

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Key Achievements

- The incorporation of a special chapter on child poverty within the annual poverty snapshots published by the National Statistical Services ensures the increased attention of policy makers and donors towards the situation of the most vulnerable among Armenia's population.
- The reform towards Integrated Social Services, strongly supported by UNICEF, has been officially launched by the Minister of Labour, and approved by the Government as a key priority for 2011.
- As a result of the joint effort of various UN agencies and the National Statistical Service, Armenia Info was launched nationwide as the accredited monitoring system for Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) indicators; the launching was for UNICEF the occasion to advocate for an increased focus on equity in data analysis.
- The child health certificate and passport, introduced by the Ministry of Health with UNICEF support, with the allocation of extra budget to child health services for 2011, is a major step towards improved access for vulnerable families and reduction of informal payments in child health services.

### Significant Shortfalls

- Despite the substantial technical supervision provided to the EU-funded Situation Analysis report, the result is not satisfactory; negotiations are ongoing with the EU Delegation for the required revision of the report.
- Due to the reduced capacity of the CO, related to the departure of two Project Officers, some shortfalls occurred in achieving results in Child Protection (on the de-institutionalisation programme, and on the inter-sectoral work on the continuum of services) and in Local Planning (on the promotion of child focused Local Action Plans).
- Unforeseen delays in defining the policy framework on flour fortification slowed down the implementation of the programme: the concept note and action plan developed by the expert group supported by UNICEF are awaiting governmental approval.

### Collaborative partnerships

- Within the DIPECHO funded programme on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), UNICEF's role has been crucial in formulating a joint plan of action involving the three implementing agencies and Government counterparts, ensuring the optimization of resources and coordination towards emergency preparation initiatives in schools.

## 2. COUNTRY SITUATION AS AFFECTING CHILDREN AND WOMEN

The National Progress Report on MDGs signalled challenges towards achieving the goals in Armenia, largely due to the global financial crisis. National targets may not be met on a number of key goals, including poverty reduction, child mortality and maternal health <http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=87>. Status of all MDG-related indicators is reflected in Armenia Info posted on <http://www.armdevinfo.am/>.

In 2009 the GDP declined by a devastating 14.4%, but reversed to a positive growth of 2.6% during the January to November period in 2010. Likewise, after a 25% collapse in revenue collection in 2009, the state budget revenues started to show better performance (around 10% more than planned in the 2009 Budget Law), with a significant improvement in budget deficit ratios and deficit financing pressures. As a result of improvements in fiscal stability, the government increased the pension allocations and some other social transfer programmes, and also introduced a mandatory increase of 8% in the minimum salary level. However the total poverty rate increased from 27.6% in 2008 to 34.1% in 2009 – with a peak of 38.1% for children, among whom those with disabilities are indicated as the most vulnerable (with a 70% poverty rate) (<http://www.armstat.am/en/?nid=82&id=1202>).

Despite the crisis, the allocations for family benefits were less than initially planned in 2009, and around 7000 beneficiaries were excluded from the system. The government explained this with the improvement in the targeting of the programme; however, excluding non-eligible beneficiaries without improving coverage does not seem to represent a mitigation measure. In fact, the coverage of poor and extremely poor families with social protection measures decreased from 2008. The Government, however, is looking at modifying its approaches to address barriers in access to family benefits.

The 2011 State Budget adopted by the National Assembly falls short of ensuring sufficient conditions for improving the situation in the social sectors. Resources allocated under the education sector account for 3 percent of GDP in 2011 against 3.1 percent in 2010 and 3.35 percent in 2009. Although the 2011 Budget Law provides for a 13 percent increase in allocations to the health sector compared to 2010, this is still below the level of 2009 and accounts for 1.66 percent of GDP against 2 percent pledged in the Sustainable Development Programme (SDP) - formulated before and suspended during the crisis. Likewise, the Mid-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), which the Government of Armenia resumed after suspension in 2009, gives little hope for an improved situation in the coming three years in Education, Health and Social Protection, in particular family benefits. Yet family benefits remain one of the most crucial tools to control poverty in Armenia. Given the current increase in prices, especially for staple foods and essential public utilities such as gas, there is high risk that more people will fall into poverty and extreme poverty.

### **3. CP ANALYSIS & RESULT**

#### **3.1 CP Analysis**

##### **3.1.1 CP Overview:**

The new Country Programme focuses on child rights monitoring and social policies, and on system strengthening in the social sectors. In view of the limited resources of the Country Office, the bigger implementation capacity of other UN agencies, and of the comparative advantage of UNICEF in working upstream, the whole programme focuses mainly on policy advocacy and partnership for the promotion of children's rights, with specific focus on equity of access to quality social services.

The first year of the programme cycle was focused on strengthening the cooperation with traditional and new Government counterparts, in consideration of the timeframe of the Intermediate Results, which are all planned to be achieved in 2015. Particular attention was paid to the identification of areas which require an inter-sectoral collaboration, both within UNICEF office and at Government level. The focus on public finance management and budgeting for children was consistently increased, with the aim of promoting informed decisions at policy level.

The milestones achieved in the different programme areas are the result of a combination of strategic approaches, which are described in the following section.

##### **3.1.2 Programme Strategy**

###### **3.1.2.1 Capacity Development:**

UNICEF for the first time engaged with paediatrician and neonatologist associations, research institutes and State Medical University to build a common understanding and create a broader platform in addressing gaps in accessibility and quality of mother and child health services through capacity development of these entities and their further involvement in policy development and delivery of pre- and in-service training activities.

The joint UN programme to promote ArmeniaInfo as a monitoring tool for indicators related to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) focused on increasing the skills of National Statistical Service (NSS) staff on management and utilisation of the software. The training of

trainers was completed with the aim of expanding the use of the database at regional level. NSS will also work with the regional decision makers in promoting the use of data for the identification of needs of the most vulnerable, and the enhancement of planning exercises.

A model of integrated social services for Armenia was outlined, as the result of a thorough analysis of the capacity assets and needs in social services, carried out with UNICEF support through the involvement of senior European social services managers in a peer exchange programme. The model will help promote case management at sub-regional level, and project resource management at regional level. The ultimate aim is to better orient resources and professional capacities towards the needs of the most vulnerable families, and eventually to increase the social protection coverage.

Within the DIPECHO project on Supporting Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) amongst Vulnerable Communities, UNICEF focused on the capacity development of national institutions responsible for DRR in education. A core team of specialists from the Ministries of Education and Emergency Situations, and the National Academy of Crisis Management, was supported in developing training programmes on disaster preparedness, aimed at preventing and mitigating potential disasters' impact on schools and pre-schools. As a result, 24 teachers from rural and urban schools most prone to disasters are equipped to disseminate knowledge on disaster risk reduction, and 132 regional education and emergency authorities and community leaders are committed to make DRR initiatives in education more systematic and sustainable.

### **3.1.2.2 Effective Advocacy:**

The presentation of data on Child Poverty at a Parliamentary hearing (February 2010) raised the attention of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Social Affairs, representatives from the ministries and Ombudsman office, international organisations and local NGOs on the higher vulnerability of children among the already vulnerable poor population. The initiative also opened the debate on the most appropriate policy solutions to address the low level of coverage of social protection measures, enhancing the position of UNICEF in the dialogue with the WB, IMF and the Ministry of Labour on social policies.

UNICEF has been continuously advocating for government approval of a programme for flour fortification (FF), presenting FF as the most effective way to reduce micronutrient deficiencies in Armenia. A Concept Note and Plan of Action were developed with UNICEF support, approved by all concerned line ministries and submitted to the Government for endorsement. Upon endorsement, the Concept Note will serve as a legal basis for implementation of the FF national programme.

The evidence and solid recommendations presented in the report on the *Evaluation of Inclusive Education Programmes and Policies*, launched in 2010, allowed UNICEF to engage in a dialogue with all the key stakeholders in the country to address equity and inclusion in education. Media events and round table discussions were organized to strengthen the communication and coordination between different partners working towards the scaling-up of inclusive education (IE), and progressively reduce the presence of special schools and residential institutions for children with disabilities, who are recognised as the most vulnerable of all children. UNICEF recommendations were endorsed by the Ministry of Education, and reflected in various policy documents (e.g. State Standards of General Education; Procedures of Internal and External Assessment of Schools).

In addition, the NGO Bridge of Hope, a leading IE partner, benefited from the participation in the regional meeting on 'Exploring Collaboration in Inclusive Education in CEE/CIS', organised by UNICEF RO, which provided an opportunity for an exchange of current researches, strategies and approaches to inclusive education in the region

### **3.1.2.3 Strategic Partnerships:**

UNICEF established strategic collaboration with World Vision in the field of mother and child health. The major result in 2010 was the launching of the initiative on the Child Certificate: starting from January 2011 each child from 0-7 will be guaranteed free hospital services, owing to the newly ensured transparency in the documentation of health interventions, and to the allocation of earmarked budget for child health services. All newborns will also be provided with a child health passport which will serve as a communication tool for better parenting.

At present, the major provider of funds in the social sector in Armenia is the World Bank, with whom UNICEF aimed at progressively increasing its strategic partnership. The first successful collaboration started around a school preparedness programme funded by the WB that has already enabled 42 communities to receive grants for the opening of preschool services. UNICEF contributes to the full training of the professional staff involved, while the WB supports the hardware component. UNICEF advocated reaching the most vulnerable communities and the revision of preschool funding modalities to guarantee the sustainability of ongoing efforts.

A second area of engagement initiated in 2010 is related to the reform of Integrated Social Services: UNICEF promoted a model of service provision focused on individual needs and entitlements. Recognising UNICEF's specific expertise, the WB (which funds the reform with a USD 5.0 million loan), jointly with the Ministry of Labour, committed to align the functional revision of the current social protection system along the model to be piloted in 2011 with UNICEF support.

The focus on social protection services allowed UNICEF to engage also in a closer partnership with the IMF, which showed great interest in working towards social policies issues, and its availability for a joint initiative to further promote budgeting for children.

As per MoU signed between USAID, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNAIDS, and the National Statistical Service (NSS) with the aim to support the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) 2010, UNICEF provided MACRO International with MICS modules on child labour, child discipline and birth registration for inclusion into the DHS questionnaire.

### **3.1.2.4 Knowledge Management:**

UNICEF contributed during the year to the production of solid evidence aimed at increasing the awareness and informed decision making of Government counterparts. The most significant among these knowledge products and/or knowledge building initiatives are:

- The Child Poverty analysis included in the 2010 Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia, provides data on poverty prevalence among children with various social profiles, consumption-based poverty, material deprivation and housing deprivation.
- The rapid assessment on residential care institutions, conducted by the Association of Social Workers, provides a solid baseline on the situation of institutionalised children, their contacts with families and their access to services, which will be used for the drafting of a master plan on de-institutionalisation.
- The report on infant birth and death registration in the country provided recommendations for setting up of an inter-ministerial working group, appointed to devise legal measures necessary to ensure the right of every child to receive a birth certificate.
- The evaluation report on quality assurance systems in mother and child health services (included in a Regional Office initiative and in line with the Concept on Improvement of the Quality of Health Services endorsed by the Government in 2010) was completed. The recommendations of the evaluation will be used to develop a model of quality monitoring of child health care services.
- At the request of the Ministry of Labour, UNICEF engaged international experts to help frame the guidelines on the implementation of integrated social services according to the European framework, and outline a model tailored to the assessed capacities and re-organisation potential of Armenian social services.

- In agreement with the Ministry of Territorial Administration, UNICEF promoted a thorough analysis of budget allocations to services for children in two regions of the country, which will be used for further engagement of local authorities in the promotion of local child-focused social action plans and advocacy with the government on child friendly budgeting.
- ArmeniaInfo database has been developed by NSS and posted at [www.armdevinfo.am](http://www.armdevinfo.am).

### **3.1.2.5 C4D Communication for Development:**

In 2010 the Country Office developed a concept note on implementing the “Every Child Needs a Family” communication campaign in line with the Government’s and UNICEF’s policy supporting de-institutionalisation of children. The concept note outlining communication problems, participant groups, general messages as well as communication channels was submitted to the Ministries of Education and Labour and Social Issues for discussion and approval. Following positive feedback from the main stakeholders, the concept paper was finalised and after careful screening, a private company was selected to implement the campaign in 2011-2012.

To ensure institutionalisation of child participation in decision-making processes, the Country Office developed a concept paper on creation of a web-based platform to promote child participation in decision-making. Based on the innovative use of social media, the concept paper emphasises establishing direct links between School Student Councils and decision-making institutions such as the National Assembly of Armenia, Ministries of Education, Health, Labour and Social Issues, Youth Sports and Culture, and the Ombudsperson’s Office, as well as including the maintenance of the web-based platform among functions of one of the above-mentioned entities. The above proposals were commended by all key stakeholders to be involved in the project’s implementation scheduled to begin in 2011.

In 2010 the Country Office initiated a KAP Baseline Survey to assess knowledge, attitudes and practices of school administrators, school and pre-school teachers and schoolchildren in disaster preparedness and reduction before and after implementation of the Disaster Risk Reduction in Education Project. The Survey will help to assess whether incorporation of disaster preparedness and reduction into school curriculum will lead to behavioural changes in participant groups and vulnerable communities.

### **3.1.3 Normative Principles**

#### **3.1.3.1 Human Rights Based Approach to Cooperation:**

The overall programme implemented stemmed from the new programme cycle, designed in 2009, applying the principles of a human rights based approach. In support of this approach, the two components of the programme are focused on the identification of the most disadvantaged groups of children among the population through data analysis and advocacy initiatives in social policy; and on the increased engagement of duty bearers in providing appropriate responses to the needs of the most excluded and vulnerable. Several initiatives were launched in 2010 to sustain the active participation of right holders in claiming and protecting their rights. Among others,

- The recently established Public Group for Monitoring Residential Care Institutions focuses mainly on monitoring the wellbeing of institutionalised children and identifying cases of abuse or violation of their rights, giving them the opportunity to express their needs and concerns.
- The introduction of the child health passport and certificate will enhance the awareness and skills of parents in monitoring the growth and health status of their children, while ensuring full access to health services for children.
- The web platform for children in Armenia, to be launched in 2011, as agreed with the National Assembly representatives, will be a primary channel for increasing the focus of decision makers on children’s rights, ensuring the active involvement of children and young people.

- The endorsement of UNICEF recommendations on the enhancement of inclusive education in various policy documents reflects the increased commitment of the Government towards the rights of children with disabilities, on which UNICEF programmes are increasingly focused.

The planned engagement of institutional bodies mandated to monitor and protect children's rights (such as the Ombudsperson office and Parliament members) was delayed due to a shortage in the capacity of the office, and the appointment to other positions of key stakeholders with whom the dialogue was initiated. The office intends to complete the planned activities within the second year of cycle of the rolling work plans signed with the Government.

### **3.1.3.2 Gender Equality and Mainstreaming:**

Following the gender review conducted at the end of 2009, the office intended to involve a gender expert, with the support of the Regional Office, to further identify specific areas of work to enhance gender equality and mainstreaming within the country programme. The activity has been postponed to the beginning of 2011.

The evidence produced so far by various researches in the different areas of work related to children does not appear to indicate any significant gender inequality in children's access to social services or in their social inclusion. On the other hand, among the adult population in Armenia, gender inequalities are known to be prevalent. These relate primarily to inequality in decision making processing and work opportunities for adult women, along with domestic violence against women. The data on violence against women as reported in the *Nationwide Survey on Domestic Violence against Women In Armenia 2008-2009* (UNFPA) indicate that this phenomenon is a common occurrence in Armenia and that intimate partner violence accounts for the greatest share of physical and psychological violence and controlling behavior and, probably, of sexual violence. As member of the UN-led Theme Group on Gender, UNICEF contributed to the designing of a common action plan that includes, among other activities, the capacity development of UNCT members and gender focal points on promoting gender equality and mainstreaming. UNICEF will contribute to the initiative in 2011 with the involvement of a gender expert identified by the RO.

Adhering to the joint UN Armenia fundraising effort in this area, UNICEF contributed to the drafting of two joint project proposals, aimed at enhancing gender equality in the country (with the inclusion of an education and public awareness components, where UNICEF would be directly engaged) and at advancing the action plan on combating violence against women (under the coordination of UNFPA).

### **3.1.3.3 Environmental Sustainability:**

UNICEF supported the Foundation for the Preservation of Wildlife and Cultural Assets (FPWC), a leading environmental organization in Armenia, to conduct activities in response to a global UN call for action on the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity. A summer camp for children and adolescents was organized to raise the young participants' awareness for their "environmental rights" and their ability to express, demand and advocate for these rights in their local communities in the future. A special curriculum on "Water and Biodiversity" and a Manual for Environmental Education was developed with theoretical lessons and practical tasks, accompanied with a DVD screening educational activities on environmental protection issues included in the manual. The manual was shared with the Ministry of Education for diffusion in Armenian schools, educational institutions and communities.

The attention and engagement of the Ministries of Education and Emergency on disaster risk reduction was substantially increased during the first phase of the DIPECHO funded project promoting the emergency preparedness in schools of the 4 regions of Armenia most prone to natural disasters.

## **3.2 Programme Components:**

**Title: *Child rights monitoring and social policies***

**Purpose:**

The overall aim of the programme component is to support the Government in addressing the cross-cutting issues of child poverty and regional disparities as well as institutional weaknesses and capacity gaps. Towards that end, throughout the entire programme cycle (2010-15), the Country Office (CO) intends to contribute to building the capacity of the Government to identify and address the needs of vulnerable children at national and local levels, both through the data produced by national and regional networks, and through the implementation of a child-focused local action plan.

As the initial step towards the achievement of the planned results, the following results were planned for 2010: (i) improvement of data collection and analysis on child poverty, and on the overall situation of children; (ii) improved monitoring of MDGs indicators through ArmeniaInfo; (iii) increased attention on the coverage of social protection measures for families and children; (iv) establishment of the institutional framework for child-focused local planning, with the active involvement of local authorities and service providers.

**Resources Used:**

Total budget approved for 2010 as per CPD: USD 508,000

Available funds and utilization for 2010 from all sources:

- CPD-approved RR of USD 308,000 with an implementation rate of 70%
- CPD-approved OR of 200,000 with implementation rate of 97% (including full utilization of 7% set-aside and RR for OR)

Special allocations:

- 7% Set-Aside "Recovery with a human face" (USD 153,900)
- RR for OR: MICS funds for use as a contribution to DHS (USD 24,000)
- Thematic funds for Policy Advocacy and Partnership for Children's Rights (see below)

List of donors: Government of Spain through Thematic Funds for Policy Advocacy and Partnership (USD 165,000).

**Result Achieved:**

The major achievements in this component for 2010 are related to child-focused data analysis and to social policies addressing disparities and improving social protection.

The presentation of the Child Poverty Analysis report at a Parliamentary hearing (February 2010) gained the attention of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Social Affairs on child poverty and disparities in the country, and led to the incorporation of a chapter on child poverty within the annual poverty snapshot (*Integrated Living Conditions Survey 2010*), launched by the National Statistical Services in December 2010. The report highlights not only the alarming increase of poverty in 2009 (with higher rates for children over the rest of the population, and a peak for children with 2 or more siblings, and children with disabilities), but also a reduction in the coverage of poor and extremely poor families with social protection measures (Family Benefits, reaching only 24% of poor and 58% of extremely poor families).

The increased focus on the most disadvantaged groups of children also received the attention of the WB, key partner of NSS for the analysis of data on poverty, and of IMF, which agreed with UNICEF to publish a box on child poverty and social policies in the next Staff report (February 2011).

The completion of the training for NSS national staff (TOT) on the use of Armenia Info, and the launching of the programme, which saw the joint engagement of UNICEF and other UN agencies, contributed to the improved monitoring of MDGs indicators, and also allowed UNICEF to advocate an increased focus on equity in data collection and analysis.

With the aim to contribute to the improvement of social protection services for vulnerable families, UNICEF engaged with the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues (MOLSI) in enhancing the recently launched reform of Integrated Social Services. The facilitation of peer professional exchanges of senior social services managers of Armenia and Italy (as one of the countries with the most mature experience of European integrated social services) resulted in the outline of a model of social services for Armenia, focusing on case managers as the key professionals engaged in integrating services around the needs of families.

The work carried out in support of the social services sector reform highlighted the pivotal role of UNICEF and led to the strengthening of key partnerships with prominent decision makers (MoLSI and MoTA) and with major donors such as WB (which, primarily engaged in supporting the reform, showed an increased interest in cooperating with UNICEF, aimed at avoiding duplications and aligning interventions), and IMF (which included the legal reform component related to integrated social services as a structural benchmark for the new loan arrangements for 2011-13). The reform saw also greater attention and engagement of USAID (previously working in the same sector) and of Save the Children, interested in strengthening the role of case managers as a key step towards the effective provision of social and child protection services to the most vulnerable families in Armenia.

The reform has the full support of the Government of Armenia, and will be one of the main vehicles for increased inter-sectoral cooperation in the social sector. The work carried out in this programme will facilitate the strengthening of social sector systems (outlined in the second PCR) in the future.

The reform is also related to the development of social action plans at regional level, linking the work of service providers directly interacting with families with the progressive improvement of the allocation of resources for the set up of services responding to the specific needs of the population at local (regional) level.

However, due to a major shortfall in UNICEF staff (the Planning officer post was vacant for 4 months) progress in the area of local planning did not achieve intended milestones.

The regional budget analysis recently finalized focuses on allocations to social services for children in two regions (where child-focused local plans are to be developed), offering a solid baseline for the engagement of regional administrations on data analysis and planning. Upon the request of the Vice Minister Territorial Administration, the report is to be shared with all the line ministries involved, before being presented to regional governments and service providers.

### **Future Workplan:**

For 2011 the office plans to build on the major achievements of 2010, towards the results planned for the overall programme cycle:

The progress towards use of reliable data, social policy and budget analysis to allocate resources to vulnerable children will be achieved through:

- Strong policy advocacy with high-level representatives in government, in close cooperation with IMF and the WB, using the evidence produced by the child poverty analysis;
- Engagement of NSS and Family, Women and Children Units at regional level, towards the improved collection and analysis of local data on MDGs and specific vulnerabilities (also through the use of ArmeniaInfo);
- Support to the piloting of the model of integrated social services already outlined with the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, focusing on (i) identification of vulnerabilities, case management and referral at local level; and (ii) engagement of regional departments in project and resource management (the resources allocated

to promote equity will be utilised in this area of work, with the provision of qualified technical assistance).

Closely linked to the above, the progress towards the realisation of child-focused local action plans in at least two regions will be achieved through the engagement of policy makers and local authorities in the definition of an institutional framework for the development of child focused local action plans.

**Title: *Systems strengthening in social sectors***

**Purpose:**

The overall aim of the programme component is to support the Government in reducing the disparities in access to quality social services for girls and boys. In particular, throughout the programme cycle (2010-15) it focuses on creating a fully functional continuum of services for vulnerable children and families in at least two regions; addressing disparities in access to quality inclusive education for children, starting from pre-school; and addressing disparities in access to quality mother, child and adolescent health and nutrition services.

The programme results planned for 2010, focusing on health, education and child protection areas were: (1) establishment of Intensive Neonatal Care Units; enhancing capacity of health providers on neonatal and antenatal care and IMCI; identification of gaps and opportunities to address adolescents' health needs; support fortification of flour with micronutrients; (2) define a policy framework for improving the inclusiveness and quality of education services; expansion of school readiness programmes in 35 vulnerable communities; (3) development of a Master plan on de-institutionalisation, through inter-ministerial cooperation; engagement of national institutions (Government, National Assembly, Ombudsperson) in the promotion of children's rights; enhanced emergency preparedness in child protection.

**Resources Used:**

Total approved funds for 2010 as per CPD: USD 809,000 (379,000 RR and 430,000 OR)

Available funds and utilization for 2010 from all sources:

- RR of USD 376,000 with an implementation rate of 88%
- OR of USD 430,000 of which USD 319,000 allocated for use during 2010, with an implementation rate of 90%.

Special allocations: Global Thematic Funds for: Global Girls Education (USD 13,600); Basic Education and Gender Equality (USD 294,000 for use up to end 2012); and Child Protection (USD 70,000 for use up to end 2012).

List of donors: Government of Norway (USD 194,000 for use up to end 2011); European Commission ECHO (USD 219,000 for use up to end June 2011); UN Trust Fund for Human Security (USD 88,000); Dutch NatCom (USD 182,000 for use up to end January 2012); USAID (USD 10,600); Local private sector (MGA Water for USD 17,000 and HSBC Bank USD 1800).

**Result Achieved:**

The office focused on areas of collaboration between health, education and child protection sectors, as an initial step in addressing fragmentation and capacity gaps in social services. The following initiatives were promoted:

- Attention towards children living in residential care, and in particular those with disabilities, was leveraged in 2010 through a series of initiatives which saw the involvement of the Ministries of Labour, Education and Territorial Administration. The rapid assessment on residential care supported by UNICEF provides a baseline on demographic data of institutionalized children, their access to basic services, and the protection of their rights. The report complemented the recommendations included in the *Evaluation of Inclusive Education Programmes and Policies* (published in 2010) on how to enhance inclusive education and promote de-institutionalization in the country. The documents will be discussed in 2011 within the inter-ministerial working group appointed to define a Master Plan on de-institutionalisation, one of the strategic priorities of MoLSI for 2011. The delays in the achievement of planned results in child protection are related to capacity gaps within UNICEF, which are now overcome with the recruitment of a new Child Protection Officer.
- Greater attention was paid to violation of rights of children living in residential care, following publicity around an unfortunate occurrence of sexual abuse of young girls in a special boarding school. The active engagement of several NGOs led to the establishment of a Public Group for Monitoring Residential Care Institutions, in constant dialogue with the responsible Ministries. The group is mandated to assess the situation of institutions and provide recommendations for improvement, identify and prevent child rights violations, and refer cases to the competent Ministry. The capacity of the group has been developed with UNICEF support.
- An assessment of system responsiveness to school-age children and adolescents' health was conducted by MoH in collaboration with MoES and UNICEF support, providing recommendations for the improvement of quality and accessibility of health services for adolescents. At the same time, a comprehensive healthy lifestyle course for high schools (grades 10-11) was developed and piloted during 2010 as a result of the joint support of UNICEF and UNFPA.
- UNICEF is working with Yerevan State Medical University and State Pedagogical University on the development of modules on maternal and child health and nutrition as well as on healthy lifestyle, to be integrated into pre-service education, with the aim of enhancing the capacities of service providers in a sustainable way.
- The recommendations of the UNICEF-supported study on the existing gaps in infant birth and death registration were immediately accepted by an inter-ministerial working group, and received the attention of the Deputy Prime Minister in ensuring the necessary measures to grant a birth certificate to all children.

### **Future Workplan:**

Building on the activities undertaken during the first year of implementation of the programme, the following key areas are envisaged at the inter-sectoral level:

- Identification of specific areas for cooperation (internal and external) towards the set up of a continuum of services responding to the most vulnerable groups of the population, in accordance with the reform on integrated social services and the definition of local action plans. Specific focus will be on improved access to services for children with disabilities and system responsiveness to adolescents' health;
- Enhancement of the engagement with institutional bodies (ombudsperson, national assembly) on the promotion of children rights (through international exchanges and country-led initiatives);
- Promote the rights of particularly vulnerable groups of children through awareness raising campaigns and the creation of a web platform to promote child participation in Armenia;
- Finalise the Master Plan on de-institutionalization, defining medium-long term plans for the transformation of institutions, reallocation of resources, re-qualification needs for staff, requirements for the set up of alternative services.

At the sectoral level, the following priorities are identified:

- Additional establishment of 4 intensive neonatal care units in three marzes and upgrading skills of health providers; assessment of PMTCT services; establishment of parental education centres within health services in two marzes;
- improving access to quality nutrition services and prevention of micronutrient deficiencies through the development of a comprehensive national nutrition policy and initiation of production of fortified flour;
- modelling of CFS to operationalize state normative acts on quality and inclusiveness of education supported by an advocacy campaign;
- support the expansion of low cost preschool services in 35 more communities, with the professional preparation of staff;
- strengthen capacities of the education authorities and children services for implementing disaster preparedness and risk reduction programmes in 24 schools and communities.

## **4. OPERATIONS & MANAGEMENT**

### **4.1 Governance & Systems**

#### **4.1.1 Governance Structure:**

The year marked the beginning of a new programme cycle of six years in line with the UNDAF. An office retreat was organized in early 2010 to deliberate on management priorities and staff responsibilities, discuss staff development and results of the Global Staff Survey and how they could be addressed, orient the staff on risk management, review and discuss Emergency Preparedness activities and agree on a calendar of major events, all of which contributed to the preparation of a two-year Office Management Plan (OMT), along with the programmatic two-year Rolling workplans developed in line with new programme structures.

Weekly Monday morning meetings with all staff were used for information sharing on priority activities of every staff during the week and brief overview of events and actions of the previous week, which also promoted better coordination. Upon return from trainings and regional meetings, all travelling staff were required to conduct a briefing for others on the contents of the workshops and meetings.

Standing agenda items were identified both for CMT (10 meetings held) and Programme meetings, and management indicators in line with the OMT were reviewed each time and actions agreed on to address gaps. Additional topics as required were discussed during both meetings and decisions communicated to all staff.

Based on the new guidelines for travel, PCA and SSFA for working with civil society organizations, processes were streamlined and user friendly mechanisms established by the CMT. The Office placed a special emphasis on financial spot checks of all implementing partners with PCAs or SSFAs.

To improve internal information sharing, a new E-book with updated forms and procedures was introduced and placed on a shared drive to provide easy access by all staff.

An electronic field trip report system was revised and put to use for monitoring follow up actions, and continues to be improved to address its flaws.

For the first time, given the initial year of the programme cycle and the low resources available, the office decided not to conduct a full fledged annual review meeting with all partners but to conduct individual sectoral review meetings to discuss joint actions and plan for 2011.

#### **4.1.2 Strategic Risk Management:**

With the support of the Regional Planning Specialist, a Risk Control Self Assessment exercise was conducted in July with all the staff participating, to jointly identify categories and levels of risk perceived as priority in the context of the country office. Interestingly, the highest risks were perceived in the context of our role in working upstream and maintaining a strategic position and visibility, rather than operational and financial risks. Based on the intensive work done, a Risk and Control Library was finalized, the actions and deliverables of which would form the basis of strict adherence for implementation and monitoring as part of Programme meetings and the CMT for 2011 and beyond.

BCP and EPRP were updated, with the latter fully migrated into the Early Warning Early Action (EWEA) system. Additional efforts and enforcement mechanisms are required to ensure compliance with planned preparedness activities. A briefing was conducted by an EMOPS Specialist for all staff on the new developments in the EWEA. The new system gives increased options to different staff and more responsibilities for individual response and information management.

The Representative, EPRP Focal Point and Operations Manager participated in the Interagency Contingency Planning workshop organized by UNDP with strong support of UNICEF, including EMOPS, in the context of an earthquake simulation. The list of recommendations identified will be followed up by the Disaster Management Team working group for appropriate follow up actions.

#### **4.1.3 Evaluation:**

The 2010 IMEP was developed based on the multi-year IMEP for 2010-2015. The implementation of the IMEP activities was closely monitored by the CMT at every meeting and adjustments made as required. No evaluations were planned for 2010. The CO developed a management response to the evaluation of Inclusive Education conducted at the end of 2009, which was posted on the intranet in early 2010 and monitored during the CMT. A roundtable was organized with relevant stakeholders to discuss the findings of the Evaluation and to advocate with the Ministry of Education the need to act on the recommendations that the Ministry considered as priority and feasible to ensure a systematic approach. The experience of using the Management Response System and existing internal mechanisms was shared by the M&E Officer at the Regional meeting of M&E officers in September 2010.

The Regional Office provides a facility whereby country offices can be supported with review of TORs for evaluation to ensure quality, roster of consultants and feedback provision on draft reports.

#### **4.1.4 Information Technology and Communication:**

ICT resources and services are in line with UNICEF policies and standards including remote access via Citrix, efficient user support, and effective business continuity. The Office replaced all desktops and old laptops with new energy-saving laptops to ensure

proper functioning under Windows 7 and Microsoft Office 2010. During the year a new Domino Server was installed, supporting a continued messaging system.

The office has been successfully piloting ProMs 9.1.

All servers, workstations and laptops are configured to receive antivirus updates from SEPM and UNICEF Standard Security upgrades through an Automated Patch Downloader. The Office ensured the first backup Internet connectivity through a 3G provider. A backup connection BGAN continued to operate. The CO is fully compliant with minimum IT MOSS. A BCP server was installed in a backup office and routing internet connectivity arrangements were agreed with a local internet provider.

During the year about 60 Service Calls were handled through the GHD.

Armenia has started to support Blackberry service allowing service access for the Representative and Deputy Representative, although the service is not fully functional abroad.

The CO successfully installed a functioning video conferencing facility used 6 times during the year.

To ensure smooth operation of ICT in the absence of the ICT Assistant, an ICT Assistant Replacement Guide was introduced, outlining functions of different UN agencies and the RO. The initiative was considered by the RO as a good practice and shared with other offices. A system of backup support on services that can be outsourced and user/equipment support has been agreed to by ICT staff of the UN offices. UNICEF supervises the demarcation management of the local ISP shared between 4 UN Agencies.

All staff are equipped with VHF, but field vehicles have yet to have VHF installed as part of MOSS. Sufficient numbers of Thuraya cards were available and can be activated during an emergency in addition to the two functional ones.

All network services (web/mail/ProMS replications/etc.) were run over the VPN. UNICEF VoIP and local VoIP routers operated efficiently.

The ICT Assistant completed all UNICEF HQ recommended IT trainings in Information Security and was certified with the Regional IT Training-ITIL Level 3.

## **4.2 Fin Res & Stewardship**

### **4.2.1 Fund-raising & Donor Relations:**

The Office was fully compliant with timely donor submissions although few in number. All PBAs were entirely utilized before expiry without any extension requests, due to the rigorous monitoring done during CMTs. The OR funds mobilized matched the ceiling, given their modest level.

A number of new funds came through in 2010, including those from the Government of Norway, Dutch Natcom, DIPECHO (the latter two through regional proposals), UNICEF funds from 7% set-aside to address recovery with a Human Face, and Thematic funds for Policy Advocacy and Education. The Office continued its cooperation with a Private Water Company (Clearwater) which also ensured extensive visibility for UNICEF.

As a Joint UN Programme funded by the Human Security Trust Fund is coming to a close, the involved UN Agencies agreed to pursue a subsequent funding request for a new project to be implemented in areas with a high population of internally displaced. New funding for a Regional Project on Juvenile Justice will also begin in 2011. UNICEF also contributed to a Joint UN Programme proposal on gender equity.

A set of short one-pagers on priority areas for funding were prepared for potential donors. Throughout the year, UNICEF diligently engaged with the EU Delegation in Armenia in promoting alignment of approaches as well as soliciting their increased engagement in Child-related issues.

Discussions are under way with the private sector and prominent figures in the country to set up a mechanism for leveraging resources in areas that would be most beneficial to fulfilling children's rights. This work will be an important activity for 2011 and would require support from HQ in programme partnerships.

#### **4.2.2 Management of Financial and Other Assets:**

The budget planning as part of the Rolling workplans gave appropriate flexibility for implementation within a broader allocation scheme and was very effective, enabling a range of activities to be in line with planned budgets.

As per the HACT assurance plan, all NGO partners were assessed through spot checks to ensure sound financial practices.

Bank reconciliations and month and year-end closures were completed on time.

The expenditure rate of RR was 85%. There were no DCTs outstanding for more than 6 months during any part of the year. No funds remained from expired PBAs.

#### **4.2.3 Supply:**

Procurement of programmatic and office supplies/hardware were carried out through the local market as well as the Supply Division via offshore and direct ordering.

Within the framework of the MoU signed between the CO and the Ministry of Health (MOH), the Office successfully assisted MoH Procurement Services offered by Supply Division for all the country vaccines and other non-vaccine supplies requested by the Government. An additional procurement arrangement has been organized for an NGO funded by Armenian diaspora providing funds for vaccines.

The Office continued to use supply plan as an effective planning tool and ensured timely preparation and submission of the plan to the CMT. To increase the CO's operational efficiency, CMT revised the ITB limit in line with the revised Supply Manual. Out of 23 UN Common Services, the Office led 3 and was actively involved in another 15, providing necessary technical expertise and support to relevant Task Forces and other common activities implemented during the year.

The Ministry of Emergency Situations provided space to UNICEF for warehousing emergency supplies thereby resulting in savings of warehouse costs.

The Office's Operations Manager was nominated as a member of the newly established UN Local Advisory Committee for Procurement and efficiently provided professional

expertise to ensure that procurement processes are properly followed and decisions made are cost-effective.

UNDP took over administration of common services and premises in January 2010 from UNICEF. However, within the framework of security enhancement strategy, UNICEF continued to follow up on two pending issues: new ITB was conducted for the procurement of construction services for a total amount of US\$51,233 -the services are planned to be rendered in 2011. After the completion of the construction works UNICEF will supervise the works related to the installation of bollards.

A number of service contracts were signed for ancillary services, including cleaning and office clerk, as well as regular maintenance of computer equipment. The ancillary service contract was cancelled due to indications of non-compliance of the contractor with agreed upon labour regulations, and a new contractor selected for the start of 2011.

#### **4.3 Human Resource Capacity:**

Three recruitments took place to cover a Temporary Assistance post for Disaster Risk Reduction and the posts of Child Protection and Planning Officer, which became vacant as a result of the resignation of the former incumbents. Interviews were conducted by the 4 staff members who had undergone CBI training and all cases were submitted to the new CRB.

A NETI Health Expert joined the office in October but only for 6 months due to the start of her maternity leave corresponding with her start of work in Armenia.

Despite rigorous monitoring during CMTs, timely individual workplan developments and PER completions were far below the targeted 100%.

Three temporary support missions were conducted by Armenia staff: Communications Officer to Georgia and Geneva; and Finance Assistant to Montenegro.

The Programme Assistant (PA) supporting the Health Section was given an SPA to replace the incumbent on maternity leave, given his technical background and expertise. All PAs participated in at least one training or study tour outside the country, as related to their areas of work. Functions were streamlined so that each PA was supporting two Project Officers.

The SA Chair participated in the Global SA meeting and organized a briefing meeting. In June, the new SA Committee was elected.

The annual Training and Learning plan was prepared with significant support of the HRDT and approved based on the Office's priorities, relevance to their work, and costs. Individual and group trainings were organized to respond to requirements of the Country Programme. In 2010, the UN organized trainings on the minimum standards for HIV in the workplace, Security and First Aid. Respective staff members completed mandatory IPSAS training with 100% completion rate. Mandatory learning hours were instituted for 2 hours every other week; however, compliance was low.

As a follow up to the Global Staff Survey results and during the Office Retreat, key priority areas were identified by the staff for improvement including: Personal Empowerment, Work/Life Balance, Job Satisfaction/Motivation, Career/Professional Development and recommendations made for follow-up.

## **4.4 Other Issues**

### **4.4.1 Management Areas Requiring Improvement:**

In general the UN Common building provides a significant opportunity for cost savings when common services are shared, especially security.

UNICEF introduced a mechanism for recycling paper which was expanded to all other UN agencies in the common UN building.

Following a CMT decision and introduction of a new procedure for dispatch of MIP claims by staff members, the Office saved US\$1,900 on UN pouch expenses.

Car maintenance costs were reduced by US\$1,400 through introducing a UN LTA and enhancing internal monitoring of costs.

The Office saved about US\$ 2,700 based on free warehouse space provided by the Ministry of Emergency Situations under a MoU. Funds were also saved through use of local VoIP.

The Office was also part of wholesale procurement of hygiene supplies administered by the UN Building Manager.

Based on discussions during the CMT, a common understanding was established to avoid the use of business class tickets by all staff in case of eligibility.

### **4.4.2 Changes in AMP:**

The main changes to the AMP are the result of the actions envisaged as part of the Risk and Control Library prepared for the Country Office. The library includes a series of measures as well as monitoring and control mechanisms to address the nine key risks identified for the UNICEF context in Armenia.

## **5. STUDIES, SURVEYS, EVALUATIONS & PUBLICATIONS**

### **5.1 List of Studies, Surveys & Evaluations:**

- 1. Survey of Child Focused Public Finances in Armenia*
- 2. Rapid Assessment of Residential Care Institutions*
- 3. Strengthening Health Services for School- age Children and Adolescents in Armenia*
- 4. Gender Issues Ten Years after the Women in Transition*
- 5. Strengthening the System of Birth Registration in the Republic of Armenia*

### **5.2 List of Other Publications**

- 1. Assessment of Juvenile Justice (JJ) Reform Achievements in Armenia*
- 2. Evaluation of Inclusive Education Policies and Programmes in Armenia Report*
- 3. Towards Alternative Child Care Services in Armenia: Costing Residential Care Institutions and Community Based Services*
- 4. Healthy Lifestyles Teacher's Manual*
- 5. Survey of Child Focused Public Finances in Armenia*
- 6. Environmental Education Manual (DVD included)*
- 7. "It's About Ability" Explanation to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*
- 8. Healthy Lifestyles Tabloid books*

9. "Compasito" Human Rights Education for Children Manual
10. Gender Issues Ten Years after the Women in Transition Analytical Report (MONEE)
11. Women and politics (special issue)
12. Intensive Neonatal Care (INC) Guidelines and Modules
13. Materials for 6th International Film Festival for Children and Youth (catalogues and programmes)

## **6. INNOVATION & LESSONS LEARNED:**

**Title:** *Institutionalization of Child Poverty Analysis*

**Contact Person:** Sona Karapetyan at Skarapetyan@unicef.org

### **Abstract:**

Child poverty is the main cause of children's exclusion and marginalization in Armenia, though it has yet to be ranked sufficiently high in the decision makers' agenda.

The recently concluded analysis of child poverty undertaken with support from UNICEF intends to generate and inform future debates, and increase the attention and commitment of Government representatives towards improved budgeting for children.

Based on the above analysis, the formulation and inclusion of a chapter focusing on the poverty of children, within the annual Poverty analysis published by the National Statistical Services, is a concrete positive sign of the attention beginning to be paid to the issue by key national stakeholders, as well as by major donors.

### **Innovation or Lessons Learned:**

The innovation offered by the report is its specific focus on children, and among them, on the most vulnerable categories of children. The success of the study and of the initiative was possible owing to the high level of technical competence/preparation of NSS, which is considered one of the best national agencies among the countries in the region; the convincing methodology provided by the York University, involved in the process; and the optimum cooperation existing between UNICEF and NSS. The relevance and soundness of data was also a useful tool to leverage the exchange with IFIs on issues related to budgeting for children.

### **Potential Application:**

Focusing poverty analysis on children and producing reliable and scientifically sound data is a very good advocacy tool to raise the attention of policy makers on crucial issues affecting children in any country. The realization of the report (such as the one carried out in Armenia) is possible only through cooperation with an efficient National Statistical Service which collects poverty data systematically. In order to keep children high on the agenda of policy makers, the presented solutions for the reduction of poverty need to take into consideration the opportunities existing in the country, the entry points, the political readiness towards innovative solutions and the economic constraints.

### **Issue/Background:**

The National Statistical Service (NSS) has conducted Integrated Living Conditions Surveys (ILCS) since 2004. The related report, Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia provides annual information about the social situation, poverty trends, access to social services and the economic developments in the country. Using the opportunity of data availability, UNICEF proposed analysis of Child Poverty which was initially done as a separate report through technical assistance from York University. The methodology was subsequently adopted by NSS to analyse data focused on children rather than families as the unit of reference.

### **Strategy and Implementation:**

In 2009, York University was engaged by UNICEF's Regional Office to analyse data on poverty (Integrated Living Conditions Survey) in Armenia provided by the NSS. The report on child poverty produced and presented at a parliamentary Social Affairs meeting in 2010, highlighted the higher risk of poverty for children than the rest of the population, and the social conditions determining their higher exposure to poverty.

The report proposed also the introduction of a universal child benefit, instead of the targeted social assistance provided at present (which reaches only one fourth of all the poor families, and 58% among the extremely poor) as a way to drastically reduce child poverty. Although the debate on this issue of universal child benefit has started, it has yet to gain the required political momentum to move forward.

After the presentation of the study, NSS agreed to include a separate chapter with a child poverty focus within the annual *Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia*, thus increasing the attention of policy makers towards the most vulnerable group of the population.

York University shared the methodology for the data analysis, and supported the work of UNICEF in suggesting improvements to the questionnaire utilized during the year for the survey, with the introduction of more child-focused deprivation indicators.

### **Progress and Results:**

The NSS report was recently launched, and will be presented to high level Government representatives at the beginning of 2011, increasing the attention towards better budgeting for children, with the involvement and support of the IFIs.

The discussion around child poverty has the full engagement of the WB, which is technically supporting the NSS in the production of the report, and launched the idea of a South-Caucasus Conference on child poverty and social protection to be organised in Georgia in the first quarter of 2011.

Data on child poverty included in the report will also serve as a basis for further discussions with the IMF, which has already requested UNICEF to provide a textbox on child poverty in the next IMF Staff report to be published in March 2011.

### **Next Steps:**

The report will be used for promoting improved budgeting for children, and leveraging the debate on possible solutions for the reduction of child poverty among decision makers and donors. Based on the revised ILCS questionnaire, the 2011 report will also include analysis of child deprivation.

## **7. SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION:**

As part of the social policy component of the new country programme, UNICEF will systematically support data collection on the situation of children in Armenia at national and regional levels, and facilitate the use of such data for the design of needs-oriented responses in the social services. The above activities will be linked closely to the work done by the National Statistical Services (NSS) in data collection, and that done by the Ministry of Territorial Administration (MoTA) in the promotion of local social action plans.

Given the positive experience of Serbia in the effective use of the UNICEF-supported DevInfo for data collection and analysis, and on the development of child-focused local action plans, the UNICEF Serbia Country Office kindly agreed to organize a study visit for Armenian representatives. The visit aimed at facilitating a direct experience of good practices and innovative ideas in the development of the two areas of work mentioned above.

During the visit, representatives from NSS, MoTA and the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues (MoLSI) drawn from the national and regional levels, became acquainted with the experience of the Statistical office in Belgrade on the use of data produced through DevInfo for the designing and governance of child focused local action plans, and on promoting the role of children in national or local dialogue on issues bearing on children.

As a follow up to the learning experience, in 2011 NSS is planning to develop regional level ArmeniaInfo database, for use by decision makers for developing and monitoring child focused local action plans.

The above work will be undertaken in collaboration with regional bodies focusing on the collection and analysis of data, and the identification of specific needs of the most vulnerable groups of the population in different regions. The use of a regional version of Armenia-Info will be piloted in the two marzes where the development of local action plans will be supported.