

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UNICEF successfully leveraged over US\$ 8.0 million from the Dutch Government to the Ministry of Health to address MCH disparities through improved facilities, training and outreach services. The Government has committed to co-fund the programme with an additional US\$15 million.

UNICEF support to develop an electronic data system for social workers has enabled generation of disaggregated data on children at risk. Through close collaboration with the WB, which is developing a consolidated database on social benefits, the database will link for the first time child protection data with social protection data. All CSWs have been trained on the use of the system, and 45% of data entry has been completed. The data will be a key resource for planning, budgeting and monitoring child protection programmes.

With UNICEF facilitation and support, Parliament conducted a legislative oversight hearing on the status of recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The hearing brought four key ministers (MoES, MoH, MoLSP, and MoJ) to give evidence and respond to questions on child rights issues identified in a UNICEF supported comparative review of Macedonian legislation and the CRC. Following the hearing, a new action plan to respond to issues raised will be considered by Parliament. Progress in the implementation of the Child Friendly Municipalities (CFM) project has been limited. Obstacles include insufficient human, technical and fiscal capacities at the local level as well as limited planning and prioritizing capabilities at the municipal level; scarcity of child-related data; and a highly politicized environment.

An evaluation of CFM is planned prior to the mid-term review.

UNICEF remained partner of choice for EU in realization of children's rights. The EU country progress report reflected UNICEF input and highlights critical child rights issues. Partnership with USAID and WB has been pivotal in ensuring focus on quality education. Advocacy by UNICEF resulted in a government decision to participate in the 2010 TIMSS. This initiative helped the launch of a national debate on country's low student achievements as measured in international assessments and ways to address the issue. UNICEF and USAID worked together in the numeracy component to ensure alignment of training.

2. COUNTRY SITUATION AS AFFECTING CHILDREN AND WOMEN

The State Statistical Office (SSO)'s Annual Poverty Report (based on 2009 data) revealed the impact of the economic downturn on the most vulnerable (<http://www.stat.gov.mk/pdf/2010/4.1.10.64.pdf>).

It showed that compared to 2008, relative poverty rates increased by 2.7% to 31.1%. Child poverty rates (published for the first time by SSO) are even higher, at 34.1%, with children living in households with six or more members most at risk of living in poverty. About 53.2% of the poor live in rural areas. Unemployment rate among youth (15-24 years old) increased to 55% this year.

The economic crisis continued to affect budget allocations for children in 2010. While cuts in allocations to social service ministries were relatively modest, cuts to programmes addressing the needs of children were more severe. The Ministry of Education saw its budget reduced by 2.2% compared to 2009; however, the Bureau for

Development of Education was allocated 23% less funds compared to 2009. Although the Ministry of Health's budget increased by almost 55% in 2010 compared to the previous year, child-specific health programmes received significantly less funds in 2010. For example, funds for systematic medical examination of school-age children were slashed by 35%, preventive healthcare programmes by 32%, and mother and child health protection programmes by 47%. Social protection funds too, received 1.6% less funding than in 2009, while within this declining allocation, funds for families with children were reduced by 6%.

Partner policy briefs indicate that the lack of "stable, transparent, sustainable, objective and equitable funding for local self government units (LSGU) has not been created. Sufficient funds, both in terms of scope and structure, have not been secured and are not appropriate to finance the new competencies of LSGUs". Insufficient financing is particularly an issue in the social development sphere. Municipalities with existing infrastructure are favoured in some funding transfer formulas, leaving children in poor and rural municipalities at a greater disadvantage. [Source: "Republic of Macedonia – Centralized (fiscal) Decentralization"]

Infant and peri-natal mortality rates are currently 11.7/1000 and 16.4/1000 respectively. These rates are 3 times higher than the EU average and are due to increases in deaths of premature newborns, representing 80% of infant mortality. There is also up to 30% difference in IMR between regions, with Albanian and Roma communities having 25-30% higher rates than average (SSO, 2010). The coverage of preventative MCH services remains below set standards; community nurses cover approximately 50% of the population. Approximately 20% of pregnant Roma women never visit a doctor for antenatal care. The MCH system requires between 30% to 50% increase in the number of physicians and nurses (IPH, 2010).

Revision of legislation to relax criteria for opening kindergartens and also include provisions on private providers enabled a number of rural areas to expand ECD coverage. In response to increasing separation in schools along ethnic lines, with HCME support, Government adopted a national policy on integrated education, though funds have yet to be committed for its implementation. Although there were shortages, free textbooks were distributed to all primary and secondary school children.

3. CP ANALYSIS & RESULT

3.1 CP Analysis

3.1.1 CP Overview:

The country programme continued to sharpen its focus within a system-building approach and through the equity lens. Examples of good practices this year were in the areas of:

- Leveraging resources through advocacy and technical support, resulting in MOH securing the US\$8.0 million grant from the Dutch government, along with the concerned Ministry's commitment to co-fund the programme with additional US\$15 million to address MCH disparities in the country.
- Knowledge management, supporting the establishment of the first computerized social work database in all the CSWs, which will interface with the WB-supported data base on social benefits, thus linking child protection data to social protection for the first time. Knowledge on children's issues was also deepened through a number of studies (see details below) that will serve as the basis for further policy development and planning with relevant government and civil society counterparts. Technical support in knowledge management resulted in the first child poverty report produced by SSO as part of its annual poverty report.
- Capacity development was pursued with a focus on institutionalizing the initiatives and ensuring sustainability in the areas of ECD, math and literacy education in

primary schools, continuous medical education, and child rights monitoring by NGOs (see details below).

- Strategic partnerships with the Parliament and the National Child Rights Commission (NCRC) to follow up on the CRC Committee's concluding observations on the second periodic report (June 2010), led to the first Parliament oversight hearing exclusively on the CRC, and also to agreement by the NCRC to revise the Nation Plan of Action for Children to incorporate the Committee recommendations.
- The focus on Communication for Development (C4D) resulted in the formulation of C4D plans and initiation of their implementation on two priority issues: justice for children, and violence in schools.

Challenges: Complexities of governance, insufficient technical capacity for planning and evaluation among government and other counterparts, limited dedicated funds for implementing approved policies and programmes, and lack of quality data are key challenges to the fulfilment of children's rights.

3.1.2 Programme Strategy

3.1.2.1 Capacity Development:

Capacity development efforts based on concrete evidence included the following:

- Building on the situation analysis of MCH, UNICEF efforts targeted the improvement of MCH policies, financing and implementation which resulted in: (i) Update and adoption of clinical guidelines; (ii) Revitalizing of continuous medical education in peri-natal care (not operational since 2004); (iii) Development of a Rulebook to define the standards for maternities.
- An evaluation of child protection trainings had found little impact largely due to lack of standardized training tools and lack of a robust follow-up mechanism. Preparatory work was completed this year for the development of standardized curriculum and training tools for social workers in 2011; the curricula will be part of the licensing process for CSW staff.
- Based on evidence of low student achievement in mathematics and language (TIMSS and PIRLS), UNICEF expanded CD programmes in the teaching of math and literacy, focusing on national trainers, teachers and advisors responsible for quality support and assurance. The math and literacy training has so far covered 22% and 10% of total primary schools respectively. A similar approach is being pursued as part of the prevention of violence in schools programme which was launched in September and expected to reach all primary schools in 2011.
- UNICEF developed a training programme on the application of ELDS and tested them in 5 kindergartens and 20 ECD centres. This resulted in a manual on ELDS implementation to be offered to all ECD providers in the country. Similarly, in selected schools of 3 ethnically mixed municipalities that are the focus of a MDG-funded programme, joint extracurricular activities and materials were developed and implemented. The materials will be published in a manual to be offered to all schools.

Following the adoption of the "Child Rights and the Media Syllabus" in 2009, the Kiril and Metodij University introduced the subject as an optional element of the journalism curricula this year. Some forty students of journalism and law completed the programme.

The CD plan for NGOs on child rights monitoring and reporting was developed in consultation with two major NGO alliances; the participating NGOs will start producing monitoring reports from 2011.

3.1.2.2 Effective Advocacy:

The Country Office (CO) was successful in leveraging US\$8.0 million from the Dutch Government for the Ministry of Health for a comprehensive programme to reduce

disparities in MCH. The efforts will be co-financed by the Macedonian Government (US\$15M). Strong evidence produced through a situation analysis, government ownership of the process and intensive advocacy at different levels of MoH, strategic use of limited UNICEF resources for technical support to develop a very large equity-based funding proposal, and lobbying with the donor at the country level were instrumental in the success of this advocacy effort (for full details, see Innovations).

The Comparative Review of Macedonian Legislation and the CRC that was completed this year served as the basis for the first Parliament oversight hearing focusing exclusively on the CRC. In this high profile advocacy activity, four key Ministers (MoES, MOH, MoLSP and MOJ) presented the Government priorities for children and responded to questions from the Members of Parliament covering critical child rights issues that were identified by the comparative study. The oversight hearing has led to the development of a draft action plan for the Parliament's systematic oversight on implementation of different plans and strategies concerning children.

UNICEF analysed the current coverage and cost of providing ECD services. The report "Fair Play", provides strong evidence of inequity in access, and inefficiency in allocating resources for ECD in the current system. It suggests a financially feasible plan of action. The Minister of Labour and Social Policy publicly made firm commitments to take action on the recommendations of the study, starting with introducing necessary legislative amendments early next year to allow diversified service provision, new funding formula, prioritization of age groups, and accreditation.

Advocacy on key child right issues through the EU delegation continued. For countries (including Macedonia) seeking EU membership, the recommendations of the EU annual progress are driving factors for political, social and judicial reform. Through its inputs to this year's progress report, and participation in EU consultations in Brussels and Skopje, UNICEF ensured that all the key child rights issues (progress as well as shortcomings) are reflected in the report.

3.1.2.3 Strategic Partnerships:

UNICEF continues to be a vocal and active member of the National Child Rights Commission (NCRC). In 2010, UNICEF supported the creation and launching of a website for the NCRC, thereby making its work transparent and allowing for a wider consultation with and access by the public. At UNICEF's recommendation, the NCRC has agreed to revise the existing NPA for children in order to address the recommendations of the CRC Committee (June 2010). The revision will be conducted in 2011. A significant step forward was the NCRC's commitment also to review the new and emerging legislation to ensure its consistency with the CRC. The findings of the Comparative Review of Macedonian Legislation and the CRC will serve as the starting point. Work on strengthening the NCRC's capacity for monitoring and reporting on children's rights is on-going.

A two-year contract was signed between UNICEF and EU to support the Government in the implementation of the Justice for Children Project. The project has three pillars addressing policy making, institutional and human capacity building, and prevention of juvenile delinquency.

UNICEF influenced policy making through different national child protection bodies such as the National Coordination Body on Child Sexual Abuse and Paedophilia and the National Council on Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency which resulted in the drafting of the National Strategy on Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (to be adopted by the Council next year), a 5-year workplan for the Council, and the completion of the study on Child Sexual Abuse.

Following a setback in negotiations with a potential corporate partner (see part 3.2) the CO identified additional companies as future prospects and initiated efforts to develop a strategy that best leverages their capacities and resources to meet UNICEF priorities.

The CO partnership with the Parliament builds on the need for greater oversight and budgetary allocations to ensure full implementation of child-focused laws, strategies and programmes. As a result of the 2009 formal agreement signed with the Parliament, this year two informal child-rights bodies were established, a two-year joint plan (including capacity building and advocacy activities) developed, and two major events organised (for details, see Innovations).

3.1.2.4 Knowledge Management:

Knowledge generation and sharing with national partners was part of several projects in 2010.

As part of the *Justice for children* project, UNICEF is using the results of a recent assessment to develop a system for monitoring the implementation of the new juvenile justice law. UNICEF is linking different institutions involved in this process and facilitating information sharing and exchange among them.

As a result of continued technical support and consistent advocacy, for the first time SSO produced child poverty data as part of its annual poverty report.

The first electronic data system to register cases and interventions by the CSWs was set up with UNICEF support. The software prevents multiple recording and provides disaggregated data on children at risk or victims. It is also linked to the database on social transfers, and once fully functional, will link for the first time child protection data with that of social protection. All CSW have been trained on the use of the system, and data entry is ongoing. The data generated through the database will be available for use by the SSO for its regular reports on child protection.

The Situation Analysis of Child Sexual Abuse, the first of its kind, confirmed that the sexual abuse of children remains underreported, that the legal framework, although advanced, has gaps and inconsistencies, and that the preventive and protective services currently in place are largely inadequate.

The national body responsible for plans to address child sexual abuse agreed to use the study recommendations as the main basis for the Government's 2011 action plan.

A baseline study on teaching skills and students' achievements in literacy in primary education grades 1-3 was conducted in 2010. The baseline provided information on the initial knowledge and understanding of students and communication by teachers, and will be used to evaluate the impact of training in 2013. The 3-year time period is in line with the duration of the cycle students need to go through from grade 1 to 3 while being exposed to the new teacher's instruction programme.

3.1.2.5 C4D Communication for Development:

C4D strategies and plans were developed in two programme areas (Eliminating Violence in Schools, and Justice for Children).

Using the Strategic Communication Planning Tool as a guide, multi-discipline workshops were organised to elicit knowledge and ideas from experts and stakeholders. While there were some limitations (i.e. stakeholders not available more than one day for the exercise) the process ensured a participatory approach to communication planning. Furthermore, it provided an opportunity to build basic capacities among stakeholders to engage in C4D initiatives. Given time limitations, a great deal of pre-workshop analysis was conducted (i.e. defining objectives, principles, key facts taken from field research

conducted as part of the programme interventions, defining related programme actions and target audiences at individual, community and policy levels). This enabled stakeholders to primarily focus on behavioural analysis, and on defining communication strategy and interventions. Post-workshop analysis included developing an M&E framework.

The C4D strategy to reduce violence in schools foresees a series of integrated communication activities targeting students, teachers and parents, school leadership and policy makers. It focuses on: challenging the acceptance of violence as a normal and justified response among children; increasing awareness of the consequences of punitive disciplining practices and promoting positive parenting; motivating teachers to apply "behaviour for learning" principles in classroom settings; motivating school leadership to initiate action at community level and advocacy efforts to ensure national policy and procedures are adopted on preventing violence and promoting behaviour for learning. A detailed implementation plan (which foresees a launch in early 2011) has been developed and incorporates M&E activities to pre-test material, and monitor impact during the rollout and evaluation.

The C4D strategy on justice for children includes a series of interventions designed to positively change the way children in conflict with the law are perceived and treated in the justice system and activities to support the implementation of prevention programmes. While not as advanced as the violence in schools initiative, the C4D strategy will be used to revise the Communication and Visibility Plan which was defined earlier in the year to support the implementation of the EU IPA funded Justice for Children project.

3.1.3 Normative Principles

3.1.3.1 Human Rights Based Approach to Cooperation:

Two key studies supported by UNICEF this year highlighted the inequities in access to ECD and education for the most vulnerable groups, i.e. ethnic minorities and children in rural areas, and proposed concrete actions for closing the gaps.

"Fair Play" makes an argument for the most marginalized children who are excluded from ECD provision (enrolment rates are only 2% among Albanian children and 3.4% among Roma; 18% in urban areas vs. 2% in rural areas; 24% in the richest quintile vs. 2% in the poorest) and suggests scenarios for inclusion of the most marginalized through half day programmes subsidized by the state.

The "Assessment of Inclusiveness of the Education System" analyzed the gaps in meeting the needs of all children and provided a roadmap for a system approach to the needs of most marginalized (the socially-disadvantaged, children with disabilities and Roma children). Inclusive education is one of the IPA priorities for 2011.

Under the second programme component, UNICEF continued to support the government in data collection and policy planning targeting the most vulnerable children at the local and national levels. Municipal authorities have been using UNICEF provided "MakInfo" software to monitor the situation of children at the local level and plan child rights related activities accordingly in 11 pilot municipalities.

UNICEF worked closely with the government on its second periodic report to the CRC committee, which was reviewed by the Committee in May. An orientation session was held for the members of government delegation to inform them of the procedures and dynamics of the session. UNICEF also supported an alliance of NGOs for their shadow report, as well as a separate report by children that was presented to the Committee by

children themselves. Using the concluding observations of the Committee as an advocacy tool, UNICEF secured NCRC commitment to revise the existing action plan for children. The revised version will address all the recommendations in one comprehensive document containing a reasonable time-frame, resources and responsible institutions for implementing child rights actions. Moreover, the Parliament oversight hearing on the CRC was used as the forum to disseminate and reflect on the CRC recommendations.

3.1.3.2 Gender Equality and Mainstreaming:

The CO conducted an assessment of gender mainstreaming in the country programme at the beginning of 2010. The assessment found that while gender aspects were not consistently and systematically applied in the country programme, there is more gender awareness and action toward gender equality in programme implementation in various CP areas and individual projects than is actually documented in writing. Promising practices include UNICEF's engagement to support the SSO in the production of data, including sex-disaggregated data, the child-friendly schools project, ECD and Education in general, as well as the joint UN-supported national programme on domestic violence. Since data in many fields do not show glaring gender inequalities, a significant focus should be on gender mainstreaming in institution building and policy development.

As a response to these findings, UNICEF ensured thorough adherence to the relevant programme practices, e.g. inclusion of gender issues in TORs for consultants for all programme areas, explicitly highlighting gender issues in the design of any research or study, or gender disaggregated data in any new data source or M&E system. This was the case for the database on social work services where the CO ensured that all the indicators included in the data base are gender sensitive, and that gender disaggregated data was explicitly emphasized in the instructions for users. Similarly, the process of defining indicators for monitoring the implementation of the juvenile justice law included instructions for gender disaggregated data on all indicators. In training the NGOs on child rights monitoring and reporting too, particular emphasis was placed on collecting gender disaggregated data.

The office gender focal point has been appointed with a specific terms of reference.

3.2 Programme Components:

Title: *System strengthening for child rights*

Purpose:

PCR - By end of 2015, as a result of social sector reforms, the Government addresses targeted disparities in the quality of and access to basic social services for vulnerable children and families.

Main results planned for 2010-2011 (two-year rolling workplan):

- ECD national policy and ECD training programme for different service providers developed and adopted; ECD service delivery models for the most disadvantaged children established in 5 municipalities.
- Policy and normative framework related to inclusive education revised; in-service and pre-service teacher training curricula and manuals ready, and trainings delivered; policies and programmes to address inter-ethnic relations developed and adopted; CFS framework updated and applied in education sector reform in the areas of violence in schools, teacher development, and school self evaluation.
- Standards for enforcement of the Juvenile Justice Law adopted and applied; existing justice for children training curricula revised; at least ten Local Councils for prevention of

juvenile delinquency established; system for monitoring the implementation of the Juvenile Justice Law established
- Capacities for planning, budgeting and implementation of MCH related preventive programme improved (2 MCH sector policies endorsed; additional resources for MCH leveraged; pre-service and in-service MCH curricula revised; process for decentralized health planning in pilot municipalities started.

Resources Used:

Total approved for 2010 as per CPD: US\$1,872,500

Total available for 2010 from all sources: RR: US\$424,500; OR: US\$1,921,662;

Total:US\$2,346,162

Any special allocations (list)

List of donors: Government of Netherlands (education in emergencies), Consolidated Funds for NatComs, Spanish Government (MDG-F), Dutch Government for the Joint Programme on Domestic Violence, UN Trust Fund (JP on Domestic Violence), EU, Italian Government, National Committee of the Netherlands

Result Achieved:

The following were achieved through a system building approach and policy advocacy:

ECD – The study “Fair Play” provided a financially feasible plan for expanding ECD coverage and made a significant contribution to ECD policy development (see 3.1.6 for details). The training programme for ELDS implementation was finalized and piloted in 20 community-based centres. Instruments for monitoring child outcomes based on ELDS were developed, tested, and included in kindergarten regulations. Community-based centres were supported to provide ECD services to over 800 most marginalized children in rural Albanian and Macedonian, and Roma communities. Municipalities increasingly choose to invest in these centers; in total 6 centres are expected to be funded by municipalities in 2011.

Education – The Inclusive Education study (see 3.1.6 for details) got the full support of MoES and was recommended as one of IPA priorities for 2011. CFS standards were revised based on which the concept for new secondary education curriculum was developed. Teacher training on mathematics was expanded to 22% of schools, and on literacy to 10% of primary schools. The national teacher training programme on reduction of violence was launched in 22 primary schools and will be scaled up to all schools next year. Capacity development for policy makers on inter-ethnic dialogue was supported by facilitating access to first hand information on a successful model (Northern Ireland), with a focus on national level policies, programmes and mechanisms for implementing multiculturalism, dispute resolution, and peace education. Furthermore, extracurricular activities in multiculturalism and democratic participation were supported in schools and Youth Centers of three ethnically mixed municipalities. These activities have contributed to increased interaction and socialization amongst students from ethnically mixed communities, allowing them to better understand and respect each other's culture and values.

Health - Safe Motherhood strategy was developed, and under its framework the following was achieved: i) US\$8.0 million leveraged for MCH programme (see Innovations for details); ii) Clinical guidelines in peri-natal care were updated; iii) Continuous medical education in peri-natal care was restarted; iv) Rulebook for reorganization and standardization of maternities was formulated; v) MoH was supported to undertake a survey on the nutrition status and anaemia prevalence among women 15-49 and children <5. Based on the survey results, UNICEF will assist MoH to develop a nutrition plan of action.

Child Protection – The normative framework and system capacities were advanced through the following: i) The findings of “Assessment of Juvenile Justice” were used to develop the protocol for inter-institutional cooperation regarding children in conflict with the law, and the National Strategy for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency; ii) Standards for Child-Friendly Investigation Rooms were developed and endorsed by MoLSP, and two CFR were established; iii) A programme for counselling services for children and families at risk, including the standards and operating procedures, was developed and adopted by the MoLSP, and the center was established; iv) MoLSP was supported to finalize the plan for a mentoring center for children at risk and in conflict with the law. The center will be fully operational next year; v) for the first time, the concept of outreach work by social workers was introduced through a training programme, with a focus on street children. A Day Care Center for street children was established in Bitola, one of the municipalities with large Roma population.

Constraints: Complexities of governance and decision-making processes complicate programme implementation. Inconsistent technical and administrative capacities of government and other counterparts, together with lack of corresponding financial and human resource for implementation of action plans and strategies continue to affect progress towards goals. Identification and timely availability of qualified consultants is also a challenge. RO/HQ roster of top-notch experts is limited, leading to a long waiting list for availing of their services.

Evaluation: See 3.2.6 and 3.1.2. for the studies supported.

Partnerships: UNICEF is part of both JPs in the country, Domestic Violence, and Enhancing Inter-ethnic Dialogue and Cooperation. Inter-agency coordination improved considerably this year, with coordination bodies addressing the bottlenecks more effectively. As a member of the Joint UN Team on HIV/AIDS, UNICEF contributed to the development of proposals (HIV and TB) to the Global Fund, both of which were approved with the total budget of over €15.5 million.

Future Workplan:

Work will continue on system building including development of normative framework (revision of laws for ECD, juvenile justice and CSW standards), policy reform (national social protection programme, juvenile delinquency prevention, launch of inclusive education, nutrition policy framework), budgeting with an equity lens (piloting new ECD funding formula, local health action plans in municipalities with poorest MCH), data systems (social work data base, juvenile justice monitoring system), and capacity development (literacy and numeracy training scaled up to 50% of primary schools, social work curriculum, continuous medical education in peri-natal care)

Title: *Child rights monitoring and social policy*

Purpose:

PCR - By end of 2015, all partners (Government, CSOs, Parliament, media, and private sector) are collectively engaged in budgeting, monitoring child rights and child-focused social responsibility programmes.

Main results planned for 2010-2011 (two-year rolling workplan):

- Pilot municipalities with capacities to implement CFM (local sitans on children’s situation completed, local action plans for children developed, mechanisms for participation of children and citizens group in CFM developed; systematic data collection on children and municipal databases regularly updated); National Strategy for Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion produced and adopted;
- Improved capacity of the existing and new alliances and partners for fulfilling child

rights (Parliamentary body on child rights mobilizes support for child friendly legislation and budget; child rights syllabus included in the journalism curricula; broader alliance with one local corporation established); C4D for Violence in Schools and Juvenile Justice developed)

- Data on social inclusion indicators, disaggregated by gender are available and aligned with EU regulations and standards for data quality; National Commission on children's rights and NGOs regularly report on children's situation; MICS survey plan is ready.

Resources Used:

Total approved for 2010 as per CPD: US\$777,500

Total available for 2010 from all sources: RR: US\$261,500; OR: US\$69,809; Total: US\$331,309

Result Achieved:

Decentralization – Work with “Child Friendly Municipalities” continued to strengthen child rights monitoring and protection mechanisms through training of municipal child rights commissions from 11 municipalities on monitoring and evaluation of their own action plans for children. A child participation manual has been produced and disseminated in all participating municipalities, which will serve as a basis for involvement of children in 2011. The office focused on enhancing impact and sustainability of the programme in current municipalities rather than expanding programme coverage.

Social Inclusion- Through inter-agency collaboration, UNICEF supported MoLSP to develop the National Strategy to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion, which was adopted in October.

Monitoring Child Rights and equity trends- After two years of technical support and consistent advocacy, the SSO produced for the first time data on child poverty which shows 34% of children live under the relative poverty line. UNICEF extended support to the National Child Rights Commission to strengthen its capacity in monitoring CRC implementation. The NCRC website was designed and launched increasing NCRC visibility and transparency. Advocacy efforts also resulted in expansion of NCRC membership to include broader NGO representation. The NCRC also agreed to revise the NAP for children to address the CRC Committee's concluding observations.

TransMonee dataset was updated and uploaded on web in DevInfo format. This dataset contains information that is not otherwise collected.

The findings of an assessment of the existing Juvenile Justice data sources and mechanisms were used to develop a list of indicators, based on the set of 15 international JJ indicators, which will be used to set up a JJ monitoring system.

Capacity development support was provided to two NGO alliances on child rights monitoring and reporting. The partner NGOs will start producing reports on the child rights situation by late 2011.

Preparatory work for MICS was completed. Although SSO was unable to take the lead owing to their census-related responsibilities, written support from the Deputy Prime Minister, as well as establishment of a cross-sectoral steering committee helped assure government ownership. A private company has been identified for data collection, and the survey was reviewed and endorsed by the steering committee.

Cooperation with the NGO sector continued with capacity development support to two NGO alliances on child rights monitoring and reporting. They are to produce their

monitoring reports on child rights situation by late 2011.

C4D strategies to eliminate violence in schools and create an enabling environment for justice for children reform were developed and implementation initiated (see 3.1.5) Two informal parliamentary bodies for children were established, a joint work plan was developed and two major events were held – Inter-country consultation and Oversight Hearing on the Implementation of legislation as it relates to the CRC (see Innovations for details). The first batch of 40 university students graduated from Child Rights and the Media Course supported by UNICEF.

Constraints: After reaching a preliminary agreement with the CEO of a large corporation, the CO had to revisit the advisability of going ahead in view of some negative reports in the media about the corporation. The search for new partners is ongoing. The SSO's lead role in the upcoming census tended to de-emphasise some of the joint activities. Within UNICEF, due to a heavy agenda including overseeing private sector partnerships, alliance with the Parliament, C4D programmes, and corporate communication efforts, the Communication Section continued to be overstretched, at times contributing to delays in implementing some activities.

Evaluations: See 5.2

Partnerships: Partnership with the Parliament continued to further build the capacity of parliamentarians and institutionalize child rights advocacy and monitoring within the parliament structure. The collaboration brought local parliamentarians together with MPs from Germany and Serbia for a consultation on the Role of Parliaments in Monitoring and Promoting Children's Rights and to examine the feasibility of establishing a permanent standing committee for children's rights. The meeting helped parliamentarians take stock of the situation of children in their country and underscored the critical role parliaments can play in fulfilling children's rights. Furthermore, as part of the partnership, the first oversight hearing exclusively focusing on the CRC – where four ministers were called up to give evidence – was organised to discuss the findings of a recently published UNICEF supported Comparative Review of Macedonian Legislation and the CRC

Future Workplan:

Continue MICS 4, assessment of child benefits in Macedonia, scaling up of CFM and strengthening child participation in CFM; Continue support to NGOs and NCRC for child rights monitoring; Continue rollout of C4D strategy to reduce violence in schools; Work with Parliament for implementation of oversight hearing conclusions; Revise corporate sector fundraising strategy and continue rollout.

4. OPERATIONS & MANAGEMENT

4.1 Governance & Systems

4.1.1 Governance Structure:

The 2010 Annual Management Plan (AMP) reflects key annual priorities critical to the achievement of the CP planned outcomes. It includes management priorities and indicators, and activities to improve work planning, performance management and co-ordination. All the statutory office governance committees such as CMT, CRC, PCARC, LPSB, SP/CRB, SA and LTC were functional. The office continued with the well established practice of all staff meetings held bi-weekly, and the programme coordination and operations meetings held monthly. As scheduled, the CMT met six times in 2010 to monitor programme implementation and office management performance indicators; 4 out of 5 RWPs were signed by March 2010. As per DFAM instructions, the office continued to send bank reconciliations on a quarterly basis rather

than monthly. The office has improved its performance in respect of bank optimisation, and securing month-end closing balance within set benchmark. The office conducted four micro-assessments, one for a Government IP and three for NGOs. The SMT and security focal points continued to perform their role related to security of staff and premises. UNDSS CO organized security orientation sessions for the new staff. A MOSS Mission from NY visited the country, and UNICEF was rated as MOSS compliant.

The Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (EPRP) and the Office Business Continuity Plan (BCP) were updated. UNICEF led the development of a joint UN emergency contingency plan. As part of the office preparedness plan and UN Emergency Contingency Plan, an emergency simulation exercise was conducted for all UN agencies in the country in December. The exercise was facilitated by EMOPS and the RO. The office has in place updated Building Evacuation Plan and Office Fire Plan. A building evacuation drill was also conducted in April.

4.1.2 Strategic Risk Management:

- a) The CO conducted the RCSA in November and drafted its RCSA library with support from RO.
- b) CMT, monthly programme meetings, monthly operations meeting, and general staff meetings held twice a month are among the internal structures used to review the programme implementation environment, processes, and partnerships, and identify and manage risks in a timely manner.
- c) Regular update of the EWEA data base was provided by the CO.
- d) One of the measures to ensure business continuity was provision of external hard drives to all staff for automatic system data back up. During the first quarter of the year, BCP was reviewed together with colleagues from Kosovo office and agreement was reached to exchange the monthly back-up between the two offices.
- e) In addition to the structures mentioned above under b), external mechanisms such as programme management coordination bodies under the Joint Programmes, Principals meeting with EU, UNCT and UN thematic working groups meetings provide fora for identifying and analysis of changes to the operating environment, and developing timely responses.

4.1.3 Evaluation:

See under part 3.1.4 information on the baseline study on teachers' instructions and students' achievements in literacy in primary education grades 1-3.

4.1.4 Information Technology and Communication:

Remote access to the network is in place and maintained in line with UNICEF policies and standards, enabling continuous remote approach of all staff to most of the IT services via Citrix and continuous access of senior management staff to email through Blackberry services managed by RO and enabled by local GSM provider.

The new Polycom video conferencing system was introduced and widely used for effective and low cost point to point and multipoint communication.

As part of the UN common services, LTA was established with local internet service provider and telecommunications.

Through a local IT company that is promoting the EU directives for reducing and recycling of electronic waste, the office equipment, endorsed for destruction by the LPSB, was disposed to the company for secure and safe disposal and/or recycling.

Replacement of the new server hardware for the ProMS database and upgrading it to version 9.1 provided secure and reliable environment for the business processes and was a step towards implementation of VISION in near future.

The ICT Assistant participated in the regional ICT meeting where the roll-out of new ICT technology in UNICEF was introduced. Relevant follow-up actions were taken enabling the office to fulfill all the prerequisites of implementation. New laptops were acquired to replace those whose lifecycle ended and did not meet the requirements for the new server and client technology.

The business continuity requirements were further improved by switching the server backups from tape to hard disks, and backing up system settings and personal local data through personal external hard drives. Additionally, second copies of monthly server backups are stored on remote location to ensure additional security of the data.

The network/internet connectivity is a critical point for business process. Accordingly, the backup connectivity means are regularly tested. In coordination with and support of RO, a router based monitoring tool was installed to provide independent, objective and timely information on the status of the link.

4.2 Fin Res & Stewardship

4.2.1 Fund-raising & Donor Relations:

- a) Out of 11 donor reports due this year, 10 were submitted on time (the 11th was submitted 24 hours late).
- b) The programme OR ceiling for 2010 was US\$1,960,000. The CO managed to mobilized US\$1,991,471, i.e., 101% of OR resources. However, the bulk of OR was for Programme Component 1 (over \$1,9M), while Programme Component 2 was way below the OR ceiling with around US\$70,000 raised out of the planned OR of US\$500,000.
- c) The office had 4 expiring PBAs this year. All four achieved 100% utilization rate.
- d) The monthly programme coordination meetings as well as the CMT regularly monitor expenditure rate and ensure full PBA utilization rate.
- e) UNICEF is part of both JPs in the country, one on domestic violence and the other on enhancing inter-ethnic dialogue and collaboration (MDG-F funded by the Spanish government). UNICEF provided timely inputs for progress reports to donors on JPs, and maintained close working relationships with the donor embassies. As a member of the Joint UN Team on HIV/AIDS, UNICEF supported the development of two proposals to the Global Fund Round 10, both of which were approved with a total budget of over €15.5 million (€9.4 million for HIV, and €6.1 million for TB).

4.2.2 Management of Financial and Other Assets:

For management of financial and other assets, the CMT regularly reviews financial implementation and budget utilization, liquidation of direct cash transfers, as well as the status of Donor reporting. The programme coordination meetings also regularly monitor the same.

The office had 0% of outstanding DCTs over 9 months. The monitoring of the Direct Cash Transfers released to Implementing Partners (IPs) was strengthened through regular field visits and spot-checks, and five were undertaken in 2010. Four micro-assessments were also undertaken, one government IP and three NGOs. These were intended to avoid the irregularities and enhance financial management practices among the IPs as well as ensure acceptable levels of assurance activities for UNICEF.

The RR utilization rate was 98% (i.e. US\$734,464). The office had four expiring PBAs, two thematic funds for education and child protection, the Dutch government contribution for education in emergencies, and the Italian contribution for street children. All four PBAs had 100% utilization rate. The office received no OR for emergencies.

As part of the UN common services and Operations Management Plan for 2010, UNICEF actively participated in all initiatives intended at improving cost efficiency and ensuring availability of good quality supplies and services. UNICEF pushed for more agencies to take part in common services system.

4.2.3 Supply:

a, c, d) The strong focus on a system building approach and minimizing support for direct service delivery is manifested in the lowest expenditure rate against the supply component this year. The well developed local network of reliable suppliers with capacity to deliver on time to end users, as well as the good cooperation with SD in Copenhagen contributed to easy management of the procurement activities, including both offshore and local procurement.

(j) The mass use of new technologies, such as mobile phones, e-mails, the CO local web page, as well as increased availability of detailed web pages of the local suppliers, facilitated quick communication, considerably shortening the time needed for procurement of supplies and services, from quotations and purchase, to delivery to end users.

(f) At the regular OMT meetings, the UN agencies evenly distributed tasks for assuming bidding processes for procurement of initially identified common services and supplies.

(i) Regular and frequent field visits by both programme and operations staff included the monitoring of supplies, as part of the regular project implementation monitoring.

(g) The country office had rented two warehouses initially for accommodating PSD supplies and emergency stock received at the end of 2008. In 2010 the office signed a MoU with the Crisis Management Center and donated the emergency supplies to them in their capacity as the main government body responsible for coordination of disaster management response by different institutions.

4.3 Human Resource Capacity:

With the start of the new country programme, its corresponding staffing structure needed to be put in place. This entailed several recruitment processes for the new posts and TFTs.

The key staff (all officers and the HR Assistant) were trained in CBI, and the office hosted one of the regional CBI trainings. As a result, the recruitment processes followed the new recruitment guidelines.

A briefing kit on in-house practices, processes and regulations was developed for new staff. This complemented the ProMs orientation that Finance and HR/admin assistants regularly provide to newly recruited staff. Other capacity building activities included a one-day training on enhancing communication skills for all staff during the office retreat

in June, as well as completion of two mandatory e-courses by all staff on Sexual Abuse and Abuse of Authority in the Workplace, and UN cares.

The status of PERs is one of the office performance indicators and was regularly monitored at CMT meetings. Setting deadlines for completion of PERs and close follow up resulted in improved office performance in this regard. The mid-year performance reviews were held for all staff and were noted in writing by their supervisors for easy follow up and monitoring.

4.4 Other Issues

4.4.1 Management Areas Requiring Improvement:

The CO continued to strengthen recommendations produced by a staff panel last year to improve efficiency in the local business process. The recommendations ranged from developing CRC checklists and orientation for new CRC members to developing workflow timeline (who, what, when) for request for procurement and services to reinforce supply procedures.

The CO also adopted new polices to improve work/life balance. This included the use of teleworking and changing the official office hours.

The Representative has followed up on requests to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for free or subsidized facilities. The CO has begun to use new VCT facilities.

4.4.2 Changes in AMP:

Staff learning development will include plans for training and preparing staff for the roll out of key change management initiatives (incl. VISION, IPSAS) and link them with staff development objectives. Annual office retreat will include formal review of intermediate work plans to ensure necessary adjustments. There will be weekly Senior Management meetings to improve coordination and timely flow of information.

5. STUDIES, SURVEYS, EVALUATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

5.1 List of Studies, Surveys & Evaluations:

- 1. Assessment of the Juvenile Justice System in the FYR of Macedonia*
- 2. Baseline study on teachers' instructions and students' achievements in literacy for primary school grades 1-3*

5.2 List of Other Publications

- 1. Forlorn and Scarred, A Situation Analysis of Child Sexual Abuse*
- 2. Comparative Review of Legislation in the Republic of Macedonia and the Convention on the Rights of the Child*
- 3. The Wellbeing of Children and Young People in Difficult Economic Times*
- 4. Fair Play*
- 5. Working towards equity for children*

6. INNOVATION & LESSONS LEARNED:

Title: *Leveraging resources for more equitable delivery of MCH services*

Contact Person: Igor Veljkovic, Health Officer, iveljkovic@unicef.org

Abstract:

The innovation is an example of effective advocacy for leveraging additional resources for MCH in a middle income country where UNICEF resources are limited. Strong evidence produced through a situation analysis (sitan), government ownership of the process, strategic use of limited UNICEF resources for technical support to develop a National Strategy on Safe Motherhood (based on the findings of the sitan) as well as a funding proposal, ensuring the Safe Mother Strategy is aligned with other government national plans and strategies in the health sector, and lobbying with the donor at the country level were instrumental in leveraging US\$ 8.0 million (Dutch government grant) to address MCH disparities, while the Government committed to co-fund the project with additional US\$15 million.

Innovation or Lessons Learned:

This innovation represents a model of UNICEF's work in a middle income country where limited resources were used in a strategic way to help the government leverage additional funds to close the equity gaps in MCH area. The evidence produced through situation analysis, government ownership of the process, involvement of the ministry officials at the highest level, top-notch technical support provided through international consultants, and lobbying with the donor at the country level were pivotal in the successful leveraging of resources.

The approach also entailed furnishing quality data and evidence for the government leading to its recognition that addressing disparities and ensuring targeted interventions for the most vulnerable population groups is critical to improving the basic MCH indicators and accelerating the country's progress towards achieving the Health-related MDGs and children's rights.

Potential Application:

The initiative can serve as a model for leveraging resources, especially in middle income countries.

Issue/Background:

In 2009, UNICEF supported a comprehensive situation analysis of maternities (showing peri-natal mortality at 16.4, as one of the highest in Europe). The analysis clearly depicted the equity gaps and disparities in terms of MCH services. Mortality rates, for instance, differed up to 30% among regions and ethnic groups, and the coverage of MCH services was significantly lower among Roma (over 20% of Roma pregnant women never visited a physician during pregnancy, while 50% visited a physician only once). Informed by the study, a revised MCH strategy was developed that required substantial resources for its implementation. Intensive advocacy and leveraging therefore was needed and undertaken to raise the required resources.

Strategy and Implementation:

Following the situation analysis, the National Safe Motherhood strategy was developed and endorsed in 2010, proposing short-term and long-term interventions to address the gaps and disparities in MCH care. The cost of implementing the strategy was estimated at US\$30 million spread over three years. UNICEF discussed with MOH the opportunities to leverage additional funds to support the strategy's implementation, in particular the Dutch Government grants for investments in public infrastructure, including the health

sector. UNICEF provided technical assistance to MOH for the development of a comprehensive proposal with the agreement that the proposal would focus on MCH disparities. Experts with solid knowledge in Dutch Government health grants were recruited to support the MoH working group for the development of the proposal. At the same time, lobbying was done with the donor at the country level to acquaint the donor with the urgency of the requirement and gain their support. The proposal was approved in October 2010.

Progress and Results:

Throughout the development of the project proposal, UNICEF ensured the interventions are focused on equitable delivery of MCH care with the following targets: i) Reduce perinatal and infant mortality, by addressing disparities, at different levels and on different grounds; ii) Increase the percentage of pregnant women receiving support from the patronage nursing system from the current 50% to 90%. In absolute terms, this means that 9,200 new pregnant women, predominantly those living in rural areas and Roma, will be reached with health services; iii) Increase immunisation coverage, especially among the poor and under-served communities; immunization coverage rates of the Roma and rural communities are expected to rise from 80% up to 95%. This implies 12,500 new children of these communities will be reached annually.

MOH is currently preparing the development phase of the project which entails feasibility studies and detailed assessments of the key components of the project

Next Steps:

Following the success of the Ministry of Health in securing additional resources for MCH care, UNICEF will provide additional technical assistance in 2011 to support MOH for timely and quality submission of the documents for project inception phase, while ensuring the project maintains a strong equity focus.

Title: *Strengthening the Role of Parliament in Promoting and Monitoring Children's Rights*

Contact Person: Suzie Pappas, spappas@unicef.org

Abstract:

With the aim of establishing a formal permanent Child Rights Committee dedicated to regularly advise lawmakers, hold government accountable, and advocate for child rights issues, in 2009 the CO signed an MOU with the Parliament. Among other initiatives, the agreement foresees conducting an inquiry into the feasibility of establishing a formal permanent standing committee dedicated to children's issues. The purpose of sharing this innovation is to provide information on two key events organised in 2010 as part of the MOU. The events exemplify what parliaments can do to advance child rights, while also indicating how a UNICEF Country Office, can work with existing parliamentary bodies to generate broader commitment for establishing or strengthening a relevant legislative oversight body and help build capacity for it to carry out its responsibilities.

Innovation or Lessons Learned:

Building political commitment is best achieved through demonstrating what this means in practice. The inter-country consultation provided an opportunity for local MPs to understand how others (Germany and Serbia) through their specialised cross cutting committees focus on ensuring child rights issues are addressed across the board in all policy, budgets and legislation (as opposed to their inclusion narrowly in the obvious policy areas of education, protection etcetera). While this is the long-term goal of the CO's partnership with the Parliament, the consultation contributed to gaining broader commitment for strengthening their role in monitoring and promoting child rights. As

stated above, immediately after the consultation, the Working Group for Children initiated the Oversight Hearing, which in itself is an example of good practice application.

Potential Application:

Partnerships with Parliaments should be viewed beyond the need to harmonise national legislation with the CRC. As seen in Macedonia, the level of convergence between national legislation and international instruments is relatively high; however, additional efforts are required to ensure full implementation. Country Offices that identify the need to boost implementation of legislation and support at the highest political level for strategies that impact children and child-rights issues may find this approach valuable. Key to ensuring results is to present concrete examples of and solutions for areas where implementation is weak. Ensuring the views of various stakeholders are sought and reflected is also key to the effectiveness and validation of the process, as demonstrated in the oversight hearing conducted in Macedonia.

Issue/Background:

In the past, the CO invested in building capacity of government child rights monitoring bodies and worked with Parliament on ad hoc issues. While efforts produced results, implementation of laws and strategies continues to be limited due to insufficient funding and oversight. Although parliamentary oversight is relatively new to the country, (with the practice of oversight hearings introduced only in 2009), the CO identified great potential in it as a means of strengthening the role of Parliament in monitoring and promoting child rights. Although high-level political commitment to this idea was achieved in 2009, through MOU signing, further efforts were needed to broaden commitment among MPs.

Strategy and Implementation:

Building on the high level political commitment made by the Speaker of the Parliament in 2009, the CO continued to foster its partnership with the Parliament to further build the capacity of parliamentarians and institutionalize the child rights advocacy and monitoring within the parliament structure.

The collaboration between the Parliament and UNICEF led to two prominent and powerful initiatives. The first brought local parliamentarians together with MPs from Germany and Serbia for a two-day consultation on the Role of Parliaments in Monitoring and Promoting Children's Rights and to examine the feasibility of establishing a permanent standing committee for children's rights. The meeting, organized with UNICEF support, helped parliamentarians take stock of the situation of children in their country and underscored the critical role parliaments can play.

The second initiative consisted of an oversight hearing that was the first ever organised by the Child Rights Working Group to gather evidence and information from key stakeholders for developing an agenda for action to address recommendations of a Comparative Review of Macedonian Legislation and the CRC, and the Conclusions and Recommendations of the Child Rights Committee to the Government.

Progress and Results:

In February 2010, the Parliament fulfilled its commitment (as per 2009 MOU) and established two informal bodies: Child Rights Management Board (responsible for implementation of the MOU), and Child Rights Working Group within the Committee on Labour and Social Policy (CLSP) (responsible for conducting inquiry into feasibility of establishing a permanent body). With UNICEF support, a two-year work plan was developed and adopted by the Management Board.

In September 2010, an inter-country consultation was organised to take stock of the situation of children which underscored the critical role parliaments can play in protecting and enforcing child rights. The result was a consensus among the leaders of all political parties that a specialised committee for children should be established in the long run. In the interim as a short-term measure, the informal Working Group for Children should initiate concrete actions to demonstrate the mandate of such a body.

In November 2010, the Working Group (within CLSP) initiated an oversight process by calling an oversight hearing on the implementation of national legislation and the UNCRC. While the oversight hearing was a one-day event where four ministers and five non-government witnesses were called to give evidence, it was the beginning of a process that is to be followed up in the regular meetings of CLSP. As planned, an agenda for action will be finalised in 2011.

Next Steps:

The CO will continue to provide technical support to the Child Rights Working Group to finalise the agenda for action to address conclusions of the oversight hearing. To further facilitate cross country knowledge exchange, the CO will support a study visit for selected MPs as well as the participation of MPs at the relevant regional IPU consultations. The CO will revise and continue supporting the roll out of the work plan to take into consideration the agenda for action developed by the Working Group.