

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This has been an important year for consolidating achievements of the current country programme and laying the ground for the new one focusing on the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Programme implementation led to a number of strategic results: UNICEF's position as a partner of choice for policy formulation and technical advice was strengthened; the OR significantly increased due to resources leveraged from GFATM (UNICEF got a GFATM sub-recipient status on PMTCT with overall budget of US\$518,000 for two years) and UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UNCT joint project of UNFPA, UNICEF and IOM) on improving capacity to counteract and prevent domestic violence, especially against women and girls with a budget of US\$885,000.

In 2010 the Presidential Programme "Children of Belarus" and National Programme on Demographic Security for 2011-2015 were drafted, and the State HIV Prevention Programme for 2011-2015 was approved by the Council of Ministers. UNICEF had been involved in reviewing and contributing inputs to these critical documents shaping the evolution of the social policy in relation to children.

UNICEF support over the years to the national PMTCT programme has been instrumental in decreasing the mother-to-child HIV transmission rate to 3.5% in 2009. More than 90% of HIV positive pregnant women and newborns received ARV prophylaxis in 2010. Belarus is on track towards virtual elimination of MTCT by 2015.

Given the enormous prestige of 2010 Junior Eurovision Song Contest (JESC) in Belarus UNICEF engagement in this contest gave an important opportunity to strengthen cooperation with the Government, advocate for children's rights with special needs and to raise UNICEF visibility.

The expected progress in development of juvenile justice (JJ) system has not materialized. Since March 2009, a JJ Concept paper is under consideration by the Presidential Administration and awaits approval. This delay is impeding the improvement of legal frameworks and their alignment with international standards.

Partnership, networking and alliance-building have been critical strategies for improved relevance, efficiency and proactive work. Over the years, UNICEF has successfully developed close working relationships with line ministries, local authorities and NGOs.

2. COUNTRY SITUATION AS AFFECTING CHILDREN AND WOMEN

Belarusian Economy begins to recover. Real GDP rose by 7.2% in January-November 2010, driven by recovering export demand and private consumption. Labour market starts to pick up. In 2010, employed population increased by 0.6%, while registered unemployment rate decreased to 0.7% of the economically active population.

Inflation rose at the same rate as year before. Consumer prices increased by 8.9% since the beginning of 2010, food price - by 11.3%. Real wages raised by 11.6%.

The Budget comes under strain due to decreasing revenues and worsening terms of oil trade with Russia. The external debt increased essentially over last two years reaching 48.8% of GDP. 9.9% of GDP went toward servicing the country's foreign debt.

Nevertheless Belarus maintains stable level of public social expenditure representing 62.7% of the total.

The country's progress along the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is impressive in some areas. Belarus achieved the MDG1 to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. In Q3 2010, 3.8% of households had income below the SMB. The proportion was higher (5.9%) in rural areas. Significant regional disparities pose extra challenges for poverty alleviation.

The poverty level of households with children also decreased, from 8.6% in 2008 to 7.5% in 2009. Even with the decrease, the number of children under 15 living on less than the SMB is considerable, about 170,000 or 33.8% of the total low-income population.

Belarus has already achieved MDG 2, 3, 4 and 5. U5MR constituted 6.2 per 1,000 live births in 2009 (6.0 in 2008). Similar trends have been noted with infant and maternal mortality. In 2009, IMR was 4.7 deaths per 1,000 live births, (4.5 in 2008). However, in rural areas IMR still remains above average (6.3). In 2009, MMR was 0.9 per 100,000 live births, compared to 3.0 in 2008.

Negative trends in youth health are observed. In 2008, the share of adolescents with chronic diseases and disabilities amounted to 21.7% versus 14.6% of school children of all age groups. Smoking, alcohol consumption and drug misuse by adolescents are growing risk factors.

As of January 2010, there were 25,984 orphans and children deprived of parental care in formal care. Of them 7,899 children (30.4%) resided in 85 public residential care institutions and 18,085 children (69.6%) were in substitute family care, including guardianship, foster families, and family type children's homes. In 2010, de-institutionalization strategies resulted in placement of 74% of new cases of children deprived of parental care in family-based alternatives (an 11.5% decrease of children in residential care versus 2009). UNICEF continues to advocate and support the country's efforts to expand the on-going practice of return of children deprived of parental care to their biological families.

Due to focused interventions child disability has decreased. Nevertheless, 25,867 disabled children and some 120,000 children are in need of special education. Children with disabilities represent 35% of all institutionalized children.

As of November 1, 2010 the cumulative number of HIV cases increased to 11,562 which are 10 % higher than in 2009; 65.7% of those infected are aged 15-29. Growing number of HIV positive reproductive age women, HIV positive pregnant women and newborns were reported. As much as 40.1% of the newly registered pregnant women in 2010 found their HIV positive status during pregnancy. By November 1, 2010, a total of 1,713 children had been born to HIV positive mothers, and 173 children had their HIV diagnosis confirmed of whom 8 died.

Over the last five years, while the number of crimes committed by minors decreased by 40.5%, a high level of recidivism points to the need for additional efforts to support

delinquent juveniles with individual rehabilitation and educational opportunities in their place of residence.

Major publications in 2010 include the final report of the nationwide study on violence against children, which was presented to Government officials and NGOs. The report analyses violence against children in the family, at school/institution and in the street, and gives recommendations on improvement of the existing system on violence prevention and response.

To ensure the quality and reliability of the reported data, UNICEF provided expert and technical support to the national counterparts in preparing the women's and children's health section of the UNGASS Report and the Global Reporting Tool on Health Sector Response to HIV/AIDS.

Sources:

1. Belarus MDG Report 2010 - <http://un.by/f/file/CRDT-belarus-2010.pdf>
2. Belarus UNGASS Report 2010
http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2010/belarus_2010_country_progress_report_ru.pdf

3. CP ANALYSIS & RESULT

3.1 CP Analysis

3.1.1 CP Overview:

In 2010 UNICEF Belarus placed greater programming emphasis on advocacy for children's and women's rights, policy advice and legal frameworks improvement, strengthening national partners' capacities to address children's needs and rights, support to child rights monitoring and reporting on their status, facilitation of experience exchange and replication of good practice.

UNICEF's position as a partner of choice for policy formulation and technical advice was strengthened in 2010. UNICEF had been involved in reviewing and contributing inputs to the drafts of the Presidential Programme "Children of Belarus" and National Programme on Demographic Security for 2011-2015 as well as the State HIV Prevention Programme for 2011, thereby shaping the evolution of the social policy in relation to children.

Through technical assistance, modeling of good practices and capacity development the programme contributed to the Government's efforts to improve adolescents' health, promote healthy lifestyles and safe behaviour of young people. Life skills-based education was advanced, the peer education concept was developed and methodologies in education were improved. A network of the youth-friendly health centres (YFHCs) has been established. The centres have received strong support from local authorities, and are included in regional health plans and budgets.

UNICEF continued to be a leading agency in providing knowledge transfer and further support to the development of the BelarusInfo as an effective tool to capture disparities and social exclusions that are often hidden by national averages, for informed policy-making.

In 2010 UNICEF Belarus continued to maintain existing and develop new approaches to attract public attention to the child rights issues. UNICEF engagement in JESC 2010 gave an important opportunity to strengthen cooperation with the Government, advocate for children's rights with special needs and to raise UNICEF visibility.

UNICEF continued its collaboration with national and local governmental authorities as well as NGOs. The child-friendly city initiative is proving to be an effective vehicle to promote closer collaboration with high-level decision-makers at the local level.

3.1.2 Programme Strategy

3.1.2.1 Capacity Development:

2010 saw a major emphasis on development of professional capacities in the child care sector. Activities on improvement of the national policies and legislation on de-institutionalization have been coupled with those on enhancement of capacities of service providers on the use of referral mechanisms, inter-disciplinary planning of interventions, the child environment assessment framework, individual protection plans for children, including those with disabilities, rehabilitation plans for families in crisis, and prioritization of family placement before the institutionalization of the child. As a result, there is steady decrease in numbers of orphaned children and children deprived of parental care in institutions and increase in number of children in alternative care and those returned to their biological families.

UNICEF in coherence with UNFPA shifted from pilot projects to development and institutionalization of sustainable and comprehensive system of peer education.

Consolidating efforts on HIV and AIDS treatment, care and support were also focused on capacity development and quality assurance.

The country's preparedness to protect children in emergencies is on the national agenda. The Ministry for Emergencies' capacities to take under its control potential threats related to small, medium and big accidents on the country-wide scale are well developed and advanced. It is unlikely that in case of emergency UNICEF would be called upon for technical assistance.

Due to UNICEF's timely, relevant, cost-effective and value-added advocacy, communication strategy and technical assistance provided during the period 1997-2009, the Republic of Belarus pursued activities to reach the goal of IDD elimination through USI. The country-led evaluation "IDD elimination programme in Belarus" (2009-2010) concluded that Belarus has reached the goal of USI and adequate iodine nutrition of the entire population. The evaluation identified the Government's ownership as mature and sustainable, and recommended UNICEF to pursue the exit strategy by the programme end-cycle.

3.1.2.2 Effective Advocacy:

Several advocacy strategies were elaborated focusing on child rights in general, and on issues of equal rights for the most vulnerable including children deprived of parental care, children with disabilities, and children in conflict with the law. Different tools or their combination were used to raise people's awareness, attract society's and government's attention to the target groups' needs and rights, give additional professional information and algorithms of the work for specialists, and promote the integration of international standards in national legislation. Mass media and major cultural events are used for advocacy purposes: TV to telecast specially made PSAs, to deliver messages during main social talk shows at two national channels (ONT and TV1), JESC 2010 broadcasting, interviews in radio stations and web-portal TUT.BY, as well as publications in printed and electronic mass-media.

In cooperation with other UN agencies UNICEF assisted the MoH in development of the 4th State HIV Prevention Programme for 2011-2015. UNICEF advocacy efforts resulted in integrating the child friendly and family-centred approaches in PMTCT and Paediatric HIV services provision. The Programme has also the objective of supporting the setting-up of integrated services for families with HIV positive and exposed children and providing support to the association of parents of HIV positive children.

Major advocacy efforts during 2010 were geared to JESC 2010 that took place in Minsk on the CRC Day, November 20th. The cumulative audience of JESC 2010 was represented by 16 countries and guesstimated 50 million people. According to the national estimates Belarus audience came up to the country's population. The theme of JESC 2010 was devoted to equal opportunities and the non-barrier environment for children with special need. Thematic messages were sent out before and during the show. Added value was given by effective interaction of all parties involved: UNICEF, EBU, Belarus TV, Presidential Administration and line ministries.

Resulting from the persistent CRC recommendation and UNICEF's long term advocacy efforts, the UNDAF for 2011-2015 envisages the creation on a pilot basis of a Child rights Ombudsman Office.

As a result of continuing advocacy the National Statistical Committee has agreed to conduct MICS4 in 2011.

3.1.2.3 Strategic Partnerships:

In 2010 there were encouraging developments and new opportunities for UNICEF to significantly consolidate strategic partnerships, networking and alliance-building. UNICEF supported networks of policy makers and technical experts and facilitated exchange of experience, dissemination of best practices and consensus building on child rights issues. UNICEF effectively collaborates with the Parliament on improvement of the legal framework related to child rights monitoring and CFCI scaling up.

Led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the course of preparation and during JESC 2010, the strategic partnership with National State TV and Radio Company was reinforced. The National Statistical Committee (Belstat) is a key counterpart in undertaking comprehensive socio-economic data collection and ensuring its availability to other national stakeholders and decision makers as well as to the annual update of the MONEE database. Belstat is an implementing agency of the project jointly funded by UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and UNAIDS on development of the BelarusInfo database to facilitate the monitoring of MDGs' progress and children's and women's situation at national, regional and district levels.

Striving for the better health of youth and adolescents UNICEF in coherence with UNFPA coordinated the implementation of the joint project "Peer Education" aiming to protect youth health from major risk factors (HIV, STI, smoking, alcohol and drug abuse) and healthy life style promotion. Joint efforts were underpinned by pro-active work of NGOs in the process of project implementation.

Strategic collaboration with UN agencies was strengthened during the common work undertaken to formulate the first ever UNDAF for Belarus. UNICEF continues to play a proactive role within the UNCT and in its theme groups (HIV/AIDS, Gender, Chernobyl, and Migration). UNICEF also supports the recently established group on Democratic Governance.

Partnership with the civil society is also evolving and embraces assistance to families having young children, children with disabilities, and children victims of violence and trafficking; promotion of healthy lifestyle and child rights; and bringing peer education technologies to schools and health care centres.

3.1.2.4 Knowledge Management:

UNICEF's role in knowledge management strengthened over the course of the year. The Country Office (CO) provides support to a number of studies and evaluations that facilitate collection of disaggregated data on the situation of children and women in Belarus and on factors affecting their well-being.

In 2010 the BelarusInfo database was updated with the 2009 statistical data. Its list of indicators was analysed and revised to promote and capture disaggregated data up to the district level, and sample templates were elaborated and forwarded to all oblast statistical offices for their use. The computer software for automated export of data from the national statistical system to the BelarusInfo database was developed, tested and shared with all oblasts to make it easier for the statisticians' work on processing about 50% of data being uploaded into the BelarusInfo. Training and advocacy events conducted by Belstat in oblasts' main cities contributed to expansion of the DevInfo technology and use of the BelarusInfo in the socio-economic data collection and analyses undertaken for planning and monitoring.

Baseline data on at-risk adolescents (ARA) including most-at-risk adolescents (MARA) was finalized with the focus on assessment of adolescents' vulnerability to HIV infection, risky behaviour patterns and needs for appropriate services addressing their health issues. The ARA/MARA baseline research report is currently under validation by key government partners and NGOs, and when finalized, will be disseminated nationally and regionally. The report's data will be used for evidence based decision making and development of ARA/MARA strategy for 2011-2015.

UNICEF has a critical role in assisting the country in monitoring the situation of women and children in the context of HIV for informed reporting on the progress towards universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support for PLHIV and MDG6. To ensure the quality and reliability of the reported data, UNICEF provided expert and technical support to national counterparts in developing the women's and children's health sections along with calculation of the PMTCT and Paediatric HIV indicators, which were included in the UNGASS Report and the Global Reporting Tool on Health Sector Response towards HIV.

3.1.2.5 C4D Communication for Development:

The C4D Child Friendly City Initiative is recognized in Belarus as a well evolved C4D approach to creating an enabling environment for child development and meaningful participation. The programme, increasingly led by the MoE, is multi-faceted involving a combination of direct engagement of children and adolescents, mobilization of various stakeholders (local authorities and communities, CSOs and media), and participatory research.

3.1.3 Normative Principles

3.1.3.1 Human Rights Based Approach to Cooperation (HRBA):

The HRBA guides all UNCT and UNICEF Belarus planning and implementation activities. It was applied in the development and finalization of the first ever UNDAF and CPD for 2011-2015, and used as a tool to guide and engage UN agencies and key stakeholders in analysing human/child rights violations.

Revision and improvement of the child protection system in the country is considered as an overarching framework within which the rights of all children and especially those in need of special protection measures are addressed. Improvement of legal frameworks in the light of the best interest of the child, increased national institutional capacities and improved care practices for children and families are important components both of national actions and of joint activities.

To advocate priority issues of concern in relation to fulfillment of women's and children's rights, UNICEF submission to CRC Committee as well as UNCT submission to CEDAW Committee were prepared. They contain concrete recommendations that the Committees can make in relation to implementation of the Conventions and what the State Party should address.

3.1.3.2 Gender Equality and Mainstreaming:

UNICEF Belarus pays significant attention to gender mainstreaming, and supports the Government and civil society efforts for promoting gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment. Issues related to the status of women were mainstreamed in all research and analytical activities. All data collected were disaggregated by gender to compare the situation of girls/boys and women/men in the country and help identify whether and where gender-based discrimination exists.

The Fifth Joint UN Information Campaign to prevent domestic violence in Belarus, coordinated by UNFPA and co-funded by UNFPA, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNDP, IOM, UNDP, and OSCE, was held in 2010. Its main goal was to increase the level of public and particularly men's responsibility in tackling and overcoming the problem of domestic violence (White Ribbon, a men's initiative was mainstreamed into the campaign to mobilize men to condemn violence against women and take action).

All communication and advocacy activities, including national Nike Junior Tour, OneMinutesJunior, a photo-seminar on "Child Rights – Your Rights", and JESC, complied with gender equality principles providing same opportunities to both boys and girls for being heard and involved.

UNICEF coordinated the development of UNCT submission to the CEDAW review of the country's 7th periodical report. Along with other agencies, UNICEF highlighted the need to more effectively address violence against women, promote family planning and sex education in the face of decreasing but still high numbers of unwanted adolescents' pregnancies resulting in high number of abortions, as well as take additional measures to diagnose and treat breast cancer. UNCT submission also underlined the necessity to transform existing gender stereotypes.

In gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment, UNICEF works closely with UNFPA, UNDP and IOM. Most recently the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women has endorsed UNCT proposal (UNFPA, UNICEF and IOM) on improvement of the national capacity to counteract and prevent domestic violence, especially against women and girls (budget US\$885,000).

Within the framework of MONEE project country analytical report "Gender issues 10 years after the "women in transition report" was prepared.

3.2 Programme Components:

Title: *Early childhood development*

Purpose:

The strategic goal of the programme component is: Young children under eight increasingly benefit from good start of life.

The main planned results for 2010 were: agreed exit strategy for sustainability mechanism of IDD prevention; achieved interagency cooperation for integrated early care and rehabilitation of children U3 with special needs and their families; enhanced knowledge base and skills of the medical and educational professionals in assistance to newborns and young children with special needs; gained MoH commitment in creation of unified early childhood intervention national system; enhanced knowledge of parents and future parents on early childhood education and care.

Resources Used:

Total approved for 2010 as per CPD: USD 732,751.80

Total available for 2010 from all sources: RR: USD 203,178.96; OR: USD 529,572.84;

Total: USD 732,751.80

Any special allocations (list): N/A

List of donors: European Commission; the Netherlands Committee for UNICEF.

Result Achieved:

a) ECI:

In all, 83 parents and 232 specialists were trained with new skills in providing care to children U3 with cerebral spastic infantile paralysis and autism spectrum conditions. About 3000 children benefit from new ergotherapy services included in their rehabilitation plans. The development of ECI national system was integrated into the Presidential Programme "Children of Belarus" for 2011-2015 draft. At present 34 ECI centres function on the basis of children's polyclinics premises nationwide.

UNICEF assisted in development of the "National ECI resource centre" to build the knowledge base of specialists and parents in ECI.

Developed with UNICEF assistance, Early Childhood Learning and Development Standards (ECLDS) were adopted by MoE Resolution 90. This is the alignment document for preschools curricular development and preschool conditional norms. The course "Educational standard of preschool system" was added to post-graduate and graduate pedagogical programmes. The MoE provided preschool education departments with instructions on ECLDS use.

The issue of "responsible parenting" was included in the draft of National Programme on Demographic Security for 2011-2015. UNICEF supported the pilot course "Formation of responsible parenting among youth" aimed at students' behaviour change in family planning with gender perspective. Five national educational institutions included the course in their curriculum. The "Better parenting package" consisting of 62 educational brochures with focus on psychological development of children U3, was developed.

In all, 25 preschools in 23 districts of Gomel oblast improved their capacity in working with families, and 320 families were reached with materials and consultations on early education and parental skills. Three kindergartens were equipped with educational and developmental games and toys.

The equipment for intensive newborn care was procured for 15 medical institutions situated in Chernobyl-affected areas, and 49 medical professionals (obstetrician-gynaecologists, anaesthesiologists and resuscitation specialists) from the respective institutions were trained in the equipment's use.

b) Flour Fortification: The technical automatic line for flour fortification (FF) was installed at the Minsk Mill factory. It was tested for using the premix (E, B1, B2, B3, B6, B12, folic acid, pantothenic acid, biotin and vitamin C). Market research showed the population of Minsk city is interested in having fortified flour available for purchase. However, some reluctance in government counterparts delayed the introduction of the FF strategy. Additional advocacy efforts and engagement of other partners are needed to address government concerns and advance FF nationally.

c) IDD Elimination: The country-led evaluation of "IDD elimination programme in Belarus" (2009-2010) concluded that Belarus has reached the goal of USI and adequate iodine nutrition of the entire population. The evaluation identified the Government's ownership as mature and sustainable, and recommended UNICEF to pursue the exit strategy. The evaluation was a participatory process and led to the formulation of the progress report submitted to the Network for Sustained Elimination of Iodine Deficiency featuring informed by key data supporting IDD elimination and USI achievement.

d) The National Conference on "Prevention of micronutrient deficiency disorders" organised in cooperation with MoH resolved that the Government commits to include ID biological monitoring in the national monitoring system. The National ECD conference organised in cooperation with MoE took stock of policies and practices which specifically relate to quality of management and conditions in preschool system.

Future Workplan:

- Review the advocacy efforts for FF and advocate for MoH's recommendation on voluntary FF;
- Assist MoE with development of monitoring programme on quality of preschool system services;
- Assist MoE in improvement of parental skills in care for children U3, including prevention of traumas and poisoning;
- Assist MoE and MoH in strengthening of interagency cooperation for better coverage of children U3 with early ergotherapy services;
- Enhance the knowledge base and skills of medical workers in newborn care;
- Assist MoH in creation of national ECI system, including development of ECI national concept and standards.

Title: Children and young people's health and development and HIV/AIDS prevention

Purpose:

The strategic goal of the programme is to protect children and young people from HIV and other risks undermining their health and development.

The main planned results for 2010 were:

- advanced YFHC functioning and scaling up;
- strengthened capacity of the health care providers on quality PMTCT and Paediatric HIV services provision;
- gained commitment of the MoH decision makers on the early infant diagnosis on HIV including DBS method;

- enhanced meaningful youth participation in decision making and CFCI implementation;
- approved normative and methodological basis for peer education's institutionalization.

Resources Used:

Total approved for 2010 as per CPD: USD 313,000.00

Total available for 2010 from all sources: RR: USD 208,555.04; OR: USD 82,938.92;

Total: USD 291,493.96

Any special allocations (list)

List of donors: UNDP/USA Administrative Services Section; European Commission; Swedish Committee for UNICEF.

Result Achieved:

Key Results

The major focus of UNICEF activities was on YFHS scaling up, professional capacity development, and ensuring YFHC networking prioritizes youth health issues in Chernobyl affected areas. Five new YFHC were opened in Gomel, Mogilev and Brest oblasts in addition to 11 already functioning. The methodological basis was enhanced and 120 medical professionals improved knowledge and skills on ASRH. UNICEF assisted MoH in establishment of the Informational-Methodological Resource Centre in Minsk. The website www.junior.by developed earlier facilitated YFHC networking.

To address system gaps in PMTCT, identified in the course of the 2009 evaluation, the National Strategy on PMTCT was developed, and strategic partnership between UNDP, UNICEF and MoH was built. UNICEF was approved as sub-recipient of PMTCT component of the project "Prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS in the Republic of Belarus-2" financed by GFATM. The DBS method for EID HIV was presented and discussed at the National Round Table and DBS method piloting was recommended.

The promo-campaign "test for the healthy life" was started by a public event-concert in Minsk with participation of 1200 young people to promote provider-initiated HIV counselling and testing of pregnant women emphasizing the necessity of their partners' HIV testing. UNICEF assisted MoH in revision of the order and methodological recommendations on pre and post-test HIV counselling. Six national experts attended TOT training and 350 health care providers acquired new knowledge at cascade on-job training in all oblasts.

UNICEF's comprehensive approach to key well-being issues of children was applied through implementation of CFCI and children's empowerment to become pro-active builders in their cities. Youth Parliaments were created in 4 cities that joined CFCI in 2009. Representatives of Youth Parliaments shared ideas, exchanged experience of adult-youth cooperation at the 1st International Conference on "Creating a favourable environment for children in the modern city". The conference engendered greater interest towards CFCI and motivated Municipalities of Minsk, Brest, Lida and Novopolotsk cities to join CFCI in 2011.

Jointly with UNFPA, UNICEF continued to strive for the institutionalization of Peer to Peer education on HIV, focused on smoking, alcohol and drug abuse prevention in the system of secondary education. Joint efforts resulted in the approval of the concept "Realization of the principle 'peer educates peer' in the mainstreamed secondary schools" by MoE and enhanced involvement of NGOs. In all, 26 oblast and regional coordinators on peer education management, 53 teachers and 42 youth leaders were trained on interactive techniques of youth peer's trainings with active participation of NGOs facilitators.

Critical factors or Constraints

Insufficient financial and human resource support from government partners was an impediment to implementing IMRC. Limited appreciation among counterparts of the

advantages of integrating EID in the Pediatric HIV health care system, likewise, affected the integration of the DBS method in the HIV prevention and treatment strategy.

Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)

To ensure the quality and reliability of data included in the Global Reporting Tool on Health Sector Response to HIV/AIDS and UNGASS Report, UNICEF provided expert support to MoH on validation of data collected on women's and children's health.

A baseline survey on behaviour patterns of ARA/MARA, their vulnerability to HIV infection, and their needs for appropriate health services was conducted and will provide a strong evidence base for development of the ARA/MARA Strategy 2011-2015.

Partnerships

In collaboration with MoH, UNDP and WHO, UNICEF built a strategic alliance on PMTCT and Paediatric HIV care. UNICEF and WHO experts assisted National counterparts in development of the PMTCT protocols and PMTCT strategy for 2011-2015, and UNDP supported the protocol's printing and distribution.

UNICEF and UNFPA advocacy efforts enhanced governmental and NGO collaboration in the Peer Education project's implementation, and the MoE benefited from the pro-active role of NGOs in methodological materials development and training of teachers and adolescents.

Future Workplan:

- Assist in National Strategy "On improvement of Children's and Youth Health" development focusing on youth mental health and addictive behavior prevention;
- Optimize YFHC networking and ensure YFHS sustainability;
- Accelerate the Peer Education integration into the secondary school, including monitoring and evaluation system;
- Strengthen PMTCT system with emphasis on EID HIV and HIV counseling and testing of women and partners;
- Enhance cooperation with City Municipalities on CFCI expansion.

Title: *Child protection*

Purpose:

Child Protection Programme aims to ensure that vulnerable children and young people benefit from improved protective environment.

In 2010, the main planned results of the Programme were: improved national child protection standards system, accelerated juvenile justice reform, strengthened community based support programmes for graduates from state care institutions, and capacity of social workers developed to deal effectively with out of school youth and children deprived of parental care; improved inter-agency collaboration involving the civil society in provision of the rehabilitation environment for children and adolescents with disabilities; strengthened system on combating child trafficking and capacity development of professionals involved; counselling and training information centres on radiation safety and health securing behaviour for children and adults set up in 3 selected Chernobyl affected locations; and improved national social data collection system.

Resources Used:

Total approved for 2010 as per CPD: USD 316,000

Total available for 2010 from all sources: RR; USD 167,219.49; OR: USD 45,079.22;

Total: USD 212,298.71

Any special allocations (list)

List of donors: United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security.

Result Achieved:

Results achieved:

- Social pedagogues and child protection specialists from all oblasts equipped with the standards of social-pedagogical work on selection, training of substitute parents candidates, and foster families' support. Relevant amendments were introduced into the normative frameworks on substitute care allowing for reduced institutionalisation of children newly deprived of parental care. In 2010, notably the share of new cases of orphaned children's placement into family care reached 74%, and in 20 out of 118 districts none of the children went to an institution.
- The resource centre on aftercare support programmes for graduates of public care in Soligorsk conducted the next round of the training for 22 social protection specialists from 14 districts of Minsk oblast in building their capacity to provide 878 public care graduates with targeted systemic support helping them to build their independent life. Due to enhanced capacity of social workers from all oblasts in 2009-2010 around 2,300 young people deprived of parental care benefit from improved quality aftercare support.
- A special training course for education specialists was developed and equipped with two teaching aid methodological manuals on counteracting child trafficking and violence against children in Internet. The course was integrated into the Training Programme of the Post-Graduate Academy under the MoE for 2011. A total of 693 education specialists acquired knowledge on awareness raising activities for schoolchildren on child trafficking prevention, 101 parents learned how to better protect children from becoming victims of trafficking, and 2,489 children (49% girls, 51% boys) were trained on self protection from trafficking in children.
- In 2010, the BelarusInfo database was updated with 2009 statistical data. Its list of indicators has been analysed to provide for disaggregated data up to the district level, and sample templates were elaborated and forwarded to oblast statistical offices for use. The computer software for automated export of data from the national statistical system to the BelarusInfo database was developed, tested and shared with all oblasts to facilitate the statisticians' work on processing about 50% of data being uploaded into the BelarusInfo.

Critical factors or Constraints

Insufficient support among government partners to reform the juvenile justice system in accordance with international standards impeded the approval of the Concept paper on juvenile justice in Belarus that was developed with UNICEF support. Similar hesitation is slowing the progress on creating a Childs Rights Ombudsman Institute. UNICEF will intensify its efforts in advocacy to better convey the immense value of both concepts to counterparts in government.

M&E

In 2010 UNICEF, in cooperation with the Prosecutor General Office and line Ministries, conducted a study of the effectiveness of the prevention work undertaken with juvenile delinquents. The aim was to get a comprehensive picture of the status of community based measures on prevention of children's delinquent behaviour, and social integration work being carried out with young offenders towards their rehabilitation. The study helped to assess effectiveness of existing residential and non-residential programmes in assisting children in conflict with the law. A total of 1,150 children and 700 specialists were interviewed. The study got official status by being included in the State Programme on Counteracting with Crime and Corruption for 2010-2011.

Partnerships

The MoE and MoLSP are the main partners in promoting and strengthening the work being carried out at the local level on de-institutionalisation programmes. These are aimed at forming a multi-player system of social support geared to families and children, including aftercare programmes, extension of family based alternatives, and rehabilitation/social adaptation programmes for children with disabilities.

The National Statistical Committee is a key counterpart in comprehensive socio-economic data collection and its dissemination to other national stakeholders and decision makers for use in the annual update of the MONEE database, and in monitoring MDGs.

Future Workplan:

- Promotion of juvenile justice reform in the country through piloting a comprehensive juvenile justice model in selected locations and in custody facilities.
- Further strengthening of the national system of statistical data collection and provision of free access to the disaggregated data on the situation of children and families, social-economic aspects up to district level within the framework of the BelarusInfo database update and extension;
- Acceleration the work of the development of child protection standards system and inter-agencies collaboration on child care reform;
- Capacity development of the national counterparts in prevention and combating of violence (domestic violence in particular) and child trafficking.

4. OPERATIONS & MANAGEMENT

4.1 Governance & Systems

4.1.1 Governance Structure:

There was no change in 2010 from the committees' list in 2009. All through 2010, the advisory and review committees were active and functioned well. Major office objectives and priorities are discussed regularly in the CMT meetings, and the minutes are placed on the shared drive for each staff to access freely. The CMT continued regular monitoring of Office management indicators including budget utilization and other key aspects to stay on track. The CO had no outstanding DCTs more than 9 months.

Supported and guided by UNICEF's Regional Office, Geneva Office and NYHQ, the CO was able to negotiate with and obtain the approval of the government for an office space at minimal rent permissible under Belarus rules. The office relocation plan was prepared to ensure smooth movement of the office to the new premises, which was accomplished with the office's daily activities practically uninterrupted. The new premises are totally compliant with UNICEF standards, which has enabled the office to significantly improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its programme operations and management performance.

4.1.2 Strategic Risk Management:

A structured approach exists to systematically identify, analyse and manage risks and opportunities. Risk assessment will be conducted as a team exercise addressing all governance sectors – operations, programmes, PFP, communications and reviewed at the CMT in early 2011. Risks will be defined based on the risk management system comprising 83 target questions developed by UNICEF HQ.

Business continuity issues are addressed in the AWP and reviewed to ensure a timely response to changes in internal and external operating environments. Security wardens are in place and a telephone tree is established in case of emergency. Regular heads of section and CMT meetings provide opportunities to flag issues of concern. The office's Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans have been updated and

Business Continuity Plans have been tested. These exercises showed that the office's level of readiness and ability to respond to an emergency is adequate.

4.1.3 Evaluation:

In 2010, the Annual IMEP was developed, approved, quarterly adjusted and partially implemented (5 studies & surveys and 1 evaluation).

The purpose of the evaluation of IDD elimination programme in Belarus, planned for 2009 – 2010, was two-folded: (a) ascertain to what extent UNICEF assistance to the Government of Belarus in 1997 – 2010 was timely, relevant, cost-effective and value-added, and (b) assess if, by the end of the programme's cycle in 2010, the Government's ownership had matured and was sustainable for UNICEF to pursue the exit strategy.

To measure the progress and strengthen monitoring role of the Government's systems, the country-led participatory evaluation was designed and conducted in two phases. Phase 1 undertaken in 2009 entailed assessment of the IDD programme implementation, its results and its role in IDD elimination in Belarus; Phase 2 carried out in 2010 consisted of a country-led self-assessment of the achievements in Universal Salt Iodization (USI) in Belarus and the sustainability of the enhanced national IDD monitoring system.

Findings and recommendations of the evaluation were widely shared at the national round table on IDD and greatly contributed to the jointly approved management response as follows:

- The Government will forward the Report on Success of the Programme for Prevention of Iodine Deficiency Disorders (IDD) in the Republic of Belarus to the Network for Sustained Elimination of Iodine Deficiency.
- UNICEF will pursue the exit strategy from the USI Programme.

4.1.4 Information Technology and Communication:

The CO ensured the availability of new IT technologies, implementation of the UN IT security requirements, on-going maintenance of the IT infrastructures, IT support to programmes and e-learning.

The key achievements were:

- The local computer network and the phone network were successfully laid in the new Office premises. All phone numbers were crossed to the new Office premises.
- The second Internet access point was bought. First and second access points were relocated and crossed to the new Office premises.
- All Servers, Desktops and communication and office equipment were successfully installed and tuned in the new Office premises.
- The Office was upgraded successfully to ProMs 9.1 and Briefing Book 570, ProMS Client 9.1 was installed to the Citrix Server.
- The new 3 servers were bought and ProMS, File&Print Server and Server for backups were successfully installed.
- Tape autoloader were bought and successfully tuned.
- All necessary patches were automatically downloaded and installed to all servers, desktops and laptops in the Office.
- The electronic system of legal information, Consultant Plus was set up successfully in operation in the CO.
- The new IP subnetwork (/26) was successfully set up in the Office network.
- The 100% of service calls from GHD were resolved successfully by local IT specialist.
- Stability of the internet connection was on the high level and there were no interruptions and corruptions of the connection during working time.

- MOSS standards are maintained and equipment and data are protected fully.
- 10 tenders of purchase of computers equipment were held for meeting the implementation partners and Office needs.

4.2 Fin Res & Stewardship

4.2.1 Fund-raising & Donor Relations:

Seven donor reports were due in 2010 and all of them were submitted on time.

Fundraising efforts resulted in significant OR increase mainly due to resources leveraged from GFATM (UNICEF was given a GFATM sub-recipient status on PMTCT with overall budget of US\$518,000 for two years) and UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women that endorsed UNCT proposal (UNFPA, UNICEF and IOM) on improvement of the national capacity to counteract and prevent domestic violence, especially against women and girls (budget of US\$885,000).

Within the framework of JESC preparation, extensive groundwork was pursued at the national and international level. Widely acclaimed UNICEF advocacy efforts on child rights featuring barrier free environment for children with disabilities could lead to effective engagement and cooperation with the donor community for the next CPD 2011-2015.

4.2.2 Management of Financial and Other Assets:

In 2010, as in all previous years, budget utilization was regularly monitored and discussed in the CMT meetings enabling the expenditure rates in programme and support budgets to approximate 100%.

There have been no late submissions of donor reports for several years. There were no outstanding DCTs over 9 months. The bank reconciliations were done timely as required by UNICEF rules and procedures, and the Office did not have a single case of late reconciliation or non-reconciled accounts. The Office continues to benefit from the use of the electronic banking system, which gives added value in terms of security and time and cost-efficiency.

At the end of the year the Office bought a new phone station that allowed the VoIP to be used, which added significant savings to the Communication budget by eliminating the expensive option of international phone calls. In addition, replacing SITA with a low cost, high quality local internet service provider lowered the costs by approx.10 times.

4.2.3 Supply:

In 2010 the supplies breakdown was as follows:

- Medical supplies: 72.28%
- Printing: 13.4%
- Equipment: 7.14%
- Souvenirs, gifts, visibility items, t-shirts, etc. (Junior Eurovision contest): 3.73%
- Other (furniture, household equipment, conference materials, misc. office supplies): 3.45%.

The biggest component in medical supplies consisted of the medical equipment for children supplied within the European Commission project for the hospitals in Chernobyl affected areas (including fetal monitors, artificial pulmonary ventilation apparatuses, and infant incubators with accessories). The CO consulted with the SD Copenhagen on the procurement process and submitted all relevant documentation there as well to justify the tender process. The bidding was done in collaboration with the technical experts and national coordinator from the receiver of this medical equipment – the Ministry of Health

of the Republic Belarus. The final decision was made jointly by UNICEF Office and the Ministry of Health.

The printing component is usually fairly big, and the same was true in 2010. The launch of the Kazki project alone cost around 30% of the total printing costs. The expense on the visibility supplies was due to UNICEF's participation in and support of the Junior Eurovision contest held in Minsk of which the CO was the co-organizer. The move to the new premises required additional supplies to adjust the new premises to UNICEF standards.

As in previous years, in 2010 as well, supplies were mostly procured locally.

All supply requisitions and purchase orders for local procurement were made on the basis of the results of Requests for Quotation or Invitations to Bid. All Purchase Orders above US\$ 10,000 were reviewed by the CRC. All locally procured supplies were delivered directly to the end-users by suppliers. All furniture and equipment was correctly installed and responsible staff was trained in the effective use of equipment.

4.3 Human Resource Capacity:

2010 was the final year in the CO's 5 years' programme cycle. With more than a double increase in its budget, the CO submitted to the PBR a new office management structure to support the envisaged programme activities. After it assessed the staffing gaps, it requested two new positions, Child Protection Officer, NOA and Executive Assistant, GS-5. PBR agreed with the Office and cleared two new posts. Five positions were approved for upgrades: Social Policy Specialist to NOD, Child Protection Specialist to NOC, Operations Manager to NOB, and Programme and Finance Assistants to GS-6. After final clearance from HQNY, the CO in November-December 2010 initiated seven recruitment processes for the above mentioned two new and five upgraded posts. The GS positions have been cleared by the Representative in December 2010; National Officers positions have been submitted to RO Geneva for further consideration and approval.

Following its Learning Plan provisions the Office had the Retreat in February 2010 as part of its final preparation for the new CPD development. The professional facilitators had a number of prior discussions with the relevant office staff to prepare the training that would help to further polish and perfect the CPD. The Retreat was assessed by all staff as most practical and extremely value-added.

As part of its Learning strategy the Office approved the participation of one of the Programme Assistants in the Supervisory Skills training. Another staff (the IT Assistant) received funds to pursue a course on English language learning to improve language skills. These are beneficial investments that are helping staff to improve their performance and add to the efficiency of the Office.

With UNICEF switching to new accounting standards, the Office approved three staff (Operations Manager, Finance Assistant and Programme Assistant) to enrol in IPSAS e-learning certified courses.

4.4 Other Issues

4.4.1 Management Areas Requiring Improvement:

As stated earlier, the Office bought a new phone station that enabled the use of VoIP, which is proving to be highly cost-effective. Replacing SITA with a low cost, high quality local internet service provider has also led to costs that are ten times lower than previously.

The Office continues to benefit from the UN common services agreements for banking services, GSM telecommunications, courier, travel agent, hotels, translators/interpreters providing for efficiencies in bargaining power, use of staff time and better rates.

4.4.2 Changes in AMP:

Core management approach will aim at maintaining adequate level of staff abilities, and increased efficiency in leveraging human and financial resources. Within the UNDAF framework, the Representative and the office staff will continue to support the UNCT, and facilitate advocacy, social mobilisation, monitoring and joint programming where appropriate.

The 2011 AMP will follow the thrust of new CPAP and introduce VISION-like management tools and indicators.

Staff learning development will include plans for training and preparing staff for the roll out of key results-focused management initiatives (incl. VISION, IPSAS) and link them with staff development objectives. There will be weekly Management meetings to improve coordination and timely flow of information.

5. STUDIES, SURVEYS, EVALUATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

5.1 List of Studies, Surveys & Evaluations:

- 1. Review of the social assistance package for families with children*
- 2. IDD Programme Evaluation*
- 3. Child trafficking in Belarus study*
- 4. Juvenile Justice Study*
- 5. MONEE Country Analytical Report "Gender issues 10 years after the "Women in Transition Report"*
- 6. Survey of the level of information, knowledge, behaviour determinants and practices of at-risks adolescents (boys and girls) aged 10-17 and young people aged 18-19, their vulnerability and coverage of the services contributing to the reduction of the HIV infection in the Republic of Belarus*

5.2 List of Other Publications

- 1. Manual "Youth Friendly Health Centre"*
- 2. Table loose leaf booklet "To protect yourself, family and children from HIV&AIDS"*
- 3. Leaflet "To protect yourself, family and children from HIV&AIDS" (additional to the booklet)*
- 4. PMTCT evaluation report*
- 5. Booklet "Your child is prescribed the ARVs"*
- 6. Booklet "Prevention of mother to child HIV transmission (PMTCT)"*
- 7. Materials of the National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect*
- 8. Set of the informational booklets on HIV, STI, smoking, alcohol and drug abuse prevention*

9. *Methodological manual on aftercare support for residential care graduates*
10. *Vocabulary-Reference book for foster parents*
11. *Foster Parents Training Course Manual*
12. *Methodological Guidelines on Selection of Candidates for Foster Parents and Supervision of Foster Families and Family-type Children's Homes*
13. *Collection of fairytales "National fairytales for children"*
14. *Report of the National Study on Violence Against Children*

6. INNOVATION & LESSONS LEARNED:

Title: *Junior Eurovision Song Contest 2010 (JESC 2010)*

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Abstract:

During JESC 2010, UNICEF priorities were constantly visible and projected to an estimated cumulative audience of 50 million from 16 countries. Such positioning helps to generate the image of a credible and reputable international agency while encouraging different target audiences to be involved with and invest in UNICEF. The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) and National State TV and Radio Company (BTRC) as major partners shared UNICEF principles and granted enough agenda space for promotion of equal rights for all children, with the focus on children with special needs and participation. This year the show adhered to family values profile and integrated social and responsible content with festival activities.

Innovation or Lessons Learned:

Within the overall advocacy and communication efforts undertaken on a regular basis, the following innovative elements of the JESC 2010 initiative merit consideration: (a) UNICEF song performance; (b) PSA on building barrier free environment for children with disabilities; (c) UNICEF GWA and UNICEF celebrity participation; (d) BTRC's strong assistance and lobbying for UNICEF interests; (e) government commitment to promote child rights and support UNICEF within the framework of JESC 2010. All of the above mentioned elements worked to the fullest except the PSA, which was not included at the JESC 2010 Final international broadcast and was presented only during the UNICEF press conference to international audience and media. At the national level, the PSA will be put on air in 2011.

Potential Application:

As an international information/advocacy campaign, considering the massive visibility of UNICEF and of its content component gained through JESC 2010 and achieved with a relatively modest budgetary investment of USD 42,232, it could be assessed as extremely cost-effective. In addition, the event and preparation for it worked as a powerful tool to engage the partners and the audiences on a sustained basis. This was especially true in respect of the following target audiences (TAs): mass media, children, and their families.

UNICEF'S JESC 2010 partners (EBU, BTRC and MFA) rated the contribution made by UNICEF during the JESC very highly as noted in the official letter of appreciation issued to UNICEF.

Issue/Background:

JESC is an international song competition organised by EBU annually since 2003. It is held in a different European city each year. JESC 2010 was the eighth edition and took place in Minsk, Belarus on 20 November 2010, also celebrated as CRC Day. As an annual cultural and social event for children and their parents, JESC has built a massive audience and ensures broadest coverage and feedback. This year JESC 2010 involved 14 countries: Armenia, Belarus, Belgium, FYR Macedonia, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta,

Moldova, Netherlands, Russia, Serbia, Sweden, and Ukraine. Participants are children selected by national contests by tele/sms voting.

Strategy and Implementation:

The preparatory period to the JESC 2010 lasted a year and a half enabling major partners (EBU, UNICEF and BTRC) to develop and match all parties' strategies for the best interest of a child. Solid support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and responsible partnerships built unique ownership that is perceived as sustainable and replicable hereafter. Major efforts during the process were directed to (a) advocacy, (b) visibility, (c) participation of children with special needs. UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Maria Guleghina took part in JESC event line as well as in UNICEF press-conference held on CRC Day. Belarus singer Dmitry Koldun and all participants performed UNICEF song 'Day Without War'. The song staging was highly branded and 'youtube' browsing points to about 35 000 viewings (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tvIR5IhGuz0>). United celebrities' voice for child rights issues acted as a strong advocacy tool for high level officials, mass media and general public sector.

Progress and Results:

For Belarus CO, participation in JESC was an innovative experience that resulted in (a) intensified demand for information on child rights issues for different TAs, (b) extended mass media coverage for children with disabilities and their social integration, (c) more positive and constructive way of collaboration with national partners, (d) considerable shift in society's attitude to children with special needs, (e) UNICEF visibility at the regional/international level. For the present, the outcome cannot be precisely measured as there was no baseline for it. Therefore its benefits can only be estimated in general terms.

An outstanding breakthrough was accomplished with the voluntary decision of EBU/BTRC to fill the commercial show with socially responsible component.

The following challenges came up during the preparation period: (a) the long time it took to sign the contract between EBU, UNICEF and BTRC suggesting a need for patient follow up; (b) unproductive and detailed negotiations regarding UNICEF GWA. These challenges did not influence the JESC 2010 festive week agenda.

A key challenge that was revealed through the experience of JESC 2010 is the pressing demand on communication and advocacy for better strategic programme planning and management. For UNICEF CO, the challenge remains to promote child rights' values not only among governmental and NGO partners, but among private sector and general population as well. In reaching those vastly larger and varied constituencies, UNICEF's association with ongoing high-profile events that have an established reputation and viewership can be a solid asset to advocacy for children.

Next Steps:

In early 2011 the Advocacy/Communication Strategy for next CPD 2011-2015 will be finalized taking into account previous and the newly acquired innovative experience to more effectively serve the requirements of a new programme structure. Future opportunities with similar high potential as JESC 2010 will be explored using an overarching strategy based on a more comprehensive and sustainable approach with extensive advocacy efforts geared to the following objectives:

- Increasing the visibility and credibility of UNICEF Belarus
- Focusing on promoting the identity of UNICEF and on the results of our activities
- Developing fundraising approaches.