

UNICEF IN UZBEKISTAN



For every child
Health, Education, Equality, Protection
ADVANCE HUMANITY





BACKGROUND



UNICEF has been working in Uzbekistan since 1994 to advocate for the promotion and protection of children's rights, to help the government to meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. UNICEF, through its programme of cooperation, works with national government at central and local level, civil society and international development partners to: 1) Promote healthy lives and combat HIV/AIDS, and 2) Provide quality education, health and protect against abuse, exploitation and violence.

Much has been achieved by Uzbekistan in addressing children's needs in the healthcare and education sector. The child mortality and child malnutrition has declined and 96 per cent of the children complete primary school according to the nationwide Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey carried out in 2006. The survey also found that over 80% of children are fully vaccinated before their first birthday; 84% of mothers breast-feed their children until the age of one year; and 94% of the urban population and 79% of the rural population are provided with access to safe water and adequate sanitation.

The first country programme of cooperation started in 1995 by providing training and supplies for healthcare. This was backed by social mobilization and health education campaigns. By 1999, provision of basic services for children were well underway, allowing UNICEF to shift its focus to a rights-based approach aiming to ensure that the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) becomes the standard for health and education and protection of children. The CRC recognizes that children need good health care services, proper nutrition, good quality education, protection from harm and exploitation, a safe environment, and encouragement to participate in the decisions that affect their lives.

Country Programme of Cooperation 2005–2009

Under the framework of the CRC, the goal of the current 2005–2009 Country Programme of Cooperation is to support the government to meet its obligations towards children's and women's rights to live, grow up and develop in a nurturing, caring and protective environment. The UNICEF Country Programme is also geared towards the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on improving nutrition, education, gender equality, maternal health, reducing child mortality, HIV/AIDS and addressing child poverty.

Key **results** under this programme include:

At national level: State policies to provide a better framework for the protection of children's rights, with existing legislation amended to comply with CRC principles. Administrative frameworks and institutional development support effective implementation of the programme.

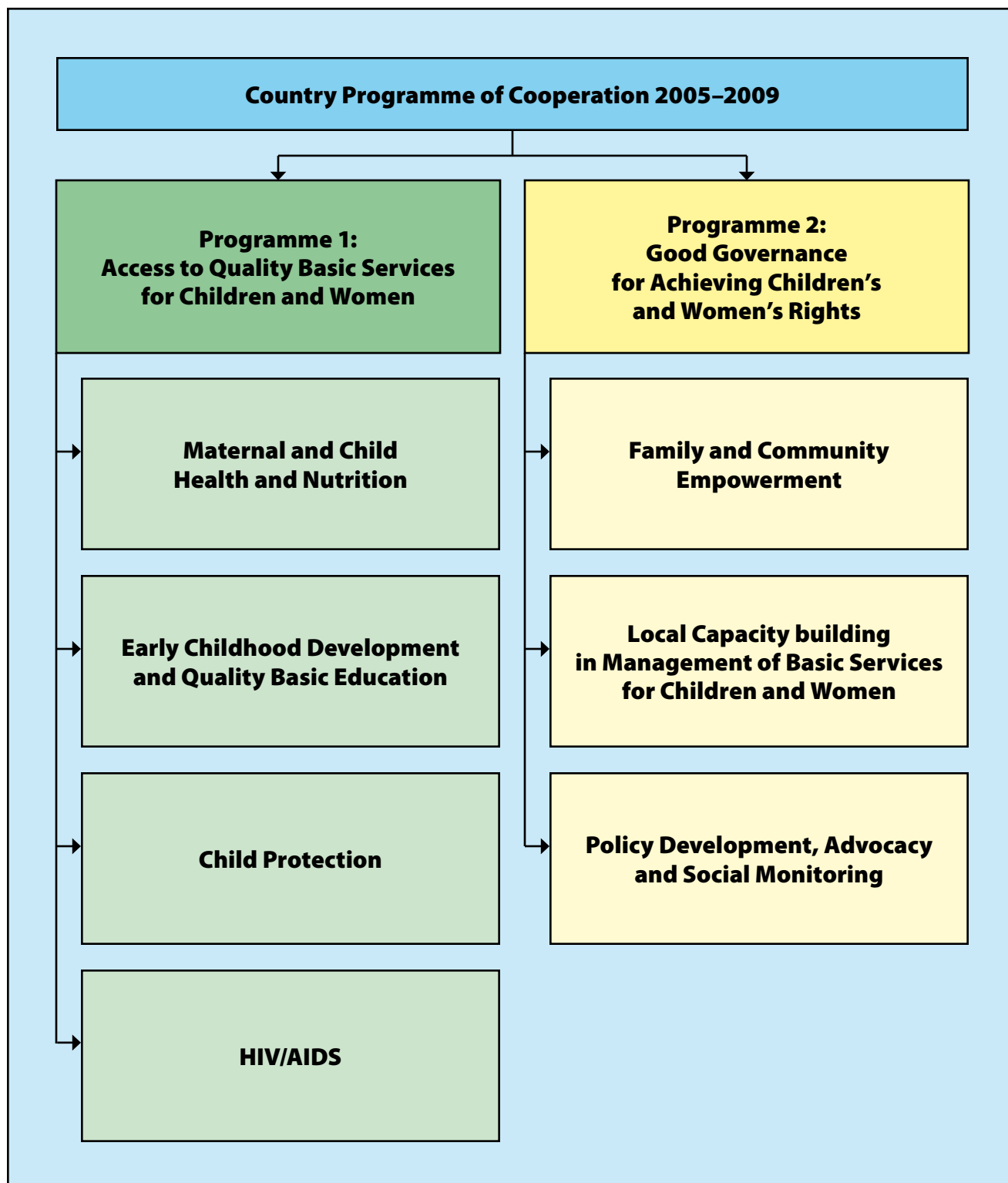
At field level: Improved quality of health care with a special focus on maternal and new born care, improved quality of basic education with a focus on child centred teaching and learning, also families adopt improved child-rearing practices (health and nutrition, psycho-social and cognitive development, protection, hygiene and sanitation). The physical integrity and dignity of the child will be respected within local institutions and communities. Communities ([Makhallas](#)) and local officials develop and implement action plans for improved basic social services for women and children's well-being.

UNICEF works with Government, international and local organisations, civil society, media, children and young people to:

- Advocate for effective policies to benefit children;
- Support innovative programmes to care for and protect children;
- Ensure that the voices of children and young people are heard.

UNICEF aims to identify and support those organizations, institutions, or individuals who can advocate and make a difference to the children's life and wellbeing in Uzbekistan.

UNICEF UZBEKISTAN PROGRAMME STRUCTURE



HEALTH AND NUTRITION



Promoting young children's survival and development in support of Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 4: reducing child mortality; MDG 5: improving maternal health; MDG 6: HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria control; MDG 7: providing a clean environment.

UNICEF's health programmes support the Government in the introduction of low cost, high impact health intervention throughout the country, to reduce child mortality, morbidity, and disability. UNICEF has contributed to major policy changes on safe motherhood and supports the Government of Uzbekistan in developing a new strategy on newborn and child survival. Currently 38% of babies are born in maternities, certified as baby friendly hospitals. UNICEF supported the development of the law on Universal Salt Iodization, which will provide a basis for the sustainable elimination of Iodine Deficiency Disorders. Since 2002 Uzbekistan has been declared as a polio-free country. Currently, the immunization programme covers about 98% of children in Uzbekistan and anaemia among childbearing women and children has been decreased by 35% (MICS 2006). UNICEF programme in health is in line government's health sector reform and complement the contribution of IFIs and other international and national partners involved in this sector. These programmes are reflected in the State Programme on the Year of Social Protection, as well as in the new Presidential Decree on Health Reform (September 2007).

Child Survival. UNICEF is taking a leading role in assisting the state in improving the quality of health services for newborn/child survival at hospital and primary healthcare (PHC) levels. At hospital level, all health professionals dealing with delivery and newborn care nationwide will enhance their professional skills in diagnosis and appropriate registration of newborns, neonatal resuscitation and essential newborn care. At the primary health care level, the development of basic package of quality

services for children and women is completed and all PHC professionals will enhance their skills to deliver this basic package. These initiatives are well placed in the donor support spectrum like WB supported health I & II and ADB MCH projects.

Immunization. Immunization coverage is very high according to 2006 MICS and the country is self-sufficient in procuring routine immunization. Hepatitis B vaccines are provided by GAVI but effective 2008, the government will take over. Currently UNICEF is assisting the state in capacity building to improve safe immunization practices and strengthening cold chain system. UNICEF also supports the government with procurement of vaccines and injectables.

Nutrition. UNICEF continues to support the [iron supplementation](#) programme. Since 2000, the Government of Japan has provided Ferrous Sulfate and Folic Acid tablets and UNICEF provided capacity building for health professionals and operational support to the supplementation programme. Up to now, the programme covered nine out of fourteen regions reaching close to 90% of children 6–59 months old and pregnant women. A 2005 evaluation showed that the level of anaemia in the area covered by the programme has decreased on average by 20% in all target groups.

Within the scope of [Universal Salt Iodization](#), UNICEF has provided a range of assistance. In early 2000s, UNICEF provided three salt producing areas with fortification equipment. This initiative was also picked up by ADB who provided additional eight areas with the same equipment. Since then, UNICEF has been focused on monitoring quality (USAID funded). All regions were provided with lab equipment, respective professionals trained and local level authorities sensitized to ensure their support. In 2005–2006, UNICEF worked with the Consumer Rights organization to promote the production and use of iodized salt and helped the state to establish sustainable procurement service for potassium iodate. Since 2005, UNICEF is leading and implementing the communication component of the GAIN fund (through WB) for [flour fortification](#) to support all 48 fortified flour production sites countrywide. The comprehensive communication programme contributed to raising awareness and demand for fortified flour in the country (in 2007 alone, over 900,000 tonnes of fortified flour have been produced).

Starting 2006, UNICEF and the WB have been supporting the development of a multi-sectoral national nutrition action plan for children. This activity is being coordinated by the cabinet of ministers and ministry of health.

BASIC EDUCATION



Providing basic education and gender equality in support of MDG 2: educate every child; and MDG 3: provide equal chances for girls and women.

Since the enrolment rate in primary and basic education in Uzbekistan is high at 96%, UNICEF assists the Government in improving the quality of education and learning achievements for children from pre-school up to grade 9, through improvement in provision of early childhood services and making schools more child-friendly. Together with its national and international partners, UNICEF promotes and supports inclusive and child-centred education, by educating parents, children, teachers, directors/school administrators and community leaders. UNICEF's main focus is on:

- **Policy Level:** The Law on Education has been revised, and the new School Charter has been developed by the government. The [State Programme on school education development](#) has five components, two of which are supported by UNICEF as part of Child Friendly School initiative—on curriculum development and capacity building for teachers.
- **Early Childhood Development:** In addition, UNICEF is supporting the MoPE in developing Early Learning and School Readiness Standards. Currently UNICEF is assisting the government in the development of a new National policy for preschool education. Nearly 20% of children under-5 attend pre-school. UNICEF also supports the improvement pre-school preparation of children by encouraging the establishment of non-traditional forms of preschool education.
- **Child Friendly School (CFS)** initiative: Promotion of interactive, child-centred, rights- and life-skills based teaching and learning, professional capacity building for teachers to deliver education using modern interactive methodologies in grades 1–9 for 10 key subjects. The project is implemented in 5 pilot regions of RKK, Khorezm, Ferghana, Tashkent regions and Tashkent City and is covering 700 schools benefiting around 600,000 schoolchildren.
- **Inclusive education** continues to be supported as part of the CFS package through the development of methodical materials for children with disabilities and worked with MoPE to integrate 560 disabled children into 200 mainstream schools in 4 regions. Inclusive education has also been included in the revised version of the Law on Education.

CHILD PROTECTION



Protecting children against abuse, exploitation and violence in support of MDG 6: exploited and abused children are particularly vulnerable to infectious diseases.

UNICEF, together with national partners, focuses on the following areas:

- Advocating for **legislative reforms** in the spheres of child rights and juvenile justice to bring it in compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); with support from UNICEF, a law on Guarantees of the Rights of the Child has been drafted and submitted to the Parliament of Uzbekistan in 2007.
- Promoting **restorative justice for children through supporting a team of national experts to draft a juvenile justice law that is in line with the CRC and other international standards. Within this project, UNICEF is supporting piloting of child court** and diversion mechanisms.
- Supporting establishment of the field of social work through professional capacity building in social work through in-service and pre-service trainings; 3 universities already have Social Work Departments. The first group of professional social worker will graduate from these universities in 2008.
- Promoting **child care reform**, with an emphasis on [de-institutionalization](#) and the rights of children to a family environment; two regions for piloting de-institutionalisation and setting up Child and Family Support Services were identified (Tashkent and Samarqand). As part of this the child protection system has been assessed and policy recommendations have been developed.

HIV/AIDS PREVENTION AND YOUTH



Combating HIV/AIDS and providing care and services for affected children in support of MDG 6: fighting infectious diseases.

The rapid growth rate of HIV cases in Uzbekistan from 230 cases in 2000 to over 10,015 in 2006 is of big concern. 56% of

reported HIV cases are among the young population below age 30. The HIV/AIDS pandemic in Uzbekistan is at the stage where it is mostly prevalent amongst people with high risk behaviours such as intravenous drug users, commercial sex workers and men having sex with men. UNICEF's primary focus is to assist the state with programmes targeted at "most at risk" adolescents (MARA). UNICEF conducts a five-year "UNITE FOR CHILDREN—UNITE AGAINST AIDS" campaign, raising awareness about the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS on children. The five components of the campaign are: prevention of mother to child transmission; provide protection to HIV & AIDS children, care and support of vulnerable children; support prevention programme among young children; and paediatric treatment.

In order to achieve the objectives, UNICEF focuses on:

- **Peer-to-peer education** and outreach work, which addresses the most at risk adolescents (MARA) and young people through a behaviour change communication strategy.
- **Youth friendly health services (YFHS)** for HIV/AIDS, which are primarily addressing MARA for HIV prevention, care, support and treatment; the YFHS Standards were adopted by the Government of Uzbekistan based on piloting results in Ferghana region and Tashkent City and will be scaled up to one more region in 2008. Mayors of pilot areas adopted "Policies on HIV Prevention", which provided an enabling environment to bring together key gate-keepers and MARA, while the Health Department adopted a Decree authorising the use of Unique Identification Code system in referring MARA to specialized services.
- **Prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV (PMTCT)** through building capacity of health service providers. The main focus is on integration of PMTCT into perinatal systems.
- The Government has adopted a **National Strategy to combat HIV/AIDS for 2007–2011**. UNICEF has supported the development of an overall communication strategy and prevention components among young people as its contribution to the national plan.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT/ FAMILY EDUCATION



The family education programme aims at increasing the knowledge of parents in child rearing practices, so that children of all ages can receive adequate nutrition and access to quality education, grow up in safe and friendly local communities and become healthy and well-balanced young citizens. It also addresses issues of community empowerment

and capacity building of local authorities to support local initiatives to assist families in better caring for their children.

UNICEF is supporting early childhood development through Uzbekistan's unique and traditional local structure: the makhalla (community). The makhallas are taking on an increasing responsibility for community development and social assistance, particularly for pre-school services. Makhalla initiative groups focus on the survival and protection of newborns and women by promoting access to safe immunization services, encouraging breastfeeding, good nutrition, better parenting skills and early education.

LOCAL PLANNING CAPACITY BUILDING



This project complements the sectoral programme by capacity development of local administrations and managers. It aims at improving managerial, planning and monitoring skill of local administrators. Currently, UNICEF is working with the state Academy on State and Social Construction which offers postgraduate courses for different levels of state authorities. Jointly with the Academy a special course was developed and introduced in the existing training programme of the academy. The course focuses on issues such as Results Based Management, Monitoring & Evaluation and CRC.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION



Since 2007, Ministry of Emergency and UNICEF are jointly implementing a disaster preparedness and risk reduction programme. The programme supported by EU/DIPECHO aims at risk reduction among vulnerable communities, especially children and women in disaster prone areas of Uzbekistan.

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