Central and Eastern Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States
CFS: Child Friendly School CO: Country Office
CPAP: Country Programme Action Plan
CPD: Country Programme Document
CPMP: Country Programme Management Plan
CRC: Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO: Civil Society Organization
D
DHR: Division of Human Resources
DRR: Disaster Risk Reduction
E
EMOPS: Office of Emergency Programmes
EMRO: Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean
EMT: Emergency Management Team

EPI: Expanded Programme of Immunization
EPRP: Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan
EWEA: Early Warning Early Action
F
FA: Focus Area
FGM/C: Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting
G
GAO: Gulf Area Office
GAVI : Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization
GBV: Gender-Based Violence
GCC: Gulf Cooperation Council
GFATM: Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
H
HACT: Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers
HIC: High Income Country
HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HQ: Headquarters
HRBA: Human Rights Based Approach
I
IASC: Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICT: Information and Communications Technologies
IDP: Internally Displaced Person
IDU: Injecting Drug User
ILO: International Labour Organization
IPSAS: International Public Sector Accounting Standards
IR: Intermediate Result
ISDR: International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
IYCF: Infant and Young Child Feeding
J
K
KAPB: Knowledge Attitudes Practices and Behaviours

KM: Knowledge Management
L
M
MARA: Most at Risk Adolescents
MDG: Millennium Development Goal
M&E: Monitoring and Evaluation
MENA: Middle East and North Africa
MENARO: UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office
MIC : Middle Income Country
MICS: Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MMR: Maternal Mortality Ratio
MSM: Men Who Have Sex With Men
MTR: Mid Term Review
MTSP: Mid Term Strategic Programme
N
NETI: New and Emerging Talent Initiative
NGO: Non-Government Organization
O
ODA: Official Development Aid
OIP: Office Improvement Plan
oPt: Occupied Palestinian Territories
P
PBR : Programme Budget Review
PCR: Programme Component Result
PLHIV: People Living With Human Immunodeficiency Virus
PMTCT: Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission
PSG: Peer Support Group
R
RAR: Regional Analysis Report
RBM: Results Based Management
RC: Resident Coordinator
RMT: Regional Management Team
RO: Regional Office
ROMP: Regional Office Management Plan
ROMT: Regional Office Management Team

RRRM: Regional Rapid Response Mechanism
R/UNDG: Regional United Nations Development Group
S
SIDA: Swedish International Development Agency
SitAn: Situation Analysis
SMR : Strategic Moment of Reflection
SOP: Standard Operating Procedure
SSC: South-South Cooperation
T
U
U5MR: Under-5 Mortality Rate
UAE: United Arab Emirates
UNAIDS: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCT : United Nations Country Team
UNDAF: United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDSS: United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNESCO : United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund
UNGASS: United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS
UNICEF: United Nations Children’s Fund
UNODC: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNRWA: United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees
UN Women: United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
V
VAC: Violence Against Children
W
WASH: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO: World Health Organization
Y

1. Executive Summary

2010 was a year of formidable opportunities and challenges in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region that continue to reverberate into early 2011. Wide-ranging socioeconomic inequities and poor governance, marked by corruption and largely absent political representation, are being exacerbated by record-high food prices, severe water scarcity, and extremely volatile political and security contexts, in addition to the protracted humanitarian crises in the Region (Occupied Palestinian Territory, Iraq, Sudan, Yemen, Tindouf in Algeria). All these deeply affect the poorest and most vulnerable children and women. Critically, young people – especially young women – have been politically, economically and socially disenfranchised, growing up in largely opportunity-scarce settings. Moreover, the MENA Region continues to have the highest rates of youth inactivity in the world, especially among young women, who are neither studying nor employed. The starkest manifestation of these combustive factors was seen in late 2010, starting in Tunisia and then spreading to Egypt, Bahrain, Libya, Yemen, Algeria, Jordan, Iran and Sudan in early 2011. The MENA Region remains the focus of the attention and concern of the world – and the imperative to ensure growth with equity, strengthened social policies to reduce social and economic disparities and the need for wider political, civic participation and representation, is more urgent than ever before.

UNICEF's Organizational re-focus on equity could not have been more opportune and timely. While UNICEF programmatic focus on reducing disparities towards the fulfilment of child rights has been the longstanding leitmotif of Country Programmes in this Region – especially given the large number of High and Middle Income Countries with an unfinished Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)/child rights agenda – MENARO has availed fully of this opportunity to sharpen the equity programmatic focus. A Regional health equity study started in 2009 was finalized, while the evidence base on inequities was strengthened through dissemination of MDG country profiles and design of equity profiles, as well as the launch of a major mapping of social protection schemes in the Region. MENARO also supported the completion of the Equity Tracker Tool to establish a baseline for gauging the extent to which pro-equity programming is already mainstreamed in the Region.

MENARO was also instrumental in the Regional United Nations Development Group (R/UNDG) decision to identify young people as one of three priority areas for the United Nations in the Region. Together with UNFPA, UNICEF co-led and co-chaired the development of the Regional Strategic Action Plan on Young People 2010-2011, under the leadership of the R/UNDG. The Action Plan was disseminated to all UNCTs in the Region to guide United Nations Regional and country-level action on young people.

The rollout of global Child Friendly School (CFS) training in 2010 has significantly boosted implementation of the CFS framework as the centrepiece of quality education interventions across MENA. Additional countries adopted CFS in their national standards and plans (Egypt, Oman, Morocco, Tunisia), as well as scaled up; with regard to the latter, a notable example is found in Syria, which witnessed increased coverage from 16 schools in 2007 to 600 in 2010.

The Sudan Compact, chaired by UNICEF Deputy Executive Director, Hilde Johnson, was launched at the MENA Regional Management Team meeting in October 2010 to optimize corporate support to UNICEF's readiness in advance of the referendum in South Sudan in January 2011. Encompassing several Headquarters Divisions and Regional Offices (MENAR, ESAR, WCAR), as well as the Sudan Country Office (North and South) and supported by a joint Secretariat of MENARO and EMOPS/HQ, it has ensured timely, well-coordinated and priority Organizational support to UNICEF Sudan in planning and preparations leading to the South Sudan Referendum and post-referendum period.

MENARO also has remained at the forefront of excellence in Knowledge Management, especially in the quality of evaluations, as recognized in a global assessment commissioned by the UNICEF Evaluation Office and completed in May 2010. A Communications for Development (C4D) Knowledge Attitudes and Practices (KAP) survey tool developed by MENARO has been adopted globally and translated into French and Spanish. In addition, two key Regional Strategies were finalized and launched in 2010, on gender equality and on disaster risk reduction (DRR), and have operationalized these two Organizational priorities; the latter also reflected current thinking on climate change.

The quality of the RO's oversight function was well reflected in the fact that all five CO audits in the Region in 2010 were rated overall as either "generally satisfactory" or "partly satisfactory". Moreover, findings from MENARO's 2010 Client Satisfaction Survey indicated that CO were highly satisfied with the RO's performance on technical support, with ICT, Operations, emergencies, capacity building and security rated the highest.

In terms of significant challenges, heavy pressures and demands were placed on the Office in achieving some of its 2010 work plan targets owing to the large number of Organizational initiatives launched in 2010, leading to competing priorities. In a Region with a large number of small Offices and Middle Income Countries, this has often meant the RO stepping in to fill human resource capacity gaps in those Offices. Protracted and new emergencies, as well as reduced humanitarian space and conflicting programmatic approaches to humanitarian strategic planning, also have required strong RO support. Despite additional capacity acquired by the RO with the appointment of Adolescent and Social Policy Advisors, changes in senior leadership (Regional Director's departure in July 2010 and the arrival of an RD a.i. in October), prolonged vacancies in key RO posts or severely limited capacity in some sectors have been among additional constraining factors. Programmatically, the prevalence of poor governance in the Region and a resulting paucity of civil society organizations, combined with entrenched social norms that hold women and minorities in low social regard, have challenged the achievement of greater results in such sensitive areas as child protection, juvenile justice and HIV/AIDS. High and low income countries have introduced new vaccines from their own national budgets and through GAVI support, respectively. However, due to high costs, middle income countries are unable to introduce them. To address this disparity, WHO and UNICEF have jointly launched the pooled vaccine procurement initiative to reach children in middle income countries, which represent 30 per cent of child population in the Region.

Lastly, MENARO has continued to both nurture longstanding strategic partnerships (the League of Arab States, the African Union, Regional UNDG / Regional Coordination Mechanism, ESCWA, WHO, UNESCO, OCHA, UNWRA, the American University in Beirut, Harvard University, CDC-Atlanta, GAVI, the World Bank, SIDA, Save the Children, various regional and international media outlets), as well as to foster new ones, especially with the private sector. A new partnership was developed with Royal Jordanian Airlines, whereby travellers can donate more than 100,000 miles to UNICEF. This partnership offers an important advocacy opportunity, by broadcasting on-flight UNICEF Public Service Announcements on child rights and by publishing articles on UNICEF activities in the in-flight magazine. Advocacy work through a number of Regional and global Goodwill Ambassadors (GWA) on wide-ranging issues affecting children and women has been another key area of collaborative partnership. Among the highlights on the work of GWAs was that of Martin Bell for Humanitarian Emergencies, who witnessed first-hand the impact of conflict on children when he visited northern Yemen in August 2010. Mr. Bell's visit was a critical opportunity to demonstrate the efforts being made by the government and development partners in addressing the basic needs of the children especially in nutrition, education and protection in Yemen. Two new regional GWAs were appointed in 2010; Hanane Al-Fadili, a Moroccan actress, and Madjid Bougherra, an Algerian football player.

2. Trends and Progress in the Region

1. In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region, the dominance of young people in the overall population of 406 million is at the heart of both ongoing, history-making political transformation as well as the Region's capacity to adapt to social change and economic strains. With 38 per cent of the population under the age of 18 and 53 per cent younger than 25, the people of the Region have high expectations for tangible improvements in their daily lives. Yet at the same time, such improvements remain elusive, particularly for children, youth and women, with persistent vulnerabilities not only owing to conflict, but also to poverty and malnutrition, acute lack of employment opportunities, major deficits in good governance, unfulfilled human rights, and recurrent natural disasters.

2. Wide-ranging socioeconomic inequities, disparities, both among and within countries, and poor governance, marked by corruption and largely absent political representation, are being exacerbated by record-high food prices, severe water scarcity, and extremely volatile political and security contexts, in addition to the protracted humanitarian crises in the Region. Critically, young people – especially young women – have been politically, economically and socially disenfranchised, growing up in largely opportunity-scarce settings. As a result, the MENA Region continues to have the highest rates of youth inactivity in the world, especially among young women, who are neither studying nor employed.

3. In early 2011, all these contextual factors came to a boil in Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain, Libya, Yemen, Iran, Algeria, Jordan, and Sudan, propelled by ground-breaking public disenchantment – often led by young people – with such chronic socioeconomic inequities and perceived good governance deficits, and with direct impacts on political stability and social cohesion. In addition, most governments in MENA are undertaking fiscal readjustment, and the high cost of subsidies maintained to mitigate soaring food prices and mounting social tension will not be sustainable for long. Thus, the MENA Region remains the focus of the attention and the concerns of the world – and the imperative to ensure growth with equity, strengthened social policies to reduce social and economic disparities, and the need for wider political, civic participation and representation is more urgent than ever before.

4. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) remain an unfinished agenda in the Region. Progress has been slow in reducing extreme poverty and malnutrition (MDG1), with 14 per cent of children under age 5 years remaining underweight. Accelerated action will be required in countries where underweight prevalence is very high, such as Yemen (46%), Djibouti (33%) and Sudan (31%), or is increasing, as in Egypt. Related food insecurity affects tens of thousands of households in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) and other countries as well. It also is important to note that child malnutrition is still significant even in High Income Countries (HICs) such as Oman (18%), United Arab Emirates (UAE) (14%) and Saudi Arabia (14%).

5. Although the MENA Region is on track to achieve universal primary education (MDG2), quality education needs to be addressed even in high-performing countries. Regional education trends provide evidence of deteriorating literacy and numeracy skills, increasing dropout rates, and shortages of trained teachers. Rates of net enrolment and attendance are still far from the target in Djibouti (66%), Lebanon (83%), OPT (73%), Oman (74%), Sudan (54%) and Yemen (70%). About 6.7 million children, nearly two-thirds of them girls, remain out of school.

6. Gender parity in primary education (MDG3) has been achieved in 12 out of the 20 countries of the Region and is above 0.9 elsewhere, except in Yemen (0.85). In many countries, the gender parity index in secondary education exceeds 1. Women's participation in political life has improved in some countries (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, OPT, Sudan, Tunisia), which adopted a quota system as a gender equality measure. Nonetheless, the Region continues to be characterized by significant gender inequalities and low social status of girls and women. Gender equality targets

largely continue to fall well short with regard to women's social, economic and political participation. Despite some improvements in 2010, most MENA countries retain their reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), particularly with regard to provisions ensuring non-discrimination based on sex in the realization of women's rights; promoting gender equality in both private and public spheres, as well as women's political, social and economic empowerment; and eliminating all discriminatory customs and practices against girls and women.

7. The Under-5 Mortality Rate (U5MR) (MDG4) for the Region has fallen sharply, from 77 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 43 in 2008, but overall, the Region is not on track for achieving the MDG target. Wide inter- and intra-country disparities exist. Further progress will not be possible without additional efforts in neonatal mortality reduction in high-prevalence countries such as Djibouti, Sudan and Yemen. Several MENA countries still face numerous challenges that could hinder reductions in maternal mortality (MDG5). An accelerated reduction of the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) is imperative in Djibouti, Sudan and Yemen, where rates remain unacceptably high (up to 650 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births).

8. With regard to MDG6, average HIV prevalence rates are generally low but increasing, and risks and vulnerability are high. In 2009, an estimated 75,000 people in the Region became infected with HIV, compared to 36,000 in 2001. Most reported cases involve unprotected sexual contact among young adults, with increasing evidence of concentrated epidemics among Injecting Drug Users (IDUs) and Men Who Have Sex with Men (MSM). Significant bottlenecks continue to affect access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services, compounded by a persistent environment of stigma and discrimination. Malaria remains endemic in only three countries (Djibouti, Sudan, Yemen) of the Region, but still exacts a toll among vulnerable populations, particularly children.

9. Progress on environmental sustainability (MDG7) – and particularly on water and sanitation coverage (MDG7.c) – appears stalled; currently 86 per cent of households in the Region have access to safe drinking water, compared to 85 per cent in 1990. For access to improved sanitation, slightly better trends are observed, with coverage rising from 71 per cent in 1990 to 80 per cent currently. Disparities between rural and urban areas remain very large. Six countries in the Region are not on track to achieve this MDG (Algeria, Djibouti, Iraq, OPT, Sudan, Yemen), and coverage in urban areas has declined in Iraq, OPT, Sudan and Yemen since the 1990s. Moreover, the unsustainable, demand-driven extraction of freshwater, as well as climate change, are contributing to the growing water scarcity crisis, and a major threat to realization of the MDGs, with children among those most vulnerable to its impacts. In particular, the potential exhaustion of freshwater threatens life (with decreased food production and health-related impacts and diseases), livelihoods (male migration from rural communities places a disproportionate burden on women, with a risk of increased child labour), and stability in most MENA countries.

10. With respect to partnerships for development (MDG8), Official Development Aid (ODA) to the MENA Region has been declining since the 1990s. However, aid provided by Arab development funds and organizations to Arab recipients has been steadily increasing, led by Saudi Arabia. This offers great potential in the region for certain forms of global partnerships and South-South Cooperation (see also Section 7).

11. Other strategic areas such as child protection, covered by the broader Millennium Declaration, also bear examination. Positive developments include the issuance of the Marrakech Declaration by the League of Arab States (December 2010), which calls for better data collection and analysis, as well as enactment of legislation protecting children from violence, exploitation and abuse and putting an end to child labour, female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), early marriage and trafficking; the signing by Iran (September 2010) of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which seeks to ban the use of children in armed conflicts; and the

launching in Sudan of a Child Protection Unit and criminalization of the recruitment of children under the Armed Forces Act.

12. Yet overall awareness of child rights still appears very low across the Region, including among policymakers and children themselves. Violations of girls' and boys' rights remain common. An overwhelming 89 per cent of children are reportedly subjected to physical or psychological punishment; child labour and child trafficking are still widespread; and of particular concern is the high prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV). This includes FGM/C, which affects 96 per cent of women and girls in Egypt, 93 per cent in Djibouti, 89 per cent in Sudan and 73 per cent in northern Iraq (Kurdistan); early marriage, with 32 per cent of girls in Yemen and 34 per cent in Sudan marrying before age of 18; killings in the name of "honour;" and domestic violence of all types. A strong need exists to improve juvenile justice systems, given the low age of criminal responsibility in MENA and the fact that four of the five countries that still have laws allowing the execution of juvenile offenders belong to the Region (Iran, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Yemen). In 2010, Iran was the only country in the world that actually executed a person for a crime committed before the age of 18. In addition, a "silent tragedy" exists of children without parental care, comprising about 6 million orphans in the Region.

13. Turning to emergencies, the final configuration of the political landscape in countries such as Egypt and Tunisia has moved to a very nascent stage, but continued instability across the Region or wider civil unrest could put the lives of children and women at risk. Meanwhile, continued significant constraints to humanitarian access exist across the Region (Iraq, OPT, Sudan, Tindouf in Algeria, Yemen), some at the behest of national authorities and/or difficulties in interactions with non-State entities controlling parts of affected areas, and others due to insecurity from continued ethnic tensions, as well as indiscriminate or targeted attacks.

14. UNICEF, in partnership with UNDP, UNFPA and WFP, undertook a survey in 13 countries of the Region (Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, OPT, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Yemen) on perceptions and attitudes toward the United Nations, which confirmed a public perception of a pro-Western agenda on the part of United Nations. On this basis, the risk and threat environment will continue to require significant levels of engagement and oversight on the part of the Regional Office (RO) in support of affected Country Offices (COs), and in addressing alternative business modalities as possible solutions to maximize resources.

15. Overall, UNICEF MENARO has made equity its overarching priority to support a sharper focus of programmes, as well as to ensure that socioeconomic trends are constantly monitored among Offices and governments and innovative approaches are developed to reach the most disadvantaged. This remains particularly challenging amid the varied political and governance contexts of the Region, ranging from conflict and transitional societies to high-resource, high-capacity Middle Income Countries (MICs) with weak democratic and social cohesion. Considering the number of high-income countries (HICs) and upper-middle income countries (MICs) contexts in MENA, the reflection on defining transformation modalities for UNICEF's cooperation was a priority at RO level, including in a process of lesson-learning from innovative country experiences.

16. Based on the context of a youth "bulge" and high youth unemployment, the RO has continued to work closely with programme countries. In so doing, it has endeavoured both to ensure effective upstream social policy advice in support of adequate Office and government capacities that position the United Nations / UNICEF as a leading actor on social protection, and to reduce disparities to safeguard against sudden economic shocks in particular. Its evidence-based interventions have continued to support CO programmes toward accelerating MDG achievements with equity by the 2015 global deadline. Critically, it has further deepened and strengthened public and private alliances with those with a like-minded agenda.

17. All this has required the RO to promote a transformed business plan and a coherent equity-based Office approach, particularly in HICs and upper MICs, building on a continuous learning

process. Thus, piloting transformed engagement models is a priority, employing a flexible approach adapted to country-specific situations – in essence, “learning by doing.” In this regard, strengthening inter-Regional cross-fertilization of experience has been a critical strategy to improve the quality of the transformation process.

18. Ensuring that the health, education, protection and participation rights of children and adolescents, particularly adolescent girls, are met by the countries in the Region has been given additional strong priority. Specific efforts have been geared toward keeping adolescent girls free from violence and promoting their participation and leadership, in concert with the Joint Statement by ILO, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women and WHO.¹ The RO has advocated for a focus on policy and macro actions – data collection, research, public policies, budgets and legislation – required to facilitate a supportive environment for adolescents’ rights and development, in particular targeting the most vulnerable. The RO also provided programme guidance to COs by identifying and sharing examples of promising initiatives and models implemented at scale that directly support the realization of adolescents’ rights, and by offering technical guidance to ensure that the promotion of equality between women and men, girls and boys, was integrated in all UNICEF Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) areas.

19. The effects of risks and consequences of humanitarian situations on adolescents, and a focus on the youngest cohort of adolescents (ages 10-14), formed crosscutting themes that infused programme responses. Emphasis was placed on strengthening the capacity of COs, United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) and national counterparts within the context of the broader Regional focus on young people, which UNICEF co-leads with UNFPA within the R/UNDG framework. In addition, opportunities were explored for advancing the rights of young people that are afforded by new technologies, social media and approaches to problem solving, and for enabling greater attention to empower them to participate in decisions that affect them at all levels.

20. Equally critically, special attention has been given to the urgent need to address programme countries’ vulnerability to climate change and development of adaptation capacity across sectors; indeed, Member States themselves, in the MTSP Mid-Term Review (MTR), proposed climate change as an area for greater consideration by UNICEF. MENARO has already fully embraced such need, and is the first UNICEF Region to have developed a two-year Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) strategy, endorsed by its Regional Management Team (RMT) members and piloted in both **Jordan** and Lebanon. In addition, the RO also used the equity focus to address gaps in legislation in line with the CRC and its Optional Protocols as well as CEDAW, in areas such as justice for children and women, child trafficking, and sexual and gender-based violence, including in conflict settings.

21. Considerable deepening occurred in UN Coherence in the Region in 2010. Well-coordinated Common Country Assessment (CCA)/UNDAF processes also were instrumental in deepening inter-Agency coordination. Six countries of the region were undergoing CCA/UNDAF preparations in 2010-2011 (Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen). Joint programming in the Region offer a wide array of thematic focus, ranging from FGM in Djibouti to HIV/AIDS in the UAE, and from conflict prevention and peace-building in Lebanon to GBV in Morocco. Syria conducts Joint Programmes on up-scaling the MDGs and on child labour. In addition, UNICEF led UNDAF thematic groups on basic services in a number of UNCTs, including in Egypt and Iraq. MENARO is promoting inter-Agency ICT governance bodies to better use ICT capacities within a country and to underscore a more coherent approach to common issues.

¹ Accelerating Efforts to Advance the Rights of Adolescent Girls, Joint UN Statement, CSW 2010.

3. Analysis of Programme Strategies and Results in the Region

3.1 Overview of Programme Strategies

22. Following UNICEF's renewed global emphasis on equity, the RO built on a process of reflection with COs and among the RMT to develop an overall strategy for enhancing the equity approach in MENA. At RO level, this included strengthening the evidence base on inequities through design of equity profiles, as well as capacity building initiatives and piloting of further engagement in strategic areas such as social protection. This has been and will continue be a priority area at Regional level, to support the active involvement of several COs on child-friendly social protection (Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Oman, Tunisia) as well as to consolidate an RO-wide approach including all programming sectors. The RO also supported completion of the Equity Tracker Tool toward establishing a baseline of information on the extent to which pro-equity planning already is mainstreamed in CO interventions. To strengthen equity-focused approaches for reaching the MDGs, the RO coordinated the strategic allocation of US\$2.5 million for COs; several countries have begun to implement pro-equity activities.

23. Capacity development of national counterparts at country level, and of staff at country and regional levels, has been a cornerstone strategy throughout all programmes. For counterparts, this has been particularly applied in MICs, where human and financial resources are available but state-of-the-art technical knowledge still represents a major constraint. In several countries, the capacity development strategy has been recalibrated so that international technical assistance, rather than funds for training, is provided to counterparts at all levels. For example, in Djibouti, UNICEF has placed nutritional focal points to work with community-based and district-level health staff. Experience sharing from other countries has proven crucial. Capacity development for national counterparts for improved service delivery, including social protection and child-friendly budgeting, has been highlighted in countries such as Sudan. Other approaches have focused on strengthening national policy frameworks (Oman, OPT, Tunisia); development of capacities in monitoring and reporting to the CRC and CEDAW, as well as templates to assist journalists in ethical reporting on children (GAO); working with non-Government and civil society organizations (NGOs/CSOs) (Jordan, OPT); and putting in place tracking and referral systems, especially in for child protection (Jordan, OPT).

24. In 2010, MENARO also undertook the major task of developing the capacity of all COs and the RO in the Revised Programme Structure (RPS) toward global rollout in January 2011. It likewise has been instrumental in strengthening capacities in Results Based Management (RBM) and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) principles, through two major workshops; in Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) methodologies; and in cluster coordination and leadership on education, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and child protection in emergencies. Notably, with technical support from the UNICEF Headquarter (HQ) Statistics and Monitoring Section, the capacity to estimate progress in reducing child mortality has been strengthened for 64 participants from 20 MENA countries, United Nations Agencies, the League of Arab States and Cairo University. This initiative was selected globally as a best practice and presented at the November 2010 United Nations Knowledge Fair at UNSCC in Turin, Italy.

25. Meanwhile, sustained evidence-based advocacy has proven effective in prioritizing investment in programming for adolescents and young people, as reflected in draft United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) and Country Programme Documents (CPDs) (Morocco, Oman, Syria, Yemen). MENARO opened a new advocacy channel with media, focusing on edutainment and infotainment, while major advocacy work has been conducted with script and TV writers in Egypt, Syria and Tunisia to include child rights messages in popular TV programmes. Strategic partnerships have been brought to bear with influential regional and international TV

channels (France 24, Deutsche Welle, MBC, Al-Arabiya) to broadcast UNICEF public service announcements for free. Other initiatives were taken for UNICEF in MENA to have a strong presence on social platforms by creating Facebook, Twitter and YouTube pages to better outreach with youth and promote messages for child rights. These initiatives also aim at engaging the public in discussions around the challenges faced by children of the Region and their rights to education and participation.

26. Significant progress was made in positioning Communication for Development (C4D) in CO work, including recognition of C4D as a core programme component (Morocco) and acknowledgment of it as a key programmatic strategy to achieve results (**Algeria**); the featuring of C4D in the UNDAF and National Development Plan (Iraq); use of the results of a UNICEF-supported Knowledge Attitudes Practices and Behaviours (KAPB) study as a reference for both the National Strategic Plan and the 2010 United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS (UNGASS) (Iran); and seizing a favourable political environment to promote child rights through pro-child municipal campaigns and local development plans (Lebanon). Building partnerships with the private sector for C4D campaigns and interventions represents a major breakthrough that the RO will need to build upon. These include reaching 13 million people through partnership with the Highways Morocco company for a breastfeeding campaign in Morocco; a partnership with Mobinil, a leading Egyptian mobile operator, to finance WASH activities, and use of the SMS network in Iran to promote timely birth registration; and working with Royal Jordanian Airlines to raise awareness on child rights throughout the Region and worldwide. Initiatives such as a study on social determinants of child labour and drug abuse among adolescents are ensuring development of targeted communications plans and promoting an integrated equity approach in C4D interventions. Several COs also have intensified efforts to strengthen cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms, which will help to maximize results of community-based interventions. Other key strategic partnerships, including with ANASY, the Abu Dhabi documentary awards, for a special award on child rights documentaries, have provided tangible benefits for the UNICEF agenda.

27. Turning to Knowledge Management (KM), a select number of countries are forerunners in KM in the Region. Egypt, Tunisia and Djibouti have developed KM strategy documents, while active KM groups in the Egypt and Iraq COs support national analysis of such issues as multi-dimensional child poverty and equity concerns affecting children. The launch of the RO gender equality intranet page has provided an important platform for knowledge sharing and will be further developed and promoted in 2011. MENA HIV and Adolescent Development and Participation (ADAP) specialists and others have been trained to innovate in the use of new technologies and social media to create dynamic methodologies for working with adolescents as partners in generating and managing knowledge. This initiative, the first of its kind on adolescents and KM, is expected to serve as a model for other Regions and HQ. Among a number of KM products finalized by MENARO, an important C4D survey toolkit is worth noting, with templates designed for COs planning to collect household and service delivery data on behavioural and institutional changes on key child rights issues. This has been adopted globally and shared with other UNICEF ROs; already, the West and Central Africa Regional Office (WCARO) and Americas and the Caribbean Regional Office (TACRO) have pledged to translate the toolkit into French and Spanish in 2011.

28. Meanwhile, UNICEF's global re-focus on equity also has underlined the centrality of the Human Rights Based Approach to Programming (HRBA) to work in the Region. In addition to HRBA being an integral part of UNDAF rollout processes in which MENARO has played an instrumental role (see also Part VII), the vibrancy of HRBA principles has been witnessed in programming, planning, evaluation and reporting documents from COs across the Region, including Situation Analyses

(SitAns) (Egypt, Tunisia, UAE, Bahrain); strategic studies, especially on child poverty and disparities (Djibouti, Egypt, Morocco Yemen); and advocacy work (Iraq).

29. MENARO also has reinforced its focus on gender-responsive programming and mainstreaming. Important initiatives in this regard were the introduction in 2010 of the Regional Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality and Empowerment of Girls and Women, and the work by a regional research institution to assess the capacity of nine COs in the Region (Algeria, Iran, Iraq, Morocco, Oman, OPT, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia) on gender-sensitive programming, with subsequent training of staff. Gender experts have been embedded in Yemen and OPT to strengthen the Gender Cluster approach in humanitarian crisis settings and gender mainstreaming in development activities, while at **RO** level, human resource capacity has increased with the creation of a new post of Gender Rights and Equality Officer and of a gender expert database. At the same time, the roll-out of new MENA Country Programme designs starting preparations in 2010 increasingly focused on other crosscutting issues such as climate change vulnerability, adaptation, environmental sustainability and DRR (Egypt, Iraq, Morocco, OPT, Syria, Yemen).

30. The Evaluation function benefited from new UNICEF Guidance Notes on prioritization and management response to evaluations. Assessments of the RO's technical clearance system, which supports CO evaluations, revealed very high satisfaction levels among managers of evaluations. The first trend data from the Regional evaluation scorecard system are expected in 2011. Critically, however, a key Regional evaluability analysis of UNICEF engagement with MICs pointed to a need to establish an adequate evaluation architecture to support accountability and learning in the three countries covered (Algeria, Jordan, Tunisia). At the same time, a number of countries undertook significant efforts to strengthen the Evaluation function, with UNICEF Egypt helping to establish a university research and evaluation diploma. In a particularly innovative initiative, Morocco created a Morocco Evaluation Association, which sponsored an Evaluation Week attended by more than 120 in-country participants. This has been featured as a good practice on the UNICEF intranet.

3.2 Overview of Each MTSP Focus Area

3.2.1 Young Child Survival and Development (FA1)

Major Initiatives

- In 2010 eight MENA countries (Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, Yemen) enhanced their efforts under the Accelerated Child Survival and Development Initiative to attain planned targets of securing basic health and nutrition services for highly disadvantaged children and women in underserved districts. An RMT review in October 2010 indicated marked progress in implementation of this initiative across all targeted countries.
- An initiative to reach the un-immunized in Yemen and North Sudan was launched, with HQ support, to access vulnerable groups in hard-to-reach and remote districts.
- Wide dissemination of studies on equity and on food security and vulnerability has contributed to broader understanding of these issues across the Region.

Key Results

KRA 1:

- The Region sustained its polio-free status, with more focus on strengthened community immunity, especially in countries with weak routine immunization.

- Broader immunization coverage was sustained at more than 85 per cent regionally, although countries such as Iraq, Yemen, Djibouti and Sudan remain below the regional average.
- Measles elimination was further strengthened in all countries.

KRA2:

- An Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) strategy adopted in most countries, although effectiveness of implementation still varies considerably.
- The cold chain system was strengthened in Yemen, Morocco and North Sudan.
- A third consecutive year of Nutrition Cluster coordination training enriched the Regional roster for potential candidates for nutrition professionals.

KRA3

- UNICEF contributed to a two-percentage-point increase in access to improved water supply in North Sudan; in South Sudan, more than 300,000 people became new users of improved water points.
- 650,000 vulnerable people in Iraq benefited from water projects, while sanitation projects reached more than 95,000 people.
- Iraq, Sudan and Djibouti made significant progress in WASH in Schools coverage and standards, while Lebanon started a new WASH in Schools programme with a dedicated (seconded) specialist.
- Improved hygiene promotion capacities among WASH partners in Syria, OPT, North and South Sudan, Djibouti and Iraq resulted in development and implementation of country action plans.

KRA4

- Nearly 2 million disaster-affected people were supported with water supply and/or sanitation facilities in the region, 90 per cent of them in Sudan.
- Support of a dedicated WASH Cluster team resulted in cluster coordination improvements with partners in OPT, North and South Sudan, and Yemen.

Major Partnerships

- The US Centres for Disease Control (CDC), WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (EMRO), World Bank, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) and academia, as the main contributing partners, played a vital role in pushing forward Regional health and nutrition objectives

Common Constraints and Factors

- Ongoing emergencies in Sudan, Yemen, Iraq and OPT remained a considerable challenge, with the lack of sufficient human resources in Yemen and Sudan resulting in major impacts on programme implementation. Lack of health and nutrition as a programme component in the office structure, as in Lebanon, also poses an important hurdle.
- Availability of funds for MIC countries is a key constraint, given that these countries have unfinished health agendas but no funds for interventions; a clear example of this is the challenge of introducing new vaccines. Low breastfeeding rates merit special attention.
- The combination of unsustainable water management and groundwater extraction, successive years of drought, insufficient governance effectiveness, growing urbanization without appropriate sustainable planning, and political tensions with regard to water sources is accelerating growing water scarcity across the Region.

Validated Good Practices and Lessons Learned

- Good practices and key lessons learned with regard to the WASH capacity building component, which has been designed and implemented with national and local governments in Djibouti, Iraq, OPT, Sudan and Yemen, is being captured and will be shared with all COs.

Value Added of RO

- The RO was particularly useful in mobilizing financial resources for COs for polio, Accelerated Child Survival and Development (ACSD) and WASH training, as well as in providing technical guidance on maternal health, the Expanded Programme of Immunization (EPI) and WASH. The RO also contributed effectively to quality control through active oversight functions in all areas of Young Child Survival and Development.

3.2.2 Basic Education and Gender Equality (FA2)

Major Initiatives

- The rollout of global Child Friendly School (CFS) training in 2010 has significantly boosted implementation of the CFS framework as the centrepiece of quality education interventions. New countries adopted CFS in their national standards and plans (Tunisia, Oman, Morocco), as well as scaled up (Syria, with increased coverage from 16 schools in 2007 to 600 in 2010).
- A major capacity development effort was undertaken in Education in Emergencies preparedness and response, with training jointly organized for Ministry of Education officials from nine countries, by UNICEF, UNESCO and Save the Children, and additional training for 62 Education Cluster Coordinators.
- A two-year Regional DRR strategy, endorsed by the RMT, focused on a minimal set of expectations for COs around construction standards and mapping of risks for school premises, as well as on water scarcity in the Region. MENARO has launched a review of best practices around these issues from Iran and Algeria, while RO efforts toward donor engagement have resulted in funding of two country-focused initiatives on DRR in education.
- Advocacy by UNICEF in Algeria and Tunisia has led the Ministry of Education in the two countries to engage more in economic analysis of the educational system; for example, an appraisal was conducted of the Tunisian Ministry's experience with results-based budgeting. This initiative corresponds to the upstream work expected from UNICEF in Middle Income Countries.

Key Results

KRA1

- Nine countries have been actively involved in Early Childhood Development and preschool education, including defining standards for child readiness for school (Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, OPT, Yemen) and training for teachers, supervisors and parents. In **Iraq**, UNICEF assisted the revision of the preschool curriculum.
- A number of preschool education service delivery models – often school-based – are being piloted in Egypt, Morocco, Iraq, OPT and Djibouti. Yemen is piloting a child-to-child approach to increase the successful transition to primary school.

KRA2

- School enrolment across the Region has increased to 87 per cent overall. In Sudan alone, 340,000 additional children have been enrolled, facilitated by UNICEF support to rehabilitation and construction of classrooms and provision of learning materials to more than 2.5 million students.

- Girls' education has seen the finalization of updated National Plans of Action in Egypt and Sudan. Inclusive education for children with disabilities has been prioritized in six countries (Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Morocco, Oman, Tunisia), with five countries (Algeria, Iran, Lebanon, OPT, Tunisia) working to develop standards and monitoring mechanisms such as student profile databases that promote enrolment and reduce dropout of most-at-risk students.
- Advocacy and communications strategies have been effectively used for Girls' Education Day and national Education For All Week (Djibouti); educational access among refugee children (Jordan, Syria); mobilization of community support, particularly for girls' education (Iraq); and promotion of public education that enrolls children from underserved groups (Lebanon).

KRA3

- In the context of progress on the CFS model, several countries, including Egypt and Yemen, are focusing on school improvement plans to ensure participatory management. School Committees and Mothers' Councils set up in 97 pilot schools in Yemen were instrumental in boosting girls' enrolment and retention. Morocco's innovative and participatory school-based management experience, the "school of respect," has been documented by the RO and published in the UNICEF MENA Learning Series.
- Capitalizing on an RO collaborative initiative with the League of Arab States, five countries, including Algeria and Jordan, are working on defining teacher performance standards. Curriculum reform, design of teaching materials and training of education personnel, along with Accelerated Learning Programmes and Life Skills Based Education have been prioritized in Djibouti, Iraq, OPT, Sudan and Tunisia.

KRA4

- Education in Emergencies remains prominent in the region (see also Major Initiatives), with response strategies including the provision of psycho-social support (Jordan, Iraq) and remedial education (Lebanon, OPT, Syria), as well as the offer of IT-based alternative learning opportunities (Iraq, Jordan, OPT, Sudan). An education in emergencies training package has been translated/adapted to Arabic.

Major Partnerships

- At RO level, important partnerships have been developed with the League of Arab States on teacher performance standards and professional development, and with the Save the Children Regional Office and UNESCO on capacity development in Education in Emergencies; and for DRR, with the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), the Regional Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and the Governments of the Netherlands and Switzerland. At CO level, traditional partnerships with Ministries of Education, other Ministries and the media are being complemented by a new emphasis on working with UNCTs as a whole, NGOs and the private sector; for example, in Tunisia British Airways is funding two inclusive education pilot projects.

Common Constraints

- A complex working environment in countries with protracted crises (Yemen, Iraq, Sudan, OPT), changes in national counterparts (Iran, Tunisia), or vacancies in key UNICEF education staff positions represent key constraints to further progress.
- The sensitivity of some studies, such as those on out-of-school children, also gives rise to institutional, coordination and ownership constraints (Sudan, Yemen, Djibouti).

Validated Good Practices and Lessons Learned

- In the “school of respect” experience in Morocco, education stakeholders were given the “voice” they rarely have (see also KRA3). The quality grid embodies many of the underlying principles of the Child Friendly School model.
- An Evaluation of CFS in OPT revealed that while CFS concepts can be highly effective in improving educational quality and reducing negative impacts of a crisis, they may not significantly improve learning outcomes. This requires further analysis.

Value Added by RO

- MENARO played a critical role in three key areas in 2010: (1) capacity development, through organization of a number of training sessions on CFS and Education in Emergencies; (2) facilitation of experience sharing, particularly at the launch of the Learning Series report on Morocco’s “school of respect” at a Regional workshop with 12 countries represented; and (3) provision of technical assistance during key planning milestones (MTR, CPD). In addition, rollout of the regional Guiding Framework for Performance Standards for Arab Teachers led to its adoption by numerous countries.

3.2.3 HIV/AIDS and Children (FA3)

Major Initiatives

- MENARO advocated for and led a region-wide push for HIV prevention and outreach for most-at-risk adolescents (MARA). This included investments in building specific capacities of UNICEF’s country-based staff as well as of several key partners (NGOs, academic institutions, other resource persons). Direct support was given to conducting country assessments and developing country-led initiatives addressing HIV- and AIDS-related needs of MARA.
- The regional initiative to support scaling up of Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT), launched in 2009, also was significantly furthered, while the addressing of HIV/AIDS data gaps was prioritized.

Key Results

KRA1

- Noticeable progress in PMTCT was recorded in several countries. This included declaring a national commitment to elimination of MTCT in Djibouti; systematic integration of PMTCT services in antenatal clinics (Oman, Saudi Arabia); and scaling up of policies, programmes and protocols (Lebanon, Morocco, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia). In this context, Sudan endorsed a new PMTCT strategy that expanded HIV services to rural areas, where most vulnerable women live; in North Sudan, some 70 per cent of pregnant women (108,500 women) attending antenatal care sites accessed PMTCT services, with 28 per cent accepting HIV testing. Of those who tested HIV positive, 98 per cent started treatment.
- In Egypt, expansion of care and support for people living with HIV (PLHIV) was achieved through scaling up of important home-based care programmes.

KRA2

- In Sudan, 67 per cent of children identified as affected by HIV/AIDS (480 children) accessed basic social protection services, while in Egypt, major investment was made in building the capacity for the country’s first PLHIV-led NGO. In Lebanon, an assessment study of the current situation and needs of children affected by AIDS and their families was initiated with World Bank and UNICEF support. In Syria, the first draft of the country’s legislation to promote the rights of PLHIV was produced.

KRA3

- HIV prevention efforts in Egypt have concentrated on reaching young people, particularly most-at-risk children living on the street or in public care institutions. A total of 1,014 children aged 6-15 (417 girls, 597 boys) were equipped with skills and knowledge to protect themselves from HIV, while 87 peer mentors (43 females, 44 males) also have enhanced capacities. Young people were targeted with HIV prevention messages through the media on the innovative “Useful Talk” website, viewed by 4,000 young people each month.
- In Iran, a new partnership model was adopted with Government for the Adolescent Friendly Services (AFS) programme and interventions, while 2010 data revealed that 18,158 young people (8,646 females, 9,512 males) have benefited from centre-based HIV activities; a total of 3,523 of these are considered MARA. The number of peer educators has reached 12,505 (7,332 females, 5,173 males), including 4,553 MARA.
- In North Sudan, the expansion of HIV prevention services reached more than 6.6 million people including 255,000 and 286,700 in- and out-of-school youth respectively, while in South Sudan, about 295,231 youth accessed correct information on HIV/AIDS through 519 trained peer educators.
- In UAE, a significant initiative addressing HIV/AIDS knowledge, attitudes and behaviour among young people was launched in partnership with the Ministry of Health, universities, media and others, while in Oman, interventions included sensitization and capacity building of religious leaders on HIV/AIDS and young people.
- A total of 97 networking youth forums, including 1,380 peer educators trained in 2010, have provided a rare opportunity for adolescents in Yemen to exchange experiences on HIV and life skills. Through these forums, 110,000 young people have been reached with key messages.
- Other progress included training of a total of 900 Ministry of Health and NGO staff members, teachers and school counsellors in Syria; a KAPB study and an evaluation of 17 Voluntary Counselling and Testing Centres in Lebanon; and a KAPB study of young people in OPT, as well as capacity building of teachers and peer educators.

Major Partnerships

- Continuous coordination with UNAIDS, WHO and other United Nations Agencies was maintained, with strategic new partnerships developed with World Bank, Columbia University and the League of Arab States.

Common Constraints and Factors

- A need exists to develop more comprehensive HIV prevention programmes by ensuring linkages to quality services and more targeted outreach toward the marginalized and most-at-risk.
- Maintaining and developing support remains a challenge amid the global economic crisis and expected decreases in resources from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM).
- Further investments are needed in young people’s meaningful and effective participation in the HIV/AIDS response across all MENA countries.

Validated Good Practices and Lessons Learned

- The capacity building workshop focusing on HIV prevention and outreach for MARA, conducted by MENARO, has been identified as a good practice; its model is expected to be replicated by other UNICEF ROs.
- Support on HIV/AIDS policy development and programming in several COs has provided additional best practices, including the AFS model and partnership with

religious leaders in Iran; outreach to most-at-risk children and young people and scaling up of home-based care in Egypt; policy development and expansion of Voluntary Counselling and Testing services in Tunisia; and scaling up of PMTCT services in Sudan and Djibouti.

Value Added by RO

- The RO strongly advocated for maintaining the HIV/AIDS needs of children and young people on the MENA Regional agenda and with national AIDS programmes, media and other partners. It focused on technical and financial support as well as Regional capacity building, networking and sharing of best practices and relevant data. Lessons learned mainly related to re-prioritizing country support needs based on the latest epidemiological evidence, which translated into a shifting focus to the growing epidemics among IDUs and MSM noted in Section 2.

3.2.4 Child Protection from Violence, Exploitation and Abuse (FA4)

Major Initiatives

- In view of the region's volatility, MENARO, supported by HQ, embarked on long-term capacity development aimed at ensuring that UNICEF staff and counterparts deliver against the Core Commitments for Children (CCCs) in emergencies.
- The RO commissioned a Regional comparative study in five countries (Egypt, Tunisia, Lebanon, Yemen, and Northern Iraq (Kurdistan)) of the most decentralized echelons of child protection systems. These include an examination of policy and legal frameworks, services, coordination mechanisms, information and data management systems, and agency mandates and responsibilities. The 18-month study will assess capacities to make social services or justice for children available to vulnerable children and their families, ultimately informing plans for scaling up interventions.

Key Results

KRA1

- With household surveys being one of the most effective approaches to data collection, MENARO has assisted Government counterparts in carrying out MICS4/national surveys in three countries (Algeria, Iraq, OPT). This version of MICS contains a module on child protection with 15 indicators designed to generate data on poorly documented issues such as all forms of violence. The RO has further advocated for inclusion of this module in three additional surveys beginning fieldwork in early 2011.
- Several COs have strengthened sector-specific information systems, including training of officials on standard juvenile justice indicators (Algeria, Djibouti, Tunisia). Knowledge gaps with regard to particular issues are being addressed through in-depth studies such as one on support to social and family reintegration of children in conflict with the law (Tunisia).

KRA2

- In partnership with governments and civil society (Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, OPT, Sudan, Yemen), UNICEF is contributing to the review of juvenile justice and child welfare legislation to ensure alignment with CRC and CEDAW. For example, the new Child Act in Sudan recognizes as a child any person younger than age 18 years, while the age of criminal responsibility has been raised from 7 to 12 years.

KRA3

- In a Region where conflict is prevalent, UNICEF's role with respect to protecting children in emergencies is critical. Guided by the CCCs, concerned countries have been instrumental in establishing and maintaining national and sub-national

coordination mechanisms in Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, OPT, Sudan and Yemen. In Yemen, Sudan, OPT, Lebanon and Iraq, UNICEF and its partners also have actively raised awareness on landmines and small weapons through the media, in schools and at community level.

KRA4

- Numerous countries have contributed to capacity development initiatives on restorative justice among the judiciary (Algeria, Iran, Iraq, OPT, Sudan, Yemen), the police (Morocco, OPT, Sudan) and social workers (Iran, Jordan, Sudan, Yemen). Direct legal aid to victims, witnesses and alleged offenders is provided in Yemen and Iraq, and juveniles benefit from alternative measures to detention in Lebanon. UNICEF advocated for the appointment of a judge for children in Djibouti and supported special courts in Yemen and Sudan.

KRA5

- The Lebanon and Iraq COs are involved in child protection mapping exercises aimed at identifying gaps, available resources and synergies. Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, OPT, Sudan and Syria are strengthening sub-national mechanisms with regard to child victims of abuse, violence and neglect. Behaviour change initiatives have been undertaken on child marriage (Yemen), Violence Against Children (VAC) (Iran, Iraq, Jordan, OPT, Sudan, Syria), FGM/C (Djibouti, Egypt, Sudan, Yemen) and child recruitment (Yemen).

Major Partnerships

- Key partners include the League of Arab States, with regard to the fight against all forms of violence against children; UNODC, on training in the use of global juvenile justice indicators (Algeria, Djibouti, Morocco, Tunisia); UNRWA; and the Office for Foreign Aid of the UAE.

Common Constraints and Factors

- Several countries continue to implement programmes that focus on single issues (street children, orphans) rather than shifting toward a more systemic approach encompassing proactive child and family welfare services.
- Social protection continues to be underfunded.
- Some partners, particularly in conflicts or emergencies, may themselves be responsible for violations of child protection rights, making effective engagement problematic.
- Better coordination among sections within UNICEF COs remains critical to address many child protection issues (child marriage, child labour, child justice).
- More strategic, realistic approaches to child protection KM are needed, prioritizing options for long-term information management systems.

Validated Good Practices and Lessons Learned

- In OPT, an important inter-Agency/Columbia University evaluation of psycho-social programming on children in emergencies adopted globally developed monitoring and reporting tools to the national context to measure child well-being – and found that some groups, e.g., adolescent girls, were being underserved. Now, these evaluation tools will be further applied across the child protection sector as a whole to provide a solid evidence base to analyze additional trends and impacts. Yemen recorded a similar experience with “nationalizing” a broad child protection assessment that generated scientifically collected information on issues of child abuse, recruitment, access to basic services and detention. The exercise mobilized the entire sector, with information used strategically for advocacy purposes and sector planning.

Value Added by RO

- The simple, effective framework to structure child protection programming developed by MENARO in 2009 has been used throughout 2010 to guide RO technical assistance to COs. The RO also ensured the dissemination of good practices, including by translating documents into Arabic and French, as well as sharing Terms of Reference and consultants on common issues of interest, including FGM/C messaging, establishment of monitoring and reporting mechanisms on grave child rights violations, and assessment tools and practices.

3.2.5 Policy Advocacy and Partnerships for Children's Rights (FA5)

Major Initiatives

- In 2010, the RO fully engaged in social policy by recruiting a Regional Advisor and a Specialist, which enabled the Office to develop a long-term vision to strengthen upstream policy work, with a specific focus on the most vulnerable children. These new personnel also play a coordination role to the RO approach on equity. Among the priorities defined at Regional level, social protection played a central role as a key strategy to reach the most vulnerable children. As a result of this emphasis, social protection became an area of increasing programming investment, with 11 COs reporting active engagement, ranging from technical advice to strengthen the child focus of pro-poor policies to development of review exercises to improve targeting and effectiveness of programmes in place. In addition, the RO finalized the first regional analysis of social protection and child rights, providing an important baseline for improving the child focus of current initiatives.
- Social budgeting for children also was integrated as a key programming priority for a number of COs, leading to development of a variety of innovative initiatives, including high-level advocacy for child budgeting (Iraq, Jordan); engagement in public finance reviews and sectoral budgetary analysis (Morocco, Oman); and design of budget monitoring and capacity building mechanisms (Jordan, Lebanon). In addition, capacity of UNICEF staff was strengthened with the organization of a learning initiative on social budgeting for children (see also KRA2).
- The Regional discussion on transforming UNICEF's engagement in HICs and MICs evolved from completion of the stocktaking study of innovative approaches followed in three MENA countries (see also Section 3.1). This study documented the transformation of internal programme structure (Tunisia), as well as advanced inter-Agency work (Algeria), and will serve as a base for lessons learned to influence similar processes in other countries.
- The RO finalized recruitment of the Regional ADAP Advisor and sub-Regional ADAP Advisor for the Maghreb, and established a UNV post, funded by the Government of Denmark, to support programming for adolescents and emergencies. This has allowed more effective provision of RO technical support to COs, particularly those undergoing UNDAF, CPD and MTR processes, as well as has improved implementation of the Regional ADAP Strategy, with a focus on strengthening the knowledge base on adolescents. In collaboration with ADAP HQ, the RO initiated an assessment of national youth policy development processes and implementation mechanisms across the Region; a handbook will be published in 2011.

Key Results

KRA1

- UNICEF's contribution focused on knowledge creation and dissemination activities. The RO offered oversight for undertaking SitAns in GAO, Libya, OPT and Tunisia. New knowledge also was generated through studies, evaluations and data collection activities, particularly MICS. Algeria, Iraq and OPT joined the MICS4 programme in

2010, while technical assistance was provided to Sudan and Djibouti for ongoing MICS4 surveys. Technical support also was provided for completion of MICS3 in Lebanon and national surveys in Morocco and Syria. Advocacy for the conduct of MICS4, undertaken in the GCC countries, Libya, Iran and Tunisia and for Palestinians living in Syria and Lebanon, has yielded positive results, and it is expected that these countries/areas will implement MICS/national surveys in 2011. Political considerations stalled implementation of MICS4 in Djibouti, as well as negotiations with the Government of Jordan for conducting a collaborative survey with UNRWA on Palestinians living in Jordan.

- MENARO also continues to update information on young people, child protection, education and child mortality in partnership with the Harvard University School of Public Health, and is in the final phase of developing a trends analysis of the situation of young people in the region in coordination with American University of Beirut.
- Data dissemination activities were facilitated through MENAInfo, launched in 2009 and updated in 2010. At country level, EgyptInfo was updated and showcased for its innovation for better governance. KSAInfo was successfully launched in Saudi Arabia; efforts to institutionalize DevInfo within Government in both Saudi Arabia and Oman will require continued support and advocacy in 2011. Several countries (Algeria, Egypt, OPT) and the RO increased efforts to systematically collect information on young people, through desk reviews, surveys, SitAns and capacity strengthening within national statistical institutions and NGOs, among others.
- A major initiative to build a shared understanding of child mortality estimation for monitoring of MDG4 was organized for 20 countries and academic institutions, in collaboration with HQ (see also Section 4.1).

KRA2

- The strong emphasis on social protection in pro-poor and pro-equity social policy, noted in Major Initiatives, led to multiple undertakings. In addition to the outputs cited above, these included analyses of social protection in Algeria and Jordan, to identify areas to improve benefits for children; four sectoral budget reviews in Morocco, identifying areas of child spending; and in Jordan, elaboration of a handbook on budgeting for better results for children, to be used to train key sectors of the national administration. Finalization and launch of the Child Poverty Study in Egypt led to establishment of multidimensional poverty indicators at national level, while Iran produced a databank on the socioeconomic status of children, with disparity indicators. Equity profiles at governorate level were formulated in Iraq.
- RO leadership with the UNICEF Regional Office in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS) in Social Budgeting for Children learning initiative; 20 MENA staff trained at social protection course in the United Kingdom.
- MENAInfo SMS platform finalized, including MMS feature, and made available.
- High-level sub-regional advocacy workshop for MICS in GAO/Libya, with potential for new MICS4 in 2011.
- Data companion and country-specific MDG profiles made available at May RMT, in collaboration with HQ Division of Policy and Practice (DPP).

KRA3

- Advocacy for pro-child social policy was noteworthy in most countries as evidence of the consolidated upstream focus of Country Programmes. In flagship advocacy efforts, Morocco succeeded in institutionalizing multidimensional poverty indicators and creating the ground for a major national child poverty analysis based on data; advocacy in the country also led to development of a national strategy on neonatal health and an integrated youth strategy, in addition to the recognition of nutrition as

a policy priority. In the GAO, UNICEF was effectively involved in preparation of the first National Strategy for Children, while in Iraq high-level advocacy led to promising opportunities for child spending. Pro-equity advocacy at decentralized level in Lebanon, Morocco and Iraq led to the inclusion of child rights in local planning development processes.

KRA4

- UNICEF facilitated a variety of opportunities for children and adolescents to share their views and express themselves; in Syria and OPT, launch of the International Year of Youth served as a platform for mobilizing young people. Egypt supported adolescents aged 12-19 to create one-minute videos for the International Children's Day of Broadcasting, while young volunteers made content available on the interactive "Useful Talk" website (see also Section 3.2.3), while in Algeria a documentary on adolescents' role in emergencies was finalized. Jordan initiated a national-level effort, including the meaningful participation of adolescents, to establish norms and standards for Adolescent Friendly Spaces, thereby improving the quality of services; several other countries (Lebanon, OPT, Syria) have now followed a similar model. Other countries also support adolescent-friendly peer-to-peer education and improvement of services, with particular focus on HIV prevention (Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Lebanon, Tunisia). A focus on opportunities for the adolescent girl also was a hallmark of a Jordan initiative, launched together with UNRWA, to create safe spaces for girls to learn, play, participate and socialize, complemented with a sports for development initiative for adolescent girls and young people with disabilities. Conflict prevention among young people was central in the OPT and **Lebanon** programmes.
- With regard to C4D key results, see Section 3.1.

Major Partnerships

- With an improved focus on upstream policy work, traditional partnerships were widened to Ministries of Finance in several countries (Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco), offering strategic collaboration to strengthen budget allocations for children. Successful inter-Agency partnerships were established in Algeria, where UNICEF led discussions on transforming the United Nations role in a resource-rich MIC context. UNICEF in Iran forged breakthrough partnerships in the area of HIV/AIDS, in particular with the National Youth Organization in the President's Office.
- Key international and academic partners included the World Bank, on issues of youth employability; World Economic Forum Next Generation Council, on examining strategies for engaging the private sector in youth livelihoods and social entrepreneurship; Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for promoting peace and reconciliation through the programme on Palestinian adolescents as agents of positive change; the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), which supports ADAP programming in MENARO and nine COs, with a strong emphasis on developing mechanisms for institutionalizing good strategies and promoting nationally sustainable programmes; and American University of Beirut and Harvard University School of Public Health, as noted under KRA1. A new partnership was established with the Dubai School of Government, a leading research institution in the Middle East in the area of youth employment and exclusion.
- With UNFPA, UNICEF is co-leading the Regional United Nations Development Group (R/UNDG) Strategic Action Plan for Youth 2010-2011 in MENA and the Arab States; UNICEF also is leading the development of an information kit on youth for the United Nations System as a whole.

- With regard to C4D partnerships, see Section 3.1. In addition, important partnerships have been established with Zain Telecommunications, to send messages to all Zain subscribers on child rights and raise awareness on protection and hygiene issues; and the Special Olympics, which co-organized regional competitions in Syria aimed at empowering children with intellectual disabilities.

Common Constraints and Factors

- Capacity gaps continue at CO and partner levels in relation to innovative areas of engagement such as social protection and social budgeting for children, despite RO organization and support to training initiatives on these two topics. The social policy focus of UNICEF's work still needs to be fully absorbed in a number of Country Programmes. Some approaches, including those at a decentralized level, need to be sustained by scaling-up strategies.
- Political, cultural and social practices continue to constrain development and implementation of national youth policies. A focus on marginalized or excluded young people, including young people with disabilities and better analysis of gender-specific issues, can be further strengthened and systematized in the overall programming approach.
- The extent to which programmes for ADAP are being taken to scale, thereby determining the effectiveness of adolescent initiatives, remains of concern.
- Lack of national capacities in C4D represents a primary challenge affecting implementation of communications campaigns, while documenting good practices in C4D also stands as a large gap. Measuring C4D results and conducting impact evaluation studies will be critical.

Validated Good Practices and Lessons Learned

- The stocktaking evaluation of transformation modalities in an MIC context (Algeria, Tunisia, Jordan) identified a number of lessons and good practices presented at the RMT and discussed in an ad hoc task force (see also Section 3.1).
- Increased importance of social media and new technologies and the role of young people in MENA has particularly become evident in 2010; there is, therefore, a need to better understand these trends and implications for programming

Value Added by RO

- FA5 was an area of added RO value in relation to the strong emphasis provided to the equity focus and the priority of centering country approaches on socioeconomic disparities. Elaboration of Equity Tracker Tools and coordination of dialogue with COs on social policy facilitated development of an office approach at RO level and increased efforts to strengthen the knowledge base on disparities.
- The two sub-Regional adolescent participation programmes, which encompass nine countries, represent an opportunity for the RO to support cross-country knowledge sharing and strengthening of Region-wide programme interventions.

3.2.6 Core Commitments for Children in Emergencies

Major Initiatives

- Concerned by the potential implications of the South Sudan referendum in January 2011, MENARO spearheaded the testing of a corporate "Compact mechanism" with a view to optimising UNICEF's corporate readiness for referendum outcomes. Led by the Deputy Executive Director for Emergencies at HQ and supported by a joint MENARO-Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS) secretariat, the Sudan Compact proved an extremely effective management tool, bringing together all key HQ

Divisions and RO and CO senior managers and enabling significant progress in readiness at both country and corporate levels. Key lessons learned and best practices from the use of this management model may provide important innovations for future preparedness and management of large-scale emergencies.

- The initiative to establish a Regional Humanitarian Centre for training gave rise to key interactions with US-based, globally renowned knowledge leaders that expressed deep interest in forming strategic partnerships. A clear vision for the way forward appears to have been reached, which should enable acceleration of engagement and results in 2011.
- With a view to protecting all UNICEF premises against blasts of up to 400 kg, MENARO saw the completion of work on the first Regional blast protection initiative at a number of sites and the signing of final contracts for the remainder of concerned COs. This paves the way for full completion by the second quarter of 2011.

Major Partnerships

- For the Sudan Compact initiative, the close cooperation of all parties to the Compact was key. For the Regional Humanitarian Centre, Harvard, Columbia, Tufts and Fordham Universities are playing a key role; for blast protection, partners comprise the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) and a range of private firms with world expertise in such areas.

Common Constraints and Factors

- Risks and threats remain limiting factors to outreach in several key countries (Algeria, Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Yemen).
- Understanding and integration of DRR in all sectoral work, rather than as an “emergency function,” as well as insufficient funding availability, limited effectiveness of some initiatives. With specific regard to accelerated progress on the Regional Humanitarian Centre, time availability and limited funding continue to represent key constraints.

Validated Good Practices and Lessons Learned

- Compact effectiveness was seen as a key lesson learned by the concerned country senior management (Sudan).
- The blast protection initiative may be seen as a corporate best practice for the United Nations as a whole.

4. Management and Operations

4.1 Overview of Management and Operations Achievements

Key Results Achieved

- MENARO provided high-level representation in and out of the Region on issues for children, through the leadership efforts of the Regional Director. Contributing toward representation and advance of the core mandate, the Regional Director/Regional Director a.i. took part in meetings and events such as the inter-Agency launch of the Regional Response for Iraqi Refugees, in Syria; UNICEF Global Consultation on Violations Against Children's Rights in Armed Conflict, in Geneva; country visits to Sudan, Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia, Oman, Morocco, Bahrain and OPT; International Forum on Trafficking, launch of the 2010 League of Arab States-United Nations Arab MDG Report and UNICEF Regional Communications meeting, all in Egypt; the Fourth High Level Conference on Children's Rights, in Morocco; and the UNICEF Global Consultation on United Nations Coherence and Middle Income Countries, as well as other R/UNDG initiatives and

consultations. Similarly, the Deputy Regional Director's participation included, among others, advocacy events related to the situation analysis of adolescents and youth (**Dubai**), violence against children (Lebanon) and an MTR (Tunisia) and led the MENA team in the consultation with the Government of Libya, a key initiative that contributed to defining priority areas for UNICEF's engagement as a non-resident Agency.

- The Regional Director/Regional Director a.i./Deputy Regional Director particularly led targeted efforts or evidence-based advocacy on children's rights and the CRC, with a special focus on sensitive issues such as children in armed conflict and issues of international humanitarian law, as well as continued UNICEF's high-level engagement on sensitive policy issues including crisis/post-crisis countries, child marriage, and violence in schools. For low-income countries and those with emergencies or humanitarian crises, MENARO was able to mobilize support and interest for "countries with special needs" and issues, with emphasis on Djibouti, Yemen and Sudan. In MIC countries, translation of the transformational agenda and social policy into advocacy messages was advocated, highlighting equity and reduction of disparities. Emerging issues advocated in HICs include road safety, obesity and risky behaviour.
- Technical support, quality assurance and oversight provided toward formulation and approval by the Executive Board of Iraq CPD (2011-2014) and Palestinian Area Programme (2011-2013), as well as to Iraq and OPT Country Programme Action Plans (CPAPs).
- Submission of Regional MTR Report to the Executive Board, comprising seven CO MTRs (Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Oman, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen).
- Leadership in change rollout capacity building in all COs and RO, on Programme Component Results/Intermediate Results (PCRs/IRs) and Rolling Work Plans.
- Adoption of revised programme structure to the Regional Office Management Plan (ROMP 2010-2011). MENARO was the first regional office to have done so.
- Support to **Tunisia** MTR/Strategic Moment of Reflection (SMR), Jordan MTR, Yemen SMR, Djibouti pre-MTR.
- Programmatic thinking on future cooperation/engagement plan for Libya, leading to UNICEF non-resident technical targeted support.
- Technical review of 12 CO Programme Budget Review (PBR) submissions and 7 SitAns.
- Finalized Regional Gender Strategy; developed and shared roster of pre-screened and qualified gender experts with COs/HQ.
- For emergencies, 13 out of 15 COs have Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans (EPRPs), five of which have been updated in the new Early Warning/Early Action (EWEA) system. Numerous "surge" and oversight missions strengthened RO quality support and oversight to COs in crisis. Regional cluster response capacity continued to expand, while progress occurred in establishing a sub-regional warehouse for immediate supply provision in crises.
- Implementation of the new and overarching "how to stay" approach to security management within the wider United Nations has mainstreamed security within ongoing work to define programme criticality and ensure no programme is without security.
- Development and rollout of Regional Learning Strategy.
- Development of Stretch Assignment Mechanism.
- Signing of the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on Regional Rapid Response Mechanism (RRRM) by RO and HQ Division of Human Resources (DHR).
- Enhancement of enabling environment through increased opportunities for management/staff interactions, such as through the development process of the Office Improvement Plan.

- Competencies Based Interviewing rollout resulted in certification of 132 staff members, including 13 Representatives and the Deputy Regional Director.
- Successful recruitment to senior leadership positions (4 Representatives' positions, in Yemen, Jordan, South Sudan and Egypt, and six Regional Advisors). In addition, 61 National Officer Posts were reviewed and approved by 1 December 2010.
- Five staff members graduated from the Leadership Development Initiative programme.
- Further strengthening of capacities of newly appointed Representatives, through three RO induction sessions.
- Co-facilitation of ethics sessions for the Regional Management Team, MENARO, Jordan and OPT.
- A number of learning sessions were organized in COs (Iran, Lebanon, Morocco, OPT) relating to new contractual policy updates and staff selection. WebEx sessions on the "one-time review for permanent contracts" also were conducted.
- Regional Resource Mobilization Strategy developed, including thematic concept notes, with technical inputs from programme clusters.
- Donor reporting quality assurance survey conducted in all COs and RO, including feedback provided to Offices.
- Rosters available of social policy experts (individual and institutional) and emergency health human resources.
- Completion of two key regional studies: 1) Alternative Business Modality Study, which has subsequently presented and reviewed viable options to be considered in the United Nations' ongoing dialogue on programme criticality; and 2) Operations Feasibility Models in MICs and HICs in MENA, which has proposed alternate models for Operations in small-l and medium-sized Offices based on a shared services concept.
- Five Offices (GAO, Iran, OPT, North and South Sudan) were supported with audit exercises; RO attended all exit meetings.
- Leadership on change rollout in International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) preparation, with development of specific training modules on administration.
- Introduction of ICT technologies as cost-saving measures. Connectivity enhancement throughout the Region to accommodate requirements of various ICT components of the Change Management initiative.
- Enhanced ICT capacity for emergency response, including Advance Telecom Training for five additional ICT staff; deployment of iDirect VSATs in COs as independent means of connectivity; and distribution of spare ASA firewalls where required.
- Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 training for 33 ICT staff in the Region as preparation for upcoming Office modernization tool for unified communication.
- Very high availability of ICT systems across the Region, ensuring uninterrupted operations for Programme results.

Shortfalls in 2010 Work Plans

- Assessment of RO gender programmatic mainstreaming capacity, development of training tools and staff training were rescheduled to 2011. Human resources practitioners retreat also postponed.
- Implementation of Regional Rapid Response Mechanism (RRRM).

Factors Supporting Key Results

- Timely, effective and efficient internal coordination in the Office, as well as from concerned COs, resulted in completion of high-quality CPDs and Regional MTR Report.
- Excellent piloting work by 3 COs in applying the Revised Programme Structure provided good lessons learned and technical support for other COs during the change rollout.

- The recruitment of Regional Social Policy, Child Protection and Adolescents Advisors added valuable capacity to both the RO and its ability to support the work of COs in those critical areas of work. The Office also benefited from the New and Emerging Talent Initiative (NETI) programme, with the assignment of a Planning Specialist for 10 months. A fully-funded UNV from Japan further enhanced RO's work, especially in the development of the MENAR Intranet site.
- Additional short-term resources and innovations (financial and human) provided for learning mechanisms and "surge" response. Regional Human Resources Network actively strengthened capacities of human resources practitioners.
- A total of seven MENARO Emergency Management Team (EMT) meetings were conducted and 85 per cent of action points met; clear focus on emergency challenges and proposed strategies by RMT, with joint commitments. Significant buy-in from various RO technical sections. Key support to WASH Cluster development in Yemen, North and South Sudan, and OPT. Comprehensive United Nations perception survey proved invaluable.
- With the development of more sophisticated and lethal methods of attack by extremists across the Region, this has necessitated implementation of multi-faceted and balanced security-related protection measures.
- Constraints: Heavy pressures and demands were placed on the Office in achieving all its 2010 work plan targets due to (1) the large number of Organizational initiatives launched in 2010, leading to competing priorities; (2) protracted and new emergencies, as well as reduced humanitarian space and conflicting programmatic approaches to humanitarian strategic planning; (3) changes in senior leadership (Regional Director's departure in July and arrival of RD, a.i. in October); (4) prolonged vacancies in key RO posts (Education, Nutrition, Partnerships, C4D) or severely inadequate capacity (Human Resources); and (5) limited information on recruitment and strategies for capacity building, as well as limited pools/profiles for senior international posts, posts in relatively new/unique areas of work (social policy, adolescents), and posts that require a second United Nations language.

Office Management Practices, Systems and Structures

- The Regional Office Management Team (ROMT) met seven times in 2010 to monitor performance against management indicators, follow up on required actions instituted to address audit recommendations, and discuss priority country issues and key RO milestones. In addition to mid-year and annual reviews of progress against work plans, the RO maintained the "weekly meeting" as an opportunity to share information on missions and country-specific information. Formal programme meetings with programme clusters also were maintained. The RO Joint Consultative Committee met twice, in addition to six general staff meetings. Given the context of the Region, an Emergency Task Force has been maintained with an expanded membership to include all Cluster leads as the primary forum in which to hold in-depth discussions on countries in crisis and agree on next steps.
- While consolidated support services arrangements, whereby Operations functions are provided to the RO and the Jordan CO jointly, have proven highly effective in terms of cost savings, it became apparent in 2010 that the unit needed strengthening and was no longer aligned with the growth in staff and programme through-put of both Offices. Even so, a client satisfaction survey of the Common Services Unit in December 2010 offered positive results overall; findings will be considered in the RO's revised office structure to be submitted to HQ in the first quarter of 2011.

- The RO continues to provide advice on organizational design to ensure that structures are aligned to deliver on strategic results. This includes re-profiling of roles and personnel and advising on staffing implications.
- As a result of the findings of the Global Staff Survey, numerous COs (except Sudan, Jordan, Yemen) implemented enhancement measures identified in their Office Improvement Plans, which has greatly contributed to improved interaction between management and staff. Key areas for strengthening include knowledge sharing/internal communication; career and professional development; Staff Association; and work/life balance.
- Monthly programme budget implementation status reports and analysis prepared by Programme Budget Officer/Regional Chief of Programme and Planning supported ROMT to monitor progress and identify bottlenecks. Marked improvement was shown in programme budget implementation rates in 2010.
- The RO continued to ensure that the enabling environment in offices is strengthened. With regard to HIV/AIDS, the RO monitors implementation of UN Cares 10 minimum standards. Stress management also is monitored in a variety of ways and linked to implementation of flexible working arrangements and the existence of Peer Support Volunteers and Staff Counselors.
- The RO also maintains the required statutory committees, notably, the Contracts Review Committee, which is a joint effort of the Jordan and MENARO Offices; the Iraq CO is no longer part of the committee, based on the Office strengthening capacity and mechanisms in Baghdad, a move that has significantly reduced the committee's caseload. Both the Jordan and MENARO Offices reviewed their thresholds in alignment with updated guidance and have applied them accordingly. Other statutory committees include the Central Review Body; the Joint Consultative Committee, which in 2010 played a critical role in monitoring of the establishment and implementation of improvement plans developed from results of the Global Staff Survey; the Regional Human Resources Development Committee; and Staff Association. A new Staff Association Executive Committee was elected in May 2010 for a two-year term, contributing to key Office priorities in the areas of staff wellbeing and overall staff morale. In addition, the RO has constituted a new Local Learning Committee in 2010 and has developed a two-year work plan focused on Office-wide priorities. More investment and greater priority for the Learning Committee are needed in 2011.

Procurement Services

- The RO does not have a supply advisor and provides limited support to COs by sharing responsibilities among the Operations, Emergency and Child Survival Clusters. Key countries involved in procurement services remain Yemen, oPt and Iraq; such services are primarily used to facilitate procurement of vaccinations, particularly for the introduction of new vaccines.
- MENARO promoted the use of online collaboration tools by supporting several countries (Iran, Sudan, Syria, Yemen) with strategic Information and Communications Technology (ICT) equipment and services not available locally due to the country context (videoconferencing); in addition, it distributed 20 WebEx licenses among COs. All this has been largely successful not only for improving timeliness and support to RO information sharing, but also for contributing to significant cost savings. To support business continuity and emergency response, the RO also distributed nine units of firewall devices to equip COs with spares of the most critical component of the UNICEF ICT infrastructure.

4.2 Oversight Function and Oversight-Related Accountabilities

Methods and Indicators to Monitor and Assess CO Performance

31. The Regional Management Team (RMT), which is responsible for integrating UNICEF's work in the RO and fostering a participatory management style at Regional level, met twice in 2010. The first meeting, in Cairo in May, focused on leading and managing change, while the second meeting, in Amman in October, focused on MDG+ 10 and beyond in MENA, especially unfinished business and emerging issues. The Deputy Executive Director, Hilde Johnson, attended the Amman RMT and led a discussion on United Nations coherence, while HQ colleagues and other resource persons or external speakers participated in both meetings to contribute to discussions with MENA Representatives and RMT members. In particular, the Governance group of the RMT looked at issues relate to management performance, assessment, human resource development, fundraising and other humanitarian or security concerns.

32. To complement the work of the RMT, Standing Committees continued to address priority issues identified by the RMT. MENA had five Standing Committees: Regional Operations; Regional Human Resources Development; FA5-Social Policy; and a Fundraising Committee, although this committee was disbanded at the May RMT and it was recommended that its work plan/agenda be supported by the Partnership team in the RO. Crucially, the Standing Committee on Operations was formally convened for the first time in 2010, chaired by a Representative at D1 level. The Standing Committee will advise and guide the RMT on key Operations issues and ensure that the Operations function is tailored to become increasingly more strategic. The RO also formally introduced scorecards for Operations, combining system-generated and qualitative information, to provide benchmarks for operational performance in a number of areas and improve transparency.

33. Audit reports on five COs in 2010 revealed overall results of "generally satisfactory" or "partially satisfactory." The RO has invested substantially in strengthening management performance of offices in the Region in general and provided additional support to COs preparing for audits. This has included targeting the Deputy Representatives and Chiefs of Operations (DROPS), analysis of common audit findings, and tailor-made training in critical areas such as office administration. Building relationships between the RO and COs, in part through Webex discussions (see Section 4.1), has proven a critical success factor in developing an enabling environment in which to discuss operational issues and enhance oversight.

34. The RO's quarterly Management Performance Indicators Report continued to provide a country-by-country analysis of the RMT-approved set of 25 key Management Performance Indicators (KPI), as well as an examination of overall Regional performance. All indicators are managed through the DevInfo-based KPIInfo database. On the basis of the RMT KPI, COs submit to the RO their quarterly Management Performance Reports, which are then analyzed and consolidated for feedback, highlighting areas of both strengths and weaknesses.

35. The MENA RMT held in May 2010 agreed to adopt fully the globally introduced set of Management Key Performance Indicators as found in the Office Management Reports (OMRs) produced by HQ. This approach has the merit of presenting comparable information across countries without burdening staff in the COs with data collection and also avoids running parallel sets of KPIs, one globally and another Region-specific. The new format of quarterly Regional Management Performance reports, introduced in the third quarter of 2010, is based on self-interpretive graphs and tables. A covering note from the Regional Director in transmitting these reports to Representatives continued to note specific areas of weakness in relevant COs where remedial action is needed.

36. The RO introduced Enterprise Risk Management in 2010 but has faced some challenges with persuading all COs to conduct the suggested workshops and complete profiles, in large part due to competing priorities. The RO therefore requested and received approval to defer the reporting requirement for all Offices in the region until March 2011. As of December 2010, 12 Offices, including the RO, had draft profiles completed.

37. With regard to the PBR process, the MENARO PBR continued to guide the progressive realignment of office structures to new programme results and priorities. In particular, the PBR process facilitated establishment of a number of Social Policy and KM posts in 2010 to support the Region's capacity to deliver in FA5 and with renewed attention to equity. To address vulnerable populations, the RO endorsed the out-posting of a project officer to address these populations in Tindouf, Algeria, with guidance from HQ. The RO has noted a significant contribution from HQ in supporting and providing guidance in unusual circumstances (Sudan) and has implemented structural changes accordingly.

38. The Regional Contingency Fund, established with the contributions of pooled non-post support budget contributions, proved a dynamic mechanism used to effectively manage the Regional envelope as well as address budget shortfalls in a number of countries due to salary scale increases and other unforeseen costs.

39. Other methods and indicators to monitor performance of COs included analysis of the results of the Global Staff Survey and implementation of enhancement plans; peer review of human resources management systems and risks (missions); critical incidents (employee relations issues, staff turnover); feedback from Staff Association representatives; technical support to risk assessments; and weekly monitoring of Service Desk ICT calls.

Quality of 2010 CO Annual Reports

40. The newly introduced global methodology for preparation and posting of 2010 CO Annual Reports on a Web-based portal has witnessed a significant overall deterioration in the quality of these reports, as well as their subsequent value toward the preparation of the 2010 Regional Analysis Report (RAR). During the RO review of CO Annual Reports, the following aspects were highlighted:

- Reports suffered in quality of analysis compared to previous years and tended to be more lists of results than reports with flowing, logically structured analysis and narrative. Lack of analysis and "self-censoring" of these public documents have particularly affected sections on Country Situations and Programme Components. The public nature of the reports meant that a great deal of key information was missing, including political analysis/forecasting, constraints/challenges faced, and security information.
- As a result of loss of clear context and "story line," the reports have become much more difficult to read and analyze.
- Future work plans were short and less useful/meaningful for planning support to COs.
- The Studies/Publications list occupied a great deal of space in reports that could have been better used.
- Strategy sections were the best part, but tended to be "compartmentalized." Most COs employ a mix of strategies, so forcing arbitrary decisions on whether something was a strategic partnership or capacity development or advocacy, when it might comprise elements of all three, considerably complicated reporting.

- In a positive development, reporting on gender and the specific situations of girls, boys, women and men has improved in countries that received gender training, although there was little room yet for full analysis.

41. As an RO, MENARO had found the annual review of CO Annual Reports very useful in the past to “ground” regional analysis as well as to augment the RO oversight and quality assurance role. The RO did not benefit as much from the process this year as in previous years. Recognizing that recent changes were intended to improve UNICEF transparency and simplify the CO Annual Report process in advance of VISION, it would seem that more has been lost than gained. The RO recommends strongly that the 2010 CO Annual Reports are not made public at this point, given that they lack overall the high quality of published documents usually seen from UNICEF.

COs with Special Needs

42. The RO provided extensive dedicated support to North and South Sudan to ensure emergency preparedness levels and capacity, especially human resources, and to monitor the security situation in the period leading up to the January 2011 referendum in South Sudan. It also supported Yemen with emergency “surge” capacity, human resources and recruitment as the country faced a deepening of ongoing crises and increased challenges of humanitarian access. In OPT, the RO supported communication and advocacy efforts to address persistent child rights violations related to the ongoing Gaza crisis. The large scale of deprivation in the abovementioned countries and the complexity of the humanitarian and political situations, with challenging access to basic social services, remain major constraints in reaching the most vulnerable groups. The RO has continued its dialogue with COs to target and implemented pro-equity interventions to address these issues. Special attention, technical support and oversight also were given to COs that underwent MTRs (Tunisia, Jordan), pre-MTRs (Djibouti), and SMRs (Tunisia, Yemen); to the new Iraq CPAP and Country Programme Management Plan (CPMP); to the Palestine Area Programme (OPT, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan); and to the formulation of six new CPDs (Egypt, Morocco, Oman, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen).

43. Specific Operations support was provided to GAO and Oman, resulting from their unique office structures, with a limited number of Government-financed staff. RO programming support to Libya has ensured UNICEF’s continued engagement without country presence in this HIC, creating an important model within the region. Significant remote and in-country support was provided to Syria, Tunisia and Morocco to meet their M&E demands. Movement and security restrictions in various locations were met by providing training in alternative settings and formats to reach all stakeholders.

Donor Reporting

44. A donor reporting quality assurance assessment, conducted for all COs and the RO based on one randomly sampled and one self-selected best practice report per Office, found 73 per cent of COs rated “good” or “exemplary” on these reports, with the RO rated “exemplary” on both reports. Detailed feedback and Office-specific recommendations to sustain or further improve quality were positively received. Progress in reporting timeliness was sustained and is being closely monitored, with only five donor reports out of 366 overdue at the end of 2010. Planning of relevant publications has continued to be the responsibility of each RO cluster to ensure quality and timeliness.

Client Satisfaction Survey

45. The performance of MENARO in 2010, assessed via a client satisfaction survey in January 2011, revealed that 66 per cent of respondents found overall performance good (44%) or very good (22%). Findings indicate that COs were of the view that MENARO's highest performance by ROMP functions is on technical support, emergencies, capacity building and security. COs also were asked to rate their satisfaction with support from specific MENARO sections; in the top ten were ICT, Operations, Human Resources, C4D and Security, programme planning, nutrition, M&E, child protection and social policy. Areas identified in need for further strengthening were south-south cooperation, knowledge management, UN coherence and staff capacity building. The survey, administered to a sample of 64 staff from all COs and with a 92 per cent response rate, also revealed that the current Lotus-based technical support facility is known only to a few staff, since this tool often is handled by a CO focal point. This is a good pointer to the need to expand access and use to all staff when designing the new system in SharePoint.

5. Studies, Surveys, Evaluations and Publications Completed in 2010

Title: Survey/Review of the Quality of Donor reports in COs & RO

Year: 2010

Sequence number: 2010/001

Type of report: Survey

Themes: Donor reporting, donor relations

Management response: N/A

Title: C4D KAP Survey Protocol

Year: 2010

Sequence number: 2010/002

Type of report: Survey methodology toolkit

Themes: C4D

Management response: N/A

Title: Impact of Living Arrangements on Education and Health of Unmarried Adolescent Girls in the Middle East and North Africa

Year: 2010

Sequence number: 2010/003

Type of report: Study

Themes: Adolescents, child protection

Management response: N/A

Title: Evaluability of UNICEF Engagement Plans in Jordan, Tunisia and Algeria

Year: 2010

Sequence number: 2010/004

Type of report: Study.

Themes: Middle Income Countries (MICs), engagement models

Management response: N/A

Title: HIV/AIDS Knowledge, Attitude and Practice in MICS Surveys for MENA Countries

Year: 2010

Sequence number: 2010/005

Type of report: Study.

Themes: HIV AIDS, MICS

Management response: N/A

Title: Survey on UN in MENA: Image, Perception and Attitudes

Year: 2010

Sequence number: 2010/006

Type of report: Survey

Themes: United Nations coherence

Management response: N/A

Title: Yemen WASH Cluster Peer Review

Year: 2010

Sequence number: 2010/007

Type of report: Evaluation (against Global WASH Cluster Evaluation tool)

Themes: WASH cluster performance

Management response: Done

Title: OPT WASH Cluster Peer Review

Year: 2010

Sequence Number: 2010/008

Type of report: Evaluation (against Global WASH Cluster Evaluation tool)

Themes: WASH cluster performance

Management response: Done

Title: Review of National Guidelines on Clinical Management of HIV Infection in Adults, Adolescents and Children, Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV (PMTCT), and Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP)

Year: 2010

Sequence number: 2010/009

Type of report: Review

Themes: National HIV/AIDS guidelines review

Management response: N/A

Title: MENA HIV/AIDS Thematic Report 2009-2010

Year: 2010

Sequence number: 2010/010

Type of report: Review

Themes: Regional HIV/AIDS SitAn

Management response: N/A

Title: MENA Sub-Regional Supply Initiative

Year: 2010

Sequence number: 2010/011

Type of report: Survey

Themes: Sub-regional market survey

Management response: N/A

Title: Development of Early Warning Systems in the Middle East and North Africa: Phase II

Year: 2010

Sequence number: 2010/12

Type of report: Study

Themes: Early Warning System indicators

Management response: N/A.

Titles: Earthquake Withstanding of MENA Buildings (Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, Yemen country offices – Blast/Security Vulnerability Assessment and Design and Construction Documentation for the Blast Retrofit of the UNICEF Building)

Year: 2010

Sequence Number: 2010/13

Type of reports: Study

Themes: Blast/security vulnerability assessments

Management response: N/A

OTHER PUBLICATIONS:

Title of the publication: Arabic translation of the Hygiene Promotion Training Toolkit (Global WASH Cluster product)

Main intended audience(s) and objectives of the publication: Hygiene promotion training of trainers, Amman, 2009 and 2010

Authors: English version by Oxfam on behalf of the Global WASH Cluster, translated by MENARO

Quantities printed (or electronic only): Electronic only, widely shared.

Estimated cost of the publication to UNICEF: US\$5,715

Title of the publication: Short documentary to cover UNICEF's activities in the Region

Main intended audience(s) and objectives of the publication: MENA/UNICEF Country Offices

Authors: UNICEF/MENARO

Quantities printed (or electronic only): Electronic only, widely shared

Estimated cost of the publication to UNICEF: US\$3,100

Title of the publication: State of the World's Children 2011 and Executive Summary (in Arabic)

Main intended audience(s) and objectives of the publication: Policymakers, media, civil society

Author: UNICEF

Quantities printed (or electronic only): 7,000 (SOWC 2011); 1,500 (Executive Summary)

Estimated cost of the publication to UNICEF: US\$65,000

Title of the publication: 2011 wall calendars with C4D messages and photos, distributed to all MENA Region COs

Main intended audience(s) and objectives of the publication: CO distribution to civil society, policymakers, private sector, media

Author: UNICEF/MENARO

Quantities printed (or electronic only): 2500

Estimated cost of the publication to UNICEF: US\$20,303.67

Title of the publication: Safety on Road stickers, distributed to all MENA COs

Main intended audience(s) and objectives of the publication: Civil society

Author: UNICEF/MENARO

Quantities printed (or electronic only): 15,000

Estimated cost of the publication to UNICEF: US\$26,483

Title of the publication: RMT Data Companion

Main intended audience(s) and objectives of the publication: UNICEF Representatives

Author: UNICEF MENARO and DPP

Quantities printed (or electronic only): 20

Estimated cost of the publication to UNICEF: US\$1,400

Title of the publication: UNICEF in the Middle East and North Africa
Main intended audience(s) and objectives of the publication: Donors
Author: UNICEF/MENARO
Quantities printed (or electronic only): 1000
Estimated cost of the publication to UNICEF: JD1,200

Title: DRR in MENA: Proposed Strategy for 2010 - 2012
Main intended audience(s) and objectives of the publication: UNICEF MENA CO Representatives; MENARO proposes a DRR strategy over the coming two years that leverages UNICEF’s comparative advantage in the niche areas of education and WASH, as well as responding to both climate change and urban risk, with a view to progressively build momentum and scaling up
Authors (including any other organizations/agencies which are co-authors): MENARO
Quantities printed (or electronic only): Electronic only
Estimated cost of the publication to UNICEF: Staff time

6. Innovations and Lessons Learned

Category: <i>Lesson Learned</i>
MTSP Focus Area: <i>Policy advocacy and partnerships for children’s rights (FA5)</i>
Country: <i>Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region</i>
Title: <i>Situation Assessment and Analysis of Children’s and Women’s Rights: Lessons Learned from the MENA Region, 2000–2010</i>
Related links: http://www.unicef.org/sitan/
Contact person: <i>Pierre Ngom, UNICEF/MENARO, pngom@unicef.org</i>
<p>Abstract:</p> <p><i>Over the 2005-2009 period, 17 out of 20 countries in MENA region conducted a SitAn. Globally, one out of every four SitAn reports posted as a model on the UNICEF website is from the MENA region. These indicators point to the quantity and high quality of the SitAn conducted in the MENA region. However, there are no documented lessons learned on the process, outcomes and utilization of such SitAns. We also lack in-depth knowledge of the contexts that are conducive of or barriers to the smooth implementation and utilization of the SitAn. In 2010, UNICEF/MENA Regional Office commissioned a review of SitAn conducted in 7 countries of the Middle East and North Africa over the past decade. The overall purpose of this review was to draw lessons learned from the implementation and use of these SitAns with a view to improving SitAn guidelines, processes, and outcomes.</i></p>
<p>Innovation or Lessons Learned:</p> <p><i>Though the quality and use of the SitAns completed in the MENA region has improved in the last decade, the review revealed various challenges in the SitAn process and implementation. The main hurdles that almost all Country Offices encountered involved inadequate collaborative efforts between UNICEF and its national partners, limited civil society involvement, low levels of UN participation in the process, out-of-date indicators, and data that were not disaggregated by critical factors such as gender. Other parameters that had a negative effect on the SitAn process and the quality of the final report included high turnover of consultants prior to the completion of the report, and weak alignment with existing guidelines.</i></p> <p><i>The review revealed that the SitAns that were deemed successful had a high level of government and civil society participation, especially in the early stages of the planning process. They also included inputs from children and adolescents; had a strong methodology; utilized a range of updated indicators; were attractive in terms of the design (the final report); and were widely disseminated within the government and civil society.</i></p>
<p>Potential application:</p> <p><i>To strengthen the capacity of key stakeholders in the SitAn process and outcome, UNICEF should systematically organize well designed training sessions for players in this exercise, including potential consultants, with a</i></p>

focus on the guidelines, implementation and utilization of the SitAn in the run-up to – and following – its launch. This can be done through structured modules and thematic working groups that target communication, the SitAn preparation process, data collection, best practices, and strategies for disseminating and utilizing the SitAn.

By engaging stakeholders early in the SitAn process, UNICEF's advocacy efforts may be fruitful in influencing national development plans, strategies and policies to better address children's and women's rights. National ownership may be strengthened further via a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the government and UNICEF to help ensure official review of and commitment to some of the key recommendations emanating from the SitAn.

Issue:

Although almost all UNICEF MENA country offices have supported a SitAn in the past decade, a number of them were never published, while some doubt remained over the quality and use of the final reports. More specifically, there were many unanswered questions regarding the SitAn process, factors affecting the process and outcomes of SitAns, and their quality and use to influence policy.

Strategy and Implementation:

In addition to the UNICEF Regional Office, the review covered Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Oman, the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), Sudan, and Tunisia. The diverse country contexts have provided an opportunity to explore associations between the programming environment and the SitAn outcome. These countries were chosen to represent high income (Oman), and lower middle income economies (Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, OPT, Tunisia, Sudan).

The review was carried out by a team of consultants through an in-depth desk review, field visits to six of the seven countries (Jordan, Oman, Sudan, Egypt, Tunisia and Djibouti), and telephone interviews with OPT. The team also conducted interviews via telephone and e-mail with UNICEF staff, former SitAn consultants, colleagues from UN agencies, and national stakeholders who took part in the SitAns under review. The review methodology focused on analyzing the SitAn preparation process, quality of the final report, compliance with UNICEF guidelines, how the completed report was used, and constraints encountered.

Progress and Results:

SitAns were typically initiated following the availability of recent nationwide data from sample household surveys or censuses. In instances where there was little or no government involvement from the outset, the SitAn process was negatively perceived by the government and was overshadowed by difficulties in later stages, including restrictions over obtaining data, as well as limited dissemination and use of the report. As for the collaboration of civil society organizations, limited participation was observed in all seven countries under review. The participation of children and adolescents in the SitAn process was effective in the cases of Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, OPT, and Sudan.

Given the socio-political context in the MENA region, there are a variety of sensitive issues to deal with and most are as a result of poor governance, transparency and human rights systems, while others include cultural, traditional and religious factors. Some attempts have been made by Country Offices to address such sensitive issues mainly through advocacy and involvement of key stakeholders in SitAn steering committees right from the beginning of the process. However, these efforts were marred by the lack of government involvement in the process, as well as poor consultation with children and adolescents.

Next steps:

The regional review of the SitAn in Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Oman, the OPT, Sudan, and Tunisia underlines UNICEF's need to modify and adapt it in order to adequately address the rights of children and women and to enhance development planning at both the national and local levels. The SitAn needs to be transformed from a top-down, content heavy and infrequently used document into a tool that encourages the participation of national and civil society partners from the outset, has a wider platform that allows for broader dissemination, is employed as a reference material beyond academic institutions, and is used by government to shape public policy. Also, the various field interviews held during this regional review point to the fact that the usefulness of a SitAn largely depends on the body of evidence from research and analytical work available on national issues regarding children and women. Consequently, the SitAn process and outcomes will be enhanced if UNICEF continuously supports governments in high quality data collection and analysis that bridge key gaps in our knowledge of the situation of children and women.

Category: Innovation
MTSP Focus Area or Cross-Cutting Strategy: <i>Children and AIDS</i>
Country: <i>Middle East and North Africa (MENARO)</i>
Title: <i>Capacity building on HIV Prevention with focus on outreach for Most-At-Risk-Adolescents (MARA)</i>
Related links: <i>Not available yet</i>
Contact person: <i>Samir Anouti, Regional HIV/AIDS Advisor, MENARO</i>
<p>Abstract:</p> <p><i>Given nature and dynamics of HIV progression in MENA countries, there is an urgent need to invest in building capacities to outreach for Most-At-Risk-Adolescents (MARA) with adequate services. In this context, such a capacity building workshop provides a significant contribution in view of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Creating a uniformed deep understanding of comprehensive prevention interventions among young people based on a sound appreciation of their needs and epidemiological realities of different countries;</i> <i>• Sharing latest country experiences focusing on prevention among Young People at country level;</i> <i>• Providing guidance (including latest frameworks and tools) on how to design effective prevention interventions addressing Young people;</i> <i>• Agree on concrete steps forward in scaling-up comprehensive and effective prevention programs at country level.</i>
<p>Innovation or Lessons Learned:</p> <p><i>The workshop engaged a wide-range of partners from governmental, non-governmental, and academic; as well as, UN officers and representatives of other partners. This has proven to be an important catalytic factor yielding additional richness and benefits gained from the training</i></p> <p><i>In addition, the core content of the training – which is based on state of the art, experiences and lessons learned world-wide- has been combined with illustrative and practical case studies emanating from local and regional contexts. In addition, top international experts and facilitators can be coupled with regional resource persons.</i></p> <p><i>Finally, the workshop included several pre-planned field visits to relevant service-provision centers and NGOs. This has been very beneficial in terms of sharing experiences and boosting discussions.</i></p>
<p>Potential application:</p> <p><i>Given the successful adaptation of the capacity building workshop’s material, sessions and applications to the context of HIV/AIDS in MENA countries, it can be also be replicated at national level or in other regions.</i></p>
<p>Issue:</p> <p><i>Most MENA countries are increasingly developing concentrated HIV epidemics among key groups, including Injecting Drug Users (IDUs) and Men who have Sex with Men (MSM). This challenge is further compounded with evidence indicating a concerning trend of engagement in risky behavior and an increasing HIV incidence in the younger age groups.</i></p> <p><i>In this context, there is a need to better understand and address needs of Most-At-Risk-Adolescents through scaling up comprehensive prevention knowledge, skills and services.</i></p>
<p>Strategy and Implementation:</p> <p><i>The strategy in preparing and conducting this capacity-building workshop started with a creation of a committee of resource persons which included international experts and regional resource persons. This committee oversaw the adaptation of state of art training modules to the specific regional context of MENA countries; as well as, developing the workshop’s agenda and material.</i></p> <p><i>In conducting the workshop, special consideration was given to sharing country-level experiences and best</i></p>

practices through inviting speakers from different MENA countries. In addition, sessions included discussions, practical application exercises, and field visits.

Progress and Results:

A pre-workshop assessment tool was designed and completed by participating countries. This tool was considered to refine the scope and details of the workshop’s agenda.

After the workshop, UNICEF MENARO and Country Offices are actively following up through advocacy and provision of technical support to scale-up country prevention programmes to better identify and address the needs of MARA.

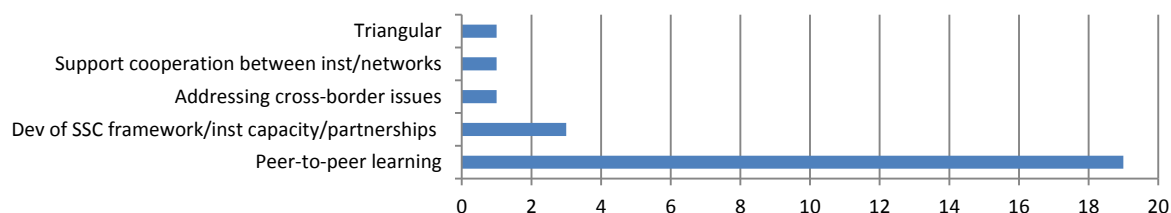
Next steps:

As a result of this workshop, participants expressed heightened awareness, conviction and commitment to identify and address the HIV prevention needs among Most-At-Risk-participants.

Subsequently, the workshop succeeded to pave the way for more planned country-level initiatives on MARA programming.

7. Special Report: South-South Cooperation

46. Significant results have been achieved through more than 25 South-South Cooperation (SSC) initiatives (see chart below) supported and facilitated by UNICEF in the Region, particularly by COs. Initiatives involve expertise, funding and advocacy on diverse topics, with governments, public and private institutions, and universities both within and beyond MENA. Examples of achievements include the promotion of regional consensus and uniformity on FGM/C legislation; identification and repatriation of unaccompanied children in Yemen to the Horn of Africa; facilitation of emergency relief funds of US\$23 million for Pakistan from the Saudi Fund for Development; and establishment of a United Nations Theme Group on South-South Cooperation in the Gulf.



47. The RO has supported SSC primarily by reviewing draft HQ guidance on SSC and supporting peer-to-peer learning related to MICS, as well as by cross-fertilizing advocacy and C4D efforts across the region. For example, the Government of Iran benefited from participation in the MICS4 Regional Advocacy and Survey Design workshop for the CEE/CIS, held in Geneva; this informed the design of the Iran Multiple Indicators Demographic Health Survey, conducted in 2010. Likewise, the Government of Sudan participated in a data processing workshop in Nairobi to support adaptation of data entry and processing programmes for the Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey 2/MICS4. An advocacy workshop on MICS for Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, enabled by collective efforts among UNICEF HQ, MENARO, Oman CO and the Government of Oman, brought together decision makers of the GCC and Libya to consider implementation of MICS4. Following this workshop, a number of these countries expressed interest in conducting the MICS4 survey. With regard to broader advocacy, the MENA Regional Goodwill Ambassador, Mahmoud Kabil, participated in the launch of a vaccination week in Mauritania, while a Communication Specialist from South Sudan supported Djibouti with C4D initiatives. The recent Client Satisfaction Survey showed that COs would like the RO to play a more prominent role in supporting and facilitating SSC; as discussed at the 2010 RAR retreat, held in February 2011, an integrated approach to SSC, capacity building and knowledge management will be key to strengthen the RO’s performance in this area.

8. Report on UN Reform and Inter-Agency Cooperation

48. Considerable deepening occurred in inter-Agency cooperation through the Region in 2010. The Regional Director and Deputy Regional Director participated actively in the Regional Directors Team (R/UNDG). The R/UNDG 2010 work-plan supported the acceleration of progress toward MDG targets, maximizing strategic opportunities afforded by preparations for the UN General Assembly MDG+10 Summit in September 2010, and by the new cycle of UNDAFs and other strategic planning and programming processes being rolled out in 2010 and 2011 in the Region. This entailed (1) substantive contributions to drafting of the joint League of Arab States-United Nations Arab Regional MDG Progress Report, which had as its theme the impact of the financial crisis on Regional MDG achievement; (2) early engagement with and guidance to UNDAF rollout countries to accelerate MDG achievement, national priorities and UNCT comparative advantages; (3) organization of modalities for strategic guidance and quality assurance of the evidence base for UNDAFs and associated programmes; and (4) transformation of R/UNDG priorities into practical guidance and action plans to facilitate programme planning and implementation at country level. Regional priorities to enhance MDG acceleration also are being addressed through key policy studies and other initiatives. Such priorities include strategic positioning in MICs to meet the increased demand for high-calibre upstream support and downstream, sub-national interventions; addressing the youth “bulge,” which resulted in endorsement of the Strategic Action Plan on Young People and formalization of a United Nations Inter-Agency Technical Task Team on Young People in 2010; and a Study on the nexus of food security and climate change, with a subsequent Guidance Note.

49. With regard to the R/UNDG performance appraisal function of RCs/UNCTs, the annual performance appraisal meeting revealed a need for more emphasis on defining key planned results and making them available to the R/UNDG early in the reporting year, with more R/UNDG attention to these results; also highlighted was the need for better reporting on results, rather than activities, at the end of the performance year. These insights were subsequently conveyed to RCs to guide preparation of their 2011 performance plans. In addition, the One80 exercise was launched in the Region in 2010, with 14 countries participating in One80 competency development and a number of RCs/UNCTs making use of supported One80 coaching sessions. In response to the expressed need for closer interaction between the R/UNDG and UNCTs, country consultations were organized during the R/UNDG segment of the Regional Cluster meeting in Bahrain. Dedicated consultations were held with Sudan and Yemen, with which follow-up consultations already have occurred, as well as with numerous MICs or Net Contributing Countries (Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, UAE). Consultations with crisis countries (Djibouti, Iraq, OPT, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen) focused on the interface of development and humanitarian issues and how best to manage this at country level.

50. Well-coordinated Common Country Assessment (CCA)/UNDAF processes also were instrumental in deepening inter-Agency coordination. Six countries of the region were undergoing CCA/UNDAF preparations in 2010-2011 (Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen), with three others scheduled for rollout in 2011-2012 (Djibouti, Jordan, Sudan). Three more countries also are in the process of preparing Common Country Strategic Frameworks (CCSFs) in 2010-2011 (Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Libya).

51. Through the Peer Support Group (PSG) at Deputy Regional Director level, the R/UNDG has facilitated senior-level guidance to ensure that these UNDAFs and Strategic Frameworks are indeed strategic, in harmony with UNDG programming principles, and reflect and build on UNDG and R/UNDG priorities and Action Plans (including the Regional Action Plan on Young People). For example, in the case of Algeria, the PSG prepared a sequenced package of support that included a joint mission at Deputy Regional Director level. Moreover, an innovative approach to PSG support

that designates a particular PSG “focal Agency” per rollout country offers a substantive, successful model for replication in other Regions; this has contributed greatly to effective coordination and collaboration. For example, MENARO is the focal point in Tunisia and Jordan.

52. Crucially, the R/UNDG also noted improved Agency comments on the analysis that had been of poorer quality in the early stages. A particular note of concern to UNICEF, however, is the timeline of CCA/UNDAF process completion in some countries – as late as November and December 2010 – which left very little room for UNICEF to comply with its own Organizational deadlines for preparation and submission of CPDs to the Executive Board in June 2011, bearing in mind that CPDs should be fully informed by UNDAFs. In addition, high demand from UNCTs in the region for RBM support has not always been able to be met at PSG level and has thus far been provided primarily by UNICEF and UNFPA; an urgent need exists to expand this support base.

53. The United Nations Joint Programmes in the Region offer a wide array of thematic focus, ranging from FGM in Djibouti to HIV/AIDS in the UAE, and from conflict prevention and peace-building in Lebanon to GBV in Morocco. Syria conducts Joint Programmes on up-scaling the MDGs and on child labour. Lessons drawn so far from these Joint Programmes consistently point to new opportunities for greater impact; better harmonization and coherence, especially on sensitive issues; the benefits of speaking with “one voice;” and reduced transaction costs for host governments. On the negative side, however, transaction costs are being increased for some United Nations Agencies, including UNICEF, especially in terms of staff time investment and reduced efficiencies.

54. In its study on United Nations Harmonization in Middle and High Income Countries, MENARO identified a number of potential opportunities for greater harmonization. Although the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) faces significant obstacles to implementation in a number of COs, including high costs associated with the assessment of partners, the RO has encouraged COs to identify HACT components that can be implemented within UNCTs as a whole or on an Agency-specific basis. Consequently, the Region is expected to continue to increase the introduction of HACT and further contribute to ongoing business simplification efforts. With regard to human resources, the RO has contributed to strengthening capacities of human resources practitioners of other United Nations Agencies in Morocco and Lebanon. Representatives from UNDP and UNHCR, among others, participated in Competency Based Interviewing Training in 2010.

55. MENARO is promoting inter-Agency ICT governance bodies to better use ICT capacities within a country and to underscore a more coherent approach to common issues. The Regional Chief of ICT, during his missions to COs, regularly meets ICT managers of various United Nations Agencies to discuss opportunities for inter-Agency collaboration. Notable examples of such collaboration include extension of UNICEF’s connectivity service through its fibre-optic backbone to all Agencies operating in Iraq; extension of ICT services to UNAIDS in Algeria; and data safekeeping arrangements between UNICEF and UNDP in Egypt. MENARO also maintains about US\$100,000 worth of emergency telecommunications equipment for inter-Agency response to emergencies in the region.

56. Lastly, the political sensitivity associated with some MENA crisis countries (OPT, Sudan, Iraq) continued to play a positive role in leveraging increasing degrees of United Nations coherence, particularly around joint advocacy messaging, engagement with national counterparts on matters of humanitarian access, as well as joint messaging on humanitarian response and development of financial investment requirements. However, crises like Yemen provided major challenges to principles of United Nations coherence, specifically arising from the persistent disconnects between the humanitarian and development spheres, as well as the gaps between financial mechanisms attached to both sets of needs. In several countries, as noted in Section 3.2.4, it was difficult for senior United Nations representatives to engage meaningfully with national interlocutors on

development challenges when some of these parties also apparently were involved in violations of children's rights. Rollout of the Integrated Strategic Framework planning tool, while welcomed, also raised questions of possible duplication of coverage and efforts with UNDAFs, and hence, ultimate usefulness for UNCT stakeholders.