

### Executive Summary

#### **Achievements:**

- **Withdrawal of the reservations of Oman to the CRC** has been a major achievement in 2011, which highlighted advocacy by UNICEF for the rights of children in Oman. Four out of five reservations have been withdrawn, and the fifth reservation on freedom of choice of religion, has been modified so freedom of choice of religion is granted at age 18.
- Youth has come forefront in Oman in 2011, particularly after the 2011 popular demonstrations that took place early in the year. The **establishment of the Youth Committee** in November 2011 has been a major achievement towards promoting a sustainable youth agenda in Oman. UNICEF has supported the Government of Oman in a number of initiatives to promote youth. Foremost among these, has been the analysis of the household income and expenditure survey, which has addressed the Human Opportunity Index for youth in Oman, and the study on youth friendly spaces.
- The programme has continued to conduct important **strategic research** to inform policy-making. This has contributed to a better understanding of the vulnerabilities, bottlenecks, and barriers to attainment by women and children of their full potential, in turn reflected in better programming. Among the most important research conducted in 2011 is the Omani Child Well-being Index initiated in 2011, which will support decentralised planning and monitoring of child rights, and provide a better understanding of the situation of children at the sub-national level. Research on school-dropouts and on youth-friendly spaces (both undertaken in 2011) is highlighting the immediate and underlying drivers of vulnerability of some groups of children and young people, with a gender lens.

#### **Shortfalls:**

- Communication for development (C4D) remains a weak area in the country office (CO). A number of the challenges related to the attainment by children of their potential lie in behavior change. Recruitment for an NO-B post for C4D commenced but none of the candidates who applied for the post were deemed suitable. The post will be re-advertised in 2012.
- The limited human resource capacity in the CO increasing constrains the attainment of programme results. While the CO has defined the roles and responsibilities of the seconded project officers, this arrangement is insufficient to sustain and enhance programme quality. In an effort to address this gap, the CO utilized the stretch assignment mechanism to bring on board a programme assistant from Swaziland during a critical period in country programming.

#### **Collaborative Partnerships:**

- Collaboration with the World Bank and UNICEF MENARO in two HIV/AIDS projects, on mapping the most at risk population, and assessment of services provided to PLHIV is contributing to an improved understanding of the situation of HIV/AIDS in Oman.
- Collaborative relations with the private sector have contributed to raising funds from the private sector in Oman towards the Horn of Africa crisis (for Djibouti) and contributing to raising awareness of the situation of children outside of Oman. A total of US\$50,000 was raised from private contributions for children in Djibouti.

### Country Situation

Popular demonstrations that swept across a number of countries in the Middle East had a resonance in Oman, with outbreak of similar demonstrations in different parts of the country in the early months of 2011. The public outcry was focused on key issues of governance including political reform, increased employment and employability of youth, and improvement in living standards. The Government has responded swiftly to meet many of the demands. Significant political and legislative reform measures have included devolution of power to the Shura Council and the Public Prosecution Office, changing the composition and functioning style of the top-most echelons in the government agencies, in a move meant to be more inclusive of young people and wider segments of the population in Oman in decision-making.

The public protest has also clarified that while Oman is a High-Income, High-Development Country there are vulnerabilities and inequities that exist and need to be addressed. Demands relating to improving standards of living in Oman in terms of minimum wage and benefits were core demands of the protestors. Following the protests, the Minimum wage was increased to Omani Rials<sup>[1]</sup> 200, unemployment benefits were increased as well as other benefits including education grants, housing loans write off, and reforms to the social protection/grant scheme. Generation of employment opportunities figured prominently in the demands put forth by the protesters resulting in a Government commitment to generate 50,000 job opportunities in Oman. The cost of the reforms weighed heavily on the Government of Oman, and in support, the GCC Council of Ministers pledged an aid package to Oman of US \$ 10 billion.

The year 2011 has been marked by continued commitment of Oman to international obligations. Prominently, Oman has withdrawn four out of its original five reservations to the CRC, paving the way for similar action with regard to Oman's reservations to the CEDAW. Royal Decree 86/2011 on withdrawal of reservations to the CRC is expected to impact the legislative framework for the rights of children in the country. Oman has also discussed its national report submitted for review as part of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), and its initial report submitted to the CEDAW. While there has been recognition that Oman has achieved much in terms of ratification of human rights instruments, and establishing a legislative framework commensurate with Oman's international obligations, additional reform and administrative measures are required to ensure a protective environment is in place for Oman's women and children, as highlighted by the concluding observations of the CEDAW committee and the outcome of the UPR.

**Progress in MDGs:** Whereas Oman is well on track to meet the MDG targets, further investments are needed in some areas particularly towards achieving MDG 1 target on 'underweight prevalence of children under 5', and MDG 6 related to HIV/AIDS. Efforts are also required to strengthen data collection and monitoring, develop evidence-based policies, and focus on the sub-national level in the interest of balanced growth and greater equity.

**Eighth Five-Year Plan 2011-2015:** Seen as a continuation of the Seventh Five Year Plan, the Eighth Five-Year Plan 2011-2015 highlights 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, refining and updating education policies, development of statistics through capacity building and improvement in quality of data, etcetera. The results of the census 2010 conducted in December 2010 will form a baseline for monitoring the outcomes of the Eighth 5-Year Plan.

**Health System Reform Vision 2050:** The Government of Oman is embarking on a major Health System Reform with a vision in line with the development challenges currently facing Oman. The health system reform is a timely measure to enhancing Health sector performance and effectiveness in the face of both emerging and persistent health challenges. The Vision 2050 for Health System reform aims to review the health system in the Sultanate of Oman and set up a national health policy to meet the health needs and expectation of the community in cooperation with other sectors. Focus on enhancing quality services, augmenting human resource capacity in health care and service provision, improved financing of health services, inclusive of health insurance, are among the major concerns addressed as part of the health system reform.

**Youth:** The total population of Oman is 2.7 million as per census 2010, of which 37% are under 19 years of age. The needs of youth in terms of investments in health, education, higher education, and job creation are a national priority. The 2011 protests highlighted the needs of youth – in education, employment, and income. A Royal Decree was issued in 2011 (Royal Decree 117/2011) establishing a National Youth Committee as a coordinating body on Youth Affairs. The Committee will be responsible inter-alia for acting as a bridge with young people to ensure their participation in defining their needs, involvement of youth in economic, social, political, and cultural development in Oman, as well as foster networking and coordination, planning, and allocation of resources for youth development and participation.

**Women:** The *Gender Gap Report 2011* published by the World Economic Forum gives a perspective on how Oman is performing in gender equity globally. Out of 134 countries, Oman has ranked 127 for 2011 (compared to a rank of 122 in 2010), which when juxtaposed against Oman's rank in HDR 2010 reveals persistence of gender inequities that need to be addressed for Oman to achieve equitable development for all. The limitations in participation and in opportunities for women in economic and political fields are of particular concern. The election of the members of the Shura Council (Consultative Council) for its 7th term carried out in 2011 resulted in the election of 1 woman to the 84-member body, despite a number of women candidates. The concluding observations of CEDAW have recommended the adoption of temporary special measures that need to be put in place to expedite equality between men and women.

[1] OR1=US\$2.6.

### **Who are the deprived children in your country context?**

The 2010 Human Development Report ranked Oman with the fastest increase in Human Development Index globally over the past 40 years. Despite progress in terms of economic and human development at national level, the data highlight vulnerabilities and disparities at subnational level. Number of beneficiaries of social welfare grants has increased since 1996, reaching over 50,000 cases in 2008. AlBatinah and AshSharkia regions have the highest proportion of cases (34 per cent and 23 per cent, respectively), particularly of small households (1-3 persons). Among the main beneficiaries of the scheme are persons with disabilities (21 per cent) and orphaned or abandoned children (12 per cent). Without addressing the barriers to the attainment of women, children, and the most vulnerable groups in Oman their full potential, the returns to Oman's investments will diminish.

Three main determinants affect the welfare status of Omani households: educational status, gender of head of household and size of household. Trends indicate that the most vulnerable children, those suffering the highest risk of multidimensional deprivation, come from female-headed households, households whose head has little formal education, large households, households in specific locations and households in the lowest income quintile. All of these factors reflect limitations on the chances to succeed in life. A UNICEF review of equality of opportunities among Omani youth highlighted declining opportunity for post-secondary education over the past few years. The implications for employability and breaking the inter-generational cycle of vulnerability are evident.

### **Data/Evidence**

- **Making Equity Relevant in Context of a High Income Country:** The development of the new Country Programme (CP) 2012-2015 was based on a comprehensive assessment of the situation of children in Oman that was equity based. The Oman CO conducted an analysis of the available data – inclusive of research conducted as part of the joint programme of collaboration - to highlight the equity concerns. The findings of this assessment on which the CPD was based were also presented at a stakeholders meeting.

- **Support to counterparts in addressing knowledge gaps about children:** The CO is addressing the gaps in knowledge about children through research and data analysis. During 2011, the Oman CO has initiated a number of important studies that have an important bearing on understanding the situation of children in Oman, including a study to understand the underlying causes of school dropout. The study is based on extensive analysis of secondary data related to school dropouts, focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews with key stakeholders. The study is expected to provide recommendations on policy measures that will enhance school retention.

- **Data/Evidence to promote policy change/reform:** The CO is also using the results of the assessment of the capacity of the regional teams responsible for monitoring cases of child abuse to lobby for adoption by the Government of Oman (GoO) of legislation to make education compulsory. The Child

Law is expected to be issued in 2012, and a proposed Education Law will make education at basic level compulsory. Equally important, data produced by counterparts is also analysed to provide insights into the situation of children.

- **Strengthening data collection at sub-national level:** One of the major areas of support to the GoO in 2011 has been in strengthening data collection at the sub-national level. The CO is collaborating with the University of Oxford on the development of an Omani Child deprivation index at the sub-national level. Based on an analysis of the data at sub-national level, a new "geography of deprivation" is being explored for Oman that will contribute towards an assessment of levels of deprivation of children at the sub-national level.

**Enhancing the Capacity of the GoO in knowledge management:** In addition to supporting national counterparts in data collection and analysis, the CO is providing support to the GoO in knowledge management through the development of an Observatory on Education, Vocational Training, and Labour market needs. This meets one of the pressing concerns of youth in Oman, quality education that can enhance chances of employability. A survey was conducted to identify the main components of the observatory, as well as sharing of international standards. The next phase of the development of the project entails defining the main indicators, data sources, and the setting up of the database for the observatory.

### Monitoring Mechanism

- At the outset of this section, it is important to recognize that the work of UNICEF in the context of a High Income Country – like the case of an upper middle income country – requires a long period of time to attain results as it is primarily upstream work focused on policy development, and building national capacity in certain areas. While indicators for "service delivery" type interventions can be measured more frequently, that is not the case for programmes that focus on upstream work. As such, the programming for the country programme is done on a bi-annual basis, with the CO developing bi-annual work plans and IMEPs.

- The 2009 mid-term review (MTR) of the Oman country programme of collaboration ending in 2011 (the CP 2007-2011) revised the programme results to make them more measureable. Indicators for monitoring progress of programme achievements were identified, and have since been utilized as the reference for M&E in the office.

- A bi-monthly progress report on all work plan activities was introduced as a measure in early 2011. The bi-monthly report – which is shared with counterparts – is an important management tool to provide timely information on the progress of implementation and any challenges the programme may face.

- The annual review of the CP also provides a very good opportunity to share progress on results for children that the programme has achieved. The reference is the set of indicators used to monitor results for children as revised following the MTR.

- The CO conducts analysis of data sets on a periodic basis (such as the multi-year analysis of the household income and expenditure survey) to assess the situation of children in the country, and measure progress against results of the Country Programme.

- Training of CO staff in Results Based Planning and Management was undertaken this year to further strengthen the capability of staff in monitoring results for children. With support from the Regional Office, the CO was also provided training in the UNICEF monitoring and evaluation function.

- For the new Country Programme 2012-2015, the CO, with support from the Regional Office, has developed a monitoring and evaluation framework to monitor, assess, and evaluate results for children.

### Support to National Planning

- Capacity building has been provided to counterparts (and UNICEF staff) on Results Based Planning and Management.
- Capacity building for counterparts in strategic planning has also been provided (Ministry of Social Development), with the aim of strengthening the capacity of the ministry in development of a vision, strategic results, and indicators to monitor these results.
- In the context of the major surveys and studies carried out as part of the joint programme of collaboration, counterparts are provided with intensive training in data collection, analysis and monitoring of progress. This measure is undertaken by the CO in recognition that follow up of progress of CP results is to be undertaken by counterparts with UNICEF support.
- As part of the training undertaken by counterparts towards conducting the MICS4, extensive capacity building of counterparts in survey design and data analysis was carried out in 2011. Comprehensive surveys such as the MICS provide an important information base to monitor the situation of children in the country.

### Any other relevant information related to data/evidence?

Future work will seek to:

- Continue to build and improve the knowledge base on the situation of women and children and provide gender and age disaggregated data.
- Conduct further research to understand the vulnerabilities, and some of the underlying bottlenecks affecting the attainment of children of their rights.
- Support counterparts in development of tools to monitor the situation of children at the subnational level.

## Country Programme Analytical Overview

A significant change in the senior level decision-makers in almost all ministries and public authorities (ministers and undersecretaries) as well as the dismantling of one of the key ministries took place following the demonstrations earlier in the year. Though the change had an impact on the progress of the joint programme of implementation between UNICEF and the GoO, the CO's overall programme implementation rate for 2011 was 80%. The programme has focused on a few interventions that had high added value for the programme.

Support provided by UNICEF continued to include upstream technical assistance, policy advocacy, capacity development, resource leveraging, support to local research and international knowledge networking. The CO continued as a knowledge broker, supporting partners to conduct and disseminate strategic research to highlight vulnerabilities, immediate and underlying drivers of inequities that negatively affect women and children from reaching their full potential. The component of equity as well as gender equality was emphasized throughout the implementation of programmes. The relevance of equity and vulnerability analysis in the context of Oman was highlighted through strategic research. Important interventions have been conducted including: the development of the Omani child wellbeing index, Mapping among Most-at-Risk-Population (MARPs) of sex-workers (SW), men-having-sex-with-men (MSM), and Injecting Drug Users (IDUs), study on PLHIV, young people infected and affected by HIV and their families, as well as school dropouts.

Capacity development, knowledge creation and management are critical strategies. They will emphasize knowledge transfer through partnerships with centres of excellence promoting generation of know-how for

achieving results for children in the region and through international networks as well as South-South cooperation.

The programme has moved towards a more integrated programming approach that brought together broad-based partnerships across different sectors both governmental and others through projects such as youth friendly spaces, development of an Observatory on education, vocational training and employment for Oman, qualitative study on school retention/dropout in order to increase school enrolment in all regions in the country and implementation of child friendly school in Omani education system.

The country programme (CP) started strengthening regional (sub-national) and community outreach in recognition of the need to address the communities and families to promote behaviour and social change to achieve results for children.

The CP also strengthened gender analysis and gender audits, guided by the revised UNICEF gender policy and regional strategy to ensure that the needs of both girls and boys are addressed from infancy through adolescence. This has been clearly demonstrated in the analysis of the situation of women and children developed in the context of the new CPD and CPAP for the period 2012-2015.

Youth agenda is at forefront of the programme. In part, this has been in response to pressing national needs to promote development of the youth following the protests earlier in the year.

Additionally, the CP has been extending support and building the capacity of stakeholders to adopt innovative approaches to increase participation of children and youth – boys and girls – to develop solutions to issues that affect their lives.

### Effective Advocacy

*Fully met benchmarks*

Advocacy for the rights of children in Oman has been supported through sustained dialogue with high-level stakeholders that resulted in the withdrawal of four out of the five reservations on the CRC. The CO has highlighted the reservations to the CRC utilizing the concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights on the national reports of Oman on the CRC and its Optional Protocols to lobby for withdrawal of reservations. It has also utilized the preparation for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Oman to advocate with counterparts for withdrawal of CRC reservations.

Advocacy for legislative reform to promote child rights has supported near-finalization of the child law that incorporates some adjustment to existing legislation (minimum age of criminal responsibility, and compulsory basic education). The final draft of the law, which has been submitted to the Council of Ministers, is awaiting approval for its enactment.

The outcome of the activity promoting youth friendly spaces resulted in a better understanding of the the demography of young people in Oman; and the context of change (both internal and physiological but also external and societal in terms of modernization, globalization etcetera), which makes the use of youth friendly spaces and other provision for young people important. Through youth-centred activities, their needs are better understood along with the existing provisions and recommendations addressing them. . Implementation of child friendly schools (CFS) is aimed at contributing to the review of CFS reforms – child rights, CFS principles and dimensions, and strategies of a CFS standards-based system; status report on system-wide priorities. In the next phase of this project, development of a communication plan is built in.

### Changes in Public Policy

It is very difficult to directly and exclusively attribute changes in public policy to specific interventions.

Nevertheless, continuous work over a number of years does and will contribute to specific policy outcomes.

The CO is able to cite a number of successes by way of changes in legislation and public policy due to sustained advocacy over a number of years:

**Legislation has been passed withdrawing four out of five reservations to the CRC:** UNICEF advocacy with counterparts on withdrawal of reservations to the CRC and the capacity building of counterparts not only in 2011, but through many preceding years has contributed to the withdrawal of the reservations to the CRC;

**A Royal Decree was issued establishing a National Youth Committee affiliated to the State Council:** UNICEF has invested significantly in the area of youth: including development of material on health promotion for adolescents, awareness raising campaigns on HIV/AIDS, and other interventions. In 2011, the CO made significant contributions in the area of youth: analysis of the human opportunity index for youth, and extensive research - including focus group discussions with adolescent girls and boys - on youth friendly spaces in Oman. These various interventions were developed in close collaboration and in partnership with counterparts, often culminating in workshops with high-level participation. This has contributed to strengthening the agenda for youth in Oman, and provided the evidence base for the youth agenda. The impact of the protests held earlier in the year doubtless contributed to the decision to form the National Youth Committee.

### Leveraging Resources

In developing the work plans, UNICEF has discussed with counterparts the importance of addressing issues of inequity in Oman. UNICEF discussed the importance of equity with senior level counterparts, and shared the 'Narrowing the gaps' report. The CO had already initiated shifts in the programme towards more upstream policy support to counterparts - in line with Oman's status as a high-income country. The MTR of 2009 reinforced that trend in Oman. It was thus possible to allocate programme resources to reflect the organizational shift towards focus on equity. Awareness raising of counterparts on equity was undertaken through the process of developing the CPD, culminating in a workshop on child vulnerabilities in Oman. In parallel, capacity building to counterparts was provided in data analysis, at the sub-national level to highlight discrepancies at that level.

### Capacity Development

*Mostly met benchmarks*

Building national capacity is one of the CP's priorities. The CO accordingly had conducted needs assessments to identify the needed training for counterparts. The CO organized RBM training for staff as well as partners aimed at enhancing their capacities in planning, management, analysing, monitoring and evaluation, and development of results. The participants gained knowledge on results based planning and this knowledge is being applied in the preparation of the biannual work plans 2012-2013.

In line with UNICEF's focus on innovation, the CO conducted a retreat on innovation co-facilitated by the Communication/Innovation Specialist from NYHQ. Relevant partners were also invited to the retreat and it was a good opportunity for a briefing on UNICEF's current work on initiatives on innovations.

The GCC MICS4 training workshop was conducted in Oman, enhancing technical expertise of participants on MICS methodology to assess the situation of children and women in Omani society and to monitor progress towards achieving the MDGs. The workshop was attended by participants from the GCC countries and Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria and facilitated by MICS experts from UNICEF Headquarters and the Regional Office.

In addition, four officials of the MoNE attended an inter-regional data processing workshop organized by UNICEF in collaboration with the Government of Qatar in Doha. This training was organized to ensure that the training needs of countries from different regions that will soon be collecting data are met. The workshop was facilitated by UNICEF global and regional data processing experts and included the adaptation of the applications for use of computer aided interviewing tools for countries adopting these options.

A study tour to learn from other countries' experience on juvenile justice was a successful exercise for the Oman team members who travelled to Jordan. The visit enhanced the team's knowledge and maximized their experience based on which to devise and implement suitable methods of dealing with juveniles. One of the important modalities that can be applied in Oman is juvenile education and integration with the community.

As part of implementing the CFS Initiative in Oman, a CFS Standards workshop was conducted for the MoE staff to support the development of CFS standards for improving the quality of education in Oman. Improved quality of education is central to UNICEF agenda, and this was clearly the focus during the capacity building of the MoE team and participants from counterparts who were trained on the methods of qualitative research and on statistical and research tools required for the study on school retention/dropouts.

Building capacity of health care providers including nurses, paediatricians and consultants from different hospitals in all the regions in Oman on the safe transportation of sick children was a vital step in attaining the joint vision of MoH and UNICEF for creating safe and supportive environment for newborn children. MoH now has 30 trained health providers with sufficient amount of knowledge and skills and 10 were identified as master trainers in order to continue conducting training in their regions.

### Communication For Development

*Partially met benchmarks*

Communication for development has been focused on and will continue to contribute to understanding the behaviours that underlie some of the inequities and vulnerability that women and children face.

The PEM campaign launched by UNICEF in 2011 was based on messages derived from an extensive social marketing campaign carried out in different parts of Oman.

A peer education training package on several educational matters that concern adolescents in schools was effectively developed in collaboration with Ministries of Education and Health and UNFPA. The training package will be effectively utilized in schools in order to develop young people's skills and raise their awareness on different issues such as road safety, HIV/AIDS, nutrition, violence etcetera. The package also includes standards and principles of effective communication enabling students to qualify to be master peer educators. The package was developed in a participatory process whereby all the partners were involved in developing the activities, language, images and information. The materials are designed in a learner-friendly and innovative way in order to be utilized outside the schools with other target groups such as women's associations and ministries.

There is currently lack of required C4D capacity in CO, and the CO will be recruiting a national officer for C4D in the near future.

The advocacy strategy is also due for finalization early in 2012.

### Service Delivery

*Initiating action to meet benchmarks*

Not applicable to Oman as the CO does not provide service delivery

### Strategic Partnerships

*Partially met benchmarks*

Collaborative partnership with Oman's largest telecommunication company Omantel to promote and raise awareness of children's rights in Oman is ongoing. Discussions on initiatives such as a workshop on CSR and cyber protection of children are underway.

Child Nutrition Campaign was launched in January 2011 in collaboration with the MoH and with the support of private sector partners. Over its one-year duration, it covered different regions in the country with the aim of raising awareness of good feeding practices for infants. It was targeted to caregivers - primarily mothers and fathers, and reached out to target audiences through various channels including TV spots, radio messages, print media, and through the Friday prayers.

2011 has been a successful year for building partnerships with various stakeholders through projects such as youth friendly spaces, child nutrition campaign, school retention project, development of an observatory on Education, vocational training and the labour market, and the newly started project on the setting up of an innovation lab.

Partnerships were established or strengthened with the Council of Ministers, Ministry of Higher Education, Muscat Municipality, Royal Oman Police, associations, private sector and media. UNICEF MENARO and Oman CO have collaborated with the World Bank on conducting important work on HIV/AIDS in Oman, specifically two important surveys on the most at risk populations in Oman, and an assessment of the services provided to PLHIV and their families.

UNICEF Oman has been a recipient of funds from the US UNICEF National Committee. The funds were allocated to education, and were utilized in the development of Wechsler tests for children in Oman. The CO has been able to raise funds from the private sector for the Horn of Africa crisis (for Djibouti).

### Mobilizing Partners

- Serve as a catalyst and convener to bring together partnerships to establish consensus, and mobilize resources towards fulfillment of children's rights from Governmental, non-governmental, and corporate sectors. Partnerships will be supported to leverage assistance and promote fundraising.

### Knowledge Management

*Fully met benchmarks*

The CO has made significant contributions towards Knowledge Management (KM) in Oman as follows:

Support to counterparts in addressing knowledge gaps about children: The Oman CO is addressing the gaps through (i) Research and data analysis; (ii) Utilization of data/evidence to promote policy change/reform; (iii) Strengthening data collection at sub-national level; and (iv) Enhancing GoO capacity in knowledge management.

The programme has invested significantly in strategic research to inform policy making. This has contributed to a better understanding of the vulnerabilities, bottlenecks, and barriers to attainment by women and children of their full potential, reflected in better programming. Included among the most important research conducted over the year is the finalization of the analysis of the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HHIES), 2010/11, which has shed light on income-based and sub-national disparities, and the Omani Child Well-being Index that is being developed and will also support decentralised planning and monitoring of child rights. The sub-regional Child Well-Being Index supported by the CO will capture key indicators of the well-being status of the children in Oman, and serve as a support tool to inform planning, decision taking, priority setting, resource allocation, and monitoring the progress on child well-being. The Index will be disaggregated at the third administrative level (Wilayat level), and will also be disaggregated by age and gender. Currently assessment of data availability is being conducted by an expert in order to map the Child Well-Being Index and identify data gaps.

In addition to the above, the research studies on school-drop outs and on youth-friendly spaces (both undertaken during 2011) are highlighting the immediate and underlying drivers of vulnerability of some groups of children and young people, with a gender lens. The strategic research carried out has informed policy directives affecting women and children in Oman and is much in line with the role of UNICEF in providing upstream policy support and technical assistance in the context of a HIC, with very limited service delivery as part of its programming.

The CO has been able to serve as a knowledge broker, supporting partners to conduct and disseminate strategic research to highlight vulnerabilities, immediate and underlying drivers of inequities that negatively affect women and children from reaching their full potential. Capacity development, knowledge creation and management will be critical strategies for future work. They will emphasize knowledge transfer through partnerships with centres of excellence promoting generation of know-how for achieving results for children in the region and through international networks as well as South-South cooperation. National capacities will be strengthened in collection and analysis of disaggregated data for evidence-based planning and strengthening the information base on the most vulnerable children. Disparities will be mapped and analysed. This will also improve monitoring of realization of children's rights.

### Human Rights Based Approach to Cooperation

*Mostly met benchmarks*

The CO has been guided in providing support to programme design and implementation of interventions by the CRC, CEDAW, CRPD, WFFC, and other international instruments. With regard to the CRC and its Optional Protocols, the CO vigorously advocated and supported the GoO on the framing of the draft Child Law with both the CO MENARO providing substantive inputs to the draft Child Law, with emphasis on ensuring a protective environment for children and the full attainment of their rights. The draft Law has been presented to the Council of Ministers, and feedback on the draft obtained from a number of ministries.

The CO supported capacity building and raised awareness of counterparts on the CRC and other international rights instruments, particularly towards the development of a national plan of action for children, and a similar plan of action for persons with disability. Support to the human rights mechanisms,

inclusive of the Omani Human Rights Committee, as well as other organs was provided in the context of the pre-session discussions with counterparts for the UPR and CEDAW. Additionally, the CO is providing support to the GoO as it prepares the national report to the CRC - due in July 2012.

Through the mainstreaming of the human rights based approach (HRBAP), the country programme has made some contribution towards promotion of a national protective environment that addresses all types of violence, abuse and neglect, particularly against children with disabilities, who are uniquely vulnerable. The programme will provide technical assistance to develop and implement a gender-sensitive child protection policy that would complement the Child Law currently under review. It will also ensure that institutions dealing with children in conflict with the law are sensitive to child and gender issues; promote effective training of professionals in identifying and monitoring cases of violence, exploitation and abuse against girls and boys (including against those with disabilities); and develop measures to rehabilitate these victims. The CO will contribute to raising awareness of duty-bearers and promote behaviour change and strengthen social responsibility for child protection through awareness-raising campaigns on child rights and protection. Based on the work conducted in 2010, the CO has been able to continue supporting the regional teams to monitor child abuse, through the development of a training plan based on a comprehensive training needs assessment carried out in 2010.

### Gender

*Mostly met benchmarks*

The analysis of situation of women and children for the development of the new CP 2012-2015 has incorporated gender-based analysis. The need for gender and age disaggregated data has been reiterated in the support UNICEF has provided to counterparts on data collection and analysis. .

A study on harmonization of Omani laws with CEDAW was conducted, and is serving as an important advocacy tool to promote the legislative reform and building national capacity in gender analysis and mainstreaming. The study on Harmonization of national legislation with CEDAW has also produced a framework for strengthening the National CEDAW committee by developing rules of procedure for the Committee.

The CO is working with the GoO on addressing the concluding observations of the CEDAW committee, and the Government has expressed willingness to explore the possibility of withdrawal of the reservations to the CEDAW

### Environmental Sustainability

*Initiating action to meet benchmarks*

This area is not addressed in the current CP, but will be in the new CP 2012-2015.

### South-South and Triangular Cooperation

No significant initiatives were undertaken to promote South-South Cooperation in 2011.

**Country Programme Component: Family and childcare and development**

**PCRs (Programme Component Results)**

PCR	EQRank	OTDetails
Existing key interventions such as Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI) and perinatal and neonatal care including universal neonatal screening for selected disorders, scaled up and improved		1 FA1OT1, FA1OT7, FA1OT8, FA1OT4, FA1OT6

**Resources Used in 2011(USD)**

Resource Type	Planned for 2011 (as per CPAP ceiling )	Allocated in 2011	Estimated Year-End Expenditure	%Spent (4)/(3) * 100
OR-E				
OR-R	1.00	286645.00	177930.00	62.07
RR				
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1.00</b>	<b>\$286,645.00</b>	<b>\$177,930.00</b>	

**Results Achieved**

**Safe Transportation of sick children**

- Building capacity of health care providers including nurses, paediatricians and consultants from hospitals in all the regions of Oman on the safe transportation of sick children was a vital step in attaining the joint vision of MoH and UNICEF in creating safe and supportive environment for new born children.
- Technical support was provided in capacity building of health professionals and a comprehensive assessment of the current situation of transportation was conducted in different regions in order to identify gaps and challenges. The local guidelines for the safe transportation of sick children were also revised and amended according to the local context needs and available resources.
- Some 30 health providers were trained with sufficient amount of knowledge and skills and 10 were identified as master trainers in order to continue conducting training plans in regions.
- Training health care providers on issues of transportation is crucial particularly taking into account the high rates of accidents, geographical complexity of some of the regions, concentration of highly specialized paediatric care in the capital, and varied competency levels of healthcare providers.

**Infant and child feeding strategy**

- An evaluation study on infant and child feeding strategy was conducted in three main regions to look into the current programmes, policy, and surveillance system within the MoH. The study was implemented in response to the longstanding concern of nutrition-related health problems in Oman: specifically malnutrition among children under five years of age (PEM, micronutrient deficiencies such as anaemia and iron deficiency).
- The consultant conducted a desk review of all relevant documents and previous studies to identify gaps and challenges in programmes related to infant and child feeding strategy. This will help in exploring better mechanisms to implement strategies for improved infant and child feeding practices. Ways of integrating international standards in health services and better ways of improving the current counselling and health facilities for both mothers and their children were discussed.
- The above study will add valuable information towards improvement in child survival, growth as well as early development. This will lead to optimal infant and young child feeding for all children and will promote early childhood development, which will ensure the best start in life.

**Wechsler Intelligence Tests**

The Wechsler Intelligence Tests for children 6-16 years old, which were initiated in 2010 have been translated from English to Arabic and adapted to Omani educational system. This is envisaged to lead to other educational programmes to support the learning process.

### **Child Friendly Schools Initiative**

The Child Friendly Schools (CFS) initiative in Omani education system is characterized by these dimensions: the promotion of child rights; a safe, protective, and healthy environment; effective learning; stakeholder participation; inclusiveness; and gender-responsiveness. An environmental analysis of CFS was conducted in 2010, followed by a workshop in 2011 on 'CFS standards: Improving Education in Oman' for orientation training of the MoE staff.

### **Most Critical Factors and Constraints**

- One of the major constraints has been absence of a programme specialist to carry out programme implementation, thus placing a burden on the Representative.
- Lack of a diversified roster of qualified consultants for implementation of the projects resulted in major delays.
- High consultancy fees quoted by shortlisted consultants.
- Coordination between the many stakeholders is inadequate, which has negative impact on achieving planned results.

### **Key Strategic Partnerships and Interagency Collaboration**

- Ministries of Health, Social Development, Education, Higher Education, National Economy, Manpower, Information, Civil Services and Interior
- NGOs
- Sultan Qaboos University.

### **Humanitarian Situations**

There were no humanitarian situations in Oman.

### **Summary of Monitoring, Studies and Evaluations**

An evaluation study on Infant and Young Child Feeding Strategy - The aim is to look into the current programmes, policy, and surveillance system within the MoH. The study was implemented in response to the longstanding concern of nutrition-related health problems in Oman; specifically malnutrition among children under five years of age (PEM, micronutrient deficiencies such as anaemia and iron deficiency).

### **Future Work Plan**

- Develop Early Child Strategy and standards of ECD in Oman
- Develop a comprehensive awareness raising campaign on preschool value targeting parents.
- Develop advanced tools to social workers to provide counselling services for children in schools
- Implement next phase of the CFS in Oman to ensure achievement of quality education. Develop an advocacy plan kit on CFS
- Develop advanced diagnostic and assessment tools for children with disabilities.

### Country Programme Component: Protection and participation of children and adolescents

#### PCRs (Programme Component Results)

PCR	EQRank	OTDetails
The growing concern of preventable injuries, now the leading cause of child morbidity and mortality for the 1-18 year age group, in particular road traffic accidents, to be addressed		1 FA3OT6, FA5OT3, FA5OT8, FA5OT9

#### Resources Used in 2011(USD)

Resource Type	Planned for 2011 (as per CPAP ceiling )	Allocated in 2011	Estimated Year-End Expenditure	%Spent (4)/(3) * 100
OR-E				
OR-R	1.00	278230.00	100464.00	36.11
RR				
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1.00</b>	<b>\$278,230.00</b>	<b>\$100,464.00</b>	

#### Results Achieved

Following the assessment conducted by Jordan River Foundation in 2010 to evaluate training needs of the regional teams working on child abuse cases across the country, a consultative meeting on the study outcome was held for relevant stakeholders.

A study tour to Jordan to learn from experience on juvenile justice enhanced the team's knowledge and maximized their experience especially in the area of conducting suitable methods of dealing with juveniles. An important aspect that can be applied in Oman is the juvenile education and integration with the community.

A peer education training package on several educational matters concerning adolescents in schools was developed and will be effectively utilized in order to develop young people's skills and raise their awareness on issues such as road safety, HIV/AIDS, nutrition and violence.

Given that youth form a large segment of the total population, an assessment was conducted on the possibility of developing youth friendly spaces (YFS) with the aim of raising awareness, and improving knowledge and behaviour with respect to different youth concerns like HIV/AIDS, road injuries, drugs and other social issues. The study indicated that young people had many concerns they believed were neglected by decision makers including the lack of safe space for their daily activities. A joint workshop was organized by UNICEF and MoH with relevant partners from civil society and private sector that showed willingness in establishing YFS.

An assessment was conducted on PMTCT, looking into the Omani guidelines, process and challenges. MoH aims to begin HIV testing of all pregnant women attending ANC clinics. Started in 2009, this initiative entails training of counsellors, preparation of materials, building of referral networks with secondary and tertiary centres, and community engagement. The study's findings will be valuable and helpful in improving services provided to women and children and eliminating current gaps.

The Health education package for PLWHA was revised and printed and the amended package includes different ways to maintain their health and care.

The World Bank and MENARO are supporting GoO in conducting two ongoing studies to gather and analyse data and develop a country report suggesting evidence based HIV/AIDS policies and interventions. The studies are:

**PLHIV, Young People Infected and Affected by HIV and Their Families:** This study is intended to support the GoO to deepen its understanding of the local context in which the needs of PLWHIV and their families are addressed, including assessment of the kinds of services they receive and their sense of vulnerability in terms of the discrimination they face.

**Mapping among Most-at-Risk-Population (MARPs) of sex-workers, Men-having-sex-with-men and Injected Drug Users:** The objective is to support the GoO in generating quality data for evidence-based HIV/AIDS decision-making and programming. The study will aim at mapping the status of knowledge of the MARPs, their current modes of transmission of HIV, and their practices in terms of protection.

A study tour to Malaysia for members of the CRC Committee exposed them to Malaysian experience on child protection, child law, youth engagement, and family participation to promote the wellbeing of children and youth.

A harmonization study on Omani legislations and CEDAW was partially completed.

### **Most Critical Factors and Constraints**

- The expected outcomes of the activity to develop life skills manuals for 16-18 year olds were not achieved as there were delays in submission on part of the consultants hired for this task.
- 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, further actions await the passing of a Child Law.
- Partial completion of harmonization study on Omani legislations and CEDAW is because the study did not meet the required standards.

### **Key Strategic Partnerships and Interagency Collaboration**

Ministries of Health, Education, Social Development and National Economy, and private sector.

Through the project on development of youth friendly spaces, the CO was able to build strong partnerships with a number of entities. Partnerships were established with the Council of Ministers, Ministry of Higher Education, Muscat Municipality, Royal Oman Police, civic associations, private sector and media.

### **Humanitarian Situations**

There were no humanitarian situations in 2011.

### **Summary of Monitoring, Studies and Evaluations**

Study to look into the possibility of establishing Youth Friendly Spaces in Oman - completed

### **Ongoing studies as part of this programme are:**

- PLHIV, Young People Infected and Affected by HIV and Their Families
- Mapping among Most-at-Risk-Population of sex-workers, men-having-sex-with-men and Injected Drug Users

### Future Work Plan

- Development of the life skills manuals for 16-18 year olds to support youth with friendly and well-structured programmes in healthy life style, communication skills etcetera.
- Implementation of Plan of Action for the development of Youth Friendly Spaces in Oman.

## Country Programme Component: Communication and resource mobilization

### PCRs (Programme Component Results)

PCR	EQRank	OTDetails
To influence the attitudes and behaviours of all members of society so that issues concerning children, women and families are understood, internalized and accorded sufficient priority and resources	1	FA3OT6, FA5OT3, FA5OT4, FA5OT6, FA4OT5

### Resources Used in 2011(USD)

Resource Type	Planned for 2011 (as per CPAP ceiling )	Allocated in 2011	Estimated Year-End Expenditure	%Spent (4)/(3) * 100
OR-E				
OR-R	1.00	165000.00	30650.00	18.58
RR				
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1.00</b>	<b>\$165,000.00</b>	<b>\$30,650.00</b>	

### Results Achieved

'Child Nutrition Campaign', previously called 'PEM Campaign' was launched in January 2011 in collaboration with the MoH and with the support of private sector partners, for a one-year duration and covered different regions in the country with the aim of raising awareness of good feeding practices for infants. It was targeted to caregivers, primarily mothers and fathers. The campaign used a multitude of approaches, reaching out to target audiences through TV spots, radio messages, printed media, and through the Friday prayers.

The CO supported participation of two officials from private sector in a Consultation on Children's Rights and Business Principles Initiative in Dubai to expose them to UNICEF's Children's Rights and Business Principles Initiative which together with the UN Global Compact and Save the Children aims to develop a set of principles to guide businesses in respecting and supporting children's rights in the workplace, marketplace and in the community.

The CO also supported an awareness campaign on 'Let's Talk AIDS' through provision of rapid test kits to the MoH.

### Most Critical Factors and Constraints

- Lack of staff capacity in C4D is a major constraint in implementing C4D programmes.

### Key Strategic Partnerships and Interagency Collaboration

Ministry of Health, media and private sector.

### Humanitarian Situations

There were no humanitarian situations in Oman.

### Summary of Monitoring, Studies and Evaluations

There were no studies/evaluations conducted in this programme component.

### Future Work Plan

- Finalization of advocacy and communication strategy
- Recruitment of a national officer for C4D.

## Country Programme Component: Monitoring and evaluation

### PCRs (Programme Component Results)

PCR	EQRank	OTDetails
A national database system developed and made accessible to all partners, monitoring a comprehensive range of child rights, identifying and addressing regional disparities		1 FA5OT1, FA5OT3

### Resources Used in 2011(USD)

Resource Type	Planned for 2011 (as per CPAP ceiling )	Allocated in 2011	Estimated Year-End Expenditure	%Spent (4)/(3) * 100
OR-E				
OR-R	1.00	380000.00	246580.00	64.89
RR				
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1.00</b>	<b>\$380,000.00</b>	<b>\$246,580.00</b>	

### Results Achieved

#### Child Well-Being Index

Though the Human Development Index is high, and Oman is well on track to meet the MDGs in health, data reveals challenges in terms of child development. The Child Development Index 2000-2006 ranked Oman at 83rd position (source: Save the Children Sweden, 2008), indicating that despite its high-income status, Oman requires further efforts to ensure the fulfillment of children's rights. A study was conducted to look into the gaps in child development indicators and discuss ways to develop new indicators that include all the groups of children and in all regions of Oman by involving different ministries as well as policy. The expert contracted for this study visited Oman and met with relevant stakeholders.

Currently assessment of data availability is being conducted by the expert in order to map the Child Well-Being Index and identify data gaps

#### Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey Round 4 (MICS4) Comprehensive Survey

The GCC MICS4 training workshop was successfully conducted in Oman, which enhanced the technical skills and knowledge of the participants on the MICS methodologies that help to assess the situation of children and women and to monitor progress towards achieving the MDGs.

In addition, MoNE officials attended an inter-regional data processing workshop organized by MENARO in collaboration with the Government of Qatar, to ensure that the training needs of countries from different regions that will soon be collecting MICS data are met. The workshop included the adaptation of the

applications for use as computer aided interviewing tools for countries adopting these options.

### **Observatory on Education, Vocational Training and Employment for Oman**

UNICEF in collaboration with MoE implemented the initial phase of this project. The Observatory's primary purpose is to provide strategic information for policy makers, managers of education and training institutions, employers, guidance and counseling personnel, and for individuals seeking orientation in education, training and employment including persons with disabilities, and increasing to support gender equality. The Observatory will serve both the public and the private sector. It will address links between education, training and the labour market, in particular school-to-work transition. International standards, experiences and models are developed.

### **School Retention Study**

In collaboration with the MoE, the CO undertook to conduct a qualitative study on school retention, in order to increase school enrolment in all regions in the country. UNICEF contracted the Social Research Centre at the American University in Cairo and a local consultant for this study with the support of a national team from the Ministries of Education, Health, Social Development and Manpower, and other organisations. The study methodologies and tools have been designed, and the national team is collecting data from regions using the study tools. The study will provide projections and developmental plans for the educators to enhance the enrolment rates of children along with the quality of education.

### **Spending for child rights**

Following the study to assess spending on children conducted in 2010, a consultative meeting was held to discuss results of the study with the stakeholders.

### **Most Critical Factors and Constraints**

- Disbanding of the MoNE, as a result of major reforms in the Government in early 2011, had a major impact on implementation of programmes where MoNE was the main implementing partner.
- Changes in focal points in some of the line Ministries also affected programme implementation.

### **Key Strategic Partnerships and Interagency Collaboration**

- Ministries of Health, Education, Social Development, National Economy and Manpower
- Royal Oman Police and The Research Council

### **Humanitarian Situations**

There were no humanitarian situations in Oman.

### **Summary of Monitoring, Studies and Evaluations**

The qualitative study to enhance school retention to increase school enrolment in all regions in the country is ongoing.

### **Future Work Plan**

- Increase the number of kindergartens.
- Adopt compulsory education as a government policy for inclusive education.
- Conduct an assessment of the services provided for the visually impaired children
- Reach long-term strategy recommendations on the integration of children with disabilities in ordinary schools.
- Support GOO in implementation of MICS4 survey in Oman.

**Country Programme Component: Cross-sectoral costs**

**PCRs (Programme Component Results)**

PCR	EQRank	OTDetails
Effective and Efficient programme management and operations support.	1	FA6OT9

**Resources Used in 2011(USD)**

Resource Type	Planned for 2011 (as per CPAP ceiling )	Allocated in 2011	Estimated Year-End Expenditure	%Spent (4)/(3) * 100
OR-E				
OR-R	250000.00	342000.00	288327.00	84.31
RR				
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$250,000.00</b>	<b>\$342,000.00</b>	<b>\$288,327.00</b>	

**Results Achieved**

2011 was a bridging year. Contribution was requested from the GoO only towards cross-sectoral support in the amount of US\$250,000. Carry-over funds were used for programme implementation.

Cross-sectoral funds cover salaries of programme assistant and support staff on institutional contracts and operating expenses, like security, office rent, communication, etc.

Approval is received from the GoO for the post of National Officer for C4D to be covered from the cross-sectoral funds.

**Most Critical Factors and Constraints**

None were encountered.

**Key Strategic Partnerships and Interagency Collaboration**

Not applicable.

**Humanitarian Situations**

There were no humanitarian situations in Oman.

**Summary of Monitoring, Studies and Evaluations**

Not applicable.

**Future Work Plan**

Cross-sectoral funds will continue to be used for operating costs.

### Effective Governance Structure

The office maintained a steady level of operations and programme management performance throughout 2011. The CO held 8 CMT meetings in 2011 including the Annual Management Review. The Annual Management Plan 2011 covered key management priorities, programme, management, human resources development, partnership, staff learning and monitoring.

Initiatives were taken by the CMT during 2011 to improve operations and programme management performance as seen below:

- Following the training conducted by the RO at the end of 2010, through several joint exercises, the CO ERM Risk Profile and Risk Control Library were prepared that identify opportunities and challenges that may have implications on the achievement of programme results. Office processes are guided by the ERM policy; CPD, CPMP, annual planning and reporting processes are risk informed. This framework is important for the CO as it operates with unique features, including programme funding that is primarily provided by the GoO along with government seconded project officers. In order to ensure systematic and timely monitoring of ERM risk library, an assessment is being conducted to take stock of action points/recommendations.
- Annual Management Plan (AMP) 2011 was finalized through a review by the CMT. AMP priorities for 2011 were guided by the ERM policy and framework.
- KPIs were further strengthened with the addition of indicators on gender equity.
- AMP 2011 highlighted programme and management priorities. Some of management priorities are: CO to adhere to new modalities for operations and programming as outlined in VISION; ensure maintaining a minimum level of readiness to tackle crisis and emergency; ensure systematic and timely monitoring of ERM risk library through assessing the presence and function of its components and evaluating them; ensure regular follow up of audit implementation and action plan; monitor KPIs and office learning plan on quarterly basis; ensure WRM, CMT and programme meetings are conducted regularly, minutes recorded and shared as appropriate; ensure adherence of the internal rules and procedures for office improvement.
- CMTs and other staff meetings are used as opportunities to share information with and update staff on key developments and changes, and to identify what is required of the office.

Given the organisation's focus on innovation, a survey was conducted to establish a baseline by finding out the extent of staff members' knowledge of innovations. Outcome of the survey was presented during the staff retreat on innovation co-facilitated by the Communication/Innovation Specialist from NYHQ.

Discussions ranged from the initial step on how to create an environment for innovation to allocation of required funds needed for the office to generate ideas/systems on how to introduce innovative changes to our work that will bring value-added contribution to the stakeholders and also improve our business processes with clear deliverables.

Suggestions are currently being collected on how to create a culture of innovation and carry it forward.

In the implementation of joint programmes, regular meetings are held with partners to identify constraints, and discuss possible solutions. IMEP 2011 was developed to ensure more realistic planning and continuous monitoring of the implementation of joint programmes with the partners.

### Strategic Risk Management

The CO's ERM risk profile and risk library serve as very helpful guides in management of risks through facilitating risk-informed decisions in all processes, ensuring that risks are identified and managed through adequate risk control mechanisms, which are put in place.

Emergency preparedness is ensured through EWEA system. In cooperation with WHO and UNFPA, the CO is engaged in strengthening emergency preparedness system and maintaining close relations with

government agencies such as Disaster Management Committee (DMC) and Oman Charitable Organisation (OCO) in providing the required humanitarian assistance. In 2011, there were no emergency situations in Oman and therefore no measures were required for operationalization of the emergency response plan. The Business Continuity Plan (BCP) is updated as and when required. Core Commitments for Children are disseminated to counterparts. Strong partnership is also maintained with Civil Defence, Royal Oman Police and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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 and tackled.

The audit observations are closed. The audit implementation and action plan is being monitored to ensure they adhere to internal risk control measures.

### Evaluation

The CO has ensured that the process for monitoring the implementation of the planned activities is in place. Outcome and recommendations of major studies/evaluations are formally presented to the Government.

An updated IMEP guides the planning and implementation of activities and evaluations in key programmes.

Though the CO does not have in-house capacity to conduct evaluations, support is provided by MENARO as and when required.

Recognizing the need to strengthen the capacities of both the CO and its partners in the areas of monitoring and evaluations as well as results based management, and in light of the ERM framework that clearly suggests that inability to adequately measure and report results has a negative impact on efficiency and effectiveness of programme interventions, a RBM training was provided to the CO staff and partners to build their capacity in this important area.

Management responses to evaluation findings are made in a timely manner.

### Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Operational procedures necessary for migration to VISION were undertaken by the CO in a timely manner. VISION role mapping has been developed and roles and responsibilities of staff members have been identified. Staff accountability in the area of VISION access and utility is defined in order to maintain absolute confidentiality and integrity of UNICEF's data and systems.

The CO is supported by the ICT HUB in MENARO, and the core business applications, mainly ProMS and Lotus Notes are accessed remotely using various IT tools such as CITRIX, VPN client and Win Term. In addition, the regional ICT HUB is also managing the overall ICT functions for the CO and On-site IT support is provided by a local service provider in Oman.

The CO has a standard Country Office ICT Infrastructure consistent with the organizational IT policy. The office has 2MB Lease Line link from Oman Telecommunication SAOG (Omantel) which is funded completely by a three years partnership agreement with Omantel. The CO'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. VOIP is effectively used for freely calling UNICEF offices.

The CO 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 pending due to complicated customs clearance formalities. The office also has BGAN Satellite terminal equipment, which can be utilized for voice and data connectivity in case of emergency.

HQ rollouts were applied on time; all servers/services have been migrated to the Windows 2008R2 HyperV Virtual server's environment, which provides better and high availability, more effective ICT management, and lowers the cost of additional server hardware. Computer hardware being used in the office is as per UNICEF's standards; meets the current requirements/specifications and configured in accordance with UNICEF standards.

### Fund Raising and Donor Relations

The GoO continues to be the primary source of programme funds in Oman. In recognition of the fact that partnerships and collaborative relationships are critical for UNICEF to deliver results for children, including the achievement of the MDGs, significant partnerships have been established for fund raising to support innovative initiatives for communication and behaviour change, for example child nutrition. A similar initiative for fund raising for youth employability interventions is underway.

Strategic partnership with the biggest telecommunication establishment in Oman (Omantel) to support the work of UNICEF in promoting the rights of children and towards increasing corporate social responsibility (CSR) culture in Oman is ongoing. The CSR workshop scheduled for 2011 had to be postponed to 2012 given the inability of the identified consultant to undertake the mission to Oman. As part of this collaboration, the CO supported participation of business and other officials in a Consultation on Children's Rights and Business Principles Initiative.

One of the major challenges the CO has faced is the absence of a full time officer in carrying out fund raising activities. However, a full time consultant who supported the CO for a period of six months made important headway in fund-raising. Despite the challenges of limited staff, the CO undertook fund raising for Horn of Africa crisis with the support of individuals and private companies. The purposes of the funds received are to enhance the living conditions of people in the Horn of Africa, with a focus on Djibouti.

Building on its success in fundraising initiatives in the past years, the CO is finalizing an advocacy and fund-raising strategy in 2012 as there is potential for fund raising with the corporate sector in Oman. The strategy aims to highlight areas of communication and advocacy amongst stakeholders who wish to partner with UNICEF and integrate their CSR programmes with local projects and activities promoting child rights, and to establish closer relations with knowledge partners. Recruitment of a national officer for C4D, which is underway, will support the CO in areas such as communication, advocacy and fund raising.

### Management of Financial and Other Assets

The CO had a total of 5 PBAs in 2011. These reflect contributions for the country programme from the GoO as the primary donor, funds from HQ for supporting equity initiatives, funding support from UNAIDS, US Funds for UNICEF and from private sector entities in Oman.

Cross-sectoral funds are critical to programme operations, as they cover salaries of programme assistant and support staff, institutional contracts and operating expenses like security, office rent, communication, etcetera. These funds significantly complement the support budget. Additionally, approval is received from the GoO for the post of National Officer for C4D to be covered from the cross-sectoral funds.

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. 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 as of end 2011. No RR funds were allotted for the CO.

At the end of 2011, Programme expenditure rate reached 80%, and SBA expenditure achieved a rate of 98%.

Resources have been efficiently committed to programme activities.

### Supply Management

The supply component of the CP including offshore and local procurement reached an estimated value of US\$40,485.00. No difficulties have so far been encountered in local procurement as local vendors have a solid and reliable marketing and procurement policy. The CO has not used in-kind supply assistance. Since Oman CP does not include service delivery, no collaboration is necessary on supply and logistics aspects. Being a high income country, government counterparts have adequate resources and supplies to deal with health needs and emergencies.

Supply related services from Supply Division were not required in the year 2011 except for purchase of cold chain equipment and Vitamin A capsules for the MoH on reimbursable procurement basis.

A new vehicle for the office was purchased through the trade-in of the old vehicle of year 2000 model.

### Human Resources

An Office Improvement Plan (OIP) is in place. The key areas included are business process efficiency, empowerment and work life balance. OIP monitoring and review mechanisms are in place. The OIP plays an important role to further build on areas of strength and make staff aware of their roles and responsibilities in the workplace. Regular programme and CMT meetings are held where roles and responsibilities are discussed.

About 71% completion rate is achieved in the office learning plan. As per the organizational requirement, focus was on VISION training and preparedness. VISION orientation was provided to all staff and participation was made mandatory. Staff are also encouraged to enhance their skills through continuous learning. Staff training plan is linked to job description and needed competencies in line with equity, upstream policy development and knowledge management. Programme as well as interested staff completed training on social policy. Emphasis was also laid on courses on equity. As part of the learning objective, it is made mandatory for programme staff to undergo PPP online training.

All HQ/RO scheduled training courses through webex were attended by relevant staff, as also TOT training held at the regional level, DROPS meeting and RMT, which included VISION orientation for Representatives.

A 2-month stretch assignment opportunity was provided to a programme assistant from Swaziland. This provided both the CO and Swaziland with an opportunity to learn from experience exchange.

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

UN Standards of Conduct, Code of Ethics and Policy on Prohibition of Harassment, Sexual Harassment & Abuse of Authority were re-distributed to staff to refresh themselves.

Security Management Team meets twice a year or as needed. Although the overall security situation in Oman continues to be peaceful and there have been no possible scenarios or applicable risks/specific threats to UN presence in Oman, UNICEF Representative in her role as the DO in Oman has advised all UN staff to remain alert to security developments in the region and be prepared at all times with adequate measures. SMT meetings have been held to take stock of the situation in Oman following demonstrations and unrest at the beginning of 2011 as well as the attack on UN compound in Nigeria. In view of the need for adequate security control, meetings have also been held with security personnel.

### Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings

As has been a standard practice of good management of funds, certain efficiency gains in resource use, costs savings and reductions were achieved and reallocated to operating costs. The CO introduced staggered working hours for drivers in order to cut back on overtime costs. Utilization of office vehicles and drivers during weekends and holidays is kept to an absolute minimum. As a result, there has been an overall reduction in operating costs.

### Changes in AMP and CPMP

Priorities for the AMP will place significant focus on equity and innovation, including innovative changes to work that will bring value-added contribution to the stakeholders and also bring improvement to business processes with clear deliverables. Measurement/assessment tools will be developed in this regard.

With an increased focus on equity and in the context of ongoing projects such as Child Well-Being Index, study on School Retention and assessment of Child Friendly Schools, UNICEF's interventions will be directed towards all Governorates especially those that are more vulnerable.

Bi-Annual Work Plans for 2012-2013 are based on prioritized interventions that are focused, add value and are in line with the priorities identified and agreed-upon in the CPD.

Through the CO's role as the chair of the UN Theme Group on HIV/AIDS for the period 2012-2013, coordination will be strengthened through the work of the UNTG. As an initial step, a 2-year work plan will be developed on UNTG's areas of focus. Among the priorities will be an assessment of the situation of HIV/AIDS.

The action plan included in the ERM risk library will be incorporated into the AMP 2012.

Table of KPIs will be revised to align with the new CP priorities. Quality control measures will be adhered through the following:

- systematic and timely monitoring of ERM risk library, including an assessment currently being conducted;
- regular monitoring of audit implementation and action plan;

- quarterly review of KPIs, status of donor reports and learning plan;
- monthly review of implementation status of both programme and support budgets

To address the organisation's relevance and added value in the context of a high-income country, and as the CO moves towards an advisory role in the new CP, there is a need to update and match staff competencies – focusing more on analytical and communication skills. Accordingly, provision of state of the art training in the various functional areas of staff job descriptions will be one of the priorities.

### Summary Notes and Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
AMR	Annual Management Review
ARM	Annual Review Meeting
AWP	Annual Work Plan
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CO	Country Office
CP	Country Programme
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability
CSG	Community Support Group
CSGV	Community Support Group Volunteers
FFL	Facts for Life
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GoO	Government of Oman HIV
HHIES	Household income and expenditure survey
IEC	Information/Education/Communication
KABP	Knowledge, Attitude, Behaviour and Practices
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude and Practices
MCH	Mother and Child Health
MD	Millennium Declaration
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MENARO	MENA Regional office
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoLA	Ministry of Legal Affairs
MoM	Ministry of Manpower
MoNE	Ministry of National Economy
MoSA	Ministry of Sports Affairs
MoSD	Ministry of Social Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OCO	Oman Charitable Organisation
OR	Other Resources
PEM	Protein Energy Malnutrition
PLWHA	People Living With HIV/AIDS
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission
RBP/RBM	Results Based Planning/Management
ROP	Royal Oman Police
RR	Regular Resources
SQU	Sultan Qaboos University
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
WFFC	World Fit for Children
WHO	World Health Organisation

### Document Centre

#### Evaluation

	Title	Sequence Number	Type of Report
1	Infant Child Feeding Strategies In Oman	2011/0001	Study
2	Study PLHIV, Young People Infected and Affected by HIV and Their Families	2011/0002	Survey
3	Mapping among Most-at-Risk-Population (MARPs) of SWs, MSM, and IDUs in Oman	2011/0003	Survey
4	Study to Enhance School Retention	2011/0004	Survey
5	Comprehensive survey on children	2011/0005	Survey
6	Analysis of Household Income and Expenditure Survey (2010-2011)	2011/0006	Survey
7	Analysis of data on Road Traffic injuries in Oman: Study and policymakers dashboard	2011/0007	Study
8	A Harmonization study on Omani Legislation and CEDAW	2011/0008	Study
9	Spending on Child Rights in the Sultanate of Oman	2011/0009	Study
10	Youth Friendly Spaces	2011/0010	Survey

#### Other Publications

	Title
1	PMTCT Guidelines

#### Lessons Learned

	Title	Document Type/Category
1	Development of an Observatory on Education, Vocational Training & Employment in Oman	Innovation

#### Programme Documents