

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The main thrust of UNICEF work in Bulgaria, Child Care System Reform, took a major step forward in 2010 through synergetic efforts with Government, CSO and private sector partners, especially media. A strong political will was demonstrated and funds secured to replace old-type residential care with family-based care. UNICEF contributed to the process through modeling the development of new services, closing down of two old residential care facilities, strong advocacy to mobilize society, and sustained efforts to address capacity gaps of child care system, namely, insufficient capacity of child protection services and inadequate planning at local levels. UNICEF support to the development of foster care contributed to doubling the number of foster families in one year.

UNICEF's public awareness generation and social mobilization efforts were the most prominent and visible feature of UNICEF's contribution to Child Care System Reform in 2010. A national campaign in support of foster care "Every child needs a family" was launched in April 2010, and continued through a 3-month long popular TV show undertaken in partnership with the media house bTV. The TV show reached up to 47% of total viewers (around 2 million people) and managed to raise USD 700, 000 from individual citizens.

Work on ECD and parenting support was somewhat delayed and did not achieve all results planned for 2010. The slow progress was partially due to the limited capacity within the office, and also because of insufficient clarity in the roles of the partners.

Although recruitment of individual pledge donors is slower than expected, due to strict regulations prohibiting direct mailing to private addresses, the overall private sector fund-raising results are impressive. In addition to raising funds for its local programme, UNICEF Bulgaria for the first time engaged in fundraising for children in other countries, raising an amount of over USD 1.0 million for Haiti emergency - the biggest amount raised by UNICEF CO globally.

The overall results of the Country Programme would not be achieved without strong partnership with the media, the corporate sector, the National NGO Network, and the local authorities. The Child Friendly Cities Initiative, in particular, has provided a new partnership platform for engagement at the local level.

2. COUNTRY SITUATION AS AFFECTING CHILDREN AND WOMEN

Two major, contrasting factors affecting Bulgaria's children in 2010 were the continuing negative impact of economic crisis on the most disadvantaged families and children, and at the same time, a mobilisation of resources for better results in child protection reform.

In 2010 (with a Q3 2010 GDP estimated at 1,759.73 USD per person), Bulgaria was one of the few EU countries where economic decline continued with 21% overall poverty rate (for Q1 2010). The poverty rates in the two main ethnic minority groups - Turkish and Roma - were significantly higher than among the Bulgarian majority. Almost 75% of the Roma population lives below the official poverty line and three out of five live in extreme poverty.

The 2009 mortality rate for infants under 1 year old was 8.9 %. Although no major natural disasters occurred in 2010 to pose further risks to child survival, the 2009 measles outbreak continued, affecting mainly the poorest Roma communities, predominantly children. The official rate of immunisation was 96.1%. Even so, there were 21 927 registered cases of measles in 2010, and 20 out of 24 mortalities were children.

UNICEF's National Survey on Nutrition and Child Rearing Practices of Children 0-5 showed high levels of anemia among babies and young mothers, particularly serious amongst Roma.

Despite the on-going educational reform, the quality of education in Bulgaria according to the World Bank (WB) is inadequate, with a drop-out rate of 2.45 %.

For 2009, the state authorities registered 1539 cases of child abuse and child exploitation. There is evidence additionally of new forms of child violence such as cyber-bullying. Despite some notable success with deinstitutionalization and the development of foster care and alternative services, about 7,500 children still live in institutions. The number of children entering institutions is around 3,000 per year; only 1.19 % of children in infant homes are orphans. The majority of institutionalised children are Roma, abandoned for social and health reasons. Children in institutional care do not have the desired adequate care. In 2010 the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee carried out an inspection of all institutions for children with mental disabilities and noted a total of 238 deaths between 2000 and 2010, including 31 deaths attributed to insufficient nutrition and 84 to inadequate care.

The government has set a priority on deinstitutionalisation and adopted a Strategy "Vision on deinstitutionalization of children in Bulgaria". This process received additional budget support through the EU Structural Fund Mechanism. Until 2010, the youngest children in care were not part of the deinstitutionalisation programme but enhanced advocacy resulted in a plan to close 10 infant homes (out of 32).

In November 2010, the first Universal Periodic Review for the Human Rights situation in Bulgaria was presented. The recommendations mainly address current violations of child rights including: placement of children in institutions, inadequate family support, inefficient systems for addressing cases of child abuse, discrimination towards children with disabilities, difficulties with Roma integration; detention conditions (including for children) not meeting international standards.

In 2010, Bulgaria submitted the fourth, fifth and sixth CEDAW reports. UNICEF commissioned the Trans MONEE 2010 compilation of statistical data together with an analytical report on Gender issues 10 years after the "Women in transition report". A comprehensive gender assessment was finalised in 2010, evaluating the extent to which UNICEF programmes promote women's rights and gender mainstreaming.

As part of the constant monitoring of the situation of children and women, UNICEF commissioned a report on the impact of the current financial crisis on poverty. Based on the report's findings,

in 2010 UNICEF Bulgaria identified the following three groups as the most disadvantaged children facing multiple deprivations and social exclusion:

- Roma children - highest poverty levels, poor living and sanitary conditions, poor nutrition, limited access to health, education and social services, inappropriate parenting practices, teenage pregnancies;
- Children with disabilities - inappropriate access to education, health and social services;
- Children living in residential institutions - deprived of parental care and having limited access to quality health and education services. A significant number of children living in residential care also belong to the other two groups placing them in an extremely disadvantaged and marginalised position.

Improving the access of the above categories of children to their rights and to improved survival, development and protection services remains at the core of UNICEF's work in Bulgaria.

Main sources:

OSI-Sofia and WB, Crisis Monitoring Survey, March 2010

Andy Bilson, The Development of Gate-Keeping Functions in CEE/CIS, Dec 2009,

3. CP ANALYSIS & RESULT

3.1 CP Analysis

3.1.1 CP Overview:

The overall goal of UNICEF cooperation within the current programme cycle is to support Government effort for social inclusion of most vulnerable children and families in line with national and EU strategies. Cooperation also aims to achieve sustainable policies and services benefiting children through building capacity to assess and analyse the situation regarding rights of children and women as well as to plan services based on assessed needs, implement plans, and monitor implementation, at local and central levels of Government; promoting child-focused and gender-sensitive policies and laws; and ensuring adequate fiscal and human resources. In addition, the Country Programme aims to develop broad partnerships with civil society, media and private sector to leverage advocacy efforts, and mobilize support and resources for achieving local and global commitments for children.

In 2010, the Government of Bulgaria pursued bold actions to address inappropriate child protection practices. It developed a vision and an ambitious action plan for deinstitutionalization, and successfully secured significant funds for their implementation. UNICEF actively participated in policy development at the central level, while directing its efforts also to strengthen capacity for developing local strategies, plans and actions at the district and municipality levels.

The Public Finance Management Survey was completed in 2010, analyzing priority and commitments for children and child related programmes through the budgeting process. Though the financial crisis put social expenditure under pressure, the Government successfully mobilized funds from the European Structural Funds programme to support its policy objectives for child welfare programmes. New financial mechanisms for social services will allow more effective use of scarce funds and ultimately reach out to more children and families.

Key accomplishments and contributions to the creation of new child care practices include upstream policy work combined with pilot projects which demonstrate new community based services and enable for their documenting, costing and replicating, while at the same time closing old-style residential care institutions. A big step forward was taken to develop foster care as an alternative to institutions.

3.1.2 Programme Strategy

3.1.2.1 Capacity Development:

UNICEF contributed to building the overall capacity of the child protection services, including statutory services (child protection departments), local governments, and non-governmental organisations acting as service providers (in particular those developing foster care and community based care for children) as well as to strengthening the capacity of the National NGO Network for Children in their advocacy role.

In agreement with the Government of Bulgaria, UNICEF provided training and facilitated the formulation of district and municipal level strategies and plans for the development of social services in all 28 districts and 265 municipalities across Bulgaria. This process was informed by the model developed and tested a year before in 3 pilot districts. New strategies and plans of actions are based, for the first time, on proper needs assessments, and will enable local governments to provide adequate social services to

the vulnerable populations. They will additionally allow local governments to apply for and access funds available from European Union.

UNICEF supported the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare in upgrading capacities of public child protection services through expert advice on the development of a comprehensive curricula and appraisal system for social work professionals. UNICEF also supported the training for policy makers and participatory development of indicators on Juvenile Justice in support of the reform of Juvenile Justice System.

3.1.2.2 Effective Advocacy:

Advocacy remains one of the most prominent and successful approaches in UNICEF work in Bulgaria. Advocating for family based care for children and reform of the inherited system of care in large residential care institutions has been on the agenda of the Country Office (CO) since its opening in 2005. In 2010, sustained efforts of many partners over the years resulted in the strong commitment of the Government along with the securing of funds for a large-scale national "deinstitutionalization". The synergy between state and civil society actors needs to be sustained to help overcome strong resistance in some pockets (i.e., from the employees in residential care institutions, local authorities and in some cases the general public). With the above in mind, UNICEF has engaged in a highly visible advocacy and awareness raising campaign, including through TV shows, social media, outdoor and print media, while also mobilizing support and funds from the corporate sector and individual citizens, and engaging school children.

Another area of strong and focused advocacy was judicial reform where UNICEF's efforts contributed to putting Juvenile Justice Reform high on the Government agenda. . Importance of early childhood development and the need for cross-sectoral, transparent budgeting for children were also advocated. UNICEF used the platform of "Child Friendly Cities Initiative" to advocate for child rights at the level of local communities. A strong and well functioning National NGO Network for children, supported by UNICEF, undertook a number of advocacy initiatives.

In addition to spotlighting the important issues related to child rights in Bulgaria, the year 2010 saw UNICEF launch a powerful and very successful campaign for children in Haiti. Apart from the special fundraising show, TV documentaries and photo exhibitions helped to maintain public interest and elicit generous support. The unprecedented funds raised for Haiti marked Bulgaria's transition to a new role as a donor society and country.

3.1.2.3 Strategic Partnerships:

In addition to close collaboration with Government counterparts, UNICEF has a number of strategic partners in different sectors of society. In relation to the civil society, a strong and fruitful mutually supportive partnership exists between UNICEF's CO and the National NGO Network for Children, consisting of over 70 NGOs. The key partnership which brings together the media and corporate sector with UNICEF is with BTV, the most popular TV channel in the country and a long-term partner of UNICEF.

Through its support to, and engagement with, the work on regional planning of social services as part of the "Child Friendly Cities Initiative", and its close collaboration with the Bulgarian Association of Municipalities, UNICEF has positioned itself as a relevant and valuable partner to the local governments, which is of utmost importance in improving the delivery, scope, and effectiveness of services affecting children's situation in this recently decentralized country.

3.1.2.4 Knowledge Management:

UNICEF contributes to the improved knowledge and understanding of the situation of children and their families in Bulgaria. During 2010, the CO commissioned surveys in the

field of nutrition and early childhood development; assessed the impact of the economic crisis; and assessed gender mainstreaming in the Country Programme.

Important studies were conducted in the field of deinstitutionalisation, public finance management, juvenile justice and cyber bullying. An analytical report on gender issues 10 years after the 'Women in transition' report was also produced along with a highly informative update of the statistical data on Trans Monee indicators.

Special guidelines on regional planning of social services and on foster care were produced.

During 2010 UNICEF initiated a research study on the reasons for child abandonment and placement of children in institutions (expected to be completed by January 2011).

All the surveys, studies and project products have been presented to decision makers and relevant stakeholders and disseminated appropriately. The office produced numerous publications, all in electronic form, though some were also printed to facilitate their use. There is a very successful information exchange not only with the government partners, but also with key NGOs and donors.

On a regular basis, relevant information is updated on the UNICEF Bulgaria website, which had about 150 000 visits for 2010, with 821 unique publication's page-viewers.

Regular meetings with partners and key actors in the area of child rights are also used as an opportunity for peer learning.

3.1.2.5 C4D Communication for Development:

The Office contributed to the health education efforts in regard to H1N1, and to promote the behaviour change of parents in the most marginalized communities related to the vaccination of children. The measles outbreak at the end of 2009 and 2010 revealed that many children in the marginalized communities were not vaccinated, and their parents lack knowledge, skills and opportunities to provide better protection against diseases. In collaboration with health authorities and with association of health mediators, UNICEF has developed materials adjusted to the target population. Towards the end of 2010, UNICEF started a strong C4D intervention in two areas of Bulgaria, the region of Shumen and the town of Yambol, to promote behaviour change among parents and improvement in care for the youngest children.

3.1.3 Normative Principles

3.1.3.1 Human Rights Based Approach to Cooperation:

The main national policy document addressing the issues of children – National Strategy for the Child 2008-2018 has been developed by the Government of Bulgaria using HRBAP. However, some of the major child rights issues remained inadequately addressed due to poor data, especially on the most vulnerable groups of children. Further action is also needed to address root causes of inequities and social exclusion. Human rights reports and recommendations, including those related to the most recent Universal Periodic Review of Human Rights, will inform further action.

Children's rights are mainstreamed through all programme components within the existing Country Programme, thus engaging all partners in better understanding and promotion of rights of children. Substantial amount of funds from the European Structural Funds programme have been earmarked to address the issues related to rights of children for better protection.

3.1.3.2 Gender Equality and Mainstreaming:

In 2010, in collaboration with the National Statistics Office, a gender Country Analytical Report (Trans MONEE 2010: Gender Issues Ten Years After the "Women in Transition" 1999 Report) was undertaken. Key focus was to assess the trends in last ten years and to identify emerging new issue based on gender analysis of sex disaggregated data.

A comprehensive gender assessment was finalised this year, evaluating the extent to which UNICEF programmes promote women's rights and gender mainstreaming. One of the findings of the Gender Report for Bulgaria explained the lack of gender segregated data, hindering the clarification and monitoring of gender policies. In 2010, UNICEF office requested government partners to provide data based on gender, to enable better analysis of results for children. A great deal of data has yet to come forth, especially on the most disadvantaged minority groups, where gender issues are more severe.

As part of the quality assurance process of the new CPD, the main challenge ahead will be how to mainstream gender equality in programming and planning, improve tracking of gender-related results, and identify few cross-cutting themes regarding gender that can be integrated into specific areas of intervention.

3.1.3.3 Environmental Sustainability:

3.2 Programme Components:

Title: *Social inclusion and reduction of child poverty*

Purpose:

The social inclusion and reduction of poverty programme component aims to support the enhancement of policies and budgets for children at the national level to ensure children's rights are at the forefront of the political agenda and a more integrated national policy framework for children is adopted. At the sub-national level, capacity development of regional and municipal governments support the adoption of new approaches for effective and efficient delivery of social services to meet the needs of the most vulnerable, as well as to promote child protection and development programmes. Principles of human rights-based approaches to programming and results-based management are the cornerstone of capacity-building of local stakeholders. A special emphasis is on the most vulnerable including Roma and other minority groups.

The programme component aims to achieve the following result:

By 2012 Bulgaria advances the fulfillment of child's rights through further reform of its child welfare systems.

The following Immediate Results will contribute to achieving the planned targets:

1. National and local authorities undertake effective cross-sectoral budgeting of policies and programmes for children.
2. Government implements programmes for vulnerable families in support of improved child care and protection practices.
3. Municipalities provide community-based alternative social services in accordance with the adopted minimum package of social services.

Resources Used:

Social inclusion and reduction of child poverty	2010
<u>1. Summary of resources</u>	In USD
1.1. Total approved budget (estimated as per the CPD/CPAP for 2010-2012);	2 300 000
Regular Resources	400 000
Other Resources	1 900 000
1.2. Total Actual Resources	1 725 011
Regular Resources	398 042
Other Resources	1 326 970

Result Achieved:

The PFM Survey reviewing budgeting process for child related programmes identified lack of output based budgeting towards most vulnerable groups.

Financial crisis impact assessment showed 50% of families with three and more children living below poverty line; people dropping off health insurance registers; and families spending less money on food and education. Government increased allocation to cover shortages in social assistance payments impacting on poverty reduction.

Lessons learned from UNICEF-supported activities informed government policies for deinstitutionalization and helped shape the new Vision on deinstitutionalization.

Government prioritised closure of institutions for children 0-3. Concept for closure was developed with UNICEF participation.

Analytical review of approaches to funding and personal budget systems informed the development of a new financial mechanism for social services.

As a non voting member of the Operational Programme Human Resource Development Monitoring Committee, UNICEF provided funding in support of government policies in social, educational and health, and lobbied for measures supporting child welfare and development of social services.

The National Conference of Social Workers on issues facing career development, capacity strengthening and professional training resulted in a draft regulatory act outlining the framework of competency based training and a career development system.

The National Network for Children comprising 73 organizations was strengthened to advocate for child rights. A participative campaign highlighting poor sanitary conditions of school toilets gained media attention and attracted many students to participate.

The Child Friendly Cities Network was established

A Child Rearing and Nutrition Survey provided important information on the high level of anaemia (60%) among Roma children aged 6-11 months and low levels of exclusive breast feeding of newborn babies (5%), and recommended special attention to both aspects. A targeted equity approach informed a small ad hoc intervention providing emergency support to homeless Roma people.

The ELDS component was reviewed for compliance with UNICEF and WHO policies. Standards were provided to Ministry of Health for age validation and follow up on implementation.

The BFHI was reviewed which highlighted areas of non-compliance with the Baby Friendly standards. A Plan of action was proposed to strengthen obstetric and neonatal practices.

A working model for transforming an existing institution for babies into a centre for delivering a host of social and health services is in process. In all, 104 children and their families have been assessed to establish possibility of family reintegration or a need for providing alternative family care.

The Juvenile Justice System review of indicators for backtracking crime-related risk factors among minors and juveniles was completed, and results presented at an international conference. A UNICEF/UNODC-supported training workshop on establishing juvenile justice (JJ) information systems was held in South-East Europe, enhancing knowledge on UNODC/UNICEF-recommended JJ indicators, capacity for data analysis, and inter-ministerial cooperation.

Facilitation to all 25 regions was provided on Regional planning of social services: 25 new regional strategies for social services were developed and adopted; 25 planning teams were established with 211 members; and 1560 participants were engaged at the local level. The Regional strategies identify the main vulnerable groups at the local level and prioritise interventions to achieve better social cohesion and inclusion. In Vidin, the poorest region of Bulgaria UNICEF is working with local government to develop a model of a Multi-functional complex of social services for prevention of abandonment, family support, prevention of abuse as well as support for children leaving residential care and children in conflict with law.

The Regional Foster Care model, rolled out in 9 regions and accompanied by a mass communication campaign, doubled the number of foster families in one year from 250 to approximately 475. Through this model UNICEF is assisting the Government to establish and test financial standards for development of foster care in order to scale it up to the national level. The telephone hotline for foster care was accessed for consultation by 839 callers.

Six small group homes for 44 children and young adults were completed and significantly improved the quality of physical and mental care.

A total of 150 children and their families used the Child Space Service Model that will be replicated with EU funds. Necessary steps were taken by the Government to include it in the Public Health Law.

The most critical factor affecting achievements of the PCRs and the IRs was insufficient resources linked to the financial crisis and reduced budget capacity. Regardless, the Government showed remarkable commitment to pursuing long delayed reforms in child protection, starting with the implementation of the complex deinstitutionalization process.

Limited human resource (HR) capacity of the existing child protection system and insufficient qualified staff in CPDs and social services continue to hamper reform objectives. Some legislative amendments in the Child Protection Act were not realized. UNICEF is continuing efforts to help address the above constraints.

The prevailing regulatory and financial constraints impeded success in mobilizing contributions directly from the public for the foster care programme. However, a Foster Care Project under OP HRD was developed and secured funding amounting to 7.5 Million Euros, allocated for promoting foster care at the municipal level.

Among constraints, an important limitation is that most NGOs, although relatively big, have limited lobbying capacity and require strengthened capacity for effective networking and productive result-based strategies and partnerships.

As EU member, Bulgaria does not have many donor/funding agencies operating in the country. For instance, UNDP closed its programme in 2009 and only operates a small programme office. As a result, UNICEF has focused on expanding and strengthening partnerships with the private sector. The main partnership of course continues to be with government institutions, the Child Network, and regional and local administrations.

Future Workplan:

Main focus of the programme component will be Early Childhood Development (ECD) and supporting the strengthening of parental and child rearing practices. An Equity-focused approach will be pursued to reach the most vulnerable parents and children from Roma communities. Discussions with the Ministry of Health took place for BFHI to change standards and protocols in maternity hospitals. An international conference on ELDS is planned for the first quarter of 2011, to identify ways to accelerate and improve the implementation of Early Learning standards and foster greater engagement with paediatricians, obstetricians and neonatologists.

Support for deinstitutionalization will continue through work on closing an infant home in Shumen and the development of a new network of social and health services. Dialogue at the national and local level will aim at integrating the piloted project's approach and results into the broader deinstitutionalization agenda.

Support for foster care will continue by improving the foster care model and integrating it into Government plans. Government will be supported in developing a monitoring and evaluation system and mechanisms for the de-institutionalization programme.

The CO will continue to engage with monitoring of implementation of Regional strategies and the development of social services. Regional stakeholders will be supported to develop mechanisms for implementation, co-ordination, and M&E. UNICEF CO will also support the Government by analyzing the results from the regional planning process and

ensuring their integration into policy and the EU funds agenda. Future areas of work include identifying a new financial mechanism for social services and human resource development.

Work will continue on supporting MLSP for elaboration of professional training and capacity development programmes for social workers. Technical assistance will be provided for drafting new child protection legislation linked with the work in Juvenile Justice. Major efforts will be focused on advocating changes in Delinquency and Child Protection Act for treatment and work with children in conflict with law.

Strengthening civil society and improving child participation will continue through support for the National Network for Children. Child Friendly Municipalities Network will be further developed and used as a key advocacy mechanism for child participation at a local level.

Title: *Social mobilization and communication for development*

Purpose:

By 2012, government, private sector, media, civil society and the public enhance partnerships for programmes for children.

- Private sector, media and individuals engage in sustainable, long term social mobilization partnerships for children in Bulgaria and elsewhere.
- Government, media, private sector and civil society organizations actively engage in promotion of child’s rights.

The Programme Component is based on the understanding that leveraging partnerships is a key to UNICEF’s effectiveness in advancing children’s rights. The objective is to engage with the private sector, media and individuals in sustainable, long term social mobilization partnerships for children in Bulgaria and in the world, as well as to promote children’s rights.

Social mobilisation is aimed at

- (i) Informing and mobilizing government, civil society, the media and the private sector to ensure that they will give priority to the rights of children;
- (ii) Increasing visibility and strengthening UNICEF’s image and brand in Bulgaria as a leading agency in advocating the rights of children;
- (iii) Drawing attention to new themes for discussion in the area of childhood;
- (iv) Strengthening Bulgaria’s social agenda and policies in relation to priority areas of UNICEF’s Country Programme.

Resources Used:

Social Mobilisation and Communication for Development	2010 (USD)
1.1. Total approved budget (estimated as per the CPD/CPAP for 2010-2012);	300 000
Regular Resources	200 000
Other Resources	100 000
1.2. Total Actual Resources	285 923
Regular Resources	200 000
Other resources	85 923

Result Achieved:

The largest integrated advocacy and fundraising campaign was undertaken through the second edition of the TV advocacy and fundraising show ‘The Magnificent Six 2’ which focussed on preventing abandonment of children 0-3 years and advocating the closure of

one institution for children. The programme supported the government policy on deinstitutionalization and reforming the child care system. An integrated communication strategy was rigorously planned and implemented in partnership with our corporate media partner bTV. The TV programme lasted for 3 months and was broadcast twice a week at prime time.

The final of the show reached 47% of the total number of TV viewers in Bulgaria (around 2 million people). During the final, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance publicly committed the government to speed up the reforms and confirmed that funds are allocated to support the process. The TV programme raised an impressive 700,000 USD.

The main thrust of the C4D for 2010 was mobilizing support for the development and implementation of foster care projects in 9 regions in Bulgaria. The C4D approaches in the office included the strategic use of mass media, social mobilization, partnership with NGOs and interpersonal communication.

In April 2010, UNICEF launched the national foster care campaign, jointly with the Minister and Deputy Minister of Social Policy. It aimed at raising public awareness on foster care and finding new foster parents. The partnership with more than 30 media companies ensured broad pro bono use of communication channels (3,598 TV spots telecast, 6,765 radio spots broadcast, 473 outdoor advertising spots; 300 printed advertisements, over 77.7 million on-line impressions). More than 8,000 people were engaged in interpersonal communications activities. A total of 151 foster parents were newly appointed. As part of the interpersonal communication, a National Foster Care Telephone Line was set and provided accessible information.

In continuation of the campaign, in December 2010, a 3-month long documentary series 'Life as it is – Foster families' was launched with bTV. The documentary is broadcast once a week and shows real life stories of 11 foster families over a 7 months period. Foster care was also promoted during the TV advocacy and fundraising show 'The Magnificent Six'.

The CMT adopted the new 2010-2012 Fundraising Strategy for UNICEF Bulgaria. The objective is to ensure sustainable and reliable funding for the CP, through developing reliable and enlarged house lists of individual donors, pledge donors, elaborated partnerships with corporate sector and introduction of fundraising for international causes. Based on this strategy, 360 new pledge donors were recruited; the house list increased from 500 to 7000 donors. The total amount of funds raised is 2,000,000 USD for local and international programmes. Some major integrated partnerships with private companies such as MKB Union Bank, Beauty Zone, Happy and bTV combined joint promotion of child rights and financial contributions (company donations, employee giving and free services).

Future Workplan:

New activities relating to social mobilization, communication and advocacy will focus on child participation and Early Child Development. Behaviour change communication approaches will be used to address parenting skills in the most vulnerable communities.

4. OPERATIONS & MANAGEMENT

4.1 Governance & Systems

4.1.1 Governance Structure:

In 2010, office committees met regularly to discuss and advise on management, programme, fundraising and operational decisions. New Staff Association Representative

was elected and invited to participate in CMT and LTC meetings ensuring staff interests and concerns are shared with the management and addressed in a timely manner.

The CO started the new Country Programme in 2010 with an increased number of staff and new organizational structure. It completed recruitment for all fixed-term positions that were approved for the 2010-2012 Country Programme. In addition 2 staff members were appointed on temporary basis to further strengthen programme implementation.

At the end of Q3, the CO was audited by the Office of Internal Audit, and was rated 'Satisfactory' in three audited areas of Governance, Programme and Operations. Specific recommendations from the audit included:

- i. Analysing and balancing the office structure, and in particular, soliciting help from PFP and RO to reduce risks related to the limited capacity of the office with regard to PSFR.
- ii. Strengthening the mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on the achievement of programme and management results.
- iii. Improving internal control functions and risk management in the office.

The CO has developed and submitted an Action Plan for approval.

4.1.2 Strategic Risk Management:

On emergency preparedness, the CO has appointed a second Emergency Focal Point. Staff was trained on how to update and use the Early Warning Early Action portal on Intranet. Following Emergency Preparedness Training for all staff, delivered by the Regional Emergency Specialist, the CO was able to identify minimum preparedness levels and concrete action points to address gaps.

Towards the end of the year, the CO completed Enterprise Risk Management Self-Assessment. This involved all staff in defining risks, identifying and estimating effectiveness of key controls, and deciding on response actions in their respective areas. Some of the 'medium high' and 'medium low' risks identified are:

- i. Lack of appropriate practices, legal environment, and rigid banking conditions mitigate ability to fundraise from individual donors and lead to loss of fundraising opportunities;
- ii. Demonstration models are not sustainable due to limitations in office capacity for documenting and promoting good demonstration models and insufficient community involvement;
- iii. Unpredictability of funding reduces ability of organizational structure to support operational needs (requirements);
- iv. Business needs and staff capabilities are not always aligned due to structural and system limitations;
- v. Ineffective internal communication of lessons learned lead to repeated errors and may affect the co-ordination of activities.

4.1.3 Evaluation:

The annual IMEP was developed on the basis of the 3-year IMEP and revisited during the mid-year review process. The IMEP activities are now adequately defined, with clear utilization plan making them realistic and more likely to be implemented. In order to strengthen the office capacity at the beginning of the current CP programme an M&E Officer was appointed.

During the previous programme cycle, the CO commissioned various evaluations of satisfactory quality. Their findings and recommendations were followed by respective management responses involving the CO as well as national partners.

In 2010, no external evaluation was carried out due to the fact that this was the first year of the County Programme.

Major evaluations are planned for 2011 and 2012, which will guide future actions and activities.

4.1.4 Information and Communication Technology (ICT):

In regard to ICT, the office continues to receive support from Geneva ITSS unit. The office applications are hosted in Geneva and the office can access them via the Citrix portal. A local IT consultant was appointed to provide IT support services (computer set-up and installation, back-up, maintenance and trouble-shooting). The office has also appointed a local IT focal point to address minor issues related to system access and handling of equipment and to coordinate communication between the Geneva team and the local administrator.

In mid 2010 the office relocated to a new premises and acquired network and communication equipment, including an additional server provided by the Geneva Regional Office, firewall and back-up devices, as well as telephone central. In its previous location in the UN House, the office was part of the UNDP network and did not possess a network inventory. Currently, the office is almost fully compliant with UNICEF ICT standards, and is part of the UNICEF global network. The Regional IT team provided effective support to the office in this transition process.

The office is gradually replacing all computers to be compliant with Windows 7 requirements. A few more computers will be replaced at the beginning of 2011. The Regional Office has also notified us that a Video Conferencing Unit was purchased for the Bulgaria office and will be dispatched shortly.

The office is effectively using ICT for internal and external communications, including donors and supporters and 49, 000 'Friends of UNICEF' who follow our advocacy activities on Facebook.

4.2 Fin Res & Stewardship

4.2.1 Fund-raising & Donor Relations:

UNICEF Bulgaria raises funds both locally and internationally. The Private Sector Fundraising Strategy was developed based on a Marketing Study on Fundraising Potential and Attitudes in Bulgaria, finalised at the beginning of 2010. Fundraising is an integral part of the communication and advocacy activity.

Although fund-raising is hampered by stringent privacy protection as well as banking system regulations, in 2010 the CO raised significant funds from the local private sector (citizens and corporations). By the end of 2010, USD 1,542,532 were transferred to UNICEF accounts, of which USD 948,048 were for Haiti emergency and USD 594,484.00 for programme activities in Bulgaria. Additional funds raised at the end of 2010 will be transferred in January 2011. To match the value of funds raised from the private sector, the Government of Bulgaria has also contributed USD 172,500 for Haiti and USD 109,209 for the local UNICEF programme.

The CO received installments of donor contributions, as per agreements negotiated in 2009 with Danish Natcom (612,340 USD), UK Natcom (227,947 USD) and the Belgian Government (149,920 USD). Donor reports were submitted on regular basis.

4.2.2 Management of Financial and Other Assets:

In terms of management of assets and support costs, the CO managed to decrease the rental costs for 2010. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reimbursed only 37% of the claimed rental cost for 2009 and asked UNICEF to search for a less expensive solution. After extensive research on available commercial space in Sofia, the office relocated from the UN House to new commercial premises in the middle of 2010.

Three months later, the Ministry informed UNICEF of the possibility and willingness to lease premises to UNICEF free of charge. The office is currently in the process of negotiating the conditions of the lease and plans to move to the Government owned premises toward the end of the first quarter of 2011.

The costs for the 2010 rental will not be fully reimbursed, as the Ministry has committed to cover only 54%. The remaining 46% of the 2010 rental costs (totaling approximately 17,300 USD) will be recovered from the Regional Contingency Fund or from RR. The planned move will significantly reduce costs for both the Government and for UNICEF, although it may increase some maintenance costs for the new premises. The office plans to apply for funding to the Capital Asset Fund for any repair and renovation works that may be required.

The CO has performed well on key management indicators: 98% of the planned OR level for the year was mobilised, Regular Resources were expensed at 97% rate, while the Support Budget, PSD Support Budget and Investment Funds from PFP were spent in full. About 55% of the programme delivery was done through DCT modality. The office managed to liquidate two long outstanding DCTs in the third quarter of the year. At the year end, the outstanding DCTs over 6 months were under 2%, with no outstanding DCTs over 9 months.

4.2.3 Supply:

The office does not have a significant supply component (less than 3% of total programme expenditure). In the Support Budget, the share of supply expenditure is higher (15%), resulting from the additional Regional Contingency funds received in 2010 for the purchase of basic network and communications equipment for the new office.

4.3 Human Resource Capacity:

In 2010, the CO started the new programme cycle with changed staffing needs. It managed to recruit all staff in accordance with the approved structure, although there were difficulties and delay in recruiting the Private Sector Fundraising Officer. All new staff members are provided with a welcome package of orientation and training materials.

A series of group and individual training activities took place including:

- Emergency Preparedness Training for all staff;
- Competency Based Interviewing Course (which was attended by all staff involved in interviewing);
- The IPSAS on-line course (which is currently being completed by selected staff members).

Programme staff participated in Public Finance Management training, Training on Establishing Juvenile Justice Information Systems, and a number of technical meetings and conferences at the international level.

Some planned individual training remained unaddressed due to unavailability of respective courses during the year. The CO will follow up on opportunities for staff to complete these planned trainings in 2011.

Executive and HR Assistant attended a FICSA workshop on Salary Survey Methodology in view of the transfer of some common services from UNDP to UNICEF.

Issues revealed in the Global Staff Survey were addressed through a validating workshop and office retreat.

The audit conducted at the end of the year commented on the need to provide more training to all newly recruited staff, and on the practice of using consultants to tackle insufficient staffing capacity in the office. It recommended reviewing the staffing structure in agreement with PFP and RO.

4.4 Other Issues

4.4.1 Management Areas Requiring Improvement:

Internal audit conducted at the end of 2010 found the CO's overall risk management practices satisfactory. The individual ratings for governance, operations support, and programme management were also satisfactory. However, some weaknesses were found in human resources management, programme reporting and sustainability of local

fundraising activities. These are addressed in the Action Plan which is to be implemented by 31 March 2011.

4.4.2 Changes in AMP:

In order to respond to the audit's recommendations, the CO will introduce some changes in the AMP, primarily through clear definition of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of staff members. Within the first quarter of 2011, the CO will also review the current staffing structure and propose changes to PBR.

5. STUDIES, SURVEYS, EVALUATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

5.1 List of Studies, Surveys & Evaluations:

1. *The Faces of Child Poverty: early childhood education and care in Bulgaria*
2. *Assessment of UNICEF Bulgaria awareness levels and fundraising potential*
3. *Study on gate-keeping functions in three countries*
4. *Juvenile Delinquency Integral Index*
5. *National Survey on Nutrition and Child Rearing Practices of Children aged 0-5 years*
6. *Strengthening Child Focused Public Finance Management*
7. *Analytical report on gender issues 10 years after the "Women in transition report", Trans Monee 2010*
8. *Assessment of the Impact of the Economic Crisis on Poverty and Social Exclusion in Bulgaria*
9. *Assessment of Gender Mainstreaming in UNICEF Bulgaria's Country Programme*

5.2 List of Other Publications

1. *UN Guidelines for Alternative Care for Children (translation)*
2. *Regional Planning of Social Services Handbook*
3. *Guidelines for foster parents (booklet)*
4. *Leaflet for foster care*
5. *Cyber bullying - handbook for parenting*
6. *Media and children's rights (translated)*

6. INNOVATION & LESSONS LEARNED:

Title: *Regional planning for social services and social inclusion*

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Abstract:

UNICEF Bulgaria tested the model of regional (district level) planning of social services in 3 of the 28 regions in 2009 in response to the main problems identified in the development of social services: inadequate capacity of local authorities to plan services based on vulnerable groups' needs and a need to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of social services by establishing regional networks of services with cross-municipal and cross-sectoral linkages to provide holistic care to young children.

In 2010, the Government decided to implement the model nationally. With UNICEF support all regions developed strategies and local plans of action, following national priorities and based on local needs. In the future, establishing of any new social service funded by the Government will be based on these strategies and plans.

Future priorities for developing local capacity to plan social services will focus on:

- Availability of reliable data

- Financing mechanism for social services
- Quality assurance system
- Development of human resources
- Capacities and mechanisms for implementation of the strategies
- Involvement of beneficiaries.

Innovation or Lessons Learned:

In 2009, UNICEF Bulgaria demonstrated a model for regional planning of social services with the aim of assisting Government in ensuring a more effective and efficient system of social services and implementation of EU structural funds. The model was adopted by the Government in 2010 and UNICEF supported its expanded nation-wide implementation by building local capacities at the regional and municipal level.

The process of planning social services in the country was innovative in the following aspects:

- It introduced the regional level of planning as more efficient and effective both from a social and financial perspective;
- It harmonized national priorities with regional and local specifics and needs.

In a short period of time, it involved all relevant players in all 28 regions and 265 municipalities, which allowed UNICEF, through direct dialogue, to influence the important process of capacity building at the local level. By providing an excellent insight into capacity gaps, it enabled UNICEF to direct its support to appropriate capacity building measures.

Potential Application:

The decentralized, localized planning approach can be applied equally to other sectors and themes such as the reduction of poverty, education and health. Similar to social services, the development of health and education sectors is not sufficiently coordinated between sectors, preventing synergy.

The project also offers potential for replication in other countries facing a similar challenge of decentralization and harmonization of national strategies with local needs, and the challenge of promoting targeted action for improved social inclusion of the vulnerable groups.

Within Bulgaria, the project offers approaches of strategic value. The Government's deinstitutionalization programme, for instance, requires strategies for the development of services that employ a cross-regional approach, as many residential institutions accommodate children and adults from various parts of the country.

UNICEF will continue to develop the established partnerships and mechanisms to support additional interventions for children and families that are specific to their needs and context. The formation and positioning of the network of Child Friendly Municipalities will follow similar approaches and principles.

Issue/Background:

Community-based services have been developed across the country, as part of the reform process, only recently. Their development was not based on rigorous planning at

the regional level, resulting in an uneven distribution of the services and resources. Potential beneficiaries were not always provided with equal opportunities for access.

Social services have been developed at the municipal level too, without the benefit of systematic planning, efficient budgeting and adequate capacity building. This has proved to be inefficient both for the beneficiaries and on economic grounds. The dependence on municipal capacity puts citizens of small and undeveloped municipalities, in particular, at a disadvantage.

Existing services are rarely networked, both among themselves and with educational and health systems, to form a comprehensive response to the needs.

Strategy and Implementation:

The project aims to bring together local and national stakeholders and develop regional strategies, which:

- Address local needs and national priorities following a needs assessments exercise;
- Promote innovation and flexibility;
- Provide for co-ordination and networking of existing and new social services;
- Provide access to people in need to a minimum package of social services;
- Develop synergy with other sectors in reducing poverty and facilitating social inclusion.

The regional planning approach was designed to inform Government of the situation of social services in the country and support efficient targeting of EU funds.

Participation of stakeholders was ensured through the project implementation structures (advisory committee, regional and municipal coordination and planning units, large forums for consultation with stakeholders) and mechanisms for elaboration and adoption of the strategies, which were based on existing administrative processes.

UNICEF implemented a project for regional planning of social services in 3 (out of 28) regions of the country in 2009. The pilot model was adopted by the Government for national roll out with amendments to the legislation in 2010.

Progress and Results:

The pilot phase facilitated a process of developing and testing regional strategies based on local needs and national priorities. In 2010 the pilot regions were supported for the implementation of the strategies, i.e. putting in place coordination and M&E mechanisms, training and designing project proposals.

In 2010 UNICEF provided technical assistance and training to all regions in the country. A total of 25 regional strategies were developed within 6 months by 25 regional teams involving around 1600 participants.

The regional strategies outline the main vulnerable groups and prioritise interventions for better social cohesion, social inclusion and deinstitutionalisation. The strategies include social services for groups from different ages, health and socio-economic status. The main groups identified are children (in institutions and in vulnerable families), people with disabilities and the elderly.

Networks of services, ensuring access to a minimum package of services in the social sector and in other related sectors, at regional and sub-regional level, are designed.

Achieving the planned results will depend upon the Government addressing the main stumbling blocks identified:

- Availability of reliable data
- Financing mechanism for social services
- A quality assurance system
- Significant gaps and needs for development of human resources
- Capacities and mechanisms for implementation of the strategies
- Involvement of beneficiaries.

Next Steps:

The CO will provide support to the Government in the following areas:

- Development of mechanisms to implement the adopted regional strategies for social services;
- Integration of the results from regional planning into the social inclusion policies. This includes a better understanding of the problems faced by the vulnerable groups and the factors leading to social exclusion, the prioritisation of main social services and measures, and elaboration of a minimum package of social services with guaranteed access;
- Integration of the results from regional planning with the EU funds planning and absorption;
- Development of Human Resources in the social services area. This includes a career development plan for social workers and a system for Human Resource development;
- Elaboration of a new financial mechanism for social services allowing for the development of regional, cross-municipal and cross-sectoral services with greater accountability, more effective links to the quality assurance system, and improved motivation for the service deliverers to achieve results.