Executive Summary

Throughout 2013, UNICEF programming and advocacy contributed to significant gains in the overall legal and policy environment for children, increased awareness on child rights and improved the quality of services and statistical base for informed decisions.

The 2013 mid-term review (MTR) confirmed compliance of the country programme with the national, regional and global social development priorities. While assessing results and constraints and documenting lessons learned, the MTR further defined priorities and emerging challenges, and facilitated strategic alliances with UNICEF partners.

The Child Friendly City Initiative (CFCI) was expanded to 22 cities and facilitated an environment conducive to child development and participation, increased effectiveness of local planning and budgeting, and accelerated inter-agency work and interaction on levels. The CFCI monitoring tool was introduced within Monitoring Results for Equity Systems (MoRES) mainstreaming and the CFCI website developed. Novopolotsk and Pinsk received “Child Friendly City” status.

Leveraging efforts of national and UN stakeholders facilitated national-level actions to prevent domestic violence. Preparatory work was completed on a campaign to prevent domestic violence against children. 2013 was crowned by the amendment of the “On Basic Activities Aimed at Offence Prevention” Law which introduced a protection order that shifted the focus from prosecution against an offence to prevention.

Equity and inclusion have become well-recognised within the national social development agenda. 2013 was a watershed year for inclusion of children with disabilities into social life and development of longer-term strategies to assure equity. Jointly with profile NGOs, UNICEF supported the development of the Palliative Care concept and facilitated government-level work on Inclusive Education and Education Communication Initiative (ECI) strategies. UNICEF became a member of the recently established national Early Childhood Development (ECD) Council.

A systematic, harmonized and coordinated approach to research and data was pursued to generate evidence on child-related issues. MICS4, the most comprehensive survey in the field of social statistics, was completed by Belstat and a report with the results was launched by the Deputy Prime-Minister. MICS4 information is already in use by the Government in strategic social planning for children, women and families.

Despite concerted advocacy efforts, the 2011-2015 Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) remained unsigned (same for UNDP and UNFPA). However, additional efforts that have been taken within the MTR process may bring positive results regarding the CPAP and national project registration system.

In order to minimize the negative effects of potential staff cuts in the education, health and other social sectors as a result of a large scale administrative reform, UNICEF intensely advocated maintaining the network and scope of services for families with children, supported cost-effective and innovative approaches, and called for the use of international best practices in this matter.

UNICEF facilitated strategic cooperation within national plans and programmes on children and protection of their rights, gender equality, demographic security, and HIV prevention. A joint UN-Parliament working group was established to advance advocacy and policy work including on children’s rights.

Sound progress was made in cooperation with the NGOs and civil society in assisting families with children, children with disabilities, children victims of violence, healthy lifestyle’s promotion and children’s rights fulfilment.
Country Situation as Affecting Children & Women

In 2013, the national economy still had not recovered from the 2011 economic and financial crisis. This reflected badly on people's financial state and especially on that of families with children. The price of food, gas, health care and communal services continued to increase and certain changes in the consumption pattern of households with children were observed. In 2012, 10 per cent of the most well-to-do households spent 34.2 per cent of their household income on food; in the 10 percent of the least well-to-do households, this number stood at 50.4 per cent [1].

Though incidence of poverty decreased, it is still above the pre-crisis level. In the 3rd quarter of 2013, the share of households with income below the national poverty line was 4.1 per cent and in households with children it was 8.4 per cent compared to 4.6 per cent and 9.2 percent respectively in 2012 [2]. In the structure of low-income households, 65.1 per cent were families with children compared to 22.1 per cent without children [3].

Despite challenges, the social system provided steady support to families with children through monetary child benefits and pensions, and in-cash/in-kind aid as well as assistance with employment, taxation, housing, health and other aspects. State allowances are paid for 26.2 per cent of the total child population, and for 96 per cent of children under three years old (U3). From January 2013, the universal childcare allowance for U3 children is based on the average monthly pay in the country (35-40 per cent depending on the number of children in the family) instead of the minimum subsistence budget. While social assistance programmes have broad coverage among the poor, targeting is weak and efficiency in poverty reduction is insufficient.

Macroeconomic stability is challenged by over-centralised planning and management, stalled market reforms, low international trade competitiveness, excessive reliance on external financing and cheap energy imports. Economic vulnerability is exacerbated by external public debt service (US $3.1 billion in 2014), high inflation rate (18.3 per cent in 2013) [4] and continuing national currency depreciation (10 per cent in 2013).

In 2012, government spending as percentage of GDP on education was 5.1 per cent and on health, 3.9 per cent. Belarus maintains an extensive health and education delivery system that reflects historical legacy rather than service demand and needs. Salaries and utility costs absorb 88 per cent of education and 92 per cent of health budgets. These costs crowd out spending on capacity development and investment in equipment. Teachers and physicians' salaries remain low, making it difficult to attract and retain skilled professionals. There are signs of concern about the quality of health and education services.

In 2013, an increase in the child population was observed for the first time in the decade. However, Belarus is challenged by an overall population decline, slow ageing and increasing dependency ratio, low fertility, and high mortality among working age men. Current demographic trends have important implications for the demand placed on education and health. Taking into account population aging, fiscal policy will have to balance the needs of the old age population and younger citizens and cope with spending pressures in the pension and health systems.

Despite a reduction of child mortality, high immunization coverage and stabilization of chronic diseases, challenges remain. The following evidence predetermines the priority focus on programmes aimed at children’s health: traumas and other external causes (3 per cent in the structure of primary disability for children under 18) [5]; congenital abnormalities, mental impairment and nervous system disorders and traumas (26,077 disabled children); mental health of adolescents and suicide (26 children aged 10-17 years committed suicide in 2012) [6]; smoking and substance abuse (1,553 cases of psychiatric and behavioural disorders per 100,000 of child population; 4 per cent of women and 9 per cent of men had the first drink of alcohol before they were 15 [7]; risky sexual behaviour (1,429 pregnancies at age 15-17 years in 2012) [8]; HIV infection (morbidity indicator amounted to 16.2 per 100,000 people) with growing number of infected women; PMTCT (overall 2,492 children were born to HIV-positive mothers) [9]; lifesaving behaviour in the Chernobyl areas, less environmentally favourable and with fewer developmental opportunities (12.4 per cent of the total child population) [10]. Main bottlenecks are low prioritization of prevention, late detection of a child's health and developmental problems, low effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes, unhealthy life
style, lack of self-preservation skills and parents’ responsibility, and stigma and discrimination of children with disabilities and of those who are HIV positive.

The Government’s strong commitment to de-institutionalization resulted in a stable decrease in number of orphans and children deprived of parental care. By end-2012, 18,602 (77.7 per cent) of these children were brought up in family environment. Number of children placed at residential institutions decreased to 22.3 per cent in 2012. There was a special focus on preventing the placement of children under three in infant homes (912 in 2012) [11].

Late identification of families’ at-risk, low effectiveness of rehabilitation and social acceptance of violent behaviour impede the implementation of child right into the family environment. Some 22 per cent of children are brought up in single-parent families due to high divorce rate and men’s mortality and 21,000 children were recognized as being at risk due to families’ dysfunction [12]. To secure the child’s right to live in a family environment, diverse family-type arrangements (adoption, custody, foster family, and family-type children’s home) were institutionalized, legally secured and implemented. Child care standards were developed and are being formalised; the scope of family-centred services, including respite and palliative care, was widened.

According to MIA and MICS4, in 2012, 6,485 minors were victims of crime and two thirds of children aged 2-14 years were subjected to psychological/physical punishment by parents [13]. To prevent domestic violence a new inter-sectoral model was piloted in the Brest region jointly with UNFPA, IOM and local authorities. There is a free national hotline for survivors of domestic violence as well as a crisis counselling line for children.


**Country Programme Analytical Overview**

The MTR confirmed that the Country Programme (CP) effectively addresses national social development priorities and strategic plans and programmes. The MTR situation update and Determinant Analyses within the following Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda (RKLAs): “Children’s Right to a Family Environment”, “Children's Right to be Born HIV free”, “Young Child Well-being”, “Adolescents: Second Decade, Second Chance” identified bottlenecks and appropriate strategies to address them.

In 2013, UNICEF continued upstream policy work focusing on improving the legislative framework to be in line with international standards; strengthening inter-agency cooperation; developing integrated family-centred social services to minimize risks to child neglect and abuse; expanding opportunities for family-type placement of children deprived of parental care focusing on children U3 and with disabilities; strengthening the capacity of professionals dealing with children; transformation of social norms and stereotypes that stigmatized vulnerable groups of children; and monitoring child rights implementation.

UNICEF contributed to the following achievements: inter-sectoral strategy for Child Injuries Prevention and Palliative Care concept; advanced training of health and educational professionals, law enforcement and emergency response personnel; improved system of life skills training for children and young people;
increased responsibility for and awareness of parents, general public and media of organizing and creating conditions to secure child safety. Additional efforts are needed to shape tolerant attitudes toward children with disabilities.

UNICEF contributed to significant gains within legal framework, particularly on the regulation of respite care services, lowering the age of adolescents to apply for ordinary medical services, and strengthening the protection measures of victims and witnesses of domestic violence.

UNICEF’s strengthened its role in knowledge management which focused on the most vulnerable. Continued support was provided to improve the availability of data through MICS4, TransMonEE, and DevInfo. Evidence derived from surveys and DAs informed government policies and strategies which included the inter-sectoral plan of action on preventing child injuries and the concept and plan of action of the palliative care system for children development.

UNICEF intensified efforts and partnership to monitor children’s rights. Within CFCI, UNICEF assisted local authorities in monitoring child rights implementation through reports, a special monitoring tool and dedicated web-site.

To strengthen inter-sectoral cooperation on preventing child abuse and neglect including identification, investigation and parent rehabilitation, UNICEF enhanced advocacy for national child protection standards and provided technical support for the revision of the relevant by-law act. The new inter-sectoral collaboration model on domestic violence prevention was piloted in the Brest region in cooperation with UNFPA, IOM and local authorities.

UNICEF continued advocating for the introduction of integrated services to protect socially vulnerable families and prevent institutionalisation. The CP was successful in supporting targeted and innovative social services, including respite and palliative care, Early Childhood Interventions (ECI), HIV testing and counselling for MARA.

The quality of services was improved through the capacity development of social workers, healthcare providers, prosecutors and judges. To remove bottlenecks related to specialists’ qualification in a sustainable way, UNICEF enhanced efforts to institutionalise capacity development through partnership with post-graduate education and retraining institutes.

UNICEF stepped up its work to address social norms and mind-sets - including discrimination against children with disabilities and in conflict with the law, children infected and affected by HIV, and Most at Risk Adolescents (MARA) - to foster an enabling environment in society and families for child rights implementation.

Case management remains at the top agenda for the remaining part of programme cycle to ensure the sustainability, affordability and accessibility to family-centred services.

Tight national fiscal policy calls for prioritized budgeting that takes into consideration children’s needs. Strategic partnership with Ministry of Finance (MoFin) is expected to provide recommendations for key mechanisms necessary to finance social services.

Effective Advocacy

Fully met benchmarks

UNICEF advocacy and strategic partnerships with the Government and profile NGOs assured steady progress in national social policy securing child rights. In alliance with other UN agencies, UNICEF provided expertise and technical assistance to refine legislative framework in compliance with international standards.
Amendments to the Law "On Basic Activities Aimed at Offence Prevention" aimed at strengthening protection measures of victims of domestic violence and taking personal responsibility for committing domestic violence were adopted. New by-laws were approved to ensure the implementation of the new provisions of the Law "On Social Services" to regulate general conditions and procedures of services delivery including respite care services for families raising children with disabilities. Changes involved limit access to social services, including respite care service for families raising children with disabilities. UNICEF, in partnership with NGOs, advocated for the regulation of service fees - taking into account the needs of the most vulnerable families and children – in order to close the equity gap in the access to and quality of the services. An amendment to the Law "On Healthcare" decreased the age when adolescents can apply for simple health interventions without parental notification to 14 years and, with this, expanded access to counselling and other services.

UNICEF expedited an important Government decision to set up the National Council on ECD which comprises representatives of social sector ministries, UNICEF and academia. Effective work of this Council will facilitate coordinated inter-sectoral work.

As part of the MTR, UNICEF supported comprehensive policy discussions on lessons learned and bottlenecks with representatives from the education, social protection and health sectors, NGOs and parents' associations. This resulted in prioritizing changing the social norms and attitudes toward inclusive education and ending placement of children under three into residential care institutions. UNICEF supported the MoH in establishing an inter-sectoral approach to early detection, intervention and rehabilitation of children under three with special needs.

As part of a wider regional initiative, UNICEF continued advocacy for de-institutionalization of children under three including those with disabilities. UNICEF coordinated national dialogue with the Government and NGOs to develop a strategic approach to changing social norms, capacity development of multi-disciplinary child protection teams, and strengthening gatekeeping mechanism and foster care to prevent institutionalization. A pilot project on re-profiling the Infant home was negotiated with the Government.

UNICEF facilitated a national dialogue on further improvement of the child protection system to guarantee the child’s right to grow-up in the family. In partnership with the MoE and Child Fund International, UNICEF continued advocacy for formalization and introduction of childcare standards to ensure comprehensive assessment of the situation of the child in the family and prevent arbitrary separation from the family.

UNICEF’s efforts at the local level resulted in approval of Special Regulations on inter-sectoral data collection and information exchange on children at risk, suffering from abuse and neglect in the family, in the Brest oblast.

### Capacity Development

**Fully met benchmarks**

The MTR and DAs confirmed that capacity development of national state and NGO partners continue to be vital in upgrading the social sectors’ effectiveness and efficiency; ensuring professional response to emerging challenges, including domestic violence, MARA and prevention of trauma in children; ensuring sustainable improvement in service delivery and care quality, including for children with special needs, in conflict with the law and in institutions; and improving statistical data collection and analysis.

Considerable attention was given to strengthening the knowledge and skills of education system managers and specialists, particularly in rural areas, on early care and rehabilitation of children under three with severe and multiple delays and alternative communication for children with autistic conditions. Attention was also given to the capacity development of social protection, education, health, police and NGOs specialists to help them provide assistance to victims and witnesses of domestic violence, work with aggressors, provide palliative and respite care services for families rearing children with disabilities, and provide HIV testing and
Special consideration was given to the mental health of adolescents and to upgrading the knowledge of psychologists and psychiatrists on modern methods of diagnosis and response to of adolescents in times of crisis and on-the-spot phone counselling and psychological assistance to child victims of abuse and maltreatment was provided. Training workshops were organized to increase competencies of parents on conflict-free communication with adolescents in times of crisis, prevention of delinquent behaviour and substance misuse. The Information Methodological Resource Centre was established in the Minsk City Clinical Children's Psycho-Neurological Dispensary and two model centres for HIV testing and counselling for MARA were set up in Minsk and Gomel with UNICEF assistance to address the quality of care and to ensure the sustainability and continuum of learning.

The implementation of the MICS4 enhanced the knowledge of statisticians in survey planning, sample design, data processing, archiving, interviewing, and results dissemination.

UNICEF provided technical support to expose national counterparts to best practices in the international arena. Belarussian specialists learned about advanced technologies and presented their experience on early intervention services for children with special needs at the international conference on Early Childhood Intervention in St. Petersburg, Russia.

There was a special focus on bringing methodological and normative frameworks in compliance with international standards. This included the development of palliative care (PC) protocols for major symptoms in children, a preparation formulary for PC, and a guide on the specifics of PC for various age groups: newborns, children and adolescents.

A training programme was developed and tested on applying international justice standards in cases involving minors to upgrade the competencies of judges specialized in hearing these cases. In 2014, this programme will be included into the curriculum of the Institute of Retraining and Advanced Training of Judges, Prosecutors, Judicial Authorities of the Belarusian State University.

**Communication for Development**

*Partially met benchmarks*

In 2013, the CO improved C4D as a cross cutting strategy integrated into programming processes, and C4D components were reflected in almost all communication, advocacy activities and awareness-raising campaigns.

DAs confirmed presence of stigma and rigid stereotypes toward vulnerable children, including those with disabilities, children in conflict with law, most at risk adolescents, and HIV positive children.

In 2013, an assessment of the health and social needs of infants and pre-schoolers with special developmental needs and disabilities and their families was conducted in order to inform programme activities aimed at reducing the social distance between children with disabilities, their families and society. Results of the assessment (showing, for example, that 68 per cent of the parents surveyed do not want inclusive education for their children) were used by the CO to advocate for inclusive society and ratification of the CRPD. During the MTR process new approaches and tools were designed to be implemented till the end of current programme cycle.

To respond to findings of the survey on crisis conditions of adolescents (June 2013) and to complement programme and capacity development efforts in this area, the CO and its partners conducted an information campaign and created a website ([www.pogovori.by](http://www.pogovori.by)) with information on the nature of adolescent crises which provides the number of a crisis hotline for children and adolescents.
The education campaign "5 Steps", aimed at transforming stereotypes regarding safe sexual behaviour and voluntary HIV-testing, reached more than 300,000 young people through traditional and social media. The campaign website (www.5shagov.by) gives the nearest place to get an HIV-test and clear and simple information on HIV-testing in order to rebrand testing as a simple and routine element of life.

An awareness-raising campaign for the young parents of infants and pre-schoolers entitled “Learning to be good parents” (www.bpp.unicef.by) was conducted to improve parents’ skill and knowledge about caring for, bringing up and helping children develop, including those children with special needs.

To overcome the negative stereotypes regarding vulnerable children and to promote equal opportunities to participate in the social, economic and cultural life of the society an information project entitled “Everyone has the right to be different” (http://special.unicef.by) was implemented.

Considering limited financial and human resources, C4D interventions were applied selectively, to a limited extent and couldn’t demonstrate peak effect. That is why the campaigns reached only segments of the target audiences. Therefore additional efforts will be made to ensure continuous dialogue and participation of beneficiaries in the development and implementation of information and awareness-raising programme components.

C4D is recognized as a cross-cutting practice area that supports governments and civil societies to reach child-right goals with equity. Still, there is much to be done to integrate C4D into partners' networks and national monitoring mechanisms. Exposure of relevant national parties to C4D principles and values will pave the way for further improvements in audience-centred and evidence-based approaches regarding social norms and behaviours. The CO will continue to learn from its own experience in this area.

**Service Delivery**

*Fully met benchmarks*

The country programme contributed to the increased quality and efficiency of support to families with children by helping to widen the scope and increase accessibility to social services.

Children under three in the correctional, developmental and rehabilitation centres were given an opportunity to receive complex early rehabilitation and development services - such as ergo therapy, speech therapy, early intervention and rehabilitation of children with severe and multiple delays, and cochlear implantation rehabilitation - in early care cabinets established in all oblasts. Three resource centres were established to provide special assistance to young and preschool children with autism. In 2013, 23 children with autism and their parents received integrated services in specially equipped classrooms in one primary school, one preschool and one developmental centre.

Two HIV/AIDS resource centres were set up in Minsk and Gomel in order to train specialists from NGOs and health care institutions. They provided training support and information on HIV testing and counselling, and support for MARA. They also facilitated the exchange of experience, best practices and promoted inter-sectoral cooperation. Special focus was placed on the quality of the implemented HIV services and approval of case management and referral systems for MARA.

A youth marathon called “Open House” to raise awareness and educate young people on HIV prevention was conducted in five project cities. MARA were actively engaged in the marathon events, calculating their behaviour risks with the use of android application and were offered HIV saliva express-testing in youth friendly health centres YFHCs to define their HIV status. The marathon events contributed to the changing of social stereotypes and increasing motivation of MARA to apply for HIV testing and YFHS.

UNICEF supported the pilot of four respite care service models in four locations, using NGOs and two governmental residential care institutions (within education and social protection systems). The cost of the
service was calculated for different types of establishments. A targeted information campaign helped to raise public awareness on the services available and to generate demand from the local community. Waiting lists has been introduced in response to the growing demand for respite care services. Nation-wide scale-up will require further consideration and support from central and local authorities and civil society.

Jointly with UNFPA and IOM, UNICEF supported national counterparts in improving capacities to prevent domestic violence, especially against women and children and setting up an inter-sectoral collaboration model involving state and non-governmental service providers at the community level. UNICEF also provided technical assistance for the children’s hot-line service, statistical data collection, sharing and analysis, and public awareness on domestic violence.

UNICEF supported comprehensive policy dialogue with representatives from the education, social protection, health sectors, and NGOs, including parents’ associations. This resulted in identifying priority areas for services development which include inclusive education, early intervention, palliative care, and support for victims and witnesses of domestic violence.

Given the growing economic difficulties and undertaken austerity measures, UNICEF placed special attention on the use of cost-effective models for social services provision.

**Strategic Partnerships**

*Fully met benchmarks*

Forming sustainable and strategic partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders continued to be priority to improve relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of programme and advocacy work. UNICEF strived to forge new partnerships and alliances as well as leveraging partners’ opinions, decisions and resources in the interests of children. Within the MTR, UNICEF’s approach to partnerships was assessed in order to explore the full potential of these partnerships and to harness their innovative and transformative power for children.

A joint working group comprising parliamentarians of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus and UN agencies was set up to deepen cooperation joint advocacy, policy work and legal framework improvement with special attention to a children-related agenda. This new partnership opens up the possibility to leverage political will, policies and budgets for vulnerable children.

Taking into account the authority and mandate of the National Commission on the Rights of the Child and the National Commission dealing with Minors under the Council of Ministers, UNICEF aimed at improving interaction with them to highlight priorities, advocate on children’s rights, influence policy, and monitor the situation of children in the country.

UNICEF continued to forge partnership with civil society organizations (CSOs). Overall weakness of civil society and lack of cooperation between CSOs and government agencies at local and national levels impede CSOs actions in support to vulnerable children and families. To address this challenge, UNICEF devoted concerted attention to the capacity development of CSOs, accumulating best practices of social contract mechanism implementation in order to involve them in providing social service and realising social projects. Throughout the year, the dialogue between CSOs and the Government gained new impetus that will hopefully be kept up in 2014. UNICEF was actively involved in the drafting of the UNCT strategy on cooperation with civil society organizations in Belarus. This will provide additional opportunities to leverage advocacy efforts in the interest of disadvantaged children in the remaining part of CP.

The partnership with the Office of ChildFund International in Belarus was strengthened through collaboration on the promotion of child care standards, as well as in implementation of family-centred approach in working with families and keeping the child in the family, prevention of child abuse and neglect, development of inter-sectoral cooperation, and introduction of database for child protection system at the local level.

The established National Network of NGOs (19 organisations), acting in the field of violence prevention and
assistance to victims of violence, became a strong advocate for improving the legal framework and services to families, and for promoting zero tolerance of violence against children.

2013 provided new opportunities for UNICEF engagement in strategic partnerships with the EU within multicounty project implementation on strengthening capacity of non-state actors on HIV testing and counselling of MARA and young people and in preventing non-communicable diseases and promoting a healthy life style.

In the remaining part of the CPD, a targeted partnership strategy with the World Bank (WB) will be pursued. To ensure future sustainability of the Country Programme, the CO has to intensify its engagement with private sector.

Knowledge Management

 Mostly met benchmarks

UNICEF’s role in knowledge management with special focus on the most vulnerable children was strengthened and supported by solid evidence derived from studies, surveys and round tables, and a series of bilateral discussions with stakeholders within the MTR to influence policy formulation and reaching agreement on the most effective actions to be undertaken.

Despite progress, gaps in data availability, as well as in its quality and level of disaggregation and consistency, still exist. To bridge gaps in data identified within DAs, UNICEF cooperated with Belstat and line ministries to ensure data quality and consistency between sectoral databases. Through MICS4, information characterizing women’s reproductive behaviour, attitude of men and women to domestic violence, sexual behaviour of young people, life satisfaction by young people and other issues relevant for Belarus, were studied for the first time.

A number of important surveys and studies were undertaken/finalized in 2013: KAP ECD and Better Parenting survey; surveys “Assessment of the health and social needs of infants and pre-schoolers with special developmental needs and disabilities and their families” and “Motivation and needs of at-risk adolescents in the context of HIV testing and counselling and the potential of public health institutions and NGOs in provision of such services”; analysis of legislative regulation of HIV T&C for at-risk adolescents provided by medical institutions and NGOs. These were complemented by follow up plans and discussions with implementation partners.

The “Assessment of the health and social needs of infants and pre-schoolers with special developmental needs and disabilities and their families” revealed existing stigma and barriers impeding the access of children with disabilities to services, preschool, and rehabilitation. The type of disability and area of residence were found to be decisive factors of exclusion and discrimination. The evidence produced by the survey initiated a debate within the MTR on the next steps to create an inclusive environment for children with disabilities.

UNICEF strived to maximize access to data and data-sharing by placing the results of studies and surveys on the Internet. The following web-sites were designed: www.pogovori.by to address adolescent crises; www.detigvgorode.by for child rights monitoring in cities joined through the child friendly initiative; and www.5shagov.by to promote HIV testing among young people.

Solid UNICEF performance in knowledge generation and brokering, fostering relevant knowledge exchanges among national and international stakeholders provided the base for the improved capacity development of national counterparts in using and managing of knowledge for advancement and monitoring of children’s rights.

The collection of statistical data on children with disabilities still has to be improved. A unified national system for the registration of all categories of children with developmental needs and/or disabilities will make it possible to develop evidence based early intervention policy as well as plan the provision of health and social
services for children and their families based on inter-sectoral cooperation. Information entered into the system will contain the latest health and social data about the child and be accessible for education, health and social protection professionals to secure an integrated targeting approach to every family raising a child with special needs.

Human Rights Based Approach to Cooperation

Mostly met benchmarks

The CO continued to promote and apply the HRBA to programming, and its underlying principles of participation of right holders and capacity development of duty bearers, in its partnerships with line ministries, local authorities and CSOs.

The 2013 MTR process was fully based on a human rights-based analysis of the situation of children in Belarus and the results achieved in realizing children’s rights with a focus on the most disadvantaged children and on international commitments of the country.

The right of a child to live in a family environment is firmly included in the national and local agenda. Recent changes in normative frameworks in inter-sectoral collaboration to help families in socio-economic danger aim to better assess the situation of children in terms of their right to age appropriate care, education, and protection from violence and neglect. A legal provision on objective decision-making regarding the separation of a child from a family in crisis that is in line with international was finalized by the Government. The institutionalization rate of new cases of children deprived of parental care is no longer used as a criterion of local authorities’ work effectiveness. UNICEF will advocate for the inclusion of this indicator into Government monitoring and evaluation of the deinstitutionalization process.

In line with HRBA in programming, UNICEF continued addressing disability issues by supporting the “Everybody Has the Right to be Different” TV series which promotes the equal rights of children with disability and encourages them to realise their full potential. The issue of the country’s accession to the CRPD was the focus of UN agencies and CSOs in their interaction with the Government regarding the rights of people with disabilities. A long-standing tradition of a medical approach to disability continues to dominate within the health, education and social services systems. This bottleneck will be addressed by UNICEF in cooperation with the CSOs.

The CO promoted shifting from integrated to inclusive education for children with disabilities at preschool, primary and secondary school levels. As a result, the Government committed to develop the Inclusive Education Strategy Paper.

As part of the preparation for the second cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), the CO continued to advocate for the establishment of a Child Rights Ombudsman Office in a selected location. As a special invitee to the National Commission on the Rights of the Child and the Commission on Minors under the Council of Ministers, the UNICEF Representative expressed UNICEF’s vision of the most pending issues affecting children’s rights including the importance of an independent child rights monitoring system.

To highlight the rights of MARA for special measures of protection, the CO supported a determinant analysis; a qualitative and quantitative survey of needs, views and opinions of most-at-risk adolescents regarding HIV testing and counselling; and building alliances between NGOs and Youth Friendly Health Centres to deliver of confidential, age appropriate and gender sensitive services to address the needs and demands of MARA.

Gender Equality

Mostly met benchmarks

State policy on gender equality in Belarus appears to be relatively weak and given low priority compared to other social issues. In order to keep gender equality as a national development priority, in 2013 efforts were
made by the UNCT Gender Theme group chaired by UNICEF to accelerate the work on finalising the draft Concept Note on Gender Equality. UNICEF provided technical expertise in the drafting process and advocated for the inclusion of indicators to allow for measurement of progress in the draft’s implementation.

The CO’s programme work to enhance gender equality focused on: promoting meaningful "father’s participation" in a child’s upbringing and the sharing of responsibility between mothers and fathers to ensure their child’s health and security; promoting HIV testing and counselling as responsible behaviour; countering domestic violence; tackling the gender aspects of suicide and attempted suicide and its prevention as well as death caused by risky male adolescent behaviour.

Throughout the year UNFPA, UNICEF, IOM provided technical assistance and expertise to the Ministries of Interior and Labour and Social Protection in order to improve the legislative framework around the prevention of domestic violence, which is often gender based. The new wording of the Law "On Basic Activities Aimed at Offence Prevention” introduced the protection order as an effective tool for preventing further domestic violence. The amendment to the Law also calls for the registration of citizens, who within twelve months have repeatedly committed an offence in the sphere of family/household relations. The Code of Administrative Offences was also adjusted to prevent domestic violence. The amendment of Article 9.1 deals with liability for violent actions against a close relative or a family member, if these actions do not constitute a crime.

Throughout the year, the CO actively participated in the work of the National Council on Gender Policy operating under the Council of Ministers and chaired by the Minister of Labour and Social Protection. This interagency advisory and coordinating body is responsible for developing, implementing and coordinating gender policy.

Success of any gender-related policy depends on the data availability used both for identification of gender issues and monitoring progress. There is a lack of regular, detailed gender disaggregated statistics in Belarus. The MICS 4 conducted with UNICEF assistance provided for the first time valuable and sex-disaggregated information characterizing the reproductive behaviour of women, the attitude of men and women to domestic violence, sexual behaviour of young people, and life satisfaction by young people.

In order to provide additional evidence that Belarusian women are more vulnerable to a double workload in the workplace and at home UNFPA and UNICEF agreed with Belstat to conduct Time Use Survey in 2014. The survey will provide an opportunity to analyse in detail the division of paid and unpaid workloads between men and women; understand how men and women use their time; and to identify the way gender differences in the use of time develop during the various stages of life.

### Environmental Sustainability

**Mostly met benchmarks**

In 2013, the world commemorated the twenty seven years of the Chernobyl nuclear power station disaster.

Belarus has made considerable efforts to rehabilitate the areas contaminated by the Chernobyl accident. Even with this, the aftermath of the accident continues to be present and requires significant investments. As of 1 January, 2013, 216,765 children or 12.4 per cent of the total child population of the country lived on contaminated territories which have fewer opportunities for economic development.

The CO was involved in all UN joint activities (ICRIN, Human Security Enhancement) and programming in the area of Chernobyl, participated in the Inter-Agency Task Force annual meetings and providing inputs into consolidated UN programming and reporting papers in relation to assessment of results achieved, implementation monitoring and up-dating the Chernobyl action plan.

Chernobyl radionuclide irradiation is mostly due to internal irradiation, resulting from the consumption of food contaminated with Caesium-137. One of the major problems is the consumption of contaminated mushrooms,
berries and other “gifts of the forest”. There is, therefore, continued interest in increasing knowledge on the basics of radiation safety, structure of radiation dose, ensuring safe living on radioactively contaminated territories, and health preservation techniques and healthy lifestyles. The CO continued to support a network of information training and counselling centres for radiation safety that have been established at schools and conduct awareness-raising activities for schoolchildren, their parents, and education professionals living in the contaminated areas.

Despite large amounts of information on radiation safety being made available to affected communities through official channels, much of it is perceived as impractical and incomprehensible. The effectiveness of public information and education interventions on radiation safety in producing positive behaviour change and reducing anxiety is achieved by ensuring the information is relevant and practically oriented. Moreover, that it is channelled through sources trusted by the local population such as education and health establishments and well used by women and young people. It is these groups are most likely to pass on safe living skills to their families, friends and neighbours - thereby increasing the positive impact.

According to the KAP survey that was conducted among schoolchildren and teachers, the joint UNICEF/Sakharov University project interventions focusing on improvement of radiation safety knowledge and skills among children and young people to reduce the risks of additional internal radiation contamination resulted in 81.6 per cent of children and 96 per cent of teachers in selected district refusing to consume potentially radiation accumulating food products without a test of their contamination level.

The Facts for Life website (http://ffl.unicef.by) was created and provides access to reliable, easy to understand information on child health and development. The full version or individual chapters of the Belarusian Facts for Life publication is available on the site.
**Narrative Analysis by Programme Component Results and Intermediate Results**

**Belarus – 0630**

**PC 1 - Social policy for children**

- **PCR 0630/A0/04/001**: By the end of 2015 comprehensive social policy securing child rights protection and monitoring is developed, resourced and implemented.

**Progress:** UNICEF advocacy efforts and strategic partnerships with the Government and profile NGOs resulted in significant progress in national social policy development securing child rights. In the course of 2013 UNICEF and the Government drew their joint efforts on monitoring of the National Plan of Action on the Improvement of the Situation of Children and Protection of their Rights for 2012-2016, CPD MTR and CRC and UPR recommendations follow-up.

Amendments to the Law on Social Services (2012), resulted in the development of new by-laws regulating general conditions and procedures of service delivery including the respite care services for families raising children with disabilities. Within the existing legal framework the key barrier to accessing social services and in particular respite care is their cost. UNICEF in partnership with profile NGOs advocated for the regulation of the fees taking into account the needs of the most vulnerable families and children in order to close the equity gap in both access and quality of service.

UNICEF is a leading voice the advocacy for the ratification of the CRPD. In 2013, it continued convening national dialogue to bring disability advocates together to share ideas at: the launch of the "The State of the World’s Children 2013: Children with Disabilities”; high level meetings, events and round table discussions focusing on the rights of children with disabilities and in particular the right to a family environment and the right to be free from stigma and discrimination.

The MICS4 final report was produced; findings were verified and are publicly available on childinfo.org and the Statistical Committee website. The report was officially presented by the Government at Vice Prime-minister level and disseminated among national and local decision-makers at meetings and conferences to provide evidence for decision-making.

UNICEF continued to deploy CFCI in 22 cities providing opportunity to increase effectiveness of local planning in the interests of children especially the most vulnerable ones as well as mobilize and motivate decision-makers, professionals, parents, CSOs and media to unite around child rights monitoring and implementation.

Recommendations of the regional conference "Middle-Income Countries Perspective on Sustainable Development in Eastern Europe and Central Asia" (Minsk, May 2013), hosted by Belarus MFA and supported by UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA, reinforced UNICEF work within Regional Key Leadership Areas (RKLA) with particular focus on equity and social inclusion.

- **IR 0630/A0/04/001/001**: By the end of 2015, the Government addresses targeted gaps in legal and institutional frameworks related to the provision of preventive and protective services to children.

**Progress:** In partnership with the MoE and the ChildFund International, UNICEF continued advocating for the formalization and introduction of childcare standards across the country and provided technical support to the Government on the revision of the Regulation #47 as an inter-sectoral by-law act. This act stipulates the procedure and local agencies responsible for social investigation and recognition of a child in social danger to ensure immediate support to the child in case of abuse and parental neglect, comprehensive assessment of the situation of the child and prevention of his/her unreasonable separation from the family. It also defines the guidelines for developing an inter-sectoral plan on the protection of the rights and legal interests of children. UNICEF facilitated a national dialogue on further improvement of the child protection system to guarantee the child’s right to grow-up in the family at the interagency collegium organized by the Ministry of Education. It identified children under three as the most vulnerable group for institutionalization and agreed to develop complex measures to ensure the right of these children to a family environment.

The existing legislation and policy framework do not fully address gaps that exist in the prevention of domestic violence. To address this bottleneck, the MoI and MoLSP with UNFPA and UNICEF assistance intensified their advocacy efforts to amend the Law “On Basic Activities Aimed at Offence Prevention” with provisions aimed at strengthening protection measures for victims of domestic violence. A joint project between UNICEF, UNFPA, IOM and national counterparts developed a new model of inter-sectoral collaboration on domestic violence prevention at the local level that stipulates the roles and responsibilities of different agencies that is awaiting approval in three pilot districts of the Brest region. To improve the information inter-agencies exchange and the referral system ensuring prompt response and assistance, local authorities approved Special Regulations on inter-sectoral data collection and exchange on children in social danger suffering from abuse and neglect in the family. Weak inter-sectoral coordination and information flow among specialists at local level are the main bottlenecks to be addressed by the database system and by bringing in new technologies into the local agencies work.

As a result of cooperation and, in some cases promotion of additional data collection or greater disaggregation, data on children are publicly available to inform policymaking, reporting and UNICEF flag-ship publications. The MICS4 survey was carried out and verified with UNICEF’s technical and financial support and is available on childinfo.org and on the Statistical Committee’s website. The final report was forwarded to all policy decision making levels (central & local) to provide evidence in support of the agenda for children. The results...
were presented at numerous meetings and conferences. In 2013, UNICEF also supported the update of the TransMonEE database and the “Availability and Collection of Data on Children with Disabilities” Country Analytical Report.

Social norms remain the key bottleneck leading to the exclusion of children with disabilities and their families. To address this issue, and with strong commitment of the MoE, the TV cycle “Everyone Has a Right to Be Different” (21 films developed in 2011-2012) was launched in February 2013 and broadcast by the national TV channel. With technical support from UNICEF, the MoE developed and disseminated among all educational institutions and other interested stakeholders methodical recommendations on awareness raising and child rights promotion activities with schoolchildren, their parents, general public focusing on equal and social inclusion of children with disabilities and their families.

To provide a renewed impetus towards closing the equity gap in access to education, ensuring inclusion of all children in quality learning, and strengthening inter-sectoral cooperation, UNICEF supported the participation of the high-level delegation by the Deputy Minister of Education of the Republic of Belarus in a Regional Ministerial Education Conference entitled “Including All Children in Quality Learning” (9-13 December 2013). The conference provided a platform for young adults to discuss the challenges to access, quality and relevance of inclusive education. As a result, Belarus supported the Call for Action to include all children in quality learning. Experience and lessons learned of other countries in the region will become a solid knowledge base for development of the national action plan on mainstreaming inclusive education in Belarus.

To acquaint the Government with the progress made in reforming juvenile justice systems over the past decade in CEE/CIS, UNICEF supported the participation of a national delegation from Belarus in the High-level Regional Conference on Justice for Children (Brussels, 27-28 June 2013). The Government expressed its readiness to continue the juvenile justice reform and supported the pilot of a comprehensive local juvenile justice system model in selected districts using justice for children principles.

UNICEF initiated, and in cooperation with the MoE, facilitated consultations with children within the framework of the national consultations on the Post 2015 Development Agenda. The consultations were conducted in February-May 2013 in the regional cities that joined CFCI and completed at the national round table. More than 350 young people aged 13-17 from urban and rural areas discussed the progress made towards achieving the MDGs and future national and global strategies. They also identified priorities and adopted the youth declaration summarizing results of their discussions. According to the teens’ opinion education, health, environment and employment are the priority areas to be addressed by the world community after 2015.

IR 0630/A0/04/001/002 By the end of 2015 local authorities, young people, children and CSOs are engaged in alliances for building child friendly cities.

**Progress:** UNICEF in collaboration with national experts developed a special monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tool within the framework of CFCI as part of MoRES mainstreaming process to assess the progress of cities in creating a child-friendly environment and fulfilling child rights. The tool constitutes of a set of objective (official statistics) and subjective (personal opinions) indicators covering such areas as youth participation, living environment, safety of children in the city, health and health care, education and development, leisure and culture and social protection. The subjective indicators are based on the results of opinion polls of children aged 6-12 and 13-17 and parents of children aged 6-12 on the most pressing issues affecting child well-being. These indicators were used calculate an index of the child-friendliness of cities, or CFC index, and to develop the Report “Status of Children in the City” reports. The CFC Index and reports are important tools for advocacy, programming and policy development at the city level. In order to ensure transparency and public awareness of the CFC initiative progress and child rights fulfilment, increase the accountability of local leaders and allow participating cities to learn from each other, the CFC index results and reports are available on the especially designed website: www.detyvgorode.by.

In 2013, two cities (Novopolotsk and Pinsk) completed the evaluation procedure which consists of calculating the CFC index and finalising their “Status of Children in the City” report with describes main results, reveals bottlenecks and identifies strategies to overcome them. Based on the reported results and CFC index, Novopolotsk and Pinsk were awarded the honourable Status of “Child Friendly City” by the CFC National Coordination Council.

PC 2 - System-strengthening for child well-being

PCR 0630/A0/04/002 By the end of 2015, an increased number of vulnerable children and families benefit from quality and inclusive social services in education, health and protection.

**Progress:** Capacity development and a child-family centred approach for integrated assistance to children under eight with special needs continues to be a key focus for UNICEF and national partners. Technical expertise and capacity building support was provided to the special education system to further advance early developmental assistance to young and preschool children with special needs and increase equity in usage of services in rural and urban areas.

The Government’s strong commitment to deinstitutionalization has led to a stable decrease in the number of children living in residential care. The ratio of placements of children deprived of parental care in residential care versus in substitute family care in 2012 reached 22.3/77.7 percent in comparison to 25/75 per cent in 2011. In 2013, three establishments in the residential care institutions network comprising orphanages in education, health and social protection, were shut down or re-profiled. It should be noted that despite the
Council of Ministers, ministries, NGOs and UN agencies. An Inter-Sectoral Plan of Action for 2014-2016 was developed and submitted for approval to the Coordination Council on Child Injuries Prevention was created under the auspices of the MoH and comprises representatives of Special emphasis was placed on reducing preventable cases of child mortality and injuries caused by external causes. The National development through to 2018, was worked out and is awaiting approval by MoH.

The promotion of a healthy lifestyle among adolescents and young people continued to be a priority supported by UNICEF. Integration of peer education into general secondary education was also further promoted.

UNICEF scaled up efforts in developing inter-sectoral cooperation and widening of palliative care (PC) services provision for children with severe life-limiting diseases or in the terminal stage of an illness. The Concept and Plan of Action of the Children's PC system was forged at several meetings with national counterparts. All partners involved agreed on the scope of interventions to change social norms, develop capacity of the multidisciplinary teams of child protection specialists, strengthen gate-keeping mechanisms and foster care. As a result of planned activities, one infant home will cease functioning as a residential care institution and will be re-profiled into a centre providing palliative care, respite care or other medical and social services for families raising young children with disabilities.

UNICEF provided technical assistance for the institutionalisation of respite care services for families raising children with disabilities as a support mechanism to ensure keeping children within the family environment. There is a strong demand for such services in the country. Development of respite care provision regulations created a solid background for its further dissemination and expansion.

UNICEF, jointly with UNFPA and IOM, supported national counterparts in strengthening national capacity to prevent and counteract domestic violence, especially against women and children by setting up a model for inter-sectoral collaboration (involving education and social protection system, police, medical service providers, NGOs) at district and local community levels.

UNICEF also provided technical assistance for the children's hot-line services, statistical data collection analysis and raising public awareness on domestic violence.

UNICEF, in partnership with UNDP, supported the Government in improving the national court system. A training programme on the application of international justice standards for minors was developed and tested to upgrade the competencies of judges who specialise in hearing cases with juvenile offenders. This programme will be included into the curriculum of the Institute of Retraining and Advanced Training of Judges, Prosecutor's Office Personnel, Courts and Judicial Authorities of the Belarusian State University in 2014.

In 2013, UNICEF also focused on promoting closer cooperation of NGOs with YFHCs on HIV testing and counselling (HIVT&C) of most-at-risk adolescents (MARA). The activities, aimed at strengthening capacity of NGOs in HIVT&C and widening access to confidential and gender sensitive youth friendly health services for most-at-risk adolescents, were conducted in 10 cities (12 project sites) in the most HIV epidemiologically disadvantage regions of Belarus.

Growing attention was given to the issues of adolescent's mental health. A determinant analysis, survey of causes of crises conditions and assessment of the psychological care rendered were conducted with UNICEF assistance. UNICEF cooperated with the MoH in addressing the revealed bottlenecks: weak institutional capacity, insufficient level of knowledge and skills of psychologists and psychiatrists, and lack of public awareness.

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Special emphasis was placed on reducing preventable cases of child mortality and injuries caused by external causes. The National Coordination Council on Child Injuries Prevention was created under the auspices of the MoH and comprises representatives of the leading ministries, NGOs and UN agencies. An Inter-Sectoral Plan of Action for 2014-2016 was developed and submitted for approval to the Council of Ministers.

**On-track**

**IR 0630/A0/04/002/001** By the end of 2015, local education and health authorities provide integrated ECD services for families in urban and rural areas.

**Progress:** A study was conducted evaluating the educational needs of families with children under eight with special needs. The findings of the study were presented to the MoE and other national counterparts at the national round table and resulted in strong follow-up commitment.

The results of the study showed a lack of knowledge and practical skills among educational specialists working with children under three in rural areas in post- and pre- cochlear rehabilitation, early assistance to children with severe and multiple delays and therapy of autistic conditions. To address this, seven field training sessions were organized in seven oblasts for 149 specialists from rural areas in order to strengthen their knowledge and skills, and 135 families were consulted during field visits. Seven specialists started a certified distance learning course on ABA therapy and 117 attended seminars on methodological approaches of working with autistic children at the preschool and primary school levels. Additionally, 25 specialists from rural areas went through an internship programme on "early integrated assistance to children with severe and multiple delays" in Minsk.

All children under three enrolled in educational activities at correctional, developmental and rehabilitation centres were able to receive...
IR 0630/A0/04/002/002 By the end of 2015, Ministries of Health and Education in cooperation with other line Ministries and CSOs ensure the provision of comprehensive services for children and youth health and development and HIV/AIDS.

**Progress:** The DA revealed that prevailing social norms are discriminatory towards HIV-infected and affected children and most-at-risk adolescents (MARA). To transform this stigmatising attitude and stereotypes and raise demand of MARA for HIV testing, UNICEF supported a youth marathon/information campaign entitled "Open House". 1600 teenagers actively participated in the marathon events conducted in 5 project cities. As a result of the campaign, 192 at-risk adolescents were HIV tested in YFHCs with the use of the saliva rapid test and learned of their HIV status.

The lack of effective cooperation between health care institutions and NGOs was also identified as the bottleneck in ensuring access of MARA to HIV testing. UNICEF advocated at the national and local levels and facilitated policy dialogue between local administrations, health institutions and NGOs on HIV testing and counselling services provision for MARA and building linkages between HIV related and other prevention, treatment, care and support YFHS. To secure administrative support in project sites, the issues of inter-sectoral collaboration including the case management and referral mechanisms for MARA were specified and precisely analysed within local round tables in 10 project cities.

Insufficient professional qualification and quality of HIV T&C services were addressed by strengthening the methodological foundations of staff in key NGOs and upgrading of professional qualifications of YFHCs specialists. Two model centres for the promotion of HIVT&C for MARA were set up in Minsk and Gomel regions. Three methodological manuals were developed by the team of national experts. 177 outreach workers and health care providers gained appropriate knowledge and skills on HIVT&C through local training in 10 project cities, five webinars and Skype conference organized through the distance learning portal on the NGO "BelAU" website. The Integrated Computer Assisted Training Tool (ICATT) was presented and adapted to Belarusian context for further learning.

The results of the DA and conducted survey reaffirmed that adolescents’ mental health remains an acute issue. It revealed an insufficient level of knowledge and skills of specialists in the education and health care systems dealing with adolescent mental health, low awareness level of adolescents and parents of the types and forms of available psychological services and an existing stigma towards their children from the prenatal stage, through the early years and onward. The campaign’s key messages focused on the importance of full parent involvement and responsibility for the early education and development of a child and are succinctly summarized in its motto: “Read. Play. Role of the farther. Discuss. Hug. Learn about your child”. The campaign material was prepared in 2013 and will be put into online and on posters and distributed across the country. The posters will be put up in children’s policlinics and preschools to reach as many parents as possible.

UNICEF continued to support efforts of the MoH to safeguard families with children with special needs during the early detection, intervention and rehabilitation process. A screening tool for early detection of delays in physical and psychological development of children under one was developed. The screening tool was piloted among specialists from medical rehabilitation centres, children neurologists in children policlinics and paediatricians and was presented to a wider range of specialists and representatives of local health authorities through the national round table. This resulted in active interest and substantive feedback on including the tool in the everyday work of paediatricians and children’s neurologists at the primary health level and during house calls.

**On-track**

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complex early rehabilitation and development services in early care cabinets established in all oblasts centres. In 2013, all children under three were covered by different services of early care cabinets.

UNICEF continued to focus communication activities in 2013 on raising awareness on the importance of early childhood development and creating opportunities for parents to learn more about early childhood development, early education and early care. DAs show that around 47 per cent of professionals assess the parental preparation for parenthood as lacking. In other words, they believe that almost half of all parents are not adequately prepared to care for their young children. UNICEF, in cooperation with the MoE, started an ECD information campaign for actual and future parents on the key role parents play in ensuring the positive growth and development of their children from the prenatal stage, through the early years and onward. The campaign’s key messages focused on the importance of full parent involvement and responsibility for the early education and development of a child and are succinctly summarized in its motto: “Read. Play. Role of the farther. Discuss. Hug. Learn about your child”. The campaign material was prepared in 2013 and will be put into online and on posters and distributed across the country. The posters will be put up in children’s policlinics and preschools to reach as many parents as possible.

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listed 934 children in December 2013.

To ensure the quality of PC, 198 specialists shared their experience and were given training in 5 seminars which included the "ALV in PC for children", "basic concepts of PC for children, difference from PC for adults", "working in a multidisciplinary PC team, interaction with the sick child and his/her families". To strengthen methodological foundation for PC protocols for major symptoms in children with cancerous and non-cancerous diseases, a protocol for providing PC for children and a guide on the specifics of PC for various age groups (newborns, children and adolescents) were developed. The focus was also on developing outpatient PC for children to ensure that children can stay in the family environment and receive qualitative in-home care. A multidisciplinary team of specialists was created and an out-patient PC office was piloted on the basis of the children's policlinic #25 in Minsk.

UNICEF emphasised the issues of the data quality collection and supported the monitoring of the child injuries in 2012-2013 including the analysis of child morbidity from road accidents, poisonings and another accidents with gender and age disaggregation. The findings and conclusions of the analysis were presented and discussed at National Round table. Recommendations on how to improve the sectoral statistical forms by, for example, expanding the list of the traumas categories and inserting of a special "violence and abuse" category were approved.

UNICEF, in cooperation with WHO, provided expertise and supported the capacity building of 21 physicians on TEACH-VIP methodology and designed 2- and 3-days training curriculum for health care providers to be implemented in the regions. The curriculum included: recommendations for teachers on education activities-to help improve road and transportation safety; the training programme "Basics of Life Safety"; and recommendations for police workers on how to prevent children's road injuries were developed. Lack of public awareness was addressed through a special page on the www.ortoped.by website and a press conference on prevention of the winter (ice road) injuries.

IR 0630/AO/04/002/003 By the end of 2015, authorities at all levels ensure referral systems and services for protection of children.

Progress: UNICEF further supported the approval and documentation of four piloted models of respite care services in four locations using two NGOs and two governmental residential care institutions (within education and social protection systems) as an example. 163 families benefited from the respite care service and took short break (up to 28 days) to settle home and family matters. A targeted information campaign (dissemination of the leaflets, booklets, interviews in local and national newspapers, end etc.) helped to raise public awareness on the availability of the service. Waiting lists until the end of the year were created. An emerging bottleneck threatening the sustainability of respite care services is the introduction of a fee that would influence the affordability of the service. UNICEF will continue advocacy for the access to the quality service for the most vulnerable groups of families raising children with disabilities.

In cooperation with UNDP and UNHCR, UNICEF assisted national counterparts in developing a national concept paper on specialised training of judges in Belarus with a chapter on juvenile judges. A special training course curriculum for judges dealing with juvenile cases was also developed with the aim of introducing international juvenile justice standards into the practice during the examination of a minor’s case, trial proceeding and judgment. UNICEF also supported the participation of a Belarusian Government delegation representing Ministries of Justice and Foreign Affairs and the Supreme Court at the High-level Conference on Justice for Children in Europe and Central Asia hosted by the European Commission and the UNICEF Regional Office for CEE/CIS in Brussels. UNICEF will further advocate with the Government to ensure the progress in the juvenile justice reform is in line with the UN common approach on justice for children.

To overcome the lack of inter-sectoral collaboration, UNICEF assisted in the capacity development of education, police, and social protection and health professionals in inter-agencies on approaches to counteracting domestic violence and on the specific role of profile specialists. A special training course on domestic violence prevention was developed as part of a qualification upgrade in four sectors and is being endorsed. Special attention was focussed on the family-centred model in working with families with children, and the consequences of violence for children of different ages. The ultimate goal of such work is the normalization of the situation in the family enabling a safe environment for children.

To expand access to services and ensure the quality in the framework of the joint project with UNFPA on counteracting the domestic violence, UNICEF strengthened the national capacity of 19 specialists providing immediate psychological assistance to children victims of abuse and maltreatment, including those in an emotional crisis situation through four children's hotlines. The specialists reported the successful resolution of an adolescent suicide attempt using acquired knowledge and hot-line counselling skills. After completion of the course coupled with on-line supervision, a group of 11 specialists representing four hotlines were trained as supervisors and focal points of support for their colleagues. The audit of the hotline in the Minsk City Psycho-Neurological Dispensary showed that the main bottleneck to quality service lays with the capacity of the hotline specialists. To address this, UNICEF will continue to support the capacity development of the hotline staff and supervisors.

UNICEF supported integration of domestic violence topics into the secondary school (5-9 grades) optional study course on Basics of the Life Safety in order to raise awareness of children on how to identify violent behaviour of parents and other relatives at home and how to protect themselves from becoming victims of violence and abuse. The amended teaching aid materials will be tested in cooperation with the MoE at schools in pilot project locations of Brest region, evaluated and recommended for the nationwide use.

To overcome social acceptance of violence, an information toolkit for parents has been developed to raise their awareness on violence against children and non-violent parental behaviour. The toolkit will be used in the national public information campaign "Playroom
without Violence”.

UNICEF assisted with the purchasing of computer equipment and capacity building of specialists as well as development of local normative regulations to set-up a special database on children in social danger. The database is aimed to make the specialists’ networking easier, and to facilitate information exchange and prompt action by professionals in cases of domestic violence, child abuse and neglect.

UNICEF continued advocacy for the re-profiling infant homes and reached an agreement on implementing a joint project to prevent the institutionalisation of children under three and to pilot the re-profiling of an infant home. The project will involve government agencies, local authorities and NGOs.

**PC 3 - Cross-sectoral costs**

| On-track |

**PCR 0630/A0/04/003 Programme efficiency and delivery enhanced.**

**Progress:** In accordance with UNICEF guidelines in 2013 concerned governmental authorities of the Republic of Belarus and the United Nations Children’s Fund in Belarus held a mid-term review of the country program for the period 2011-2013. The MTR was an opportunity to further refocus the country programme around equity and implementation of children’s rights. To this end, key social determinants enabling and/or hindering progress and critical bottlenecks and barriers in systems, services and practices were identified and will be addressed and monitored during the second half of the CP.

2013 was also marked by an audit which was instrumental in terms of re-assessing business practice, streamlining work processes and capacity development.

| On-track |

**IR 0630/A0/04/003/001 Programme implementation supported by appropriate human resources.**

**Progress:** Funds utilized under this IR contributed to the overall achievement of country programme goals by covering staff related expenses that are not funded by two programme components inter alia “Social Policy for children” and “System strengthening for child well-being”.

The budget was also used to finance logistical support for various visibility and advocacy events, translation services and other miscellaneous services (advertisements, renting vehicles, etc.), contributing to the overall effective implementation of the Country Programme.

| On-track |

**IR 0630/A0/04/003/002 Programme implementation supported by appropriate supply and services.**

**Progress:** Funds within IR.3.2 “Supply and Services” were spent on maintenance of the national legal database software, purchase of programme related statistical publications and programme related pouch services.

| On-track |

**IR 0630/A0/04/003/003 Programme implementation monitored, evaluated and supported by relevant advocacy and communication activities.**

**Progress:** The Communication section and the programme sections worked closely to highlight the equity agenda as per the global strategic communication and public advocacy framework. Strategic communications were built around events like launches of the ECD KAP, and Better Parenting Package, as well as all other activities. A resource pack of materials and toolkit for the “4Rules 4Responsible Parents” information campaign was developed and will be implemented in 2014.

In 2013, the CO placed an emphasis on synergetic communication and advocacy efforts to re-energize political will to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and create enabling environment for children with special needs. In February, UNICEF appealed to society and high level officials to reduce demand-side barriers hindering children’s participation and presented 21 films ‘Everyone Has Rights to Be Different’ that reveal needs and gaps pertaining to life and well-being of challenged children and promotes inclusive approach and non-barrier environment.

UNICEF continued to advocate for the promotion of the Convention on the Rights of the Child that places the child as a rights-holder. UNICEF wrapped up a two year educational project called “Wizard for All Children” aimed at basic rights education for children aged up to 5-6 years old and their families. During the project period, 24 fairy tales on child rights issues were written by the famous Belarus writer and educator, Vladimir Lipsky. The captivating stories were published in a children’s magazine and reached about 2.5 million children,
parents and preschool educators. The nationwide project ‘Wizard for All Children’ embodies UNICEF’s general principles of non-discrimination and equity.

**PCR 0630/A0/04/800 PCR Support**

**IR 0630/A0/04/800/001 IR 1: Effective and Efficient Governance and Systems.**

**Progress:** In addition to the CPMP, CO management coordination of governance, oversight, quality assurance, technical assistance, advocacy and strategic engagement was supported by a number of office committees including: the Country Management Team (CMT), Contracts Review Committee (CRC), Joint Consultative Committee (JCC), Selection Advisory Panel (SAP), Local Property Survey Board (LPSB), Learning Committee (LC) and Publications Review Committee (PRC). In addition to existing governance mechanisms, the Evaluation Management Committee (EMC), chaired by the Representative to provide strategic guidance to the overall management process of evaluation, was created at the beginning of 2013.

The CO also maximized opportunities to use performance information data, which is becoming increasingly available through VISION and the related web-based Performance Management tools. The Monthly Monitor, prepared by the RO Operations Section, was instrumental in assessing and strengthening the CO’s management performance.

Discussion of major office objectives and priorities at CMT meetings is regular office practice. The CMT minutes are placed on the shared drive and each staff in the office has access to the minutes for review and follow-up. The CMT continued regular monitoring of the office management indicators in order to stay on track. This year, as in previous years, budget utilization was regularly monitored and discussed at the CMT meetings to allow the expenditure rates in programme and support budgets to get to close to a 100 per cent.

This year the CO had an off-site audit, received preliminary audit notes and provided a response. The audit will be finalized in 2014. It is possible that the Office will have another on-site audit visit at that time.

**IR 0630/A0/04/800/002 IR 2: Effective and efficient Management and Stewardship of Financial Resources.**

**Progress:** There have been no late submissions of donor reports for several years now. The same was true for 2013.

There were no outstanding DCTs over 9 months. The CO introduced an effective system of monitoring DCTs: if a late DCT report is spotted/forecast, the CO takes immediate steps to discuss with the partner options to meet deadlines and not to lose programme priorities.

The Office role mapping was done very accurately to fully meet office needs and ensure effective work processes while keeping role conflicts to a minimum.

**IR 0630/A0/04/800/003 IR 3: Effective and efficient management of Human Capacity.**

**Progress:** To respond to the expectations from partners for strategic engagement and to remain relevant to the fast changing environment, the CO paid special attention to the development of staff competencies. In order to increase the quality of knowledge products, the CO paid attention to exploring high level expertise from outside the country. It also encouraged ethical behaviour, staff awareness of UNICEF’s ethical policies and zero tolerance to fraud.

Based on MTR assessment of the competencies and gaps in the human capacity of the CO, job descriptions were redefined/revised and classified to enable the CO to respond to the priorities identified through the MTR process.

These objectives were reflected in the Office Training and Learning Plan. Training opportunities were encouraged for individual professional development as was the sharing of experiences with the colleagues to gain knowledge. Staff actively participated in regional networks, Webinars and Webex sessions.

In autumn, the CO held a common UN agencies retreat in Belarus. The retreat was organized together with UNDP. The professional facilitators were hired on a cost-shared basis. The aim of the retreat was to strengthen team spirit and improve work relations. The retreat was seen by all staff as very practical with a lot of value added. The CO also took the retreat as an opportunity to review the audit preliminary notes and draft an audit response.

**IR 0630/A0/04/880/002 Advocacy / Communication.**

**Progress:** Activities and costs related to advocacy and communication (Communication Officer and direct support staff).
Effective Governance Structure

The CO strived to further improve its management practice. Management priorities for the year were determined following the 2012 AMT, 2013 MTR and preliminary Audit recommendations. The main thrust of changes in management practice was the enhancement of the CO’s ability to deliver measurable, lasting national development results that impact positively on the lives of children.

Oversight committees are in place and functioning well. CMT met regularly to discuss major office objectives and priorities and define follow-up actions. A comprehensive results-based matrix of management indicators was developed and is regularly reviewed to ensure CO focus on results achievement as per CPAP and AMP (e.g. implementation rates, management of grants, donor reporting and proposal submissions, DCT utilization, etc.). The matrix was supplemented by indicators derived from DAs. CMT minutes were placed on a shared drive and each staff in the office has access to them. The Regional Monthly Monitor, which provides the main performance indicators for all countries in the CEE/CIS region, showed that UNICEF Belarus's performance indicators were virtually all positive in 2012 and 2013.

In 2013, the CMT met 5 times. One of the main topics was MTR and related MTMR and PBR submission. The MTR process was discussed in depth to monitor the overall process, define main steps (e.g. consultations with partners), ensure a good quality report and agree on how to incorporate conclusions and recommendations in programme strategies.

In May 2013, the Office of Internal Audit started the off-site audit of the CO to reveal the areas that need more attention. Preliminary notes were produced for the office to review, comment on and adjust if needed. The CMT took this process under its control. The CO gathered a separate all staff meeting to discuss the preliminary notes and address them efficiently. This meeting was scheduled on the agenda of the joint UNCT retreat held in September 2013. Upon return from the retreat, the CO drafted the response matrix, discussed it with all staff, finalized it and reported to the auditor. The actual audit was postponed until 2014.

The transformation of UNICEF engagement in the MICs necessitates the assessment of project documents to determine: the extent to which the project meets increasing organizational demands (upstream work to assist legal reform, policies formulation, addressing exclusion and closing equity gaps); whether the justification of the project is grounded in DAs; and whether the implementation of project contributes to removing identified bottlenecks and assists in significant advances in the realization of child rights. To ensure all above, the CO set up the Project Review Committee in the mid of 2013.

The CO paid special attention to knowledge management as an important strategy and resource for strengthening staff capacity to address programmatic issues. Various platforms for knowledge sharing such as video-conferencing and joining communities of practices on intranet, participation in networks’ meetings were used. The CO continued using its local knowledge management database to ensure staff had access to national policies and strategies, international and national best practices on children’s issues, and research and development information. The staff was encouraged to share gained experience, knowledge and practice.

Strategic Risk Management

In accordance with the UNICEF Risk Management Policy (CF/EXD/2009-006) and new requirements (Memorandum dd 01.03.2013, M. Mogwanja, Deputy Executive Director), the CO reviewed the nature and potential risks impacting the achievement of CP objectives and fulfilment of its core accountabilities. Audit gave new impetus to re-assess the CO’s approach to risk management practice, including the identification, analysis and management of risks.

The Risk and Control Library contains one risk assessed as medium-to-high. The identified risk is the aid environment and predictability of funding. The mitigating measures included: finalizing the fundraising strategy; producing a donor booklet, a set of projects outlining the finalization as well as intensification of interaction with EU and Russian Federation (project outlines were submitted for consideration to the MFA of
the Russian Federation, Regional Office and Delegation of EU to Belarus, and the Embassy of Switzerland), and strengthening advocacy and visibility.

The BCP was adjusted by the Operations Manager and signed by the Representative. Following the audit preliminary recommendations, the office crisis management team simulated the crisis discussion and response activities to test the CO’s readiness. The technical procedures were simulated as well - finance documents parked and posted in the system and paid through the bank.

The unsigned CPAP was not included in the Risk and Control Library as it was considered medium risk (CO is used to working with an unsigned CPAP) and mitigated by various actions.

**Evaluation**

In 2013, the relevance of the multi-year IMEP and planned evaluations/studies/surveys was reviewed against the changing programmatic environment and engagement in RKLAs. Major research, monitoring and evaluation activities were identified and incorporated into annual IMEP and updated in the multi-year IMEP.

The annual IMEP draft, developed in consultations with POs & CMT, was reviewed by the RO and technical advice was provided. POs ensured funds allocation for the studies, surveys, partners’ monitoring systems support. The finalized IMEP was uploaded to the UNICEF Intranet "Evaluation and Research Database".

All research activities except one for one study were implemented (87.5 per cent implementation rate).

The multi-country evaluation, which included the participation of Belarus, within RKLA 1 “Children’s Right to a Family Environment” was completed and finalized.

In addition to existing governance mechanisms, the Evaluation Management Committee (EMC) chaired by the Representative to provide strategic guidance to the overall management process of evaluation, was created at the beginning of 2013.

Findings and accepted recommendations were the foundation of discussions with stakeholders around the future planning of activities. Monitoring of Management Response to evaluations conducted in the previous year was continued and reflected in the UNICEF on-line tracking system.

**Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology**

The Office continued to ensure the availability of new IT technologies, implementation of the UN IT security requirements, on-going maintenance of the IT infrastructures, IT support to programmes, and e-learning.

Key activities included:

1. To unify the Office’s local network in compliance with UNICEF standards, the Office bought, mounted to the server rack and crossed the new Cisco switch 3560. The new network map was elaborated. All switches were crossed and configured in accordance with the new network map.
2. The new Cisco Wi-Fi access point 1142 was configured and included to the office Wi-Fi network.
3. The Office deployed the VEEAM 6.5 Backup and Replication solution. The data of nine virtual machines was archived to a hard drive outside the server room.
4. Cisco AnyConnect Client was installed to all office laptops. The security keys were configured and linked to staff members. A presentation on Cisco Any Connect was given at the office retreat in 2013.
5. Service Pack 1 for Windows Server 2008 R2 was installed to Hyper-V hosts.
6. The Office successfully deployed private IP Address ranges and the Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol Server and Network Protection Server were installed and configured.
7. The Lotus Mail agent was installed and set-up on the Android phones of the staff members.
8. Symantec End Point Protection Server was upgraded to V.12.1 RU3.
9. All necessary patches were automatically downloaded and installed to all servers, desktops and laptops in
the office through WSUS.
(10) All service calls from GHD and SMs were processed to GHD successfully by the local IT specialist.
(11) Two desktop computer and a Xerox Work Center repurposed for donation to local partners.
(12) Stability of the internet connection was high and there were no interruptions and corruptions of the connection during work time.
(13) MOSS standards were maintained and equipment and data were fully protected.

**Fund-raising and Donor Relations**

In 2013, the CO continued reviewing the Donor Reports Schedule on a regular basis, This resulted in all of the donor reports (4) being submitted on time and in line with quality standards of donor reporting. The use of funds and donor reporting were closely monitored by Country Management Team. Regular grant utilization monitoring enabled appropriate use of resources and prevention of unnecessary extension of contributions.

The programme had five grants expire in 2013; all the grants were fully utilised. Financial implementation and budget utilization of projects, including expiring donor resources, were regularly reviewed in programme and CMT meetings.

UNICEF fundraising for Belarus continues to be a challenge and in 2013 donors’ interest was limited. Donor assistance to Belarus as of 2013 focused on areas related to democratic governance and economic development. The CO is looking for potential donors to diversify its sources of funding in order to fully finance the country programme.

The ambitious goals and outcomes of the country programme require establishment of effective mechanisms for leveraging financial and human resources. Keeping the fundraising issue on the front-burner, the CO follows its Fundraising Strategic Plan for 2012-2014 making long-term efforts to cover existing funding gaps in the framework of CP 2011-2015 and allowing funds delivery for CP 2016-2020.

The CO fundraising strategy aims at enhancing partnerships with bilateral and multi-lateral donors, giving the priority to the EU as the major donor and the Russian Federation as emerging donor. The fundraising strategy and leveraging of resources is linked with the evolving priorities in Belarus. The associated purpose is to refocus the international community on the child rights agenda, strengthen advocacy for children’s rights, promote UNICEF’s visibility and expand networks. A comprehensive fundraising booklet provides information on UNICEF priorities, comparative advantages and funding gaps.

Fundraising activities with the EU focus on children’s health. Recently the UNCT, primarily UNDP, UNICEF, WHO and UNFPA, developed a joint concept paper ‘Health promotion and prevention of non-communicable diseases at the local level in Belarus’ for which EU granted funds.

In early 2014, the Resource Mobilization Task Force (RMTF) will update funding priorities, as well as define a separate action plan for each resource mobilization initiative considering: a) the country request received during MTR process; b) UN joint donor mapping exercise (will be finalized February 2014), and c) in/out country donor community specifics.

Within the second phase of the current programme, the CO will place special focus on exploring possibilities for private sector’s engagement primarily within Global Compact Initiative.

**Management of Financial and Other Assets**

This year, as in previous years, the use of the budget was regularly monitored and discussed at CMT meetings to ensure the expenditure rate of programme and support budgets is close to 100 per cent. The process became even more intense and rigorous at the end of the year.

Also as in previous years, there were no outstanding DCTs over 9 months, showing that the CO pays utmost
attention to monitoring the status of transfers to partners. If a deadline is looming, the CO does not wait but rather takes proactive measures to help partners overcome challenges. Bank reconciliations have been tuned to become an effective tool to monitor the outgoing and incoming payments and were done properly and on time. As a rule, there were no differences between bank and the system data indicating that the CO closely monitored its transactions. If minor differences arose, mainly due to technicalities, they were strictly monitored by the operations section and reconciled.

HACT has been continuously implemented by the CO since 2007. There is an agreed-upon oversight plan and according to national legislation, twice a year, each IP submits detailed reports on their use of funding, status of project implementation, achieved results and the bottlenecks impeding project implementation to the Ministry of Economy. CO personnel participated in all planned activities as a resource and monitored the implementation status of projects. The responsible programme officers revised all relevant information materials, documentation (methodological materials, information booklets, survey studies, reports, etc.), developed within each particular project.

In 2013, following the preliminary audit notes, the CO intensified its oversight activities. In addition to routine programmatic oversight, two audit spot checks of its counterparts were carried out. The results were summarized in memos and signed by the operations staff carrying out the spot checks. The spot checks did not reveal any major discrepancies or rule violations. The spot checks found that all supporting documents were properly filed, valid and complete and confirmed that the funds reviewed were spent in accordance with the approved projects’ budget.

The CO returned VAT on the purchase of supplies and services for the Office. An effective protocol for VAT refunding was established allowing for full and quick refunds. This protected against currency devaluation (according to a national law, refunds are done in local currency that is very unstable and very prone exchange rate fluctuations).

The CO continued to benefit from the use of the electronic banking system which is quicker, and more secure and cost-efficient. The Office also always looked at the official market exchange rate when converting USD to local currency in order to benefit from the exchange rate on transactions.

**Supply Management**

In 2013, all procurement procedures were carried out on a timely basis and according to UNICEF rules and procedures. Most of the procurement was of low value.

Some of the most important activities supported: 1) the development of education materials on prevention of violence against children for school children (5-11 grades), 2) training of specialists working domestic violence help hotlines, 3) preparation of information materials on violence against children, 4) ECD consultant services, 5) the national information and education campaign on the promotion of HIV testing and counselling for young men and women, 6) hiring a specialist/company to develop a set of materials for the ECD campaign, 7) renovation of the UNICEF Belarus web-site. A tender for expert services to evaluate the development of respite care services for children with disabilities and their families in Belarus project was cancelled.

All procurement was supported by preliminary market research or by formal commercial offers from different suppliers. Most of it was conducted for programme purposes. Taking into account the relatively small volume and value of each purchase (less than US $10,000), research in neighbouring countries was no conducted to avoid additional costs for transportation and customs clearance. The transfer of equipment to implementing partners was processed and duly documented.

There were two cases of offshore procurement from Supply Division in Copenhagen. One was the purchase of HIV test kits for the MARA project. The process started in 2013 and will be finalized in 2014. The second was the purchase of office laptops and desktops for staff. The delivery is expected to take place early in February
2014. The research confirmed that this IT equipment is cheaper to buy from the Supply Division.

**Human Resources**

Assessment of the competencies and gaps in human capacities was undertaken by the CO within the MTR. It resulted in the request for an upgrade of Youth and Adolescents Development, HIV/AIDS Officer post in order to strengthen UNICEF’s strategic presence and better position it for engagement in two RKLAs: “Children's Right to be Born HIV-free” and “Adolescents: Second Decade, Second Chance”. The PBR approved the upgrade and the country office carried out the recruitment process and provided the package of documents for Regional Office CRB review and decision. Belarus chaired a regional Reference Group within RKLA 5, actively participating in a multi-country MARA project which already achieved impressive results within the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) component.

Programme work was challenged by the maternity leave of the ECD Officer and a special leave without pay of one of the CO’s programme assistants. The Office recruited a substitute for the programme assistant position. In order to avoid gaps in staffing, the CO prepared and implemented a plan, and substitute staff filled the vacancies as quickly as possible.

In mid-2013, the CO driver (the only one in the office), retired. The Office was prepared and implemented all necessary steps to fill in the vacancy in a timely and proper manner. A new driver was recruited and started work the day after the old driver retired. This avoided a break in service and allowed for continued for smooth functioning of the Office.

Performance management was carried out systematically, with clear deadlines for PAS task definition and discussions that were monitored by the CMT. Honest PAS discussions are held for all staff members mid and end year. The 2012 Year-end Appraisal phase for all staff members was completed by the end of March 2013. The 2013 PAS performance planning phase was completed by the end of April.

Following PBR’s recommendation, the CO decided to redefine/revise and classify the job descriptions for all staff by the end of 2013 - beginning 2014.

Fiachra Mcasey, RO Planning Specialist, conducted a PPP mini-training in December during his mission to Belarus.

The Operations Manager continued to back up Moscow Office activities after its closure in 2012. Similar to what was done in 2012, though on a smaller scale, the Operations Manager continued creating & posting invoices, inputting payments into Moscow local electronic banking system, liaising with Citibank, performing bank recons, numerous HR issues incl. Moscow Office staff payroll, MIP payments, office assets issues, IT equipment, etc.

The CO continued to invest in staff through strategic training and networking opportunities. The Local Training Committee diligently pursued staff learning, ensuring that 83 per cent of the Local Training Plan was implemented. Staff actively participated in regional networks, as well as through virtual media in Webinars and WebExes.

Follow-up to the 2011 Staff Survey Results focused on encouraging the use of flexi-time options, exploring and realizing opportunities for staff development, fostering staff recognition and mutual communication and open interaction between supervisors and supervisees.

**Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings**

The Office applies a common services scheme, sharing common rates, often with good discounts, for the following services: 1) hotel rates, 2) translators and interpreters, 3) travel agent, 4) mobile phone operator,
5) stationery supplier, 6) courier, 7) bank, 8) events management and 9) printing. The Office is housed in one building with UNFPA, UNAIDS and UNHCR which allows the sharing of drivers and the use of one car to go to UNCT meetings or other common events.

Common services are included in the OMT and UNCT meeting agendas on an as needed basis. The UNICEF Operations Manager chaired the OMT this year.

The Office continued to strongly promote the use of the modern telecommunications technologies, like Polycom, Skype, and Webex instead of the old and costly telephone system. The operations managers in the region created a Skype community that allows quick, effective and cheap communication and experience sharing.

The Office strictly controlled the quality of replenishment requests to ensure cash liquidity and efficiency. The issue was discussed a number of times during staff meetings to reinforce the importance of accurately planning cash replenishment forecasts.

In 2013, the Office once again cooperated with other UN agencies in the organization of a joint UN Retreat. The event took place in Belarus. The joint approach allowed economizing on the retreat’s administrative costs and provided a great opportunity to discuss issues of common interest for UN agencies and the sharing of experiences. Staff participated in the team building exercises and feedback following the retreat was very positive.

### Changes in AMP & CPMP

Following discussion on transformation of UNICEF’s engagement in Middle Income Countries (MICOs), guided by Global Initiative to Improve Efficiency and Effectiveness, taking into account changing political and economic situation, aid environment, MTR results and preliminary Audit recommendations, the CO defined the following management priorities:

- Further align the CP with the Regional Knowledge and Leadership Areas (RKLAs) and UNICEF Strategic Plan for 2014-2017.
- Reinforce results-based management in the absence of signed CPAP, results documentation and reporting, including the establishment of standards and indicators to which management and staff are held accountable.
- Continue work on mainstreaming the risk management approach, paying special attention to assessing progress in the implementation of risks mitigation strategies (mid-year and AMR).
- Improve the quality of programming by further operationalising MoRES, finalizing Determinant Analyses within remaining programme components, focusing interventions on those bottlenecks that are assessed as most off track or constrained.
- Promote staff professional development (and rotation when needed) to meet requirements of transformed UNICEF engagement and the refocus on equity.
- Adjust management practices and coordination mechanisms in accordance with audit recommendations.
- Reinforce synergies among programme components to ensure cross-sectorally, facilitate knowledge generation and enhance the CO team coherence (ECD/CP - Children with Disabilities, CYPHD/CP – MARA).
- Assist in transforming social norms and stereotypes to ensure non-discriminatory treatment of vulnerable children and their families and their legal rights.
- Intensify efforts in resource mobilization, including with the EU and the Russian Federation.
- Seize opportunities for greater efficiency through common services scheme, sharing common rates, booking air tickets via the Internet (corporate card) and investing in testing and using latest advances in technology and telecommunication.
Summary Notes and Acronyms

CFCI    Child Friendly City Initiatives
CMT    Country Management Team
CP    Country Programme
CPAP    Country Programme Action Plan
CRC    Contracts Review Committee
CSOs    Civil Society Organizations
ECI    Education Communication Initiative
ECD    Early Childhood Development
EMC    Evaluation Management Committee
JCC    Joint Consultative Committee
LC    Learning Committee
LPSB    Local Property Survey Board
MICOs    Middle Income Countries
MoFin    Ministry of Finance
MTR    Mid Term Review
PC    Palliative care
PMTCT    Prevention of Mother to Children Transmission
PRC    Publications Review Committee
RKLA    Regional Knowledge and Leadership Areas
RMTF    Resource Mobilization Task Force
SAP    Selection Advisory Panel
UPR    Universal Periodic Review

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Evaluation

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