

Executive Summary

The new UNICEF Country Programme 2013-2017 started in a year that was turbulent for Bulgaria, with the Government cabinet resigning amid mass protests and a new coalition government also working under the pressure of prolonged public protests. This affected the Government's partnership with UNICEF to some extent, especially with regard to policy and legislation change.

However, work on the two Programme Components generally progressed well in 2013. UNICEF successfully worked with a coalition of NGOs to sustain the momentum on child care system reform irrespective of political changes and instability. Progress on juvenile justice reform slowed down slightly.

The main achievements were made in the area of comprehensive young child development and wellbeing. A number of programme interventions addressed the needs of the most disadvantaged families with young children, aiming to improve the outcomes for children and to prevent family separation. The most impressive one was the successful start of the health home-visiting service, which was systematically backed by communication for development (C4D) and public awareness campaigns as well as continuous advocacy for policy change. The work with the most deprived children and families will continue in the three pilot regions in order to develop and document "social technologies", inform public policy and national scale-up, as well as contribute to the sharing experiences with other countries.

Progress was made in addressing inclusiveness and access to education, primarily by providing strategic technical support to the Ministry of Education in its preparation of a national strategy to reduce the number of early school drop-outs.

Bulgarian society was mobilised in support of children through a partnership with the business sector and the media. UNICEF benefited from free media services and the support of popular performers in reaching out to a broad audience with important messages about child rights and solidarity with children in need. Particular focus was put on the need to support parents of young children. Software to facilitate regular monthly (pledge) donations through a simple mobile phone text message was developed pro bono for the CO by an IT company and resulted in the registration of over 20,000 pledge donor by the end of 2013. The software has already been shared with a number of Country Offices and National Committees through the Private Fundraising and Partnerships Division (PFP).

A slow start was registered in the new area of work related to adolescents, who are out of school and unable to find work. This was mostly due to lack of funding and corresponding weak office capacity in this area. Some initial steps were taken to assess the situation and plan a consultation with young people using the technical expertise of the Romania CO and cross-border cooperation between the two COs on this topic was initiated at the policy level.

At the end of 2013, Bulgaria saw an influx of refugees, mostly from Syria, for which the authorities were not prepared. The Government requested help from the EC, UNHCR and UNICEF to deal with the situation. The CO engaged mostly in advocacy work and provided technical support for the development of child friendly services and procedures.

Country Situation as Affecting Children & Women

In February 2013, amid mass protests, the centre-right government cabinet resigned, and a caretaker government was appointed to lead the country until the elections in May. After the elections, a fragile coalition government was formed, and soon after was put under pressure by public protests that continued, with varied intensity, until the end of the year.

In 2013, Bulgaria continued to struggle with the negative effects of the economic and political crisis. The third quarter in 2013 showed an employment rate of 61.1 per cent and unemployment rate of 12.0 per cent (www.nsi.bg/). Youth unemployment stood at over 29 per cent, indicating serious problems in economic

development. The Government had access to EU Structural Funds to support necessary public sector reforms, but the implementation rate was still only 51.6 per cent in November 2013 (www.eufunds.bg/en/).

Bulgaria has a population of 7.3 million, the majority of which comprises people of Bulgarian ethnicity and two dominant ethnic minority groups: Turks (8.8 per cent) and Roma (4.9 per cent). Significant disparities among these groups. According to Eurostat, the risk of poverty and social exclusion rate stands at 49.3 per cent in Bulgaria and is the highest in the EU. This percentage goes up to 52.3 for children. The main factors affecting child poverty are: the employment of parents which is linked to their level of education, the composition of the household, and the level of government assistance through income support and enabling services. The share of the severely materially deprived exceeds 40 per cent. Most serious is the situation of families with three and more children, where risk of poverty reaches 78.2 per cent. The majority of these families are ethnic Roma.

Disparities and social exclusion are widespread, leaving many families and children struggling to survive. Poverty mapping reveals drastic disparities between different regions and between rural and urban areas. Urban poverty is largely based on economic factors, while in rural areas, poverty is marked by the lack of employment opportunities and the low quality of or lack of access to health, education and social services.

Reform of the child care system continued and at the end of June 2013 there were 3592 children in residential care institutions, compared to 12609 in 2001 (www.sacp.government.bg). During the last five years, the number of foster families increased tenfold, and now exceeds 1200. However, policies and practices are still not sufficient to prevent the risk of family separation and the risk of institutionalisation remains high for children from the most disadvantaged and minority groups. One bottleneck that remains is that social services are funded based on service capacity and often do not take the actual number of beneficiaries, the quality of service, and results into account. Children with disabilities still represent almost half of the total number of children in residential care. Stigma and discrimination against marginalised and disadvantaged families facilitate family separation, increase the risk for social exclusion, and affect access to and the quality of services.

In 2012, more than 3800 children were born to mothers under 18 years of age. Harmful traditional practices, inadequate parenting skills, lack of preventive health care and family planning services, early school drop-out are the reasons for young girls becoming mothers, sometimes as early as at the age of 12.

An increasing number of children whose parents do not have health insurance also do not have access to health services. Overall, the infant mortality rate is low at 7.8 per cent, but in some areas of the country, especially in rural areas and Roma settlements, this number is three times higher. The percentage of children with low birth weight has increased, and stood at 8.3 per cent in 2012. HIV/AIDS prevalence remains low, although a 10 per cent annual growth of newly registered cases has been recorded. There is no data on children living with HIV/AIDS.

Children's right to education is also marked by ethnic disparities. According to the 2011 census, 23.2 per cent of Roma children do not attend school, compared to 11.9 per cent of children in the Turkish minority and 5.6 per cent of ethnic Bulgarian children. Roma girls are more likely than boys to drop out from school earlier. The inclusion of children with disabilities into mainstream education is promoted, and the Government is committed to pursuing further steps to improve access and outcomes.

Primary school enrolment rates, once at a 100 per cent, are dropping. UNICEF research revealed that an estimated 1000 children annually never enrol in school (<https://www.unicef.bg/bg/article/Izgubeno-badeshte-Izsledvane-na-fenomenite-na-neobhvashtane-v-uchilishte/639>). More than 6000 children drop out every year before completing their basic education (grades I-IV). This number goes up for grades V-VIII, with 20 per cent of children dropping out in the 2012/2013 school year. Reduced enrolment rates and poor quality of education has led to increased illiteracy rates. The overall quality of education needs special attention, as more than 40 per cent of Bulgarian ninth-graders were found to be functionally illiterate in the latest (2012) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) survey. The difference between urban and rural students is high (equivalent to almost two years of schooling), and the difference between the top 20 per cent and the bottom 20 per cent on the socioeconomic ladder, equates to almost three years of schooling. A

long awaited Law on Education, prepared by the previous Government, was not passed and is on hold thus preventing major improvements in the education system.

A UNICEF survey on economic migration and its effect on children revealed the extent to which children are living separated from their parents under the guardianship of grandparents, or other relatives. Results of the survey revealed that 25.9 per cent of children live in a “transnational” family, with more than a half of these being under 14 years old. Analysis shows that often children who are separated from one or both parents perform worse in school and are more likely to have behavioural problems. Social and child protection services are not well equipped to provide the necessary support and their needs often remain unattended to.

The rate of crimes committed by children remains unchanged at about 7,000 cases per year. In 2013, Bulgaria experienced a substantial increase in the number of asylum seekers and at present they are approximately 10,000 of them. Over half of the asylum seekers are from Syria and are mainly families with children but also include unaccompanied minors. Due to lack of coordination, deficiencies in the reception conditions and asylum procedures, the state has faced many difficulties in ensuring the protection of their rights.

There were no major emergencies in 2013.

Country Programme Analytical Overview

The year 2013 in Bulgaria was marked with political instability, including the change of three Government cabinets, elections and continued protests. It was also the first year of the UNICEF Country Programme (CP) 2013-2017, and the political instability presented a significant constraint in building partnership relations.

Despite this, implementation of the CP was only somewhat delayed compared to policy and legislation processes at the national level. Additional policy advocacy efforts supported the work related to child care system reform, ECD, juvenile justice, child rights monitoring and child participation, prevention of early school leaving and, in particular, to protecting the rights of the most disadvantaged Roma children.

Knowledge management and sharing of good practices contributed to the development of key government policies and strategies including the operational programmes for EU Structural Funds for 2014-2020, the Road Map for Justice for Children Reform, Strategy for Reduction of Early School Leavers, and others.

The support and dialogue with partners on child care reform continued at different levels. Model projects brought about good results for children at the local level and increased the capacity of local stakeholders to work together to provide family support services. Knowledge sharing and policy advice at the national level provided the necessary evidence to support the improvement of the reform process.

Advocacy combined with a demonstration of potential activities in the area of early childhood development (ECD) raised awareness among policy makers, professionals, authorities and society on the importance of a child’s early years and the need for cross-sectoral policies. A major achievement for UNICEF and partners was the successful start of a health home visiting project in one test region, accompanied by strong public awareness and advocacy efforts.

The Ministry of Education and Science, with technical support from UNICEF, developed and adopted a national strategy to reduce the numbers of early school drop-outs. A school-based model of child participation is being tested in selected regions in order to inform national scale-up. The CO continued to build strong alliances for child rights with the National Network for Children (consisting of over 100 NGOs) and through the Child Friendly Municipalities Network.

C4D interventions at the national and local level, partnerships with civil society, media and private sector further contributed to social mobilization and alliances for child rights. The CO used an integrated approach combining policy advocacy, communications, social mobilization and fundraising around selected issues. Beyond traditional partners, the CO worked on engaging citizens in creating change for children, addressing harmful social norms and practices as well as promoting culture of solidarity with the most disadvantaged

children and families. The number of corporate and individual donors was increased, and new fundraising channels were introduced, with priority given to pledge giving. At the end of 2013, UNICEF Bulgaria had over 20,000 regular monthly donors and around 77,000 followers on Facebook. A successful mobile phone application for pledge giving was developed and is ready to be shared with other countries.

At the Annual Review Meeting, partners identified violence against children as an area of work to which the CO needs to dedicate more resources.

Humanitarian Assistance

In 2013, Bulgaria experienced a substantial increase in the number of asylum seekers and refugees and at present, their number is estimated to be approximately 10,000. Over half of the people who applied for international protection are from Syria and include mainly families with children but also include unaccompanied minors. Due to lack of coordination, deficiencies in the reception conditions and asylum procedures, the state has faced many difficulties in ensuring protection of their rights.

In November 2013, the Government requested UNICEF assistance. The CO is closely cooperating with UNHCR in monitoring the situation and advocating for the implementation of international standards and obligations as per the CRC. UNICEF participated in several inter-sectoral working groups, providing technical inputs as part of the Emergency Coordination Mechanism for response to the refugee crisis in Bulgaria.

Effective Advocacy

Fully met benchmarks

To ensure a more strategic approach and synergy in advocacy efforts, the CO organised advocacy training for all staff members and developed a comprehensive advocacy plan. The plan is based on analysis of the local context, major bottlenecks and determinants for achieving program results and contains key areas, goals and messages for advocacy, as well as specific milestones for assessing implementation.

Priority areas for advocacy include the right of every child to live in a family environment, strengthening the national support for early childhood development, promoting child participation, juvenile justice reform and reducing the number of out of school children. Special attention in the advocacy plan is devoted to promoting corporate social responsibility and building solidarity with children. Ensuring equity and the social inclusion of the most disadvantaged children, including Roma, cuts across all advocacy areas. In addition to the advocacy areas outlined in the advocacy plan, the changing context in the country following the influx of refugees from Syria in August-September 2013 pointed out the need of including another relevant topic in the plan, namely the protection of the rights of refugee and asylum-seeking children.

The CO continued to support the consolidation of the national child care reform which aims to reduce the number of children in child care institutions and prevent institutionalisation. Evidence generated through pilot projects as well as research and analysis supported advocacy efforts aimed at expanding support to families and avoiding separation of young children from their families.

"A Promise Renewed" provided a useful platform to advocate for a number of interventions related to maternal and young child health, including legislative changes to improve access of uninsured pregnant women to health care services, and support for the testing phase of a health home-visiting service. The CO was also a strong advocate for marginalised children during the process of developing the national "The Health of the Nation" strategy.

The CO continued to advocate for inclusive education and access to education by the most disadvantaged children through technical support, networking and research. The national strategy for reducing the number of early school drop-outs, which was developed with the technical support from UNICEF, was adopted by the Council of Ministers. UNICEF commissioned research on the scope of and reasons behind non-enrolment in schools, which included detailed recommendations, was widely shared with relevant national stakeholders through public events and the media to inform future policy interventions. A high-level delegation from the

Bulgarian Government and the National Assembly attended the Ministerial Education Conference “Including all Children in Quality Learning – Closing the Equity Gaps” and confirmed the country’s commitment to close equity gaps in education, participation and learning.

In 2013, CO advocacy efforts mobilised support for legislative change in the juvenile justice system leading to the adoption of a road map for the implementation of the Concept of State Policy on Juvenile Justice. During the national parliamentary elections UNICEF Bulgaria called all political parties to place greater focus on strengthening child rights and promoting children’s wellbeing in their political agendas.

Capacity Development

Mostly met benchmarks

Communication for Development

Mostly met benchmarks

In 2013, the CO used C4D mainly in two areas: young child health and development and building a base of pledge donors (regular monthly supporters).

A concerted effort was made to improve the knowledge and influence the behaviour of parents and extended families of young children as well as health professionals, local authorities, marginalized communities and the general public regarding the wellbeing of young children and to influence community practice and social norms in this area. The aim was twofold: to improve development outcomes and to prevent the separation of young children from their families. A survey of parenting practices and the bottleneck analysis, as well as the consultation with parents, professionals and local communities in the selected pilot region, informed the design of interventions.

The health home service engaged with more than 1,600 families in the pilot region, the family centres, located in marginalised communities, were particularly instrumental in reaching out to the most disadvantaged parents and children, and workshops for parents also contributed to delivering evidence-based, tailored messages.

In addition to the face-to-face communication with parents, professionals and local authorities, the CO used mass and social media to build support and influence families, communities and authorities regarding positive parenting practices. Over a period of 3 months, a documentary series called “Life As It Is - Workshops for Parents”, produced together with BTV (the biggest TV channel in Bulgaria) and financed by a corporate partner, promoted positive parenting practices, encouraged learning and aimed to increase the demand for parenting support services at the local level. To increase the reach of the programme, each episode featured a well-known public figure attending a group session with parents. As a direct and measurable outcome, 15 municipalities budgeted for and started 23 parenting groups.

To reinforce the message about the need for parenting support, a multifaceted media campaign called “Children Do Not Come with Instructions” was launched to support the health home-visiting approach. The campaign was developed in close consultation with visiting nurses and managed to double parents’ demand for the newly established service in a short time.

Towards the end of the year, partnership with Bulgarian National Television added to these efforts with a prime-time programme called “Mission: Every Child” which focused on the most disadvantaged families and the challenges they face in raising young children. The programme managed to recruit 10,000 new pledge donors.

A parallel campaign “Become Benefactor Through Mobile Phone” further contributed to developing solidarity

with children and promoting the new channel for donations. Strong media support accompanied a concert-roadshow in 7 major cities, with the closing concert broadcast on national TV. The tour engaged over 10,000 young people, and around 6000 of them became UNICEF supporters. Both the concert tour and the TV programme "Mission: Every Child" were supported by the most famous performers in Bulgaria, and resulted in the registration of over 20,000 new regular monthly donors.

Service Delivery

Mostly met benchmarks

Strategic Partnerships

Fully met benchmarks

Knowledge Management

Mostly met benchmarks

Human Rights Based Approach to Cooperation

Fully met benchmarks

Gender Equality

Mostly met benchmarks

Environmental Sustainability

Fully met benchmarks

South-South and Triangular Cooperation

The Bulgaria CO started cooperating with the Romania CO in the area of youth/adolescence. An exchange of best practices is expected to bring about change in Government policies and services for adolescents out of school and unable to find work.

Narrative Analysis by Programme Component Results and Intermediate Results

Bulgaria – 0570

PC 1 - Equity and social inclusion for children

 On-track

PCR 0570/A0/04/001 By 2017, more children from excluded and poor families benefit from equal access to education and protection systems.

Progress: 2013 was the first year of the new Partnership Programme. It was marked by political instability in the country, prolonged civil unrests, change of three government cabinets and an election campaign. Although this presented a constraint for the initiation and formulation of national policies and legislation change, the work on the local level continued without much disruption.

PCR 1 employed a mix of strategies, including high level policy advocacy, expert advice and alliances building on national level, complemented with working at scale with local authorities in three selected regions to address disparities and especially the multiple deprivations among Roma children. Based on indicators, the regions of Shumen, Sliven and Montana were selected to develop and test "social technologies" for delivering effective and culturally sensitive services to the most disadvantaged groups and promoting the right to child health, education, development and protection. The knowledge generated through this test pilot will contribute to the development of national strategies aimed at enhancing equity. In Shumen region, the work has continued since last year. Assessment of the situation in the Sliven region was completed, and the assessment of the Montana region is ongoing.

Knowledge sharing based on best practices from the pilot in Shumen and advocacy efforts informed the existing national strategy on de-institutionalisation and yielded changes in its management mechanisms and implementation. Strengthened capacity, development of new services and continued C4D activities led to the reduction of the number of children placed in residential care, including children under the age of 3. The current Government has committed to developing new legislation for social services in order to better align the services with the needs of the vulnerable groups, and to improve their efficiency and quality. The development of a mechanism to re-direct financial resources from institutional care to child and family support services was initiated. The CO successfully advocated for the inclusion of child and family support services for the most disadvantaged Roma children and children with disabilities among the Government priorities in the new draft of operational programmes for the EU structural funds.

In addition to the above mentioned strategies, ECD benefited from broad public awareness raising and social mobilization which led to a better understanding of and support for stakeholders. A universal health visitation service, focused on maternal and young child health and early learning, successfully started in one of the test regions, and quickly garnered interest for scale-up in other regions. This initiative was complemented with advocacy efforts at the national level for improved access of pregnant women without health insurance to health care. A representative survey was completed to age-validate Early Childhood Learning and Development Standards. Technical assistance, improved data and advocacy efforts supported the development of an evidence-based national strategy for reducing the number of early school drop-outs for the period 2013-2020.

The CO also supported the development of a road map for juvenile justice reform, which was adopted in May. Political changes slowed down the implementation process of the reform and a renewed effort was needed to re-build consensus on the need for reform. The CO actively participated and contributed to the two key results areas in the Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda: RCLA 1 "A child's right to a supportive and caring family environment" where an external multi-country evaluation is being planned, and RCLA 7 "A child's right to comprehensive wellbeing". At the end of 2013, the CO also joined RCLA 10 "An adolescents' right to a second chance". In order to develop an adequate response to the growing problem of adolescents out of school and unable to find work, the Bulgaria CO cooperated with the Romania CO and benefited from their expertise in this area. Further cooperation has been planned between the two offices and countries.

 On-track

IR 0570/A0/04/001/001 By end 2017, based on the results of tailored approaches in three regions, key stakeholders at central level (especially the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and Ministry of Health) ensure that relevant regulatory provisions and budget allocations incorporate effective, culturally sensitive and accessible prevention and protection services for vulnerable and marginalized children, especially children at risk of family separation, children living in institutions and children with disabilities.

Progress: The CO supported the child care reform by:

- Providing policy advocacy focused on the need to provide effective support to families at risk and to develop good quality alternative services.
- Supporting pilot interventions in the Shumen region, developed with local authorities, which created a network of innovative child and family support services and alternative care, resulting successfully preventing the separation of children from their families and the anticipated closing of an Infant Home. The services tested in the pilot project are informing Government plans for closure of eight homes for children 0-3 years old.
- Initiating an external assessment and sharing of lessons learned from the completed process of closing one residential care institution for children with disabilities. The conclusions and recommendations were discussed with local stakeholders and EC representatives in order to inform EU funded projects. Evaluation of the Foster Care Programme, completed in 2012, was also discussed with stakeholders.

- Providing on-going technical advice for the child care reform and seconding one expert consultant to the Ministry of Health to support the DI process.
- Contributing to thematic group drafting the new applications for EU Structural Funds 2014 – 2020. Ensuring that DI and support to families and young children are included as priorities.

CO support for juvenile justice reform included helping develop a new model of services and close correctional boarding schools. Individual assessments of children were conducted and used to plan a regional network of services for children in conflict with the law and to strengthen the capacity and coordination between the child protection and the juvenile justice systems. Violence against children in various settings, in particular violence against children in the juvenile justice system, emerged as a challenge to be addressed by the CO.

 On-track

IR 0570/A0/04/001/002 By 2017, relevant stakeholders at all levels in the health, education and social protection systems apply inter-sectoral protocols of cooperation that enable the effective provision of integrated ECD services for the most disadvantaged and marginalised families and children, including from ethnic minority groups.

Progress: In collaboration with the Ministry of Health and other relevant stakeholders, a model Centre for Maternal and Child Health providing home visits to expectant parents and families with young children was established in the Shumen region. The centre provided information, guidance and support to parents and caregivers, strengthening their knowledge and capacity for child care, early risk identification and early intervention. Particular focus was placed on reaching out to the most disadvantaged children and addressing their complex needs through close collaboration with social protection and education services. Experience gathered through this service informed and supported advocacy efforts for the development of a national health home-visiting service to improve the wellbeing of the most marginalised and disadvantaged children. In addition, advocacy efforts at the national level resulted in improved access to maternal health services for pregnant women without health insurance.

The capacity of professional associations in the health sector and medical universities to promote evidence-based approaches in the area of early childhood development and early intervention for children at risk of developmental difficulties was strengthened through technical assistance and knowledge sharing of international best practices.

A study using 1200 children to validate early learning and development standards was completed in 2013. The standards were used to develop a screening test to identify children at risk of learning difficulties at the age of three which was subsequently adopted by the Ministry of Education and Science. The standards will be used in 2014 to promote a more integrated approach to early childhood development.

A positive parenting programme was developed and delivered in collaboration with a network of local authorities and community based organisations. An internal evaluation of the program showed its effectiveness in strengthening parental knowledge, skills and attitudes in promoting young child well-being and rights.

 On-track

IR 0570/A0/04/001/003 By end 2017, the Government at all levels, with the support of NGOs and education institutions, implements school enrolment, drop-out prevention and second chance education strategies for children, especially Roma girls and children with disabilities that are not enrolled in, that have dropped out, or that are at-risk of dropping out of compulsory education.

Progress: In 2013, the CO focused on providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Education and Science for the development of strategic documents, advocacy and research aimed at improving the access of children to education and reducing school drop-out. A national strategy to reduce the number of early school drop-outs for the period 2013-2020, developed by the Ministry of Education and Youth with the technical support of UNICEF, was adopted by the Council of Ministries in 2013. The strategy envisages a comprehensive set of preventative and compensatory measures for reducing the number of children out of school and adolescents out of work, including through the development of “second chance” opportunities. With the support of UNICEF, a study on the scope and reasons for non-enrolment and non-attendance of school was completed and results and recommendations widely shared with relevant stakeholders. The study is expected to inform evidence-based interventions in the implementation of the national strategy.

Bulgaria took part in the regional study “Evaluating the Impact of the Per Capita Financing and School Optimisation Reform in Selected CEE/CIS Countries”. The study is to be completed in 2014 and will inform education reform in Bulgaria as well as in other countries undertaking similar reforms. A high-level delegation from Bulgaria took part in the Regional Ministerial Conference on Education, jointly organised by UNICEF and the Government of Turkey in Istanbul, and expressed its long term commitment to achieving the goals laid out in UNICEF’s call for action: “Including All Children in Quality Learning – Closing the Equity Gaps”.

 On-track

IR 0570/A0/04/001/004 By 2015, the Government enacts revised legislation that introduces inter-sectoral coordination and alternatives to custodial service for children in conflict with the law.

Progress: In 2013, CO worked in close collaboration with Government counterparts, civil society organizations and the media to mobilize support and speed up legislative change for justice for children/JJ. Due to CO advocacy efforts with the Ministry of Justice, a Roadmap for implementation of the Concept of State Policy was approved.

CO contribution to the reform continued with:

- Supporting individual assessment of children in conflict with the law and their families, the child protection and juvenile justice systems in one region of the country to inform the regional plan of action and the Roadmap;
- Consultation on local and national level to create a coordination mechanism for children in conflict with the law;
- Development of a model for work with children in conflict with the law placed in correctional-educational facilities and planning closure of the facilities to inform legislative changes;
- Development of action plan for services for children in conflict with the law, children at risk and their families in one demonstration region focused on wide scope services – aimed at general prevention for children and families at risk; specialized services for children at risk, children at conflict with the law and their parents; services for reintegration and prevention of recidivism;
- Technical assistance to the Prosecutor's Office for the development of Guidelines in cases of children victims and witnesses of crime;

The Road map implementation is currently constrained due to the changes of government cabinets during 2013. To prompt the implementation, CO organized consultations, coordination meetings and used the Annual Meeting with partners. As a result a Conference on Juvenile Justice – principles, legislation, policies and practices is planned for the first half of 2014 in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and the Parliament.

 On-track

PCR 0570/A0/04/800 PCR Support

Progress:

All major operational benchmarks and objectives of the year 2013 have been met, as described in detail in the corresponding sections of the Country Office Annual Report.

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 On-track

IR 0570/A0/04/800/001 Governance and Systems

Progress:

Bulgaria CO continues to apply the governance structure which was rated as "satisfactory" in the last audit report. The governance structure, office objectives and priorities, ToRs of all relevant bodies and accountabilities of staff members were described in the Annual Management Plan adopted in the beginning of 2013 and shared with all staff members. The changes envisaged in the new CP and CPMP 2013-2017 were reflected in the AMP. Some further changes in the staffing structure, notably sources of funding, were endorsed by the PBR and approved by Regional Director in 2013. The CPMP 2013-2017 also contains Annex 4 describing the CO PSFR Strategy and Plan, and its implementation is coordinated with PFP.

Standard UNICEF control systems are in place. The Table of Authority was revised twice in 2013 to reflect changes in the office structure. Programme review meetings, monitoring progress in programme implementation and budget spending are held quarterly. Overall management of the office is monitored by the CMT which remained the central management body, advising the Representative on management and performance, programme priorities and challenges, policy initiatives, budget and fundraising. A set of indicators to be monitored by the CMT is defined in the AMP. However most of them are covered by the Monthly Monitoring Report prepared by the Regional Office, which is regularly reviewed at CMT meetings. There were 6 meetings of the CMT in 2013. Internal committees (CRC, PSB, CRB and others) continue to function and follow up closely the UNICEF rules and regulations implementation. However, regular information exchange, day-to-day coordination and briefing on important developments and policy recommendations happen at all-staff meetings taking place most Monday mornings.

Staff Association was active in information sharing and participation in regional fora. Three JCC meetings took place in 2013.

 On-track

IR 0570/A0/04/800/002 Financial Resources and Stewardship

Progress:

In 2013 the CO continued to implement the recommendations in terms of financial management from the Internal Audit, performed in 2010 with rating "Satisfactory". Assignment of authority and delegations of financial controls reflect the office structure and are in line with the requirements of VISION. The table of Authority was reviewed to strengthen the segregation of duties. Additional supervisory controls were used, e.g. stamping of invoices for payment. There are procedures in place ensuring timely and accurate recording of PSFR income. At the end of each month contributions are recorded in Vision and reported to PFP with a table indicating the amounts received per PBA.

Bank reconciliations were performed in timely manner to ensure matching between the bank data and data in VISION. Financial controls were used to identify and prevent possible gaps. The office operates with two banks - PSFR bank account in Piraeus Bank, one of the biggest corporate donors of UNICEF in the country, and PSFR, USD, EUR and Current bank accounts in Raiffeisen Bank.

UNICEF Bulgaria has significant volume of transactions below 500 USD, most of which are result of continuing process of cost optimizations and negotiations with service providers, e.g. office telephony, internet, office maintenance services, etc.

An inventory/ physical count of the assets was performed in the last quarter, in relation to annual closure and in accordance with IPSAS requirements. All items correspond to VISION records. The local PSB committee met and took decision for donating of the old official vehicle to Medical Center Shumen to support Visiting Nurses project.

In 2013 Bulgaria CO received from RCF additional funds for upgrade of end-users computer equipment, installation of video control and emergency exit, and equipment of workplace for the RO outposted post.

Global Performance Indicators:

- There are 0% of outstanding DCTs over 9 months;
- RR spent in 2013 is 100%;
- 54% of OR spent, the remaining was rephrased to 2014;
- 1 PBA (SC110654) was extended until the end of 2017. All other PBAs were used within the original duration of the PBA life. PBA expenditure rate in 2013 is 100%.

 On-track
IR 0570/A0/04/800/003 Human Capacity**Progress:**

In the first year of the new CPD 2013-2017, Bulgaria CO submitted request for aligning the structure to reflect the current needs. PBR conclusions resulted to changes of funding sources, abolishment of 1 vacant post and creation of 1 new post. The recruitment process was finalized in the first half of 2013.

At the end of 2013 the recruitment of Policy and Knowledge Coordinator (NOD) position started, after leaving of the incumbent to Somalia CO.

Two other contracts – Communication Assistant and Programme Assistant, were not renewed at the end of the year and after their expiration recruitments will be performed in 2014.

The office is strengthened by consultants in several key areas: Working with Refugees, Regional planning of services/ Community work, Child Protection, Deinstitutionalization, Juvenile Justice, Child Friendly Municipalities and others.

Interns were used in the Fundraising department to assist with data entry.

All 2012 annual and 2013 mid-term PAS for local SM were completed on time.

 On-track
IR 0570/A0/04/800/011 Travel**Progress:**

Despite the increased number of trips in 2013, travel expenses remain at the same value as in the previous year - \$73,000.

 On-track
IR 0570/A0/04/800/012 Maintenance of premises**Progress:**

In 2013 UNICEF Bulgaria CO continues to occupy Government-provided rent-free premises. Compared to the amount previously paid for rent (for smaller premises), in 2013 the office generated savings of about 50,000 USD.

 On-track

IR 0570/A0/04/800/013 Communications

Progress: During 2013 most of the SM were equipped with new mobile phones – smart devices with access to email. VPN Cisco AnyConnect access installation for office laptops was done. A second and independent internet access through Wi-Fi routers coverage was improved. The contract for mobile telephony was renewed and cost was optimized with more than 40%. Official vehicles were equipped with mobile internet.

 On-track

IR 0570/A0/04/800/014 UN joint arrangements

Progress: In 2013 UNICEF continues to facilitate and conduct activities relevant to all UN staff in Bulgaria: leading the activities in terms of Security as DO and CSFP (UNDSS), language exams, Interim Local Staff Salary Survey.

PC 2 - Alliances and National Capacity for Child Rights Monitoring

 On-track

PCR 0570/A0/04/002 By 2017, a national alliance for children (involving the Government, international community, civil society, the private sector and the media) mobilises support, capacity and resources to significantly advance the rights of Bulgarian children and youth.

Progress: Alliances, partnerships and initiatives with all relevant stakeholders were built to increase awareness and understanding of children's issues and mobilise support and funds for child rights with a focus on equity and social inclusion. Relevant government agencies jointly drafted a consolidated report to the UN CRC to be submitted in 2014. Data collection and situation assessment were completed as per plan.

The network of child friendly municipalities expanded with new members. The network is gradually consolidating and developing joint plans and organizing events promoting child rights and improved practices at the local level. The umbrella organization National Network for Children, supported by UNICEF, continued to monitor the situation of children in the country and to advocate for the improvement of child welfare and the realization of child rights. A child participation mechanism at school, municipal and regional levels in the test regions was tested and children's views were consulted for the first time in preparation of the Annual Review Meeting with UNICEF partners.

UNICEF successfully leveraged its partnerships to increase exposure and influence. Facilitating joint media ventures with government departments and business sector helped position UNICEF as a key advocate for children's rights. Work with and through media partners focused on the benefits of family-based care, the damaging effect of residential care, the importance of early years in life, support to the most disadvantaged families, and child participation. Cooperation with the Bulgarian National Television engaged general public in supporting families at risk and recruited over 10,000 pledge donors. The most prominent and well-known Bulgarians supported UNICEF, helping the CO to reach out to new audiences and engage them on children's issues.

Aligned with the global shift to more strategic engagement with the corporate sector and the leveraging of resources, the CO maintained and established new partnerships with business entities, including business associations. The CSR approach contributed significantly to the fundraising income, but was not limited to it, as much attention was given to customer and employee engagement and using corporate communication channels for the benefit of children.

In terms of local fundraising, the focus in 2013 was on increasing the income from individual donors and on developing a giving culture in Bulgaria through the implementation of innovative and easily accessible channels for donation. This was achieved through the development of a new and successful platform (pro bono by a prominent local IT company) for monthly giving programme through mobile phones, negotiated partnerships with all mobile phone operators in the country and coordinated communication efforts to promote regular monthly giving.

The local UNICEF website supported the communication, fundraising, and advocacy efforts of the CO with the public. UNICEF Facebook fan page reached almost 77,000 fans and proved to be a useful communication tool.

 On-track

IR 0570/A0/04/002/001 By 2017, an independent child right monitoring system, with the capacity to regularly collect reliable data on the situation of children, is operating in the country.

Progress: In 2013, the Government prepared the Periodic report to the UN CRC, with technical support provided by the CO. A comprehensive training for respective institutions was conducted by a former UN CRC member and the CO facilitated discussions during the drafting process.

The CO also advocated for the ratification of the Third Optional Protocol with government bodies, the Office of the Public Ombudsman and the National Network for Children. For the time being, however, Bulgaria decided to postpone the ratification.

The regular and planned data gathering on child wellbeing and child rights implementation (TransMonee) was completed, as well were assessments as per IMEP. Independent information about the situation of children and women was provided for the midterm UPR. UNICEF agreed with the Office of the Public Ombudsman to start a joint assessment on the capacity of the institution to effectively monitor child rights implementation and violations of child rights in order to plan concrete measures for strengthening the Ombudsman's capacity in this area.

During the annual meeting, the Child Friendly Municipalities Network discussed and adopted a set of indicators for monitoring child rights at the local level. The National Network for Children (NNC) continued with independent monitoring and published the second "Report Card on Child Rights" which included an assessment of CRC implementation and realisation of Government commitments. The CO supported the NNC in involving children in the preparation of the 2013 Report Card.

Based on a 2012 UNICEF-facilitated assessment of child safety in Bulgaria, an alliance of state institutions and CSOs was formed to continue monitoring the situation and identify bottlenecks. A national campaign on child safety is planned for 2014.

Throughout 2013, the CO supported selected specialised NGOs in conducting independent surveys and assessments with a specific focus on vulnerable groups and inequities.

 On-track

IR 0570/A0/04/002/002 By 2017 central, regional and local government have put in place policies and mechanisms ensuring the meaningful participation of children and adolescents in decisions concerning their wellbeing.

Progress: A school-based model for promoting child participation at school, municipal and regional levels was developed and rolled out in the country involving children from 17 schools in 8 municipalities. Training on the right of the child to be heard was organized for experts working with children and government officials, which led to the development of a comprehensive manual for promoting child participation in line with CRC recommendations. In each of the participating municipalities, a local children's council was established following a transparent and inclusive procedure. In addition, the first regional children's council in the country was established in Sliven region as a consultative body to the regional government.

Children were also involved in the management of the country programme. As a part of the Annual Program Review process, the CO carried out consultation with children and youth to gather their views on what the country priorities should be. The perspective of children was presented to all partners and stakeholders at the ARM and provided a valuable contribution to the discussions.

UNICEF continued to strengthen the capacities of local authorities to involve children in decision making, as well as to work towards realisation of children's rights through the Child-Friendly Municipality approach. The network of child-friendly municipalities, consisting at present of 17 members, provided an effective platform for advocacy, capacity building, exchange of knowledge and promoting good practices for improving the wellbeing of children at the local level. A representative of young people in Bulgaria took an active role in the consultative meeting in preparation of the Regional Ministerial Conference on education equity and the post-2015 development goals for Europe and Central Asia.

 On-track

IR 0570/A0/04/002/003 By 2017 Media, NGOs, business, children and adolescents participate in partnerships and alliances for monitoring, advocacy and promotion of child's rights.

Progress: The CP goals were supported through an integrated communications approach, combining C4D, social mobilization, CSR and fundraising. To CO supported efforts to build public support for and challenge social norms regarding the importance of family-based care as opposed to residential care, the importance of early years in life and exclusive breastfeeding, child participation, equity and social inclusion, as well as the importance of building a culture of solidarity with disadvantaged children.

ECD was supported by a TV documentary series called "Life as it is – Workshops for parents" which contributed to a better understanding of positive parenting. The public awareness/C4D campaign "Children do not Come with Instructions" emphasised the need to support parents of young children, and in particular aimed to increase demand for the new health visiting service. 21 TV outlets, 13 radio channels, 23 magazines and newspapers, and almost 200 outdoor locations were involved in this production.

World Breastfeeding Week was led for the first time led by the Minister of Health and used to address the role of parents and health professionals in the development of young children. To mark the event, a number of public events were jointly organised with partner NGOs, and educational materials on nutrition of young children were produced and widely disseminated.

A fundraising telethon called "Mission: Every Child" organised in partnership with National Television and well-known public figures highlighted the challenges faced by the most disadvantaged and excluded families to a wide audience. The partnership was endorsed by European Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs Kristalina Georgieva, and resulted in more than 10,000 new pledge donors for UNICEF. To further increase the base of pledge donors, the CO also partnered with a famous national singer - Vladimir Ampov Grafa - who used his national concert tour to promote the pledge programme "Benefactor Via Mobile Phone".

A study on how child-related topics are reflected in media was conducted to support the CO's efforts in facilitating dialogue and improving the protection of children in media reporting.

The CO successfully managed on-line communications through local website and Facebook, using them for building and maintaining a broad base of supporters. In the pre-election period, a strong advocacy message stating that "Children do not Vote but have Voice" aimed at the political parties attracted around 100 000 viewers in two days. The local website had 6000 unique viewers per month and daily postings on the Facebook page engaged almost 77,000 fans.

All partnerships with the private sector were based on CSR and involved employees, customers and suppliers in advocating and promoting children's rights as well as fundraising for UNICEF. UNICEF partner "Piraeus Bank" was awarded 1st Prize at the European Commission's CSR Awards in 2013.

 On-track

IR 0570/A0/04/002/004 By 2017, the general public and the private sector mobilize financial resources in support of most disadvantaged children in Bulgaria and worldwide.

Progress: CO efforts were directed to maximize income from the private sector through strategic partnerships and new accessible channels for individual giving, especially pledge. Despite the economic and political crisis in the country, the CO managed to achieve sustainable income growth of 13 per cent and maintained its leading position on the fundraising market in Bulgaria. The overall income from local fundraising in 2013 amounted to US \$731,064, 83 per cent of which was unrestricted funding.

This includes:

- Income from corporate contributions: US \$ 526 372 (5 per cent increase). The CO built strong partnerships with local corporate partners and managed to benefit, although modestly, from some of the UNICEF global partners.
- Income from individual donations (one-off and regular): US \$ 204, 692 (increased of 57 per cent).
- Total number of pledge donors: 20,495 as of 31 December 2013 (compared to 703 at the end of 2012). The overall income for the year from this stream totalled US \$117,529, of which US \$35,276 was the CO's contribution to global RR. Much more is expected to come in 2014.

Using the pro bono contribution of an IT company and engagement with all mobile operators in the country, the CO developed an innovative management platform for mobile donations. This comprehensive IT platform enables one-off and pledge donations and represents an effective tool for campaign management, real time monitoring, result analyses and charging. Using this technology, a new easy toll- and VAT- free application for automatic monthly pledge donations via mobile phone was developed and launched in July. This payment option was widely promoted through national media, corporate partners and fundraising events and resulted in over, 20 000 new registrations for monthly mobile donations. PFP is looking ways to expand the use of the Bulgaria software platform to other markets.

PC 3 - Cross sectoral costs

 On-track

PCR 0570/A0/04/801 Cross-sectoral costs

Progress: All major operational benchmarks and objectives of the year 2013 were met, as described in detail in the corresponding sections of the Country Office Annual Report.

 On-track

IR 0570/A0/04/801/001 Staff Related Costs

Progress: Few changes in the staffing structure, notably sources of funding, were endorsed by the PBR and approved by the Regional Director in 2013.

 On-track

IR 0570/A0/04/801/002 Operating Expenses

Progress: In 2013, the CO continued to implement the financial management recommendations from the internal audit, which was performed in 2010 and rated CO management as "satisfactory". Assignment of authority and delegations of financial controls reflect the office structure and are in line with the requirements of VISION. The ToA was reviewed to strengthen the segregation of duties. Additional supervisory controls were used, e.g. stamping of invoices for payment. Procedures were in place to ensure timely and accurate recording of Private Sector Fund Raising (PSFR) income. At the end of each month, contributions were recorded in VISION and reported to Private Fundraising and Partnerships (PFP) Division with a table indicating the amounts received per PBA.

Bank reconciliations were performed in a timely manner to ensure matching between the bank data and data in VISION. Financial controls were used to identify and prevent possible gaps. The Office has accounts in two banks – the PSFR bank account in Piraeus Bank, one of the biggest corporate donors to UNICEF in the country, and PSFR, USD, and EUR bank accounts in Raiffeisen Bank.

UNICEF Bulgaria has a significant volume of transactions below 500 USD, most of which are result of continuing process of cost optimizations and negotiations with service providers, e.g. office telephony, internet, office maintenance services, etc.

An inventory/ physical count of the assets was performed in the last quarter of 2013 as part of closing the books year-end and in accordance with IPSAS requirements. All items corresponded to VISION records. The local PSB committee met and decided to donate the old office vehicle to the Medical Center in Shumen to support the visiting Nurses project.

In 2013, the CO received from the Regional Contingency Fund (RCF) additional funds to upgrade end-user computer equipment, install video control and enhancing emergency exit procedures, and equipment for workplace for the RO outpost post.

Global Performance Indicators

- There were no outstanding DCTs over 9 months
- All RR was spent in 2013
- 54 per cent of OR was spent, the remaining was re-phased for 2014

- 1 PBA (SC110654) was extended until the end of 2017. All other PBAs were used within the original duration of the PBA life. PBA expenditure rate in 2013 was 100 per cent.

 On-track

IR 0570/A0/04/801/003 Training

Progress: In 2013, particular attention was paid to developing staff capacity through training and networking:

Individual training included:

- VISION Finance training in Geneva - Operations Officer
- PPP basic and advanced training in Istanbul - Operations Officer, ECD Officer, Child Rights Monitoring Specialist and Child Protection Specialist
- UNDSS Workshop in Bratislava - Operations Officer as CSFP
- On-line certificate on International Organisation Management offered by the University of Geneva - Sr. Exec./HR Assistant
- Donor Perfect Training, Istanbul - Fundraising Assistant and Officer
- Dynamic Leadership Certificate Programme, UNICEF/Harvard Initiative – completed by Fundraising Officer - Corporate and Policy and Knowledge Coordinator
- Importance of Early Relationships - ECD Officer and Policy and Knowledge Coordinator - done locally by trainers from UK & Training on Home Visiting Services in Geneva
- Representative attended Senior Leadership Development Programme training in Cambridge
- Advanced Excel & Financial Modelling Training - Finance Assistant
- Language courses - Child Protection Specialist - Spanish, Representative and PA – French

Group training included:

- Advocacy Training, March 2013
- Diversity Training, November 2013
- Knowledge sharing visit of Serbia Communication Officer on the development of UNICEF communication materials and working with MPs/Parliament
- Child Participation Training
- Integrity Awareness Training

Effective Governance Structure

Bulgaria CO continues to apply the governance structure which was rated as "satisfactory" in the last audit report. The governance structure, office objectives and priorities, ToRs of all relevant bodies and accountabilities of staff members were described in the Annual Management Plan adopted in the beginning of 2013 and shared with all staff members. The changes envisaged in the new CP and CPMP 2013-2017 were reflected in the AMP. Some further changes in the staffing structure, notably sources of funding, were endorsed by the PBR and approved by Regional Director in 2013. The CPMP 2013-2017 also contains Annex 4 describing the CO PSFR Strategy and Plan, and its implementation is coordinated with PFP.

Standard UNICEF control systems were in place. The Table of Authority (ToA) was revised twice in 2013 to reflect changes in the office structure. Programme review meetings, monitoring progress in programme implementation and budget spending were held quarterly. Overall management of the office was monitored by the CMT which remained the central management body, advising the Representative on management and performance, programme priorities and challenges, policy initiatives, budget and fundraising. A set of indicators to be monitored by the CMT was defined in the AMP. However most of them were covered by the Monthly Monitoring Report prepared by the Regional Office, which is regularly reviewed at CMT meetings. There were six meetings of the CMT in 2013. Internal committees (CRC, PSB, CRB and others) continued to function and closely followed up on the implementation of UNICEF rules and regulations. Regular information exchange, day-to-day coordination and briefings on important developments and policy recommendations occurred at all-staff meetings which took place most Monday mornings.

The Staff Association was active in information sharing and participated in regional fora. Three Joint Consultation Committee (JCC) meetings took place in 2013.

In the absence of the Resident Coordinator (RC) and the UN Country Team, UNICEF CO took the lead on security issues for UN staff and the remaining UN Agencies in the country. The UNICEF Representative was appointed DO, and Operations Officer was the Security Focal Point. Security Management Team meetings took place quarterly, and the Security Plan and MOSS were revised and adopted in 2013.

Strategic Risk Management

The Office Risk Library was reviewed and amended in the first half of 2013, as part of overall office management. Only medium and low risks were identified. Corresponding controls and risk response were also revised, using a structured approach for assessment and analysis. Improvements in some areas were identified, as were some new risks.

In 2013, the Office did not face any significant operational and financial risks related to VISION. Some problems that appeared in the Monthly Management Report were a result of system bugs.

The most important risk was associated with the country environment. Political instability and the resignation of the Government, elections and public protests required additional efforts to ensure full programme implementation.

Additional risk that emerged at the end of the year was related to a major staffing change, with some of the senior staff taking international post or going on maternity leave. This required quick re-assignment of duties was challenging for the small office, and especially at the year end.

The Intranet-based Early Warning Early Action was regularly updated during the year. The only major event affecting the country situation was a significant influx of refugees, mainly from Syria.

Evaluation

A multiannual integrated monitoring plan responding to the new 5-year Country Programme was prepared. In accordance, a 2013-2014 rolling IMEP was adjusted to the needs of the Programme, actual workflow, priorities, and government plans and capacity. Both plans were consulted and approved by all relevant state partners. The only main revision in 2013 was the postponement of a joint evaluation with the Office of the Ombudsman until 2014. This was due to their increased workload.

The findings and recommendations of the 2012 evaluation on foster care - rated among the best evaluations by UNICEF HQ - were used in office work planning and were shared and discussed with partners. A survey on baseline indicators in KLA 1 and KLA 6 (Child's Right to a Family Environment and Young Child Wellbeing) was performed in partnership with the Open Society Institute in Bulgaria.

Regular monitoring visits were conducted in all sites where currently activities are being implemented and corresponding field visit reports were prepared. The CO developed a special tool to monitor ongoing progress of health home-visiting services in the Shumen test region which will be fine-tuned and incorporated into the model.

Partners were informed and consulted on a regular basis during the preparations of all studies, assessments and evaluations in order to guarantee better quality and to adequately and timely manage responses. The CO provided technical assistance to the Government and NGO partners to help assess the various child rights safeguards in the country.

That said, national capacity for evaluations does not always allow for analysis in line with UN standards. The strict evaluation function is limited in national strategic plans and donor funded projects and usually only internal monitoring and audit are performed or implementation is simply evaluated based on a document review.

Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology

A number of adjustments were performed in line with the Organization's requirements, including procurement of new hardware for the end users and new mobile phones – smart devices with access to email, VPN Cisco AnyConnect access installation for office laptops, installation of Windows 2008 Server R2 DHCP with NAP Enforcement, Hyper V OS upgrade to Service pack 2, installation of new VEEAM Backup 6.5 for Hyper V backup facility, setting of WSUS automatic updates, upgrade of Symantec EndPoint Protection. Secondary and independent internet access was improved through Wi-Fi routers. The office equipment now provides more timely, reliable and secure information flow.

Cooperation with the Regional Office ITSS Division was further developed. Since all business applications and email servers are still based in the RO or HQ, Bulgaria CO continued to rely on the IT services provided by these entities. Support for end users was also provided by the CO. A new Administrative Assistant (ICT focal point), GS5 post was established in July 2013. Together with administrative and procurement tasks, his support was especially valuable and important for ICT work.

CO developments in 2013 included:

- A new channel for receiving recurring (pledge) donations via mobile phone (sms).
- Enhanced website performance.
- Installation of Donor Perfect in multiple stations to allow the fundraising team to have donor data safe and available for use.
- Renewal of contract with mobile phone provider resulting in cost savings.
- Installation of video surveillance in the Office.
- Equipment of office cars with mobile internet.
- An audit of the websites.

To reduce its footprint on the environment, the CO used several recycling policies, including responsible disposal of unusable electronic waste, depositing used batteries in a collection spot, separating paper,

plastic, and glass for recycling, using recycled paper in the Office, setting the standard for double-side printing, and installing a bike stand. Various energy saving activities were also introduced throughout the year.

Fund-raising and Donor Relations

In 2013, the CO raised funds from different sources, both nationally and internationally. Funds were received for programme activities from the Danish National Committee and Velux Foundation (US \$146,309) for community based social services; from the Swedish National Committee (US \$9,493 for field work); and from the French National Committee (US \$367,943) for juvenile justice. The French National Committee also committed an additional US \$765,000. Thematic funds (US \$564,279) and Set-Aside funds (US \$300,000) were also received. Additionally, the CO received US \$72,514 through external (delegated) funding. Efforts were also made to maximize income from local private sector fundraising. As a key achievement, an overall US \$731,064 was raised through local fundraising, 83 per cent of which constitutes unrestricted funding.

Income from corporate contributions amounted to US \$526,372 (5 per cent increase). The CO built strong partnerships with local corporate partners and managed to benefit, although modestly, from some of the UNICEF global partners. Income from individual donations (one-off and regular) amounted to US \$204,692 (57 per cent increase). The number of pledge donors totalled 20,495 on 31 December 2013 (compared to 703 at the end of 2012). The overall income for the year from this stream amounted to US \$117,529, of which US \$35,276 was contributed by the CO to global RR. Much more is expected to come in 2014.

At the end of the year, the CO reached 24 per cent of the approved OR ceiling (US \$2,948,522 available) for the 5-year cycle. 25 per cent of OR available in 2013 came from local private sector fundraising. All of the donor reports were sent on time in 2013. The Donor Focal Point monitored due date and alerted the responsible Programme Manager. During the year, three PBAs expired and were fully utilized. In addition to the funds raised for UNICEF, the CO played an important role in leveraging funds for children (in particular for child care reform) by assisting the Government in preparing successful applications for EU Structural Funds.

Management of Financial and Other Assets

In 2013, the CO continued to implement the financial management recommendations from the internal audit, which was performed in 2010 and rated CO management as "satisfactory". Assignment of authority and delegations of financial controls reflect the office structure and are in line with the requirements of VISION. The ToA was reviewed to strengthen the segregation of duties. Additional supervisory controls were used, e.g. stamping of invoices for payment. Procedures were in place to ensure timely and accurate recording of Private Sector Fund Raising (PSFR) income. At the end of each month, contributions were recorded in VISION and reported to Private Fundraising and Partnerships (PFP) Division with a table indicating the amounts received per PBA.

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UNICEF Bulgaria has a significant volume of transactions below 500 USD, most of which are result of continuing process of cost optimizations and negotiations with service providers, e.g. office telephony, internet, office maintenance services, etc.

In 2013, the CO continued to occupy rent-free premises provided by the Government. This resulted in a savings of US \$50,000 when compared to the amount previously paid for rent (for smaller premises).

An inventory of the assets was performed in the last quarter of 2013 as part of closing the books year-end and in accordance with IPSAS requirements. All items corresponded to VISION records. The local PSB committee met and decided to donate the old office vehicle to the Medical Center in Shumen to support the

visiting Nurses project.

In 2013, the CO received from the Regional Contingency Fund (RCF) additional funds to upgrade end-user computer equipment, install video control and enhanced emergency exit procedures, and equipment for workplace for the RO outpost post.

Global Performance Indicators:

- There were no outstanding DCTs over 9 months;
- All RR was spent in 2013;
- 54 per cent of OR was spent, the remaining was re-phased for 2014;
- 1 PBA (SC110654) was extended until the end of 2017. All other PBAs were used within the original duration of the PBA life. PBA expenditure rate in 2013 was 100 per cent.

Supply Management

The Office does not have dedicated supply staff members or significant supply activities. In the Institutional Budget, procurement is limited to the purchase of basic network and communications equipment for the Office. Programme supplies were used depending on cooperation activities with partners, and were mainly limited to the use of equipment. The Office followed the general supply processes guidelines for local procurement. Additional assistance was received from colleagues in the Regional Office and from other UNICEF offices in the Region.

To address the needs of the influx of refugees coming into Bulgaria in 2013, the Office ordered 55 ECD in-a-box and 15 School in-a-box kits (with 35 Replenishment kits) valued at US \$14,730 from the Supply Division in Copenhagen. The order will be delivered in January 2014 and used in the centres for the refugees.

Human Resources

In the first year of the new CPD 2013-2017, the CO submitted a request to align the Office structure to reflect current needs. PBR conclusions resulted in changes of funding sources, the abolishment of one vacant post and creation of one new post. The recruitment process was finalized in the first half of 2013.

In sum:

- Administrative & HR Assistant (GS5) – abolished vacant post
- Administrative Assistant (IT focal point) (GS5) – new post
- Communication Officer (NOB) – change of funding from RR to IB, effective 01 July 2013
- Senior Executive Assistant (GS6) – change of funding from OR to IB, effective 01 July 2013

At the end of 2013, recruitment for the position of Policy and Knowledge Coordinator (NOD) started, following the departure of the incumbent for the Somalia CO. Two other contracts – for the Communication Assistant and Programme Assistant - were not renewed at the end of the year. Recruitment for these positions will be held in 2014.

Consultants supported the work of the Office in several key areas: working with refugees, regional planning of services/ community work, child protection, de-institutionalisation, juvenile justice, child friendly municipalities and others. Interns were used in the fundraising department to assist with data entry.

In 2013, particular attention was paid to developing staff capacity through training and networking:

Individual training included:

- VISION Finance training in Geneva - Operations Officer
- PPP basic and advanced training in Istanbul - Operations Officer, ECD Officer, Child Rights Monitoring Specialist and Child Protection Specialist
- UNDSS Workshop in Bratislava - Operations Officer as CSFP

- On-line certificate on International Organisation Management offered by the University of Geneva - Sr. Exec./HR Assistant
- Donor Perfect Training, Istanbul - Fundraising Assistant and Officer
- Dynamic Leadership Certificate Programme, UNICEF/Harvard Initiative – completed by Fundraising Officer - Corporate and Policy and Knowledge Coordinator
- Importance of Early Relationships - ECD Officer and Policy and Knowledge Coordinator - done locally by trainers from UK & Training on Home Visiting Services in Geneva
- Representative attended Senior Leadership Development Programme training in Cambridge
- Advanced Excel & Financial Modelling Training - Finance Assistant
- Language courses - Child Protection Specialist - Spanish, Representative and PA – French

Group training included:

- Advocacy Training, March 2013
- Diversity Training, November 2013
- Knowledge sharing visit of Serbia Communication Officer on the development of UNICEF communication materials and working with MPs/Parliament
- Child Participation Training
- Integrity Awareness Training

All 2012 annual and 2013 mid-term PAS for local staff members were completed on time.

Two PSVs were available and provided support. Flexible working arrangements, such as flexible working hours, telecommuting and time for learning were approved by management and used by staff members throughout the year.

The CO monitored the closing and certification of TAs within 15 days after their completion was introduced. The CO also facilitated and conducted activities relevant to all UN staff in Bulgaria including leading activities pertaining to the security of staff in its role as DO and CSFP (UNDSS), language exams, and the Interim Local Staff Salary Survey.

Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings

In 2013, the CO continued to occupy rent-free premises provided by the Government. This resulted in a savings of US \$50,000 when compared to the amount previously paid for rent (for smaller premises).

Despite the increased number of trips, travel expenses remained at the same level as in the previous year - US \$73,000. In 2013, the CO obtained better contractual terms for some of the Office's operational expenses, such as mobile telephony and Internet use, and optimized the use of video conferencing and Skype as well as various supplies to save costs. The competitive selection of offers between companies with which the Office signed LTAs reduced the cost of external printing and office consumables by almost 50 per cent compared with 2012.

Successful negotiations with Raiffeisen Bank, resulted in the abolition of standard bank fees on all accounts at the bank. This decreased the cost for bank charges from US \$952 in 2012 to US \$476 in 2013. Payment management was improved and regulated to up to 2 payment runs per week, or an average of less than 11 payments per month (total for 2013 – 131), including transfers from contribution accounts to the current account, payroll. Fund availability in the bank accounts was optimised with requests for replenishment processed through Treasury in HQ and replenishments processed directly into the current account. All bank charges and interest were recorded in the current account for all bank accounts in Raiffeisen Bank, which results in efficient operations.

Changes in AMP & CPMP

No significant changes are envisaged in CPMP and AMP for 2014.

Summary Notes and Acronyms

AMP – Annual management plan
 ATM - Automatic Teller Machine
 BCP – Business continuity plan
 BGN – Bulgarian Leva
 C4D - Communication for Development
 CAF – Capital asset fund
 CEDAW – Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Discriminations Against Women
 CFC – Child Friendly Cities
 CFM – Child Friendly Municipalities
 CMT – Country Management Team
 CO – Country Office
 CP – Country Programme
 CPD – Country Programme Document
 CPMP – Country Programme Management Plan
 CRB – Contract Review Body
 CRC – Committee of the Rights of the Child
 CRC – Contract Review Committee
 CRC – UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
 CRING – Country report on indicators for the goal
 CRM – Customer relationship management
 CSFP – Country Security Focal Point
 CSO – Civil Society Organisations
 DCT – Direct Cash Transfer
 DHCP - Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol
 DI – De-institutionalisation
 DO - Designated Official
 ECD – Early Childhood Development
 EU - European Union
 EU SF – European Union Structural funds
 FICE – International Federation of Educative Communities
 GoB – Government of Bulgaria
 HQ – Head Quarters
 HRBAP – Human Rights Based Approach
 ICT - Information and Communication Technology
 IFCO – International Foster Care Organisation
 IT – Information Technologies
 ITSS - Information Technology Security System
 JCC – Joint consultation committee
 KLA -Key Leadership Area
 LTA – Long-Term Arrangement
 MDG – Millennium Development Goals
 MEYS – Ministry of Education, Youth and Science
 MF – Ministry of Finance
 MFA – Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 MH – Ministry of Health
 MJ - Ministry of Justice
 MLSP – Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
 MoRES – Monitoring of Results for Equity System
 MOSS - Minimum Operating Security Standards
 NAP - Network Access Protection
 NatCom - National Committee for UNICEF
 NEP – Non Expendable Property
 NGOs – Non-governmental organisations
 NSI – National Statistics Institute
 NSO – National Statistic Office
 OIA - Office of Internal Audit
 OR - Other Resources
 PAS – Performance Appraisal System
 PBA – Programme Budget Allotment
 PBR – Programme and Budget Review
 PFP – Private Fundraising and Partnerships

PISA – Programme for International Student Assessment
 PPP -Programme Planning Process
 PSB – Property Survey Board
 PSFR - Private Sector Fund Raising
 PSV – Peer Support Volunteer
 RC- Resident Coordinator
 RCF - Regional Contingency Fund
 RO – Regional Office
 RR - Regular resources
 SACP – State Agency for Child Protection
 SM – Staff Member
 UNCT - United Nations Country Team
 UNDSS - United Nations Department of Security and Safety
 UNFPA – United Nations Populations Fund
 UNODC - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
 VEEAM Backup - Backup Software
 VPN - Virtual Private Network
 WB – World Bank
 WGs – working groups
 WHO – World Health Organisation
 WSUS – Windows server update system

Document Centre

Evaluation

	Title	Sequence Number	Type of Report
1	IMEP 2013 Bulgaria	2013/001	IMEP
2	Bulgaria IMEP 2013-2017	2013/002	IMEP
3	Situation Analysis Sliven: Mapping of vulnerable communities, situation analysis and needs assessment of the region of Sliven, focused on families with children at risk and children in conflict with the law	2013/003	Survey

4	Assessment of the process of closure of a home for children with disabilities and its effect on the fulfilment of rights of children placed in the home	2013/005	Survey
5	Assessment of a pilot initiative Workshops for Parents	2013/006	Review

Other Publications

	Title
1	CO Annual Report 2012
2	Lost Future? Non-enrolment and Non-attendance of School: a study on the phenomena