Executive Summary

Overall, 2013 has been a year for reflection (through the Mid-Term Review) and regrouping, as the Presidential election and the change of two key Ministers with whom UNICEF cooperates reduced programme implementation. Improved cooperation will more than make up for the hiatus in 2014.

Due to these factors, although good preparatory work was made on changes to the Youth Law and the Law on HIV, there was limited progress in Parliament on legislation in 2013. The older draft law on corporal punishment remains in place, there has been no constitutional change to allow for a Child Ombudsman, no changes to the Health Code to establish mandatory food fortification, the Law on Juvenile Justice has not been updated although this has been put on the Parliamentary Agenda for Spring 2014.

The main long-term constraint to work by Government for the children of Azerbaijan is the challenge of inter-ministerial cooperation, and (at local level) between the line Ministries and the central authorities. This can result in issues concerning individual children not receiving the requisite attention in the “Commission on Minors” which is designated to address issues at rayon-level, but which in practice rarely meets.

The most striking successes were in empowerment of adolescents and youth. UNICEF worked with the Ministry of Youth and Sports in two complementary strands (one funded by the EU) to help adolescents and young people identify the problems they face and devise solutions and offer to work constructively with authorities to address them. In addition, UNICEF organized consultations with young people in five different areas of the country, ensuring participation of every level of income and ability, on the post-2015 development agenda. This work both supported and was supported by the regional Knowledge and Leadership area on youth (which Azerbaijan chairs), which facilitates information exchange and mutual lesson-learning in these ground-breaking fields.

In 2013 the Office assisted the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection to implement the 2011 Law on Social Services which allows Government to fund NGOs to deliver social services. We built their capacity in many areas, including modern monitoring and evaluation techniques.

The Office also established new partnerships in the area of disability, including helping establish a Child Paralympic Committee to promote and support the rights of children with disabilities in sport, and break stereotypes.

Less dramatic, but still important, progress was made in line with A Promise Renewed, in that the Government has prepared and will very soon have approved a State Programme on Maternal and Child Health, one of whose important elements is the (long-delayed) implementation of the international definition of a Live Birth, with its concomitant emphasis on the importance of caring for the most vulnerable newborns (those born very premature and/or very light) who – under the Soviet definition – would not have been considered as being born alive.

UNICEF in Azerbaijan supported a major nutrition survey (the first ever survey including blood samples) undertaken by the Ministry of Health, and an important study on institutional responses to violence against children.

Country Situation as Affecting Children & Women

Azerbaijan is a resource-rich country, enabling it to weather the recent global economic crisis relatively well. However, oil production slowed significantly in 2013 though the non-oil sector continued with growth of 10.9 percent in the first half of 2013[1]. Overall GDP growth was projected to be 3.5 per cent in 2013[2].

At the same time, budget dependence on oil revenues increased further in the first quarter of 2013: direct transfers from the State Oil Fund of Azerbaijan covered 44 per cent of total spending in 2010 and increased to 59.8 per cent in the first quarter of 2013[3].
The poverty rate continued to decline, to six per cent in 2012[4], largely due to increase in real wages and social cash benefits. However, only 25 per cent of the recipients of the TSA lived below the national poverty line suggesting that the programme remains insufficiently targeted. Informal payments were required in 95 per cent of cases in order to receive the documents needed for application[5].

In October, Presidential Elections took place resulting in Ilham Aliyev being re-elected for a third term, following earlier constitutional amendments that removed the term limits for President. The statement issued by the OSCE/ODIHR concluded that the election “was undermined by limitations on the freedoms of expression, assembly and association that did not guarantee a level playing field for candidates. Continued allegations of candidate and voter intimidation and a restrictive media environment marred the campaign. Significant problems were observed throughout all stages of election day processes...”[6]

In July 2013, Azerbaijan’s UPR Report was discussed in the Human Rights Council which raised similar issues and provided recommendations on how to strengthen adherence to human rights and fundamental freedoms in the country.

The coverage and quality of preschool education remains challenging: enrolment is only 14.8 per cent in 2013 (21.8 urban and 8.1 rural), a decrease from 16.9 per cent in 2011[7]. Children with disabilities and girls who have entered child marriages are generally not attending school.

At the end of 2012, there were still 42 long-term large-scale residential institutions, which serve more than 8,300 children (though only 3,470 resident), out of which about one third were children with disabilities.[8] Currently, 168 children under three are in “baby homes” under the Ministry of Health[9].

The number of children in conflict with the law, who committed a crime and were convicted, has been declining since 1995. In 2012, 466 children went through the justice system.[10] The majority of the cases concerned robbery (231 cases) and only 42 involved serious crimes. In most cases, it was boys aged 16-18 who committed the crimes, and they did so as part of a group.

Due to the very low share of health sector expenditure in GDP (1.2 per cent), the Government is unable to fulfil all its commitments to children. According to UN estimates, under-five mortality in Azerbaijan was 35/1,000 in 2012, which is high for an upper-middle income country, but also represents a halving of the rate since 1992.

The prevalence of HIV/AIDS is less than 0.2[11] per cent among the adult population and still concentrated among certain high-risk groups, mainly injecting drug users and commercial sex workers. The size of the population of injecting drug users is estimated to be 70,000 and sex workers 30,000[12]. People with HIV are severely stigmatised, and comprehensive knowledge of HIV and its prevention is very low even among young people.

Some 3,800 adults are in need of ART, while actual ART coverage stands at 24 per cent (2012). Reportedly 22 children are receiving ART. Very few facilities are providing HIV services integrated with other health services[13].

In 2013, 520,793 people with disabilities receiving pensions and benefits were registered; 62,866 of them are children (2.5 per cent of child population)[14].

Suicide is another important issue. In the absence of official statistics, unofficial sources suggest that in 2012 there were 482 suicides (105 of them were females and 34 were school children and teenagers)[15]. Since the beginning of 2014, 19 suicides have already been reported by the media.

The proportion of households with Internet access at home has increased to 64.4 per cent in 2012 (compared to only 16.6 per cent in 2005). Mobile phones have also been extensively used and in 2012 on average there were 105 mobile phones for 100 people[16]. A UNICEF study showed that internet access in rural areas is primarily through the mobile phone.
Use of social media has also been increasing. As of February 2013, the number of Facebook users in Azerbaijan exceeded 1 million (12.21 per cent of Azerbaijan population and 24 per cent of the total number of Internet users)[17].


[3] Ibid.


[8] Figures provided by the Ministry of Education Directorate of Child Protection and Deinstitutionalization. definitions/reporting requirements about the number of children staying/receiving education in the institutions. Since UNICEF supported the MOE to establish their database, we tend to trust it more.


**Country Programme Analytical Overview**

Country Programme: The Mid-Term Review of the Country Programme 2011-2015 was finalised and the MTR Report developed. The Review demonstrated that all programme components are essentially on track and have produced good results while major programmatic strategies are still valid. As a result of the MTR, minor adjustments will be made. A major Education evaluation as well as studies in Child Protection, Youth Participation and Nutrition will provide the basis for further enhancement of effectiveness of the interventions in key programme areas. Major changes will be introduced to CPAP to bring results and indicators in line with changing programme...

There will be a broadening and deepening engagement in social protection (both social services and cash benefits) and PFM to address structural bottlenecks and reinforce results achieved within sectoral work. To build an effective social protection system, synergetic delivery of social services and cash benefits needs to be promoted. To strengthen outcomes of sectoral work, sustainable budget allocations need to be in place supported by effective funding mechanisms (where needed). According to Determinant Analysis, PFM issues (such as insufficient budget allocations, inputs-based budgeting, and spending inefficiencies) feature prominently among key bottlenecks for improving policy outcomes for children. In 2014, more analysis and policy advocacy will be undertaken on social protection and PFM issues. Particularly, in 2014 the impact of the dramatic fuel price increase on household and child poverty and wellbeing will be analysed and recommendations for further strengthening of social protection instruments will be provided; advocacy with the State Statistical Committee on introduction of deprivation analysis into household surveys will be continued; commissioning of social services will be advanced jointly with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population.

After the nation-wide survey on community services is finalised in early 2014, detailed plans for establishment of necessary services will be drawn up and implemented, and once community level services are established, children will no longer be placed in large-scale institutions, and the remaining large-scale institutions can be transformed. Also, synergetic delivery of social services and cash benefits will promoted where possible to maximise effectiveness of social protection instruments.

Given the success in the momentum of rolling out Child Friendly Schools by the Government, agreement has been reached to move to the next step of the Child Friendly School process by focusing on development of a child friendly education systems (CFES). This pioneering work requires building mechanisms that connect the principles and standards at national level to regional level management systems and then to the actual practices at schools (quality and teachers).

Adjustments have already been undertaken (addition of HIV testing and counselling, and of psychosocial support to IDPs), and indicators are adjusted to reflect the pioneering work on adolescent and youth participation in planning, developing and monitoring local projects that affected them. There will also be an expansion of S4D activities to include Child Paralympics.

In 2014 the Country Programme will continue using technological innovations to deliver efficient and quality programming.

**Humanitarian Assistance**
N/A

**Effective Advocacy**

*Partially met benchmarks*

As a further advocacy with the MOH on adoption of Early Detection, Prevention and Early Interventions (EDPEI) to prevent childhood disabilities programme, UNICEF organized a Round Table with participation of relevant governmental institutions, civil society and international expert where concept and National Action Plan for implementation of EDPEI to prevent childhood disabilities developed by MOH working group was presented and advocated for its approval.

UNICEF has continued advocating for approval of the State Programme on Inclusive Education, which was eventually included as a priority area of Azerbaijan Education Sector Development Strategy and in December 2013 MOE has finally voiced the commitment commence relevant activities in 2014 without waiting a formal government approval of the state programme.

Effective advocacy with the National Parliament, Ministry of Youth and Sports and the National AIDS Centre allowed UNICEF to officially flag the issue of HIV Testing and Counselling for adolescents as requiring special
attention. As a result, the Parliament endorsed the proposal of UNICEF to consider in 2014 the recommendations to remove the existing legislative barriers for access to HTC by adolescents.

Advocacy with the local academia and district-level executive power resulted in initiation of a system change in addressing the psychosocial needs of adolescents and youth affected by the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. UNICEF high level advocacy resulted in streamlining Government funding to directly benefit marginalized children and vulnerable families through community-based NGO programmes. The government has adopted several legislative acts and revised guidelines to facilitate this process, which enabled over 2,400 children with disabilities and from vulnerable families to receive individualized services.

Collaboration with partners from Government, civil society and media to celebrate UNICEF’s 20th anniversary of work in the country. A number of events organized under this theme became not just an occasion for celebration, but also for advocacy and reflection on the achievements of the Government and UNICEF in the area of child rights as well as new endeavours and challenges. Additional media exposure triggered by celebration, also became a good opportunity to put children’s issues into public domain.

The issue of children with disability remained the major theme of the advocacy efforts and led to a number of partnerships – civil society, media, Government. (one example is the joint effort with the Ministry of Youth and Sports - a child photography workshop on disability facilitated by international consultant and a subsequent photo exhibition.

### Capacity Development

*Mostly met benchmarks*

In 2013 UNICEF Azerbaijan has been engaged in implementation and evaluation of different capacity development interventions. Active Learning Project evaluation has been commissioned to document the results of Active Learning capacity development to date and provide recommendations on further strengthening of the teachers and broader Education system’s capacity in using active learning methods.

Relevant government officials from the MOH and the State Statistical Committee acquainted with knowledge and skills for better understanding of UN child mortality estimates and can use the same methods to produce estimates in the country after participation at a sub-regional Child Mortality estimation workshop.

MOH working group on Early Detection, Prevention and Early Interventions received instant technical support for development of a concept and National Action Plan on EDPEI. Establishing pool of trainers on EDPEI and further capacity development of relevant health care staff is planned for 2014.

Trained 12 education NGOs and providers to improve their training delivery capacity and knowledge on New Preschool Education Curriculum. These organisations were trained as support to the implementation and piloting of the new preschool curriculum by MOE. Within the scope of work UNICEF prepared additional 250 trainers on the new preschool curriculum training for early childhood specialists and educators.

Young people’s capacity has also been developed and respective mechanisms were provided to ensure their meaningful participation in decision making on local level.

A serious effort to invest in the knowledge, skills and capacity of a group of selected school psychologists from the war-line districts allowed IDP adolescents and youth to receive access to adequate counselling services.

UNICEF engaged with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection to improve their capacity in monitoring of ministry-funded programs so that they meet the minimum quality standards and reach to the most vulnerable children.

UNICEF Azerbaijan has provided technical assistance on communication to the Ministry of Health for the upcoming PCV10 introduction. The first phase of the support included a consultancy to conduct small-scale
formative research and a series of in-depth interviews to identify knowledge, attitudes and practices about immunization in general and PCV in particular. Based on the research findings, a communication strategy for the smooth introduction of PCV as part of the routine immunization programme was developed by the international consultant with the national focal persons, as well as key messages for each target group. Informational materials for parents, doctors and journalists have been prepared for printing and dissemination.

**Communication for Development**

*Mostly met benchmarks*

Social and cultural norms affecting child health, protection and development remain a critical determining factor in improving attitudes and practices towards children’s rights in Azerbaijan. The analysis of the situation of children and women also shows an increasing cadre of claim holders (children and young people, parents and caretakers) and duty bearers (decision makers, civil servants, service providers, etc) with limited capacity to improve a child’s image in the society, to address child marriages, violence against children, stigma and discrimination against children with disabilities. This is due to the absence of key principles, approaches, methodologies and tool/techniques in planning and implementation of strategic and systematic communication for behaviour and social change process.

The C4D component, complementing the ongoing programme communication component in sectoral programmes, uses evidence-based capacity development approach to address gaps in design, planning and implementation of strategic communication for behaviour and social change programmes run by government agencies and civil society.

To create sustainable improvement in C4D capacity in Government, UNICEF continued to provide technical advice to the Public Administration Academy under Presidential Office to plan and carry out in-job training sessions for state civil servants on strategic communication for behaviour and social change. So far, 30 hours of sessions have been delivered for 75 mid-level state civil servants in the Academy, based on the teaching manual developed by UNICEF and the Academy. In addition, within the frame of the partnership with the Academy, UNICEF also carried out special sessions on violation of child rights: child marriages.

In support to Government, UNICEF partnered with Cabinet of Ministers to develop national guidelines and protocols on strategic communication for behaviour and social change. Relevant ministries, including Ministries of Education, Health, Youth and Sport, State Committee on Family, Women and Children Affairs appointed their focal points to attend the process.

UNICEF in partnership with SCFWCA successfully completed a ‘Say No to Child Marriages’ campaign in the two impoverished rayons most affected. The campaign established Community Social Advocacy Groups and Mom’s Clubs to enable community members, including women and children, to make informed decisions. Due to Presidential elections, implementation of the campaign in the other two most affected districts was postponed. However, ‘Development Initiative’ local NGO conducted social advocacy with local authorities and religious figures to end child marriages in the villages.

UNICEF in partnership with Ministry of Health and WHO conducted formative research on knowledge, attitudes and practices on vaccination in general, new vaccine introduction in particular and developed national communication strategy on PCV introduction at national level.

UNICEF in partnership with UNFPA, UNAIDS and Global Fund developed national behaviour change communication strategy on HIV and AIDS prevention among most at risk population, including young people.

**Service Delivery**

*Fully met benchmarks*
The section is not relevant for UNICEF Azerbaijan Country Office since it is not delivering services directly.

**Strategic Partnerships**

*Mostly met benchmarks*

UNICEF established a multi-party partnership to improve hygiene practices in schools: the Japanese Embassy funds construction of new toilet blocks with running water, implemented by a national NGO, whom UNICEF trains to conduct hygiene training for students, teachers and parents. Thus no money passes to UNICEF, but high-quality teaching is undertaken, the local Government takes an interest because of the Japanese construction interest, and so quality is very high.

UNICEF established a new strategic partnership around the inclusion of DRR in the In-service Teacher Training Curriculum, with training provided by the Azerbaijan Teachers Institute, the largest national provider, with 11 sub-campuses. Since January 2013, the Institute has trained 2,750 teachers, as well as 50 DRR teacher trainers, with plans to train around 4,500 teachers each year in the future. These achievements will ensure that children in Azerbaijan receive DRR education during regular classes and that teachers will upgrade their DRR knowledge during their mandatory in-service training for use in the classroom.

Productive partnerships with the MoYS, the UN RC’s Office, UN agencies, World Vision and a selected local youth NGO allowed UNICEF to lead a series of five Post-2015 National Youth Consultations successfully feeding into the global initiative.

A new productive partnerships was built with the National Paralympic Committee to allow for a review of their legislative framework.

A tri-partite relationship was established between UNICEF, the Baku State University and the Ministry of Youth and Sports to initiate a system of psychosocial services for conflict-affected adolescents.

UNICEF facilitated strategic partnership with state and non-state actors to mobilize resources to undertake a national study on the availability of and needs to the social services. The nation-wide study will be a landmark mapping exercise, which will enable government and non-government partners to design their programmes and strategies according to the real needs on the ground.

As part of its efforts to leverage resources, CO established relationship with new potential donors from the private sector (Nar Mobile, Ata Holding, BP), as well as maintained ongoing partnerships and dialogue with partners, such as Procter & Gamble, Four Seasons, Azersun.

Manchester United fund-raising Gala Dinner and auction, organized by Bakcell, telecom company raised finds to support UNICEF CO work on promoting rights of children with disabilities.

A landmark set of principles to ensure that companies respect and support children’s rights (Business Principles and Child Rights) was launched jointly with the Parliament of Azerbaijan during a round table organized in Parliament with a participation of UNICEF international expert on Private Fundraising and Partnership.

**Knowledge Management**

*Fully met benchmarks*

A national nutrition survey was undertaken by Ministry of Health with strong support from UNICEF. This did not only measure anthropometry, but took blood samples to ascertain levels of micronutrient deficiency. This is the first ever survey in this depth in Azerbaijan.

To strengthen UNICEF Azerbaijan internal knowledge management, the CO has elaborated and established in
2013 an on-line trip report system. The reporting system is expected to become a user-friendly tool for consolidation and processing information from the trips and generation of different reports.

In order to start addressing the difficult topic of violence against children, UNICEF sponsored the Office of the Ombudsman and the State Committee on Family, Women and Children Affairs to undertake a survey of official responses to violence against children – asking, essentially, whether officials (police, teachers, doctors, nurses, etc.) knew how to look out for signs of violence, and if they knew what they should do about it.

Within DIPECHO-funded Disaster Risk Reduction in Education Project, Azerbaijan along with Armenia and Georgia played a central role in the Knowledge Management workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction in Education (Istanbul, 25 February to 1 March 2013). The workshop had two objectives:

- provide a platform for stakeholders working on DRR in education in Central Asia and South Caucasus to share their experiences and approaches
- Provide an opportunity for UNICEF and government counterparts to exchange information and experiences in implementing DRR interventions under the UNICEF DIPECHO- funded programme.

The workshop built on the positive response to the previous regional Knowledge Management workshop (March 2011). It was attended by representatives from Ministries of Education and Emergency Situations and from other education and emergency institutions; UNICEF Country Offices, Regional Office for CEE/CIS and HQ; NGO representatives; local DRR experts; regional DRR organizations, and ECHO.

### Human Rights Based Approach to Cooperation

*Mostly met benchmarks*

The Human Rights Based Approach to Programming (HRBAP) has been mainstreamed in all programmatic interventions, which focused both on capacity of duty-bearers to realize rights of children and women and capacity of rights holders to claim their rights. Implementation of Recommendations of the UN CRC Concluding Observations 2012 was mainstreamed in programme planning and implementation and reflected in respective documents. 2013 UPR Recommendations have been also taken into account. In the course of the MTR process CPAP matrix has been revised to reflect UN CRC Concluding Observations 2012. Opinions of rights-holders (particularly, young people through Youth Consultations and other mechanisms) have been taken into account on all stages of programming. Capacities of duty bearers to realize child rights were developed through capacity development interventions; capacities of rights holders to claim their rights were built through C4D interventions.

UNICEF rolled out School Readiness Programme for Remote (impoverished) Areas (173 locations in three mountainous districts) with state funding for teacher salaries and by doing so reaching to the areas where children historically never had access to preschool education and it was first ever experience. The results of assessment of initial results showed improved both psychological and educational readiness of children to school life after 10 week programme.

UNICEF conducted the first National Study on the Institutional Response to Violence Against Children to measure successes and gaps in undertaking the role of duty-bearers to ensuring the child’s right to grow without violence, exploitation and abuse.

### Gender Equality

*Mostly met benchmarks*

In 2013, the office completed a robust exercise to assess gender mainstreaming in the supported programmes at all levels – from design through to monitoring and implementation. On the basis of the assessment, staff capacity was raised focusing on gender consciousness, staff motivation, attitudes towards gender equality and girls'/women’s empowerment, as well as tools and instruments for gender mainstreaming
throughout the UNICEF program cycle. It was confirmed through the MTR process that following the recommendations of the international expert UNICEF CO is including gender dimensions into all spheres of programmes, including in legislative and policy reviews. Additional efforts to sensitize the partners on the issues emerging from specific vulnerabilities and needs of different groups of children and adolescents resulted in the increased quality of their project proposals that were screened through a gender mainstreaming lens.

UNICEF has joined global and regional out of school children initiative and conducted the categorisation by profiles of out of school children in Azerbaijan, which unveiled current appalling status of data collection in education system. The initial results showed that poverty had a big role in girls school drop outs and early marriage.

**Environmental Sustainability**

*Mostly met benchmarks*

In 2013 UNICEF supported young people to identify and act upon environmental issues that affect them through advocacy with local governments and awareness raising. As a result, young people have implemented projects to improve waste management and quality of water; prevent deforestation and air pollution.

UNICEF has introduced Disaster Risk Reduction into formal curriculum and in-service teacher training with DIPECHO funding and documented the experience of one pilot school that during a recent severe earthquake (8 Richter) one previous pilot school reported that it evacuated its building in 90 seconds due to prior training.

**South-South and Triangular Cooperation**

A multi-country working meeting of UNICEF teams and State and non-State partners was hosted by the UNICEF Azerbaijan CO to facilitate exchanges between partners representing six CEE-CIS countries contributing to the regional HTC project.

UNICEF Azerbaijan worked with the UNICEF Serbia office to share the good experience on developing government standards on the provision of day-care services to children with disabilities and other marginalized children.

Government participation in the regional post-2015 agenda conference, and in the regional Ministerial Conference on Education significantly broadened the outlook of Government officials and enabled them to make contacts with their peers in other countries for information exchange and other support.
Narrative Analysis by Programme Component Results and Intermediate Results
Azerbaijan - 0310

PC 1 - Responsive, child-friendly services

On-track

PCR 0310/A0/04/001 By the end of 2015, more children benefit from responsive and child-friendly services, with reduced disparities in outcomes.

Progress: According to this PCR’s theory of change, disparities in health, educational and social protection outcomes will be reduced if respective services become more women- and child-friendly so more women and children get access to them. Some progress has been achieved in reducing the infant mortality rate from 37 (2008 baseline) to 31 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2012. Percentage of pregnant women receiving antenatal care stayed almost unchanged during 2008–2012 at a level of 90 according to official statistics.

Although data on the progress on other PCR 1 indicators are not available, there has been progress in health (introduction of live-birth definition), education (expansion of Child-Friendly Schools and alternatives to pre-school), children protection (Government take-over of Diversion and Legal Aid Centre and progress towards social services reform and development of family-based care) and youth service provision (re-vamped Youth Houses and interaction between young people and the heads of rayons), but evidence is scant on reduction in disparities, although those interventions which address the least privileged directly – the child protection and youth outcomes, in particular and the Child-Friendly Schools rollout targeting poor areas – are logically doing so.

On-track

IR 0310/A0/04/001/001 By the end of 2015, the Ministry of Education ensures the nationwide application of child friendly school (CFS)* standards, particularly by schools serving vulnerable and marginalised children.* CFS standards include: inclusiveness, access, standards for quality of teaching, management, protective environment and community participation.

Progress: There was a major management shift in the Ministry of Education in April 2013, with appointment of a new Minister after 15 years. This resulted in many structural and staffing changes through which UNICEF has managed to re-establish the past high level of cooperation and to agree critical areas of future cooperation within a relatively short period of time.

One of the new directions established is to support the Ministry in preparation of national teacher certification and associated professional development policy and action plan.

Active Learning techniques are now implemented nation-wide up to grade 7. A formative evaluation to assess the impact of this methodology was completed and the recommendations have been included in Ministry work plans.

UNICEF has joined the global and regional out of school children initiative by conducting categorisation by profiles of out of school children in Azerbaijan. The main conclusion is that data collection in the education system is deplorable.

UNICEF has continued advocating for approval of the State Programme on Inclusive Education, and the actions within it have been included as a priority area of the new Azerbaijan Education Sector Development Strategy without awaiting formal approval of the State Programme.

Given the changes in the Ministry, it was decided not to increase the number of schools (300, 80 of which in under-privileged areas) which were certified Child Friendly.

The National Parent-Teacher Association is: continuing hygiene and sanitation education in Child Friendly Schools and communities; monitoring education quality; and ensuring the most disadvantaged students can take full part in schooling.

UNICEF supported a pilot School Readiness Programme for Remote (impoverished) Areas (173 locations in three mountainous districts); Government funded teacher salaries and logistical support: UNICEF paid for training and pre-school materials. The assessment of initial results showed improved both psychological and educational readiness of children to school life after the 10 week programme.

Within a DIPECHO-funded project, UNICEF has contributed to inclusion of DRR components into the school curriculum. These changes are now being applied in schools, with standard subjects enhanced with DRR information. The long-term impact will be enhanced by adjustments to textbooks and syllabuses. The MOE has also included DRR in the In-service Teacher Training Curriculum, with training provided by the largest national provider of teacher training. These achievements will ensure that children in Azerbaijan receive DRR education during regular classes and that teachers will upgrade their DRR knowledge during their mandatory in-service training for use in the classroom.

These are, however, only the first steps. While the MOE has integrated DRR into standards and teacher training, further technical assistance is needed to apply DRR effectively across the education system.
meet international standards; 2. Ensuring and strengthening social protection of orphans and children deprived of parental care, as well as street children.

**Progress:** As a result a better gate-keeping system, the number of long-term residential institutions further declined to 42 (from 44 in 2012) and number of children residing in them (those without daily family/parental care) further declined to 3,470, from 3,671. There were 3,615 children with disabilities registered in residential institutions during 2013, 1,446 of whom live in the institutions. MOE decided to admit more children with disabilities through its boarding schools to enable better access to education for them.

The Government made a landmark decision and funded community-based services targeting children with disabilities and from marginalized families. Extra-budgetary funding made available through the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSPP) facilitated family-support programmes of 17 specialized NGOs to reach over 2,400 children in 30 districts, including outreach, day-care, psycho-social support, access to justice and rehabilitation services.

UNICEF provided technical assistance to the MLSPP for this process, which resulted in: informed identification of priority needs of children through better planning; improved quality of NGO services through field monitoring capacity; and improved outcomes for children through capacity building on reporting and evaluation in the NGOs.

UNICEF launched two major studies in 2013: the Social Services Mapping Study, launched in 2013, will identify the needs for social support services nation-wide; and the Functional Review of the Pilot Deinstitutionalization Project which will help the Government to decide on the model of gate-keeping and system of alternative to child care residential institutions.

As further follow-up to the 2011 SitAn on Disability, UNICEF conducted a cost assessment of the National Action Plan on Disability after which it can be submitted for government approval.

Key political processes in the country brought challenges: first, the appointment of the new Minister for Education and second, the Presidential Elections, which resulted with the appointment of the new Minister for Labour and Social Protection. Replacement of these key long-standing Ministers resulted in many months of marking time and building new relationships. Involvement of the Ministry of Finance in the design, development and implementation of the child care reform processes has remained a challenge. Greater political support must be garnered from this ministry for the reforms to be sustainable.

**On-track**

**IR 0310/A0/04/001/003 By the end of 2015, the Government provides institutional resources and capacity for the incorporation of Justice For Children in to the national justice system**

**Progress:** As a result of UNICEF advocacy and technical assistance to the Government and partners, more than 2,200 children's access to justice has been ensured through free legal aid, diversion and psycho-social support services since 2007. UNICEF's long time leadership in promoting reforms in the juvenile justice system has resulted in better understanding of the issue among key politicians and political support to the draft legislation. The Draft Law on Juvenile Justice has been shared with government bodies for final feedback and the Law has been included in the agenda of the National Parliament for adoption in 2014.

Determinant analysis identified a lack of qualified justice professionals specialized on children as a major bottleneck. With the support from UNICEF, Police and Justice Academies have developed Training Packages for in-service training of justice professionals and police officers. With support from the UNICEF Regional Office, two Master Trainers (MT) on J4C have been trained, one representing Justice Academy and another Police Academy. UNICEF continued advocating for greater inclusion of juvenile justice in the curriculum of the both institutions.

Starting from December 2013, UNICEF started working with the local partners to further the reforms with regards to access to justice in Azerbaijan, through a grant from the EU. However, greater efforts are needed to further build capacity of the system of training professionals in law enforcement, judiciary and public defence offices. Serious shortfalls also remain in pre-trial detention, where elimination of violations of child rights is a challenge, according to many reports. Finally, access to justice is still a severe issue in most parts of the country, as there are almost no free legal aid services available outside of Baku.

Greater efforts are also needed to raise the issues of juvenile justice and access to justice to the higher political agenda – in a very centralized government structure some issues might be perceived as ‘sensitive’ and therefore not tackled in the best possible way.

**On-track**

**IR 0310/A0/04/001/004 In System Strengthening for Mother and Child Health and Nutrition in 2012-2013 UNICEF will focus on advocacy and technical assistance to the government in promotion of quality improvement of neonatal care services through introduction and implementation of supportive supervision approach of on-going service delivery practices. Infant and Young Child Feeding with focus on revitalization of Exclusive Breast-feeding; promotion of 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 anemia 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 government in transition to International Live Birth Definition (ILBD) will remain among UNICEF priorities.**

**Progress:** A State Programme on MCH for 2014-2016 was developed by MOH as a result of strong UNICEF advocacy and sent to the Cabinet of Ministers. It is expected that the State Programme will be approved in early 2014. One of the important parts of the State Programme is transition to International Live Birth Definition which stimulate higher quality of neonatal care, and also facilitate international comparability of child mortality data. In line with this, UNICEF provided technical assistance in developing/updating clinical...
In the course of Determinant Analysis, poor quality of healthcare was identified as one of the major barriers to realization of the child right to health. Although the guidelines mentioned above were approved by MOH in 2013 and are contributing to better quality of neonatal care in the country, further training of health care professionals and development and enforcement of guidelines is still required, as is development of more clinical guidelines.

As a result of Determinant Analysis, lack of Early Detection Prevention and Early Interventions policies/standards has been identified as a key bottleneck for support to reduction of incidence and severity of some disabilities. As further advocacy with the MOH on adoption of Early Detection, Prevention and Early Interventions (EDPEI) to prevent childhood disabilities, UNICEF organized a Round Table where the concept and a National Action Plan on EDPEI developed by MOH working group was presented. The Action Plan envisages development of a National policy and standards of EDPEI, pilot implementation of early screening and early interventions for childhood disabilities and developmental delays in delivery and primary care institutions of the capital Baku.

UNICEF continued its advocacy and technical support for introduction of food fortification in the country. A National Nutrition Survey of Children and Women of Azerbaijan conducted jointly with the MOH has been completed and results will be available soon. The Survey will both improve understanding of the severity of micronutrient deficiencies and provide a baseline assessment for the national food fortification program.

Strong advocacy from UNICEF and partners resulted in introduction of PCV-10 vaccine from 1 December 2013 and its inclusion into the vaccination calendar for the children in Azerbaijan. With technical support from UNICEF, MOH developed a Communication Strategy for introduction of PCV-10 vaccine and series of communication materials for health care professionals and parents. As a result health care professionals feel more comfortable to address concerns of parents related to vaccination of children. UNICEF also provided procurement services to the MOH in purchasing high quality PCV-10 vaccines, related vaccination supplies and cold chain equipment.

Progress: UNICEF continued to be vocal in the national media throughout the year (in-house media monitoring shows over 500 UNICEF-related stories in the print and internet media) and to serve as a first point of reference for media and academia on information related to children.

UNICEF’s 20th anniversary of working in Azerbaijan was celebrated with partners from the Government, Parliament and civil society in a series of events through the year. This included events/meetings organized by the Government counterparts such as a special event by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, a concert organized by the Ministry of Culture, a meeting in the Parliament, and hosting displays about UNICEF in government centres.). A number of visibility/communication products were produced as part of the celebration: including documentary film in partnership with State TV channel and photo exhibition on UNICEF work in Azerbaijan.

The issue of children with disabilities remained the major theme of advocacy efforts. Jointly with the Ministry of Youth and Sports UNICEF organized a child photography workshop on disability (facilitated by international consultant) and a subsequent photo exhibition. The State of the World’s Children was launched on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities jointly with the Government and civil society.

The Office is present on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube) The UNICEF Facebook page has over 27,000 followers, and Rep’s Twitter account has 176 followers. UNICEF Azerbaijan websites (in Azerbaijani and English) continued to be a tool for knowledge sharing and external communication.

UNICEF continued its cooperation with universities to adapt the syllabus for child rights training for media professionals through regular meetings and discussions - the Syllabus was introduced as part of journalism degree courses since Fall semester of 2012.

UNICEF’s brand and visibility continues to boost interest of the private sector in cooperation. Building on that, the Business Principles and Child Rights was launched jointly with the Parliament of Azerbaijan during a round table organized in Parliament with a participation of a UNICEF international expert. This was preceded by our hosting an intern identified by PFP to undertake a CSR mapping and assessment of the country business landscape and CSR influencers Companies currently engaging in CSR are in the minority, and tend to be multinational or large domestically owned companies operating out of Baku. Many companies seem to mistake their philanthropic efforts as CSR.

Currently pending project proposals – are sitting with a number of companies, including BP, Procter & Gamble, Azersun, Ata Holding and Nar Mobile. In 2013, UNICEF launched partnership with Four Seasons Hotel; the efforts include joint fundraising for UNICEF projects on children with disabilities and pro-bono hosting. We also continued partnership with Azersun Holding through a joint campaign to benefit UNICEF programme on early prevention and early detection of childhood disability in Azerbaijan. As part of the partnership, the company placed UNICEF logo and message on the packaging of its paper products, encouraging its customers to support UNICEF. The company also made a donation to support UNICEF programme in the area.

PC 2 - Improved attitudes towards fulfilment of child rights
On-track

PCR 0310/A0/04/002/002 By the end of 2015 Azerbaijan advances the fulfilment of key outstanding observations of the Committee on the Right of the Child

Progress: In early 2012, the Government had discussions with the Committee on the Rights of the Child on progress since the second report, as they discussed the combined third and fourth reports, as well as the first discussion on progress against the two optional protocols. Although progress was noted, a new set of observations and recommendations were made, which will be used to make some adjustments in our programming. UNICEF has also been fully involved in ensuring child inputs to the UPR discussions and the CRPD discussions.

In particular, UN CRC Committee in its Concluding Observations 2012 noted positively the progress in raising the age of marriage to 18 years in 2011; adoption of the Law on Social Services that allows commissioning of social services to non-state providers; establishment of the State Committee on Family, Women's and Children's Affairs to help coordinate activities for the implementation of the Convention; adoption of the Programme on De-Institutionalisation and Alternative Care; and joining a number of ILO and Council of Europe Conventions.

While significant progress has been achieved, IRs under the PCR 2 are still relevant. PCR 2 indicators will be reformulated and introduced in 2014 to address Concluding Observations 2012, key of which are:

i. improving governance of the UN CRC coordination and monitoring (No. 12, 14, 16)
ii. mainstreaming the best interests of the child principle in all legislative, administrative and judicial proceedings (No. 33)
iii. active involvement of children, civil society, private sector and media (No. 28, 29)
iv. promoting adolescent health and development (No 63)

The theory of change for this programme component is as follows. Significant advancement in realization of child rights in Azerbaijan will be possible if key outstanding recommendations of the UN CRC Concluding Observations are implemented. Progress on the PCR is detailed in analytical statements of progress for respective IRs.

On-track

IR 0310/A0/04/002/001 By the end of 2015, the country increasingly provides an infrastructure for coordination, situation monitoring and responding to violations to children's rights

Progress: UNICEF assisted Government, NGOs and the Ombudsman in meeting reporting requirements and ensuring good quality reports on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its Optional Protocols, as well as supporting discussions with positive results noted by the Committee. Annual reporting of the Government on implementation of child rights in the country was introduced through a Presidential Decree: the National Commission on Minors chaired by Deputy Prime Minister has instructed governmental bodies to be responsible for preparing annual reports for the President following CRC reporting guidelines, and has taken an initial decision to establish a secretariat and six thematic working groups to address bottlenecks to implementation of children's rights where united efforts of several government actors is required. Starting from 2012, the government prepares an internal annual report on the fulfilment of the rights of children, as evidenced by various relevant ministries. The report is compiled by the State Committee on Family, Women's and Children's Affairs and submitted to the President every year. Monitoring and implementation of Child Rights is gaining momentum being put on political agenda and getting institutionalised. It means there is a responsive mechanism for child rights monitoring and coordination, at the level of deputy Prime Minister, which is directly overseen by the President.

On-track

IR 0310/A0/04/002/002 By the end of 2015, the country increasingly provides an infrastructure for coordination, situation monitoring and responding to violations to children's rights

Progress: The Government’s annual internal Child Rights Monitoring Report has been successfully institutionalized, as the second annual report is being finalized. It is a landmark development, when all government agencies compile a single annual report, discuss it and present to country’s President for action. UNICEF contributed to the preparation of this report, which is commissioned by a Presidential Decree of 2011, to monitor promotion and protection of the rights of children.

The Government has endorsed UNICEF’s recommendation to establish a central child data bank, which will unite all existing data-bases on children and fill in the gaps. This data bank will significantly improve the issues of birth registration, access to justice, access to education, health, family support and poverty-reduction. The data-bank will be launched in 2014.

UNICEF supported the Ombudsman Office to train children and adolescents on human rights and healthy life style topics, which will cover ten districts of the Country. UNICEF also supported the Ombudsman Office to prepare a Complementary Report on the implementation of the UN CRPD in Azerbaijan. The report looks at the status of implementation of every Article of the Convention and offers its recommendations.

Some significant challenges, however, remain in the implementation and coordination of the cases of violations of child rights. Among others the causes are related to knowledge, attitude and practice in the field of violence, exploitation and abuse of children among the government officials and general public. Lack of local capacity to address the cases of violence remains a serious bottleneck. Particular
difficulty is related to limited cooperation between various line ministries and local executive authorities, where the former report to the Cabinet of Ministers and latter to the President Administration. Less progress was made in UNICEF advocacy for the adoption of the draft law banning corporal punishment and ratification of the Lanzarote Convention.

On-track

IR 0310/A0/04/002/003 By end of 2015, the government and CSOs addresses gaps in the institutional capacity to promote positive and measurable social and behavioural outcomes especially among vulnerable groups in targeted areas.

**Progress:** Good progress has been achieved on C4D indicators. Two government agencies (the State Committee for Women’s and Children’s Affairs and the Ministry of Health) have increased their capacity and allocated resources to plan and implement strategic communication process (they are the first agencies to do so). Three government agencies and five NGOs promoted positive behaviours and social norms on child survival, protection and development through projects implemented in partnership with UNICEF and other partners (also the first to do so). Half of parents, young people and religious leaders acquired knowledge and positive attitudes to eliminate child marriages in selected communities of four southern districts while 30 per cent young people gained positive attitudes and practices to address child marriages, healthy lifestyle, HIV and AIDS at six districts (compared to baseline: no). The number of adolescents and young people who adopted and sustain key behavioural practices on healthy lifestyle and HIV/AIDS prevention increased from 0 to 546.

Communication for Development, with its principles and approaches has been integrated into the curriculum of the Public Administration Academy under the Presidential Office, the leading academic institution training government officials, with a role in mainstreaming system reforms to build sustainable institutional capacity to manage strategic communication. A Social Advocacy Group at the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs was set up to address child marriages in four most affected districts of Southern Azerbaijan. Other results include introduction and scaling up WASH in Schools programme to improve hand washing practices among children; mobilizing Youth Advocacy Groups to address child marriages, healthy lifestyle, HIV and AIDS among young people at six districts and other steps towards behaviour and social change.

On-track

IR 0310/A0/04/002/004 By end of 2015 government ensures 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.

**Progress:** UNICEF continued working at system/policy level addressing the bottlenecks hindering realization of adolescents and young people’s right to participate in decision making processes on issues affecting their lives through additional round of review of the current Youth Law and the HIV/AIDS legislation on access to testing and counselling for adolescents UNICEF also gave technical assistance to MoYS with development of the Azerbaijani Youth Strategy 2013-2023.

UNICEF as lead UN agency for youth in Azerbaijan conducted a series of five Post-2015 National Youth Consultations. A total of 308 youth including those with disabilities, HIV-positive, from ethnic minorities and the poorest rural communities, refugees/IDPs and immigrants, took part, and two joined Regional Post-2015 consultations for Europe and Central Asia in Istanbul.

A number of models successfully implemented in 2013 clearly underpinned the process of system change triggered by the policy reviews. These included expansion of large scale movements on youth participation in decision making (Azerbaijani Youth Advocate Programme- AYAP), environmental safety and youth intellectual development, addressing bottlenecks: ‘restricted participation of adolescents and youth in decision making’, ‘absence of an established platform for youth to be consulted in decision making’ and ‘constrained access to free youth-oriented services’.

Following a successful implementation in seven districts of a demonstration initiative when groups of youth advocates lead regular dialogue with local authorities through the format of ‘town-hall meetings’, expansion has started to 14 additional districts.

A related set of activities were undertaken in Youth Houses where youth designed and implemented small projects aimed at raising awareness of decision makers and local communities on environmental issues. Regular meetings with decision makers took place in the five focus districts to voice their concerns culminating in a national-level event when youth reported on their achievements. UNICEF provided technical assistance to update the Statute of Youth Houses which has triggered a system reform which will be continued in 2014 to further increase youth access to diversified services.

The end of the year has also seen a significant extension of the model on intellectual development of adolescents and youth from 8 to 32 districts thus encouraging schoolchildren’s participation - including of those from the most vulnerable and remote communities - in a popular intellectual game promoting teamwork, leadership and active participation.

In close partnership with local academia, regional authorities and international experts, UNICEF modelled a project to initiate a system change in addressing the psychosocial needs of internally-displaced adolescents and youth, investing in school psychologists’ capacity in Line of Contact districts to provide adequate counselling services, and establishing psychological supervision. The MoYS include continuing of this activity into their budget from 2014.

As a part of a regional HIV project, UNICEF also supported capacity building of NGOs and government institutions in modern approaches of referring adolescents to available HIV testing and counselling (HTC) services. As a result, over 900 youth (including those most at risk) were able to know their HIV status. UNICEF designed and prepared for the launch in early 2014 the first HIV-related youth-friendly web-site in Azerbaijan offering adolescents and youth an (confidential) route to psychological, medical and legal advice via on-line chat.

A long-term MoU was signed with the National Paralympic Committee to help create a Children’s Paralympic Movement in Azerbaijan. An
international photography workshop on disability as well as local disability festival both brought the issue of PWD into the focus of public attention.

**PC 3 - Cross-sectoral costs**

**PCR 0310/A0/04/003 Cross sectoral**

**IR 0310/A0/04/003/001 Social Policy and PM&E**

**Progress:** The Mid-Term Review of the Country Programme culminated in a high-level event in July. As a preparation to the Mid-Term Review, in-depth discussions took place with different programme partners to review progress towards the expected results and introduce necessary adjustments to programmatic strategies. The Situation Analysis on Children and Women was also comprehensively updated to ensure the latest information and data were brought together in a coherent whole.

A National Nutrition Survey of Children and Women of Azerbaijan was successfully implemented and the Survey Report will be finalized early 2014. Co-funding from the Ministry of Health has been secured to support the Survey. The Survey generated invaluable information and data about prevalence of anaemia and micronutrient deficiencies, which will be used extensively in the future advocacy work.

New data were also generated through TransMonEE project in the course of which the statistical template was updated and analytical report on disability was prepared by the State Statistical Committee of Azerbaijan.

An Active Learning Project/Child-Friendly School Initiative Evaluation, Social Services Mapping and Needs Assessment Survey, School Readiness Pilot Impact Assessment, and a Study on Violence against Children have been successfully implemented and respective reports are complete or being finalised. The one major evaluation (Active Learning) is complete and the management response to the Evaluation has been agreed.

Technical Assistance to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection has been provided to finalise bidding package for NGOs applying for participation in social commissioning projects using Government funding.

In December 2013, in response to increasing fuel prices on internal market, UNICEF Azerbaijan has launched research to analyse an impact of the price increase on household and child poverty and wellbeing. The results are expected to be ready in spring 2014.

**IR 0310/A0/04/003/002 Travel and various events for advocacy and fund raising country programme**

**Progress:** The main advocacy (and incidentally fund-raising) event for the year was the 20th Anniversary Reception which followed the Mid-Term Review meeting. The reception included a screening of the documentary about UNICEF's 20 years in Azerbaijan (made pro-bono by State Television), a speech outlining our activities and performance by child singers. The estimated 300 people who attended included top decision makers in industry, parliament, media and government, as well as all child-related NGOs, young people and Ambassadors / deputies. Therefore the message of an 'upstream' UNICEF influencing policy and bringing best practices from around the world was heard by many who needed to.

The other major advocacy event was the regional ministerial meeting on education in Istanbul, which the Deputy Minister and other Ministry staff attended, and were able to hear the latest and best information on how to craft a fully inclusive education system. They were accompanied by the Representative and Education Specialist to ensure seamless follow up.

The Representative also joined the delegation attending the post-2015 regional conference (ministers and other government officials from 50 countries) which was another opportunity to interact informally with deputy ministers from Azerbaijan.

Advocacy was also supported by a consultant generating and identifying local statistics to be validated and then used in advocacy messages and interactions with fund-raisers, government donors, as well as Government partners.

**PCR 0310/A0/04/800 Effective & efficient programme management and operations support**

**Progress:**

2012 was challenging year with implementation of IPSAS and VISION. UNICEF Azerbaijan office had successfully overcome the difficulties and as a major achievement of the year under this PCR, it must be mentioned that the main goal was succeeded; programme was successfully supported throughout the year. The detailed activities under each IR were described in respective sections.
IR 0310/A0/04/800/001 Effective and efficient governance and systems: including representation and advancement of core mandate, programme guidance, management and oversight, internal and external communication (media and PR), information and communications technology management.

**Progress:**

Azerbaijan was one of the countries scheduled for 2013 Mid Term Review and office planned to have two events, the organization of the MTR and celebration of UNICEF 20th year anniversary in Azerbaijan at the same time, 02 July 2013, which was realized successfully. Within the framework of the region’s transformation process, changes were reflected in MTR documentations. The Annual Management Plan was prepared through a participatory process. The revised Committees and relevant terms of reference continued to be used. A new Table of Authority reflecting the necessary changes was prepared and approved in December 2012 as per the guidelines issued in the last quarter of 2012. After the approval of the new ToA, all staff members were informed in writing about their responsibilities. All statutory Committees meet regularly and function well. The CMT has taken the initiative to improve management performance, with a focus on overcoming initial difficulties arising from the new ERP system of SAP-Vision. CO and RO dashboard reports are being discussed at CMT and staff meetings regularly. The CMT’s agenda included review of programme and operational goals and priorities, office performance indicators, management of resources and guidance on PBR decisions, staff learning and development, staff welfare, safety and security, and other programme and operational issues.

IR 0310/A0/04/800/002 Effective and efficient management and stewardship of financial resources, including administration, finance, office security and equipment, maintenance and vehicles.

**Progress:**

In 2013 Bank reconciliation for every month was done timely with no delays. Disbursement of cash assistance to partners and liquidation of advances has been implemented and recorded on a basis of FACE documenting. The office has one DCT with outstanding balance over 9 months and although partner’s report and documentation were cleared in time, it cannot be liquidated in system due to an error which takes some time to be sorted out by helpdesk. Recruitment to vacant positions was conducted throughout the year based on the needs and requirements of the programme and operations. The recruitment process was based on UNICEF Competency Framework which includes core values, core competencies and functional competencies. The Office recruited the following staff during the year 2013 till now:

**Three local staff:**

- Child Protection Specialist (FT)
- C4D Specialist (FT)
- Communication and Partnership Specialist (FT)

Based on PBR observations and recommendations the following post’s JDs were reviewed and classified:

**Establishment of new posts:**

Health and Nutrition Officer, NOC (FT)
Communication and Partnership Specialist (FT)

Despite all efforts and negotiations with government in 2013 for free office space, UNICEF office is still rented in commercial building and this significantly affects the office budget.

IR 0310/A0/04/800/003 Effective and efficient management of Human Capacity, including human resource management, staff development and learning, staff well-being, staff related security costs.

**Progress:**

PAS for 2012 for all staff completed. PAS for 2013 were discussed during the year and agreed with the respective supervisors. Mid-year progress review discussions between staff and supervisors have been conducted to assess performance and to monitor the progress of the individual workplan outputs. Staff worked with their supervisor, and took into consideration the competencies related to their job profile and developed the development plan. Staff reviews their development needs and access learning, training and development resources appropriate to their prioritized needs.

IR 0310/A0/04/800/888 HR

**Progress:** On-track
**Effective Governance Structure**

UNICEF Azerbaijan carried out its Mid-Term Review (MTR) in 2013. Office structure and operational and programmatic priorities were reviewed again and after consultation with the staff, necessary changes were applied through the PBR process. In addition, staff meetings and section meetings took place regularly. To effectively support office governance, and to optimize staff participation, and widen representation of different sections, the structure of statutory committees and Table of Authorities were reviewed and updated where necessary.

Regular CMT meetings were convened to identify and discuss office needs related to security, well-being, learning and development. Management indicators and major changes in the country office’s quality assurance mechanism were part of CMT discussions.

The Country Office is scheduled to be audited in 2014, thus there was no audit in 2013.

**Strategic Risk Management**

Office BCP and EWEA plans were updated to reflect recent requirements. ERM indicators and concepts were discussed in CMTs.

**Evaluation**

Azerbaijan Country Office has an up-to-date Integrated monitoring and Evaluation Plan (IMEP), which is used to plan and implement evaluations and contribute to partners’ M&E capacity development. The IMEP is updated regularly and its implementation is closely monitored.

In 2013 the Office commissioned one independent evaluation in the Education programme component – Active Learning Project Evaluation. The Evaluation provided impartial, fair and independent analysis of the results achieved, lessons learned as well as provided recommendations for future action. A management response to the evaluation was developed immediately after the evaluation report was finalised.

The CO actively contributes to strengthening in-country M&E capacity and where the capacity is not available, relies on international expertise. The evaluation mentioned above has been implemented by the international US-based consultants.

It is envisaged that during 2014-2015 other major programme components will be through independent external evaluation and the results of the evaluations will inform not only immediate programmatic decisions but also development of the next Country Programme.

In 2013 an Evaluation Management Committee was established in the Country Office to ensure overall quality of evaluation process, endorse evaluation reports, and oversee development and implementation of the management responses to evaluations. The Committee is composed of Programme Specialist, PM&E Specialist and Deputy Representative and is chaired by the Deputy Representative. The Committee will become fully operational in 2014.

During the year, the MTR of the Country Programme 2011-2015 was finalised and the MTR Report developed. The Review demonstrated that all programme components are essentially on track and have produced good results while major programmatic strategies are still valid. As a result of the MTR minor adjustments will be made to the programme directions. Major changes will be introduced to CPAP to bring results and indicators in line with changing programme environment and UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014-2017.

In 2013 the CO was increasingly applying the MoRES framework and particularly the determinant analysis in its monitoring and evaluation efforts. Mid-term and 2013 annual results have been evaluated against major barriers and bottlenecks identified during determinant analysis. This practice will be maintained and the MoRES framework will be fully mainstreamed into key programmatic processes.
Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology

IT infrastructure of UNICEF Baku office is based on high standard servers and workstations to support continuous work of the programme in their daily activities influencing children’s and women’s rights. All office IT hardware, including servers, PCs, printers, scanners, and UPS are compliant with UNICEF standards (at the time of procurement). All servers were migrated to virtual environment which increased efficiency of the whole system.

Citrix Solution has been successfully implemented in the Azerbaijan office, all users instructed and trained on Citrix clients’ installation and usage. The provided solution does not replace standard methods, and provides only limited functionality and speed for corporate applications usage. In parallel with CITRIX for business continuity, VPN solution was implemented for laptop users, which allows users to have a direct remote connection to office for major services such as email and VISION.

In parallel with CITRIX and Inter-Notes for access to emails, Lotus Traveler was introduces to staff which allows to access to system via mobile devices.

The following had been completed:
Mail-server was migrated to Windows server 2008.
New DHCP server was installed and configured.
All servers upgraded to Windows Server 2008R2 SP1
The Backup system (DPM) was replaced with more efficient solution (VEEAM)
All workstations were re-imaged with new Windows 7 image (Image ver 7.200)
Antivirus client was upgraded to SEP 12.1 RU3
Voice over IP equipment regularly checked, all Staff members have been instructed to use VoIP wherever possible to reduce international call expenses, including in conference calls. All staff were also encouraged to use Skype when UNICEF VOIP is not available.

Also the following 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 Manager. 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.

Fund-raising and Donor Relations

The office has few donors, and therefore few donor reports, but they were all sent on time and were of high quality. Resource mobilization has been tough in 2013, though there are several major donations whose spade-work was undertaken in 2013 and hopefully will bear fruit in 2014.

Utilization rates of expiring PBAs has been consistently high other than for one grant which required a three month no-cost extension as it involved work in the field which was slowed down considerably by the Presidential elections. All monitoring mechanisms are in place and situation is reviewed in CMT.

Management of Financial and Other Assets

The last audit which took place in 2008, rated the work of Operations as satisfactory. In 2013, financial resources were adequately planned and spent as required. RR was spent 99 per cent and the utilisation rate of OR funds were close to 100 per cent within the PBA duration. CAG was released during the year and the Office did not have an un-liquidated DCTs which went over nine months.

The office effectively used the bank optimization and cash forecasting tools on a monthly and quarterly basis. Monthly financial closures continue to be done in an accurate and timely manner. The benchmark (Month-end position) performed at the beginning of each month to meet the closing bank balance targets. Bank reconciliation performed by Executive Assistant and deadlines on bank reconciliations were met.
systematically.

The Office occupies the rented area in business centre and this significantly affects the office budget.

### Supply Management

The supply component of the Programme decreased again compared to the previous year. Printing of reports and project materials were the main procurement activities undertaken by the CO. Therefore, the office hired a printing consultant to assess local designers and printing houses to prepare list of designers and printers to increase the quality and efficiency. The consultant revealed that the capacity of printing/publishing houses has increased incredibly since the last assessment in 2007.

The bulk of the medical equipment and commodities for the National Nutrition Survey and also IT supply items were purchased via Supply Division as offshore procurement, also using Long Term Arrangement (LTA) suppliers as per Supply rules and procedures. Deadlines in all cases were met. The Country Office 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. The Office also procured some medical supplies locally to meet urgent needs, most of these commodities were covered by 2-3 years (at least) guarantee and maintenance was available from the suppliers. The availability of electronic goods and computer equipment locally also increases although prices remain high.

The UNICEF CO assisted National Partners, namely MOH and GAVI to use Procurement Services. In this regard, an expert from SD Procurement Service had a visit to Azerbaijan to organize a one day training to explain Procurement Services procedures to local partners to avoid miscommunication during the procurement process and also introduced new vaccine to MOH of Azerbaijan Republic.

The Office had renewed LTAs with IT maintenance service, and with design companies, and also widely used UN Common LTAs for transportation, translation and hotels to release burden on relevant staff members. There was no loss in local and offshore procurement in 2013.

Country Office does not have a warehouse.

### Human Resources

All recruitment used competency-based selection processes with Subject Matter Experts and HR colleagues from RO involved as required.

The following recruitments have been completed throughout the year:
Ø Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer (P3), NETI in January 2013
Ø Child Protection Officer, (FT) NOC, incumbent started in August 2013.

Based on PBR observations and recommendations the following post’s JDs were updated and re classified and recruitments against posts were processed.

**Establishment of new post:**
Communication & Partnership Specialist (FT) NOC (replacing NOB Communication Officer)

**Upgrade of post:**
C4D Officer (FT) NOB to C4D Specialist (FT) NOC

To date, office has the following vacant positions:

Health & Nutrition Manager (FT), NOC
Child Protection Officer (FT), NOB
b) Performance management is undertaken systematically, with clear deadlines for PAS task definition and discussions. The completion of PAS is closely monitored by the Management. All staff had at least two discussions during the year.

In addition to the official performance appraisals, staff members have regular feedback discussions with managers and supervisors to discuss their work, challenges and career opportunities.

In 2013 two staff members were deployed to provide assistance to other UNICEF offices: the Child Protection Specialist had stretch assignment for two months in the Moldova Office and C4D Officer in Jordan for emergency mission for more than six months.

Relevant staff members participated in regional training events/workshops and in Webinars and WebExes with focus on VISION.

The following trainings were conducted during the year:

Ø The two-day workshop "capacity development for gender mainstreaming”. The Country Office chose to conduct the assessment as a part of MTR process, with the goal of documenting the extent to which gender mainstreaming has been effectively integrated into the UNICEF Country Programme, and to assess staff capacity for gender mainstreaming.

Ø Two-day retreat was organized on 17-18 January 2013 to discuss the MTR and possible changes to CPD with co-facilitator from the Regional Office, Skender Nushi, Regional HR for CEECIS. This had reference to establish a set of generic job profiles for the County office.

Ø PPP training -- ADVANCED and INTRODUCTORY workshops. Three IPs and two local National professionals benefited from these workshops.

Ø The Azerbaijan Country Office Programme Retreat was organised on 19 December 2013 to discuss the Annual Report, RAM update information and Strategic Plan with result mapping.

Ø Face-to-face workshop as part of the Management Development Programme (MDP) was conducted in Copenhagen, Denmark, from 27-30 August, 2013 and two staff benefited from this programme. The Office applied UNICEF Human Resources policies on learning days, flexi-time, compressed working hours and working from home.

All staff is well informed about availability of counselling service.

**Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings**

The Office continued to optimise staff time with identifying opportunities to combine or merge VISION transactions when and where possible, but it was revealed that staff do not spend much time on the simple daily transactions, but only for those of a rare cases.

It was agreed to identify the opportunities to maximize staff productivity with the help of good planning cross sectorally.

Staff members are encouraged to use VOIP or Skype for international calls with offering reimbursement of Skype credits.

Most official meetings are organised in meeting room which was offered free of charge by our business centre, which significantly reduced the expenses and time spent on event organizations.
Changes in AMP & CPMP

The Office does not foresee any major changes in 2014 AMP and it was discussed to extend the duration of current AMP for 2013 until the end of 2014 with only changes in some Annexes and programme planning.

Summary Notes and Acronyms

Acronyms used in the Annual Report:

AMP  Annual Management Plan
ART  Anti-Retroviral Therapy
BCP  Business Continuity Plan
CAG  Cash assistance to government
CCC  Core Commitments for Children
CD  Capacity Development
CEDAW  Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CEE/CIS  Central and Eastern Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States
CFES  Child Friendly Education System
C4D  Communication for Development
CMT  Country Management Team
CO  Country Office
CP  Country Programme
CPAP  Country Programme Action Plan
CPD  Country Programme Document
DCT  Direct cash transfer
DIPECHO  Disaster Preparedness Programme of the European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Directorate General
EWEA  Early Warning Early Action
FT  Fixed-term
JD  Job Description
GAVI  Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation
GDP  Gross Domestic Product
HIV/AIDS  Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
HR  Human Resources
HRBAP  Human Rights Based Approach to Programming
HTC  HIV testing and counselling
ICT  Information Communication Technology
IDP  Internally Displaced Persons
IMF  International Monetary Fund
IMEP  Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
IP  International Professional
LTA  Long-term agreement/arrangement
MDP  Management Development Training
M&E  Monitoring and Evaluation
MOH  Ministry of Health
MORES  Monitoring Results for Equity System
MTR  Mid-term Review
NO  National Officer
ODIHR  Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OR  Other resources
OSCE Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PAS Performance Assessment System
PBA Project budget allotment
PBR Programme budget review
PCV Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine
PFM Public Financial Management
PISA Programme for International Student Assessment
PM&E Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
PPP Programme Planning Process
RAM Results Assessment Module
RO Regional Office
RR Regular resources
SCFWCA State Committee on Family, Women and Children Affairs
SD Supply Division
S4D Sport for Development
TSA Targeted Social Assistance
UN United Nations
UN CRC United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child
UNAIDS Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNICEF United Nations Children’s Fund
UNFPA United Nations Population Fund
UMR Under-Five Mortality Rates
UPR Universal Periodic Review
VISION Virtual Integrated System of Information
VoIP Voice over Internet Protocol
VPN Virtual Private Network
WHO World Health Organisation
YCSD Young Child Survival and Development