

Azerbaijan

Executive Summary

In 2015, UNICEF Azerbaijan successfully closed all audit recommendations to ensure an efficient and effective governance and management structure in the office. The new Country Programme Document (CPD) was prepared in close consultation with government counterparts and other stakeholders. Late comments provided by the Government of Azerbaijan through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs delayed the CPD approval process at the September executive board meeting, and it has been deferred to the February 2016 board meeting. The Country Programme Management Plan (CPMP) was submitted to the October 2015 Programme Budget Review (PBR) meeting and office recommendations for the management of a new country programme, including the office human resource structure, was approved by the Regional Director. The office initiated the recruitment process for all PBR approved posts before the end of 2015.

With UNICEF's technical and financial support, the Government launched the first-ever inclusive schools in the capital, Baku, for primary grade students, applying the German model of inclusive education. UNICEF also modelled a water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in Schools (WinS) programme through Azersu, the state-owned water company, supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The outcomes were measured and advocated with the Ministry of Education (MoE) to replicate the model and adapt the international standards related to WASH in schools based on child-friendly school principles. The MoE is earnestly considering replicating WinS standards across the country.

Overall, adolescent development and participation became one of the key areas of the cross-sectoral work of the UNICEF Azerbaijan Country Office. The first-ever European Games in Baku provided UNICEF with a unique opportunity to collect thousands of adolescent voices online as well as through a two-day face-to-face workshop, the day before the inauguration of the games. Eighty adolescents representing different regions of Azerbaijan and also from South Africa and Brazil participated and discussed their concerns regarding the quality, accessibility and inclusivity of education, social protection, recreation and leisure for adolescents, as well as the availability of opportunities for their development. The consultation served to highlight two key determinants of adolescents' vulnerabilities – gender disparities and disability. The consultative process culminated in a nine-point declaration on safe and inclusive sports, which was presented to the high-level government representatives for consideration during the development of state policies and programmes for children and adolescents. The multi-channel consultation process has been acknowledged as an innovative approach for Azerbaijan to ensure child participation in policy dialogue.

UNICEF supported the Ministry of Emergency Situations (MoES) in carrying out a Disaster Risk Analysis (DRA) in a selected district. The results of this child-focused vulnerability analysis have been integrated into the district-level disaster management plan as well as into the district development plan for 2016–2020, with detailed activities in the areas of infrastructure, tourism, agriculture, education, health, sanitation, water resources and flood management. A district-based multidisciplinary working group – composed of representatives of local executive

authorities on statistics, environment, education, health and social protection – has been established in the intervention district.

The institutional capacity of the Ombudsman institute has been further strengthened to improve independent monitoring and reporting of child rights violations in public settings. The general public's knowledge and understanding of children's rights has been continuously enhanced through working with the media, organizing public events and high-level meetings. Gender mainstreaming has been ensured both internally and within the framework of cooperation with external partners.

A comprehensive analysis of the social protection system focusing on the cash transfer component for most vulnerable families and children was concluded in 2015. The results have been provided for in-house discussion with the Minister of Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population (MoLSPP) and his team. The constructive dialogue resulted in solidifying plans for 2016 to assist the ministry in developing a new social protection strategy with better equity focus, ensuring effective targeting of the most vulnerable children and their families.

This past year was also marked by some challenges. Partnerships with civil society have been seriously impacted by the legislative changes on the part of the Government, which impose many obligations on organizations. Changes include new registration requirements, rules regarding receiving and using grants and reporting to the Government, and strict penalties for those who violate both new and previously existing obligations under the law.

Moreover, parliamentary elections in 2015, won by the ruling party, postponed the adoption of a number of legislative initiatives advocated by UNICEF Azerbaijan.

The child deprivation study was concluded in 2015, but due to the serious bureaucracy and change in leadership at the State Statistic Committee (SSC), the findings of the study could not be disseminated or published, and have been postponed until 2016.

Mid-Term Review of the Strategic Plan

The results framework of the Strategic Plan makes a good attempt at suggesting indicators for monitoring progress, with clear reference to a desired output/outcome. The nature of work in upper-middle-income countries such as Azerbaijan is specifically related to strong policy advocacy through coordination, exchanges of knowledge, as well as better knowledge management and modelling. Therefore, it is desired that the Strategic Plan results framework and indicators are reviewed to accommodate possibilities for monitoring and measuring these processes and claim UNICEF's attribution and contribution towards achieving results for children in those countries.

Summary Notes and Acronyms

ADB – Asian Development Bank
AMP – Annual Management Plan
AWP – Annual Work Plan
BCP – Business Continuity Plan
CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CMT – Country Management Team
CO – Country Office
COAR – Country Office Annual Report

CPD – Country Programme Document
CPMP – Country Programme Management Plan
CRC – Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD – Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CRTC – Children Rehabilitation and Treatment Centre
CSO – civil society organization
DCT – direct cash transfer
DRA – Disaster Risk Analysis
DRR – disaster risk reduction
ECHO – European Commission's Humanitarian Aid department
EPR – Emergency Preparedness and Response
ERM – Enterprise Risk Management
EU – European Union
EWEA - Early Action Early Warning
FACE – Funding Authorization and Certification of Expenditures
FIFA – Fédération Internationale de Football Association
GAP – Gender Action Plan
GS – General Staff
GSSC – Global Shared Services Centre
HACT – Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers
HR – Human Resource
HRBA – Human Rights Based Approach
HRD – Human Resource Development
IBRD – International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ILBD – International Live Birth Definition
IGMCD – International Guide for Monitoring of Child Development
IT – information technology
IYCF – Infant and Young Child Feeding
LTA – Long-Term Agreement
M&E – monitoring and evaluation
MLSP – Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population
MoE – Ministry of Education
MoES – Ministry of Emergency Situations
MoH – Ministry of Health
MoI – Ministry of Interior
MoJ – Ministry of Justice
MoLSP - Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population
MOSS – Minimum Operating Security Standards
MP4R – Managing Performance for Results
NNS – National Nutrition Survey
NO(B,C) – National Officer (category B, C)
PAS – Performance Appraisal System
PBR – Programme Budget Review
PCA – Project Cooperation Agreement
PHRC – Public Health and Reform Centre
PRIME – Plan for Research Impact Monitoring and Evaluation
RAM – Result Assessment Module
RBM – results-based management
RMT – Regional Management Team
RO – Regional Office
RRF – Results Resource Framework

SCFWCA – State Committee for Woman and Children Affairs
SMART – Specific Measurable Attainable Realistic Time related
SMQ – Strategic Monitoring Questions
SSC – State Statistic Committee
UNAPF – United Nations – Azerbaijan Partnership Framework
UNDP – United Nations Development Programme
UNDSS – United Nations Department for Safety and Security
UNGTG – United Nations Gender Theme Group
USI – universal salt iodization
WASH – water, sanitation and hygiene
WinS – WASH in Schools

Capacity Development

UNICEF strengthened the capacity of health-care professionals from the majority of Baku’s child poly-clinics by introducing them to the International Guide for Monitoring of Child Development (IGMCD). This resulted in the application of modern approaches to early interventions to prevent child disabilities, and in improved detection and timely referral of children with developmental delays. Consequently, doctor-patient partnerships were enhanced, leading to wider use of social approaches for early interventions. Referrals to the Children Rehabilitation and Treatment Centre (CRTC) of children 0–3 years old who are at risk of disability increased by 40 per cent.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) was supported in developing a tool to monitor the International Live Birth Definition (ILBD), which indicated a need to enhance the knowledge and skills of health-care professionals in applying the definition.

UNICEF provided assistance to the MoE during its launch of the first inclusive school in Azerbaijan. Professionals and teachers were trained on a model of special education, based on the German system, for social inclusion and integration of children with disabilities through education. This will support the development of a national inclusive education model.

An innovative training programme for teachers called TEMEL (Foundation) was introduced through the Teacher Training Institute, supporting the implementation of the MoE strategy on improving the teaching capacity of primary teachers from 352 schools that provide education to 369,265 children. Also, an in-service teacher training institution was supported to train 5,318 teachers on disaster risk reduction (DRR), which resulted in improving DRR education and increasing disaster preparedness in school and communities.

About 1,274 teachers, 640 parents, 6,539 boys and 5,870 girls received hygiene education and sanitation practices training in 27 schools, through the use of a multimedia approach. A 16 per cent increase in hand-washing behaviour among children was observed as a result.

UNICEF trained 200 justice and law enforcement professionals on Administration of Justice for Children, which resulted in increase of knowledge of international principles and standards by 25 per cent. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) was supported in introducing a model child-friendly interview room in a Baku court.

Evidence Generation, Policy Dialogue and Advocacy

On the basis of the school readiness modelling carried out in previous years, UNICEF advocated for ensuring a preschool education for all children. Consequently, the MoE began

formulating a new state programme for preschool education as well as conducting an outcome assessment of the ongoing ministerial programme on school readiness. UNICEF Azerbaijan also influenced the MoE's decision to learn and adopt the German inclusive education model.

UNICEF modelled a WinS programme, measured the outcomes and advocated with the MoE to replicate the model and adapt the international standards related to WASH in schools based on child-friendly school principles. The MoE is earnestly considering replicating WinS standards nationally.

UNICEF facilitated evidence gathering to inform state policies and programmes. More than 16,000 adolescents were consulted through online and offline platforms on issues affecting their lives, such as safe and inclusive sport, state youth programmes and child marriage. The consultations brought up salient concerns regarding social inclusion, protection and meaningful participation, with special emphasis on the inclusion of girls and children with disabilities. The outcomes were considered by the Government of Azerbaijan in the process of formulating the new five-year State Youth Programme.

Findings and recommendations from the National Nutrition Survey (NNS) were launched and presented to officials from the relevant ministries and civil society. The roles and responsibilities of various ministries in implementing the survey report recommendations were discussed. Continued efforts include advocating for the Cabinet of Ministers' leading and coordinating role in this implementation and for the hosting of a special meeting related to food fortification to develop a clear action plan.

A secondary data analysis of existing national social protection mechanisms for children's well-being was carried out. Based on the findings, UNICEF successfully advocated with the MoLSPP to develop a strategy document on Social Protection Strengthening 2016–2020, focusing on reaching the most vulnerable children.

Partnerships

Partnering with mega events such as the first European games in Baku 2015 proved to be strategic for the mobilization of public opinions, specifically related to children and adolescents to address social issues and promote ideas of leaving a social legacy after sports mega event like Baku 2015.

UNICEF Azerbaijan partnered with ADB through Azersu, the national water company, and modelled a hygiene and sanitation promotion intervention in schools. This demonstrated how partnerships with government, district administration, civil society, local media, children and adolescents are critical for achieving results for children. This range of partnership contributed to the successful planning and implementation of the WinS programme in 27 schools in three districts. Partnerships were also established with the Embassy of Japan and civil society organizations (CSOs) to further improve WASH conditions in the schools of one district.

A successful partnership between the MoE and Khazar University, facilitated by UNICEF, resulted in 120 promising candidates becoming school principals. The MoE strongly committed to offer training for several employment opportunities and encouraged other leading universities to do so as well.

UNICEF Azerbaijan continues to pursue partnerships with the European Union (EU) delegation that aim to ensure justice for children. During the reporting period, more than 500 children

directly benefited as a result. In addition, more than 400 vulnerable and disadvantaged children received legal aid and psychosocial support through the Government and civil society cooperation as a result of strong partnerships established by UNICEF Azerbaijan.

A unique partnership with the World Bank was established in 2015 to make the juvenile justice system aligned with international standards.

UNICEF Azerbaijan has proactively worked with other United Nations agencies under the guidance of the Country Management Team (CMT) and through different thematic groups focused on social inclusive services (health, education and social protection), gender, human rights, and so on.

External Communication and Public Advocacy

Regular contact with the media through press releases, field trips, interviews and special events provided opportunities to engage major media outlets, with an audience of hundreds of thousands of people. This helped to draw public attention to the issues of juvenile justice, DRR, adolescent participation, disability and child marriage, as reflected in more than 1,000 published stories during the reporting period.

UNICEF Azerbaijan continued to serve as a first point of reference for the media and academics on information related to children through English and Azerbaijani-language websites and the UNICEF Azerbaijan Facebook page, which has 35,000 followers.

The main partnership garnering media and public attention on child rights in 2015 occurred when Azerbaijan hosted the first-ever European Games in Baku. Using the momentum of these games, UNICEF Azerbaijan advocated for safe and inclusive sport with a special focus on children with disabilities and girls, as well as adolescent participation. A number of communication materials and documents were produced, including, but not limited to, platforms for reaching out to adolescents, an effective communication plan, documentaries, photos, a crisis communication plan, and a social media plan consisting of videos, photos and messages. A visit by UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Jose Calderon helped boost advocacy efforts, as he participated in a number of events that were widely covered by both national and international media, such as adolescent consultations, a basketball game with children and a torch relay.

Other initiatives included joint advocacy with the British Council on the issue of disability during the British Film Festival, as well as a partnership with a state television channel on the issue of safe and inclusive sport.

More than 40 adolescents from underprivileged backgrounds produced compelling advocacy materials on issues ranging from DRR to disability and adolescent participation. The initiative equipped participants with basic directing and storytelling skills through the production of one-minute videos.

South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation

While Azerbaijan was preparing for the first European Games, UNICEF Azerbaijan invited experts and adolescents from Brazil and South Africa who were involved in FIFA World Cups to ensure that Azerbaijani adolescents actively participate in sports mega events. The teams from both Brazil and South Africa have worked on creating a social legacy to realize child rights through sports, and shared their rich experiences, powerful tools and inclusive approaches to promoting child rights through sports for development. The transfer of knowledge was also

facilitated by a peer-to-peer approach, with young leaders from these countries training the young Azerbaijani leaders to become facilitators and change agents to influence the process. Consequently, the Azerbaijani young leaders facilitated a workshop of 80 adolescents from all over the country with different backgrounds. At the end of the process, adolescents prepared and presented a nine-point declaration advising stakeholders on how to ensure safe and inclusive sports, urging them to take immediate action on the social legacy of the first European Games.

UNICEF Azerbaijan facilitated a horizontal cooperation visit with representatives from the Government of Ethiopia, civil society and the Salt Producers' Association to exchange experiences and learn about Azerbaijan's universal salt iodization programme. The delegation members visited the relevant ministries, medical university, CSOs and salt production units. The experience of the Independent Consumer Union – a CSO monitoring salt iodization and salt production unit – was especially useful to the delegation, since the country had successfully shifted from multiple small-scale salt production and iodization to centralized industrial-level salt processing, retaining small producers still engaged in the production process, and the Government supporting such a shift. This also resulted in the creation of a long-standing partnership between officials and salt producers from Ethiopia and Azerbaijan, which will support better results for universal salt iodization in Ethiopia.

Identification and Promotion of Innovation

While the first European Games were being hosted in Azerbaijan, UNICEF adopted an innovative approach to collecting the opinions of adolescents on safe and inclusive sports. Also for the first time, an online survey using a Google-based comprehensive questionnaire, a street adolescent poll and face-to-face meetings were combined to determine the opinions of adolescents on the importance of sports in their lives, including the barriers they face with regard to access and participation. The use of existing Facebook networks for dissemination of the online questionnaire was instrumental in reaching out to every part of the country. The approach, which generated opinions from more than 15,000 adolescents, proved to be very effective, particularly since participation in decision making has been one of the main bottlenecks of adolescent development in Azerbaijan. The adolescents who responded included those with disabilities, from disadvantaged communities, from internally displaced camps, and from migrant families, as well as girls. The activity revealed, among other things, that girls continue to experience multiple forms of discrimination and are not allowed to practice sports by their families because of cultural norms and gender stereotypes; that children with disabilities have limited opportunities to practice sports due to significant accessibility barriers; and that children living in rural areas are unaware of how to reach available sports facilities due to their remote locations.

Another integral feature of the threefold approach of amplifying adolescents' voices was their meaningful participation in the entire process. As a result, the Baku 2015 Adolescent Declaration on Safe and Inclusive Sport, which was the final outcome from the consultation, was not only solely developed by adolescents, but also officially presented to the Government to hold it accountable for the implementation of the recommendations. The Government of Azerbaijan has taken most of the recommendations in the State Youth Strategy for 2015–2025 into consideration.

Support to Integration and Cross-Sectoral Linkages

With support from UNICEF, the MoES carried out a DRA in a selected district. The results of this child-focused vulnerability analysis were integrated into both the district-level disaster

management plan and the 2016–2020 district development plan, with detailed activities in the areas of infrastructure, tourism, agriculture, education, health, sanitation, water resources and flood management. A district-based multidisciplinary working group consisting of representatives of local executive authorities on statistics, environment, education, health and social protection was established in the intervention district.

The MoES agreed to nationally up-scale the application of the methodology through training ministries, district representatives and emergency commissions, with district emergency commissions being the main implementers of the analysis.

UNICEF facilitated three nationwide online consultations regarding: safe and inclusive sport; the State Youth Programme; and child marriage. These gathered thousands of adolescent voices expressing concerns, mainly referring to quality, accessibility and inclusivity of education, social protection, recreation and leisure for adolescents, as well as availability of development opportunities. Gender disparities and disability were presented as key determinants of adolescents' vulnerabilities. Adolescents essentially suggested cross-sectoral solutions to the key decision makers, and the consultations generated evidence that guided UNICEF's cross-sectoral adolescent programming for the new country programme.

UNICEF continued supporting the Juvenile Justice Task Force, established under the Azerbaijan Cabinet of Ministers, whose activities increased knowledge and information flow among 10 government agencies (MoJ, Ministry of Interior (Mol), MoLSPP, MoE, MoH, the State Committee for Woman and Children Affairs (SCFWCA), Prosecutor General's Office, Baku City Administration, Nizami District Administration, and the Cabinet of Ministers) dealing with children in contact and conflict with law. The group reviewed 14 legal draft documents in order to align Azerbaijan's national legislation with international standards. One legal provision was approved, which significantly reduced the juvenile conviction maximum sentence from eight years to three years.

Service Delivery

UNICEF assisted civil society and government partners to provide support services, such as day care for children at risk of family separation, community-based support services for children with disabilities, parental support services for families with children with disabilities aged 0–6, and other services for the most vulnerable children across the country. Services benefiting children in contact and conflict with the law have been expanded to Ganja and Guba Districts, which have benefited about 100 children, mostly providing legal aid, legal representation and psychosocial support services.

UNICEF's support resulted in 27 cases of juveniles being diverted from legal and judicial proceedings, and those children receiving necessary legal and psychosocial support. Legal aid and counselling services at ASAN (an Azeri word meaning 'easy') Public Services Centres have benefited more than 215 children – half of them girls – and their families. During the reporting year, this pilot initiative supported by UNICEF became part of the services offered by the ASAN centres.

Human Rights-Based Approach to Cooperation

UNICEF supported the Government of Azerbaijan in implementing the recommendations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on introducing inclusive education for children with disabilities. The first step included the revision of internal ministerial regulations aimed at strengthening special education capacity as the basis for inclusive

education, the revision of old medical-based disability assessment procedures, and the launch of a modelling project based on a German model.

The MoE has also developed a five-year, step-by-step plan to address inclusion in a holistic way by creating an education system that meets the educational and developmental needs of all children. Therefore, the plan will not be limited to pure education-related outputs (e.g., teacher training, school access, financial investments) but will cover areas related to rehabilitation services, social integration, and vocational training and employment.

UNICEF worked with government agencies to advocate for the adoption of the National Child Strategy, which will play a key role in implementing the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in Azerbaijan. However, the 2015 parliamentary elections cycle has delayed the adoption of this document. UNICEF supported the SCFWCA to develop a centralized electronic child databank, a key recommendation of the CRC Committee, which will help increase evidence-based policymaking and programming.

The Ombudsman institute's capacity has been further strengthened, thereby improving the independent monitoring of child rights violations in public settings. UNICEF worked with the National Preventive Group under the Ombudsperson to support monitoring detention centres and child-care institutions. UNICEF international experts have also provided them with practical and theoretical training, tools and methodologies to better identify and prevent child rights violations.

Adolescent development programming was also tailored to achieve Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) benchmarks through implementing CRC, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), strengthening accountability mechanisms for the realization of adolescents' rights to recreation and play, freedom of expression and access to information, with special focus on the rights of those with disabilities and girls. In previous sections it has been mentioned how the key rights holders – more than 16,000 adolescents – were given an opportunity to openly and creatively contribute to youth policy formulation and programming that will affect their lives over the next five years.

Environmental Sustainability

UNICEF Azerbaijan has been supporting the MoES in risk and vulnerability assessments via the introduction of a DRA methodology that has a particular focus on child vulnerability. The vulnerability assessment included education, access to sanitation, quality of housing, condition of roads, vitamin A deficiency, and existence of disaster mitigation and medical services in schools and communities in general. The piloting of the methodology in Gabala District revealed that, despite the efforts of the past 20 years, the district still has high levels of child vulnerability, which is a complex manifestation of many factors, including living and health conditions. A child-centred risk and vulnerability assessment has identified the most vulnerable villages, schools and groups of children in the district. The assessment showed that most residential areas and schools are at high risk in terms of hazards and preparedness. As a follow-up to this successful initiative, the MoES is planning to scale up the application of the methodology at district level via district-based emergency commissions, and use the results of the assessments in disaster preparedness and planning activities.

UNICEF Azerbaijan has taken several measures in an attempt to do less harm to the environment. All printers were set to double-sided printing and recycled paper is used. Staff are

encouraged to not print unless necessary, and the office participated in the Government's 'Let's Convert Every Paper Sheet To A Leaf' project-one tree for 100 kilograms of recycled paper and planted a number of trees.

In addition, the Country Office (CO) is using teleconferencing and Skype facilities when possible, in order to reduce work-related travel. Led-lighting lamps are used for artificial lighting in the office and a motion-based lighting system is in place for less-used areas in order to save on electricity.

Effective Leadership

The observations on office governance, noted in UNICEF Azerbaijan's final 2014 audit report, were swiftly acted upon. The CO mobilized to work on shortfalls and recommendations in order to strengthen the structure of its governance system. Consequently, all of the recommendations had been instituted by the first submission of the audit response.

An all-staff retreat was organized, which focused on team building and discussing the new country programme structure. The retreat was facilitated by an internationally known external facilitator.

The Annual Management Plan (AMP) was prepared using the latest guidelines and best practices. The Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) was updated following a participatory approach and identified the potential risks for the CO. The Early Action Early Warning (EWEA) was updated twice in 2015. The Business Continuity Plan (BCP) was tested in a real-case situation, activated for a 12-day period during the Baku Games when critical staff members were moved to an alternate location because of a major road blockade in the capital city.

CMT meetings were convened regularly to monitor governance and programme priorities stipulated in the AMP, as well as funding, security, staff well-being, and learning and development. Systematic reviews of management indicators and ERM risk profile of the CO were also part of CMT discussions. The CMT also took the initiative of building capacity of all staff on Managing Performance for Results (MP4R), results-based management (RBM), ethics and integrity, gender, and emergency preparedness and response.

The CMT facilitated a participatory process of developing the CPD and CPMP together with the staff association. The CPMP was submitted to the October PBR and office recommendations for the management of a new country programme, including the office human resource structure, was approved.

The outcomes of the RMTs, PBRs and other global and network meetings, as well as change management initiatives, were discussed in all staff meetings to keep staff informed and equipped. There were three Joint Consultative Committee meetings and management paid great attention to the staff's issues.

Financial Resources Management

As in previous years, UNICEF Azerbaijan operated its financial recourses in line with established guidelines and control mechanisms. The CO maintained a good level of performance and fulfilment of activities in line with the organizational mandate and objectives safeguarding financial and other assets.

The budget was regularly monitored using reports in the VISION system and the Performance Management Dashboard for timely utilization.

National legislation changed towards the end of 2014, requiring the registration of each grant and funding agency with the relevant government authority. The law did not stipulate how this registration would be done, and development of guidelines is expected in the future. The Government did not register any Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) or formal grant contract between UNICEF Azerbaijan and the local CSO in 2015, and the CO was unable to release funds and start activities planned in the Annual Work Plans (AWPs), except one implementing partner which registered the agreement before the legal changes, and also some government partners. Disbursement of cash assistance to partners and liquidation of advances was implemented and recorded on a basis of Funding Authorization and Certification of Expenditures (FACE) documenting. The CO had no direct cash transfer (DCT) with outstanding balance more than six months throughout the year.

UNICEF Azerbaijan regularly updated the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) Assurance plan, and uploaded it to InSight, with programme monitoring visits and spot-checks included.

UNICEF Azerbaijan continues to make effective use of its bank optimization and cash forecasting tools, and performed particularly well in meeting its closing bank balance targets and restoring the percentage of closing balances for subsequent months. Deadlines on bank reconciliations and bank optimization targets were met. Monthly closures and financial reports were completed on a timely basis and uploaded to Sharepoint.

The premises of UNICEF Azerbaijan are still rented in a commercial building, which significantly affects the office budget. Negotiations with the Government of Azerbaijan for free office space are still ongoing.

Fund-raising and Donor Relations

In 2015, besides regular resources, the CO utilized funds received from global thematic funds (Education and WASH); EU funds for access to justice; and disaster preparedness funds from the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO). All funds were fully utilized before they expired, with utilization monitored on a monthly basis and reported to the CMT. Unfortunately, due to changes by the EU requiring participation in a call for proposals, the CO could not directly engage with the EU, but will be looking for alternative ways, through a third party, to leverage resources.

Through the MoJ, UNICEF received US\$200,000 from the World Bank for aligning the juvenile justice system with international standards. This is first time that the CO established such a partnership with the World Bank. UNICEF has also undertaken successful advocacy with the Government of Azerbaijan in the areas of health, education, DRR, social and child protection and adolescent development, and leveraged about US\$4.5 million from the Government's budget.

A major private-sector fund-raising/partnership project (US\$1.3 million) with British Petroleum has been put on hold due to a potential high reputational risk, but the CO will seek alternative ways to leverage resources.

Guided by its 2011–2015 resource mobilization strategy, the CO made a number of fund-raising

efforts by submitting proposals to the embassies of Brazil, Norway and Sweden in the areas of children with disabilities, safe and inclusive sports, and child-centred, equity-focused social protection.

A series of discussions was initiated with the UNICEF United Kingdom National Committee on safe and inclusive sports, resulting in a proposal to be followed up in 2016. Discussions were also held with the UNICEF South Korean National Committee on adolescent participation.

At the end of 2015, work began on Azerbaijan CO's new advocacy and fund-raising kit – a tool that will assist with UNICEF's evidence-based policy advocacy for child rights, but also with fund-raising initiatives.

Evaluation

There were five Plan for Research Impact Monitoring and Evaluation (PRIME) activities, with studies on: 'Collecting views of young people in 21 districts on the role of sport for their development to identify themes for possible legacy intervention to follow the Baku 2015 European Games'; 'Collecting voices of adolescents and young people to inform the new Youth Program 2016–2020'; and 'Impact assessment of social protection schemes on children's well-being through assessment of social allowances, targeted social assistance and social services'. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacity development included United Nations – Azerbaijan Partnership Framework (UNAPF) and CPD preparation exercises.

Significant contributions were made to improve local partners' M&E capacity and co-leading UNAPF's M&E group. The UNICEF CO also actively contributed to shaping the Results Resource Framework (RRF) through Specific Measurable Attainable Realistic Time related (SMART) indicators and constructive feedback.

Technical support provided to the SCFWCA in establishing a multi-sectoral databank assisted government monitoring of the national child rights situation.

Together with the SSC, the first round of data collection was completed, applying the deprivation module to measure child poverty.

The NNS, conducted by the MoH, SSC and UNICEF Azerbaijan and disseminated by the Government of Azerbaijan, revealed that while there is a positive trend in the nutritional status of women and children, critical progress is required in two major fields. Firstly, infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices in general are inadequate, mostly due to the low capacity of health professionals to consult mothers. In response, the Public Health and Reform Centre (PHRC) of the MoH developed and distributed methodological guidelines for health-care professionals on IYCF. Secondly, high levels of anaemia among women (38 per cent), with 62 per cent attributed to iron deficiency, have led to food fortification in general and flour fortification with iron in particular becoming major government advocacy agendas. Discussions during dissemination covered ministries' roles and responsibilities in implementing the report recommendations. UNICEF advocated with the Cabinet of Ministers to lead in pursuing the recommendations with relevant actors for a multi-sectoral response.

Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings

Staff productivity was maximized with the help of good cross-sectoral planning.

UNICEF Azerbaijan was using jointly established Long-Term Agreements (LTAs) and rosters of

United Nations agencies to reduce costs on supplies and consumables. Systematic use of the common services in procurement, human resources and travel continued throughout the year.

Most supplies were obtained locally, supporting local markets and enabling procurement of quality supplies at competitive prices. UNICEF Azerbaijan has been continuously looking into cost savings in all possible areas. Although the sudden drop of the local currency exchange rate reduced the cost of communication expenses with respect to the United States dollar, the office continued to optimize the use of communications and information technology (IT) tools with the help of favourable mobile tariffs; the use of free facilities; and virtual modes of meetings, interviews and teleconferences. For instance, staff members were encouraged to use Voice over Internet Protocol or Skype for Business for international calls.

Most official meetings were organized in a meeting room offered free of charge by the business centre. This significantly reduced the expenses and time spent on event organization.

Supply Management

UNICEF Azerbaijan's supply component was small in 2015, as it was the previous year. The main component was for administrative supplies and printing of reports and project materials. Local printing houses were used for the printing of reports and training materials, and visibility items were procured through joint LTAs with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other United Nations agencies. The main sources of procurement were local markets, which have been improving in timeliness and quality. Also, the number of consultancy contracts increased in 2015, due to local legislation changes that resulted in a need to build partnerships with the help of individual contracting.

UNICEF Azerbaijan assisted national partners, namely the MoH and GAVI, in using procurement service assistance in 2015. The MoH requested that the CO assist with the ordering of vaccines in the amount of US\$2,544,932.

The CO continued to use LTAs for technology maintenance, design and transportation services. United Nations Common LTAs were used for translation, hotels and conferencing facility services, while United Nations rosters were also used for translation services, so as not to require additional solicitation procedures.

UNICEF Azerbaijan procured IT supply items mainly from the Supply Division and from global LTA suppliers, as per supply rules and procedures.

There was no loss in local and offshore procurement in 2015. In addition, the CO does not have a warehouse.

UNICEF Azerbaijan 2015	Value in US\$
Consultancy contracts	175,740
Service contracts	211,318
Low-value POS/administrative supplies	714
Direct ordering (computer equipment)	3,080
Programme supplies	48,723

Security for Staff and Premises

The CO is located in a secured building, a business centre with controlled access. Access to the premises is limited to authorized personnel with door card authentication. There are two closed-circuit television cameras installed – one at the main entrance to the office and another at the emergency exit – which are monitored by building security. Office windows are covered with shutter-resistant films. The office has a security focal point, a warden and a deputy warden who have the contact details of staff, as well as their addresses for easy access in case of emergencies. Wardens serve as back-ups for the United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS). In addition, the premises are Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS)-compliant.

The COBCP and DRR plans are updated regularly.

Human Resources

A PBR was conducted on 6 October 2015 in Istanbul. Results showed the following changes in office staffing:

Abolishment of posts:

- Three Programme Assistants and one Communication Assistant post, GS5 level
- Communication for Development Specialist, NOC level
- Youth & Adolescent Development Officer, NOB level
- Health & Nutrition Specialist, NOC
- Youth Adolescent Development Officer, P2 level

Establishment of new posts:

- Three Programme Assistants, GS5
- Communication for Development Officer, NOB
- Youth & Adolescent Development Specialist, NOC
- Child Rights Monitoring Specialist, NOC

Recruitment processes were based on the UNICEF Competency Framework.

Mid-year progress review discussions between staff and supervisors assessed performance and monitored individual work-plan output progress. Staff and supervisors worked together, considering job profile competencies, in submitting development plans. Development needs and access to appropriate learning, training and development resources were periodically reviewed by staff. Staff increased participation in stretch assignments and missions, and several members relocated to other offices to provide temporary support.

The role of Peer Support Volunteers has been functioning since 2003. Flexi-time and breastfeeding arrangements were in place throughout 2015 in order to improve work-life balance, and staff used them on a case-by-case basis.

Staff well-being, security, learning and development issues were discussed at general staff and CMT meetings. A retreat was held to discuss plans for the year as well as to strengthen team spirit and improve work relations. The local Human Resource Development (HRD) committee developed the Office Learning and Training Plan, which was implemented for more than 70 per cent of staff. Also, emergency response preparedness and emergency preparedness trainings were conducted for all staff.

Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology

All equipment and software used in the CO are compliant with UNICEF standards.

Cloud-based office automation tools are actively used in the CO. In order to increase efficiency, the office plans to migrate from asymmetric digital subscriber lines to fibre optics starting in 2016, although doing so may imply additional expenses to the support budget. This would also increase the use of OneDrive.

Skype for Business is widely used for e-meetings, which has helped in reducing staff travel and phone expenses.

In order to implement the globally introduced 'Light' system, the CO started replacing desktop computers with laptops, since this was a prerequisite.

UNICEF Azerbaijan also participated in a number of IT pilot initiatives through the Regional Office (RO) and UNICEF headquarters.

In line with new IT initiatives that are assumed to reduce the workload of the IT Assistant, the CO reduced the post to part-time starting in 2015.

Programme Components from Results Assessment Module

Analysis by outcome and output results

Outcome 1: By the end of 2015, more children benefit from responsive and child-friendly services, with reduced disparities in outcomes.

Analytical statement of progress:

In terms of access to child-friendly education, UNICEF Azerbaijan contributed to reforms regarding the inclusion of children with disabilities into mainstream education. About 120 school principals were involved in the school leadership programme called TEMEL (Foundation).

UNICEF Azerbaijan also modelled school-based disaster risk management in two schools, which are being examined and will be referred to while developing a comprehensive school safety strategy with the MoE. The model will eventually be scaled up nationwide. This will be complemented by the strengthened capacity of the Azerbaijan Teachers Institute, the largest in-service training provider, to improve DRR teaching capacity and knowledge of teachers. The institute provides in-service training to approximately 11,000 teachers per year.

UNICEF assisted civil society and government partners in providing day care to children at risk of family separation, community-based support services to children with disabilities, parental support services to families with children with disabilities aged 0–6, and other services to the most vulnerable children across the country. Services benefiting children in contact and conflict with the law have been expanded to other districts and now cover more children.

The CO supported the Government of Azerbaijan in implementing the recommendations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. UNICEF Azerbaijan also helped CSOs and government partners in providing social support services to vulnerable children, and continued supporting the Juvenile Justice Task Force, established under the Cabinet of Ministers. As a result, in 2015 the cases of 27 juveniles were diverted from the legal system, and these children received the necessary legal and psychosocial support.

The CO also supported the MoH in developing a tool for monitoring the ILBD. It also strengthened the capacity of health-care professionals in the majority of Baku's child poly-clinics on the IGMCD. Based on the findings of the NNS, the CO initiated a development advocacy/information package on anaemia reduction, targeting decision makers and assisting a working group of local experts.

In 2015 UNICEF CO had partnered with major events like the first European games in Baku which was strategically important for mobilization of public opinions specifically of children and adolescents to address social issues.

Also UNICEF CO has partnered with ADB through and modelled a hygiene and sanitation promotion intervention in schools. Another important partnership the MoE and Khazar University facilitated by UNICEF resulted in capacity building of 120 promising candidates to become school Principals.

Output 1: By the end of 2015, the MoE ensures the nationwide application of child-friendly school standards, particularly by schools serving vulnerable and marginalized children. Such standards include: inclusiveness, access, criteria for quality of teaching, management, protective environment and community participation.

Analytical statement of progress:

In 2015, the MoE began structural reforms aimed at establishing a system for the effective inclusion of children with disabilities into mainstream education. With technical assistance from UNICEF Azerbaijan, the first stage of the reform included the revision of old medical-based disability assessment procedures and the launching of a modelling project based on a German-model. It is important to note that government financing is being provided for teacher salaries and adjustments in schools to provide access to children with disabilities.

The MoE also developed a five-year, step-by-step plan to address inclusion in a holistic way by creating an education system that meets the educational and developmental needs of all children. Therefore, the plan will not be limited to pure education-related outputs (e.g., teacher training, school access, financial investments), but will cover areas related to rehabilitation services, social integration, and vocational training and employment.

The first cohort of 120 potential school principals completed the school leadership programme. A new in-service teacher training programme for primary school teachers called TEMEL has been introduced at the Baku-based in-service Teacher Training Institute to support the implementation of the MoE's strategy on improving the teaching capacity and qualification of primary school teachers. The course will be offered by the institute on a regular basis to primary school teachers from more than 352 schools in Baku that provide education to 369,265 children.

UNICEF Azerbaijan helped to further scale up DRR by facilitating the establishment of two resource centres at the sub-campus of the Azerbaijan Teacher Institutes in Aghjabedi and Sheki. The centres provided training to 5,318 teachers (80 per cent female) in the two districts, ultimately reaching five or six neighbouring districts as well.

In addition, disaster risk analysis exercises were mainstreamed into the Gabala District development plan, including the addition of a section on child vulnerability aspect.

Output 2: By the end of 2015, national and local authorities provide child-care services and associated mechanisms that meet international standards, thereby ensuring and strengthening

the social protection of orphans and children deprived of parental care, as well as street children.

Analytical statement of progress:

UNICEF Azerbaijan assisted civil society and government partners in providing support services, such as day care for children at risk of family separation, community-based support services for children with disabilities, parental support services for families with children with disabilities aged 0–6, and other services for the most vulnerable children across the country. Services benefiting children in contact and conflict with the law have been expanded to Ganja and Guba Districts, which have benefited about 100 children, mostly providing legal aid, legal representation and psychosocial support services.

The CO continued to help civil society and government partners in providing support services to the most vulnerable children across the country. More than 1,500 vulnerable children benefited from community-based services provided by NGOs active in more than 15 districts and funded by the Government of Azerbaijan. These services targeted children with disabilities; children at risk of family separation; children from poor families; children abandoned by parents and living/working on the street; and children in socially disadvantaged situations. The CO worked with the MoLSPP to improve the quality standards of those programmes, introducing standards on four social-care services. As a result of improvements in statistics and gate-keeping mechanisms, the number of children residing in large residential institutions was less than 3,000 in 2015.

The CO conducted an analysis to measure the impact of existing social protection mechanisms on children's well-being in Azerbaijan. Based on the findings, the CO successfully advocated with the MoLSPP to develop the Social Protection Strengthening Concept Document 2016–2020, which will specifically target vulnerable children. The concept document will help the country meet the goals set in the Azerbaijan 2020: Future Vision Paper, as well as undertake international obligations.

Output 3: Follow up on the Training of Trainers activity on adults-learning methodology to train future resource people on justice for children.

Analytical statement of progress:

UNICEF's support has resulted in 27 cases of juveniles being diverted from legal and judicial proceedings, and those children receiving necessary legal and psychosocial support. Legal aid and counselling services at ASAN (an Azeri word meaning 'easy') Public Services Centres have benefited more than 215 children – half of them girls – and their families. During the reporting year, this pilot initiative supported by UNICEF became part of the services offered by the ASAN centres.

UNICEF continued supporting the Juvenile Justice Task Force, established under the Azerbaijan Cabinet of Ministers, whose activities increased knowledge and information flow among 10 government agencies (MoJ, MoI, MoLSPP, MoE, MoH, SCFWCA, Prosecutor General's Office, Baku City Administration, Nizami District Administration, and the Cabinet of Ministers) dealing with children in contact and conflict with law. The group reviewed 14 legal draft documents in order to align Azerbaijan's national legislation with the international standards. One legal provision was approved, which significantly reduced the juvenile conviction maximum sentence from eight years to three years.

Output 4: The CO will focus on advocacy and technical assistance to the Government of Azerbaijan in promoting improvement of neonatal care services through the introduction and implementation of supportive supervision of ongoing service delivery practices. IYCF with a focus on revitalizing exclusive breastfeeding, promoting optimal complementary feeding and improving parenting skills for child nutrition and care will be further supported. Advocacy for adoption of low-cost, high-impact interventions for anaemia prevention and control, including flour fortification, as well as early detection and prevention of childhood disability, continuation of monitoring of IDD/USI law implementation and technical assistance to the Government in transiting to ILBD will remain among UNICEF's priorities.

Analytical statement of progress:

The CO helped to strengthen the capacity of health-care professionals in the majority of Baku's child poly-clinics on IGMCD. This resulted in the application of modern approaches to early interventions in order to prevent child disabilities, and improved the detection and timely referral of children with developmental delays. In turn, this resulted in the enhancement of doctor-patient partnerships, leading to the wider use of social approaches for early interventions. Consequently, the referral to the CRTC of children 0–3 years old, who are at risk of disability, increased by 40 per cent.

UNICEF supported the MoH in the development of a tool for monitoring of the ILBD. The monitoring conducted by the MoH with support from UNICEF indicates that the knowledge and skills of health-care professionals on the definition's application need to be further enhanced. A communication plan on ILBD targeting health-care professionals and the general population is now under development. An awareness-raising campaign on the advantages of the country's transition to the ILBD has already started in five universities, including Medical University and two medical colleges.

Following the presentation of the findings of the NNS, which revealed a high prevalence of anaemia among women of reproductive age and children, UNICEF initiated a development advocacy/information package on anaemia reduction that targeted decision makers. A working group consisting of the country's best experts is currently developing the information based on evidence available in and out of the country on effective anaemia reduction interventions, with special emphasis on the advantages of a flour fortification initiative.

Output 5: By the end of 2015, partnerships with parliamentarians, the media and the private sector underpin an enabling environment for the fulfilment of children's rights.

Analytical statement of progress:

Partnering with major events such as the first European Games in Baku 2015 proved to be strategic for the mobilization of public opinions, specifically of children and adolescents to address social issues and promote ideas of leaving a social legacy.

UNICEF Azerbaijan partnered with ADB through Azersu, the national water company, and modelled a hygiene and sanitation promotion intervention in schools. This demonstrated how partnerships with government, district administration, civil society, local media, children and adolescents are critical for achieving results for children. This range of partnerships contributed to the successful planning and implementation of the WinS programme in 27 schools in three districts. Partnerships were also established with the Embassy of Japan and CSOs to further improve WASH conditions in the schools of one district.

A successful partnership between the MoE and Khazar University, facilitated by UNICEF,

resulted in 120 promising candidates becoming school principals. The MoE strongly committed to offer training for several employment opportunities and encouraged other leading universities to do so as well.

UNICEF Azerbaijan continues to pursue partnerships with the EU delegation that aim to ensure justice for children. During the reporting period, more than 500 children directly benefited as a result. In addition, more than 400 vulnerable and disadvantaged children received legal aid and psychosocial support through the Government and civil society cooperation as a result of strong partnerships established by UNICEF Azerbaijan.

A unique partnership with the World Bank was established in 2015 to make the juvenile justice system aligned with international standards.

UNICEF Azerbaijan has proactively worked with other United Nations agencies under the guidance of the CMT and through different thematic groups focused on social inclusive services (health, education and social protection), gender, human rights, and so on.

Outcome 2: By the end of 2015, Azerbaijan advances the fulfilment of key outstanding observations of the Committee on the Right of the Child.

Analytical statement of progress:

According to the theory of change for this outcome, significant advancements in the realization of child rights in Azerbaijan will be possible if key outstanding recommendations of the CRC's Concluding Observations are implemented. During 2015, the following progress towards this implementation has been achieved:

UNICEF trained 200 justice and law enforcement professionals on the administration of justice for children, which resulted in a 25-per-cent increase of knowledge regarding international principles and standards. The MoJ was supported in introducing a model child-friendly interview room in a Baku court.

In 2015, UNICEF Azerbaijan supported the MoES in risk and vulnerability assessments via the introduction of a DRA methodology that has a particular focus on child vulnerability. The vulnerability assessment included education, access to sanitation, quality of housing, condition of roads, vitamin A deficiency, existence of disaster mitigation and medical services in schools and communities in general. The piloting of the methodology in Gabala District revealed that, despite the efforts of the past 20 years, the district still has high levels of child vulnerability, which is a complex manifestation of many factors, including living and health conditions. A child-centred risk and vulnerability assessment identified the most vulnerable villages, schools and groups of children in the district. The assessment showed that most residential areas and schools are at high risk in terms of hazards and preparedness. As a follow-up to this successful initiative, the MoES is planning to scale up the methodology's application at district level via district-based emergency commissions, and use the results of the assessments in disaster preparedness and planning activities.

Output 1: By the end of 2015, the country increasingly provides an infrastructure for coordination, situation monitoring and responding to violations to children's rights.

Analytical statement of progress:

The CO worked with government agencies to advocate for the adoption of the National Child Strategy, which will play a key role in implementing the provisions of the CRC in Azerbaijan.

However, the 2015 parliamentary elections cycle has delayed the adoption of this document.

Adolescent development programming was also tailored to achieve HRBA benchmarks through implementing CRC, CEDAW and CRPD, strengthening accountability mechanisms for the realization of adolescents' rights to recreation and play, freedom of expression and access to information, with a special focus on the rights of those with disabilities and girls. Previous sections have mentioned how the key rights holders – more than 16,000 adolescents – were given an opportunity to openly and creatively contribute to youth policy formulation and programming that will affect their lives over the next five years.

Output 2: By the end of 2015, the country increasingly provides an infrastructure for coordination, situation monitoring and responding to violations to children's rights.

Analytical statement of progress:

The Ombudsman institute's capacity has been further strengthened, improving the independent monitoring of child rights violations in public settings. UNICEF worked with the National Preventive Group under the Ombudsperson to support the monitoring of detention centres and child-care institutions. UNICEF international experts have also provided them with practical and theoretical training, tools and methodologies to better identify and prevent child rights violations.

UNICEF supported the SCFWCA to develop a centralized electronic child databank, a key recommendation of the CRC Committee, which will help increase evidence-based policymaking and programming.

Output 3: By the end of 2015, the Government of Azerbaijan and CSOs address gaps in the institutional capacity to promote positive and measurable social and behavioural outcomes, especially among vulnerable groups in targeted areas.

Analytical statement of progress:

On the basis of the school readiness modelling carried out in previous years, UNICEF advocated for ensuring preschool for all children. Consequently, the MoE began formulating a new state programme for preschool education, as well as conducting an outcome assessment of the ongoing ministerial programme on school readiness.

UNICEF modelled a WinS programme, measured the outcomes and advocated with the MoE to replicate the model and adapt the international standards related to WASH in schools based on child-friendly school principles. The MoE is earnestly considering replicating WinS standards nationally.

An increase of about 16 per cent in hand-washing behaviour among children was observed. Some 1,274 teachers, 640 parents, 6,539 boys and 5,870 girls received hygiene education and sanitation practices training in 27 schools, through the use of a multimedia approach.

An NNS was launched and the findings and recommendations were presented to officials from the relevant ministries and civil society. The roles and responsibilities of various ministries in implementing the survey report recommendations were discussed. Continued efforts include advocating for the Cabinet of Ministers' leading and coordinating role in this implementation, and for the hosting of a special meeting related to food fortification to develop a clear action plan.

OUTPUT 4: By the end of 2015, the Government of Azerbaijan ensures an enabling environment for adolescents and young people, including those vulnerable and marginalized for exercising their right to participate in decision-making processes on issues affecting their lives.

Analytical statement of progress:

While the first European Games were being hosted in Azerbaijan, the CO adopted an innovative approach to collecting the opinions of adolescents on safe and inclusive sports. Also for the first time, an online survey using a Google-based comprehensive questionnaire, a street adolescent poll and face-to-face meetings were combined to determine the opinions of adolescents on the importance of sports in their lives, including the barriers they face with regard to access and participation. The use of existing Facebook networks for dissemination of the online questionnaire was instrumental in reaching out to every part of the country. The approach, which generated opinions from more than 15,000 adolescents, proved to be very effective, particularly since participation in decision making has been one of the main bottlenecks of adolescent development in Azerbaijan. The adolescents who responded included those with disabilities, from disadvantaged communities, from internally displaced camps, and from migrant families, as well as girls. The activity revealed, among other things, that girls continue to experience multiple forms of discrimination and are not allowed to practice sports by their families because of cultural norms and gender stereotypes; that children with disabilities have limited opportunities to practice sports due to significant accessibility barriers; and that children living in rural areas are unaware of how to reach available sports facilities due to their remote locations.

The CO also facilitated evidence-gathering to inform state policies and programmes. More than 16,000 adolescents were consulted through online and offline platforms on issues affecting their lives, such as safe and inclusive sport, state youth programmes and child marriage. The consultations brought up salient concerns regarding social inclusion, protection and meaningful participation, with special emphasis on the inclusion of girls and children with disabilities. The outcomes were considered by the Government of Azerbaijan in the process of formulating the new five-year State Youth Programme.

While Azerbaijan was preparing for the first European Games, UNICEF Azerbaijan invited experts and adolescents from Brazil and South Africa who were involved in FIFA World Cups to ensure that Azerbaijani adolescents actively participate in sports mega events. The teams from both Brazil and South Africa have worked on creating a social legacy to realize child rights through sports, and shared their rich experiences, powerful tools and inclusive approaches to promoting child rights through sports for development. The transfer of knowledge was also facilitated by a peer-to-peer approach, with young leaders from these countries training the young Azerbaijani leaders to become facilitators and change agents to influence the process. Consequently, the Azerbaijani young leaders facilitated a workshop of 80 adolescents from all over the country with different backgrounds. At the end of the process, adolescents prepared and presented a nine-point declaration advising stakeholders on how to ensure safe and inclusive sports, urging them to take immediate action on the social legacy of the first European Games.

Outcome 3: Cross sectoral

Analytical statement of progress:

The CO supported the MoES in carrying out a DRA in a selected district. The results of this child-focused vulnerability analysis have been integrated into a district-level disaster management plan as well as into the district development plan for 2016–2020, with detailed

activities in the areas of infrastructure, tourism, agriculture, education, health, sanitation, water resources and flood management. A district-based multidisciplinary working group – consisting of representatives of local executive authorities on statistics, environment, education, health and social protection – has been established in the intervention district.

As a follow-up to this successful initiative, the MoES is planning to scale up the application of the methodology at district level via district-based emergency commissions, and use the results of the assessments in disaster preparedness and planning activities.

The CO also facilitated three nationwide online consultations regarding: safe and inclusive sport; the State Youth Programme; and child marriage. These gathered thousands of adolescent voices expressing concerns, mainly referring to quality, accessibility and inclusivity of education, social protection, recreation and leisure for adolescents, as well as availability of development opportunities. Gender disparities and disability were presented as key determinants of adolescents' vulnerabilities. Adolescents essentially suggested cross-sectoral solutions to the key decision makers, and the consultations generated evidence that guided UNICEF's cross-sectoral adolescent programming for the new country programme.

Output 1: Social policy and Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation

Analytical statement of progress:

There were five PRIME activities, with four studies on: 'Collecting views of young people in 21 districts on the role of sport for their development to identify themes for possible legacy intervention to follow the Baku 2015 European Games'; 'Collecting voices of adolescents and young people to inform the new Youth Program 2016–2020'; and 'Impact assessment of social protection schemes on children's well-being through assessment of social allowances, targeted social assistance and social services'.

M&E capacity development included UNAPF and CPD preparation exercises. Significant contributions were made to improve local partners' M&E capacity and co-leading UNAPF's M&E group. The CO actively contributed to shaping the RRF through SMART indicators and constructive feedback.

In addition, technical support provided by the CO to the SCFWCA in establishing a multi-sectoral databank assisted government monitoring of the national child rights situation.

Together with the State Statistical Committee, the first round of data collection was completed applying the deprivation module to measure child poverty.

The NNS, conducted by the MoH, SSC and UNICEF Azerbaijan and disseminated by the Government of Azerbaijan, revealed that while there is a positive trend in the nutritional status of women and children, critical progress is required in two major fields. Firstly, IYCF practices in general are inadequate, mostly due to the low capacity of health professionals to consult mothers. In response, the PHRC of the MoH developed and distributed methodological guidelines for health-care professionals on IYCF. Secondly, high levels of anaemia among women (38 per cent), with 62 per cent attributed to iron deficiency, have led to food fortification in general and flour fortification with iron in particular becoming major government advocacy agendas. Discussions during dissemination covered ministries' roles and responsibilities in implementing the report recommendations. UNICEF advocated with the Cabinet of Ministers to lead in pursuing the recommendations with relevant actors for a multi-sectoral response.

UNICEF Azerbaijan facilitated a horizontal cooperation visit with representatives from the Government of Ethiopia, civil society and the Salt Producers' Association to exchange experiences and learn about Azerbaijan's universal salt iodization programme. The delegation members visited the relevant ministries, medical university, CSOs and salt production units. The experience of the Independent Consumer Union – a CSO monitoring salt iodization and salt production unit – was especially useful to the delegation, since the country had successfully shifted from multiple small-scale salt production and iodization to centralized industrial-level salt processing, retaining small producers still engaged in the production process, and the Government supporting such a shift. This also resulted in the creation of a long-standing partnership between officials and salt producers from Ethiopia and Azerbaijan, which will support better results for universal salt iodization in Ethiopia.

Output 2: Travel and various events for advocacy for children.

Analytical statement of progress:

The general public's knowledge and understanding of children's rights has been continuously enhanced through working with the media, organizing public events and high-level meetings. Gender mainstreaming has been ensured both internally and within the framework of cooperation with external partners.

Regular contact with the media through press releases, field trips, interviews and special events provided opportunities to engage major media outlets, with an audience of hundreds of thousands of people. This helped to draw public attention to the issues of juvenile justice, DRR, adolescent participation, disability and child marriage, as reflected in more than 1,000 published stories during the reporting period.

UNICEF Azerbaijan continued to serve as a first point of reference for the media and academics on information related to children through English and Azerbaijani-language websites and the UNICEF Azerbaijan Facebook page, which has 35,000 followers.

The main partnership garnering media and public attention on child rights in 2015 occurred when Azerbaijan hosted the first-ever European Games in Baku. Using the momentum of these games, UNICEF Azerbaijan advocated for safe and inclusive sport with a special focus on children with disabilities and girls, as well as adolescent participation. A number of communication materials and documents were produced, including, but not limited to, platforms for reaching out to adolescents, an effective communication plan, documentaries, photos, a crisis communication plan, and a social media plan consisting of videos, photos and messages. A visit by UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Jose Calderon helped boost advocacy efforts, as he participated in a number of events that were widely covered by both national and international media, such as adolescent consultations, a basketball game with children and a torch relay.

Other initiatives included joint advocacy with the British Council on the issue of disability during the British Film Festival, as well as a partnership with a state television channel on the issue of safe and inclusive sport.

More than 40 adolescents from underprivileged backgrounds produced compelling advocacy materials on issues ranging from DRR to disability and adolescent participation. The initiative equipped participants with basic directing and storytelling skills through the production of one-minute videos.

Outcome 4: Effective and efficient programme management and operations support.

Analytical statement of progress:

The Annual Management Plan (AMP) was prepared using the latest guidelines and best practices. The Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) was updated following a participatory approach and identified the potential risks for the CO. The EWEA was updated twice in 2015. The BCP was tested in a real-case situation, activated for a 12-day period during the Baku Games when critical staff members were moved to an alternate location because of a major road blockade in the capital city.

The observations on office governance, noted in UNICEF Azerbaijan's final 2014 audit report, were swiftly acted upon. The CO mobilized to work on shortfalls and recommendations in order to strengthen the structure of its governance system. Consequently, all of the recommendations had been instituted by the first submission of the audit response.

Output 1: Effective and efficient management and stewardship of financial resources, including administration, finance, office security and equipment, maintenance and vehicles.

Analytical statement of progress:

An all-staff retreat was organized, which focused on team building and discussing the new country programme structure. The retreat was facilitated by an internationally known external facilitator.

The AMP was prepared using the latest guidelines and best practices. The ERM was updated following a participatory approach and identified the potential risks for the CO. The EWEA was updated twice in 2015. The BCP was tested in a real-case situation, activated for a 12-day period during the Baku Games when critical staff members were moved to an alternate location because of a major road blockade in the capital city.

CMT meetings were convened regularly to monitor governance and programme priorities stipulated in the AMP, as well as funding, security, staff well-being, and learning and development. Systematic reviews of management indicators and ERM risk profile of the CO were also part of CMT discussions. The CMT also took the initiative of building capacity of all staff on MP4R, RBM, ethics and integrity, gender, and emergency preparedness and response.

The CMT facilitated a participatory process of developing the CPD and CPMP together with the staff association. The CPMP was submitted to the October PBR and office recommendations for the management of a new country programme, including the office human resource structure, was approved.

The outcomes of the RMTs, PBRs and other global and network meetings, as well as change management initiatives, were discussed in all staff meetings to keep staff informed and equipped. There were three JCC meetings and management paid great attention to the staff's issues.

Output 2: Effective and efficient management and stewardship of financial resources, including administration, finance, office security and equipment, maintenance and vehicles.

Analytical statement of progress:

As in previous years, UNICEF Azerbaijan operated its financial resources in line with established guidelines and control mechanisms to maintain a good level of performance and

fulfilment of activities in line with the organizational mandate and objectives safeguarding financial and other assets.

The budget was regularly monitored using reports in the VISION system and the Performance Management Dashboard for timely utilization.

National legislation changed towards the end of 2014, requiring the registration of each grant and funding agency with the relevant government authority. The law did not stipulate how this registration would be done, and development of guidelines is expected in the future. The Government did not register any PCA or formal grant contract between UNICEF Azerbaijan and the local CSO in 2015, and the CO was unable to release funds and start activities planned in the AWP, except one implementing partner which registered the agreement before the legal changes, and also some government partners. Disbursement of cash assistance to partners and liquidation of advances was implemented and recorded on a basis of FACE documenting. The CO had no direct cash transfer (DCT) with outstanding balance more than six months throughout the year.

UNICEF Azerbaijan regularly updated the HACT Assurance plan, and uploaded it to InSight, with programme monitoring visits and spot-checks included.

Monthly closures and financial reports were completed on a timely basis and uploaded to Sharepoint.

UNICEF Azerbaijan's supply component was small in 2015, as it was the previous year. The main component was for administrative supplies and printing of reports and project materials. Local printing houses were used for the printing of reports and training materials, and visibility items were procured through joint LTAs with UNDP and other United Nations agencies. The main sources of procurement were local markets, which have been improving in timeliness and quality. Also, the number of consultancy contracts increased in 2015, due to local legislation changes that resulted in a need to build partnerships with the help of individual contracting.

UNICEF Azerbaijan assisted national partners, namely the MoH and GAVI, in using procurement service assistance in 2015. The MoH requested that the CO assist with the ordering of vaccines in the amount of US\$2,544,932.

The CO continued to use LTAs for technology maintenance, design and transportation services. United Nations Common LTAs were used for translation, hotels and conferencing facility services, while United Nations rosters were also used for translation services, so as not to require additional solicitation procedures.

UNICEF Azerbaijan procured IT supply items mainly from the Supply Division and from global LTA suppliers, as per supply rules and procedures.

There was no loss in local and offshore procurement in 2015.

In addition, the CO does not have a warehouse.

The premises of UNICEF Azerbaijan are still rented in a commercial building, which significantly affects the office budget. Negotiations with the Government of Azerbaijan for free office space are still ongoing.

All equipment and software used in the CO are compliant with UNICEF standards.

UNICEF Azerbaijan also participated in a number of IT pilot initiatives through the Regional Office (RO) and UNICEF headquarters. In line with new IT initiatives that are assumed to reduce the workload of the IT Assistant, the CO reduced the post to part-time starting in 2015.

Output 3: Effective and efficient management of human capacity, including human resource management, staff development and learning, staff well-being and staff-related security costs.

Analytical statement of progress:

A PBR was conducted on 6 October 2015 in Istanbul. Results showed the following changes in office staffing:

Abolishment of posts:

- Three Programme Assistants and one Communication Assistant post, GS5 level
- Communication for Development Specialist, NOC level
- Youth & Adolescent Development Officer, NOB level
- Health & Nutrition Specialist, NOC
- Youth Adolescent Development Officer, P2 level

Establishment of new posts:

- Three Programme Assistants, GS5
- Communication for Development Officer, NOB
- Youth & Adolescent Development Specialist, NOC
- Child Rights Monitoring Specialist, NOC

Recruitment processes were based on the UNICEF Competency Framework.

Mid-year progress review discussions between staff and supervisors assessed performance and monitored individual work-plan output progress. Staff and supervisors worked together, considering job profile competencies, in submitting development plans. Development needs and access to appropriate learning, training and development resources were periodically reviewed by staff. Staff increased participation in stretch assignments and missions, and several members relocated to other offices to provide temporary support.

The role of Peer Support Volunteers has been functioning since 2003. Flexi-time and breastfeeding arrangements were in place throughout 2015 in order to improve work-life balance, and staff used them on a case-by-case basis.

Staff well-being, security, learning and development issues were discussed at general staff and CMT meetings. A retreat was held to discuss plans for the year as well as to strengthen team spirit and improve work relations. The local HRD committee developed the Office Learning and Training Plan, which was implemented for more than 70 per cent of staff. Also, emergency response preparedness and emergency preparedness trainings were conducted for all staff.

Evaluation and Research

Title	Sequence number	Type of report
Survey on safe and inclusive sport	2015/005	Survey
National online youth consultation to inform the state youth programme	2015/004	Survey
Assessment of the social protection system in Azerbaijan	2015/003	Study
Assessment of the situation of children and women in Azerbaijan	2015/002	SitAn
Azerbaijan nutrition survey	2015/001	Survey