

**COUNTRY OFFICE
ANNUAL REPORT**

2010

UNICEF LAO PDR

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1. Executive Summary

In 2010, UNICEF contributed to the emergence of a more positive environment for children's rights in Lao PDR, and particularly those of the poorest and most socially-excluded children and their families. Of particular note were:

Legislation and policies: The Inclusive Education policy endorsed by the Prime Minister. The policy aims at the 'expansion of educational opportunities to all groups of people with special focus for girls, women, ethnic groups, people with disabilities and people with socio-economic difficulties'.

Effective advocacy: UNICEF provided inputs to the Government's 7th National Social Economic Development Plan (NSED) and the National Health Sector Development Plan (NHSDP) 2011-15, which sets the overall policy framework for achieving equity in child health. For the first time, Nutrition and Child Protection are priorities in the NSED.

UNICEF – alongside other UN agencies and the National Assembly – organised Lao PDR's first ever conference on violence against women and children.

Government commitment and political will to address the issue of child malnutrition was strengthened following a UNICEF-supported assessment which revealed a poor-to-critical state of acute malnutrition among children living in nine provinces affected by floods in 2008 and 2009. In the southern province of Attapeu, 18.9 % of children aged 6 to 59 months were found to suffer from acute malnutrition. Subsequently, nutrition was included in the NSED for the first time.

Collaborative Partnerships: A new and expanded partnership with WHO, UN-Habitat and the World Bank led to the establishment of the WASH sector coordination mechanism. This will raise the profile of the WASH sector and strengthen the focus on rural remote areas in the revision of the national strategy.

Shortfalls: The impressive achievements in policy development at national level were slow to translate into concrete actions that address disparities at the sub-national level. In 2011, the launch on the Global Child Wellbeing and Disparities report aims to stimulate dialogue on equity focused approaches, and all programme components will give greater attention to the collection and use of disaggregated data to establish a baseline for the new Country Programme and to inform policy.

2. Country Situation as affecting Children and Women

UNICEF's 2010 Situation of Women and Children depicts a country on the move, facing very different development challenges from those of five years ago. Lao PDR's ambitious

economic growth model will generate much-needed revenues mainly from the exploitation of natural resources, but also entails new levels of risk, especially for vulnerable populations dependent on the same resources for their livelihoods. With a total population of 6.1 million – 45% under the age of 18 – Lao PDR has one of the youngest populations in Southeast Asia. 80% of the population live in rural areas characterised by poor infrastructure and subsistence farming. The country has 49 distinct ethnic and linguistic groups, many of whom live in remote mountainous areas.

These challenges formed the backdrop for the 10th Roundtable Meeting of Government and development partners in October, co-chaired by Ms Helen Clark, Chair of the United Nations Development Group, and H.E. Mr. Bouasone Bouphavanh, former Prime Minister of Lao PDR. The meeting confirmed the 7th NSEDP as the key mechanism for accelerating progress towards the MDGs. From UNICEF's perspective, of particular note was the inclusion – for the first time in a national strategic plan – of child protection issues and nutrition.

The meeting highlighted the fact that although Lao PDR is currently on track to achieve about half of the eight MDGs, equity issues remain a serious challenge. The MDG target on poverty will be met, but those set for nutrition and water MDGs are seriously off track. The target on primary education is unlikely to be reached due to high rates of repetition and school dropout. Despite progress towards gender parity in education, especially at primary school level, the rate of progress overall is not sufficient to reach the MDG 3 education target of parity at all levels by 2015.

There are various other national and regional issues and disparities. For example, in sanitation, although the overall MDG target will be met, 46% of the population remains without basic sanitation. MDG 4 is on track but will require continued effort to be achieved, while MDGs 5 and 7 are considered unreachable.

The 2010 Child Wellbeing and Disparities Study co-produced by UNICEF and the Government of Lao PDR brought these issues into focus. The study showed that over 50% of all Lao children experience multiple deprivations in terms of lack of adequate sanitation, health, housing, water supply and nutrition. Almost 25% experience severe deprivation in relation to water, nutrition and education. Almost 98% of children in the poorest quintile experience at least one severe deprivation and the prevalence of global acute malnutrition is 18.9%. While the average annual GDP growth rate over the last five years has been 7.2%, a large proportion of the population continue to live just above the poverty line. The report identified the most disadvantaged as: children from the poorest quintile households; those living in rural, highland and off-road areas, as well as those affected by unexploded ordinance; non-Lao Tai ethnic minority groups; and girls. Also included are children with disabilities, and those who are out-of-school, working and living on the streets, living with or affected by HIV/AIDS, orphaned, and victims of sexual exploitation and discrimination

Following consultations with national and development partners, UNICEF reported in Geneva on the implementation of child rights in Lao PDR to the 56th pre-session working

group of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The presentation covered Lao PDR's progress towards ratification of international instruments, legislation and national policies, data collection, allocation of resources and other issues. In response to the Government of Lao PDR's second report to the CRC Committee in 2008, the Committee had asked for additional information on a number of issues including: the implementation of the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Children; the results of efforts to combat trafficking and all forms of abuse; and data on children who are affected by HIV, in conflict with the law, and victims of trafficking, abuse and neglect. The CEDAW Committee's 2009 concluding observations noted a need for accelerated efforts to address issues related to gender. The Lao delegation will present to the CRC Committee in January 2011.

3. Country Programme Analysis and Results

3.1 Country Programme Analytical Overview

3.1.1 Capacity Development

Based on the 2009 Thematic Study on Capacity Development, the office engaged in a strategic discussion of the issue in 2010. The focus moved beyond issue-based and individual training to more systematic, harmonized approaches in line with the Vientiane Declaration Action Plan, with an emphasis on strengthening national ownership, institutional capacity and policy level impact. These discussions influenced the annual work plans for 2011 – with priority placed on conducting assessments of institutional capacity to support more evidence-based approaches and the establishment of baselines for the new Country Programme.

Examples of key results in programme components include:

Directors, teachers and Village Education Development Committees from 1,687 primary schools gained increased knowledge and skills, and the ability to implement a holistic child-friendly approach benefiting more than 295,000 schoolchildren.

UNICEF is providing ongoing technical support to the Ministry of Health to strengthen its capacity to design, lead and evaluate effective Communication for Development (C4D) programmes nationwide. This is part of a longer-term strategy to reinforce C4D capacity in government and among partners, and to ensure greater effectiveness of multiple behaviour change interventions undertaken within the Government of Laos PDR's package of interventions for mother and child health.

With support from UNICEF, 36 Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare officials completed an academic, competency-based course on social work provided by the National University of Laos.

The inter-agency Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) task force met throughout the year to address the outcomes of micro-assessments of implementing partners conducted in 2009. As a result, a professional training company was contracted to provide financial management skills training to the staff of counterparts who manage UN funds.

3.1.2 Effective advocacy by UNICEF in 2010

- 1) The UNICEF-supported Child Well-being and Disparities Study (2010) helped focus attention on child poverty in Lao PDR. A technical review workshop examined the multi-dimensional aspects of child poverty and disparities, and the 7th National Social Economic Development Plan (2011-2015) subsequently included a greater focus on child and social protection.
- 2) Government commitment and political will to address the issue of child malnutrition was strengthened following a UNICEF-supported assessment which revealed a poor-to-critical state of acute malnutrition among children living in nine provinces affected by floods. Subsequently, nutrition was included in the 7th NSEDP for the first time.
- 3) Advocacy by UNICEF on water and sanitation coverage issues marked a significant step forward when the Government of Lao PDR accepted the significance of the UNICEF-WHO Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP), and later incorporated the JMP figures in its 7th NSEDP as reference for 2015 targets
- 4) In partnership with the National Assembly, UNICEF supported the first regional conference on gender-based violence against women and children to be held in Lao, bringing the attention of policymakers to a highly sensitive issue.
- 5) UNICEF won the backing of the Ministry of Information and Culture to organise a One Minute Junior video production workshop for young people. Fifteen Lao youngsters took part in the workshop – the first of its kind to be held in the country – and their films were screened at the Luangprabang Film Festival. Ways of building on this will be explored in 2011.
- 6) UNICEF contributed significantly to the technical review of the Lao HIV/AIDS Law and the HIV/AIDS Policy. Use of evidence-based assessments and the documentation of innovative pilots – supported by UNICEF – provided the credibility to ensure that Prevention of Parent to Child Transmission (PPTCT), the needs of Most At Risk Adolescents, Most At Risk Young People, the strengthening of the treatment to care continuum and the involvement of PLHIV (including children) were explicitly referred to in the new National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS, STI 2011-2015.

3.1.3 Strategic Partnerships

The office actively sought new and strengthened existing partnerships during 2010 in particular with the Ministry of Planning and Investment, Department of Statistics, and the

National Economic and Research Institution. It also explored the opportunity for more strategic partnerships with NGOs, particularly in addressing equity.

Notable partnerships include:

Child Protection: In a strategic partnership with the Lao Disabled People's Association, one of the few local associations in the country, disability rights and awareness, inclusive education policy and promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities were accelerated in provinces among primary and secondary school students and child protection network members.

Education: As a co-chair of the Education Sector Working Group and Fast Track Initiative Coordinating Agency, UNICEF played a critical role in developing a successful Fast Track Initiative funding application, submitted in March. A key component of the \$30 million programme is scaling up the Schools of Quality model developed over the past five years with UNICEF support in districts with a high gender gap in primary education.

Nutrition: UNICEF's collaboration with the REACH initiative is now in its third year. Lao PDR is one of two countries piloting this solution-focused approach to child under-nutrition which puts UNICEF in partnership with the Government of Lao PDR, UN agencies, civil society, donors and the private sector, and helps ensure that implementation of the national Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health (MNCH) core package and the national plan of action on nutrition are coordinated and that resources are mobilized.

C4D: As the lead agency supporting communication interventions and linkages between communities and the health sector on MNCH issues, UNICEF plays a leading role in coordinating related efforts with Government and international organizations. This support includes the facilitation of a working group comprised of representatives from government agencies, mass organisations, international and national NGOs and the private sector.

Water and sanitation: The UNICEF-supported WASH Technical Working Group (TWG) has been accepted as a forum for technical guidance in the country. In addition, the WASH TWG developed an Inter-Agency Contingency Plan to respond to emergencies and support capacity development for Disaster Risk Reduction.

3.1.4 Knowledge management

Key results in knowledge management in 2010:

Water and sanitation

In 2010, four sectors were completed as part of the National Strategy development process. The assessments will inform the 2011 work plan and the new Country Programme. A comprehensive Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice study was conducted in districts where UNICEF has been supporting service delivery and hygiene education over the last six years.

An evaluation of the “Blue Box” Participatory Tool Kit for Hygiene Promotion among schoolchildren was conducted. Analysis of Education Management Information System EMIS continued in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MoE).

Child Protection

A Child Protection in Emergencies workshop was conducted for members of the Protection Cluster. Government and non-government partners nationwide participated.

A UNICEF-supported training module used to train staff of the Lao Women’s Union in the provision of counseling to victims of abuse and exploitation underwent an assessment, resulting in recommendations for the modification of the module, and the formulation of ways to determine the suitability of targeted participants.

In the sector of Risk Education, two strategic assessments were conducted: with the National Regulatory Authority to provide recommendations for a new mine risk education (MRE) strategic plan, and; to assess the impact of UXO LAO Community Awareness teams with findings and recommendations to improve future interventions.

HIV/AIDS

UNICEF support strengthened the technical leadership and capacity of Lao professionals, creating a cadre of change agents to promote and implement the linked prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV (PMTCT) approach in-country, and to contribute meaningfully to the development of a national strategy for the virtual elimination of pediatric AIDS by 2015/20.

Education

A case study, ‘Schools of Quality: Rights-based Education Reform in the Lao PDR’, documenting the successful child-friendly schools pilot-to-policy story was produced with the support of UNICEF in New York.

M and E

In 2010 the office hosted a workshop on knowledge management to promote a more strategic and intentional approach. This included a review of the context and management of the Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (IMEP).

3.1.5 C4D Communication for Development

C4D plays a critical role in the office’s efforts to reach target populations, especially those in rural areas with high ethnic and linguistic diversity. In 2010, a variety of interventions were employed, focussed on interpersonal communication backed by traditional media.

Health and Nutrition

UNICEF is the lead agency supporting communication interventions and linkages between communities and the health sector on MNCH. This includes overseeing a communication working group of Government and international partners which coordinates initiatives aimed at improving an entire package of related services.

In 2010, UNICEF contributed to the establishment of a computer inventory system of health-related information, education and communication (IEC) materials and interventions. This strengthens monitoring efforts through mapping of interventions and material distributions and provides a central monitoring repository. The initiative will be strengthened in 2011.

In connection with its past work on Emerging Infectious Diseases, UNICEF supported the continued dissemination of H1N1 information in conjunction with Government vaccine deployment. A related small-scale survey was also conducted mid-year.

Child Protection

A survey with Save the Children helped to highlight existing beliefs and practices in violence against children and the disciplining of children at home. This led to the development of gender-sensitive messages on positive discipline.

Community consultations

In 2010, UNICEF began shifting its behaviour change support towards a model that creates stronger ownership and empowerment among rights holders and local authorities. An adapted version of the UNFPA model of Participatory Community Assessment (PCA) will be used to conduct assessments addressing maternal health, child feeding, improved water and sanitation in targeted communities in 2011.

3.1.6 Human rights-based approach to cooperation

Support to the Government of Lao PDR in implementing a human-rights based approach (HRBAP) to development remains the core of the Country Programme. In 2010 UNICEF applied the HRBAP to the Round Table process with the Government; the development of the Government of Lao PDR; the UN Strategic Priority Results; and the draft UNDAF framework and joint action plan. This ensured that HRBAP will be at the core of the new Country Programme.

Other noteworthy examples of how the HRBAP was applied include:

UNICEF continues to support the MoE in putting into operation the rights-based Schools of Quality (SoQ) approach, which promotes inclusion, participation and decision making. This includes child-seeking activities that encourage all children to enrol and stay in school, while the teaching and learning process helps children make choices and take decisions. Capacity development for education officials, community members, school directors and teachers has

resulted in increased knowledge of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the skills needed to promote the rights and responsibilities of duty bearers and rights holders.

Community-based child protection networks (CPNs) have been included in the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW) Master Plan and Decree on Social Welfare. Minimum Standards for CPNs, including the requirement for sessions on the CRC, are complete and awaiting approval. This marks an important step towards a stronger system of protection. CPNs now function in 244 villages in five provinces, building communities' capacities to identify vulnerable children and victims of abuse, exploitation and violence and refer them to appropriate services.

The development of the framework for justice for children including access to justice was completed in 2010; a crucial step towards ensuring that children are better protected by the justice system. The framework includes: development of child specific legislation; establishment of child rights institutions; capacity development and community-based support; and the establishment of alternatives to deprivation of liberty. Meanwhile, a Law on Juvenile Procedures, establishing standards and norms on child friendly procedures within the justice system, is being drafted by the People's Supreme Court.

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3.1.7 Gender Equality and mainstreaming

UNICEF commissioned a Gender Assessment of the current Country Programme to assist in addressing gender mainstreaming more effectively in the next Country Programme. As part of the Assessment, all Annual Work Plans were reviewed through a gender lens and revised in order to improve the performance, monitoring and accountability of gender results across the programme. Recommendations for strengthening the institutional response on gender have also been incorporated into the development of the new Country Programme Management Plan.

UNICEF contributed to the gender-related work of the UNCT, providing strategic inputs into the development of key policy documents, including the 7th National Socio-Economic Development Plan and the Government's framework for accelerating progress towards the MDGs, which sets out innovative solutions for reaching the unreached, particularly vulnerable women from remote ethnic communities. In line with CEDAW commitments, UNICEF and other UN agencies supported the National Assembly in organising Lao PDR's first conference on violence against women and children.

The analytical work conducted, such as the Child Well-Being and Disparities Study, helped maintain a strong focus on sex-disaggregated data and the intersection of gender inequality with overlapping multi-dimensional aspects of disadvantage.

Two programme component examples are:

In Education:

UNICEF is giving support to the MoE in the development of a National Policy on Inclusive Education, with special focus on girls, women, ethnic groups, people with disabilities and people with socio-economic difficulties. At the implementation level, gender responsiveness is one of the six SoQ dimensions, ensuring among other things: the construction of separate sanitary facilities for girls and boys; the inclusion of gender awareness during training workshops for school directors, teachers and community members; and the gender disaggregation of all SoQ school statistics. The SoQ approach is being scaled up through the FTI programme, specifically targeting districts where girls are most educationally disadvantaged.

In Child Protection:

A multi sector workshop on mainstreaming gender in Mine Action with a focus on Mine Risk Education activities was held following a Gender Review conducted by the National Regulatory Authority for UXO.

3.1.8 Environmental sustainability

Lao PDR's vulnerability to the impact of climate change was underlined by two severe flooding emergencies in 2008 and 2009. These incidents – the worst in 30 years – alerted the Government and its partners to the need to improve structured mitigation and risk reduction efforts around the country. UNICEF's response included:

1) The WASH programme now incorporates a comprehensive project on Community Based Disaster Preparedness in its regular work plan. In 2010, the project provided skills to master trainers from government at central and district level and about 100 village volunteers. Ten villages have developed their own disaster mitigation plans and equipped themselves with necessary tools.

2) In response to evidence of longer dry seasons being experienced in parts of the country, UNICEF is seeking donor support to help communities scale up the practice of household rainwater harvesting. Rainwater harvesting models have been imported from Cambodia and Thailand.

3.2 Report on the Progress and Results in Country Programme of Cooperation

3.2.1 Young Child Survival and Development

Purpose of the Programme Component and the main results planned for 2010

The Young Child Survival and Development (YCSD) programme aims to improve equity, efficiency and quality in child and maternal health services, contributing to the following results by 2011: (1) development and application of health policy standards and guidelines nationwide to ensure provision of a quality, effective core package of Mother and Child Health and Nutrition services; (2) building of an effective and sustainable nationwide Expanded Programme on Immunization Plus; (3) development and implementation of national nutrition strategies and policies to improve the nutrition and food security status of women and young children; (4) achievement of Universal Salt Iodisation and Iodine Deficiency Disorder elimination; and (5) enhanced capacity for emergency preparedness and response. The programme contributes to the achievement of: UNDAF Outcome 2 (increased equitable access to, and utilization of, quality and prioritized social services); CP Outcome 2.1 (increased and equitable access to quality basic health services); and MDGs 1, 2, 4 and 5. There are three project components: Child Survival Interventions; Improved Nutrition of Women and Young Children; and Community Action for Early Childhood Development. The main partners are: the Ministry of Health at central, provincial and district level; the Ministry of Industry and Commerce; Lao Salt producers; the Ministry of Education; Lao Women's Union; WHO, UNFPA and other partners in the Health Sector Working Group; INGOs such as Health Unlimited and World Vision; and academia and research institutions (National Institute of Public Health; Institut de Francophonie for tropical Medicine).

Resources used:

Total approved for 2010 as per CPD: RR US\$490,000; OR US\$3,303,660; Total: US\$3,793,660

Total available for 2010 from all sources: RR US\$460,859; OR US\$2,177,303; Total: US\$2,638,162

List of donors:

- Thematic Fund, Canada, Finnish Committee for UNICEF
- CIDA/HAND
- Luxembourg Committee for UNICEF
- Japan Committee for UNICEF
- United States Fund for UNICEF
- Donor Pooled Fund (mixed donors)
- The GAVI Fund
- Luxembourg
- Slovak Committee for UNICEF
- Switzerland c/o Swiss Agency for Development
- Italy
- UNOCHA UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

In 2010, the YCSD programme continued its upstream work with health stakeholders to support and provide input to the Government in the development of the 7th NSEDP and the National Health Sector Development Plan (NHSDP) 2011-15. These strategic frameworks are designed around universal access to maternal, neonatal and child health care, and skilled care at birth with a clear equity perspective. Following advocacy by UNICEF and other development partners, nutrition was included in the 7th NSEDP for the first time.

The YCSD programme focused its downstream work in partnership with WHO, UNFPA, REACH, WFP, JICA, the World Bank and INGOs to accelerate the implementation of the National Strategy and Planning Framework for the Integrated Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Services 2010-2015 and the National Plan of Action on Nutrition (NPAN) 2010-2015.

Extensive efforts were devoted to developing the capacity of health staff responsible for implementation of the MNCH core package, Skilled Birth Attendants development plan and NPAN. Provincial and district staff in four provinces (Luangprabang, Luang Namtha, Savannaket, Oudomxay) were oriented on the MNCH core package. Twenty health centre staff from poor and hard to reach areas became community midwives. Health staff and communities have developed their capacity to manage and provide appropriate care for malnourished children by using Ready to Use Therapeutic Feeding.

To address the needs of the most vulnerable people, 2,000 village volunteers (mainly women from 875 remote poor villages) have developed their capacity on the proper home care of children under five with diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections, child feeding and community-based monitoring. Forty provincial and district health staff developed their skills in management of acute malnutrition. Continuing UNICEF's longstanding support towards universal salt iodization, 26 members of the Lao Salt Producer Group and provincial

government officials were oriented on the new guideline on the Potassium Iodide Revolving Fund.

In addition to routine immunization, the second and third rounds of a national tetanus toxoid (TT) campaign were successfully conducted, targeting more than 806,000 child bearing aged women in 99 high risk districts. A coverage of 86% coverage was achieved. Nationwide distribution of Vitamin A and Mebendazol for children aged under five continued in 2010, reaching 83% of children for the first round. Micronutrient powder (Sprinkles) supplementation was scaled up from four pilot districts to 20 districts in 2010, with the aim of reaching more than 20,000 children aged 6-23 months. Integrated maternal and child health services were provided to children and women living in poor, remote and hard to reach areas in 14 poor districts of five provinces, covering more than 800 villages in order to close the gap and address disparities. UNICEF has provided 500 newborn resuscitators to equip health centres in 14 of the 17 provinces.

UNICEF leads the nutrition cluster, and played a key role in responding to the alarming levels of malnutrition among children under five that emerged from an assessment of provinces most affected by severe flooding in 2008 and 2009. UNICEF, UN agencies and INGOs worked in partnership to introduce community-based integrated management of acute malnutrition (CBIM) to five districts of Attapeu province, where the highest malnutrition rates were recorded. Meanwhile, an ongoing campaign to promote exclusive breastfeeding underwent a second phase (see C4D section).

Constraints affecting performance have included the shortage of human resources and weak management, which remain critical factors affecting the delivery of health services in Lao PDR. There is also a need for better coordination among key partners supporting key MNCH core package and nutrition interventions, and health data quality and management for decision-making at different levels remain major concerns for the equitable delivery of programme services.

The future work plan for the section includes: support to develop an integrated provincial health development plan in one target province; continuing support to improve access to immunization and integrated MNCH services for children and women at health centres and through outreach visits to remote villages; a measles follow up campaign; an independent Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) survey of the exclusive breastfeeding campaign and capacity development for communities; continued empowerment of communities in child feeding and care in the context of Early Childhood Development; and scaling up of community based integrated management of acute malnutrition to cover four provinces.

3.2.2 WASH

Purpose of the Programme Component and the main results planned for 2010

The WASH programme targets the achievement of children's rights to survival and development through increased equitable and sustainable access to, and use of, safe water and basic sanitation services together with improved hygiene. The WASH programme contributes to the achievement of: the NSEDP priorities for rural water supply and environmental health; Millennium Development Goal 7 Target 10; UNDAF Outcome 2 (increased and more equitable access to, and utilisation of, quality and prioritized social services); and CP Outcomes 2.1 and 2.2.

The WASH programme consists of three projects: *Planning and Monitoring for WASH*; *WASH in Rural Communities*; and *WASH in Schools*. The programme focuses on: policy, standards and guideline development; promotion of household, school and community sanitation and hygiene practices; construction of water supply and sanitation facilities in schools and communities; and water quality and emergency preparedness and response. The programme's key implementing partner is the Ministry of Health's National Centre for Environmental Health and Rural Water Supply ('*Nam Saat*'). Other partners are the Teacher Training Department and Primary & Pre-school Departments of the Ministry of Education, Lao Youth Union, the Ministry of Information and Culture, WHO, the World Bank – WSP, UN-Habitat and international NGOs.

Resources used:

Total approved for 2010 as per CPD: RR US\$100,000; OR US\$1,617,960; Total: US\$1,717,960

Total available for 2010 from all sources: RR US\$96,910; OR US\$1,210,990; Total: US\$1,307,900

Special allocations:

- Global Thematic Fund
- UNOCHA
- USAID

List of donors:

- Japan Committee for UNICEF
- New Zealand Committee for UNICEF
- Finnish Committee for UNICEF
- Korean Committee for UNICEF
- Luxembourg Committee for UNICEF
- AusAID

In 2010, the WASH programme contributed directly to service delivery, capacity building and policy reforms in support of the Government of Lao PDR. In addition to financial resources, UNICEF has provided strategic technical assistance to government and key sector stakeholders to revise the National Strategy for Rural Water Supply and Environmental Health. UNICEF succeeded in building a consensus among stakeholders over the key sectoral needs required for the attainment of MDG targets, which are now integrated within the 7th

NSEDP. This has ensured that water and sanitation have become central components of the national development agenda, while also establishing the critical nature of water and sanitation in reducing maternal and child mortality and improving nutrition rates as part of the MNCH core package.

WASH in Communities benefited some 43,448 individuals in seven target provinces. In 42 villages, 580 family latrines, 80 boreholes with hand pumps and 18 new gravity-fed systems were completed in 2010. Increased effort was made to improve WASH service delivery with emphasis on flexible supply procedure for bidding through the Government. In addition, UNICEF continued to build strategic partnerships, notably with World Bank-WSP, Plan International and Concern World Wide to support the piloting of Community Led Total Sanitation.

WASH in schools has provided improved water and sanitation facilities to some 12,132 children (including 5,891 girls) in 56 primary schools in seven provinces. WASH construction included 56 new school latrine blocks (with separate latrine facilities for girls and boys) and 33 boreholes with hand pumps. Nearly 400 school teachers were trained in hygiene education in 2010. The evaluation of the “Blue Box” hygiene participatory toolkit will help create a better understanding of the implementation of hygiene education in schools. Increased efforts were made to raise the profile of WASH in schools with the Government and partners through the sharing of analysis of data on WASH coverage in schools. The KAP study undertaken in 2010 is contributing to a greater understanding of WASH behaviour in rural communities.

2010 saw the completion of the emergency response to the 2009 Ketsana typhoon in three southern provinces. In addition to the rehabilitation of affected water and sanitation facilities in villages and primary schools, the relief and recovery phases were supported with the supply of soap, water containers, plastic buckets, chlorine and IEC materials. With the financial support of USAID/OFDA and UNOCHA, six gravity water systems, 88 new boreholes with hand pumps, two overhead water towers, 20 school latrines, and 750 household latrines were completed. Moreover, 100,000 bars of soap, 5,000 plastic buckets, 10,000 water containers, 500 Participatory Tool Kits on Hygiene Education (Blue Box) and 2 million chlorine tablets were distributed in typhoon-hit villages. In order to build capacity for resilience to disasters, one village from each emergency province was selected for Community Based Disaster Preparedness training. A group of master trainers, trained in 2008, facilitated the process.

In 2011, the focus will be to support the transition to the new Country Programme, notably through: supporting the integration of equity as a guiding principle in the National Strategy for Rural Water Supply and Environmental Health; learning from best practices; design and development of new communication tools; and the development of new tools for community approaches to total sanitation and the consequent reduction in subsidy.

3.2.3 Basic Education & Gender Equality

The Basic Education & Gender Equality (BEGE) programme aims to contribute to achieving quality basic education for all through the following results: enhanced capacity for education sector reform and harmonization between donors and government, contributing to improved policies and strategies, especially for girls and children from disadvantaged communities; learner friendly environments in primary schools, contributing to increased efficiency and reduced disparity in primary education in UNICEF-supported provinces; and early learning standards developed and implemented in at least 80% of all UNICEF-supported schools with pre-primary facilities.

Resources used:

Total approved for 2010 as per CPD: RR US\$420,000; OR US\$2,896,000; Total: US\$3,316,000

Total available for 2010 from all sources: RR US\$406,390; OR US\$3,797,574; Total: US\$4,203,964

Special allocations:

- Global - Girls Education (Thematic);
- Basic Education and Gender Equality Thematic
- UNOCHA
- Global - Thematic Humanitarian

List of donors:

- Japan Committee for UNICEF
- Australia through AusAID
- Finish Committee for UNICEF
- SIDA - Sweden;
- United States Fund for UNICEF

Results at the policy level show substantial progress has been made towards developing key policies and strategies and contribute to improving education outcomes for all. The Education Sector Working Group (ESWG), chaired by the MoE and co-chaired by UNICEF and Australia, has been the key vehicle for policy dialogue with development partners. As the co-chair providing Secretariat support to the ESWG and as Coordinating Agency of the Fast Track Initiative (FTI), UNICEF has played a critical role in developing a successful FTI funding application, submitted in March 2010. A key component of the \$30 million programme to improve access and quality in districts with a high gender gap in primary education is scaling up a Schools of Quality ('SoQ', or 'Child-friendly Schools') model developed over the past five years with UNICEF support. Two other initiatives, supported largely by UNICEF, include the endorsement of the Inclusive Education policy by the Prime

Minister and the development of the first draft of the Plan of Action. A Ministerial Decree issued in April mandated the implementation of SoQ in all primary schools.

At the implementation level, UNICEF continued support to MoE to operationalise the SoQ approach to include the excluded, especially girls. In 2006, there were three UNICEF-supported pilot schools, and in 2010 there were 1,687 SoQ. As a result of UNICEF-supported interventions, 295,225 schoolchildren (including 132,851 girls) are learning more effectively and benefiting from the increased knowledge and ability of 1,249 school directors, 344 pre-primary and 6,306 primary teachers, and 12,354 Village Education Development Committee members to implement a child-friendly schools approach. Support has been provided to MoE to pilot SoQ in 12 secondary schools and to pilot community-based early childhood school readiness groups in remote areas. The first phase of an MoE initiative to develop a Lao EduInfo database to improve disaggregated monitoring and planning at district level was carried out in collaboration with DevInfo.

One critical constraint has been the delay by the MoE in submitting the final version of the ECD Holistic Policy to the Government, delaying the development of the ECD Strategy and Plan of Action. One lesson learned is that successful implementation of the SoQ holistic approach requires multi-sectoral coordination within MoE and a programmatic rather than project approach. This was clearly demonstrated while developing the SoQ training modules on topics such as health, hygiene, HIV/AIDS, inclusive education, gender, positive discipline and multi-grade teaching.

Data was collected for the second of a three-year cohort study to assess the impact on learning achievement in grades one and two of children who attended pre-primary classes. The study will be used for evidence-based advocacy to increase funding for pre-school education and to encourage parents to send their children to school-readiness programmes. A case study, 'Schools of Quality: Rights-based Education Reform in Lao PDR', was written, with an account of how child-friendly schools evolved from pilot to policy in five years.

Key strategic partnerships include MoE, development partners in the ESWG, particularly Australia, the World Bank and Save the Children. Close interagency collaboration continued with the World Food Programme through the implementation of SoQ in three northern provinces, and with UNESCO in the development of the Inclusive Education policy.

Emergency response included support for rehabilitating 36 flood-affected primary schools. Frontline Responders training of trainers for government officials from 13 provinces and training of district officials in one province was supported by UNICEF and Save the Children and resulted in increased skills in disaster preparedness.

Main actions planned for 2011 will focus on continuing support for ESWG coordination functions. These will enable MoE to meet Vientiane Declaration Aid Effectiveness commitments and develop Plans of Action for the Inclusive Education and Holistic Early Childhood Development policies. Support will also continue to implement SoQ in

disadvantaged primary schools, pilot the approach in 12 secondary schools and pilot early childhood community school-readiness groups in remote communities. The second phase of an MoE initiative to develop a Lao EduInfo database to improve disaggregated monitoring and planning at district level will be carried out in collaboration with DevInfo. Disaster preparedness training at the provincial and district level will continue and revising pre-service teaching and learning materials to address the needs of disadvantaged children will begin.

3.2.4 Child Protection

Purpose of the Programme Component and the main results planned for 2010

The Child Protection Programme supports the Government in building protective environments, with a focus on the most vulnerable and at-risk, by developing a legislative framework, establishing mechanisms within a system of child protection at all levels, enhancing participation, developing capacity and expanding partnerships. The programme contributes to the achievement of MDGs 1, 6 and 8 and UNDAF outcomes.

The main partners are: Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW); Ministry of Justice (MoJ); People's Supreme Prosecutor (PSP); People's Supreme Court (PSC); Ministry of Public Security (MoPS); Lao Women Union (LWU); National Regulatory Authority (NRA) for UXO; Lao National Tourism Administration (LNTA); National University of Laos (NUOL); UN agencies such as UNDP, UNODC, United Nations Inter-Agency Project (UNIAP); NGOs such as Friends International, Afesip and Handicap International Belgium; and there is strong collaboration with Save the Children, World Vision International, Plan International and a local association, the Lao Disabled People's Association.

Resources used:

Total approved for 2010 as per CPD: RR US\$175,000; OR US\$1,427,495; Total: US\$1,602,495

Total available for 2010 from all sources: RR US\$175,000; OR US\$1,157,227; Total: US\$1,332,227

Special allocations:

- Global Thematic Funds
- UNOCHA UN Office for the Coordination of (EMG: CERF)
- Global - Thematic Humanitarian Resp THEMATIC FUND (EMG)

List of donors:

- SIDA – Sweden
- Finnish Committee for UNICEF
- Japan Committee for UNICEF
- Belgian Committee for UNICEF
- Swiss Committee for UNICEF

Based on the recommendations of the 2009 Mid-Term Review and the integration of child protection in the draft 7th NSEDP, the programme accelerated implementation in the areas of policy, advocacy and legislation.

UNICEF supported the MoJ in developing a comprehensive Framework on Justice for Children to ensure that child offenders, victims and witnesses are systematically integrated in the broader judicial reform and access a fair, transparent and child sensitive justice system. Training in 39 zonal offices is ongoing as police academies and justice training centres integrate child friendly procedures into the curriculum. Meanwhile, 300 members of Village Mediation Units (VMUs) in five provinces now apply guidelines on the mediation of cases involving children. While data is limited, government reports show that 90% of cases involving children are still resolved at the VMU level. A reporting and monitoring mechanism on justice for children still awaits formal approval from concerned ministries. Situation assessments in 12 provinces were conducted in developing the Law on Juvenile Justice Procedures.

An assessment of UNICEF-supported training in counselling for victims of exploitation and abuse given to LWU staff showed that the counselling skills learned are limited to the provision of legal assistance and giving advice to women prior to entering into a mediation process. However, the assessment showed that this service gives women and children a sense of security and protection. Building on this activity, UNICEF collaborated with the French Red Cross in training 95 women to develop their capacity to give psychosocial support to victims of emergencies.

Community-based child protection networks (CPNs) continue to gain traction with their inclusion in the MoLSW Master Plan and Decree on Social Welfare. Minimum Standards for CPNs are complete and awaiting approval. Some 244 CPNs now function in five provinces, building on the capacities of community actors to identify vulnerable children and refer them to appropriate services. Awareness raising and capacity development on child protection in emergencies, disability rights and Inclusive Education Policy were also conducted. With support from UNICEF, 36 MoLSW officials completed an academic, competency-based course on social work provided by the National University of Laos.

In November, the Government of Lao PDR hosted the First Meeting of States Parties to the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions. A side-event to this large meeting saw the screening of a UNICEF-supported UXO risk education film, *Surviving the Bombs: Children's Stories from Laos*. UNICEF continues to support the Government's National Regulatory Authority in Mine Risk Education (MRE) in partnership with Handicap International Belgium (HIB). These behaviour change initiatives reached 8,000 people, while a multi sector workshop on mainstreaming gender in mine action was held as follow up to a Gender Review. Two strategic assessments on risk education provided recommendations for a new MRE strategic plan and improved impact of UXO LAO Community Awareness. HIB carried out roving activities and destroyed over 400 UXO items. UNICEF Sri Lanka and its partners visited two UXO affected provinces to learn about the UXO situation in the country and best practices in MRE.

Partnerships with Friends International and Afesip provided services to vulnerable children and reached more than 1,000 children (42% of them girls) with medical services and counselling, and reintegration to families, and schools and alternative care. Guidelines on the Protection of Victims of Trafficking have been finalized and are awaiting approval by the Government. Ongoing collaboration with UNICEF China is progressing as both governments agreed to follow-up talks on a memorandum of understanding to protect children and women from cross-border trafficking.

The constraints affecting performance have been: limitations in data collection and monitoring; difficult coordination of mechanisms for building new partnerships in child protection; quality assurance of training and workshops; and the constant rotation/re-assignment of government partners.

The future workplan of the section includes: the facilitation of capacity and partnership assessment of the MoLSW as part of efforts to develop a comprehensive child protection system; initiating the development of a child protection policy; a complete internal migration and CSEC studies to inform policy makers and legislation; leading an assessment of birth registration and guidelines for inter-country adoption; and expanding partnerships with academia and NGOs through the Child Protection Work Group.

3.2.5 HIV/AIDS

Purpose of the Programme Component and the main results planned for 2010

The HIV/AIDS and Children Programme aims to help halt, and begin to reverse, the spread of HIV/AIDS among children, and to mitigate its impact on women, children and young people. The programme specifically targets 11 provinces identified by the National Strategic and Action Plan on HIV/AIDS/STI 2006-2010 as key priorities. Key results for 2010 include: the MoE equipped to implement, monitor and integrate the Reproductive Health, HIV/AIDS, STI and Drug curriculum into the secondary school curriculum; an evidence based assessment of Most At Risk Adolescents (MARA) and Especially Vulnerable Adolescents (EVA) conducted; an enabling policy and programming environment put in place for the integration of PMTCT into MCH services to support the Strategic Framework for the Integrated Package of Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Services; workplaces targeted to establish workplace plans on HIV/AIDS; 60 children received timely and consistent access to ARV and treatment delivered by healthcare professionals equipped to provide HIV paediatric treatment, care and support; and ‘A Framework of Action for Children Affected by AIDS’ finalized, approved and integrated into the National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS 2011-2015.

Resources used:

Total approved for 2010 as per CPD: RR US\$220,000; OR US\$1,060,000; Total: US\$1,280,000

Total available for 2010 from all sources: RR US\$235,041; OR US\$351,411; Total: US\$586,452

List of donors:

- SIDA-Sweden
- Australian National Committee for UNICEF
- Japan Committee for UNICEF
- United States Fund for UNICEF
- Luxembourg

UNICEF, with the Government, has played a key role in setting key strategic priorities in the new NSAP for HIV/AIDS, STI 2011-2015 for MARA, PPTCT and treatment to care continuums.

UNICEF assessed the impact of the Reproductive Health, HIV/AIDS/STI and Drug curriculum among secondary school students to support the adoption and implementation of the curriculum by the MoE. The assessment showed a marginal impact by the curriculum on students' knowledge and attitudes. In addition, a Buddhist monk-led curriculum used to strengthen life and resiliency skills among adolescents in and out of school was tested in four target provinces.

UNICEF, with the Joint UN Team on AIDS and key strategic Government partnerships, initiated the first assessment of MARA/MARYP to HIV infection in Lao PDR. The study provided evidence and clear recommendations to the NSAP on HIV/AIDS, STI 2011-2015 to meet the needs of MARYP.

Support, with UNFPA, to the country's only national toll-free gender sensitive Hotline ensured that adolescents and young people had access to gender sensitive reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, STI and drug information with referrals to youth friendly services. In 2010, the hotline received 26,018 calls (15,118 of them from females); up from 18,287 calls in 2009. This year, counsellors and youth volunteers were equipped with the knowledge and skills to respond and make relevant referrals to concerns raised about violence, sexual exploitation and trafficking.

As host to the 8th Meeting of the Asia Pacific UN Task Force for PPTCT of HIV, the Government affirmed its commitment to scaling up integrated MCH /ANC services to deliver PPTCT to more women and men, including those most at risk and vulnerable to HIV infection. It also committed itself to move towards the virtual elimination of Paediatric AIDS targets by 2015. UNICEF's support to pilot initiatives in five target provinces ensured that 26,689 pregnant women and 10,623 husbands were sensitized to HIV/AIDS and Voluntary and Confidential Counselling and Testing (VCCT). Lessons learned informed a review of the country's VCCT protocol from MCH/ANC Clinics to ARV treatment sites, and the development of a draft national curriculum for healthcare professionals.

UNICEF continues to take the lead on community care and support activities, especially for Children Affected By AIDS, and the Framework of Action for Children Affected by AIDS (2009). This directly influenced the development of the treatment, care and support strategies outlined in the new NSAP on HIV/AIDS, STI (2011-2015).

Peer-led self support groups for CABA have been established in three provinces, with a membership of 82 children (55 girls) that meet quarterly. A first for Lao PDR, the self-support groups, while still in their infancy, are already illustrating the importance of strengthening the psycho-social support and networks of children affected by AIDS, by giving them an opportunity to advocate for their rights, speak out against stigma and discrimination and promote positive HIV prevention. In addition, the support to equip HIV-positive Peer Counsellors at antiretroviral (ARV) treatment sites to provide quality care to children and adolescents living with HIV has directly improved the quality of care that they have received.

Through referrals by self-help groups and other informal means, 113 (69 girls) living with HIV (75% of the total nationally requiring ARV), and 15 HIV-positive pregnant women received a financial stipend to access treatment at ARV sites. Some 209 children (including 117 girls) affected by AIDS received school grants in six target provinces, and 40 families affected by AIDS received an emergency relief fund to mitigate the impact of AIDS. Community initiatives led by Buddhist monks complemented this support by engaging communities in discussions addressing the issue of stigma and discrimination.

Constraints faced by the programme include the fact that, while national commitment to meet MDG 6 is evident, programme planning and implementation continue to be hampered by stigma, discrimination, and the lack of disaggregated data and a proactive multi-stakeholder response.

The future workplan of the section includes: supporting the MoE to adopt the life skills-based teaching strategy drafted in 2010; mapping services for children to ensure relevant referral to services; developing a National Implementation Plan for a Linked Approach to PPTCT; strengthening linkages with social protection and social welfare initiatives; and pursuing opportunities for CABA to participate in the national response.

3.2.6 Child Policy, Advocacy and Communication

This Programme aims to build awareness of and support for child rights by combining rights monitoring and policy analysis and advocacy with social mobilization and communication for behavioural change. The approach is to facilitate child rights realization through research, monitoring, advocacy, dialogue and resource leverage, with the aim of contributing to the achievement of the NSEDP priorities and MDGs.

The planned key results for 2011 are: improved research and data on the impact of national development policies on the situation of girls, boys and women, assisting in promoting

increased investment in basic social services, especially to the most underserved; increased and more equal public access to timely and relevant information, particularly as related to children, youth and women; National Assembly members will be fully aware of mother and child policy research results and able to advocate more effectively for the realization of child and women's rights and for child-friendly policies in Lao PDR ; populations reached by UNICEF-supported interventions, including various ethnic groups, will have access to health and social wellbeing-related knowledge through broadcasts which promote awareness and support behavioural change; young people shall have increased access to timely and relevant information, and opportunities for participation through the regular broadcast of a national young people's radio programme; and increased quality and quantity of media coverage on the situation of women and children.

These expected key results will contribute to the achievement of the following expected UNDAF outcomes: UNDAF Outcome 1 (enhanced livelihoods of poor, vulnerable and food insecure populations); UNDAF Outcome 2 (increased and more equitable access to and utilisation of quality and prioritized social services); and UNDAF Outcome 3 (strengthened capacities of public and private institutions to fulfil their duties and greater people's participation in governance and advocacy for the promotion of human rights).

Resources used:

Total approved for 2010 as per CPD: RR US\$320,000; OR US\$809,998; Total: US\$1,129,998

Total available for 2010 from all sources: RR: US\$387,708; OR US\$383,325; Total: US\$771,033

Special allocations:

- Global Thematic Funds

List of donors:

- SIDA-Sweden
- Japan Committee for UNICEF
- New Zealand committee for UNICEF
- CANADA

In 2010, the Child Policy, Advocacy and Communication (CPAC) Programme provided cross-cutting support to a range of UNICEF interventions, while laying the groundwork for strategic shifts necessary for the next Country Programme.

This was particularly evident in the Child Rights Monitoring and Policy Analysis Project, which built on recommendations arising from the 2009 Mid-Term Review to begin the transition towards a policy-oriented programme. The formalisation of partnerships with the

Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) and National Economic Research Institute (NERI) were major steps in this direction.

For the first time, an annual internal social policy research plan was developed to prioritise key knowledge gaps on emerging issues affecting vulnerable children and women. The studies (see list below) were integrated into the annual Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (IMEP) for 2010.

Other notable results included:

- A feasibility study for a sentinel surveillance system to detect any deterioration in social outcomes.
- With support from the regional office and UNFPA, UNICEF supported the design and management of the Lao Social Indicator Survey (LSIS) to generate data disaggregated at provincial level.
- UNICEF supported two high-level meetings on statistics chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and organised in collaboration with other UN agencies.

In the area of child advocacy, UNICEF continued its collaboration with the Lao National Assembly, under the auspices of a joint UN programme (Support to an Effective Lao National Assembly - SELNA). Interaction with National Assembly members – for example, during inter-session meetings – helped improve members’ understanding of children’s issues:

Several well-received video productions were undertaken in 2010 to raise awareness and build consensus, notably on controversial issues.

- *Young Voices of Lao PDR: A Call for Action*: The film, which allowed adolescents to speak frankly about health and other challenges in their lives, was screened at a high-level meeting supported by UNICEF and UNFPA in February 2010.
- *Surviving the bombs: children’s stories from Laos*: A mine risk awareness video produced with Handicap International.
- *The Courage to Speak*: Testimonies of women produced for a regional conference on gender-based violence in Vientiane.
- Short video documentary on the nutritional situation of children in southern Lao PDR.

These videos, along with other stories and materials, were posted on *YouTube* and on the office’s new Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Unicef-Lao-PDR/159049904121576>

Radio continues to provide an important channel through which young people can raise issues and inform their peers. UNICEF’s partnership with Lao National Radio consolidated its early progress, reaching out to young audiences while exploring new partnerships and

funding sources to ensure long-term sustainability. Advocacy meetings organized by nine provincial youth radio teams received positive feedback from provincial leaders and the private sector.

A first step towards encouraging the involvement of young people in television production was the staging of a One Minute Junior video workshop. The 15 one-minute films were screened at the Luang Prabang film festival:

http://www.theoneminutesjr.org/index.php?thissection_id=10&movie_id=201000401&series_id=67

(For an outline of UNICEF behavioural change interventions in 2010, see C4D section above.)

One key constraint faced by the section during the year relates to the National Assembly. The joint UN programme (SELNA) is still young and has experienced financial and other challenges. UNICEF has ensured that continued involvement in SELNA will not limit direct interaction with National Assembly members on specific issues.

A second constraint relates to youth radio. Shifting the focus of youth radio away from specific programmatic information to a more life skills-based agenda was slowed by the lack of appropriate training materials and financing.

The future work plan of the section includes several elements: An LSIS (MICS/DHS) will be undertaken in 2011 to collect and analyse disaggregated data on children, young people and women. Preliminary findings should be available by late 2010.

C4D interventions in 2011 will focus on strengthening community-level consultations. These efforts will help prepare for the next Country Programme, notably placing additional emphasis on remote, ethnic and other vulnerable populations.

A survey of youth radio audiences will be conducted in early 2011 to help provide a clear strategy for the development of the partnership with Lao National Radio.

A creative workshop will be organised to help stakeholders develop a model for a television series to help very young children develop the necessary skills for school.

4. Operations and Programme Management

4.1 Governance and Systems

4.1.1 Governance structure

The planned results and objectives for the year were developed at the Annual Management Retreat in early February 2010, which was attended by all staff. The resulting Annual Management Plan (AMP) for 2010 was based on the transparent assessment of progress against the 2009 AMP, and programme and management priorities for the coming year, notably those arising from the 2009 Mid Term Review. The preparation process for the new Country Programme involved a month of strategic reflection, providing an opportunity to involve all staff in thinking about the future, and the results to which UNICEF should contribute.

To strengthen the framework for oversight and management, the office has reviewed the Terms of Reference for the main monthly meetings (Programme Coordination Committee - PCC, Operations, Country Management Team - CMT and General Staff Meeting), to clarify their complementary roles. The PCC is now structured to enhance cross-sectoral coordination and allow for a learning theme each month, supporting more integrated thinking around key issues. The CMT agenda includes a standard set of key performance indicators to direct appropriate decision making. During the year, the office addressed the recommendations of the 2009 external audit, and the CMT closed 10 of the 11 audit points.

The staff association actively participates in all decision making processes. The office Joint Consultative Committee has met quarterly. Its mandate includes responding to suggestions made through the anonymous staff suggestion box; a communication forum that allows any staff member to raise concerns to management. The management actions in relation to the suggestions are shared at the General Staff Meeting.

At the start of the year, the office was still responding to the effects of the Ketsana Typhoon, which seriously flooded parts of the south in 2009. The Emergency Task Force met regularly to review the progress of the response, and UNICEF focal points joined and, where appropriate, led the cluster meetings established by the Inter Agency Standing Committee. The Emergency Task Force also oversaw the updating of the Emergency Preparedness Plan, which incorporated lessons learned from the inter-agency After Action Review of the Ketsana response.

4.1.2 Strategic Risk Management

In line with global policy, the office has conducted training for all staff to ensure a common understanding of risk management principles. At the same time, the office developed its overall risk profile and Risk and Control Library. Actions identified to strengthen risk management and to address specific risk areas will be integrated into the AMP for 2011. It was interesting to note that the actions highlighted during these exercises were already incorporated in various office plans. However, the risk management process allows for more explicit risk-focused language and directed actions to address the risks faced by the office.

Accordingly, the major work processes are being reviewed, documented and shared with all staff using the Document Repository as a library for work process resources. The table of

authority has been revised to allow for greater delegation to programme managers. This work will continue in 2011 to allow for a risk-informed review of controls.

The updated Emergency Preparedness Plan includes an inventory of staff emergency experience. Four staff were requested to support the crisis response in Haiti and one in Pakistan, and brought back strengthened experience in cluster management and other emergency skills. The office has maintained minimum operating security standards (MOSS) compliance, and a small stock of supplies to support staff in emergency is kept in storage. The Supply unit has updated the list of pre-qualified suppliers. Security briefings are provided for all new staff.

The Business Continuity Plan (BCP) was tested to ensure continued capacity to communicate voice and data messages through alternate means: Mini-M satellite phone and BGAN, HF and VHF radio. As a result of the tests, the BCP will be updated in 2011 and some further investment made to strengthen communications by staff on field missions, as mobile telephone coverage is limited in parts of the country.

4.1.3 Evaluation

The Office has an IMEP, which is updated quarterly and whose status is regularly reviewed by the PCC and CMT. Three evaluations were planned in the 2010 IMEP, of which one was completed and two postponed to 2011. Human resources were a key constraint in 2010: there is one M&E officer who has been fully involved in supporting the LSIS and acting as officer-in-charge of the Child Rights and Monitoring and Policy Analysis Project. With support from Regional headquarters, the office will explore ways to adequately resource this function in the future.

In response to the MTR and as part of preparations for the new Country Programme, greater attention was paid to following up on the recommendations made by evaluations. The office also undertook a number of new studies to feed into the Country Programme preparation discussion. These findings also influenced the preparation of the 2011 Annual Work Plans.

4.1.4 ICT

Despite some changes in ICT staffing during the year, with the ICT Assistant departing for a one-year rotation to the global help desk, and the ICT Officer spending more than two months in Haiti, the office maintained a very stable ICT function through the year.

A new 01MB IPSec link through a local internet service provider (ISP) has been established for faster internet browsing as well as to support new online platforms and applications (for example, SAP and WebEx sessions). This replaces the EMC-provided VSAT connectivity, at a substantial saving, for a significantly increased bandwidth.

Remote access via *Citrix* is provided to management and critical staff. Plans are in place to extend the access to programme staff to support routine programme management.

In cooperation with other UN agencies, a joint evaluation of the availability and capability of local ISPs in Lao PDR was conducted in order to identify opportunities for further cost reductions. However, due to differing capacities and the unwillingness of the agencies involved to change service providers, limited action has been taken.

All office ICT equipment is procured under Direct Order LTA in compliance with ICT standards and policy. Obsolete ICT equipment is disposed via the recommendations from the Property Survey Board, after careful technical status checks from ICT staff to ensure no UNICEF data is left on disposed PCs/laptops. All office PCs/laptops are operational with Global Image standard to secure the ICT architecture standard. To comply with global ICT security policy, only ICT staff act as ICT administrators .

Major hardware requirements were assessed in preparation to support new global roll-outs such as *Windows 7*, *Exchange mails*, and *VISION*. ProMS 9.1 was successfully upgraded and the office effectively implemented SAP HR/Payroll as of December 2010, providing initial exposure to the *VISION* platform for a core team in Operations.

A daily data backup forms the basis of ICT disaster recovery. With BGAN terminals as the backup, the *iDirect* VSAT provides longer-term alternate connectivity to support the office business continuity plan.

4.2 Financial Resources and Stewardship

4.2.1 Fund-raising & Donor relations

Ongoing fundraising efforts in 2010 produced a total of seven donor missions organised and hosted by UNICEF Lao PDR. The missions – involving private sector and government representatives from Japan and Luxembourg, and the UNICEF National Committees of Germany, New Zealand and the Russian Federation – included field visits, partner meetings and briefings on the full range of UNICEF-supported programmes.

As of December 2010, the Office had received OR for the Country Programme in the amount of US\$ 48.84 million. This corresponds to about 84% of the approved OR ceiling of US\$ 58.13 million for the 2006-2011 Country Programme.

The office places great emphasis on timely and quality reporting to donors and quality management of PBA, with related performance indicators included in the AMP and closely monitored by the PCC and the CMT bimonthly. These targets are reflected in Section Chiefs

PERs. In 2010, all donor reports were submitted on time, following a thorough internal quality assurance process. All PBAs expiring in 2010 were utilized (average 96 %).

A minimal number of extensions were requested, with four requests (SC/2008/0141, SC/2008/0037, SC/2008/0904 and SC/2009/0705) submitted and approved by donors. Two requests (SC/2006/0246 and SC/2009/0938) were awaiting approval by donors at the time of this report.

4.2.2 Management of financial and other assets

As a result of the Mid Term Management Review, the office established three new posts to address resources management, including a Finance Assistant post to strengthen the Finance unit from two to three staff, and a Senior Budget Assistant, whose role is to enhance overall budget management and support the implementation of risk-managed processes such as the approach to cash transfers to counterparts.

The CMT reviews proposed allocations and utilisation of funds to the different programmes. This process is supported by a standard set of indicators, the data for which is generated for the monthly meetings. Exceptions are highlighted for action. Overall, utilisation rates for regular resources are above 98%. Four regular other resources PBAs have been extended during the year with the full agreement of the donor. Utilisation of emergency other resources was above 96%. DCTs over nine months were recorded at the end of the first and second quarters, with explanations provided to the Regional Office and careful follow up to ensure reporting was not delayed longer than necessary.

The quarterly exception reports from the Regional Office are reviewed by the CMT and responses have been submitted as required.

The Operations team has worked on clarifying roles and responsibilities within and across units to enhance coordinated and effective support to the office. The resulting responsibility chart will also be used to inform the planned 2011 update to the Business Continuity Plan to ensure that backups are identified and able to manage in the event of an emergency.

The office submits quarterly bank reconciliations to New York, and has maintained good controls to ensure timely clearance of reconciling items. Similarly, cash flow forecasts and cash utilisation have been carefully monitored throughout the year, with an average rate of 90% utilisation each month.

4.2.3 Supply

The office has continued to maintain effective support to the supply needs of the Country programme, and to procurement services to the Government. The Supply team met with each of the programme sections at the start of the year to gain an understanding of their supply plans and any bottlenecks or other concerns they had experienced. This has been repeated in

the planning process for the Annual Work Plans for 2011, enabling the Supply unit to address constraints systematically and strategically as part of the Operations work plans for the year.

The resulting initiatives include the development of standard bidding documents, tabulation formats and other forms for counterpart use in the case of procurement through government. Market surveys have been conducted in three southern and three northern provinces, ensuring that pre-qualified suppliers can be invited to bid for delivery at the provincial level. As a result, UNICEF has been able to advise provincial counterparts to include these suppliers in bid processes, and reduced overall costs in a number of bids. The Supply team has established the practice of informing unsuccessful bidders for the local procurement of goods at provincial level in order to ensure transparency and build trust for these relatively new suppliers to UNICEF. In addition, the office has established the policy of conducting supplier site visits in advance of issuing a contract for all new suppliers where the proposed award exceeds US\$ 30,000, and pre- and post-delivery inspections for all contracts in excess of US\$ 30,000.

WASH sector counterparts are involved in bidding processes for contracts up to the CRC ceiling. Supply staff participated at the mid-year review and used the opportunity to share best practice procurement processes and formats with the counterparts.

Systematic monitoring of supplies remains limited. A new format to support end-user monitoring was developed as part of the emergency preparedness actions, and may be integrated into spot check processes in 2011. The Supply team also plans to support the programmes in tracking which supplies and equipment have been delivered to which geographical area, to allow for more effective monitoring as the information is not readily available from PROMS.

4.3 Human Resource Capacity

4.3.1 Human Resource Capacity

The staffing structure was reviewed at the start of the year as part of the Mid Term Management Review, and limited changes were made for the remainder of the current Country Programme, directly reflecting the findings of the Mid Term Review processes.

As the year closes, the development of the Country Programme Management Plan (CPMP) is in full swing. The CPMP process has been carefully designed to link explicitly the expected results to appropriate strategies, shifts in competencies and necessary staffing. The approach has encouraged participation to allow all staff a chance to see how they can contribute to longer-term results.

A Personal and Professional Development (P²D) workshop was held during the year, encouraging staff to think about their longer-term development interests. Additionally, the

Human Resources Development Team has designed a Staff Profile Inventory intended to help staff self-assess their skills and competencies, particularly in relation to the shifts in programmatic focus. The staff profiles will be used by staff members and supervisors to establish individual learning goals for 2011. The data will also support the office to understand the competencies and skills mix available, which will be used to develop a strategic learning programme in 2011 as a transition towards the new Country Programme.

The Learning Priorities for 2010 were largely focused on change management processes and staff members' discussions with supervisors. These activities were complemented by the month of strategic reflection that included a programme of group learning events, particularly around new programme areas and issues.

The office has managed more than 25 recruitment processes in the year. With the completion of Competency Based Interview skills training, this approach is now routinely applied.

The updated Emergency Preparedness Plan includes an inventory of staff emergency experience. Four staff attended further emergency training at international workshops, while 16 staff attended locally run workshops together with counterparts to strengthen cluster leadership capacity. Additionally, four staff went on emergency missions to Haiti and one to Pakistan.

The Staff Association has supported the office to disseminate organizational policies and procedures to all staff, and assisted with the translation of key policies into Lao.

4.4 Other Issues: Efficiency Gains and Costs savings in Management and Operations

The conversion from EMC-provided VSAT to the local ISP-provided IPsec connection has resulted in an actual cost saving of \$7,500 per year. However, the cost saving for the equivalent bandwidth amounts to a saving of \$45,000 per year.

Market research at provincial level has broadened the number of suitable suppliers which can be invited to participate in provincial-level bid processes. In two cases, the office was able to advise the provincial counterpart to rebid, saving around US\$4,000 in each case.

The Annual Management Plan for 2011 will be a year of transition while supporting the implementation of key organisational changes. The Annual Work Plans for 2011 reflect the shift to the new Country Programme, as the final year of some programme elements and approaches, and an opportunity to prepare for new strategies.

The zone office will be relocated in preparation for 2012, with a change in focus to become a resource for understanding and supporting government decentralisation processes.

The office will continue documenting and reviewing work processes in a risk-informed manner to increase efficiency and to ensure appropriate controls.

5. Studies, Surveys, Evaluations and Publications Completed in 2010

5.1 Study/Survey/Evaluation

Type: (x one)	Study <input type="checkbox"/>	Survey <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Evaluation <input type="checkbox"/>
Title: Nutrition Assessment of 9 Flood Affected Provinces			
Year: 2010 (Pick from 01 to 10)			
Sequence No: 2010/ (Pick from 001 to 099)			
Type of Report: Assessment survey			
Themes: (up to 4 key words only) Post flooding Nutrition Assessment			
Management Response: Done			
Report of Evaluation: Not Uploaded			

Type: (x one)	Study <input type="checkbox"/>	Survey <input type="checkbox"/>	Evaluation <input type="checkbox"/>
Title: Assessment of UXO LAO Community Awareness Activities			
Year: 2010			
Sequence No: 2010/			
Type of Report: Assessment			
Themes: (up to 4 key words only) UXO Mine Risk Education			
Management Response: Done			
Report of Evaluation: Not Uploaded			

Type: (x one)	Study <input type="checkbox"/>	Survey <input type="checkbox"/>	Evaluation <input type="checkbox"/>
Title: Assessment of UXO MRE Strategy Plan			
Year: 2010			
Sequence No: 2010/			
Type of Report: Assessment			
Themes: (up to 4 key words only) UXO Mine Risk Education			
Management Response: Done			
Report of Evaluation: Not Uploaded			

Type: (x one)	Study <input type="checkbox"/>	Survey <input type="checkbox"/>	Evaluation <input type="checkbox"/>
Title: Strategic Framework on Justice for Children			
Year: 2010			

Sequence No: 2010/
Type of Report: Development of Strategic Framework
Themes: (up to 4 key words only) Justice for Children
Management Response: Done
Report of Evaluation: Not Uploaded

Type: (x one)	Study <input type="checkbox"/>	Survey <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Evaluation <input type="checkbox"/>
Title: Knowledge, Attitudes, Practice on Discipline of Children			
Year: 2010			
Sequence No: 2010/			
Type of Report: KAP survey			
Themes: (up to 4 key words only) Violence against Children			
Management Response: Done			
Report of Evaluation: Not Uploaded			

Type: (x one)	Study <input type="checkbox"/>	Survey <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Evaluation <input type="checkbox"/>
Title: H1N1 - Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice			
Year: 2010 (Pick from 01 to 10)			
Sequence No: 2010/ (Pick from 001 to 099)			
Type of Report: KAP Survey			
Themes: (up to 4 key words only) Influenza prevention and treatment			
Management Response: Done			
Report of Evaluation: Not Uploaded			

Type: (x one)	Study <input type="checkbox"/>	Survey <input type="checkbox"/>	Evaluation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Title: Assessment of Counselling Networks (Lao Women Union)			
Year: 2010			
Sequence No: 2010/			
Type of Report: Assessment			
Themes: (up to 4 key words only) Psychosocial Help and Support			
Management Response: Done			
Report of Evaluation: Not Uploaded			

Type: (x one)	Study <input type="checkbox"/>	Survey <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Evaluation <input type="checkbox"/>
Title: A Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice Study on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Rural Communities			
Year: 2010			
Sequence No: 2010/			
Type of Report: KAP survey			

Themes: (up to 4 key words only) Community Awareness and Knowledge
Management Response: Done
Report of Evaluation: Not Uploaded

Type: (x one) Study <input type="checkbox"/> Survey <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Title: Hygiene Education Toolkit Evaluation
Year: 2010
Sequence No: 2010/
Type of Report: Evaluation
Themes: (up to 4 key words only) Hygiene Education
Management Response: Not Done
Report of Evaluation: Not Uploaded

5.2 Publications

Title of the Publication: Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission
Intended Audience: MCH Staff in the ANC, pregnant mothers and expectant fathers; general community members
Language: Lao
Objectives of the Publication: To sensitize pregnant women and expectant fathers to PPTCT and HIV/AIDS facts; general information for community members including adolescents.
Authors: (150 characters) Ministry of Health with technical inputs from UNICEF
Type of Publication: <i>Print / Electronic / Both</i>
Estimated total cost for UNICEF: US\$530.00

Title of the Publication: Poster on PMTCT
Intended Audience: Pregnant women and attendants at ANC/MCH Clinics
Language: Lao
Objectives of the Publication: To emphasise the importance of VCCT; regular ANC Visits and nutritional care during pregnancy
Authors: (150 characters) Ministry of Health with technical inputs from UNICEF
Type of Publication: <i>Print / Electronic / Both</i>
Estimated total cost for UNICEF: US\$4,000

Title of the Publication: A Healthier Future in Our Hands
Intended Audience: Donors, partners
Language: English
Objectives of the Publication: The booklet provides an overview of UNICEF's WASH activities 2007-11, documenting key achievements in providing access to basic WASH infrastructure in the poorest rural districts, and promoting hygiene education for children.
Author: UNICEF
Type of Publication: Print
Estimated total cost for UNICEF: US\$1,200

Other Publications (Documentary Films)

Title : Surviving the Bombs: Children's Stories from Laos
Intended Audience: Children and families in UXO contaminated areas of the country; participants in the Cluster Munitions States Parties Meeting in 2010; ban advocate meetings.
Language: 2 versions (English sub-titles in Lao/Mankong; Lao sub-titles on Lao)
Objectives of the Publication: To raise awareness and change behaviour in handling UXOs especially children
Authors: National Regulatory Authority for UXO; Handicap International Belgium with technical inputs from UNICEF
Type of Publication: Film
Estimated total cost for UNICEF: US\$10,000

Title: Young Voices of Lao PDR: A Call for Action
Intended audience: policy-makers; organisations working on adolescent issues and youth participation; young people
Language: Lao with English sub-titles
Objectives: To allow young Lao to contribute their views to the growing discussion on adolescent and youth issues and challenges, especially in terms of health
Authors: UNICEF
Type of Publication: Video documentary
Estimated total cost for UNICEF: US\$4,000

Title of the Publication: The Courage to Speak: Testimonies of women subjected to gender-based violence
Intended Audience: parliamentarians; policymakers; participants in the regional conference on gender-based violence, December 2010
Language: Lao with English sub-titles
Objectives : To raise awareness and promote concrete action by policymakers on the largely taboo issue of gender-based violence in Lao PDR
Authors: UNICEF
Type of Publication: Video documentary
Estimated total cost for UNICEF: US\$3,000

6. Innovations & Lessons Learned

Lao PDR has conducted an ongoing nationwide Exclusive Breastfeeding (EBF) and related Infant and Young Child Feeding campaign since mid-2009. While the campaign has since demonstrated positive behavioural impacts and helped bring recognition to breastfeeding as a national nutrition priority, capacity gaps at the central level and the use of a top-down approach for broad coverage have resulted in inequities in coverage. To further the campaign's reach, planners are taking a locally-driven approach that aims to identify needs and solutions in a series of target districts with ethnic and other disadvantaged communities.

While 90% of babies aged less than 9 months are breastfed in Lao PDR, only about 26% are breastfed exclusively to six months. For most mothers, breastfeeding is an acceptable behaviour, but the challenge is exclusive feeding for six months.

As with other health issues, gaps in community knowledge and practices are most apparent in groups who need it most – those unable to access or afford health care and those already marginalized by education and language barriers. This means that the most vulnerable communities remain uninformed of health information, ultimately resulting in a lack of empowerment and demand for services.

The EBF campaign, which began in 2009, is a major behavioural change initiative in support of the Government's National Nutrition Policy.

It uses a multi-level, multi-channel and multi-contact approach. EBF message are delivered personally to mothers through healthcare workers and community-level Lao Women's Union volunteers. These face-to-face, personal counselling efforts are simultaneously reinforced by high-level government advocates, and media advertising via the 'repetitive, intensive and persistent' (RIP) format using radio, television, newspapers, banners and billboards. Mass media advertising is also run in parallel with nationwide print material distributions at specific 'point-of-promotion' sites, including health facilities, pharmacies and village notice boards.

By the end of 2010, the EBF campaign had included training nationwide for 5,159 community volunteers and more than 1,300 healthcare workers. The campaign is now estimated to have reached 72,000 women at the community level via a combination of mass media advertising, print materials and inter-personal communication efforts.

The results of a mid-project review/evaluation, in addition to a recent nutrition assessment, suggested positive recent changes in behaviour, with EBF rates more than doubling in some areas. EBF has also achieved recognition as a national nutrition priority on the path to meeting the country's commitments to the Millennium Development Goals.

An independent evaluation via a KAP survey is still necessary to gauge wide scale changes in EBF knowledge and behaviour. Such an evaluation is planned for early 2011.

To date, the ground-level work of the EBF campaign has only reached half of the districts in all provinces, with the broadest coverage in areas that are most accessible. Innovative, community-driven strategies are now needed to identify local needs and solutions, and to ensure that impacts are equitable and that efforts are made to target the most vulnerable audiences.

Other EBF campaign lessons learned in 2010 include:

- The need for further high-level government advocacy for further support and recognition of EBF as the most important nutrition intervention for young children

- Actions must be taken to strengthen and better enforce Lao’s Code on the Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes

While establishing the overall goal and specific behavioural objectives of a campaign, it is important to weigh the costs and benefits between: a national, top-down campaign that aims for the broadest coverage; and locally-driven efforts that give special attention to the unique needs of individual areas.

In 2010, UNICEF began shifting the focus of its IYCF behaviour change support towards a model that creates stronger ownership and empowerment among rights holders and local level authorities. In 2011, an adapted version of the UNFPA model of Participatory Community Assessments will be used to engage in community dialogue and identify local barriers and solutions to maternal health and IYCF practices, in order to more equitably expand the campaign’s reach.

7. Special Report: South-South Cooperation

Child protection

Collaboration between UNICEF offices in Lao PDR and China has progressed. Both governments have agreed to follow-up initial talks on a possible MOU to protect children and women victims of trafficking.

Education

UNICEF has promoted “South-South’ cooperation through support to the MoE to carry out study visits to Viet Nam and Nepal to learn first-hand how each country is implementing community-based early childhood development programmes and sector-wide approaches in education, respectively. Both visits have had positive results with lessons learned being integrated into policy and pilots.

HIV/AIDS

Following the commitment by the Government of Lao PDR to move on reaching virtual elimination targets for Pediatric HIV in November 2010, UNICEF supported a study tour by 10 Government officials to Cambodia, comprising representatives from the Ministry of Health, principally from Mother to Child Health Centers and the National HIV/AIDS Programme. The study tour was designed and coordinated by the Cambodian Ministry of Health to strengthen the skill set and knowledge of Lao counterparts to establish and implement a linked PMTCT approach in-country.

Following the study tour visit, the Government of Lao PDR has agreed to develop an Operational Plan of Action for a linked response in-country (2011-2015), and to design and test Standard Operating Procedures of the approach in demonstration sites by 2012.

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