1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This year UNICEF in Azerbaijan was able to support full programmatic achievement despite moving to a new office and many other internal changes.

UNICEF continued leadership of the UN advocacy and support on disabilities assisting Government preparation of an implementation plan and report for the Convention on Persons Living with Disabilities (and for parallel and alternative reports), and supporting the Ministry of Education (MoE) to introduce Inclusive Education. We also undertook advocacy on early detection and prevention of disability, and established partnerships for communication to reduce stigma.

Pre-school enrolment is low, but Early Learning Development Standards have been included in the National Preschool Education Curriculum standards which will lead to increased quality. A new (equity-focused) agreement with MoE has been reached to introduce home-based school-readiness programmes in communities too remote to have a pre-school.

Not much progress was made with the Ministry of Health (MoH) in the area of flour fortification or on the introduction of the international definition of live (and still) births. However, we made good progress on the former issue with other partners, while the latter issue gained some momentum towards the end of the year.

Despite agreement on the text of a draft law on Juvenile Justice, the Bill was not introduced this year. However, we are making use of this delay to develop a clear action plan for implementation in 2011.

Another area in which UNICEF was not able to achieve fully its stated goal was in support to the Ministry of Youth and Sports in the development of a Youth Strategy, as there were some gaps in understanding of roles and expectations. We took this as a good learning experience and have ensured that 2011 will have much clearer success in this area.

We extended our work with the Heydar Aliyev Foundation to include anaemia prevention and breastfeeding promotion in addition to reduction of stigma of disability. Additionally, we are now partnered with USAID on improving the nutritional status of women and children. We are also establishing partnerships with sporting organizations including the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan, Special Olympics and Paralympics. The EU and UNICEF held a joint advocacy event this year, and for the first time we are implementing a ‘DRR in Education’ project in partnership with ECHO. Importantly, we signed a MOU with the World Bank (WB) to define and shape our partnership in promoting Early Childhood Care and Education.

2. COUNTRY SITUATION AS AFFECTING CHILDREN AND WOMEN

The nine-millionth Azerbaijani citizen was born 15 January 2010 (up to two million Azerbaijanis, however, are reported to be in Russia). The 165,643 births for 2010 are
the highest for 16 years\(^1\). UNICEF data show IMR declined from 78/1000 in 1990 to 32 in 2008. Official estimate of rates are much lower (11.4 in 2008-2009): discrepancies between the official and UNICEF data are mainly attributed to use of the Soviet definition of live birth. Nutritional status is a source of concern: 25% children under 5 years of age are stunted and over 1/3 children and women are anaemic.

The country’s Human Development Index is 0.713 (placing it in the 67\(^{th}\) position), and inequality-adjusted rate is 0.613. Azerbaijan is 134\(^{th}\) in the Corruption Perceptions Index, score of 2.4. The share of social expenses in total budgetary expenditures for 2011 will increase 8.8 per cent to 4.2 billion Manat (1/3 of the budget). Education and defence spending will both be 1.3 billion Manat, and health care 0.5 billion Manat.

There are 18,164 registered Intravenous Drug Users (IDUs) between the ages of 15 and 64. A UNICEF Regional Report identified Azerbaijan as having the highest prevalence of IDUs in the adult population worldwide (5.2 per cent). The 2006 DHS showed very low knowledge on HIV/AIDS among young people: only 5% of people 15-24 years old have a comprehensive knowledge of HIV.

More than half of street children in a survey had arrived to Baku from other towns and regions of the country or abroad: only 56% of boys and 12% of girls were Baku born. Among the street children not attending school, 77% could read and write. UNICEF is currently conducting a new study on street children which will be published early next year.

Approximately 56,000 children are registered as having a disability. Systems to support children with disabilities (and their families) need significant improvement, as do general public attitudes towards these children. Only about 6,000 receive education in special schools; and only 11,000 are educated at home. Azerbaijan ratified the CRPD in 2009 and is embarking on pilot projects on inclusive education. The first State report and parallel and alternative reports are being prepared. Children who are internally displaced may face extra challenges due to the poor resources available at some centres.

A joint study on child marriages conducted by UNICEF and the State Committee for Family, Women and Children’s Affairs presents a qualitative assessment of early marriage in Azerbaijan, shows an increasing trend in some regions of the country, and analyses reasons for it.

Only about 16% young children are enrolled in pre-school, and attendance is even lower. More boys than girls are registered in early childhood care, a turnaround from ten years ago. Discrepancies are wide between rural and urban areas. The Ministry of Education is undertaking major reforms, which should help raise quality. The 2009 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) shows Azerbaijan having slight improvement in reading scores (rising from 353 to 362) though remaining in second last place. However the result for mathematics has decreased from 471 to 431, and for science from 382 to 373.\(^2\) University admission tests show that more than three fourths of students (78 per cent of girls and 80 per cent of boys) had scores below 300 on a scale of 700 in 2009.

In child protection, the country took a major step forward in May 2010 when its parliament passed the Law on Domestic Violence addressing some elements of child abuse.


\(^2\) OECD (2010), PISA 2009 Results: What Students Know and Can Do – Student Performance in Reading, Mathematics and Science, (Volume I)
On the political front, even as efforts to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute continue, the past two years have seen the worst skirmishes on the frontline since the 1994 ceasefire. There are around 1,000,000 refugees and IDPs in Azerbaijan. The political situation remained stable in 2010, with no major changes as a result of the 2009 November parliamentary elections.

3. CP ANALYSIS & RESULT

3.1 CP Analysis
3.1.1 CP Overview:
During this final year of the country programme, the Country Office (CO) had a lot to contend with in terms of programme documentation completion, office relocation, and new recruitments etcetera. Amidst these preoccupations, the CO continued its 'upstream' results focusing both on finishing the work from the previous country programme and starting additional activities to "jump-start" the new programme 2011-2015.

Partnerships form the central theme of and characterize our programme. Government partnerships are clearly central, and beyond those, our partnership with the Heydar Aliyev Foundation (headed by the First Lady) as primus inter pares, in our collaboration with the non-government sector. We have been building on development-through-sport initiatives first sparked by a project with the UK National Committee, but now taking on its own life. We have new and renewed partnerships with the Azerbaijan Federation of Football Associations, Special Olympics and Paralympics to bring forward advocacy messages on girls' empowerment and inclusion of people living with disabilities.

Equity is an overarching guide in our programming, not only in determining what substantive areas are covered, but even more in the way in which programmes are delivered. We scrutinize geographic areas before models or pilots are put in, ensuring that it is not only the more successful or easy-to-reach areas which are used as test-bed for programmatic innovation.

Key results presented in the programme components below provide evidence of system development and are also indicative of ways in which Azerbaijan, supported by UNICEF and other partners, is striving to use its oil wealth to continue to build its social fabric.

3.1.2 Programme Strategy
3.1.2.1 Capacity Development:
UNICEF supported capacity development for the new Task Force on the CRPD both to plan for implementation of the Convention, and to report on it, as well as capacity development of the organizations and groups which will produce parallel and alternative reports.

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The CO contributed to a course for capacity building of social workers who for the very first time will be officially recognized as social workers after completing a nine-month re-qualification course.

UNICEF supported capacity development of relevant stakeholders in implementation of the State Programme on De-Institutionalisation and Alternative Care at national and local (two district) levels, in case management, transformation of residential institutions including its financial implications, and on establishment of local mechanisms.

UNICEF supported 20 judges and prosecutors to enhance their knowledge on international standards for child rights, juvenile justice and disability. It also supported additional capacity building of the Ombudsman’s central and regional child rights focal points on how to monitor systematic violations of children’s rights and report on them including development of specialised reports.

Two major Round Tables on Anaemia and Breastfeeding were held as advocacy events, and importantly, to sensitize key policy and decision makers and community on major nutritional issues affecting mothers and children as well as the low-cost and effective interventions required to address them.

UNICEF provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Youth and Sports to develop a National Youth Strategy, through a consultation workshop with youth. Senior officials of the Ministry also participated in the consultation meeting on Handbook on CRC and the meeting on youth participation beyond sporting excellence.

UNICEF supported a review of the current situation in the management capacity of preschool education in Azerbaijan with special focus on Ministry capacity. As a result, a new model for MoE’s preschool education staff development was presented to the Ministry combining international (short-term) and local (longer-term) expert support in the areas of strategic planning, change management and efficiency. Support was also provided to the Central Parents Teacher Association to carry out an assessment to identify capacity gaps and promote and monitor child friendly standards.

3.1.2.2 Effective Advocacy:

UNICEF (as lead UN agency) advocacy led to early ratification of the CRPD and establishment of a high-level working group by presidential decree, and a technical task force to develop the initial state party report to the UN Committee. The working group met at vice-ministerial level.

An Action Plan on Child Marriages for the SCFWCA has been developed (based on our joint survey) with clear activities and timeframes which include active involvement of different state and non-state actors including religious leaders.

The visit of UNICEF Regional Director enabled a meeting with the Minister of Finance (MoF) marking the beginning of dialogue with MoF on budgeting for children.

In partnership with the influential Heydar Aliyev Foundation, the convening of two UNICEF-supported Round Tables on Anaemia and Breastfeeding, along with a nationwide communication campaign helped legitimize the urgency of tackling both issues on which work will start next year.
The International Inspiration Legacy Conference held in partnership with British Council and UK Sport and visited by the IPC President was essential in achieving Government’s commitment to sustain the International Inspiration project activities and to use the power of sport for promotion of girls’ participation and inclusion of children with disabilities into mainstream society.

Effective advocacy with MoE and other decision makers resulted in the adoption of UNICEF-promoted Early Learning Development Standards into the National Preschool Education Curriculum’s Standards. Subsequent advocacy has reached agreement on a home-based school-readiness programme to be initiated in remote areas with no pre-school.

Consistent advocacy with the Ministry of Emergency Situations (MoES) and MoE has resulted in the agreement to implement a project on disaster risk reduction, initially to be supported by DIPECHO funds.

Continued advocacy with Parliament, particularly the Commission on Social Protection, has opened possibilities to strengthen Parliamentary monitoring of laws (such as the law on child feeding) and new laws (such as a law on food fortification).

### 3.1.2.3 Strategic Partnerships:

The Child Protection Network brings together international and national NGOs in child protection. For the first time this year, the network undertook an exercise on sharing documents on child care, to inform the standard-development process supported by UNICEF, and to ensure a coherent approach to child care. This process also helps to systematize interventions and produce documents which the Network will jointly advocate for adoption by Government.

Strategic partnerships in health were made with:

- The Heydar Aliyev Foundation to work on issues of anaemia prevention and breastfeeding promotion;
- USAID on improving nutrition status of women and children; and
- Ministry of Health Public Health and Reforms Centre, National Reproductive Health Office, Research Institutes of Ob/Gyn and Paediatrics on introduction of the international live birth definition, on neonatal care and infant and young-child feeding.

Partnership with the Heydar Aliyev Foundation also helped in advocacy and promotion of issues such as child rights, healthy life styles and inclusion and inclusion of children with disabilities. Joint summer camps synergized expertise and experience gained so far and resulted in better involvement of children with disabilities, their parents, and local government representatives.

UNICEF has established a strategic partnership with the three major universities to design a special “child rights syllabus” for child rights reporting for media professionals. This represents a major step forward at the academic level on reporting on children, and a sustainable approach for the education of journalists.

A crucial education partnership is with the Azerbaijan Parent-Teacher Association which is promoting and advocating CFS, and monitoring compliance of schools with CFS standards.
UNICEF has just established an important agreement with the Azerbaijan Federation of Football Associations to “sponsor” (at no cost) a league for under-15-year-old girls. This partnership will promote positive values for girls, and be used as a communication vehicle to combat child marriages.

Partnerships are also being developed with the Special Olympics and Paralympics to foster positive images and empowerment of children with disabilities.

Partnership is being developed with the European Union representation in Azerbaijan, and UNICEF and the EU held a joint advocacy event on policies affecting children and young people.

3.1.2.4 Knowledge Management:

UNICEF partnered with the State Statistical Committee for a quantitative survey covering almost 15,681 households in all regions to understand registration of new-borns. The study indicated that 2,673 infants (17%) were not registered. This not only violates the rights of the child but also raise concerns on the accuracy of the demographic data and estimation.

UNICEF supported research on school drop-outs/non-attendance among children of families receiving Targeted Social Assistance which showed almost all children had missed some school during the year, and that drop-out rates among girls was higher than among boys.

The 2010 Country Analytical Report of TRANSMONEE is on “Gender issues ten years after the ‘women in transition’ report”. The report highlights that the parliament passed the Law on Domestic Violence addressing not only violence against women but also all forms of domestic violence including child abuse. Furthermore, a sea-change can be discerned in pre-school education which used to have more girls than boys ten years ago, but now has more boys than girls.

Knowledge products are shared through the English and Azerbaijani websites and Facebook page, and certain information is also transmitted by the blog and twitter account of the Representative.

However, overall it has to be said that Knowledge Management has not been our strength so far, but inspired by the Global Strategy we are committed to enhance efforts in 2011 to improve our performance.

3.1.2.5 C4D Communication for Development (C4D):

This was mainly a preparatory year for C4D. After a long gap, a C4D Specialist was engaged, and we have established systematic strategic C4D tools and techniques ready for the new Country Programme.

UNICEF provided technical assistance to the State Committee on Family, Women and Children’s Affairs (SCFWA) to better plan and facilitate behaviour change interventions to sustain knowledge, attitudes and practices on protection of children from violence, exploitation and abuse. The SCFWCA agreed to establish a Communication for Development Unit to plan and facilitate better the C4D interventions on early marriage, working with street children and birth registration.

3.1.3 Normative Principles
3.1.3.1 Human Rights Based Approach to Cooperation:

Human rights standards and principles guided both the formulation of the new CPAP and the UNDAF. Situation analysis identifies immediate, underlying, and basic causes of development problems. Measurable goals and targets are used to focus on duty bearers’ capacities in programming. Strategic partnerships are developed and sustained, and programmes support accountability to all stakeholders. The office monitors the economic and social implications of the economic crisis in Azerbaijan and its impact upon vulnerable children. This year, the importance of UNICEF ensuring platforms for participation at all levels has been reinforced through its youth participation related interventions. Some specific examples of human rights-related achievements are:

- Capacity development for implementing and reporting on the CRPD
- Support to Ombudsman’s specialised report to the Parliament on Child Rights
- Support to NGOs’ preparation of an alternative report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child
- Initiation of work to introduce a “child rights syllabus” into journalism schools of three major universities
- UNICEF co-sponsored summer camps which focused on the promotion of child rights, inclusion and integration of children with disabilities and healthy life styles (including HIV prevention). Importantly, the participants represented about 40 districts of the country most of which were poor and rural, and some with higher HIV prevalence;
- To support the Ministry of Health to realise the rights of mothers and children to quality health, UNICEF has been advocating for the necessity of developing implementing criteria for the International Live Birth Definition (ILBD). Now accepted, UNICEF is supporting the MoH in developing an action plan for the transition to ILBDs;
- In March 2010, the MoE adopted Child Friendly School Quality Standards. These standards are based on the CRC and provide holistic, system-wide approach to improving educational quality that places the child in the centre of education reform; the MoE has also committed itself to implement Inclusive Education Programmes for the first time with particular focus on integration of children with disabilities from institutions and those receiving home education into the mainstream education.

3.1.3.2 Gender Equality and Mainstreaming (GEM):

As the office is in the process of finalizing its CPAP it has been using the GEM strategy to measure the extent to which the new country results contribute to the promotion of gender equality and/or the empowerment of girls and women. The results of this assessment will be shared next year.

- This year the CO has been focusing its efforts on promoting girls’ participation in youth events, prevention of child marriages, and rolling out the child friendly schooling initiative in schools to promote secondary education. Girls (35%) participated in events like summer camps, although it was a challenge to convince their parents to allow their participation especially when located far from their homes – a lesson which will be taken into consideration for next years’ programme.
- In Education, a clause on gender equality whereby both boys and girls have involvement in school activities has been included into CFS school quality standards. These standards were approved by MOE in 2010 and 50 more schools each year will comply with them. During monitoring of all CFS related activities, the participation of girls and gender equality will be assessed.
- The active participation of girls in sport activities has been promoted via various means including ‘sport for development project’, ‘child play bus’, and advocacy by parent-teacher association and UNICEF’s cost-free “sponsorship” of a football league for girls under the age of 15 years.
• Rural schools in a poor front-line district reported an increase in the participation of girls in physical education classes as a result of UNICEF-supported activities, while one IDP settlement reported two new volleyball teams comprised of girls. Through this programme, a 13 year old girl, identified as a promising chess player, has won several district and zone level tournaments.
• The Child Marriages study highlighted specific gender interventions for the future, and preparation is underway to plan and document the implementation of the recommended interventions.

3.1.3.3 Environmental Sustainability:
In 2010, in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sport, UNICEF held an international conference on “Youth for Ecological Progress” within the framework of the International Year of Youth and Azerbaijan’s Year of Environment. The conference brought together young people from universities, youth organizations, a young climate ambassador from Azerbaijan, young environmental scientists from 12 countries, experts from various scientific institutions, government officials, international organizations concerned with environmental safety and industrial companies. Young people participated from the very beginning in elaborating the agenda, creating a web-site dedicated to the event (http://www.ecoyouth.az), and developing a list of issues to be discussed during the event. Young people and scientists studied the current legislative basis for environmental safety in Azerbaijan, analysing existing gaps, and were familiarized with modern technologies for clean and safe environment. The conference empowered young people, stimulating discussions on environmental issues faced by society and how young people can contribute to maintaining a better environment for current and future generations.

In line with the revised CCCs and with Azerbaijan’s increasing vulnerability to natural disasters, UNICEF has been implementing a 'Disaster Risk Reduction in Education' programme with the MoE and MoES. The project is being carried out in partnership with DIPECHO and will continue in 2011. The project is addressing DRR at the national level by assessing the education curriculum in order to enhance and mainstream DRR into the formal system. It is also establishing a high-level partnership and coordination mechanism with those involved in DRR in Education within the country that additionally will contribute to significant coordination achievements under HFA priority area number 3. Once the base-line studies have been completed by the end of the year, DRR activities and climate awareness campaigns will also be conducted in the most vulnerable districts and schools due to their likelihood of experiencing flooding, landslides and earthquakes. These preparedness activities within the schools and districts will reduce the impact of environmental and man-made hazards through ensuring early-warning and preparedness methods are in place. UNICEF is also liaising with ISDR and has participated and supported them in organising a DRR conference within the Country.

3.2 Programme Components:

Title:  Policy Planning and Advocacy
Purpose:

The Youth Development component promotes opportunities for equal participation of girls, boys and young people in design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of state approved child and youth policies, as well as using the power of sport in tackling a range of social problems, including social exclusion, and to promote better life skills and awareness among young people on how to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS and other
risky behaviours. One of the aims of the component is exploring platforms for long term sustainable child/youth participation in decisions that affect their lives. The component contributes to the implementation of the State Youth Policy, which promotes the all-round development of youth.

The C4D component supports UNICEF activities across all focus areas to promote positive attitudes and practices on child survival, development, protection and participation through planning, facilitation and implementation of behaviour and social change programmes jointly with government and civil society partners.

The main results planned are as follows:

- Strategic, systematic and evidence based behaviour change communication process to address the issues of child survival, development, protection and participation is in place.
- Government and CSOs have the capacity to better plan and facilitate the C4D process, including emergency communication at national and local level.

The Advocacy and Partnerships component supports the strengthening of government and non-governmental capacities to report on and monitor the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), as well as building partnerships with the media, parliamentarians, and other groups which impact the policy making environment.

The major expected outcomes for the programme component, according to the CPAP Results and Resource Framework, are:
- Getting children’s issues into the public domain in support of UNICEF’s mission and objectives;
- All key journalists and broadcasters oriented on CRC and regularly informed on child rights issues;
- Capacities of civil society organizations and media to promote and monitor CRC compliance are strengthened;
- Fundraising and partnership building with private sector.

**Resources Used:**
Total approved for 2010 as per CPD:
Total available for 2010 from all sources: RR, $32,246; OR $233,893; Total: $266,139.
Any special allocations (list)
List of donors: UK Natcom, The Alexander Bodini Foundation

**Result Achieved:**
- Evidence-based advocacy on budgets for children and the cost of not investing in early childhood care;
- Development of the new National Youth Strategy for the Ministry of Youth and Sport;
- Development of an assessment tool to measure youth participation in Youth Houses;
- A conference bringing together over 100 young people plus Ministry officials and parliamentarians to discuss the role of youth organizations in tackling inclusion of vulnerable children, promotion of healthy life styles, environmental issues and employment opportunities;
- An international conference on “Youth for Ecological Progress” in which young people participated as well as assisted in elaborating the agenda and determining the issues to be discussed (http://www.ecoyouth.az);
• Summer camps for over 200 children/young people (35% girls, 20% CWD) promoting child rights, healthy life styles and integration of children with disabilities through play and games. During these camps, participants developed personal plans of action for subsequent promotion of the issues with their peers and teachers;
• Jointly convening the International Inspiration Legacy conference confirming Government commitment in sustaining results;
• Introduction of behaviour and social change concepts among UN, government and civil society partners; SCFWCA established a C4D Unit to work on early marriage, street children and birth registration.
• A situation analysis of C4D addressing child marriage, in seven regions;
• Development of a National Health Communications Conceptual Framework for 2011 – 2015;
• Writing a C4D system manual providing advocacy and social mobilization tools to promote FFL key interventions.
• Social mobilization campaign “With Clean hands to a Healthy Future” in 20 CFS.
• Public awareness campaign "Life starts with the first drop of Mother’s milk"
• H1N1 vaccination messages.
• Advocacy to build commitment of decision-makers to support reforms of health systems (IDD, breastfeeding, anaemia) and highlight children with disabilities and child marriage. Regular contacts were held with the media, resulting in over 300 articles mentioning UNICEF. UNICEF is the leading advocate for child rights and a hub for child rights information for media, universities and individuals. Major media events included: press conference with UNICEF RD; EU-UNICEF event on policies regarding children and young people; a series of events on nutrition with HAF; and a press conference with the San Marino-Alexander-Bodini-Foundation Children’s Awards recipient.
• Work with three universities on adopting a programme for child rights reporting as part of journalism degree courses. The universities will offer it as part of degree courses starting 2011.

Future Work Plan:
- Youth Strategy Development; strengthening Youth Houses in districts as a platform for youth participation and development; developing partnerships with AFFA and Special Olympic Committee to address social issues faced by children/young people, especially those with disabilities;
- Development of government institutional capacity for effective behavioural change communication planning/implementation;
- Planning and facilitation of behaviour change communication for programmes on child marriage, children with disabilities, anaemia prevention and health and nutrition;
- Continued support to development of curriculum for journalism students;
- Continued informing of media on key activities;
- Improving media capacity to do coverage of children’s issues;
- Build on partnerships with private sector and expand on fundraising initiatives.
Title: Social System Strengthening

Purpose:
The education component supports MoE in development and implementation of legislation, policy and plans of action in education and early childhood care/education.

UNICEF support is closely aligned with the sector reforms, which are financed by the Government and World Bank.

Results for 2010 were: implementation of Active Learning in teacher training; new quality standards for child friendly schooling; and capacity building for PTAs and school management. A priority is the enhancement of Government capacities for developing the new ECCE framework as well as implementation of a parental education and school readiness programmes in WB/MOE pilot districts.

A new EU-funded project undertaken jointly with MoE and MoEs (Ministry of Emergency Situations) on "Supporting Disaster Risk Reduction amongst Vulnerable Communities and Institutions in Azerbaijan" emphasizes the need for a systematic approach to disaster risk reduction and advocates for mainstreaming a child-focused DRR policy and strategic framework into education and disaster preparedness related policies, planning and programmes.

The Child Protection component ensures that girls and boys are better protected from violence, exploitation and abuse, and works towards ensuring the most vulnerable children have access to basic services, social and legal protection.

Results for 2010 were: assistance to government in developing National and Local Child Protection Systems: new standards and guidelines on child care; implementation of pilot project on reforming local child protection mechanisms; strengthening national mechanisms on implementation CRC and CRPD; further development of the necessary Juvenile Justice (JJ) legal and procedural framework; assessment of the outcomes of the diversion modelling project, development of a hand-over strategy as well as development of child rights capacities among justice and law-enforcement professionals.

The Health Programme supports strengthening of health policy, institutional capacity and capacity of health care providers for improved quality of services to address underlying causes of child mortality and poor nutritional status of mothers and children.

The programme consists of two components: (i) Young Child Survival, with focus on International Live Birth Criteria and neonatal care quality; and (ii) Nutrition with major focus on Nutritional Anaemia prevention and control, Young Child Feeding and families’ awareness on Infant and Young Child Feeding.

Resources Used:
Total approved for 2010 as per CPD: US$ 551,129
Total available for 2010 from all sources: RR: US$ 226,671; OR: US$ 519,429; Total: US$ 746,100
Any special allocations (list)
List of donors: DIPECHO (EU), Basic Education and Gender Equality Thematic Funds (UNICEF), The Open Society Institute, Mental Health Initiative, USAID

Result Achieved:
MoE adopted Child Friendly School Quality Standards for all comprehensive schools. Active learning is now included in the training courses of the main pre-service teacher training institution. The Central PTA was strengthened to help develop local PTAs and promote compliance with CFS standards. Major new efforts in inclusive education are underway.

Early Learning Development Standards are now incorporated into the National Preschool Education Curriculum Standards.


MoE’s De-Institutionalisation Unit was upgraded to De-Institutionalisation and Child Protection Division. Reform of child care system continues through:

- Piloting local child care mechanism demonstrating **decentralisation of services** to ensure needs of the most vulnerable children as well as right to live in **family-like environment** are met; and
- General implementation of a master plan on transformation of residential institutions (children resident in institutions declined from 4055 to 3860; only 590 are permanent).

A nine month re-qualification course on **social work** was introduced so practitioners are now formally officially acknowledged

Draft law on juvenile justice was not presented to Parliament but action plan for its implementation and required changes and reforms in legal documents and institutions are underway.

A Round Table on Anaemia and a National Conference on Breastfeeding built awareness and capacity of policy makers and scientists; also launched nationwide communication campaign on Anaemia, Breastfeeding and complementary feeding practices. A National Public, Private and Civil Society Alliance on Nutrition was established, to prepare a national strategy and action plan; advocate for effective legislation on mandatory fortification of industrial flour; and support MOH in developing standards on fortification.

Institutional capacity in neonatal care continues to be built, including among staff of three regional Training Resource Centres on evidence-based neonatal care knowledge and practices for supportive supervision: MoH recently approved piloting this in neonatal care.

UNICEF supported Government to develop a comprehensive anaemia prevention and control programme and to assess breast-feeding and complementary feeding practices and support update of Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) policy / standards including revision of the curriculum of the Medical University.

**Future Work plan:**

- Leveraging resources of the WB (nation-wide impact) through training trainers in the new curriculum/active learning and in school management;
- PTA supporting monitoring of CFS standards and building capacity of school PTAs;
- Approval of a new state programme on **inclusive education**;
- Improvement of hygiene/sanitary conditions in schools and preschools;
- Continued support to short-day school readiness programmes in six WB/MoE pilot districts;
- Finalisation and approval of new preschool education curriculum;
- Support for new school readiness programme in the most marginalised districts
- Continued support for pilot project on reforming local child protection mechanisms; development of legal and procedural framework on child care; capacity development of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders on PFM; Assistance in drafting child-friendly law enforcement procedures and their incorporation in the official curriculum of specialized law-enforcement academies and schools.
- Support in improving child protection data collection process.
• Technical Support to the implementation of ILBD;
• Improving quality of neo-natal care;
• Develop national programme on anaemia prevention / control.
• Early detection and prevention of disability

4. OPERATIONS & MANAGEMENT

4.1 Governance & Systems

4.1.1 Governance Structure:

a) Azerbaijan Country Office has been managed through a mechanism of transparency and participation. General office objectives and strategic priorities as well as global changes were shared and discussed through regular staff meetings which happened once a month. Ad hoc meetings were organized for specific topics and the annual retreat gathering was used for evaluating and discussing the current programme and the priorities for the next country programme. Programme management and implementation was very closely monitored through the regular bi-weekly programme coordination meetings chaired by the Deputy Representative. Programme coordination meeting was the real arena to share and discuss the programme issues and find solutions.

c) The country office Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (EPRP) has been successfully transferred into web based Early Warning and Early action (EWEA) and regularly updated. This and the revised Core Commitment for Children (CCC) were discussed during the staff retreat and the regional emergency officer facilitated the discussion. The topic of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) was also covered during the sessions. The Country management Team (CMT) composed of representatives of staff of all levels met regularly to oversee the office and programme performance. Key indicators of performance were identified or revised and used for performance management and providing feedback to the operations and programme. Particular emphasis was given to advocacy and partnership with civil society and private sector fund raising and the responsible person was asked to report regularly to the Country Management Team.

4.1.2 Strategic Risk Management:

a) The CEECIS RO focal person visited Azerbaijan to guide the CO in identifying the risk profile in September 2010. All staff participated in the RCSA and in determining the content for the risk and control library, including its validation and adjustment. Three working groups assessed existing controls and management response to each of the ten priority risks and they were also tasked to populate the risk and control library.

b) The groups identified a number of actions (with clear deliverables) expected to strengthen the functioning of the risk management practices. Accordingly, four risk areas featuring several risks were identified as significant enough to warrant self-assessment and regular management attention during 2011 and reflect the relevant controls the office would be able to monitor.

c) The CO focused on identifying gaps that come in the way of effectively addressing the key risks along with what is needed by the office in managing the priority risks. An example of what needs to be done to counter risks is for the CO to develop a clear advocacy and fundraising strategy, to be finalised by March 2011. Furthermore, the CO plans to improve its knowledge management function in order to retain and capture knowledge and lessons learnt within the programmatic cycle. At the beginning of a new CPAP, it was felt especially important for the CO to avoid repeating mistakes and loss of
information. With regards to emergency preparedness which was identified as a critical impact risk, the CO will review its EPRP in 2011.

d-e) To ensure timely responses to changes in internal and external operating environment, the CO will integrate Risk Management in the rolling management plan, and amend the terms of reference of the CMT and PCM to track the application of risk management controls/responses at programme level, and will allocate time to discuss risks and assess risk management practices by programme. The office will continuously monitor and reassess the significance of risks, identify responses and devise risk management actions. This will sustain staff attention to risk management (especially by those taking risk management decisions). The CO Business Continuity issues were revised by Operations in December 2010 and are up-to-date.

4.1.3 Evaluation:

a) The Office has just finished preparing its new IMEP for the Country Programme 2011–2015. During 2010, the CO conducted two evaluations viz., 1) Evaluation of School Readiness Component of Second Education Sector Reform project, 2) Evaluation of Diversion Centres.

b) The Evaluations were carried out in a fair and transparent manner through independent consulting firms. The CO manages and supports the evaluations to ensure quality and accuracy.

c) The CO has the capacity for evaluations and quality firms exist in the country to perform independent evaluations when required.

d) The mid-term evaluation of the School Readiness Component of Second Education Sector Reform project included quantitative and qualitative evaluation of children, their parents and teachers engaged in the piloting of short-day school readiness and parenting education programmes. The results of the evaluation showed the great need in the alternative preschool education model to increase the attendance and improved school readiness of the children attending the model programme. Children and families of children who had been referred to the district centres reported being very pleased with the outcomes of the project. Parents/grandparents interviewed felt that the involvement of their children/grandchildren in the project had a positive influence on their behaviour and their lives. Referring institutions were equally positive with their feedback on the effectiveness of the Diversion Centre. In most cases, they felt that the Centre helped children to get their ‘normal lives’ back.

e) The CO supported a member of the Government’s State Statistical Committee to attend the regional M&E meetings in Istanbul and it provides technical assistance to ensure joint reviews of findings.

f) Specific recommendations of the two evaluations conducted in 2010 have been integrated into the RWP’s for 2011 in the scale up of both the school readiness programme and diversion centre support.

4.1.4 Information Technology and Communication:

The IT infrastructure is based on high standard servers and workstations to support the work of the programme staff in their daily activities. All office IT hardware including servers, PCs, printers, scanners, and UPS are compliant with UNICEF standards (at the time of procurement). Windows 2003 Server is currently the only server operations system, with Windows XP Pro SP2 at all workstations used by staff. Office Business
continuity plan is prepared and updated regularly. Security measures have been implemented for business continuity and high-level data security.

Citrix Solution has been successfully implemented in the Azerbaijan office, all users instructed and trained on Citrix clients’ installation and usage. The solution provided does not replace standard methods, and provides only limited functionality and speed for corporate applications usage.

The following have been completed:

- Office successfully moved to the new location.
- New phone system was implemented which supports 8 incoming calls and voice mailing, and also password-based billing of personal and work-related calls
- All network and phone cable are renewed which increased efficiency of the network.
- ProMS/PnP, Briefing book were updated to the newer version- 9.1.
- Voice over IP equipment is regularly checked, and all Staff members have been instructed to use VoIP wherever possible to reduce international call expenses.

In addition, the IT standards are in place. All major IT equipment including servers, a router and a switch are located in a server room, with access limited to the IT Assistant and Operations Officer. This room features cooler temperature measurers, a centralized fire/smoke detection system and a fire extinguisher.

All critical security updates for Servers/Workstations are applied once they became available on the Windows Update site or the UNICEF Intranet.

Users are periodically requested to change their passwords.

Some staff member had advanced ITC training which will enable them to operate in emergency situations.

**4.2 Fin Res & Stewardship**

**4.2.1 Fund-raising & Donor Relations:**

The office sent both its donor reports on time and met the quality requirements.

The Representative has been active in mobilizing external resources from residential donors, National Committees as well as the local private sector. The Office now has a standard presentation with compelling visuals that the Representative successfully tried out at a Rotary Club meeting. It is now used by the whole office.

The main contribution to the CO in 2010 was USD 584,000 from USAID. Several local companies were screened by PFP and some were approved for potential partnerships. The funding environment is difficult, with very few Government donors willing to contribute, Azerbaijan not being high on the priority list of NatComs, and most major local companies being relatively unknown and without sufficient documentation to be cleared by PFP.

All allocated funds were efficiently utilized throughout the year before the PBA expiration. A monitoring mechanism is in place to ensure efficient and timely use of funding; as a result no request for PBA extension was made.
4.2.2 Management of Financial and Other Assets:
The CO received a “satisfactory” rating during the 2008 audit in the area of Operations, and has successfully fulfilled its operational commitments as measured in key performance indicators.

Staff News as well as newsletters and formal instructions on IPSAS were received and shared with all staff. All programme officers and operations staff undertook the requisite on-line training for IPSAS. More practical training on this will be needed next year for selected staff.

Bank reconciliation was regularly conducted at the beginning of each month for the previous month for the two bank accounts (for USD and Azerbaijani Manat) and shared with DFAM.

Business Continuity plan was regularly updated to reflect the staffing and risk level changes.

UN Banking Survey in which UNICEF took part for the past two years did not result in the identification of a suitable bank, as no bank met UNDP’s minimum selection criteria. It was therefore decided to stop the search process until the situation in the banking market changes.

The International Bank of Azerbaijan, the bank used by UNICEF, introduced a new banking system that requires collaborative work between Finance and IT to establish a new database, which is non-compliant with the existing one.

4.2.3 Supply:
(a) The amount of Supply procurement significantly decreased in 2010 compared to 2009; 100% of the supplies were procured locally representing a total value of USD 46,308. No offshore procurement was done. The CO undertook procurement of some IT supply items from Direct Order arrangements as per Supply Division recommendations. Deadline in all cases were met. UNICEF received adequate assistance and support from the Supply Division as and when requested.

The capacity of local suppliers has improved in timeliness, quantity and specifications. In addition, most of the commodities are covered at the minimum by a 2-3 years guarantee and maintenance is available from the suppliers. The availability of electronic goods and computer equipment locally continues to improve.

The office will be returning its warehouse to the Ministry of Health by the end of the year, as there is no further need for it. This is because the volume of overseas shipments for Government is considerably decreased, and the shipments received are distributed directly on receipt of the order.

The office had signed LTAs with security, design, transportation, catering companies and hotels to relieve the burden of attending to those aspects on relevant staff members.

There was no loss in local and offshore procurement in 2010.

4.3 Human Resource Capacity:
a) In 2010, based on the UNICEF Competency Framework, recruitment was done to fill six positions:
   • Communication for Development Officer
   • UNV Monitoring & Evaluation Officer
   • Health Manager
   • NETI Education Officer
   • Two Programme Assistants
   • Social Policy Specialist (for which it is hard to find qualified candidates).
CPMP and PBR strategic thinking and processes resulted in several staffing changes, for which recruitment continues.

**Establishment of new posts:**
- Programme Assistant
- Finance/Admin Assistant
- Communication Assistant
- Child Protection Specialist

**Upgrading of the current posts:**
- Operations Officer from NOB to NOC
- Child Development Officer from NOB to NOC

**Abolishment of posts:**
- Supply Assistant, GS6
- Finance/Accounts Assistant, GS6

b) Most 2009 PERs were completed. Some were kept over till 2010 to allow a full year of supervision. Periodic PER discussions were conducted and honesty in PER discussions was emphasized during a talk on Ethics.

Staff are enabled to review their development needs and access learning, training and development resources appropriate to their prioritized needs. The office training plan was developed and approved by management at the beginning of the year as per individual request forms, and the implementation of training plans will be monitored at the end of the year.

c) Staff Retreat was conducted in September 2010 and there were presentation on early warning, early action; revised CCC; Emergency Preparedness and Response, causal analysis, Ethics and Belbin team-roles.

d) The Peer Support Volunteers role has been functioning since 2003. One new PSV will be trained in 2011.

e) With support from UNAIDS, HIV training/orientation sessions were conducted during 19-21 October, as part of UN Cares. The training/orientation was facilitated by UN Cares Regional Coordinator for EECA, and hosted by UNICEF.

**4.4 Other Issues**

**4.4.1 Management Areas Requiring Improvement:**

Search for a better office was intensified as the existing rental contract was expiring and the rent increase requested by the Lessor was very high. This higher level was comparable with much better facilities which would increase office morale and efficiency. Several requests made to the Government for a free (or reduced-rent) facility met with no success.

The new office unfortunately costs almost twice as much as allocated in the Support Budget. New office rent, however, includes costs of utilities, security, maintenance and
basic cleaning. Some cost cutting was achieved by not extending the contracts of one of the cleaning ladies and the maintenance service person.

Although VTC facilities should help cut our major expenditure for travel, due to Government security requirements, it has not yet been possible to use them.

**4.4.2 Changes in AMP:** Our ERM exercise identified the lack of an advocacy plan, which we intend to include in the next AMP.

### 5. STUDIES, SURVEYS, EVALUATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

#### 5.1 List of Studies, Surveys & Evaluations:
1. A Situation Analysis of Birth Registration
2. Survey of recipients of Targeted Social Assistance with respect to school attendance
3. Mid-Term evaluation of the School Readiness Component of Second Education Sector Reform
4. Evaluation of Diversion Centres.

#### 5.2 List of Other Publications. *Child Friendly Schools manual*