

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The CP implementation in 2010 built on the recommendations and outcomes of the MTR and the audit - both conducted in 2009.

Important achievements:

- The major achievement in programme implementation has been a shift in programming to allocate more resources and focus on policy development and building the capacities of institutions and professional competencies of counterparts. Important interventions such as the analysis of the Household Income and Expenditure Survey, the 'Spending on Children' study, and collaboration with the Information and Decision Support Center (IDSC) reflect the added value of UNICEF's work in a High-Income country context.
- The Oman country office (OCO) has put its focus on both the unfinished business of health, as well as some of the emerging issues, particularly the need to promote healthy lifestyles in support of which numerous initiatives have been implemented bringing together multiple stakeholders.
- The regularization of the roles and responsibilities of the Government Seconded Officers (GSOs) has been an important achievement in the programme, contributing to a strengthened role of the GSOs in terms of more purposeful capacity building, and increased participation in programme implementation.

Significant shortfalls:

While there have been no significant shortfalls in the programme, several areas need to be strengthened:

- The office Communication for Development (C4D) needs further strengthening, by recruitment of staff with required expertise, and development of an advocacy strategy - both priorities for 2011.

Important collaborative partnerships:

A number of important partnerships have contributed to strengthening delivery of results for children.

- OCO established a collaborative partnership with Oman's largest telecommunication company Omantel to promote and raise awareness of children's rights in Oman. Omantel is providing internet lease line to OCO at no charge. In collaboration with Omantel, OCO will develop and present a yearly event on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and provide training on CSR in Oman.
- OCO, in collaboration with the MoH, is launching a Child Nutrition Campaign in Oman. The year-long campaign aims to raise awareness of caretakers of infants on healthy feeding practices. The cost of preparing the communication material for the campaign is underwritten entirely by funds raised from three private sector agencies.

2. COUNTRY SITUATION AS AFFECTING CHILDREN AND WOMEN

The year 2010 witnessed some important events that have an impact on the situation of women and children. The year marked forty years of ascension to power of Sultan Qaboos during which period, Oman has been transferred from a country lacking in basic services and infrastructure, to a modern state. The recently launched Human Development Report (HDR 2010) on "The Real Wealth of Nations" attested to this rate of progress by ranking Oman as the fastest HDI mover globally over the past 40 years, even when income is excluded from the HDI. Remarkable as this achievement has been, the challenge for Oman is to sustain the gains attained over the past four decades.

The 8th Five Year Plan:

The Government of Oman (GoO) finalized the investment plan for the 8th five-year plan (2011-2015) in 2010. The main directives of the new five-year plan highlight economic growth, securing investments to further deepen the drive for economic diversification, sustain investments in social development including expansion and increase in social services, improvement in health services, and updating education policies, development of statistics through capacity building and improvement in quality of data, among other directives.

Census 2010:

Oman has recently concluded the count for the Census 2010. It has worked closely with the UNSD in adopting and adapting the UN standards for the census methodology. A state-of-the-art center was established for the census, including a call center to follow on some of the questionnaires. Support was also sought from the Washington Group on Disability for inclusion of questions on disability in the census. The data will provide much needed information to update the situation of women and children in the country.

Gender Equality and Empowerment of Girls:

The State Council established a Committee on Women and Children's Affairs in early 2010. The Committee mandate will contribute toward an assessment of impact on women and children of the various legislation and policies that go through the State Council. The Gender Gap Report 2010 published by the World Economic Forum ranked Oman at 122 (from 134 countries), which underlines the need for Oman to address gender inequities in order to achieve equitable development for all. In preparation for the upcoming Shura Council elections in 2011, there are renewed efforts to raise awareness among women and provide adequate training to promote the participation of women in the elections – both as candidates and electors. In the 2007 Shura elections not a single woman nominee was elected.

Road Traffic Injuries (RTIs):

In May 2010 the Traffic Safety symposium brought together major stakeholders to address RTIs in Oman. The meeting concluded with endorsement of twenty recommendations that will form the basis of a plan of action on RTIs, which are the leading cause of mortality from external causes for the age group 15-44. Oman will be the focal point for GCC countries in launching the "Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020" in May 2011.

Emerging Lifestyle and Health Concerns:

Lifestyle related matters, be they emerging health issues or risky behavior among young people are a cause for national concern, with recent research and data showing that non-communicable diseases in Oman are contributing to more years of productive life lost than communicable diseases and injuries. Among adults 15 years and above, the prevalence of obesity is 16.7% for males, and 23.8% for females. There is emerging evidence that obesity rates for school age children are also on the rise. Associated with above is increased incidence of diabetes, particularly among females, who constituted 52.6 % of new cases registered in 2009. There is an equal concern with tobacco and substance abuse. Prevalence of tobacco consumption among adult males 15 years and above is 20.5% and for females the rate is 1.3%. Of particular concern is substance abuse in Oman, mainly use of drugs among young adolescents, including young adolescent girls. Rehabilitation services are very limited with only one hospital. It is also the case that HIV/AIDS in Oman is concentrated among drug users, which makes this a particularly vulnerable, high risk group.

3. CP ANALYSIS & RESULT

3.1 CP Analysis

3.1.1 CP Overview:

The CP implementation in 2010 built on the recommendations and outcomes of both the MTR and the audit that were conducted in 2009. There has been a shift in programme implementation to focus more on policy development and building the capacities of institutions and professional competencies of counterparts. The overall rate of implementation was reasonable – at 84% expenditure rate. There were no major shortfalls, nor were there unexpected circumstances that impacted the implementation of the programme. Although the CP reflects the renewed focus on equity and the new policy on "*Gender Equality and Empowerment of Girls and Women*", *both aspects need to take further root in the programme, which will be an area of focus in 2011.*

3.1.2 Programme Strategy

3.1.2.1 Capacity Development:

One of the key areas of collaboration between UNICEF and the GoO is in the provision of capacity building to national cadres:

- UNICEF convened meetings with Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) to design a comprehensive training needs assessment for staff of ministry sectors involved in policy formulation and programmes implementation for impacting children and women. Through collaboration with AMIDEAST Foundation a three stage project was initiated: assessment of existing capabilities to deliver results for women and children as per the strategies in place; identification of capacity and competency requirements to meet the mandate of the MoSD; developing a comprehensive training needs plan based on the gap analysis.
- An internship scheme in collaboration with the Egyptian Cabinet think tank viz., the Information and Decision Support Centre (IDSC) was implemented through which two officials from the Ministry of National Economy (MoNE) were trained in preparation and production of reports for policy-makers. Prior to initiating the internship, MoNE officials were requested to identify a programme of interest to Omani decision-makers, and they identified Road Traffic injuries. Through a collaborative process the two officials received on the job training on how to collect relevant country-data, identify gaps in data and ways to fill the gaps, identify international best practices, conduct data analysis, and produce recommendations in a format that addresses the needs of policy-makers. In addition, a monitoring tool was developed depicting changes periodically for a number of key indicators as an information bulletin for policy makers. The resulting study and tools were very well received, and were shared by the Minister of National Economy with the Inspector General of Police and Customs – the national focal point for road safety in Oman – for feedback.
- A number of projects to strengthen capacity building in strategic planning in the context of preparation for the 8th five-year plan (2011-2015) with respective counterparts has also been a programme priority.

Despite the success achieved in terms of constructive approaches to capacity building, some challenges remain. Foremost is lack of adequate institutional mechanisms to enable counterparts to sustain the capacity acquired by officials. An additional challenge is integration among different counterparts.

3.1.2.2 Effective Advocacy:

The OCO has been successful in advocating for the rights of children in Oman through sustained dialogue with high-level stakeholders. This was done through the sharing of international experience, and a process of trust building, in addition to building the evidence base to address rights of children:

- OCO has been able to engage with national counterparts (particularly ministry of foreign affairs) with regard to some of the reservations to the CRC and CEDAW. This

engagement has contributed to a consideration by the GoO to withdraw most reservations to the CRC, a step that will be likely announced in early 2011. Similarly, the OCO has used the preparation of the UPR report to advocate for issues of women's and children's rights with counterparts. The OCO has also started a dialogue with the newly established National Human Rights Commission, and is sharing some of the research on the situation of women's and children's rights as well as the sector studies to ensure that the national committee has a reliable evidence base to support its mandate.

- A major collaborative effort between UNICEF HQ, MENARO, OCO and the GoO has been the convening of an advocacy workshop on MICS for GCC countries. By providing evidence of the gaps in data on women and children, the MICS advocacy workshop brought together statistics decision-makers at the level of the GCC to consider the implementation of MICS4. Following this workshop a number of countries in the GCC have expressed interest in conducting the MICS4 survey.
- Through support from the MENARO and the Egypt CO, we shared information on fatwas against FGM/C with MoH to enable them to engage with the Mufti of Oman on FGM/C, the outcome of which has resulted recently in opening up a dialogue between MoH and the Mufti on FGM/C.
- OCO has established strong linkages with the State Council – particularly in light of the establishment of the Committee on Women and Children's Affairs in the Council. OCO arranged a lecture on the CRC to sensitize State Council members on the rights of children.

3.1.2.3 Strategic Partnerships:

One of the strengths of the programme in 2010 has been in the area of partnerships for children. OCO has been able to forge important partnerships for children in 2010 that range from fundraising to promote various initiatives, to strengthening corporate social responsibility:

- OCO established a collaborative partnership with Oman's largest telecommunication company Omantel to promote and raise awareness of children's rights in Oman. Omantel is providing internet lease line to OCO at no charge. In collaboration with Omantel, OCO will develop and present a yearly event on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and provide training on CSR in Oman. The partnership will also include joint activities for the promotion of cyber protection of children. Omantel will be involved in selected campaigns conducted by OCO to raise awareness of several issues through various means including sending SMS/emails.
- OCO, in collaboration with the MoH, is launching a Child Nutrition Campaign in Oman. The year-long campaign aims to raise awareness of caretakers of infants on healthy feeding practices. The campaign targets both mothers and fathers, using a multitude of approaches to reach out to target audiences through TV spots, radio messages, printed media, and outreach through the Friday prayers. While the campaign has been developed by UNICEF and MoH, the cost of preparing the communication material for the campaign is covered entirely by funds raised from three private sector agencies.
- Building on the work initiated in 2009 to promote collaboration between OCO and Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), OCO is taking this partnership further to strengthen the Child Care Centre (CCC) to become a centre of excellence on ECD in Oman. The collaboration with SQU will contribute to fostering the research resources within SQU, and through the network of expertise in ECD to develop standards for ECD in Oman. While the CP has been successful in leveraging resources for children, the completion of the advocacy strategy for the office, and recruitment of a C4D officer are critical needs for a more systematic approach to promote partnerships for children in Oman.

3.1.2.4 Knowledge Management:

The country programme in 2010 has allocated more resources in supporting upstream policy advice and development of national capacity to undertake diagnosis and policy analysis:

- A study was undertaken to assess social spending for children and effectiveness thereof. While in the context of Oman – a high income country – the availability of state budgets for children is not a source of concern, there is concern over the effectiveness of the spending for children and the gaps in the financial structures – particularly for the vulnerable. The study has highlighted certain limitations in governance systems that have an impact on, and lead to shortfalls in, social spending for children. The study is already contributing to a dialogue with national authorities on strengthening national systems to monitor child rights.
- The programme has provided support to the MoNE to develop a strategy for the directorate of social statistics to help strengthen its role in the strategic utilization and dissemination of the data collected through the various surveys, and make it more responsive to the needs of policy makers. The data needs assessment was sent to various counterparts, the “clients”, which will provide inputs to the strategy.
- In close collaboration with MENARO, OCO was among the countries in the MENA region participating in a regional assessment of the Situation Analysis as a tool for policy makers, programming, monitoring and evaluation, as well as for advocacy.
- The OCO, with support from MENARO has been able to work closely with the GoO, which is currently chairing the UN Statistical Commission, to address the data discrepancy between national data and data from international organizations. This exercise in and of itself is building the capacity of national cadres in the area of data collection, definitions and standards. It is also contributing to establishing strong networks enabling valuable exposure to international best practices.

3.1.2.5 C4D Communication for Development:

Behaviour change and awareness-raising are among the key elements of the CP in Oman, particularly in terms of addressing the persistent development concerns – notably in health, and the emerging issues of concern – including a number of health and lifestyle as well as protection issues such as violence and substance abuse. OCO has taken the position that the process of C4D in the CP should be “nationally owned”, with extensive involvement of the counterparts in the planning, development of key messages, implementation, and dissemination of the information:

- The Facts for Life books have been an integral part of the school curriculum in Oman. An assessment conducted by the MoH, however, suggested a need to revise both the content and format of the books to update and make them more relevant to the contemporary context, and more appealing and hence more useable by young people. An evaluation encompassing extensive field research and interviews was conducted based on which, both content and format are being revised.
- The child nutrition campaign to be launched in early 2011, likewise, was based on research directed at identifying the causes underlying child malnutrition, which provided an informed basis on which to develop the key messages for the campaign.
- A study on child rearing practices is underway that will provide important insight into the patterns of parent-child interaction. The study will give an opportunity to understand the interaction at the level of the household and help in promoting a protective environment for children to reach their full potential. Two main challenges have impacted the full realization of the objectives of the C4D in the programme: first, research that was conducted in the past to understand the underlying determinants of behaviour has tended to focus on associational factors

rather than in-depth causal analysis. The second is the lack of expertise in the OCO in the area of C4D.

3.1.3 Normative Principles

3.1.3.1 Human Rights Based Approach to Cooperation:

The CP is solidly based on the principles of the CRC, CEDAW, and the CRPD.

- The MoSD established in 2008 multi-sectoral regional teams to monitor cases of abuse of children at the Regional level. Even after functioning for nearly two years, the teams were confronting numerous challenges in enacting their mandate, with lack of adequate capacity and training emerging as the primary challenge. With support from the Jordan River Foundation, an assessment of the training needs of the regional teams was carried out, which identified a number of institutional gaps that barred the team members from carrying out their duties. The preliminary study is an eye-opener in terms of the potential for advocacy for children's rights and it complements the child protection mapping that was conducted last year.
- An environment assessment was conducted on "Child friendly schools", to promote a protective environment in schools. The purpose of the assessment was to explore what is already in place in Oman and to understand the context specific to Oman. Issues of inclusiveness, quality of education, protection, are all aspects that will help address some of the challenges facing students within and out of the immediate schooling environment.
- A sector review on disability in Oman was revised and completed this year. This review will contribute to addressing major gaps in Oman towards fulfillment of the rights of persons with disability.
- The OCO in collaboration with MoNE is conducting an analysis of the Household Income and Expenditure survey (2006-2010). The data is representative of the regional/subnational levels, and hence will provide an insight into regional and socio-economic inequities. The study also aims to establish a national "well-being" threshold based on a tool developed by the MoH – the Omani minimum dietary guidelines. In addition, the study will highlight the situation of women and children.

3.1.3.2 Gender Equality and Mainstreaming:

The new UNICEF Policy on Gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women was issued in June 2010, with emphasis, among others, on the role of UNICEF in building national capacity, and the accountability of various stakeholders/duty bearers in upholding the rights of girls and women.

- In 2009 the UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional office conducted a fact finding exercise of a number of countries in the Region, inclusive of Oman. The exercise entailed a thorough review of the documents of country offices to assess gender responsiveness in UNICEF programming. It was followed in February 2010, by a training course on gender mainstreaming held in Muscat – targeted to UNICEF country office staff and counterparts.
- A study on harmonization of Omani Laws with CEDAW is underway. The study aims to address discrepancies in national legislation that negatively impact women and girls from reaching their full potential and rights.

3.2 Programme Components:

Title: *Family and childcare and development*

Purpose:

- To promote a better start in life for children and its quality of education and healthy contribution aspects.
- To enhance facilities afforded to children with special needs.
- To contribute to reduction of childhood mortality with focus on neonates, through capacity building of health professionals.
- To scale up efforts and nutrition interventions targeted at the community.
- To promote early childhood development through better parenting skills.
- To improve family community care practices that impact young survival, growth and development.
- By the end of 2011 the preschool curriculum will have been revised and standards for learning environment and teacher training adopted
- By the end of 2011 all tools and knowledge will be in place allowing the inception of appropriate education for mentally handicapped children in the regular school setting
- By the end of 2011 comprehensive standards for CFS will have been incorporated in the national education system
- By the end of 2011 a unified curriculum and standards for al-Wafa centers will be finalized and ready for implementation.

Resources Used:

US\$ 126,777.27

Result Achieved:

- Workshop for nursery supervisors on the day care manual. The training workshop was conducted during 6-10 November 2010, attended by 26 government supervisors representing all regions in Oman. Training covered teaching of terminologies and concepts of childhood development, review and clarification of the manual's subjects and activities, applying required skills for planning, designing activities and implementation, conducting assessment and evaluation tools of learning process, applying important processes, techniques and strategies used in nurseries.
- A training package was developed as a TOT for health educators who facilitate trainings for the Community Support Group Volunteers (CSGVs) on key messages in the five health areas; birth spacing, nutrition, physical exercise, smoking, household injuries and road traffic accidents.

To expand the coverage of preschool service:

- The Pre-Post study on preschool was carried out, which revealed the importance of creating more awareness programmes on ECD, and to have national standards for it.
- An environmental analysis of the Omani Education System was conducted as the first phase to support the implementation of Child Friendly Schools in the country.

To ensure inclusive primary enrolment:

- A study was conducted on the needs of hearing impaired (deaf) children as part of strategy to promote inclusive education.
- Teachers were provided with the knowledge to deal with the gifted children's cognitive abilities through the development of the manual on high cognitive thinking in school curricula.

To enhance facilities afforded to children with special needs:

- Diagnostic tests were prepared for grades 7 to 9.
- Adaptation of Wechsler diagnostic tests for children from the age of 6-16 to Omani environment was undertaken.

- A national workshop was organized on TIMSS to build standards for the students' projects, design standards for examination, and enhance the quality of education in Oman.
- A review of the current situation of (child) disability in Oman was carried out.
- An evaluation study for special needs children was conducted to develop cognitive tests for children and enhance the services in the learning environment.

CRITICAL Factors:

- Regional outreach is somewhat limited.
- Lack of a diversified roster of consultants for implementation of the projects results in major delays.
- More training, especially Training of Trainers (ToT) is required to enhance the quality of nursery-level education services.

C) Monitoring

- Pre-post study on parental awareness of the importance of pre-school education: The study revealed the importance of creating more awareness generation programmes on ECD, and to have national standards for pre-school education.
- A study to evaluate children with hearing problems and suggest services for the hearing impaired: The study's findings will serve as a planning tool for the MoE to further develop and enhance educational services through capacity building of teachers and specialists in the field, an improved learning environment, revision of the curricula as per global standards, and raising awareness of the community towards addressing the needs of disabled children, as well as enabling their participation as active citizens.
- Evaluation of Life skills manuals for age group 13-15 years: The study revealed the importance of creating more awareness in the community of the objectives of the seven manuals, and provision of adequate copies for children so they can have more access.
- Sector Disability Review in Oman: The final recommendations of this study provided the Government and the private sector with evidence-based knowledge on the way forward to enhance services for the disabled.

d) Partnerships

- MOSD, MOH, MOE MONE, SQU, Private Sector, NGOs.

Future Workplan:

- Enhancing school retention rates
- Capacity building of teachers and specialists in the field of disability
- Strengthening linkages between the educational system and the needs of the labour market (transition from school to work)
- Develop Health Education package for Oman Food Based Dietary Guidelines
- Revitalization of Breast Milk Substitute (BMS) in Oman
- Assess and evaluate infant and child feeding strategies in Oman
- Adaptation and training of better parenting manual
- National implementation of the portage programme
- Development of a national plan of action on children.

Title: *Protection and participation of children and adolescents*

Purpose:

This programme is designed to address the following: preventable injuries, reporting on child abuse/neglect, FGM, adolescent health and CRC. Main objective and results are:

- To empower and build the capacities of young people and women in peer education and life skills programmes
- Continued advocacy on protection of children from injuries with focus on RTAs, with the involvement of relevant stakeholders and the community
- Securing a protective environment for all children, with focus on vulnerable children by raising awareness and strengthening systemic interventions in child protection
- To identify and monitor cases of child abuse and neglect.
- To legally promote the CRC provisions for the creation of a protective environment
- Supporting children and adolescents in developing to their fullest potential
- By the end of 2011 the peer education healthy lifestyles programme is being implemented nation wide
- By the end of 2011 at least 50% of youth 15-24 years of age are free of misconceptions about transmission and prevention of HIV/AIDS.

Resources Used:

US\$ 199,953.90

Result Achieved:

Results:

- The 'Facts for life' initiative was introduced in Oman in 1996. Ever since its inception, it had not undergone a thorough evaluation, leading UNICEF to propose that the booklet's effectiveness must be assessed. The evaluation also aimed to explore new interactive ways to engage with adolescents within the context of the book. The field work for the study was conducted in 10 schools for both girls and boys, covering 8 regions across the country. The consultant interviewed school principals, teachers, school nurses and students. Meetings were held with decision makers in order to assess the current system and the way the book is utilised and distributed.
- The Peer Education Training package was completed jointly by UNICEF, UNFPA, MOH, and MOE including the Scouts and Guides. Many meetings were held among the partners to discuss and finalise the content and the design of the manual. The consultants conducted training workshop for master trainers, and helped in piloting the manual and the booklets targeted at different age groups.
- Religious Leaders' workshop on HIV/AIDS was conducted to raise their awareness on the HIV/AIDS epidemic and provide them with up to date statistics. The purpose of the workshop was also to provide them with adequate information about different preventable methods and the importance of advocating for various preventive measures including condom use during the implementation of awareness programmes. A total of 23 religious leaders from different regions were trained on the effective ways to develop a communication plan for HIV/AIDS among different target groups, and on how to create their own future agenda. Religious leaders gained new and innovative skills on approaching young people.
- Educational package for PLWHA was revised. The package is specifically designed and targeted at PLWHA. It was distributed to all health centres around the country and will be given to PLWHA by their treating physician or counsellor.
- Capacity building assessment of regional task forces responsible for studying and following up on child abuse cases was undertaken. The assessment sought to identify the training needs and the form of training best suited to achieve the planned results of tracing and declaring cases of child abuse and neglect. It was carried out from November 27 - December 1, 2010 by a team of technical experts from Jordon River Foundation. The team had field visits with regional task forces and their visits covered six regions.

To ensure that at least 40% of young people aged 10-18 years lead healthy lifestyles and to build the capacity and self esteem of young boys and girls aged 15-24:

- An evaluation of the life skills manuals for the age group 13-15 years was conducted, which took into account the views of students, parents and teachers. The outcome was highly favourable. The life skills component was considered to improve academic achievement and social responsibility.
- The educational package for social workers was developed. It aims to increase parental awareness of their children's problems, enhance the services delivered to students for better learning outcomes, and improve the skills and capacity building of teachers and social workers.

To ensure that all school aged children are aware of their rights:

- UNICEF supported development and production of a manual on integrating CRC provisions in grades 5 to 10.
- UNICEF also supported the development of CRC curricula for teachers in coordination with the Faculty of Education at SQU and MoE.
- In addition, child friendly versions of the CRC for Persons with Disabilities were produced.
- A Child Forum was organised in coordination with MOSD, MOE, which enhanced the knowledge of children on CRC principles, and enabled them to know their rights through well-structured working groups' seminars, led by the children themselves.

CRITICAL Factors:

- While significant progress has been made in the area of protection, particularly abuse of children as demonstrated by the mission to assess training needs of the regional task forces on child abuse, it remains a challenging area to address mainly due to the preference among some senior policy makers to await the passing of a Child Law.
- Coordination between the many stakeholders is inadequate, which has negative impact on achieving planned results.

d) Partnerships

MoSD, MoE, MoH, ROP, SQU, Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs, General Prosecution

Future Workplan:

- Development of Youth Friendly services
- Training of the regional teams responsible to monitor cases of reported abuse and neglect.
- This activity will be a second phase of the project of capacity building of regional task forces. The expected report from the assessment of training needs will provide a training plan to address those needs.
- Study tour for legal and social team to learn from other country experiences on child protection.
- Promotion of activities for the empowerment of women.
- Finalization of the Omani child law.
- To build the capacity and self-esteem of young boys and girls through newly developed contents in the areas of legal education and cultural dialogue.
- To provide CRC curricula to the entire faculty at SQU, to ensure that a standardised method for integration of CRC into teachers' curricula & training is adopted.

Title: *Communication and resource mobilization*

Purpose:

- To raise awareness and promote positive practices in families, schools and communities on health issues.

- To instill and promote women's and children's rights in the community through their involvement.
- To promote opportunities for equal participation among children in addressing issues affecting their life.
- Providing technical support necessary for uplifting respective impacts of the C.P.
- Advocating and promoting the implementation of the concluding observations of the CRC and adopting the respective recommendations.
- By end 2011 reporting on children rights - girls and boys - globally and in Oman - are regularly featured in the media.

Resources Used:

US\$ 73,788.61

Result Achieved:

Results:

- 'Child Nutrition Campaign', previously called 'PEM Campaign', is a campaign to raise awareness of good feeding practices for infants. It is targeted to care-takers, primarily mothers and fathers. The campaign will be of one-year duration and will cover different regions in the country.
- Support the 'Lets Talk AIDS Campaign' in collaboration with MoH. A workshop was held for People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) with the objective to build their capacity and empower them through expanding their knowledge and understanding about HIV/AIDS. It also aimed to establish a support network for PLWHA, a platform to allow them to meet and discuss, share their hardships and problems, and act as a support for one another. Thirteen PLWHA from different regions attended the workshop. Three highly qualified and experienced consultants conducted the training effectively. The establishment of the network helped NAP to establish a communication channel with PLWHA and get them more involved in the planning phase of their programme.
- Two activities, the 4th Child Forum and the Youth Forum, were organized to explicitly follow up on the recommendations of the CRC on the participation of children and adolescents.
- The 4th Child Forum, held in Sur on 26-28 April 2010, was attended by more than hundred children from all regions. The forum intended to promote participation of children in discussing their needs, difficulties, and concerns affecting their lives. The Forum enhanced children's knowledge of CRC principles, and familiarized them with their rights through well-structured working groups' seminars, led by the children themselves.
- The Youth Forum, held on 17-19 July 2010, was attended by 100 participants aged 18-25 years old. The forum discussed topics related to the youth's future and emerging issues that affect them such as innovations, impact of road accidents and the use of drugs on their lives, while also focusing on their role in society. The agenda comprised training to promote skills needed for work.
- Child friendly versions of the CRC are being developed and scheduled to be launched in 2011/2012. The materials consist of activity books for school children in cycle 1 of the education system, incorporating messages from the CRC. This will be a major achievement for the OCO in promoting child's rights among children and highlighting the importance of knowing their rights.

Critical Factors:

- As resources for implementing communication programmes were limited, efforts were made to raise funds through a partnership strategy, but additional CO expertise in C4D is needed.
- A major constraint that UNICEF faced in 2010 was having to halt work on preparation for a 'Road Traffic Accident Campaign', as it was in partnership with Shell. During 2010, UNICEF placed a moratorium on partnership with the Oil and Extractive industries, thus UNICEF was unable to proceed with the Campaign as was planned.

Partnerships:

MoSD, MoE, Ministry of Sports Affairs, NGOs, Private Sector.

Future Workplan:

- Participate in development of national campaign for RTAs in partnership with MoH ORSA (Oman Road Safety Association)
- Conduct launch event of 'Child Nutrition Campaign' and orientation workshops for all regions in Oman
- Training on writing technical international reports
- Training needs assessment for Oman Women Associations
- Raising CEDAW awareness in all regions
- Study to assess impact of tourism on Omani family
- Continue develop child friendly version of the CRC and WFFC and MDG's
- Increase awareness programmes through media to promote the CRC.

Title: *Monitoring and evaluation*

Purpose:

- Regular updating and sharing of data concerning women and children's issues
- Ensuring effective programme planning, implementation and performance
- By end 2011 OCO has an operational monitoring and evaluation system in place
- By end 2011 at least one application to disseminate information on the census 2010 is routinely used by students in all primary and secondary schools.

Resources Used:

US\$ 61,246.74

Result Achieved:

Results:

- Study to assess spending on Children: The study intended to gather detailed information from different sectors and to identify resources and revenues that are allocated and spent on children and women. Its focus was on assessing the current budget policies and budget structure in Oman, main stakeholders involved in the budget and what are their roles in the budget process, and capacity of the government.
- Study on child rearing practices: The study focuses on the roles of different caretakers within the Omani family, and parental responsiveness and behavioural control to ensure children are integrated into the family. It seeks to examine both positive and negative practices that can foster or hinder the development of the child, forms of child abuse, violations, and neglect, including gender based differences, treatment and rearing of children with disabilities and special needs, and society challenges and obstacles prohibiting parents, caretakers and teachers in fulfilling the child's needs appropriately.

- Harmonization study on Omani legislations and CEDAW: The study aims to highlight the main issues and gaps that require legal interventions, addressing concerns and issues pertinent to women across the country. The outcomes will be a stepping stone towards a better environment for women.
- Capacity training workshop for decision makers on leadership and management "Ain Saqer": The workshop provided training in strategic planning to middle- to high-level managerial officials in the MoSD responsible for supervising the implementation of programmes affecting the rights of children and women.
- Capacity needs assessment to MoSD staff – ongoing: The purpose of the assessment is to contribute to building a vision and plan of action to guide and assist the delivery of services for children and women through the mandate of MoSD. The assessment will help identify obstacles and gaps in the ministry's structure and work environment.
- Exchange experience and information with the 'Information and Decision Support Centers' (IDSC) in Egypt and with other countries in the MENA region. This activity is focused on promoting evidence based policy making and building the HR capacity in the government. The partnership with IDSC entailed the following:
 - 1- Report on "Traffic Safety Indicators": IDSC assisted in training two researchers from MoNE in developing a report on "Traffic Safety Indicators" targeted to decision makers. MoNE is sharing the report with other Government sectors to review the report.
 - 2- Develop a Five year plan for Directorate General of Social Statistics: An expert from IDSC visited Oman in September 2010 and met stakeholders in the Ministry of National Economy and other ministries to assess their potential and mechanisms for preparing and implementing the above plan.
- Implementation of MICS4 advocacy workshop: In July 2010, following the GCC Statistical meeting in Kuwait, MoNE proposed to host an orientation session for decision makers of the GCC statistical offices to familiarize them with the MICS and requested UNICEF to arrange this event. The MICS advocacy workshop was held in September 2010, drawing participants from Ministry of National Economy, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Manpower, Ministry of Education, and member states of GCC Secretariat and Libya. The sessions brought together decision makers and technicians to familiarize them with the main objective and topics covered under MICS4 and the lessons learnt from implementing MICS3 in other countries. Decision-makers from the GCC and Libya supported the implementation of MICS4, but requested additional support to endorse implementation of MICS at the GCC level.
- Analysis of the study on the Omani HHIES: The purpose is to regularly monitor the situation of children and women in Oman based on a careful analysis of the study of Omani HHIES undertaken from 2006-2010. The expert associated with the study visited Oman in September 2010 and met the stakeholders in the Ministry of National Economy along with the users of the Omani Household Expenditure and Income survey results in the Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Health.

Critical Factors:

- The lack of qualified in-house consultants/experts to assist the projects right from inception through implementation contributed to delays in their execution.

Partnerships:

All the counterparts ministries such as, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Manpower, SQU, NGOs, and the private sector.

Future Workplan:

- Social budgeting (phase 2)
- Gameworks
- Continue to strengthen the programme of monitoring and evaluation, data collection and analysis

- Complete studies on school retention rates
- Development of the school-to-work transition programme.

Title: *Cross-sectoral costs*

Purpose:

To cover programme support and operational costs.

Resources Used:

US\$ 366,875.63

Result Achieved:

These funds are used to cover salaries, training and capacity building, as well as operational costs. The Oman Programme is OR funded, and not eligible for RR.

Future Workplan:

Same as current year.

4. OPERATIONS & MANAGEMENT

4.1 Governance & Systems

4.1.1 Governance Structure:

The office maintained a steady level of operations and programme management performance throughout 2010. OCO held a total of 9 CMT meetings in 2010 including the AMR. To enhance active participation CMT comprises all staff including the seconded POs. Weekly Review Meetings are also conducted regularly, minutes recorded and shared as appropriate.

An Office Improvement Plan (OIP) is in place. It covers human resources, career development and learning, and work efficiency. A second OIP is developed based on the results of the staff morale survey, following an all staff review and discussion of results to collectively identify/prioritize issues most relevant to OCO context, and define the next steps to address issues of concern through various mechanisms. The OIP also highlights the positive areas to further build on areas of strength. Overall, the results of the staff morale survey were very positive showing that in some areas the OCO has achieved 100% satisfaction rate.

The Annual Management Plan (AMP) 2010 adequately reflects the outcome of the MTR and audit held in 2009 and covers all requisite elements, such as key management priorities, programme, management, human resources development, partnership, staff learning and monitoring. Upon MTR and audit recommendation, the KPIs in the AMP have been strengthened to cover all aspects of work in the context of Oman as a high middle/high income country, including those related to gender mainstreaming, partnership, and focus area 5, and contributing to improved programme/operations/ICT/governance.

Regular meetings are held with partners in implementation of joint programmes, to identify constraints, and discuss possible solutions. IMEP 2010 was developed to reflect more realistic planning, as compared to IMEP of 2009.

4.1.2 Strategic Risk Management:

Citing the instances of 2 cyclones in the past 3 years, OCO in cooperation with two UN agencies in Oman, WHO and UNFPA, relies on strengthening Early Warning Early Action (EWEA) systems and maintaining close relations with government agencies such as Disaster Management Committee (DMC) and Oman Charitable Organization (OCO) in providing required humanitarian assistance. The Business Continuity Plan (BCP) is updated as and when required.

Security Risk Assessment (SRA) is updated periodically. It fully reflects mechanisms in the event of a sudden need for humanitarian intervention to ensure that possible potential risks are appropriately calculated.

An audit implementation and action plan is developed with concrete action plans and is being implemented. Many of the recommendations have led to improvements in strengthening internal control in the area of programme and financial management. Implementation status is reported at every CMT meeting. CMT also reviews the financial implementation status.

As part of UNICEF Change Management, ERM training was provided by the RO. Building upon its current informal risk management processes by adopting a more systematic approach to the identification, analysis, and management of key strategic and programme risks, through several joint exercises, OCO ERM Risk Profile and Risk Control Library were prepared and submitted. All OCO business processes and the new CP submissions as of now will be risk-informed. Audit exercise in 2009 also helped identify risks and opportunities.

The work of the UN team in Oman through the UN Theme Group (UNTG) on HIV/AIDS has been positive. Collaboration is also established in the area of MDGs, peer education and youth friendly services. There is, however, a need to strengthen UN collaboration in the context of limited UN presence in Oman.

4.1.3 Evaluation:

OCO has ensured that the numbers of planned evaluation and research activities are based on its capacity to implement them. The process for monitoring the implementation of the planned activities is in place. Outcome and recommendations of major studies/evaluations have been formally presented to the Government in preparation for the new CP. As part of the audit recommendation, the programme team will, as of now, review recommendations of studies/evaluations on a quarterly basis.

The RO provided an orientation on M&E policy to all OCO staff including seconded POs.

4.1.4 Information Technology and Communication:

Following the establishment of the ICT HUB in MENARO earlier this year, the core business applications, mainly ProMS and Lotus Notes have been moved from Muscat to Amman in June 2010. As a result, since then, access to those applications is being provided remotely using various IT tools such as CITRIX, new VPN client and Win Term. In addition, the ICT HUB is also managing the overall ICT function for OCO as the local ICT post was discontinued as of June 2010. On-site IT support is provided by a local service provider in Oman.

OCO has a standard Country Office ICT Infrastructure consistent with the organizational IT policy. The office has migrated this year its main connection from 512Kbps SITA line to 2MB Lease Line link from Oman Telecommunication SAOG (Omantel) which is funded completely by a three years partnership agreement with Omantel. OCO's corporate traffic is routed using IPsec tunnel that opens in NYHQ. Wireless Internet access is provided for guests and visitors using a dedicated 2MB ADSL link from the Omantel.

Wireless coverage was extended in December to cover the whole building. VOIP is effectively used for calling UNICEF offices.

OCO has been provided with an iDirect VSAT to be used as an independent means of connectivity for any emergency situation. However, the delivery of equipment is still pending due to complicated government/customs formalities. The office also has a BGAN Satellite terminal equipment which can be utilized for voice and data connectivity in case of emergency.

All HQ rollouts were applied on time; OCO was the first office in MENA to migrate to the new Windows 7 and Office 2010 standard applications. Computer hardware being used in the office is as per UNICEF's standards, meets the current requirements/specifications and is configured to meet UNICEF standards.

MENARO ICT support is consistently outstanding with queries responded to immediately.

4.2 Fin Res & Stewardship

4.2.1 Fund-raising & Donor Relations:

GOO continues to be the primary source of programme funds in Oman. The study on partnerships in Oman conducted in 2009 as part of the MTR, consisting of both a desk review and a survey, indicated a positive environment for CSR in Oman. Efforts have been made to ensure that partnerships with the private sector extend beyond securing funds, aiming at moving them towards greater social responsibility. Partnership and funding have been secured with a number of private sector establishments in support of child nutrition campaign in Oman. Strategic partnership is initiated with the biggest telecommunication establishment in Oman (Omantel) to support the work of UNICEF in promoting the rights of children and towards increasing CSR culture in Oman.

4.2.2 Management of Financial and Other Assets:

OCO had a total of 4 PBAs in 2010. Donor reports have been submitted on time. Assessment of the quality of donor reports is included as an indicator in the KPIs. Additionally checklist for review and clearance of donor reports is used as a tool while finalizing the reports. Quality assurance mechanisms are applied to the extent possible. Quality standards have been met using the checklists. Funds available have been utilized optimally, with 3 PBAs extended to next year. CMT reviews the donor report status on a quarterly basis and through the Office Management Reports.

In recognition of the need to strengthen follow-up and monitoring of programme implementation, a progress report on programme implementation, financial status and results achieved is prepared by the POs on a quarterly basis and submitted to respective Ministries.

There is no outstanding DCT transaction. No RR funds in the country Office.

Programme expenditure rate reached 84%, and 97% expenditure for SBA at the end of 2010.

Clear efficiency gains in resource use, costs savings and reductions were achieved. OCO contributed 3% to the RCF. The cross sectoral budget covers salaries and training of programme staff, and salaries of bilingual secretary and two drivers on institutional contract. It also covers some of the operating costs as well as office rental charges and office security expenditure.

The POs are fully committed to the correct use of UNICEF funds, especially because they are aware that the funding comes from the Government. The POs have received high caliber training in significant areas and their increased capacity will contribute to the

sustainability of UNICEF's work once they return to their respective Government departments.

4.2.3 Supply:

The supply component of the CP including offshore, regional and local procurement reached an estimated value of US\$119,506. No difficulties have so far been encountered in local procurement as local vendors have a solid and reliable marketing and procurement policy. Office has not used in-kind supply assistance. Since Oman CP does not include service delivery, none of the issues related to supply management has relevance to this report.

Supply related services from Supply Division were not required in the year 2010 except for purchase of supplies for the MoH on reimbursable procurement basis.

4.3 Human Resource Capacity:

About 80% completion rate is achieved in the Learning Plan, which was developed with due recognition given to the importance of building required staff skills. As part of the learning objective, it is made mandatory for programme staff to undergo PPP online training. Briefing Book access to the POs has been obtained from the RO. All eligible staff has taken IPSAS training.

A staff retreat was held on the theme "Learning Day", which included presentations/briefing by staff members who participated in learning opportunities in 2009-mid 2010. It also included a session on the workplan and strategy paper for new CPD (2012-2015); results framework; UNICEF work in Focus Area 5 and KPIs; a session on the competencies framework and revised staff JDs based on the competencies framework; a presentation on work-life balance/family-friendly policies and policy on Harassment, Sexual Harassment & Abuse of Authority, along with an annual refresher orientation on the UN Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics. A self-assessment on equity and priorities for the new CP was also conducted.

The office currently has no stress management committee but has a peer support focal point as well as a focal point for reporting and tackling sexual exploitation and abuse.

With regard to the secondment of POs, based on the audit and MTR recommendations proposing that for the secondment modality to work effectively there must be formal regularization of roles and responsibilities, a comprehensive set of documentation was prepared by the management and reviewed by the CMT. It was submitted to the MoSD in May. This framework of the modality will be incorporated as an annex to the new CP submission. To have more clarity on the roles and responsibilities, UNICEF Job Descriptions for the POs are included as part of the package. Regularization is also recommended in the areas of capacity building and performance evaluation in order to enhance learning.

Staff accountability in the area of ProMS access and utility was re-defined in order to maintain absolute confidentiality and integrity of UNICEF's data and systems. Monthly reconciliation of DAT/ToA continues to be done.

4.4 Other Issues

4.4.1 Management Areas Requiring Improvement:

From a regional perspective the establishment of an ICT hub and maintaining a contract for on-site support in place of a full-time ICT post has resulted in savings for the OCO and RO. Support is provided through the RO ICT hub.

4.4.2 Changes in AMP:

No major changes occurred in 2010. The recommendations of the audit and MTR of 2009 have been incorporated into the AMP. For 2011, more emphasis has been given to strengthening M&E systems, and equal focus has been placed on the need to strengthen advocacy and partnership as well as gender mainstreaming.

5. STUDIES, SURVEYS, EVALUATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

5.1 List of Studies, Surveys & Evaluations:

1. *Pre-Post study on parents' awareness on the importance of pre-school education*
2. *Evaluation for special needs children*
3. *Evaluation of Children with hearing problems*
4. *Comprehensive Evaluation of "Facts for Life" in Oman*

5.2 List of Other Publications

1. *Child Nutrition Campaign Materials*
2. *Day care Manual*
3. *Social worker Manual*
4. *Training Manual for HIV/Aids Pregnant women*
5. *HIV/AIDS Educational package for PLWH.*

6. INNOVATION & LESSONS LEARNED:

1. Omantel collaboration with Oman

Contact Person: falakbary@unicef.org

Abstract:

- OCO established a collaborative partnership with Oman's largest telecommunication company Omantel to promote and raise awareness of children's rights in Oman. Omantel is providing internet lease line to OCO at no charge. In collaboration with Omantel, OCO will develop and present a yearly event on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and provide training on CSR in Oman. The partnership will also include joint activities in the promotion of cyber protection of children. Omantel will be involved in selected campaigns conducted by OCO to raise awareness of several issues through a number of modalities including sending SMS/emails.

Innovation or Lessons Learned:

The CSR initiative is important both to support UNICEF, and get the private sector involved, on a sustained basis, in advancing child rights and protection in Oman.

Potential Application:

Build on this experience to promote other CSR initiatives for child rights.

Issue/Background:

Building on the work OCO did in 2009 on partnership mapping in Oman, OCO approached Omantel - which is the internet provider to UNICEF in Oman - to share with Omantel the outcomes of the mapping exercise. OCO informed Omantel of planned programme initiatives to promote CSR for children rights, and OCO also learned more about the CSR programme at Omantel. Through extensive discussions, a mutual agreement was reached for Omantel to sponsor OCO lease line completely, and for its involvement with UNICEF in a number of initiatives.

Strategy and Implementation:

- Through advocacy and capacity building.

Progress and Results:

Contribution to UNICEF of a total of US\$ 220,000 over a period of three years, thereby providing UNICEF with the support required to convene CSR workshops, leading to further partnerships.

Next Steps:

Revise partnership mapping study
Finalize advocacy strategy.