

UNICEF ROMANIA ANNUAL REPORT



@ UNICEF/ Kate Holt

2010

COUNTRY OFFICE ANNUAL REPORT for: Romania

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In UNICEF's programme of cooperation in Romania, the most important achievement of the year was the launch of the school attendance campaign backed by a wide coalition of partners led by the Ministry of Education. It will take until at least spring 2011 before results are evident, but meanwhile the broad energy and commitment being brought to bear on school dropout, something which eats at the fundamentals of child rights and equity, bodes well for the future.

Another achievement was the formation of a strategic partnership with local authorities to leverage EU structural funding for child protection. At over US\$5 billion per year, the structural funds are significant but difficult to access. However, even a tiny percentage of this money would make a huge impact on the implementation of child protection policies at local level.

The Resource Mobilisation component of the country programme exceeded the target for the year. However, this figure owes a lot to the public and corporate response to two emergency appeals: one for the Haiti earthquake and the other for the Romania flood victims. It highlights the amount of work which remains to be done in convincing the public to support equity issues such as non-attendance at school.

The assessment of social exclusion policies highlighted the difficulty in translating policies, laws and strategies into actions on the ground that make a difference for disadvantaged children and families. This is clearly central to the equity agenda and calls for greater attention to the implementation side of policy promotion work. Progress on institutionalising the Child Rights Monitoring System continues to be sluggish and new options need to be pursued.

One of the most important collaborations has been the coalition of Government and NGOs assembled to promote the preventive side of child protection. The school attendance initiative has brought together a broad partnership which includes the Government, the Roma Civic Alliance, Local Authorities and communities. In resource mobilisation, new multi-year partnerships have been consolidated with the energy company, GDF Suez and the bank, UniCredit. These alliances and others are advancing the equity agenda which can only be achieved through partnerships.

2. COUNTRY SITUATION AS AFFECTING CHILDREN AND WOMEN

It is likely that 2010 will go down in Romanian history as the year of the toughest economic measures the country has experienced in the twenty years since the fall of Communism. During 2010 the newly appointed government had to oversee severe public spending cuts agreed with the IMF, EC and World Bank in return for a €19.95 (\$26.7) billion bail-out to tackle a deep recession and a sizeable budget deficit.

In just over a year more than 100,000 public sector employees were made redundant while public service salaries were slashed by 25%. At 1.9% in 2010 the contraction of the economy slowed down considerably compared to a 7.1% negative growth the previous year. A modest recovery of around 1.5% growth has been forecast for 2011. Following a 5% increase in VAT, inflation peaked at 7.8% during the last quarter of 2010.

Under the World Bank's watchful eye, essential structural reforms are continuing. While the implementation of the austerity package has made the government unpopular with the majority of the population, indications are that it is on course to meet the ambitious target of a budget deficit equivalent to 4.4% of the GDP in 2011, having stayed within the recommended limit of 6.8% in 2010.

Overall the statistics point to the fiscal upsides of the reform programme. However, its impact on the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups of society is yet to be felt as budgetary cuts began to be introduced during the second half of 2010 and many are scheduled for the start of 2011.

Among the most vulnerable are Roma children who live in extreme poverty, four times higher than the population average. They account for a large number of school dropouts and are often subject to discrimination and social exclusion. The measures taken to improve the lives of the Roma need strengthening to show more impact.

Furthermore there are around 70,000 children in public care which includes protection and prevention services. Out of these some 23,000 are in state institutions. With the budgetary cuts anticipated, the child protection system is likely to be under serious pressure to function properly.

Social security cuts will likely hit isolated rural communities hardest where jobs are scarce. With even less to go around, out-of-work parents with large families will struggle to feed and clothe their children. School dropout already is on the increase and the number of temporarily abandoned children has been growing since the economy began to contract.

The 25% cut in doctors' pays has intensified the exodus of professionals to EU member states. Romania has 19 doctors per 10,000 patients, half the EU average. A GP in the country earns a meagre €250 (US\$323) while the EU monthly average is €1,400 (US\$1,812). The allocation of 4.0% of GDP for the health budget is the lowest in the EU where the average is over 8%.

A new education law stipulates 10 years of compulsory education for all children, up from 9 years, starting with a preparatory year at the age of six and culminating in the ninth grade of middle school. It is a welcome change for rural children from poor families who will now be able to complete their secondary education in their own community, thus saving the expense of travel to a high school in a nearby urban centre to attend ninth grade. Related to education, a welcome development is that Teacher training is becoming more rigorous which will help improve standards of education that have declined in recent years.

Overall, the country is on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Even so, as a result of the financial crisis, poverty is on the increase, and disparities are widespread. Supporting the Government to address these and to ensure the fulfillment of children's rights equally for all children is at the core of UNICEF efforts in Romania.

3. CP ANALYSIS & RESULT

3.1 CP Analysis

3.1.1 CP Overview:

In 2010, the Romania Country Office (CO) began implementation of a new 3-year country programme. The programme has two components: (i) Partnerships for Social Inclusion; and (ii) Resource Leverage and Mobilisation. The Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) was signed by the Government and a Rolling Workplan (RWP) for 2010-2011 was agreed.

The social inclusion component aims to advance the social inclusion agenda for the most vulnerable. It features the following main intermediate results (IR).

Child Rights Monitoring (CRM): This IR has been a relatively slow performer in the previous programme cycle, but is seen as vital for the promotion of child rights and equity. The difficulties have been largely related to finding an appropriate institutional home for the CRM System which was further complicated in 2010 by changes in the government structures. However, progress picked up again towards the end of the year with the involvement of the Federation of NGOs for Child Protection. It is anticipated that 2011 will be a breakthrough year as new ministerial departments will have settled in.

Equitable and Effective Access to Minimum Social Services: This IR includes the school attendance campaign aimed at addressing the high rates of drop outs in disadvantaged communities so as to reduce disparities. Most of the communities identified for the first phase of the campaign include the Roma minority. Although the results of the campaign will not be evident until early 2011, they are expected to contribute significantly to the reduction of disparities.

Progress was also registered in the areas of Parenting, ECD and Health, particularly in the expansion of the BFHI programme. In Child Protection, new emphasis was placed on prevention which is more affordable especially in the current climate of austerity. Strong and broad partnerships are being cultivated as key to the success of this approach which the government authorities have embraced.

In resource leverage and mobilisation, good results were realized in large part due to the compassionate response of the Romanian public to the emergency appeals for the Haiti earthquake and the floods in north-eastern Romania in the summer of 2010.

3.1.2 Programme Strategy

3.1.2.1 Capacity Development:

The CO has made important strides towards developing capacity among the most disadvantaged communities. In times of economic hardship it is the single most effective and affordable way to improve the lives of the most vulnerable children and their families.

The National Parenting Programme run by the Ministry of Education with support from UNICEF and Our Children Foundation is progressing well. It aims to improve children's early years by teaching parenting skills with an emphasis on better communication.

In 2010 the number of kindergartens included in the programme increased, particularly among vulnerable communities in rural areas. The programme is looking to expand across all state kindergartens and benefit the most disadvantaged children and their parents.

Another initiative promoted by UNICEF and NGO Partner, Holt Romania, aims to 'institutionalise' parenting education and prevent dropout of pupils in grades I-VIII by improving child-parent-teacher communication. School teachers and managers from nearly half the country as well as inspectors and Ministry of Education officials have come on board.

To step up the effort to prevent school dropout and absenteeism, UNICEF launched the School Attendance Campaign in 2010. It has identified the most disadvantaged communities with highest dropout rates, including Roma. Families are made aware of the importance of education. Teachers are coached to work closely with at-risk children. Respected individuals from the Roma community have continued to be trained as school mediators to maintain lines of communication between school and families. In parallel, head teachers have been trained to make schools friendlier environments and be inclusive and culturally sensitive to all children.

Prevention services for the most at risk adolescents (MARA) suffered setbacks following the end of UNICEF OR funding and the cessation of support from GFATM for HIV/AIDS programmes. However, capacity is still being developed. A training package on providing services, including VCT, to at-risk adolescents was put together for professionals from the health and child protection sectors. A manual, certified by the College of Pharmacists, with practical guidelines on HIV prevention and harm reduction has also been published.

3.1.2.2 Effective Advocacy:

In 2010 UNICEF held media events and meetings with key politicians to push for the adoption of the International Code on Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes. As a result, the Chair of the Parliamentary Human Rights Commission, the Senior Adviser on Health Matters in the Presidential Office and a Member of the Health Commission in Parliament are now backing the initiative. This is

important in the context of UNICEF's promotion of the BFHI and the push for higher rates of exclusive breastfeeding.

Alongside direct advocacy, the CO has commissioned analyses of stakeholder attitudes and practices to inform its strategy and reach a wider audience. Mothers, extended families, MPs, government officials, the mass media and producers of breast milk substitutes have all taken part in surveys and consultations. In addition, these studies have fed into UNICEF proposals for interventions in the National Health Programme.

Where child protection is concerned UNICEF has had to adapt its approach to the constraints of the economic crisis and the decentralisation reform. Advocacy has shifted from policy level to strengthening partnerships with local authorities. The focus is now on prevention rather than dealing with consequences. The social services sector is constrained from being under-funded and understaffed.

A Rapid Assessment of Social Assistance Policies in Romania carried out in 2010 for UNICEF has demonstrated that social policies have insufficient impact on the most vulnerable children and families. In response to the evaluation and other relevant data, the Country Office has set advocacy for cost-effective interventions at community level as its strategic priority.

UNICEF successfully mobilized an advocacy group and had meetings with MPs which resulted in the inclusion of ECD in the new Education Law as well as specific provisions regarding the education of Roma children.

The CO also organised a National Conference on School Abandonment in May. A steering committee was formed to monitor the situation and provide advice and guidance on the reduction of school dropout. The steering committee of influential officials is expected to be a powerful tool in the advocacy UNICEF has to undertake to ensure the success of the School Attendance Campaign.

3.1.2.3 Strategic Partnerships:

When floods struck in July, UNICEF partnered with Realitatea TV to raise funds through a public appeal for victims. The CO became an active partner with NGOs, local governments and the central authorities in responding to the immediate needs of child victims and their families, as well as in the ensuing rehabilitation phase.

UNICEF joined forces with partners in Government and NGOs to help address the treatment interruptions of people living with HIV, caused in large part by the economic crisis which is putting unprecedented strain on the existing care programmes.

UNICEF has convened a 'Coalition for Prevention' with likeminded partners to monitor closely the decentralization reform of the social protection system in Romania and develop a national strategy for affordable and effective prevention services at community level with a focus on child protection..

In line with the main programme focus of improving access to education for the most disadvantaged children, including Roma, UNICEF has maintained its traditional good partnership with the Ministry of Education and relevant departments within the Ministry, local authorities and NGO coalitions such as the Roma Civic Alliance as well as many individual NGOs. Increasingly, UNICEF is partnering with local authorities as the decentralization process gathers pace and in an attempt to make policies work at community level for disadvantaged children. UNICEF convenes meetings, consultations and arranges regular field trips with partners on an ongoing basis.

Three new significant corporate partners have come on board in 2010. The Kaufland hypermarket chain is a sponsor of the Parenting Programme. GDF Energy Suez Romania is backing the School Attendance Campaign. UniCredit Tiriac Bank is putting money in the BFH initiative supporting

maternities in two major cities for year one of a 3-year partnership through the first affinity cards in Romania.

Successful fundraisers would be unthinkable without the continuing support of Realitatea TV; telecom operators: Orange, Vodafone, Cosmote and Romtelecom; and BRD Groupe Societe Generale. These public fundraisers have seen UNICEF emerge as a leader in the eyes of both the public and the authorities for the speed of its intervention and the amounts of money raised.

3.1.2.4 Knowledge Management:

The Sentinel Monitoring System is providing real-time information regarding the impact of the economic crisis. The data was used in 2010 in order to advise central and local governments to address the most critical cases of vulnerable children and their families.

In 2010, UNICEF supported a new round of studies on breastfeeding which showed little improvement the number of exclusively breastfed infants since the previous study in 2005. The updated knowledge is expected to contribute to adjustments in MCH budgetary allocations as well as to accelerating progress on BFHI and the adoption of the Code of Marketing of breast milk substitutes.

An assessment of social assistance policies in Romania and the decentralisation of the social protection system are leading to a change in UNICEF's overall strategic approach to policy implementation (see Section 6 "Innovations and Lessons Learned").

The review of MARA showed that clients felt empowered by improved knowledge of their health status, access to medical and health institutions, and the support of outreach and drop-in professionals. Problems with sustainability arising from funding cuts were flagged for further action.

A major step forward was made with the publication of two UNICEF-supported research studies of Roma children and education. One is the first representative national study of Roma children's participation in education and the other looks at the quality of education in the poorest Roma communities.

At the end of 2010 UNICEF and IES launched a research package as part of the Out Of School Children (OOSC) Global Initiative. The package includes a quantitative analysis of out of school children, a qualitative research on the causes of school dropout and absenteeism and a mapping of the communities most affected by dropout, which will serve to inform strategy for the 2011-2012 School Attendance Campaign.

The establishment of the Centre for the Research of Childhood and Parenthood was supported by UNICEF in 2010. It is an independent body which identifies parenting education needs by analysing existing national programmes. It will promote and argue for the formal introduction of the profession of parental educator.

3.1.2.5 C4D Communication for Development:

A C4D strategy for the School Attendance Campaign was drafted at the end of 2010 based on desk research and field interviews. It aims to maximise the impact of communication between stakeholders to achieve the objectives of the initiative.

The strategy recommends a strong visual identity for the campaign and the creative use of communication tools to:

- Motivate parents to bring their children to school and raise the profile of education among disadvantaged communities
- Make schools more welcoming places for children, empowering teachers, head teachers and school mediators to work directly with at-risk families

- Strengthen community cohesion
- Fight discrimination against minorities
- Raise awareness of issues among the wider community through local initiatives (fairs, awareness days)
- Work closely with the mass media on local and national levels to report regularly and objectively on school attendance issues, particularly as it applies to the Roma minority.

The above recommendations will be an important part of UNICEF's work with all communities already participating in the campaign.

Two of UNICEF's newsletters for 2010 were dedicated exclusively to the school attendance campaign.

In February 2010 UNICEF Romania began to implement the Child Rights Training Syllabus and Course for students from the Faculty of Journalism and Communication at the University of Bucharest. This is a move from a quantitative approach (training a certain number of journalists) to a systematic approach which should, over time, bring about change for children and their rights and for society as a whole. Universities elsewhere in the country are willing to take on the module but are under financial constraint in the current economic climate.

Over the past year UNICEF has diversified its communication channels in line with the global trend in new media. On-line presence has been strengthened with a re-launch of the Romanian website. Social networks have been added to the C4D strategy. The CO has interacted with tens of thousands of supporters on Facebook, Twitter and Youtube. Fund raising campaigns now have a dedicated microsite (www.sustineunicef.ro).

3.1.3 Normative Principles

3.1.3.1 Human Rights Based Approach to Cooperation:

As a cross-cutting initiative, the Child Rights Monitoring Programme (CRM) seeks to develop instruments, mechanisms and structures which can be used to understand the patterns of inequities and their causes, and promote national policy dialogue and programme planning with the overall objective of reducing disparities and promoting rights.

The CRM is also an excellent tool for reporting on human rights issues, notably to the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on Discrimination against Women.

UNICEF's partnership with the Federation of NGOs for Child Protection (FONPC) has already produced samples of instruments for measuring inequities. The approach taken is to record the attributes that are commonly observed among disadvantaged groups with multiple deprivations such as lack of birth registration, no access to education and poverty.

The current "Prevention" focus within the equity agenda of the country programme is based on evidence showing that social policies have insufficient impact on the most vulnerable children and families. This approach is cheaper, better and more in line with the CRC in that it addresses protection issues in the context of the family and local community.

The school attendance campaign addresses the basic right to education by seeking to improve the access to education of vulnerable children, some of them living in deep poverty, including Roma.

During the first half of 2010, a study was undertaken on the coverage of children's rights in the Romanian Mass Media, and to assess journalists' attitudes to children and their rights. The most common problem that emerged from the study is that children are presented without consideration for their right to dignity. UNICEF is acting on improving the image of children in the media.

The 20th anniversary since Romania's ratification of the CRC was celebrated in Parliament in November. The event enabled children to communicate their own assessment of the promotion and protection of their rights along with their recommendations and requests in person to Members of Parliament and the Government.

3.1.3.2 Gender Equality and Mainstreaming:

An assessment of the extent of gender mainstreaming within the country programme was carried out in early 2010. The report found that (i) deficits with regard to both disaggregated data and gender-sensitive budgeting constrain the scope for robust baselines and benchmarked interventions; (ii) Planning, policy and monitoring documents do not accurately reflect the extent to which gender is mainstreamed across the office; and (iii) office systems and management practices in the CO appear compliant with UNICEF policy on gender mainstreaming.

Gender equality and women's empowerment are prerequisites for and major drivers of programming and action in the "partnership and social inclusion" programme component and ensuring equitable and effective access to minimum social services. There are several areas where the impact of gender is being addressed as seen below.

One gender-affected group are young Roma girls who sometimes do not progress beyond the fourth grade in school, being married off or remaining at home to care for younger siblings. Roma boys drop out of school later. The school campaign is trying to address these gender specific imbalances and the underlying causes that prevent children's enjoyment of their fundamental right to education.

About 3000 women and girls are living with HIV in Romania, aged 19 to 24 years old. A more in-depth analysis of women's and girls' vulnerabilities is needed to ensure proper integration of their issues into HIV programmes. Accordingly, a situation analysis has been planned to identify the needs of women and girls affected by HIV in different settings. Several steps are being taken. The first is to carry out secondary data analysis of existing quantitative data, followed by interviews with professionals from HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment programmes, and interviews with women and girls living with HIV.

With Regional Office support, guidelines for counterparts were developed including country-specific recommendations for developing gender-sensitive MARA programmes and interventions in Romania, and preparing reports on gender-sensitive policies and programming for adolescents and young people in Romania.

The BFH initiative is actively encouraging fathers to support mothers on breastfeeding, and care is taken to ensure fathers are not left out due to traditional association of mothers exclusively with child feeding and rearing. Promoting gender-sensitive projects will remain a focus area for considerable length of time.

3.2 Programme Components:

Title: *Partnerships for social inclusion*

Focus Area:

Focus Area 5

Key Result Area:

FA2: KRA1, FA2: KRA2, FA2: KRA3, FA5: KRA2, FA5: KRA3

Purpose:

IR1. Monitoring and Communicating Child Rights:

Government and civil society systematically monitor and communicate child rights priorities

IR2. Minimum social services:

National, county and local authorities ensure equitable and effective access to minimum social services

IR3. Decentralization and allocations for social services:

National and decentralised authorities ensure increased allocations for key services impacting on the well-being of boys and girls.

Resources Used:

Total approved for 2010 as per CPD:

RR: US\$600,000; OR: US\$2,000,000; Total: US\$2,600,000

Total available for 2010 from all sources:

RR: US\$600,000; ORR: US\$1,165,000; ORE: US\$85,000; Total: US\$1,850,000

Any special allocations:

Thematic Funds on: Basic Education and Gender Equality; Child Protection

List of donors:

International: German NatCom, UK NatCom, Irish NatCom, US Fund for UNICEF

Local donors: GDF Suez, Kaufland, BRD Societe Generale, Unicredit Tiriatic Bank, ING Bank, Porsche

Result Achieved:

- The School Attendance Campaign addressing the high estimated dropout rate of 20% was launched at the beginning of the school year. The campaign targets 38 poor communities with the highest dropout rates. This intervention will expand considerably in 2011, eventually achieving critical mass, with money leveraged from EU structural funds. Using a strategy aimed at making schools more welcoming, communities more engaged, and parents more aware of the importance of education, the Campaign will benefit especially the Roma children who constitute the majority of the country's estimated 400,000 school drop outs.
- Child Rights Monitoring: In partnership with the Federation of NGOs for Child Protection, a monitoring instrument was finalized for birth registration, education and poverty, and finalization is underway for health and welfare, special protection and family environment and alternative protection measures.
- Media monitoring: UNICEF was mentioned in over 400 articles in the press, over 100 radio news, and over 250 TV news. Children were the topic of 3980 press articles and around 700 radio news and 4600 TV news programmes.
- The Crisis Sentinel Monitoring System completed rounds 2 and 3. Round 4 will take place in early 2011 and will include a series of questions measuring the change that took place between July 2009 and December 2010 on various dimensions (work, school, consumption etc.).
- In the area of ECD, early education policies were adopted and implemented, such as ELDS, or are in process of being adopted, such as the Early Education and Special Needs Education Strategies.
- The National Parenting Programme in Preschool Education continued to be scaled up with UNICEF support. Half of the kindergartens in the public education system benefited from this programme and more than 85,000 parents attended courses.
- New parenting curricula have been developed and implemented for parents of children in primary and lower secondary school and nearly 3,000 children in grades I-VIII, benefited from the "School – Child – Parent" approach rolled out across 18 counties by Holt Romania with UNICEF support.

- BFHI continues to gather momentum with UNICEF support: 41 maternity hospitals are currently part of the initiative. 25 have received Certification upon reaching global criteria, amounting to 60,000 births, or 29% of the total; three have received a Certificate of Commitment; eight have a Certificate of Membership; and two are in the evaluation process; all ensuring a critical mass of BFH. Two years ago, there was not a single BFH in the country.
- Intensive advocacy has brought the International Code on Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes very close to official approval.
- The MARA project focused on increasing access to community services for adolescent IDU, female sex workers and males who have sex with males. Advocacy led to inclusion of adolescents in the proposed 2011-2015 National AIDS Strategy and development of regional action plans for a coordinated response among health and social services. Over 1,000 young people aged 15-24 benefited from drop-in and outreach activities.
- To mobilize resources for the extension of social protection services at community level, UNICEF has built partnerships with local authorities (County Councils and County General Directorates for Social Assistance and Child Protection) from 6 counties in the North-East and 2 in the South East (poorest region of the country). 8 project proposals were developed and submitted for EUR 4 million in funding from EU Structural Funds.
- The adoption by the Ministry of Public Finance of standard costs for child protection and prevention services for the budgeting exercise for 2010 is a major breakthrough in reform. The zero-based budget approach will have major implications for budget allocations in the child and social protection system and is expected to contribute to a shift from major reliance on state institutions towards community-based care, services and prevention. UNICEF is actively promoting this change.
- The new protocol of collaboration between the National Health Insurance House and UNICEF aims to improve allocation of financial resources for primary health care services for mothers and children by adjusting the financial contracting mechanism.
- Floods relief interventions: UNICEF facilitated psycho-social assistance to families and sent emergency kits and school supplies to 2,200 children. In addition, 50 houses were repaired; four education units will be rehabilitated; and 10 flood affected communities were included in the School Attendance Campaign.

Future Workplan:

In 2011, priorities for the CO will be the acceleration of the school attendance initiative; the promotion of the “prevention” approach to child protection; and renewed support for the implementation of policies for children.

Title: *Resource leverage and mobilization*

Focus Area:

Focus Area 5

Key Result Area:

FA5: KRA3, FA5: KRA4

Purpose:

The purpose of this programme component is to engage the private sector and individuals in sustainable long-term strategic partnerships to leverage and increase resource mobilisation for Romanian children and for children from less developed countries, through UNICEF.

Our plans for 2010 were to:

- raise USD1.0 million for local causes
- expand the pledge donor house list through new methods to provide sustainable income

- start transforming corporate donors into corporate engagements
- further tap the most successful FR channels previously tested
- explore new mechanisms for FR with priority given to private individuals.

Resources Used:

Resources used:

Total approved for 2010 as per CPD: RR: US\$50,000; OR: US\$300,000; Total: US\$350,000

Total available for 2010 from all sources: RR: US\$38,700; OR: US\$99,000; Total: US\$137,700

Any special allocations (list): US\$20,000 investment funds from PFP Geneva

List of donors: retention from various fundraising events and activities

Result Achieved:

Corporate alliances brought in a total of US\$408.000. The money was used in UNICEF's educational and health projects (School Attendance Campaign, ECD, Parenting Programme and BFHI). Four out of the 8 companies that supported us this year are new corporate partners. The CO also received a contribution from VISA UK through the UK National Committee for community based services in Romania.

UNICEF partnered with BRD – Groupe Societe Generale, for a second year in a row, to organize the Volunteer Action Solidarity Week. Over the course of a week, 4,000 BRD employees promoted UNICEF to customers and in the process attracted 686 pledge donors. Gheorghe Hagi, GWA for UNICEF Romania and face of BRD, presented the winners with awards. Total money raised was USD 24,696.

Fund raising campaigns now have a dedicated microsite (www.sustineunicef.ro) and a dedicated facebook page [sustineunicef](https://www.facebook.com/sustineunicef).

Floods in summer affecting the North-East of the country led to an emergency relief intervention. A fundraising campaign was run in partnership with Realitatea A total of US\$937,000 was raised in two months.

The UNICEF and Realitatea TV "Haiti – Children of Chaos" campaign raised just over US\$670,000. The campaign consisted of a telethon on the 23rd of January, TV ads for a month, and a fundraising concert.

In 2010 there were considerable internal constraints affecting the CO's fundraising capacity. The emergency campaigns stretched the already limited human resources and affected the realization of planned other activities.

The use of fundraising instruments such as pledge and on-line was limited by the fact that these are less known in Romania. For better results, it will be necessary to inform the public about these methods and put the requisite payment mechanism in place. The economic crisis continued to affect the disposable income of private individuals. CSR budgets of companies likewise have dropped and they want to see more tangible results for their investment.

To better target appeal messages, a study was conducted to gain insights about public perceptions of UNICEF in terms of position in the market and in terms of effectiveness, trust and preferences for donations.

Strategic partners for 2010 were: Realitatea TV and Telecom companies: Orange, Vodafone, Cosmote, Romtelecom; Bank: BRD Group Societe Generale; Media: National Radio Station. Knowledge partners were: Media Image, GFK.

In terms of leveraging funds, the most scope lies within the EU structural fund mechanism which aims at raising Romania's living standards to EU levels. In 2010, the CO worked with the Child Protection

Directorates of 6 north-eastern counties to prepare a proposal for structural funding of Euro 4.0 million to promote the prevention aspect of child protection. The decision on the proposal was pending at the end of 2010, but if the proposed funds are sanctioned, it could be the model for further leveraging of EU funds for child protection, education and health throughout the country.

Future Workplan:

In 2011 UNICEF will continue building its local fundraising capabilities for local causes. The CO's on-line presence will be strengthened through fundraising appeals, and efforts to rapidly increase the house list of pledge donors will be intensified. The CO will carry out at least one fundraising campaign to assist UNICEF programmes in less well-off countries.

4. OPERATIONS & MANAGEMENT

4.1 Governance & Systems

4.1.1 Governance Structure:

In the first two months of 2010 two meetings were held with all staff with the specific objective of discussing programme priorities for the country in order to ensure they were fully understood, and to gain momentum and buy-in from all staff.

The country management team met once a month to review an agenda, which generally included programme, operations, fundraising, communication, human resources, and staff issues and to make decisions as required. The Annual Management Plan indicators were revised and changed in accordance with circumstances. An outcome of the staff retreat held in February 2010, which was dedicated to analyzing organizational culture and improving internal communication, is that further clarification of roles and responsibilities is needed. The process was started and needs to continue in 2011, especially since staff changes took place towards the end of 2010.

Oversight committees are in place and functioning. One area where more coherence is needed is programme coordination, as the office does not have a Deputy Representative position. The responsibilities have been split between two programme specialist positions which added to their workload. The MTR which will take place in 2011 will give the office the opportunity to revise the office structure in a way which will strengthen programme coordination.

The Enterprise Risk Management initiative, part of the global organizational changes launched in 2010 is formalizing the risk approach already existing within our programme implementation process. The risk profile for the Romania office has been established through a participative process, and five main risks have been identified and considered relevant to be addressed in the Risk and Control Library. More work has to be put into this, with the participation of all staff who should become familiar with the procedure and be able to take risk-informed decisions at all levels where resources are allocated and used.

The last internal audit of the UNICEF Romania office was in December 2007, when the rating for governance was "satisfactory." All audit observations have been closed since 2008.

4.1.2 Strategic Risk Management:

The CMT is the oversight body for ensuring timely response to changes in the internal and external operating environment of UNICEF programmes in the country. In this respect, one example is the CMT's decision to get UNICEF involved in the emergency response to the floods which occurred in the North-East of Romania in the summer of 2010. Another example is the quick response to the request from the Ministry of Health to help with the purchase of BCG vaccine.

With the formalization of the enterprise risk management approach, the CMT revised the risk control library and included the risk self assessment as part of the planning, implementation and monitoring processes, both in programme and operations, in order to ensure that decisions taken are risk-informed.

Security is addressed at the level of the UNCT and the SMT together with the other UN agencies in Romania. During 2010, the Regional Security Officer based in Belgrade/Serbia visited Romania and undertook a revision and update of the security plan, MOSS, and Security Operations Procedures

manual for the UN House. The Country Security Focal Point maintains contact with state officials in charge of the security of UN staff in Romania, including gendarmerie and the Inspectorate for Emergency Situations which revised the UN House emergency interventions plan. A fire drill was organized in November 2010 in the UN House involving all staff and visitors. All recommendations made during the Regional Security Officer's mission were implemented.

The UNICEF Business Continuity Plan was updated to end-2009. In March 2010 an exercise was undertaken to test working remotely, using Citrix to access critical organizational systems from home (ProMS, Lotus Notes, Microsoft Office.) Lessons drawn from the exercise have been studied, documented, and necessary changes made to ensure smoothness of operations in situations when the office may not be accessible. EWEA has been regularly reviewed and updated.

4.1.3 Evaluation:

In 2010, the Country Office conducted 17 studies, surveys and evaluations. Results of the evaluations have in many cases already been translated into advocacy and/or programme plans of action such as the evidence based design of the School Attendance Campaign. The assessment of why policies for children are not being fully implemented will be the basis for future advocacy which pinpoints ways and means of overcoming hurdles in policy implementation. Other studies will contribute to advocacy for HIV prevention programmes among MARA; adjustment of National Health Programme for the nutrition of children under the age of two; and the incorporation into Romanian legislation of the International Code of Marketing for Breastmilk Substitutes.

4.1.4 Information Technology and Communication:

Information technology is vital to good decision-making and programme implementation. Technological innovations offer a huge potential for being leveraged to help the implementation of programmes and ensure wider access to information for all stakeholders. At the beginning of 2010, a tool for collecting and aggregating interview data for the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative was translated into Romanian. This software helped the validation of BFHI maternities to be done at a faster pace. Also, the project continues to be supported by a dedicated website (www.spitalprieteni.ro) which ensures higher visibility and ease of access to information for the wider public. In 2010, UNICEF Romania started to use social media to increase awareness of activities and enhance fundraising through setting up facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/#!/UNICEFRomania>), twitter and youtube accounts linked with the existing website. (<http://www.facebook.com/#!/SustineUNICEF>, <http://www.sustineunicef.ro/>)

In Romania, seven UN System agencies share common premises in the UN House: UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNFPA, UNODC, WHO, UNIC. This allows access to common services such as land line PBX, internet connection and security. The UN House, UNICEF Office included, is run on environmentally friendly principles. All used supplies such as empty toner cartridges are recycled by a specialized company. Computer and other obsolete IT equipment which were functional but out of standard, have been donated to project partners.

With regard to procurement of IT equipment, no common LTA with other agencies was negotiated due to differing IT standards. In Romania the IT market is quite developed, international warranties for HP equipment which is the main brand used are available and ensure good quality service. Prices from various resellers are quite similar, and IT portals are widely available to enable comparison and selection of the most advantageous one when the need arises (www.price.ro)

UNICEF IT systems are built to provide various ways to access resources like webmail, Business Everywhere connectivity and CITRIX remote access. The IT infrastructure is prepared to ensure business continuity in case of emergency. This is done by keeping UNICEF Romania IT systems in line with UNICEF prescribed practices, under the ITSS guidelines, and industry best practices.

4.2 Fin Res & Stewardship

4.2.1 Fund-raising & Donor Relations:

During 2010 all donor reports were sent on or before the deadline. For the funds raised through telethons or public appeals, reports have been issued and posted on the web site www.unicef.ro or sent as newsletters to donors/contributors. For corporate donors, reports have been prepared as per the

reporting schedule, usually once a year or at the end of the implementation period. Donors appreciate most the human interest stories that accompany the donor reports, and also the joint field visits undertaken to project sites.

With regard to HAR appeals, the Romania office raised US\$670,000 through a telethon dedicated to the Haiti emergency.

Out of the 2010 ORR ceiling of 2.5 million, 82% was mobilized. In addition to local fundraising efforts, the main source of OR funds were thematic funds, the 7% set-aside and contributions from the German and UK National Committees. Already, 67% of the ORR ceiling of US\$2.6 million for 2011 has been raised.

Five requests for PBA extensions were processed during 2010, all for locally raised funds and in agreement with donors. The main reason for the extensions had to do with the timing of bank transfers from donors to UNICEF. We had several field trips with corporate donors during the year as part of our reporting process. The office has an established procedure for monitoring expiration dates and utilization of funds is an indicator which is routinely monitored by programme staff, and monthly by the CMT in its regular meetings. Final reports for PBAs expiring in 2010 have shown over 95% expenditure.

As mentioned above, fundraising for the implementation of UNICEF programmes in Romania is both external and internal. Locally, various channels are used, including private sector partnerships with the corporate sector (GDF Suez, Kaufland, Pampers, Dinu Patriciu Foundation, Ikea, Porsche,) and banks (BRD Groupe Societe Generale, UniCredit Bank and ING), as well as the mobilization of individual donors and maintenance of relationships with the existing donors on the CO house list. Since resource leverage and mobilisation is one of the CPAP programme components, fundraising is dealt with in more detail in section 3.2 of this report.

4.2.2 Management of Financial and Other Assets:

The last internal audit of the UNICEF Romania Office was in December 2007. The audit awarded a “satisfactory” rating for the area of Operations and recommendations made at that time were implemented. Overall budget control and oversight is ensured by the CMT. Budget allocation is decided in the CMT and processed by the Operations Officer, who also helps with budget monitoring. Contribution management is a very important function for Romania which has a dedicated local fundraising capacity. With regards to direct cash transfers (DCT) there has been one single unliquidated case of US\$6,000 over nine months reported in the third quarter, which was resolved with the implementing partners. Liquidation of cash assistance is processed by the Programme Assistant in cooperation with the Operations section. The office is making progress with HACT (Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers) procedures. Five partners have been micro-assessed by the office and simplified procedures established in terms of direct cash transfers and justification of expenditures using FACE (Funding Authorization and Certificate of Expenditure.) Bank reconciliations are done in a timely manner and reports are sent to NYHQ monthly, as required. All reconciling items are cleared by the next monthly closure and no pending cheques have been reported in 2010. Operations staff follow closely the training materials and courses available on line from the Division of Finance and Administration (DFAM) with regards to IPSAS and the changes it will involve for accounting procedures.

In 2010 the utilization rate of the RR allocation was 75%. Four of the ORR PBAs were extended in 2010, all funded by local donors and with their prior agreement from them. The main reason is the cash-flow and delays in transfer of various instalments from the donors. Emergency funds raised locally include a sustainability component which means implementation and expenditures take place over two years.

It is important to mention the efficiency of VAT reimbursements, which during 2010 were done in a full and timely manner by the relevant department in the Ministry of Finance.

4.2.3 Supply:

UNICEF’s programme in Romania is not supply-heavy. The total amount spent on supplies in 2010 was around US\$160,000 which represents 7% of the total programme throughput. Out of this, US\$57,000 (36%) was spent on printing studies, evaluations or UNICEF branded materials. The office does not have a dedicated procurement assistant position: the supply component is managed by

the Operations Officer, with help from the Logistics Assistant/ Driver (G3.) None of the UNICEF Romania staff has received specialized training in procurement, which caused some difficulty complying with procurement procedures in 2010. For example, colleagues were not aware that medicines should not be procured locally without special authorization from Supply Division, or of the rules applicable to direct procurement services for governments.

The emergency intervention to help the families affected by the floods in the North-East of Romania during the summer of 2010 involved procurement of first-hand hygienic products and medicines which was handled efficiently and in a timely manner.

During the summer of 2010, due to the temporary closure of the local institute for producing vaccines, there was a lack of BCG vaccines in the Romanian market. Consequently, at the request of the Ministry of Health, UNICEF arranged for the shipment of one million doses with the help of the UNICEF Copenhagen Supply Centre. This timely help was very much appreciated by our governmental partners.

The local market is well developed and virtually any product can be purchased locally at competitive prices. The possibility of establishing Long-term Arrangements (LTAs) has been explored with the OMT members, and certain contracts have been extended to cover all UN agencies like shipping, and travel services. However, as none of the agencies is supply driven, this area does not attract much interest and is of a relatively low priority.

4.3 Human Resource Capacity:

The project which received most resources in 2010 was the School Attendance Campaign, which was facilitated by two staff on temporary assistance contracts who took on the extra work in addition to their duties related to ECD, Parenting and Emergencies. Flexibility in staffing is very important, especially when a change of priorities occurs based on the country situation and the effect of the crisis on the most vulnerable. Different HR profiles are needed to fulfil the objectives set: 75 service contracts were raised during 2010, compared to 50 in 2009. The increase is due to the focus on local level interventions at the community level to facilitate policy implementation.

Updated situation analyses, monitoring of the external environment, disaggregated data collection and analysis including coherent capability gap analysis are key in deciding the right interventions, and making the most of the opportunities available. To ensure adequate professional support for the social inclusion programme component, one temporary assistance staff was hired, under the supervision of the Programme Specialist to focus on social budgeting and community based services. All three contracts mentioned above will be continued in 2011 to ensure the necessary support for the programmes.

The Local Training Committee met in 2010 to approve the training plan, which will be reviewed in January 2011. Staff development is taken seriously and opportunities are offered to staff based on their needs, which are identified together with supervisors as part of the performance evaluation process. During 2010 one staff member graduated from the Leadership Development Initiative, and two other staff members were accepted and attended the first block. This is considered one of the most exciting opportunities for personal and professional development available in the organization, and the CO is proud to have three SMs participating.

In the UNICEF Romania office there is one Peer Support Volunteer who is available for consultations on request. Bi-annual activity reports have been prepared and shared with the NYHQ Unit, as usual. A second Peer Support Volunteer was elected in December 2010 and will be undertaking the 1st phase of training in March 2011.

4.4 Other Issues

4.4.1 Management Areas Requiring Improvement:

The Romania CO requested and obtained approval for the use of e-banking for payments. Accordingly, since November 2010 all Citibank payments have been processed on-line while continuing to ensure proper segregation of duties. The benefits obtained are as follows: three times lower bank commissions for on-line payments; extended cut-off time for processing, transfers within the same bank (Citibank) done in real time; shorter time for preparation of orders due to predefined

payments (utilities, staff salaries processed “in batch”); and saving money by ordering payments without having to depend on the availability of a driver and a UNICEF vehicle.

4.4.2 Changes in AMP:

There will be two main additions to the 2011 Annual Management Plan on account of (i) the preparation of the 2012-2013 support budget; (ii) the Mid-Term Review (MTR). Scheduled to take place mid-year, the MTR will be examining along with Government partners the form of UNICEF engagement in Romania beyond the end of the current 3-year Country Programme which covers the period 2010-2012.

5. STUDIES, SURVEYS, EVALUATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

Studies, surveys and evaluations:

1. Children’s rights and the violation of Children’s rights in Romanian mass media
2. Charitable organisations in Romania, fundraising behavior / barometer
3. School as it is
4. The preschool and school participation of Roma children in Romania
5. One school for all? Access of roma children to quality education
6. Study on the necessity of the implementation of the Integrated National strategy for the formation and development of parenting skills
7. Decentralization of social protection system in Romania – a focus on social assistance in the benefit of most vulnerable children and their families
8. Are the rights of child negotiable? The case of early marriages
9. School inclusion of Children with special education needs
10. Analysis of social inclusion policies in Romania
11. Access to needle exchange equipment and substitution treatment in pharmacies
12. Capacity building needs assessment for organization working with MARA
13. Most at risk adolescents – HIV prevention
14. Early school drop-out: causes and possible ways to prevent it

Other Publications:

1. Parenting education – determining factor for the efficiency of the school – child – community contract
2. Guide for teachers
3. Romani language and literature
4. The parent’s daily notebook parenting education – determining factor for the efficiency of the school-child-community contract
5. Guide for teachers
6. Replication of the EPA system – implications at policy level
7. Video material for raising funds for the prevention of school abandonment
8. Guide for parents
9. 2010-11 School year calendars

6. INNOVATION & LESSON LEARNED:

Title: *Evaluation Study on “Why are policies, laws, national plans and strategies not working for disadvantaged and socially excluded children in Romania?”*

Category:

Lesson learned

MSTP Focus Area or Cross Cutting Strategy:

Focus Area 5, Knowledge Management

Key Themes:

Policies, child protection, decentralization

Related Links:

<http://www.intranet.unicef.org/epp/repsubportal.nsf>

Contact Person:

Edmond McLoughney

Abstract:

The purpose of the evaluation was to examine the reasons why policies, laws, national plans and strategies for disadvantaged and socially excluded children were not working in Romania. UNICEF, other organisations, and concerned Government authorities have invested a lot of human and financial resources over the years to promote better policies and laws for children. Yet, their implementation suggests that on the ground they often do not work as well as planned or expected. The Romania Country Office (CO) recruited a research company to examine why they do not work and to provide recommendations on what should be done. The CO felt that such a study could help not just the UNICEF programme in Romania to be more effective, but would also have application in other countries where policy implementation is a problem.

Innovation or Lessons Learned:

The lesson learned is that instead of promoting policies that are not likely to be implemented. UNICEF should direct its efforts to ensuring that the policies and laws addressing social exclusion of children are implemented and enforced. This requires examining the blockages to implementation and working with central and local government partners, as well as communities and NGOs, to overcome them. An important lesson is that policies and laws on social exclusion should be looked at always from the point of view of the recipient and not just from the top-down perspective of the Government. This kind of analysis should be a standard part of the preparation of any policy, law or strategy on social exclusion. A further lesson is that UNICEF should not promote policies without ensuring that the material and human resources and management structures are there to implement them and make them sustainable.

Potential Application:

The lessons from this study are applicable in any setting. The capacity to implement a policy, law, national plan or regulation should be examined and the full resource implications reviewed before the measure is formally adopted. A policy or law without the necessary enforcement mechanism and budgetary support remains a formality. Worse, it leads to complacency from the impression that something concrete is being done to address the rights and needs of the most disadvantaged, when in fact the reality is quite different. The findings of the evaluation, in addition to guiding corrective steps at the national and sub-national levels, can also be used by the local authorities to argue for higher budgetary allocations and systemic reform. In Romania and in countries similarly situated in terms of EU membership, the evaluation can provide an informed basis to seek alternative sources of funding (e.g., from EU Structural Funds) in order to promote social inclusion and equity in fulfilment of child and human rights.

Issue/Background:

The study looks at the implementation of social assistance and child protection policies in Romania especially in the context of social exclusion. It takes into account the ongoing decentralisation of services, which is being effected in line with EU policy. It looks at the ways social services are delivered in disadvantaged communities - both urban and rural.

Strategy and Implementation:

UNICEF's strategy is to scale up community based services. However, field monitoring and observation shows that even though national policies exist for community based services, they are not being implemented efficiently on the ground. To help address the implementation gaps, UNICEF recruited a research organisation to analyse why policies aimed at disadvantaged children, families and communities are not working. The knowledge gleaned from such a study will enable the CO to take a realistic rather than an idealistic approach to the design of community based services. At a broader level, the study was expected to provide valuable guidance for the implementation of social policies in all areas affecting children and contribute to strengthening the CO's efforts to promote equity.

Progress and Results:

The study found the following:

- (1) Policies and laws are adopted without taking into account the implementation structure - both in terms of management capacity at the local level and in terms of the availability and deployment of human resources, e.g., social workers.
- (2) Policies which entail the distribution of cash transfers such as the minimum wage, tend to work all right, but are insufficient to make any appreciable impact on the lives of poor children and families.
- (3) Frequently, the intended recipients of cash assistance and services do not know their entitlements and no one informs them about what they are or how to access them. In any case, people have little trust in the system or the people who run it.
- (4) There is usually insufficient money to cover the costs of implementing the policy or law, as these are commonly adopted without proper financial costing or budgeting.
- (5) Local authorities themselves are not always familiar with the law or policy; there are frequent changes which are not always communicated to them by the central government.
- (6) Social assistance is often distributed in accordance with the political affiliation of the local authorities rather than the needs of the socially excluded.

Next Steps:

UNICEF Romania's next steps will be to strongly advocate and promote responsible budgeting for children at all levels. In addition, it will promote policy review and analysis *prior to adoption* to ensure that the necessary human, financial and management resources are in place to implement them. UNICEF will also explore working with the WB and the EU to promote a more equitable and less politicised system for distributing resources to address social inclusion. It will intensify and expand its work at the community level, and is already doing so, to get critical mass on policy implementation through social mobilisation and the involvement of the socially excluded themselves.