Executive Summary

2012 was a relatively stable year for Armenia; despite the Parliamentary elections, and the related changes in Government, UNICEF continued the smooth implementation of its programme, and further positioned itself as one of the strongest partners of the Government in the promotion of the rights of the most vulnerable families and children.

A key achievement during the year was the approval in July of the Integrated Social Services (ISS) reform, which was defined with technical advice from UNICEF; the methodology for territorial social planning, promoted by UNICEF, was approved in December. The implementation of the reform will allow the Government to address the needs of vulnerable families and children through a more efficient and effective delivery of social protection services. UNICEF also secured funds from the European Union to support a programme aimed at reducing the vulnerability of migrant families.

UNICEF succeeded in positioning children with disabilities, who are among the most vulnerable, at the centre of the country’s equity agenda. A study revealing the limited access to health, education and social protection services that these children have gained the attention of decision makers and professionals, and continues to inform the debate on the social inclusion of persons with disabilities. At the same time, UNICEF continued to sustain the development of policies and practices contributing to the promotion of the rights of children with disabilities including the right to an inclusive education, the promotion of a social model of disabilities and the advocacy for inter-sectoral cooperation in the provision of services along the life cycle.

In 2012, UNICEF consolidated and expanded strategic partnerships with international financial institutions with the aim of ensuring coherent support to the Government in the carrying out of its strategic reforms: UNICEF positioned itself as the partner of choice for the World Bank (WB) in promoting the ISS reform by providing continuous technical advice on methodological issues in the report, while the WB focused on sustaining the infrastructural components.

At the same time, UNICEF and the International Labour Organization (ILO), with the full support of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), promoted the Social Protection Floor initiative, as the platform of negotiation for a long-term social protection programme in Armenia, to be presented to the Government appointed after the presidential elections in 2013.

Despite the progress in the dialogue with the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues and the increased engagement of other donors, it was not possible in 2012 to define a long-term plan for the development of alternative care services for children and the reduction of placements in residential care, which is unanimously considered a priority in Armenia. The direct engagement of the Minister of Labour seems, however, to indicate promising developments for 2013.

Delays have also been registered in the approval of the Law on Flour Fortification, strongly sustained by UNICEF since 2011 as a milestone for the achievement of results in the improvement of nutrition of mothers and children in Armenia; data continues to show worrying trends in malnutrition and evident inequalities related to the socioeconomic conditions of families.

Country Situation as Affecting Children & Women

Armenia is a lower-middle income country with HDI value for 2011 of 0.716 - in the high human development category - positioning the country at 86 out of 187 countries and territories. The country’s GDP per capita in 2011 was 2,950 US dollars (PPP-adjusted per capita GDP is USD 5,200). After a period of double digit economic growth of around 12% between 2001 and 2007, the country was harshly hit by the global financial crisis in the last quarter of 2008. As a result GDP dropped by 14.4% in 2009.

The economic decline largely affected the poverty alleviation measures, and jeopardized the achievement of many of the national Millennium Development Goals (MDG) targets. The latest MDG progress report (2008) shows that Armenia was on track to achieve Goals 3,6 and 7 but that it was unlikely to achieve the national targets for Goals 1,2,4 and 5 by 2015. In 2010, the economy started to recover and by the end of the year,
2.6% GDP growth was registered. In 2011 the GDP growth reached 4.6%, which is considered as insufficient to overcome socioeconomic distortions caused by the crisis.

According to the results of the integrated study on living standards of households in Armenia in 2011, released by the National Statistical Service (NSS), in 2011 the poverty level decreased in comparison to 2010 standing at 35% against the 35.8% reported in 2010. While somewhat positive trends were observed in general poverty reduction in 2011, extreme poverty showed an increase compared to previous years, growing by 2.3 times or 2.1 percentage points. In 2011, 3.7 per cent of the population or around 120,000 people were extremely poor in Armenia.

Children continued to be the poorest among the poor. Some 4.7% of children (under 18) live below the extreme poverty line and 41.9% below the poverty line. Data for 2011 show also a difference in child poverty incidence by sex: 42.9% of girls were poor, vs. 41.1% of boys (all children 41.9%). There are differences in child poverty incidence by regions: 6.1% of children in urban areas were extremely poor vs. 2.4% of children in rural areas; 41.6% of children in urban areas were poor vs. 42.5% of children in rural areas. The situation was even worse for children with disabilities and their families. The poverty level among children with disabilities is 65% compared to 35% of the country’s general poverty level. Eight per cent of children with disabilities and their families were extremely poor.

Family benefits continued to play a crucial role for extremely poor families. Although the Government furthered efforts to reduce the number of families not entitled to family benefits, there is still a major concern about the number of eligible families who are not reached. According to the data of the National Statistics Service, in 2011 only 21% of poor families and 54% of extremely poor families received family benefits against 26% and 67% in 2010.

In 2012, the State Budget spending was just over AMD 1 trillion (approximately 2.6 billion USD). Approximately 26% of the budget allocation for 2012 was directed towards the social protection/benefit sector, while health and education sectors received 6% and 11% respectively. Regional disparities and socioeconomic inequalities continue to be significant. Based on inequality indicators evaluated by the Gini coefficient, Armenia’s population is socially polarized.

In July 2012, as part of its social sector reform, the Government approved the introduction of the Integrated Social Services system in the country. It aims at ensuring universal access for all citizens to social support and protection based on assessment of the individual needs of a person or a family or a community. Integrated Social Services, although being universal, primarily focus on the most vulnerable groups of the population and try to fully respond to their needs. The introduction of Integrated Social Services also envisages the expansion of the number of social workers as well as establishment of a new category of social workers – case managers, who will be responsible for assessing the situation of an individual or family in need and will work with them to prepare individual plans to improve the situation.

According to the recent Demographic and Health Survey, the nutritional status of children in Armenia deteriorated between 2005 and 2010. The main nutritional problem is stunting and chronic malnutrition. In 2005, 13% of children in Armenia were suffering from stunting and in 2010 this indicator increased to 19%. Some potential reasons behind the deteriorated nutrition situation include poor timing in the introduction of complementary foods and a variety of foods; inadequate knowledge of parents on nutrition issues; and the poor quality of counselling provided by healthcare providers. In spite of existing protocols, not all primary health care facilities are properly checking children’s weight and height during regular visits and the data is not recorded on growth charts. This prevents the Ministry of Health, regional and local authorities from having systemic and representative data to monitor the trends in different aspects of child nutrition and growth and to develop evidence based policy and specific actions addressing identified problems.

In 2012, a number of legislative initiatives and amendments were adopted that contribute to the protection of child rights. In particular, the Law on Education was amended to better reflect the principles of inclusive education and ensure access of children with disabilities to regular schools. With support from UNICEF, the Law on Domestic Violence was developed and submitted to the National Assembly of Armenia for further consideration and adoption.
**Country Programme Analytical Overview**

Throughout 2012, the UNICEF Armenia Office continued to increase the coherence of its programme components, and to gain the trust of the Government to provide policy advice in the social sector.

An analysis of bottlenecks hindering the reduction of inequalities for children was launched in Armenia as a country-led exercise, with the full engagement of many stakeholders operating in the programme areas analysed. This allowed UNICEF, on the one hand, to position itself as the convener of key decision makers in sectors affecting the wellbeing of women and children, and on the other, to focus on three strategic directions in the second part of the programme cycle, starting in 2013.

These directions include: placing a strong emphasis on inter-sectoral work, seen as the most effective strategy to respond to the multiple vulnerabilities of families and children; promoting more formalised steps in this direction, such as the approval of a national framework for the cooperation of health, education and social protection services; and developing the capacities of service providers at the territorial level to formalise protocols of cooperation regulating referral mechanisms and multidisciplinary work.

UNICEF will provide support for the capacity development of line ministries to promote reform directions through budget planning exercises. Specifically, technical assistance will be provided from the beginning of 2013 for the outline of the new Midterm Expenditure Framework, ensuring the inclusion of new sectoral reforms (such as integrated social services, inclusive education, alternative care for children, improved nutrition of the population) and of the related budgetary forecasts in the document. This is a necessary precondition to ensure allocation of financial resources for the reforms in the future Budget Laws.

UNICEF will continue to increase the focus on programme areas where inequalities are most evident, as shown by various studies (including the Demographic and Health Survey and Poverty Snapshots published in 2012) and highlighted in the Situation Analysis report produced in 2012 (to be published in 2013). Resources and efforts will concentrate on supporting the improvement of social protection services (through case management and territorial planning); the promotion of deinstitutionalisation and inclusive education reforms; and the improvement of nutrition indicators. CO’s activities will be underpinned by continuous expert technical advice; advocacy and partnership with donors; and increased leverage of resources in strategic areas.

**Humanitarian Assistance**

In 2012, the Interagency Contingency plan was developed by the extended DMT and simulation training was conducted.

**Effective Advocacy**

*Mostly met benchmarks*

In 2012, UNICEF Armenia continued the "Every Child needs a Family" campaign. Strategically, this campaign was combined with the advocacy work on children with disabilities. Many children with disabilities are placed in institutions and one third does not attend school at all. Two major events on children with disabilities, the launch of a survey and a parliamentary hearing attended by three line ministers (education, health and social issues), were accompanied by press conferences and high level media coverage.

The activities led to a more inter-sectoral approach to addressing the needs of children with disabilities, highlighting at the same time, the issue of deinstitutionalisation and the need to build up alternative child care services. The cooperation among health, education and social protection ministries is now an accepted strategy to tackle the needs of children with disabilities. Advocacy for a less medical and more social approach supported the introduction of the "international codification of functioning".

The "Every Child needs a Family" campaign continued as a long term advocacy strategy, with a specific focus in 2012 on children with disabilities.
Capacity Development

 Mostly met benchmarks

The capacity development of a critical mass of professionals to help implement the reform on Integrated Social Services (ISS) – both case management practices and territorial social planning – continued in 2012 with a focus on an exit strategy which would ensure the sustainability of the process.

After the positive response to training on case management that was organised during the ISS pilot phase in 2011, the various training modules have been organised in a manual (Case Management Training Package), in which a detailed explanatory text accompanies each of the presented slides, explaining the process step-by-step. The manual also includes assessment tools developed during the pilot in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues (MoLSI).

The manual was tested with a second group of professionals and involved some facilitators identified within the first group, and the overall response was very positive. As a result, and in agreement with the MoLSI, a training of trainers (TOT) programme was organised through a series of videoconferences involving the senior trainers who developed the manual. The TOT included professionals working in territorial services that were previously trained, trainers of the National Institute of Labour and Social Research, and professors from Yerevan State University.

This group of new trainers will be directly involved in training the group of professionals working in the first Integrated Social Centres, due to open at the beginning of 2013. UNICEF will provide external support and supervision to the training. Five hundred copies of the manual are being printed and will be distributed to all future trainees, and the presentations, both in English and Armenian, are also available online.

Capacity development related to the second pillar of the ISS reform- territorial social planning- was ensured throughout 2012 with the organisation of workshops engaging civil servants and professionals working in all social services, as well as representatives of local administrations and of NGOs, in a negotiation exercise aimed at deciding together which services would best respond to the needs of the local population.

The experience and suggestions of the participants were reflected in the methodology approved by the Government of Armenia in December to be applied nationwide, as well as in other policy papers drafted to accompany the implementation of territorial social plans in all the regions.

Communication for Development

 Mostly met benchmarks

In 2012, UNICEF used the introduction of the Rotavirus vaccine in Armenia to embark on the process of introducing C4D into the Ministry of Health of Armenia. It did this by involving respective units of the Ministry, including a newly-established Public Health Unit, in the implementation of a Formative Research on Perceptions, Attitudes and Practices Towards Immunisation and Introduction of New Vaccines in Armenia.

The process has seen an active involvement of the Sanitary and Epidemiological Department and Public Health Unit of the Ministry in designing questionnaires and providing feedback on the data collected and methodology to be applied. Furthermore, the mentioned units and departments of the Ministry were actively involved in the design of an immunization communication strategy based on qualitative data received from the research.

The exposure of relevant departments of the Ministry of Health to C4D principles and values paved the way for further improvements in the public communication setup of the Ministry, leading to the adoption of an audience-centered and evidence-based approach in communication about immunisation.
Service Delivery

Initiating action to meet benchmarks

The UNICEF programme of cooperation has very limited scope on direct programme delivery.

Strategic Partnerships

Mostly met benchmarks

In 2012, responding to a request by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), UNICEF supported the launch of the Social Protection Floor (SPF) framework in Armenia. Armenia is the only country in the CEE-CIS region to have so far adopted the framework. Promoted globally by the UN system, the initiative aims at providing recommendations to governments for the set-up of a minimum level of services in health, education and social protection and care, thus ensuring the protection of the most vulnerable citizens.

A rapid assessment, analysing the entitlements and kind of services offered to Armenian citizens, was conducted and provided recommendations for the future strengthening of the package of services. The draft assessment report, finalised with the engagement of professionals from the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues, was jointly presented by ILO and UNICEF to various agencies.

The initiative caught the attention of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which has on several occasions expressed serious concerns about the difficulties of the Armenian Government to expand, or even to maintain, the social protection services provided to Armenian families.

Considering the elections in 2013, UNICEF, ILO and IMF agreed to promote the SPF as the platform for negotiating a long-term social protection programme between the elected government and donors. The plan will further highlight the cooperation of the three agencies in the promotion of poverty reduction strategies (started between UNICEF and IMF in 2010), and will allow the engagement of other UN agencies in the initiative.

In preparation for the national conference launching the initiative – planned for spring 2013 – the ILO organised in November a residential workshop in Armenia involving senior professionals from all the interested Ministries, to ensure a full understanding of the SPF framework. UNICEF intends to use the costing tool developed by UNICEF and ILO to present to the Government budgetary scenarios related to the sectoral reforms proposed in the assessment report.

Knowledge Management

Fully met benchmarks

The data available on children with disabilities in Armenia is not accurate enough to provide a clear picture of the situation of this social group. Around 8,000 children with disabilities are registered nationwide (in a database managed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues – MoLSI). This represents 1% of the child population – well below the world average estimate of 2.5%. Furthermore, the number of school-aged children attending special or mainstream education, according to official data, does not match the total number of registered school-aged children.

With the aim of addressing these gaps and better understanding the situation, UNICEF and the MoLSI launched a census to gather reliable information on the access of children with disabilities to health, education and social protection services. The research also sought to reveal the participation levels of children with disabilities in different activities such as sport, culture and community events, as well as the attitudes and awareness of their families or caregivers.

Out of all the children registered, only 5,707 could be found, highlighting a fundamental problem with the
reliability of the database. Most of these children are being cared for by their family (including children attending special boarding schools), while 385 children were found in the care of residential institutions. The analysis was disaggregated by each child’s sex, place of residence (capital city, regional towns and rural communities), region, and type of disability.

Data reveal that children with disabilities in Armenia face strong barriers in access to services, in particular those related to school inclusion, rehabilitation and community participation. The area of residence, type of disability and gender of the child were found to be decisive predictive factors of exclusion and discrimination. The most vulnerable group was found to be children with disabilities who live in institutions.

The study also shed light on worrying discrepancies in access to education: not all the children registered with a disability have the same status in schools (when they do not have special education needs); and not all the children attending special schools are registered with (or even have) a disability.

The evidence produced by the study initiated and continues to inform the debate on the rights and entitlements of children with disabilities. Following the publication of the study, the heads of standing commissions in the Parliament held a parliamentary hearing where key ministers were asked to present their plans on how to address the needs of these children.

### Human Rights Based Approach to Cooperation

*Mostly met benchmarks*

In October 2012, the pre-session for the Armenia CRC reporting process was held with the Committee of the Child Rights in Geneva. The main session which will be led by the Government of Armenia will be held in May 2013. The preparation for the session and the list of issues drafted and shared with the Government informed UNICEF’s Mid-term review process as well as the strategic plan of the Human Rights Ombudsperson’s Office.

Issues highlighted by the CRC Committee included child protection, the need for deinstitutionalization, juvenile justice provisions and services for children with special needs. The preparation for the main session in cooperation with partners will provide a good base to strengthen the overall HRBAP and better align programme priorities to address child rights' violations.

The situation analysis drafted in 2012 and the bottleneck analysis developed with partners informed this process.

### Gender Equality

*Fully met benchmarks*

In 2012, UNICEF continued to promote gender mainstreaming in selected programme components, as defined by the Office Memo approved in 2011. This included: involving fathers in perinatal care, enhancing their awareness of their role and responsibilities towards newborn babies; encouraging authorities to support child-friendly and gender-sensitive Disaster Risk Reduction investments in education policies and programming; promoting the role of women in disaster risk reduction, in consideration of their active contribution to protecting and rebuilding their communities before and after disasters; and including sex-disaggregated data in the child poverty snapshot report.

In 2012, UNICEF’s promotion of gender equality in the country focused on providing technical support to the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues (MoLSI) for the drafting of a Law on Domestic Violence. The draft law, as well as the package of supporting legislative amendments (in the Criminal Code and Criminal Procedure Code), were submitted to the Government for approval.

In addition, since April 2012, UNICEF took the chairmanship of the UN Expanded Theme Group on Gender,
thus strengthening its position as the promoter of the Gender Equality Agenda in the country. UNICEF was invited to participate in the activities of the Women Council chaired by the Prime Minister, and was asked to assist the Government with the set-up of a national gender mainstreaming mechanism, as per the recommendation of the Beijing Platform for Action. The task will be implemented in 2013 thanks to the financial support of the UNICEF Swiss National Committee.

**Environmental Sustainability**

*Fully met benchmarks*

The work developed by the country office within the regional DIPECHO-funded programme on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in education has ensured the progressive mainstreaming of DRR principles in the national programmes. The Priority Actions of the Hyogo Framework have been recognised by the Government as benchmarks for Armenia’s development.

An education thematic group was formed to coordinate activities within the DRR National Platform. DRR topics and strategies are incorporated into the education curriculum, with the promotion of school disaster management and school safety.

UNICEF also contributed to the work of national institutions that aims to ensure increased protection of children in schools located in earthquake-prone areas (such as Yerevan and Gyumri), by assessing buildings for seismic reliability and increasing school preparedness for evacuations.

**South-South and Triangular Cooperation**

In answer to a request by UNICEF Tajikistan, a Tajik delegation of statistical service representatives was hosted in Armenia to learn about the use of DevInfo (ArmeniaInfo) in presenting human development data. The National Statistical Service of the Republic of Armenia shared its experience in the application of the software for the monitoring of MDGs and other national, regional and community level socioeconomic indicators, highlighting advantages, gaps, good practices and areas for improvement.

The engagement of the Tajik delegation is expected to contribute to the development and enhanced sustainability of TojikInfo, thus improving access to quality up-to-date information and strengthening national capacity of Government partners and UN agencies in monitoring, analysing, disseminating and reporting of progress and results on MDGs and Mid-term Development Strategy (MTDS), in order to facilitate evidence-based policy making in Tajikistan.
Narrative Analysis by Programme Component Results and Intermediate Results

Armenia – 0260

PC 1 - Child rights monitoring and social policies

Constrained

PCR 0260/A0/04/001 The Government at the national and local level systematically identifies and addresses the needs of vulnerable children based on data produced by national and regional networks.

Progress:
The intermediate results in this programme component aim to increase the capacity of the Armenian social protection system to reach the most vulnerable and marginalised groups of the population, and to enable it to effectively respond to their needs. The IRs promote systemic changes for vulnerable people such as the progressive improvement of knowledge generation mechanisms and the promotion of case management and democratic local planning, in response to specific needs identified. Data published in December by the National Statistical Service shows that, in 2011, despite the slight decrease of poverty levels (35%; -0.8%), the share of extreme poverty has increased (3.7%; +0.7%), and that children continue to be the poorer (child poverty rate: 41.9%; extreme poverty rate: 4.7%). The coverage of economic contributions for poor and extremely poor families has decreased (20.8% for poor families and 54% for extremely poor families), generating concern among development partners - including UNICEF - about the effectiveness of social protection interventions.

Notwithstanding, the progressive focus on principles of transformative social protection - reflected in the reform of Integrated Social Services approved by a Government decree in July 2012 - is a very positive signal of a wider understanding of the need to expand social protection services through outreach and professional support to families. The continuous advocacy and technical assistance of UNICEF resulted in 2012 in a strengthening of the cooperation among all social services (health, education, social protection and care) to provide effective support to vulnerable families; and in increased attention paid to inequities affecting the population. Special attention - reflected in revised indicators - will be given to extremely poor families, and to the reduction of poverty for children with disabilities, which remain the most vulnerable group in Armenia (with a poverty rate of 64%).

The engagement with international organisations resulted also in the promotion, with ILO and IMF, of the Social Protection Floor initiative, seen as the platform for negotiation of a long-term social protection plan with the new Government that will be appointed in March 2013 after the Presidential elections. The analysis of the bottlenecks restricting the right to social protection for Armenian children and families - conducted by UNICEF in participation with key stakeholders - allowed the identification of strategic priorities for next year, in particular around the formalization of inter-sectoral cooperation, and the consideration of the recently approved reform in the new budget planning exercises (MTEF).

On-track

IR 0260/A0/04/001/003 By end 2015, national and regional authorities use reliable data, social policy and budget analysis to allocate resources to vulnerable children.

Progress: The reform of integrated social services remains a critical determining factor for the long term allocation by the Government of financial, technical and human resources to ensure the children’s right to social protection. In 2012, UNICEF’s work with the Ministry of Labour continued to yield positive outcomes, in particular with the ongoing transfer of knowledge and capacity in case management practices to a critical mass of in-service professionals, who will, in turn, be directly engaged in the training of service providers involved in the newly integrated social services. UNICEF continues to be seen by the Government as the
Progress:

Delays in some reform processes (particularly those supporting the Child's Right to a Family Environment) and restrictive budgetary mechanisms constrained the reallocation of financial resources to critical services for children. Discussions continue with partners about the revision of the IR indicators to allow the close monitoring of progress made. At the same time, the request of the Ministry of Labour to provide technical assistance for the drafting of the new MTEF allows UNICEF to further increase its influence on new policy directions in the budget planning exercise.

In 2012, UNICEF continued to support the National Statistical Services in improving their Child Rights Monitoring, with a specific focus on poverty, and in improving the availability of relevant data (including deprivation indicators and absence of health services). The expansion of ArmeniaInfo at the community level in six regions, together with the update of the database on community administrative data in the social sector, were major achievements toward this end. Similarly, in April, UNICEF supported the publication of the DHS report which provides a strong source of disaggregated data for equity-focused analysis.

On-track

**IR 0260/A0/04/001/004** By end 2015, Government provides institutional resources for the implementation of social action plan (LAP) methodology nationwide.

**Progress:**

The Territorial Social Plans (TSP) supported by UNICEF in 2012 are steadily being adopted in the country and have ensured the cooperation of key national partners. As part of the Integrated Social Services reform, TSPs provide a framework for the interaction of local authorities and civil society on the setup of community-based services to meet the needs of the most vulnerable children and women. The methodology for the development of TSP was prepared by UNICEF in close cooperation with the partners and was adopted by the Government in December of 2012, allowing for countrywide expansion of the planning exercise.

In 2012, UNICEF continued to promote the adoption of cooperation protocols for various social services to ensure effective cooperation between agencies in different sectors and at all levels of government. This was done through intense consultations with local stakeholders. UNICEF also directed the attention of national partners to some systemic impediments to institutional cooperation, namely gaps in legislation that limit the obligations of parties to respect the protocols as well as a strict culture of vertical and directive governance. This was achieved thanks to extensive consultations on bottlenecks in the consolidation of territorial planning.

Securing predictable financial resources for TSP remains a key challenge for local authorities. Addressing this challenge will require continued dialogue with appropriate decision makers in central government and continued advocacy to leverage the support of major donors. Various policy options to secure sustainable funding are currently being prepared with partners, including provisions for the MTEF, and leveraging the engagement of the European Union in the social protection aspects of regional development. UNICEF mobilized over US$ 1 million in EU funding to address the social protection needs of the families of labour migrants, using the consolidation of ISS and the engagement of sub-national authorities.

---

**PC 2 - Systems strengthening in social sectors**

On-track

**PCR 0260/A0/04/002** The social sector system reduces disparities in access to quality social services for girls and boys.

**Progress:**
By addressing the unequal distribution of social services, shortfalls in applying effective and efficient approaches as well as capacity gaps, the programme aims to sustain the efforts of the Government of Armenia to protect and promote the rights of children, with particular attention paid to those most vulnerable and marginalized.

Geographical disparities are evident in the distribution of all the social services, in particular neonatal and rehabilitation services in the health sector, preschools and inclusive schools, and day care services.

In 2012, the CO continued to support increased access to quality neonatal services for children born in regions (with the set up of intensive neonatal care units in 6 regional hospitals, benefitting 30% of newborns); access to preschool services for children living in rural areas (with the establishment or expansion of 200 kindergartens, serving 5,000 children); access of children in contact with the law to supportive and preventive services of community justice centers (11 in total, serving 120 children).

With the engagement of various donors, UNICEF developed a strong advocacy strategy to improve alternative care services for Armenian children with plans for several special boarding schools to be outlined in 2013.

There was a stress in 2012 on the need to improve the cooperation of different services in responding to the needs of the most vulnerable groups of children. This was part of reform of Integrated Social Services reform approved by the Government. A significant number of professionals working in various social services are now ready to engage at the national and regional level in defining protocols of cooperation, regulating referral mechanisms and undertake inter-disciplinary work.

UNICEF positioned itself in 2012 as a key counterpart of the line ministries in the dialogue on budgetary issues. The agreement reached during the sectoral annual review on technical assistance for the next MTEF exercise (2014-2016) will allow UNICEF to contribute strategic reform directions, and influence the related budgetary forecast. In fact, while the considerable increase of budget allocation to inclusive education in 2013 (over 40%) is positive, no budgetary increase is planned for mother and child health services, and the allocations in the child protection sector continue to reveal a lack of attention paid to alternative care services for children.

On-track

**IR 0260/A0/04/002/004** By end 2015, the Government provides a fully functional continuum of services in at least 2 marzes.

**Progress:**

Progress was made in the dialogue with the Ministry of Labour regarding the set up of a continuum of alternative care services for children in Armenia, However a consensus on a comprehensive vision of the required policy reforms, and on the implications of the Integrated Social Services reform for the child protection system was not reached.

UNICEF’s advocacy in 2012- culminating with its participation in the Sofia intergovernmental conference on ending institutionalisation of children under three - resulted in UNICEF increasing its position of trust as technical advisor to the Ministry. This was demonstrated by the Minister’s request for support in the revision of funding plans for residential care institution and alternative care services.

Preparatory work has begun on outlining transformation plans for two residential special schools. The plans will represent a model for the further enhancement of the deinstitutionalisation reform in Armenia. Key stakeholders have been engaged in the analysis of the bottlenecks hindering the right of children to grow up in a family. The analysis underlined the need to pay more attention to children with disabilities, to
Improvements were made in the institutional response to the protection needs of children, in particular of those in conflict with the law. This was done through the engagement of NGOs and the Human Rights Defender’s Office, the inclusion of UNICEF’s recommendations in the revised draft of the Criminal Procedure Code, and increased awareness on the need to eliminate torture and ill-treatment practices which were denounced in a report recently published by UNICEF. Furthermore, UNICEF coordinated the drafting of a new Law on Domestic Violence and provided substantial inputs into the revised National Plan of Action for children.

**Progress:**

In 2012, the equity focus was further strengthened in the education programme.

As a key partner of the Armenian Government in ensuring access to preschool for children from disadvantaged communities (especially in rural areas, where enrolment is three times lower), UNICEF continued to promote a year-round training and mentoring curriculum for pre-school teachers covering child-friendly and inclusive teaching, gender issues and parental involvement.

The most evident inequities in access to primary and secondary schools in Armenia concern children with disabilities. A recent study published by UNICEF revealed that 18% of these children do not receive any form of education, while 12% attend special schools.

The mainstreaming of inclusive education is steadily progressing in the country. Principles on inclusion, including the progressive transformation of special schools in resource centres, have been introduced into the amended Law on Education presented to the Parliament for approval. Furthermore, a mechanism was designed to identify children out of school as well as dropouts through the synchronization of the School Management Information Systems (SMIS), a database developed by UNICEF to be introduced in every school, with other existing databases. Social protection services will also reach out to children not enrolled in schools in order to ensure their admission and continuity of education.

UNICEF also promoted the use of the International Classification of Functioning, Children and Youth version (ICF-CY), as the most advanced conceptual framework for the promotion of a social model of disabilities and of inclusive education. The consensus gained in 2012 will allow for further engagement of multidisciplinary teams in the revision of tools and practices for the preparation of special education needs assessment and individual education plans.

The Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in the education programme expanded this year and focused on children with disabilities, while sustaining the mainstreaming of DRR principles and practices into curricula and policy documents.

**Progress:** In 2012, UNICEF continued to address existing regional inequities in access to lifesaving services for newborns - 70% of infant mortality cases in Armenia occur in the first 28 days of life. Intensive Neonatal Care units are now established in 60% of the Armenian regions, thus reducing the referral of cases from
remote areas to the capital, and increasing the survival of children.

With the introduction of the Rotavirus vaccine, UNICEF conducted a study on the perceptions, attitudes and practices towards immunization. The findings helped to design a Communication for Development strategy which will be implemented engaging the Ministry of Health to help ensure the right of children to health.

Continuous attention was paid in 2012 to the improved quality of maternal and neonatal care at primary and hospital levels, as assessed jointly with WHO and UNFPA. In order to foster the introduction of a comprehensive quality assurance system, UNICEF supported the pilot of a supportive supervision system in Primary Health Care in one of the region (Lori). The system will be extended nationwide based on the recommendations derived from the model.

Malnutrition continues to be a concern for children in Armenia, and one of the areas where inequities are most evident - as shown by the DHS report published in 2012. By engaging national partners in identifying the key bottlenecks hindering child nutrition, UNICEF has positioned itself as the leading agency in the sector, leveraging additional resources to sustain the programme. The approval of the National Law on Flour Fortification has been further delayed. It has, however, been included in the Government agenda for 2013, together with the Law for the adoption of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes (in support to breast-feeding). The two laws represent key milestones the improvement of nutrition indicators.

**PC 3 - Programme Support**

**PCR 0260/A0/04/800** Effective and efficient programme management and operations support to programme delivery.

**Progress:** UNICEF Armenia was successful in the progressive realization of the Programme Management and Operations Support Strategy as noted in detail in the assessment for the Intermediate results below.

**IR 0260/A0/04/800/001** Includes Representation, Operations Management, IT Management, Business Continuity and Risk Management, Programme Guidance and Management/Oversight, Communication

**Progress:** UNICEF Armenia was successful in the progressive realization of the Programme Management and Operations Support Strategy resulting in:

- Maintenance of effective and results-ensuring governance system through a full functioning of office committees, strategic planning, analysis, monitoring and regular review; promoting of participatory decision-making; efficient realization of the risk management function, resulting in sufficient reduction of existing risks and timely identification of new ones, with designing of working mitigation strategies;
- VISION Implementation according to the plan and refinement of VISION knowledge through regular meetings, peer coaching, networking, interaction with SMEs, knowledge exchange, webex session attendance and spot checks with further analysis for improvement; timely and accurate completion of year-end closure activities;
- Completion of shaping the qualified and potential CO team with regards to the required capacity for the new CP implementation having addressed the earlier existing HR gaps; review of CO consultancies to assess the available resource base and plan the strategic required workforce;
- Promoting recognition of human resources as a key valuable asset for the organization, with a focus on staff development, regular performance review and identification of improvement areas and training courses needed; supervisor coaching; encouragement of maintaining the life-work balance using the flexible workplace opportunities and working on own time management (retreat training was conducted to practice it);

UNICEF Armenia was successful in the progressive realization of the Programme Management and Operations Support Strategy that resulted in:
- Maintenance of effective and results-ensuring governance system through a full functioning of office committees, strategic planning, analysis, monitoring and regular review; promoting of participatory decision-making; efficient realization of the risk management function, resulting in sufficient reduction of existing risks and timely identification of new ones, with designing of working mitigation strategies;
- VISION Implementation according to the plan and refinement of VISION knowledge through regular meetings, peer coaching, networking, interaction with SMEs, knowledge exchange, webex session attendance and spot checks with further analysis for improvement; timely and accurate completion of year-end closure activities;
- Completion of shaping the qualified and potential CO team with regards to the required capacity for the new CP implementation having addressed the earlier existing HR gaps; review of CO consultancies to assess the available resource base and plan the strategic required workforce;
- Promoting recognition of human resources as a key valuable asset for the organization, with a focus on staff development, regular performance review and identification of improvement areas and training courses needed; supervisor coaching; encouragement of maintaining the life-work balance using the flexible workplace opportunities and working on own time management (retreat training was conducted to practice it);

**On-track**

**IR 0260/A0/04/800/002 Financial Management and Administrative Management**

**Progress:** Throughout 2012, the Country Office was guided by revised processes and control mechanisms.

To ensure that the CO benefited from the improved financial processes, the performance level, adherence to the regulations and functioning in accordance with the Segregation of duties were all supervised by the VISION Coordinator. Regular meetings on VISION issues were conducted. In addition, staff were given individual briefings, and super-user coaching. They were encouraged to participate in the required webex sessions, and taught how to effectively use the iLearn resources and find experts in challenging areas.

The office successfully continued the cash forecasting practice on a monthly and quarterly basis, providing the managers with an opportunity to additionally revise and adjust the payment plans.

The planning and utilization of resources was aimed at reaching the maximum efficiency of CO activities. Taking into account the office capacity and resource constraints, the CO applied a cost-effective rational approach. Strategic planning and qualified evaluation of ICT resources ensured their long-term usage and prospective savings.

**On-track**

**IR 0260/A0/04/800/003 Human Resources Management and Staff Security**

**Progress:** The Peer Support Volunteer function was duly and actively performed in 2012.

The Local Training Committee diligently pursued Staff Learning, ensuring 100% implementation of the Local Training Plan. Based on an analysis of reasons behind the underutilisation of learning days in previous years, the learning days model was adapted to allow staff to take learning days at home. This resulted in higher use of this learning model.

Apart from managerial skills enhancement and development, the CO also focused on developing competence in social media, communication and compliance with the new accounting standards.
Effective Governance Structure

Country Programme objectives and priorities were respectively illustrated in the Office Management Plan (OMP) and regularly communicated to staff through CMT and extended weekly all-staff meetings.

During the year, six CMT meetings were held and Management Indicators were reviewed. CMT decisions were properly communicated to all staff and, where necessary, actions were taken to ensure that decisions were implemented. The OMP was updated at the office retreat to reflect office priorities and directions and to ensure alignment with the office environment (considering all the changes taking place). Office committees functioned effectively and mitigated risks. Five PCARC meetings were held. In 2012, a fundraising focal point was identified to help the CO Representative improve fundraising activities.

A three-day office retreat was organized in February 2012 to discuss management priorities and staff responsibilities, staff development and Global Staff Survey results as well as to orient staff on risk management, review and discuss Emergency Preparedness activities and to agree on a calendar of major events.

Weekly all-staff meetings were used to share information on the priorities set by each staff member and in each programme area. Proposed topics were duly considered by both Program and Country Management Teams.

Go-Live to VISION and related activities were among the office priorities throughout the year and significantly affected the work of all staff, in particular Operations staff and super users. Role mapping became available from July 2013. As a result, the CO went through role revision and clean-up exercises.

Informal group with colleagues from other international organizations (e.g. World Bank and OSCE) responsible for administration and procurement continued to operate effectively.

Strategic Risk Management

The office reviewed the risk assessment library during the office retreat in February 2012 and input updates based on all-staff discussions. Prioritizing identified risks in the library enabled the CO to maintain an appropriate depth and focus and concrete risk control actions were scheduled for 2012 and incorporated in the planning. The progress of risk response implementation was monitored by CMT throughout the year.

In 2012, the level of operational risk was identified as much higher in compared to the previous year. This was due to the introduction of the VISION system as an implementation tool. The system was new to all staff and ole division and internal control mechanisms needed to be understood and implemented.

The office has a standing minimum level of readiness to respond to an emergency. The Country Business Continuation Plan was updated in 2012. The Early Warning early Actions database was updated once in 2012.

Evaluation

The Annual IMEP was developed and finalized based on RO comments. The execution of surveys, studies, launches of publications and M&E related activities was monitored by the CMT throughout the year. Major changes in the Annual and multi-year IMEPs (i.e. the postponement of two evaluations until 2014) were discussed and agreed on with the RO.

Programme staff participated in several webinars organised by the Evaluation Office (EO). A survey on "UNICEF M&E decentralised function, 2011" revealed that UNICEF EO and Regional M&E Specialists should collaborate providing M&E training for all M&E staff more systematically. This includes capacity development for M&E staff in conducting evaluations in emergency/humanitarian/peace-building situations as well as in ethical principles in Monitoring and Evaluation.
The management response to the Evaluation of Inclusive Education and Policies in Armenia went through final revision and was completed in the system.

### Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology

Since April 2012, Armenia CO has been using an Open System’s firewall solution with 2 local Internet provider’s Internet Connectivity services. This solution provides fail-over scenarios and assures connectivity 24 hours a day and provides a backup solution in case one of the links goes down. The solution also provides ICT staff with online/remote monitoring capabilities and supports UNICEF ICT systems/services and users.

In 2012, all staff were given access to Cisco VPN solution for remote access and to CITRIX which give staff and alternative option for remote access. All core staff was given a remote access token to ensure secure VPN connectivity.

The CO continued using a 3G Modem for Internet connectivity during workshops/training/travel in the country. This decreased the cost of having to hire external services for events taking place outside the office premises.

In line with NY rollout of the ICT project, the CO fully migrated to Virtual Environment, which not only increases the performance of computing and service delivery of ICT services, but also reduces the energy consumption of servers and a cooling data centre. It also reduces the noise generated by servers.

Procedures necessary for the migration to VISION were implemented by the CO in a timely manner. The IT Assistant extended his strong support to all VISION end-users.

All ICT-related incidents that took in 2012 were properly addressed and communicated with the respective sections.

As a part of the UN coherent management approach, the UNICEF ICT Assistant with OM played a role in the UN team board to finalize common LTA for mobile communication, with aim to reducing cost and increasing quality of services.

In addition to the usual ICT management duties, the ICT Assistant lent technical support and expertise to programmes and projects. This included not only identifying the technical needs but also implementing procurement and facilitating rollout of all aspect of projects that encompass a technical component: Devifo/Arminfo, DRR, Education projects.

In 2012, several on-the-job group and individual training sessions (Windows 7, VISION, MS Office, Internet and document flow techniques for staff. The assistant participated in the emergency telecom responder training which contributed to the in-house expertise.

### Fund-raising and Donor Relations

In 2012, the CO concentrated its resource mobilization efforts on building relationships with major donors, especially the EU delegation and USAID, to fund the main programme areas.

The CO started drafting the fundraising strategy for Armenia to be finalized in 2013. Input was also provided for the regional resource mobilization strategy. The CO managed to secure three OR grants: an EU grant for social protection/mitigation of migration; a Swiss UNICEF Committee grant for gender; and a grant from the Brazilian government for nutrition.

The CO worked in close coordination with other UN Funds and programmes as well as IFIs to complement each other's efforts. Funding needs and availability were coordinated with partners working in the same sector.
In 2013, the CO will finalize its Midterm Review. As part of this review, a gap analysis will be conducted to identify major funding gaps that may hinder the implementation of the last 2 years of the current programme cycle. Fundraising efforts will centre on addressing the identified funding needs and will focus on two new programme areas: adolescent health and participation and sustainable development.

Management of Financial and Other Assets

Flexible budget planning included in the rolling workplans allowed for implementation within a broader allocation scheme allowing the planned activities to be in line with set budgets. The expenditures rate of RR was 97%.

As per the HACT assurance plan, all NGO partners were assessed through financial spot checks to ensure sound financial practices.

The CO currently has two DCTs (one over 6 months and one over 9 months). Both were liquidated properly on time by IPs. However due to some technical mistakes, this transaction was not able to be have been in the system. This caused them go beyond the period mentioned. To rectify this matter the CO made service calls, and discussed the issue with Regional SMEs for speedy resolution.

During the year, the CO organized a training session for all existing and potential IPs to ensure they are updated. Observation were properly addressed and shared with all IP for future reference. Numerous bilateral training sessions were also conducted with IP whenever necessary. A Question and Answer session was also very informative.

Due to discrepancies in the VISION monitoring report, the CO had to use excel worksheet to be able to monitor the budgets until the technical problems were fixed.

The CO appointed ICT Assistant as the Asset focal point. In 2012, the office procured office assets for the amount of $3,255. The CO staff did not have adequate knowledge on how to use VISION related to asset management. Other methods were used, however, to address issues related to asset management. This included webex sessions, and direct communication with colleagues. The CO had to use manual dispatch forms and excel spreadsheet to ensure proper monitoring of the assets.

During the year, two LPSB meetings were held and all donations of assets were properly reflected in VISION. The office continued to significantly reduce costs by using VoIP and external VoIP for international calls, and cellular GSM Gateway. The office continued to enjoy a special foreign currency exchange rate which the bank provides on a preferential basis to UNICEF.

Supply Management

The procurement of programmatic and office supplies/hardware was carried out through direct order from the local market as well as through offshore procurement through the Supply Division. In total, US$331,197 were spent in 2012 on office supplies (US$209,689 for offshore procurement and the rest for local procurement-including design and printing). Overall the office spent US$39,232 procuring ICT related program supplies.

The office conducted 5 CRC and 5 PCARC (PCA review committee) meetings during the year. ARM Office continued to be an active part of the OMT and the lead agency for the organization of the common services. The office ensured timely preparation and submission of the supply plan to the CMT, considering it an effective tool. With reference to the effective support to counterparts, within the framework of the MoU signed between the CO and the Ministry of Health (MoH), the Office successfully assisted partners with the procurement services offered by Supply Division for all the vaccines and other non-vaccine supplies requested by the Government. An additional procurement arrangement was organized for a diaspora NGO providing funds for vaccines. The Operations Manager attended a Contracting for Services workshop in Copenhagen.
Based on the supply training received and observations, a training session for all staff will be conducted by OM in January 2013.

The CO continued to benefit from the free warehouse provided by the Ministry of Emergency Situations. UNDP continued to administer the common UN services and premises.

The office had insufficient capacity to deal with monitoring reports available through VISION taking significant time away from the work of the staff. The office had only one super user attending the VISION supply module training session. Moreover the VISION had more features which had not been discussed and taught during ToT and end-user training, which made the monitoring of supplies more challenging during the year. The office addressed the issue through continued usage of manual dispatch forms and excel spreadsheets sheet to ensure proper monitoring of the supplies.

**Human Resources**

Three posts were filled in 2011: DRR Officer (NOB), Executive Assistant (GS5), and Receptionist (GS5). The first post was a newly established post. The second post became vacant because the incumbent was promoted to an Administrative/HR Assistant post. The third post (UNDP Service contractor) became vacant when the former incumbent resigned to take up post graduate studies abroad. Interviews for these posts were conducted by CBI-trained staff with the involvement of the regional office. Panel members were chosen according to guidelines, and involved a subject matter expert, a HR representative and a senior management representative. All cases were submitted to the CRB.

Timeliness of the individual work plan development and PER completion was monitored by the CMT and showed a delay for 43%. These delays were caused by changes in Direct Supervisors.

The CO supported the UNICEF Georgia office operations in Sukhumi with two temporary missions by the Operations Manager. Two staff members were on temporary assignments outside the CO.

During the year a new SA was elected and two JCC meeting were conducted. Global Staff Survey results were reviewed together with all staff and an action plan was developed. The SA Chair of the office participated both in the Regional Staff Association Meeting and in the Global Staff Association meeting, as the office was given its turn on GSAM.

The annual training and learning plan was prepared with significant support of the HRDT and approved based on the CO’s priorities and ensured that training plans were relevant to staff members’ assignments, and were within the foreseen budget.

Two staff members benefited from flexi hours arrangements.

IN 2012, the CO plans to develop an internal HR management strategy to implement PBR recommendations and to improve change management within the office.

**Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings**

In general the UN Common building provides a significant opportunity for cost savings through shared services, in particular those related to security.

The use of a free warehouse provided by the Ministry of Emergency Situations allowed the CO to save about US$2,700 each year. Additional funds were saved through the use of local VoIP and the GSM Gateway for calls, the upgrade of internet bandwidth without additional cost and favourable negotiation on the currency exchange rate.

Additional money was saved by providing all staff members special package for mobile phones which allows calls between group members (all UNICEF staff) free of charge.
Changes in AMP & CPMP

The last update of the OMP was done in February 2012 for the years 2012 and 2013. Management indicators were adjusted in 2012 but will need to be reviewed and revised again in 2013 to strengthen monitoring and planning areas. Also the Risk Assessment needs to be reviewed in 2013 and updated to show the final role mapping and Table of Authorities, which became available in December 2012.

Operations priorities should also include: streamlining transactions using all VISION features; reducing the cost of printing materials by replacing it with e-copies, posting it online and using recycled paper to print.

Summary Notes and Acronyms

CJC – Community Justice Centres
CO – Country Office
CMT – Country Management Team
CSO – Civil Society Organisations
DHS – Demographic and Health Survey
DRR – Disaster Risk Reduction
ERM – Enterprise Risk Management
FF – Flour Fortification
HRDO – Human Rights Defender Office
IMF – International Monetary Fund
IMEP – Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
ISS – Integrated Social Services
MICS – Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoES – Ministry of Education and Sciences
MoH – Ministry of Health
MoLSI – Ministry of Labour and Social Issues
MoRES – Monitoring Results for Equity System
MoTA – Ministry of Territorial Administration
MPs – Members of Parliament
MTEF – Mid-Term Expenditure Framework
NSS – National Statistical Service
PCM – Programme Coordination Meeting
PFM – Public Finance Management
PRSP – Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RCSA – Risk Control Self Assessment
SDP – Sustainable Development Programme
Sit An – Situation Analysis
SMIS – School Management Information Systems
SPF – Social Protection Floor
SWOT – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TSP – Territorial Social Plans
### Evaluations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Sequence Number</th>
<th>Type of Report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IMEP 2012 Armenia</td>
<td>2012/900</td>
<td>IMEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenia IMEP 2010-2015 (revised in Feb 2012)</td>
<td>2012/901</td>
<td>IMEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formative Research on Perceptions, Attitudes and Practices towards Immunization and Introduction of New Vaccines in Armenia</td>
<td>2012/001</td>
<td>Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of the safety and quality of hospital care for mothers and newborn babies in Armenia</td>
<td>2012/002</td>
<td>Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's about Inclusion: Access to Education, Health and Social Protection Services for Children with Disabilities in Armenia</td>
<td>2012/003</td>
<td>Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers: A study on Recruitment, Development and Salaries of Teachers in Armenia</td>
<td>2012/004</td>
<td>Study</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Other Publications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrated Social Services: Reaching the Most Vulnerable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>