UNICEF Annual Report 2014

Bulgaria

Executive Summary

In the second year of the 2013-2017 country programme, political instability in Bulgaria continued with the resignation of the Government in June and early Parliamentary elections in October. Despite the complex political context, UNICEF Bulgaria continued to support equity and social inclusion of the most disadvantaged children through a combination of evidence generation, policy advocacy and technical assistance, facilitating national dialogue, being an effective voice for children and building a broad alliance with variety of actors on national and local level, including the private sector.

A critical contribution was made by UNICEF to realization of a child’s right to live in a family environment, through the results achieved on a national level and through the Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda (RKLA). In a year of political changes, UNICEF positioned itself as a key actor supporting the continuity of reform processes and the coordination between different stakeholders. UNICEF Bulgaria facilitated a review of the National Strategy on Deinstitutionalisation, providing valuable findings and recommendations for up-dating the National Action Plan. The network of integrated family support services and alternative care, developed at local level, proved its effectiveness for preventing the separation of children from their families. Lessons learned from this demonstration modelling and the sustained advocacy in the framework of the Regional Call to Action “End placing children under three years in institutions” led to significant reduction of proportion of children age under three in residential care, from 0.78 per cent at the end of 2009 to 0.43 per cent at the end of 2013.

As a result of evidence generation, policy advocacy and modelling efforts, important progress was made in mobilizing political support for an integrated framework for early childhood development (ECD). The preliminary results from the home visiting approach, introduced in 2013, were reflected in the decision of the Ministry of Health to include home visiting for young children into the National Programme for Improving Maternal and Child Health (2014-2020). The Early Learning and Development Standards for children 0–3 years were finalised in cooperation with the Bulgarian Academy of Science.

While there were no significant shortfalls, the political instability slowed down progress in two key areas: education and juvenile justice. In relation to early school leaving, UNICEF Bulgaria looked at barriers and bottlenecks faced by two specific groups, identified as most vulnerable: Roma adolescent girls and adolescents and youth not in employment, education or training (NEETs). A review of the juvenile justice system was conducted and used by the Ministry of Justice for the formulation of amendments to the Penal Procedure Code and the Juvenile Justice Act.

The on-going partnership with the President’s Office was further strengthened, and the President was one of the strongest voices for child rights in the country. A new strategic partnership with the General Prosecutor’s Office was created, which is expected to be instrumental for advancing the reform in the area of juvenile justice. Strong collaborative partnership with civil society organisations and local governments were maintained, while the
partnership with business sector was expanded and strengthened, emphasizing broader corporate engagement for the promotion of child rights.

The 25th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC@25) was used as a platform for expanding the national alliance for child rights by mobilizing the Parliament, national and local level authorities, civil society, media, private sector and children. In addition to this, UNICEF Bulgaria successfully joined global initiatives, such as the CRC@25 Essay Initiative and the “Imagine” campaign. Public advocacy and communication for social change (C4SC) efforts focused on violence against children, with a year-long campaign involving mass media, digital media, prominent personalities and events.

Despite challenges on the market, locally raised funds from private sector grew significantly, especially from individual donors through pledge. A locally developed fundraising platform for pledge through mobile phones was made available through UNICEF’s Division of Private Fundraising and Partnerships (PFP) to other country Offices and National Committees. Predictable and flexible funding continued to support programme realisation in Bulgaria, and to contribute to UNICEF’s global Regular Resources, while over 20,000 pledge donors proved to be loyal supporters.

UNICEF remained as a well-known and trusted actor in Bulgaria, supported by citizens and business sector, and respected by policy makers and civil society organisations. This is reflected in 85,000 unique users of the website unicef.bg and 83,000 fans of the Facebook page, where an average post reaches 25,000 viewers. The UNICEF team received the highest recognition for its overall contribution to the advancement of child rights in Bulgaria on the occasion of the CRC@25 Anniversary. Along with 24 prominent child rights advocates, UNICEF was awarded by the President of Bulgaria with a Sign of Honour for “exceptional contribution to the protection of child rights in Bulgaria”.

Humanitarian Assistance

With the ongoing conflict in Syria, an increasing number of people continued to seek asylum in Bulgaria. According to information from the State Agency for Refugees, 11,000 refugees applied for international protection in 2014, of whom approximately were 2,000 children. Despite the progress achieved by the Bulgarian authorities in the reception and registration of refugees, significant gaps remained in the Bulgarian asylum system related, in particular, to the lack of effective system for guardianship appointment for unaccompanied children, access to formal education for children, lack of integration measures and lack of services for psycho-social support for children.

Throughout 2014 UNICEF Bulgaria worked in close coordination with Government partners, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to ensure access to education, health services, as well as social and legal protection for over 1,400 refugee children. UNICEF provided training to NGO partners on how to work with refugee children; supported educational activities for children in six refugee centres through the provision of school supplies, and; conducted a health campaign on nursing and breastfeeding combined with counselling and support to refugee mothers with babies. A communication and advocacy campaign was implemented that helped tackle negative attitudes against refugees and promoted solidarity among Bulgarian school children. In addition, UNICEF Bulgaria participated in the preparation of a detailed report on the protection and care of refugee children in Bulgaria. The report, published by the Bulgarian Council for Refugee and Migrants, identified gaps and provided recommendations to stakeholders on advocacy activities and
protection measured for refugee and asylum-seeking children. UNICEF also supported the preparation of the annual UNHCR “Age, Gender and Diversity Assessment”, in the section related to children. At the policy level, UNICEF Bulgaria provided advice for the formulation of draft amendments of the Law on Asylum and Refugees that would enable access to education for refugee children and would ensure adequate social and legal protection for unaccompanied and separated children and provided technical assistance for the development of coordination mechanism for referral, care and protection of unaccompanied and separated children.

**Equity Case Study**

In Bulgaria, 46 per cent of children (555,000) live in material deprivation and the country has the highest rate of children under three placed in residential care in the CEE/CIS region. The inequity gap has widened, and poverty has negatively affected the access of the most disadvantaged groups to mainstream services. In 2013, more than 13 per cent of all births were to mothers who did not have health insurance and, therefore, did not receive antenatal care. This is one of the factors contributing to the relatively high infant mortality in Bulgaria, which is two to three times higher than the European Union (EU) average. Lack of information and access to family planning, inadequate feeding practices of young children, and the increased rates of anaemia, stunting and obesity are also related to poverty. Some harmful traditional practices, such as child marriages, early pregnancies, violence, and a lack of attention to hygiene are common in more isolated communities. Negative stereotypes and prejudice also present an important barrier, as most of the poor families with three or more children belong to ethnic minorities, primarily Roma. The response of the social services and health professionals to poverty and the related poor childrearing practices, as well as to disabilities of children, is still in favour of separating children and placing them in residential care, instead of providing effective support to families.

UNICEF Bulgaria contributed to addressing the main barriers and bottlenecks underlying the inequalities in the wellbeing of children through modelling multi-cultural and integrated interventions, supporting families, mothers and children in the most deprived regions in the country, working closely with local authorities.

Since 2010, a network of Family Centres has been established in partnership with three municipalities in Shumen demonstration region to facilitate access of the most vulnerable families to public services, strengthen parental capacities and address harmful practices, thus contributing to the prevention of family separation, child abandonment and neglect. The Family Centres are situated within or close to marginalised communities and apply outreach work and community sensitive approaches, develop flexible interventions based on continuous assessment of needs and maintain dialogue with the local communities. They provide information and support, facilitate access to mainstream service, including legal, housing, health care, education, social benefits, employment, and advocate with authorities and professionals for the realization of the rights of the most deprived children and families. The Centres also address traditional harmful practices related to child marriages, early pregnancies, nutrition and care for children by raising awareness and supporting informal networks (mothers and mother-in-laws), thus contributing to changing attitudes and behaviours. The model of the Family Centres has been designed and implemented in close partnership with national and local authorities, NGOs and communities, which ensures national ownership and commitment to its sustainability and replication. The capacities of partners are being continuously developed through expert support, technical advice and training.

Support to families in Shumen region was further strengthened through a home visiting service
for expectant parents and families with young children, which was established in 2013 in partnership with the Ministry of Health and the Agency for Social Assistance as part of the health care system. The service offers home visits by trained nurses/midwives to pregnant women and caregivers of young children with the aim of promoting child care practices conducive to the healthy development of children, early identification of children at risk of developmental delays, abuse, neglect or abandonment and early intervention through improving access to health, social and education services in the community. During the visits, caregivers receive information and provide guidance and support related to health, breastfeeding and adequate feeding, emotional and cognitive development of children, immunisations, maternal health, positive parenting, and access to health and social service. The service also helps to identify pregnant women without health insurance and support them to access qualified antenatal care, contributing to improved maternal health and birth outcomes. The home visiting service has a strong equity dimension: it builds on universal approach aimed to reach out to all families with a minimal package of services, while seeking to ensure that caregivers from the most disadvantaged groups receive extensive support to provide adequate care to their children.

For the period 2011-2014, the Family Centres provided support to more than 3,000 poor and excluded families with children, and prevented 160 cases of family separation. Over 90 per cent of those families have never had access to existing social services. The number of children below three years in residential care in the demonstration region was reduced from 107 in October 2010 to seven in December 2014. The model of Family Centres was recognised as a promising practice and necessary service by central and local authorities, service providers, NGOs and was recommended for rolling out nationally. While the home visiting service is relatively new, it has proved to be an effective strategy for strengthening the outreach component of the health care system by enabling it to reach and effectively support the most disadvantaged families with young children. Since 2013, more than 14,000 home visits were made to 3,000 families, of whom 700 were among the most deprived. The two interventions complement each other and contribute to closing the equity gap by reaching out to the most disadvantaged children and families and removing barriers and bottlenecks. The successful model developed with UNICEF support in Shumen region will be fully documented and provided as the key policy development input to address inequities affecting children in other parts of Bulgaria.

**Summary Notes and Acronyms**

BGN – Bulgarian Leva
C4SC - Communication for Social Change
CCC – Core Commitments for Children
CEE/CIS - Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.
CIPFA – Certified International Public Finance Accounting
CMT – Country Management Team
CRC – UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRC@25 – 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child
DCT – Direct Cash Transfer
DLC – Dynamic Leadership Certificate
EC – European Commission
ECD – Early Childhood Development
ERM - Enterprise Risk Management
EU - European Union
GSSC – Global Shared Services Centre
Capacity development at individual, community and government levels remained an important UNICEF strategy for supporting the realization of the rights of every child. At individual level, more than 450 parents benefited from the programme for positive parenting, while on the community level around 7,000 families received support to provide a nurturing environment for the healthy development of their children through family support services and home visiting, aiming to empower individuals and families to claim their rights.

In parallel, strengthening the capacities of relevant institutions and services providers as duty bearers was pursued through training and expert advice. Technical assistance was provided to local authorities and NGOs to access resources for child-focused programmes from the EU funds, the European Economic Area grants and the Bulgarian-Swiss Cooperation Programme.

At the national level, UNICEF Bulgaria provided critical contribution to enhancing the effective management of the Child Care Reform process through ongoing support for improving the coordination among the main institutions involved. At regional level, training on the management of child protection activities and the coordination among sectors was organized in the demonstration regions. The multidisciplinary teams received training on identification of violence and trauma.

In 2014, a special emphasis was placed on capacity development of the judicial system to apply child-friendly justice. More than 100 professionals were trained on international standards and good practices related to children participants in administrative and judicial procedures. In addition to that, UNICEF Bulgaria supported the assessment of staff capacity in two out of seven correctional facilities, and the implementation of special capacity development plans, including training, ongoing methodological support and supervision.

Through its modelling work on child participation, UNICEF Bulgaria continued to develop the
capacities of children to have their voice heard and to help local and regional authorities and NGOs to engage children and youth.

UNICEF also enhanced national capacities in relation to the refugee response and provided training to NGOs and volunteers on working with refugee children.

**Evidence Generation, Policy Dialogue and Advocacy**

In 2014, significant efforts were dedicated to generating insights and evidence to inform national policies and contribute to advancing child rights in selected priority areas. An external review of the implementation of the National Strategy on De-institutionalisation, supported by UNICEF Bulgaria, assessed the progress made and provided valuable findings and recommendations that will be used for the up-date of the Action Plan.

In the area of violence against children, UNICEF Bulgaria conducted a determinant analysis, which was discussed with stakeholders and laid the ground for the development of a national strategic document for comprehensive prevention and response violence against children.

In the area of early childhood development, through the organization of two thematic conferences and the engagement of leading international experts UNICEF Bulgaria promoted the advancement of international evidence and contributed to the development of a shared understanding among key national stakeholders on the need for an integrated policy framework on ECD. The Early Learning and Development Standards for children aged zero to three years, developed by a multi-disciplinary team from the Bulgarian Academy of Science with support from UNICEF Bulgaria, were finalized and the screening methodology for early identification of learning difficulties was used by the Ministry of Education and Science to promote inclusive education in kindergartens.

The review of the juvenile justice system, which identified the main inconsistencies in the laws and the practices, provided a powerful advocacy instrument in the policy dialogue with the Government on the need for legislative changes. The findings and recommendations of the review were used by the Working Group to the Ministry of Justice for amendments to the Penal Procedure Code, the Juvenile Justice Act and relevant primary and secondary legislation.

UNICEF Bulgaria continued to share the knowledge and evidence generated through the modelling of outreach family support services and home visiting services to support advocacy and to inform the formulation of relevant policies and programmes. As a result, the Ministry of Health integrated elements of home visiting for young children into the National Programme for Improving Maternal and Child Health (2014-2020) as well as in the draft National Health Strategy.

**Partnerships**

UNICEF Bulgaria actively worked towards strengthening and expanding its strategic partnerships on national and local level. Due to the political instability, including the resignation of the Cabinet in June and early parliamentary elections in October, additional efforts were undertaken engage with the caretaker, and then the newly-appointed Governments. During this period of change, the State Agency for Child Protection remained a stable and engaged partner, and joint work also continued with the expert level in the respective Ministries.

The celebration of the CRC@25 in the National Assembly was good entry point for building closer partnership with legislators. The on-going partnership with the President’s Office was
further strengthened, and the President was one the strongest voices for child rights in the country. A new strategic partnership was created with the General Prosecutor’s Office, which is expected to be instrumental for advancing the reform in the area of juvenile justice.

Partnerships with municipalities, regional governors and other stakeholders in the three selected regions were strengthened, reaching out to the most disadvantaged families and children. UNICEF Bulgaria also supports the initiative “Child Friendly Municipalities” with 19 municipalities awarded for their efforts and results.

UNICEF Bulgaria continued to work in close partnership with a number of local civil society organization and the key advocacy partner, the National Network for Children. Partnerships with professional associations such as Bulgarian Association of Paediatricians proved to be critical in changing attitudes and behaviour of health professionals.

In partnership with the biggest Bulgarian TV channel, UNICEF Bulgaria worked on establishing a model for ethical reporting on children. Advocacy and fundraising to combat violence against children were in the heart of this partnership. Additionally, a media campaign in partnership with 5 radio stations promoted early childhood development (ECD).

In partnership with the business sector, an integrated approach to corporate engagement was pursued, inviting socially responsible companies to go beyond funding and become active advocates for child rights through engaging their employees, customers and business partners. A notable example was the partnership with Post bank “Best Start for Every Child” promoting positive parenting, which received the national award “Best Donor Program”.

**External Communication and Public Advocacy**

The CRC@25 anniversary was the main focus of communication and public advocacy activities in 2014, which was declared the Year of Child Rights by the key Government counterpart. A photo exhibition “Child Rights Have a Face and a Story” was presented in 10 cities and in the Parliament, where the Parliament Chair made a special address on CRC@25. The President of Bulgaria awarded the UNICEF team, along with 24 other prominent advocates for child rights. UNICEF Bulgaria reached out to children, through education system and website. UNICEF global initiatives supported included: CRC@25 Essay Initiative, by engaging UNESCO Director-General and the Vice President of the European Community; launch of the State of the World’s Children report, and; the “Imagine” song initiative, with Bulgarian children included in the global David Guetta video.

UNICEF Bulgaria engaged Vice President of the European Community to feature in the local version of the violence against children (VAC) campaign, which was continued by an outdoor fund-raising campaign and by a comprehensive partnership with the highest-rated TV channel in Bulgaria. The aim was to sensitize general public, influence social norms and raise funds for initiatives related to protection of children. The TV partnership also aimed to create a model for ethical media reporting on children with active participation of journalists. A popular singer was appointed National UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador and supported the VAC campaign, including through an acoustic concert broadcasted on national TV.

Advocacy efforts on the importance of ECD were leveraged through corporate engagement, using the communication channels of the Post Bank, promoting positive parenting and early learning. In addition to the bank’s channels, more than 500 media cuts were published and broadcast, followed by a one-month media partnership with five radio stations.
In order to build solidarity with refugees, a travelling exhibition “I Have a Dream” and multicultural meetings took place in nine cities, bringing together Bulgarian pupils and refugee children.

In 2014, the official website (unicef.bg) with 85,000 unique users (25 per cent increase from 2013), and the Facebook page with 83,000 fans and an average post reach of 25,000 (300 per cent increase from 2013) continued to be strong advocacy and communication tools.

**South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation**

In 2014, UNICEF Bulgaria undertook knowledge exchange and sharing of experience with other CEE/CIS countries in different areas. A joint initiative with UNICEF Romania contributed to strengthening the cooperation between the two countries in the field of adolescents and youth. This included supporting innovative research, facilitating knowledge sharing between national institutions on policies and programmes that address vulnerable adolescents and youth; fostering exchange of experience between NGOs working with and for adolescents and youth. UNICEF Bulgaria conducted a national representative survey on adolescents and young people not in employment, education or training, and research on social norms related to child marriages in Roma communities that prevent Roma adolescent girls’ access to rights.

In May, UNICEF Bulgaria hosted a delegation from Moldova, including representatives from the Ministry of Education, local education authorities, school management and Roma leaders, who visited Sofia to learn about good practices in inclusion and retention of Roma children in education as well as desegregation of Roma schools.

In August, the Child Protection Specialist of UNICEF Bulgaria undertook a two-week assignment at UNICEF Armenia to share the Bulgarian experience with the child protection system reform and the development of statutory, community-based and alternative care services, and to support UNICEF Armenia advocacy efforts with the Government on child protection reform.

The innovative platform for regular donations through mobile phone “MOBilizer”, which was developed by UNICEF Bulgaria in 2013, was presented at the UNICEF Fundraising Forum in 2014. UNICEF Bulgaria team worked actively with PFP Pledge team on the customization of the platform for international use. This was launched by PFP and the Spanish National Committee, and shows a high potential for pledge income growth. UNICEF PFP is planning to test the new fundraising mechanism in South-East Asia in 2015.

Through the CEE/CIS Regional and Knowledge and Leadership Agenda (RKLA), UNICEF Bulgaria participated in networking, identification of good practices, validation of solutions and sharing of experiences with other offices in the areas of child protection, ECD and adolescents.

**Support to Integration and cross-sectoral linkages**

Significant progress was made in promoting and strengthening cross-sectoral linkages and synergies, which is one of the main approaches underlying the programme of UNICEF Bulgaria. In the area of ECD, the health visiting service for expectant parents and children under three years, supported by UNICEF Bulgaria as part of the health care system, is an integrated intervention to improve growth, health, nutrition, social-emotional and cognitive development of children. One of its main objectives, along with the more traditional focus on health and nutrition, is early identification of children at risk of abuse, neglect and abandonment and early
intervention in collaboration with child protection system.

The main innovation in the model of the family support services, developed and tested with support from UNICEF in one demonstration region, is related to the application of an integrated approach. The Family Centres provide support and social counselling for disadvantaged families and family members, help with family planning and the development of parenting skills, provide health and legal information and facilitate access to mainstream services (e.g. housing services, health care, education, social benefits, and employment).

In the area of violence against children, UNICEF Bulgaria conducted a determinant analysis, which looked at bottlenecks and barriers at all levels. The determinant analysis was presented and discussed at a working meeting with experts and professionals from all sectors (child protection, health, education, and justice), municipalities and NGOs. It will be used for the development of a national strategic document for comprehensive prevention and response to violence against children.

In the area of juvenile justice, the analysis of the risk factors that influence children acting in conflict with the law and the assessment of the existing policies and cross-sectoral linkages at local and national level were used by UNICEF Bulgaria to develop a case management and referral mechanism in partnership with all relevant stakeholders. The mechanism is expected to improve the coordination and cooperation among all actors in assessing the needs of the children and developing an integrated response and measures that involve child protection, social, education and health systems.

**Service Delivery**

Not applicable.

**Human Rights-Based Approach to Cooperation**

The realization of the rights of the most vulnerable, excluded and disadvantaged groups continued to be a main priority. Through the outreach work at community level, UNICEF Bulgaria worked with local authorities to support parents, caregivers and families to meet their responsibilities for the upbringing, care and development of their children by placing a special emphasis on the most vulnerable children – children in institutions, children with disabilities and children from ethnic minorities. In parallel, UNICEF helped the Government and municipalities, as main duty-bearers, to develop tailored approaches and interventions to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged families and children.

The equity focus was also consistently applied by UNICEF Bulgaria in its research and analytical work. A “Study on Non-Enrolment, Non-Attendance and Early Dropout” from 2013, concluded that Roma adolescent girls were most vulnerable to non-attendance and early dropout from school. Child marriage and early pregnancies were identified as the main reasons for Roma girls’ early dropout from school. To address this issue, UNICEF Bulgaria commissioned research into of social norms related to child marriages among Roma communities. The objective of the research is to identify social norms that prevent Roma girls’ access to rights and to inform the design of measures and interventions for the realization of their rights that also help change social norms as a main barrier.

In 2014, UNICEF Bulgaria and the National Network for Children provided independent reports to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the promotion, protection and implementation of child rights in Bulgaria. The ratification of the Third Optional Protocol was
discussed with Government officials on several occasions, including with representatives of the new Parliament, elected in October 2014. While there is an understanding and agreement that Bulgaria should ratify the Third Optional Protocol, the national authorities are reluctant to proceed with its ratification before the adoption of some legislative amendments that will enable its effective application.

**Gender Mainstreaming and Equality**

In line with the priorities of the newly adopted Gender Action Plan, in 2014 UNICEF Bulgaria started a specific gender-focused programmatic initiative targeting Roma adolescent girls, who constitute one of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in Bulgaria. The initiative aims to prevent child marriage and promote access to education for Roma girls. Child marriage and early pregnancies were identified as main reasons for Roma girls’ early school leaving. To address this issue, UNICEF Bulgaria commissioned research into social norms related to child marriages among Roma communities. The main objective of the research is to identify social norms that prevent Roma girls’ access to education and to inform the design of measures and interventions for preventing school-drop out and promoting education, while addressing social norms.

Since 2010, a network of family support services (three Family Centres) has been established in one demonstration region to facilitate access of the most vulnerable groups to services. The Centres are integrated into the local community and apply community sensitive approaches and develop flexible programmes based on a continuous assessment of needs. Since 2014 prevention of child marriage among Roma communities has also been integrated in the outreach work of three Family Centres. They provided support and counselling to 90 Roma adolescent girls and conducted an awareness raising campaign: “You have a choice – marriage or education” in most affected communities. In 2015, the Centres will develop and implement integrated programmes for child marriage prevention that will also take into account the findings from the research on social norms.

The initiative involved the Policy and Knowledge Coordinator who is also the Gender focal point for UNICEF Bulgaria, the Child Protection Specialist, the Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist. The budget for the study of social norms is US$10,000 and the annual budget of the three Family Centres is US$300,000, which covers costs for staff and for all family support services and activities.

**Environmental Sustainability**

In 2014, UNICEF Bulgaria continued to apply the following initiatives aimed at reducing its carbon footprint on the environment:

- Responsible disposal of unusable electronic waste;
- Used batteries collection spot;
- Separation of paper, plastic, and glass garbage for recycling and avoiding use of plastic bottle and glasses;
- Use of recycled paper for printing in the office, double-side printing as standard setting
- Use of electrical taxis for work-related transportation within the city, when no office car is available;
- Installation of a bike stand.

However, there is still room for improvement in areas such as electricity efficiency, and electronic data usage and storage, which will be addressed in 2015.
Effective Leadership

In the beginning of 2014 there was a change in one senior management post: the Policy and Knowledge Coordinator, National Officer-D (the de facto Deputy Representative), and a new staff member was recruited in March 2014.

The structure of the statutory committees and the Table of Authorities were reviewed and updated on a regular basis to reflect changes, such as newly recruited staff and staff on maternity leave. Country Management Team (CMT) meetings were convened regularly to identify and discuss management issues related to business processes, security, well-being, learning and development.

The Annual Management Plan was updated to reflect changes in the external environment and UNICEF priorities. The management indicators were monitored on a monthly basis with the help of Regional Office Monthly Monitor initiative.

Under the leadership of the Field Implementation Group set by the Regional Office, a detailed analysis of work processes and risk assessment was conducted, in relation to establishing of the Global Shared Services Centre (GSSC). The analysis was conducted in participatory manner, involving all staff and the Staff Association. It revealed some capacity gaps, which resulted in management decisions, further analysis and improvement of business processes. The office contributed to the required budget optimization in relation with the GSSC project by decreasing its Institutional Budget by US$5,500 per year for the remaining duration of the programme cycle.

The office took steps to align with the requirements of the new Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) framework. Regional training was provided for the Policy and Knowledge Coordinator and the Operations Officer. A request for proposals for performing macro and micro assessments were issued at the end of the year.

Annual staff retreat was used for a thorough discussion of the programme and management issues, with focus on “theories of change” for each programme output. This contributed to internal communication, better understanding of programme goals and strategies between different units of the office and enhanced team spirit. In 2014, UNICEF Bulgaria also facilitated a place-to-place survey for the International Civil Service Commission, collecting useful information on the cost-of-living for international UN staff in the country, which is used for determination of the post-adjustment index for Bulgaria.

In line with the up-dated Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) Guidelines on Risk Assessment and Planning, UNICEF Bulgaria conducted a risk assessment exercise to identify specific risks to the achievement of programme results and management objectives. Risks were identified in the following areas: funding and external relations, organization strategy and neutrality, results-based management and reporting, human resources, information and communication technology (ICT) systems and information security, and natural disasters. Based on this exercise, the Risk Assessment Input Form in ERM was duly up-dated, and corresponding risk mitigation strategies and action plans were developed or up-dated. Throughout 2014 the most significant risk was related to the continuing political instability due to the resignation of the Government in June and early parliamentary elections in October 2014. To address this risk UNICEF Bulgaria focused on strengthening its interaction with national authorities at different
levels, particularly at middle management and technical levels, engaged more actively with local authorities and expanded its network to include a greater diversity of partners.

**Financial Resources Management**

In 2014, UNICEF Bulgaria continued to implement the recommendations from the last Internal Audit (rating “Satisfactory”) related to financial management. The assignment of authority and the delegations of financial controls reflect the office structure and are in line with the requirements of VISION. The Table of Authority was regularly updated to reflect changes within the office and the segregation of duties. Procedures were put in place to ensure timely and accurate recording of private sector fundraising (PSFR) income. At the end of each month the contributions were recorded in Vision and reported to UNICEF’s Division of Private Fundraising and Partnerships with a table indicating the amounts received per Programme Budget Allotment (PBA).

Bank reconciliations were performed on time to ensure matching between the bank data and data in VISION. Financial controls were used to identify and prevent possible gaps. The office operates with two banks: a PSFR bank account in the Piraeus Bank, and PSFR US dollar, Euro, and Bulgarian Lev (current) bank accounts in the Raiffeisen Bank.

UNICEF Bulgaria occupies Government-provided rent free premises. Compared to the amount previously paid for rent, UNICEF Bulgaria continued to realize savings amounting to US$50,000.

An inventory/physical count of the assets was performed in quarter four in accordance with International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) requirements. All items correspond to VISION records. The local Property Survey Board (PSB) committee took decision for donating old and outdated equipment.

In 2014 UNICEF Bulgaria received from the Regional Contingency Fund (RCF) additional funds for specific equipment for communications and fundraising activities, and for repair work for the office premises.

**Global Performance Indicators:**
- The outstanding Direct Cash Transfers (DCT) over 9 months at year end was 0.03 per cent of the total DCT amount;
- 100 per cent of Regular Resources were utilised;
- 57 per cent of available Other Resources for 2014 was utilized, and the remaining 43 per cent was rephrased to 2015;
- All grants were used within the original duration of the PBA life.

**Fund-raising and Donor Relations**

In 2014, UNICEF Bulgaria raised funds from different sources, nationally and internationally. Funds were received for the programme activities from Velux Foundation (US$325,489 for community based social services) and French Committee for UNICEF (US$448,741 for juvenile justice). Additional amount of US$290,000 is committed from the French Committee for UNICEF. Thematic funds (US$160,000) and Set-Aside funds (US$100,000) were also received. The office received through external (delegated) funding the total amount of US$24,289 (Investment Funds from PFP).
In parallel, significant efforts were made to maximize income from local private sector fundraising. The following key achievements were made in 2014:

- Overall income from local fundraising received in the bank in 2014 was US$1,204,708, a 65 per cent increase from 2013, and eight per cent above the target for 2014;
- The income from corporate partnerships was US$739,035, a 40 per cent increase compared to 2013;
- The income from individual donors was US$465,673, a 128 per cent increase compared to 2013;
- The income from pledges was US$405,567, a 246 per cent increase compared to 2013, with 20,685 regular monthly donors.
- UNICEF Bulgaria contributed to global Regular Resources (30 per cent of pledge), amounting to US$121,667.

2014 was the second year of the Country Programme, and UNICEF Bulgaria reached 39 per cent of the approved Other Resources five-year ceiling (US$4,898,754 out of US$12,500,000). Thirty per cent of Other Resources in 2014 came from local private sector fundraising.

All donor reports were sent on time. A Donor Focal Point monitored the due date and alerted the responsible Programme Manager. During 2014, seven grants expired.

**Evaluation**

The 2014-2015 rolling Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (IMEP) was prepared in consultation with national partners and reflects UNICEF Bulgaria programme priorities and Government plans. All the planned surveys, studies and research were performed on time and generated additional evidence for policy making and programmes, with a focus on the most disadvantaged groups.

In 2014, no evaluations were carried out by UNICEF Bulgaria, but the office continued to implement the remaining recommendations from the Evaluation on Foster Care, which was conducted in 2012 and rated by UNICEF headquarters as among the best evaluations.

UNICEF Bulgaria was part of the Multi-Country Evaluation in the area of children’s right to a supportive and caring family environment, which included 11 countries from the CEE/CIS region, and was commissioned by the Regional Office. The main findings and recommendations from the evaluation will be presented and discussed with relevant stakeholders in the beginning of 2015.

A joint evaluation with the Ombudsman office had been considered. Whilst there is an understanding of the benefit of such an evaluation and its possible positive impact on strengthening the independent monitoring of child rights in Bulgaria, due to insufficient staff and increased workload in the Ombudsman office the evaluation was not initiated. A discussion is ongoing on how to overcome these obstacles and on the most appropriate form of assessment.

UNICEF Bulgaria developed a special tool for monitoring the implementation of the home-visiting services, which contributed to documenting and assessing the positive effect of home visiting on the families and children.
**Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings**

In 2014, UNICEF Bulgaria occupied Government-provided rent free premises. This resulted in cost savings from rental payments in amount of at least US$50,000.

In 2014 expenses for duty travel decreased by 25 per cent in comparison with 2013. However, other travel costs increased, including those related to training (US$32,425), travel of consultants and other external experts (US$81,112), mostly due to intensified programme activities and investment in staff development. It was calculated that the 2014 change in the UNICEF Administrative Instruction 2014-001 Duty Travel, where an additional payment of 40 per cent of the daily subsistence allowance was introduced for the last day of travel, and the same is given for one-day trips irrespective of the duration, represents seven per cent of the increase. In its efforts to optimize travel expenses, UNICEF Bulgaria used direct access to Travel Agent’s online reservations system, providing access to real-time data about airplane tickets and hotel accommodation worldwide.

Optimization through obtaining better conditions for some operational expenses such as mobile telephony costs, internet, using of video conferencing and skype continued to be improved in 2014.

All bank accounts continued to be free of standard bank charges in 2014. Payments management was improved and regularized up to two payment runs per week without compromising the deadlines for payments (total payruns in VISION for 2014 were 91, in comparison to 131 in 2013), including transfers from contribution accounts to current account, and payroll. Cash flow management was improved. Fund availability in the bank accounts was optimized with requests for replenishment processed through Treasury in UNICEF headquarters, and replenishments processed directly into the current account. All these actions resulted in improving the efficiency of operations.

**Supply Management**

UNICEF Bulgaria does not have dedicated supply staff members nor significant supply activities. From the Institutional Budget the procurement was basic network and communications equipment for the office. Programme supplies were used depending on the type of cooperation with partners and include primarily procurement of services and some equipment. For local procurement UNICEF Bulgaria follows the general supply process guidelines.

In 2014, due to the evolving situation with the refugees in Bulgaria, UNICEF Bulgaria procured from Copenhagen Supply Division 55 sets of ECD-in-a-Box and 15 sets of School-in-a-Box (along with 35 Replenishment kits) at a total value of US $14,730. The supplies were delivered in February, and used in the centres for refugees.

In the process of writing-off UNICEF toys, in 2014 PFP delivered more than 30,000 items which were used to support UNICEF advocacy, especially for the importance of early learning. Most of the items were distributed to kindergartens and refugee centres, while some were used in support of health visiting service in demonstration regions.

**Summary of supplies and services 2014:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultancy Contracts</td>
<td>US$311,665.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Contracts</td>
<td>US$523,593.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Value POS/Administrative supplies</td>
<td>US$8,784.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme supplies</td>
<td>US$14,334.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>US$858,378.08</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Security for Staff and Premises

In 2014, UNICEF Bulgaria did not have any security related incidents. Staff were informed about security protocols and safety precautions were issued where needed. Staff responsible for receiving postal packages were informed about the procedures and requirements in terms of safety.

A security guard from a private security company provided services throughout the year ensuring safe work environment. Drivers provided safe and reliable transportation.

An evacuation drill was performed in October 2014 to test staff readiness and response. A calling tree was introduced to enable quicker transmission of information.

UNICEF Bulgaria also facilitated and conducted activities related to safety and security of all UN staff in Bulgaria and their dependents: The Representative served as the UN Designated Official for safety and security, and the Operations Officer as the Country Security Focal Point.

Human Resources

Human capacity needs were continuously monitored and addressed through identification of capacity gaps, adjustments in distribution of tasks and in staffing structure, timely recruitments, utilization of external expert help, and through investment into staff development and wellbeing.

In the beginning of 2014 Policy and Knowledge Coordinator (National Officer-D) was recruited. Two General Service staff - Communication Assistant and Programme Assistant - had discontinued their contracts at the end of 2013, which became a challenge due to the global freeze on General Service post recruitment. The capacity gap was bridged by recruiting staff under TA. At the end of 2014, with endorsement of PFP, the UNICEF Programme and Budget Review approved a new General Service-5 post of Data Analyst, in order to strengthen the fundraising team.

Capacity gaps were identified during the analysis of work processes and risk assessment, showing that some key areas of work were not sufficiently supported. Qualified consultants were recruited to support communication, fundraising and programme units, under supervision and guidance of a small number of National Officers. The staffing structure will be revised during the Mid-Term Review process in 2015.

Capacity gaps were also addressed through regular on-the-job training and an orientation package for new staff, exchange of knowledge, external training and networking, as well as stretch assignments.

Individual training took place as follows:
Representative: Designated Official Security Training
Policy and Knowledge Coordinator: Advanced Programme Policy and Procedures (PPP), HACT, Advances in Social Norms Change, Strategic Media Skills for Senior Managers, Induction in PFP and Regional Office, Gender Equality
Child Protection Specialist: Strategic Media Skills for Senior Managers, Dynamic Leadership Certificate (DLC) programme
Child Rights Monitoring Specialist: Trans Monee training on impact evaluation
Programme Assistant: PPP, Gender Equality and language proficiency exam in Russian
Operations Officer – Contracting of Corporate and Institutional Services, HACT, Certified International Public Finance Accounting (CIPFA)-ongoing, DLC, peer review with UNICEF
Georgia, and mentoring support to newly recruited Operations Officer in Romania.
Finance Assistant - Introduction to Accounting (online)
ICT Assistant – Orientation in Supply and Procurement, language proficiency exam in Russian
HR Assistant – Peer Support Volunteer training, CIIPFA (ongoing), and a 2-month development assignment with Regional Office Human Resources
Drivers – Safe Driving
Communication Officer – Communication for Development (C4D) training with Ohio University,
Communication Assistant – Digital Fundraising Workshop, Child Rights (e-learning)
Fundraising Officer Individual – Digital Fundraising Workshop, DLC programme

The local Staff Association worked actively in the office and contributed to the Regional Staff Association. The legal requirements related to social insurance for national staff and training opportunities for General Service staff were among the issues raised, as well as concerns related to GSSC. UNICEF Bulgaria staff welcomed the decision of the Executive Director to establish additional leave with pay for maternity. UNICEF Bulgaria practiced flexible work arrangements, using flexi time and work from home when appropriate. All staff members were actively encouraged to take part in the Global Staff Survey in 2014.

Only one International Professional staff member uses the electronic Performance Appraisal System (e-PAS), while other staff members are using paper-based PAS. All Performance Evaluation Reports (PERs) were completed on time for 2013, while the planning and reviewing phases for 2014 were observed as per global deadlines.

**Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology**

In 2014 UNICEF Bulgaria continued to improve its ICT system. A number of adjustments were performed in line with the organization’s requirements, including procurement of new hardware for the end users and new mobile phones – smart devices with access to email, VPN Cisco AnyConnect access installation for office laptops. The migration from Lotus email to Outlook (Office 365) was done successfully for all users in UNICEF Bulgaria. All these changes increased the potential for distance working. The Office 365 and Lync are contributing to reduction of costs with improved communication and information exchange.

The second and independent internet access through Wi-Fi routers coverage was improved. The office equipment now provides more timely, reliable and secure information flow, and the possibility to work from anywhere with internet.

As all business applications and email servers are based in the Regional Office or headquarters, UNICEF Bulgaria continues to rely on those information technology services provided. Overall support for end users in the office was provided simultaneously.

In addition, further improvements were achieved as follows:
- The new channel for receiving recurring (pledge) donations via mobile phone (sms) was further developed. Website performance was further enhanced;
- Improvement of mobile access, with popularization of the use of VPN and mobile devices;
- Increased Videoconferencing flexibility via Interoffice Videoconferencing Mobility;
- Renewal of contract for mobile telephony with optimization of the cost.

UNICEF Bulgaria maintained the website www.unicef.bg and a Facebook page for local advocacy, social and resource mobilisation. The website was visited by 85,000 unique users, and there are over 83,000 fans of the Facebook page.
ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS

**OUTCOME 1** By 2017, more children from excluded and poor families benefit from equal access to education and protection systems.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
In the second year of the new Partnership Programme, political instability in Bulgaria continued with the resignation of the Government in June 2014 and early parliamentary elections, which took place on 5 October 2014. This situation had a negative impact on the progress in some key areas such as juvenile justice and education. However, UNICEF Bulgaria continued its efforts to support equity and social inclusion for the most disadvantaged families and children through a combination of high-level policy advocacy and expert advice to the Government, research and analysis in critical areas, and through expanding the modelling of new services and approaches at the local level in the three demonstration regions.

At policy level, significant efforts were dedicated to generating insights and evidence to inform national programmes and contribute to the realization of child rights, especially the most vulnerable, excluded and disadvantaged, in selected priority areas. An external review of the National Strategy on Deinstitutionalisation, supported by UNICEF Bulgaria, assessed the progress made and provided valuable findings and recommendations that will be used by the Government for updating the Action Plan. In addition, critical contributions were provided to the effective management of the deinstitutionalisation process through ongoing technical assistance and support for improving the coordination among all institutions involved. The established network of innovative child and family support services and alternative care proved to be an effective instrument for preventing the separation of children from their families. Lessons learned from this demonstration modelling and the sustained advocacy in the framework of the Regional Call to Action “End placing children under three years in institutions” led to significant reduction of proportion of children aged up to three years old in residential care from 0.78 per cent at the end of 2009 to 0.43 per cent at the end of 2013.

To strengthen the ongoing efforts for the prevention of violence against children, UNICEF Bulgaria conducted a determinant analysis, which will inform the formulation of a comprehensive national strategy. Key national partners also benefited from knowledge exchange with other countries through their participation in the International Conference on Protection of Children from Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation (Belarus).

Through the organization of two high-level events and continuous advocacy at policy and expert level, important progress was achieved in fostering better understanding and support for an integrated framework for early childhood development. As a result of UNICEF Bulgaria’s policy advocacy at national level and the modelling of home visiting at local level, the Ministry of Health integrated elements of home visiting for young children into the National Programme for Improving Maternal and Child Health (2014-2020). Another key achievement was the finalization of the Early Learning and Development Standards for children zero to three years, developed in cooperation with the Bulgarian Academy of Science. The screening methodology for early identification of learning difficulties was used by the Ministry of Education and Science for promoting inclusive education in kindergartens. In partnership with local authorities, UNICEF Bulgaria initiated the development and testing of a new early education service for young
children (three to four years) from the most disadvantaged and excluded communities.

Technical assistance was provided to the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) for the development of an Action Plan for the implementation of the National Strategy for reducing the share of early school leavers for the period 2013-2020, which was adopted in October 2014. UNICEF Bulgaria actively participated in the public discussions on the new Draft Law on Pre-school and School Education, which was submitted to the new Parliament. As a follow-up to the National Study on School Dropout (2013), additional research was conducted to inform the development of tailored programmes and approaches for two specific groups, identified as most vulnerable – Roma adolescent girls and NEETs (adolescents and youth not in employment, education or training). In addition, to help improve learning outcomes for marginalized children, and especially children in institutions, UNICEF Bulgaria initiated the development of an innovative education model based through the use of an online educational platform.

To facilitate the national dialogue on the reform of the juvenile justice system, UNICEF Bulgaria supported a review of the juvenile justice system and organized an international conference, which brought together a wide range of stakeholders. The results from the review were used by the Government for the preparation of amendments to the Penal Procedure Code, the Juvenile Justice Act and relevant primary and secondary legislation. An important contribution was provided to the process of court specialization, and the specialization of prosecutors and police units through the development of internal rules and procedures and through the training of more than 100 professionals. As a result of its joint advocacy efforts with the Ombudsman and civil society, and due to the excellent relationship with the Ministry of Education and Science, UNICEF Bulgaria contributed to the closure of one of the remaining seven correctional facilities in the country and improved the functioning of two other correctional facilities through the introduction of a child-rights based approach.

The work towards this achievement of this Outcome contributed to advancing the CEE/CIS Regional and Knowledge and Leadership Agenda in several result areas, including a child’s right to a supportive and caring family environment, a child’s right to access to justice, a child’s right to early learning, a child’s right to inclusive quality education, a young child’s right to comprehensive well-being, a child’s right to social protection and an adolescent’s right to a second chance. UNICEF Bulgaria also participated in the Multi-Country Evaluation of results achieved through the child care system reform 2005-2012, which was commissioned by the Regional Office and included 11 countries from the CEE/CIS region.

OUTPUT 1 By the end of 2017, based on the results of tailored approaches in three regions, key stakeholders at central level (especially the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and Ministry of Health) ensure that relevant regulatory provisions and budget allocations incorporate effective, culturally sensitive and accessible prevention and protection services for vulnerable and marginalized children, especially children at risk of family separation, children living in institutions and children with disabilities.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF Bulgaria continued to support the child protection reform in the country by addressing all determinant areas: enabling environment, supply, demand and quality. Policy advocacy was focused on the need and ways to provide effective support to vulnerable families, marginalized communities, children at risk and was supported by the evidence generated through demonstration interventions, research and analytical papers. Work on legislation included support to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy for the preparation of a concept for a draft law on social services. In addition, UNICEF Bulgaria actively participated in a Working Group
that developed proposals for amendments of the Criminal Procedures Code that introduce child friendly investigation and judicial procedures.

In 2014, UNICEF Bulgaria commissioned an external review of the implementation of the National Strategy “Vision for Deinstitutionalization of Children in Bulgaria” and its Action Plan, which assessed the progress made and provided valuable recommendations on the way forward. The review was highly appreciated by a wide variety of partners and will be used for the up-date of the Action Plan. In addition, UNICEF contributed to enhancing the coordination and the effective management of the deinstitutionalisation process through ongoing technical assistance and the organizations of a specialized seminar with all Government stakeholders involved in the process.

A determinant analysis in the area of violence against children was conducted and discussed with stakeholders, which laid the ground for the development of new a strategic document for comprehensive prevention and response to violence against children. Key national partners also benefited from knowledge exchange with other countries through their participation in the Regional Conference on “Strengthening of National Child Protection Systems to Protect Children from Neglect, Abuse, Violence and Exploitation”, co-organized by the Government of the Republic of Belarus and UNICEF.

Capacity development for the management of child protection activities and the coordination with other systems (for example, juvenile justice, health and education) was supported in three demonstration regions through the provision of technical assistance and training seminars.

Optimisation of current spending on social services was supported with an analytical review of the financing of centres for social services. Recommendations on a draft financial standard for foster care services were also provided.

To help leverage resources, the office continued to actively participate and contribute to the thematic groups drafting the new Operational Programmes, funded with EU Structural Funds 2014-2020. Deinstitutionalisation and support to families and young children were included as priorities.

Demonstration modelling interventions in Shumen Region continued and the established network of innovative child and family support services and alternative care proved to be an effective instrument for preventing the separation of children from their families. In 2014, the Municipal Council in Shumen decided to close the Infant Home in the town. Generated evidence and knowledge was regularly shared with stakeholders to inform Government policies and NGO advocacy. Additional activities addressing child marriages and early pregnancies were planned for 2015. New services for children with disabilities will be developed in 2015 aiming to improve support to parents, introduction of an integrated assessment and planning for inclusion of children, improve rehabilitation and provide temporary placement.

UNICEF Bulgaria continued to support the reform of the juvenile justice system, through the design and development of new services in Sliven region, support for the closure of correctional boarding schools, and the establishment of specialized premises for hearing of children who participate in judiciary procedures and, especially, for children victims and witnesses of crime. Two new premises were established in two demonstration regions and inter-institutional mechanisms for their use were developed.

The work towards this achievement of this Output contributed to advancing the CEE/CIS
Regional and Knowledge and Leadership Agenda in several result areas, including child’s right to a family environment, justice for children, children’s right to education, children’s right to health, young child wellbeing, children’s right to social protection, adolescents. UNICEF Bulgaria participated in the Multi-Country Evaluation of results achieved through child care system reform 2005-2012, commissioned by the Regional Office.

OUTPUT 2 By 2017, relevant stakeholders at all levels in the health, education and social protection systems apply inter-sectoral protocols of cooperation that enable the effective provision of integrated ECD services for the most disadvantaged and marginalised families and children, including from ethnic minority groups.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF Bulgaria continued to promote healthy growth and development of young children in an integrated way, drawing on the core roles of the organisation in the CEE/CIS region and global implementation strategies, and in particular through modelling innovative interventions, policy advice and technical assistance, enabling knowledge sharing and supportive social norms. Given its comprehensive and multi-sectoral nature, the work in this area contributed to advancing the CEE/CIS Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda in several result areas, including realising the right of young children to comprehensive wellbeing, health, early learning, supportive and caring family environment and social protection.

UNICEF Bulgaria continued its support to the modelling of home visiting services, established in two demonstration regions in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and the Agency for Social Assistance. The services contributed to strengthening capacities of caregivers for promoting healthy development of young children, supported early identification of children at risk of developmental delays, abuse, neglect and abandonment, and provided early intervention. A special focus was placed on reaching out the most disadvantaged families, children and pregnant women and addressing their complex needs through close collaboration with health, social welfare, child protection and education services. More than 3,900 families benefited from different packages of services tailored to their individual needs and resources. The service demonstrated an integrated approach that promotes the wellbeing of young children in a comprehensive way and strengthens the cooperation and synergies between relevant sectoral policies.

Representatives of key national stakeholders were involved in monitoring and supporting the demonstration services. The knowledge and evidence generated informed and supported advocacy for promoting home visiting as an effective strategy to improve the wellbeing of young children, particularly the most disadvantaged. The Ministry of Health integrated elements of home visiting for young children into the National Programme for Improving Maternal and Child Health 2014 - 2020 as well as in the draft National Health Strategy.

UNICEF Bulgaria also continued to promote positive parenting in partnership with local authorities, public libraries and community organisations “chitalishte”. More than 450 parents of young children benefited from the programme for positive parenting and improved their knowledge and skills to provide nurturing and supportive environment for the healthy development of their children.

At the end of 2014, a new model service for early learning targeted at three and four year old children from the most disadvantaged and excluded families was developed and set up in one municipality in partnership with local authorities. Children and their families benefited from different activities offered as part of the service. In addition, to encourage early learning and
contribute to better quality of the educational process, UNICEF Bulgaria provided more than 45,000 educational toys to 6,500 children in 221 public kindergartens in the three regions of intervention (the toys were donated by PFP). At the national level, UNICEF engaged in advocacy for expanding access of most disadvantaged children to early learning, including submitting recommendations on the draft Law on Preschool and School Education.

To raise awareness on the importance of early childhood development, in 2014 UNICEF Bulgaria organized two thematic conferences on ECD in partnership with the World Bank and civil society organisations. More than 250 national policy makers and experts in education, health and child protection, representatives of academia and civil society strengthened their understanding of the science of ECD and its implications for policy and practices. The events enabled knowledge exchange with international experts, as well as between national experts and contributed to developing a shared understanding of the need to promote a more integrated national policy framework on ECD. In addition, UNICEF engaged with different professional organisations and enabled the transfer of knowledge and expertise in the area of ECD and quality standards on perinatal care through involvement of international experts.

The work on the Early Learning and Development Standards for children zero to three years of age, conducted by a multi-disciplinary team of national experts of the Bulgarian Academy of Science, was finalised and supplemented by detailed guidelines for caregivers. The screening methodology for early identification of three year old children with learning difficulties developed with the support of UNICEF, was used by the Ministry of Education and Science to support inclusive education in kindergartens.

**OUTPUT 3** By the end of 2017, government at all levels, with the support of NGOs and education institutions, implements school enrolment, drop-out prevention and second chance education strategies for children, especially Roma girls and children with disabilities, who are not enrolled in, have dropped out, or are at-risk of dropping out of compulsory education.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
UNICEF Bulgaria continued its support to the Government to ensure children’s right to education and to include all children in quality learning. Policy advice and technical assistance was provided to the Ministry of Education and Science for the development of an Action Plan for the implementation of the National Strategy for reducing the share of early school leavers for the period 2013-2020. The Plan was adopted by the Council of Ministers in October, and consultations with state experts from MES are taking place to identify specific areas of support and interventions by UNICEF Bulgaria for its implementation. A new Draft Law on Pre-school and School Education was submitted to Parliament, and UNICEF actively participated in the public discussions and provided its written opinion on the text of the Draft Law. Work in this area will continue in 2015.

As a follow up to the “Study on Non-Enrolment, Non-Attendance and Early Dropout”, conducted in 2013, UNICEF initiated a national study of adolescents and youth not in employment, education or training. The study aims to identify the scale, scope and profile of the adolescent and youth NEETs, and analyse the factors and the determinants that led to this situation. The main objective of the study is to help national stakeholders gain a better understanding of the specific needs of NEETs, to identify barriers and bottlenecks in order to provide concrete recommendations for policy measures and specific interventions. The report from the study will be ready in early 2015, and its findings are expected to inform an evidence-based set of specific measures and “second chance” programmes for reducing the number of adolescents and youth not in employment, education or training.
UNICEF commissioned research into social norms related to child marriages among Roma communities. One of the main findings of the “Study on Non-Enrolment, Non-Attendance and Early Dropout”, conducted in 2013, was that Roma adolescent girls are most vulnerable to non-attendance and early dropout from school. Child marriage and early pregnancies were identified as main reasons for Roma girls’ early dropout from school. The main objective of the research is to identify social norms that prevent Roma girls’ access to education and, especially, secondary education.

Support for access to education and prevention of child marriage among Roma communities was also integrated in the community outreach work of the Family Centres, established by UNICEF Bulgaria in Shumen region. In 2014, the Centres provided assistance and counselling to 90 Roma adolescent girls, facilitated their access to health and education services. In addition, an awareness raising campaign: “You have a choice – marriage or education” was carried out in three municipalities to help prevent child marriages in most affected communities. The Centres also helped Roma families with placing their young children in kindergarten and with preparing children for school. In 2015, the Family Centres will develop and implement integrated programmes for child marriage prevention that will also take into account the findings from the research on social norms.

A new modelling initiative was started for developing and testing an innovative approach for improving the educational outcomes of marginalized children through the use of an online educational platform. The main beneficiaries will include children in correctional facilities, crises centres and other closed or residential institutions who have interrupted their education, do not have access to quality education or are excluded from the formal learning process. A key element of the approach is the development of an easy to complete diagnostic test that will be used to assess the education level of each child. Based on the results from the test, an individual tailor-made programme of interactive video lessons will be proposed to help students fulfil their learning and knowledge gaps. This innovative education model is also expected to improve children’s learning ability by enabling better understanding and provoking children’s interest towards the learning process in general.

UNICEF Bulgaria took part in the regional study “Evaluating the impact of the Per Capita Financing and School Optimisation reform in selected CEE/CIS countries”. The objective of the study is to inform education authorities in Bulgaria as well as in other countries that have undertaken similar reforms.

To help leverage resources for access to education, UNICEF participated in and contributed to the thematic group, led by the Ministry of Education and Science, in charge of drafting the Operational Programme “Science and Education for Smart Growth” 2014 – 2020 to be funded by EU Structural Funds.

The work towards this achievement of this Output contributed to advancing the CEE/CIS Regional and Knowledge and Leadership Agenda in several result areas, including a child’s right to early learning, child’s a right to inclusive quality education, and an adolescent’s right to a second chance.

**OUTPUT 4** By 2015, the Government enacts revised legislation that introduces intersectoral coordination and alternatives to custodial service for children in conflict with the law.
Analytical Statement of Progress:
To achieve sustainable results and guarantee child’s right to access to justice in 2014, UNICEF Bulgaria continued to apply a multi-sectoral approach working in close cooperation with Government counterparts, all relevant institutions, local authorities, civil society organizations and professionals from the judicial, law enforcement, social and education systems.

Due to the political instability, changes to primary legislation were not adopted in 2014 and UNICEF Bulgaria focused its efforts on advocacy at political, expert and civil society level. In June an International Conference “Children in Conflict with the Law - reform of the juvenile justice system in accordance with international standards and the best interest of children” was organized to facilitate dialogue on the progress the reform. The Conference gathered together more than 200 professionals and experts, and included presentations by international experts, including from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, the European Commission, and UNICEF Regional Office.

A review of the Juvenile Justice System in Bulgaria, conducted by an international consultant, identified the main inconsistencies in legislation and practices and provided recommendations for their reform. The report was presented to inform and advocate for the need of legislative changes with both Interim and new Government. To support the child’s right to access to justice, UNICEF Bulgaria continued to provide technical assistance to all relevant institutions and took a leading role in the Working Group to the Ministry of Justice for amendments to the Penal Procedure Code, Juvenile Justice Act and other relevant primary and secondary legislation.

UNICEF Bulgaria also supported the process of court specialization; establishment of pilot specialized juvenile panels/chambers in regional and district courts in Bulgaria, and the specialization of relevant prosecutors and police units. Two new specialized facilities for hearing and interviewing of children participants in judicial procedures were opened (Sliven and Montana), internal rules and procedures for the use of the facilities were developed, and more than 100 professionals were trained on international standards and good practices related to children participants in judicial procedures – criminal, civil and administrative proceedings.

The strong policy advocacy efforts of UNICEF Bulgaria and the cooperation with Ministry of Education resulted in the closure of one of the remaining seven correctional facilities for children in Bulgaria. Most of the children were re-integrated in the community and some were transferred to two other facilities. In order to guarantee the rights and the wellbeing of the children, UNICEF Bulgaria provides expert support, training and supervision for their staff focused on the introduction of child’s rights based approach.

In 2014, UNICEF Bulgaria also continued to work on the development and establishment of a coordination mechanism for children in conflict with the law and the modelling of services for prevention, support and re-integration of children. A draft coordination mechanism was developed in partnership with Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Interior, State Agency for Child Protection, Agency for Social Assistance and is expected to be signed in the first half of 2015. The mechanism will be piloted in two of the three demonstration regions. In addition, methodologies for innovative services for children in conflict with the law, children at risk and their families were developed and will be tested in one demonstration region in 2015.

OUTCOME 2 By 2017, a national alliance for children (involving the Government, international community, civil society, private sector and the media) mobilises support, capacity and resources to significantly advance the rights of Bulgarian children and youth.
Analytical Statement of Progress:

In 2014, the CRC@25 Anniversary was used as a platform for expanding the national alliance for children by strengthening existing and creating new partnerships, by fostering the engagement of children and youth, and mobilizing stronger support from civil society, media and private sector. A national campaign “Child Rights have a Face and a Story”, organized jointly with municipalities, NGOs and the media raised awareness about the achievements and remaining challenges in the realization of child rights in the country. In support of the global communication and advocacy strategy, UNICEF engaged UNESCO Director-General and the Vice President of the European Commission to participate in the CRC@25 Essay Initiative. The “Imagine” initiative received high public interest in the country, and the Bulgarian child performers “Bon-Bon” were included in the global David Guetta video version.

To promote a better understanding of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and engage children, UNICEF designed a digital web-based platform containing a child-friendly version of the CRC and in partnership with the Ministry of Education, produced other materials to assist teachers, educational experts, social workers and other professionals. In addition to that, all General Comments to the CRC were translated in Bulgarian and widely distributed to relevant professionals and policy-makers, including all new 240 Members of Parliament. The celebration of the CRC anniversary in the National Assembly provided a good entry point for building closer partnership with legislators. The annual meeting of the Child-friendly Municipalities was also dedicated to the CRC and child participation.

The on-going partnership with the President’s Office was further strengthened, and the President was one the strongest voices for child rights in the country. Due to the political instability, additional efforts were made to engage with the caretaker and the newly appointed Governments. A new strategic partnership was created with the General Prosecutor’s Office, which is expected to be instrumental for advancing the reform in the area of juvenile justice.

In parallel, UNICEF Bulgaria continued to enhance the capacities of the Government (the State Agency for Child Protection, the Agency for Social Assistance) and independent bodies (the Office of the Ombudsman and the National Network for Children) for better child rights monitoring. In 2014, the National Network for Children published their third consecutive “Report Card on Child Rights”, which made an assessment of the CRC implementation in Bulgaria. Technical assistance was also provided to the National Statistical Office for improving TransMONEE database system and other thematic administrative data.

Fostering child participation through awareness raising and advocacy, capacity development and modelling was a cross-cutting area of work. Three regional events and one national roundtable provided a platform for sharing experiences and lessons learned from the pilot students councils supported by UNICEF Bulgaria, and for discussing the main challenges and opportunities for promoting child participation in the country. An independent review of child participation through children councils provided valuable findings and recommendations for capacity development and legislative changes. The National Network for Children was supported to identify good practices with child participation at local level and the National Youth Forum provided training to NGOs on inclusive youth participation.

UNICEF Bulgaria engaged civil society, media and corporate partners for joint advocacy on several key themes, including countering violence against children; the importance of early years in life; support to families and children, with special emphasis on most disadvantaged groups, and child participation. The office joined the UNICEF global campaign on violence
against children, and the initiative was bridged by an advocacy and fundraising campaign aimed to promote and raise funds for the creation of a demonstration model for an Advocacy and Support Center for children and women victims of violence.

The advocacy efforts on ECD were leveraged through engaging a big corporate partner, Post Bank, to support the promotion of better understanding of the role parents play in the early development of children and the benefits of positive parenting. In the course of that cooperation, more than 500 media cuts were published and broadcast. A one-month media partnership (awareness and fundraising) with five radio stations, dedicated to the promotion of the benefits of early childhood development, supported the UNICEF Bulgaria advocacy agenda. A national campaign “Believe in 0” was launched in December together the newly-appointed national Goodwill Ambassador, corporate partners and media. The campaign focused on the main challenges children face in Bulgaria and was supported by the leading media channels, resulting in the recruitment of almost 3,200 pledge donors.

Despite challenges in the economy, the fundraising efforts resulted in a significant increase of the income: in 2014 UNICEF Bulgaria raised US$1,204,708, exceeding by eight per cent the annual fundraising target, and realising a 65 per cent increase compared to 2013. The income raised from corporate partnerships was US$739,035, which represents growth of 43 per cent compared to 2013. The income from individual donors was US$465,673 representing an increase of 128 per cent compared to 2013. Contributions from individual pledge (monthly) donors grew by 246 per cent, reaching US$405,567, and 30 per cent of that amount was contributed to global Regular Resources, amounting to US$121,670. Existing corporate partnerships were expanded, and two new partnerships were launched, with the Bulgarian Notary Chamber and the Bulgarian Association for People Management. Over 20,000 individual pledge donors were especially valuable, as they provide predictable and flexible funding for the local programme and contribute to global Regular Resources.

**OUTPUT 1** By 2017 an independent child right monitoring system, with capacity to regularly collect reliable data on the situation of children, is operating in the country.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
UNICEF Bulgaria used the CRC@25 and the announcement of 2014 as the “Year of Child Rights” in Bulgaria to strengthen advocacy for better monitoring of child rights. In parallel, UNICEF Bulgaria continued to assist the Government and independent bodies - the State Agency for Child Protection, the Agency for Social Assistance, the Ombudsman Office and the National Network for Children – to improve the quality of their monitoring work. Technical assistance was also provided to the National Statistical Office for improving TransMONEE database system and other thematic administrative data. UNICEF Bulgaria continued to work closely with key research institutes and organizations in the areas of access to justice, early childhood development, violence against children, family environment, education, and risk behaviours.

The ratification of the Third Optional Protocol was discussed with Government officials on several occasions, including with representatives of the new Parliament who were elected in October 2014. While there is an understanding and agreement that Bulgaria should ratify the Third Optional Protocol, the national authorities are reluctant to proceed with its ratification before the adoption of some legislative amendments that will enable its effective application.

The Ombudsman Office performed an independent assessment of the correctional facilities for children and published a report in line with UNICEF Bulgaria advocacy efforts for reform of the
juvenile justice system. The Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, an independent human rights watch organization, also conducted a review on children in closed institutions and published a report.

UNICEF Bulgaria continued to support the National Network for Children (NNC) on developing mechanism for independent monitoring and evaluation of commitments to children. The main result of their efforts was the publication of the third consecutive “Report Card on Child Rights”, which makes an assessment of the CRC implementation in the country. To strengthen their monitoring and advocacy capacity with respect to the most marginalized groups, the NNC established a special working group on Roma children.

UNICEF Bulgaria also supported UNHCR with the preparation of their annual “Age, Gender and Diversity Assessment” in the section related to children.

In 2014, UNICEF Bulgaria and the NNC provided independent reports to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the promotion, protection and implementation of the rights of the child in Bulgaria.

Further to the assessment of the situation related to child safety in Bulgaria, which was facilitated by UNICEF, a national campaign on child safety was launched by the State Agency for Child Protection.

OUTPUT 2 By 2017, central, regional and local governments have put in place policies and mechanisms ensuring the meaningful participation of children and adolescents in decisions concerning their wellbeing.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
In 2014, UNICEF Bulgaria continued to promote child participation through awareness raising and advocacy, capacity development at individual and institutional level as well as through modelling. The results, experience and lessons learned from the work of the pilot Students Councils supported by UNICEF in 17 schools, eight municipalities, and one region were shared at three regional events and during a two-day National Meeting. The national meeting gathered together representatives of all Student Councils, teachers, local and regional authorities, the State Agency for Child Protection, the National Network for Children and UNICEF. In October, a roundtable on “Promoting Child Participation – good practices and challenges” provided a forum for discussing the main challenges and opportunities for promoting child participation in Bulgaria.

UNICEF Bulgaria commissioned an independent review of the mechanism for child participation through the establishment of Students Councils in order to assess their effectiveness in enabling meaningful and inclusive child participation. The review provided valuable recommendations for capacity development and legislative changes that will strengthen child participation. One of its main findings was related to the need for a baseline assessment of the current state of children’s participation in Bulgaria, which will be conducted in 2015.

UNICEF continued to strengthen the capacities of local authorities to involve children in decision-making through the Child-Friendly Municipality approach. Child participation was one of the main topics at the Annual Meeting of the “Child Friendly Municipalities”, which provided an effective platform for experience sharing, knowledge exchange and advocacy. The National Network for Children was supported to identify good practices with child participation at local level, which were presented in a publication “Why child participation? Responses from Bulgaria”.  

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A two-day training for NGOs on inclusive youth participation was conducted by the National Youth Forum with support from UNICEF Bulgaria. The training helped the participants to improve their knowledge on how to be more effective in reaching out and engaging adolescents and youth, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized ones, how to involve them in their activities, and how to advocate for their rights.

OUTPUT 3 By 2017, media, NGOs, business, children and adolescents participate in partnerships and alliances for monitoring, advocacy and promotion of child's rights.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
In 2014, UNICEF Bulgaria applied a strategic mix integrating communications, public advocacy, social mobilization and fundraising with communication for social change, in order to be an effective and credible voice for children, to reach and engage broad audiences and to build partnerships for children. Communication, advocacy and C4SC brought together a diversity of partners from Government, civil society, media, business and schools. In 2014, the emphasis was put on child rights, equity, violence against children, ECD, support to parents, children in conflict with law and child participation.

The occasion of CRC@25 Anniversary was used as a platform to strengthen advocacy for child rights. Together with a wide range of partners, various initiatives held across the country to celebrate the achievements and to reflect on the remaining challenges. A general public awareness campaign “Child Rights have a Face and a Story” was organised in partnership with local governments, NGOs and media. More than 500 photographs were received from children and adults, and the best 50 photographs were included in a travelling exhibition to promote child rights across the country.

To support the promotion of child rights among children, UNICEF designed a digital web-based platform containing a child-friendly version of the CRC and other promotional materials. In partnership with the Ministry of Education, additional materials were produced to assist teachers, educational experts, social workers and other professionals in their work to advance child rights in Bulgaria. UNICEF’s key partner, the State Agency for Child Protection, declared 2014 to be the “Year of Child Rights” and systematically promoted it during the year, with a closing conference bringing together policy makers and child rights activists.

Child rights were a core theme in the opening session of the Parliament and all Parliamentarians received a package with the Convention and all CRC General Comments published in Bulgarian. The annual meeting of the Child-Friendly Municipalities was also dedicated to the CRC and child participation. UNICEF Bulgaria and 24 other prominent advocates for child rights were awarded by the President of the Republic for exceptional contribution to child rights protection in the country.

UNICEF Bulgaria successfully joined global initiatives including: CRC@25 Essay Initiative by engaging UNESCO Director-General and the Vice President of the European Commission; launch of the State of the World’s Children flagship report; the “Imagine” song initiative, which received high public interest in the country, and the Bulgarian child performers “Bon-Bon” were included in the global David Guetta video version.

In the beginning of the year UNICEF Bulgaria also joined UNICEF global campaign on violence against children “Make the invisible visible”. The broad media campaign was supported by EU Commissioner on Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response. The initiative was bridged by an
advocacy and fundraising campaign aimed to promote and raise funds for the creation of a demonstration model for an Advocacy and Support Center for children and women victims of violence.

To address the findings of “How Child Rights-related topics are reflected in media” survey, conducted by UNICEF Bulgaria in 2013, a partnership with the biggest Bulgarian TV channel was initiated. The goal was to establish a model for ethical reporting and presentation of child rights issues (children victims of violence, children in institutions, children in conflict with the law) through the active participation of journalists and other partners, while at the same time using this partnership for advocacy and fundraising.

The advocacy efforts on the importance of early years in life were strengthened through engaging a large corporate partner, Post Bank, to support the promotion of better understanding of the role parents play in the early development of children and the benefits of positive parenting. In the course of that partnership, more than 500 media cuts were published and broadcast. A one-month media partnership (awareness and fundraising) with five radio stations, dedicated to the promotion of the benefits of early childhood development, supported UNICEF Bulgaria’s advocacy agenda.

In line with the global goal for building solidarity among children and those in need, UNICEF Bulgaria initiated a travelling exhibition “I have a Dream” and multi-cultural meetings in nine cities between Bulgarian pupils and refugee children to support the inclusion of asylum seekers into the educational system of the country.

The advocacy and fundraising campaign “Believe in 0”, which is focused on the main challenges children face in Bulgaria, was launched in December. The promotion brought together the newly-appointed national Goodwill Ambassador, Vladimir Ampov-Grafa, corporate partners and media. The campaign featured strongly in the media, and was supported by the top media channels, and Vladimir Ampov-Grafa’s fall concert. The concert was broadcast on National TV and recruited almost 3,200 pledge donors.

In cooperation with the fundraising team, communication materials were developed and events organised to support corporate partnerships, and to recruit and retain pledge donors. Due to these joint efforts, UNICEF Bulgaria is supported by over 20,000 regular monthly donors, prominent companies and business associations, such as Bulgarian Notary Association and Association for People Management.

**OUTPUT 4** By 2017, general public and the private sector mobilize financial resources in support of most disadvantaged children in Bulgaria and worldwide.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
In line with the UNICEF Bulgaria Fundraising Strategy 2013–2017 and UNICEF Private Fundraising and Partnerships Plan 2014-2017, efforts were directed towards maximization of private sector income through two major streams: strategic corporate partnerships and monthly individual pledge giving.

Challenges of the market were many: local emergencies (floods), which mobilized large public support to local charities, bank system and political instability, as well as a prolonged economic crisis. Despite such challenges, in 2014 UNICEF Bulgaria raised US$1,204,708 (1,784,530 BGN), exceeding by eight per cent the annual fundraising target and reaching a 65 per cent increase compared to 2013. The income raised from corporate partnerships in 2014 was
US$739,035 (1,100,644 BGN), which represented growth of 43 per cent compared to 2013. The income from individual donors was US$465,673 (683,885 BGN), an increase of 128 per cent compared to 2013. The contribution to global Regular Resources (30 per cent of pledge) was to US$121,670 (178,291 BGN).

In 2014, contributions from individual pledge (monthly) donors grew by 246 per cent, reaching US$405,567 (594,304 BGN). UNICEF Bulgaria made additional efforts for the recruitment of new pledge donors through two integrated advocacy and fundraising campaigns. While pledge proved to be one of the most reliable income sources, the high level of attrition of SMS monthly donors was one of the main challenges for the fundraising team. To address this challenge, the office focused on activities aimed at sustaining the pledge income and reducing the attrition of SMS donors, such as telemarketing, SMS and voice call campaigns, and e-mail campaigns. An additional communication cycle, specialized for mobile pledge donors, was developed and various activities for donor engagement through regular communication and reporting were implemented, including an electronic newsletter and telemarketing.

The development of “MOBilizer”, an innovative platform for mobile donations which was the result of a long-term partnership between UNICEF, Bulgarian mobile operators and a local IT partner, contributed to shaping the fundraising market in the country by enabling local non-profit organizations to benefit from a new fundraising model. By the end of 2014, several charity organizations in the country were implemented the monthly giving platform.

The MOBilizer platform was presented by UNICEF Bulgaria team at the Fundraising Directors Meeting (February 2014) and at the annual Fundraising Forum (March 2014). The office team worked actively with PFP pledge team on the implementation of MOBilizer at global level and negotiated its pro-bono customization for international use. The platform was successfully launched by the Spanish Committee for UNICEF, showing high potential for pledge income growth.

UNICEF Bulgaria succeeded to maximize the income from corporate contributions including customer and employee fundraising, cost-related marketing and events. The efforts were focused on the maintenance of the existing corporate partnerships and the renewal of agreements. The contract with “Happy” was renewed for US$197,052 (300,000 BGN). A strategic long-term corporate partnership with Post Bank was officially announced and US$290,121 (422,417 BGN) was raised by end of 2014. Two new partnerships were launched, with the Bulgarian Notary Chamber and the Bulgarian Association for People Management.

OUTCOME 3 Support

Analytical Statement of Progress:
All major operational benchmarks and objectives of the year 2014 were met, as described in detail in the corresponding sections of the Annual Report.

OUTPUT 1 Governance and Systems

Analytical Statement of Progress:
At the beginning of 2014 there was a change in one senior management post: the Policy and Knowledge Coordinator, National Officer-D (the de facto Deputy Representative), and a new staff member was recruited in March 2014.

The structure of the statutory committees and the Table of Authorities were reviewed and
updated on a regular basis to reflect changes, such as newly recruited staff and staff on maternity leave. Country Management Team (CMT) meetings were convened regularly to identify and discuss management issues related to business processes, security, well-being, learning and development.

The Annual Management Plan was updated to reflect changes in the external environment and UNICEF priorities. The management indicators were monitored on a monthly basis with the help of Regional Office Monthly Monitor initiative.

Under the leadership of the Field Implementation Group set by the Regional Office, a detailed analysis of work processes and risk assessment was conducted, in relation to establishing of the Global Shared Services Centre (GSSC). The analysis was conducted in participatory manner, involving all staff and the Staff Association. It revealed some capacity gaps, which resulted in management decisions, further analysis and improvement of business processes. The office contributed to the required budget optimization in relation with the GSSC project by decreasing its Institutional Budget by US$5,500 per year for the remaining duration of the programme cycle.

In line with the up-dated ERM Guidelines on Risk Assessment and Planning, a risk assessment exercise was conducted to identify specific risks to the achievement of programme results and management objectives. Risks were identified in the following areas: funding and external relations, organization strategy and neutrality, results-based management and reporting, human resources, ICT systems and information security, and natural disasters. The Risk Assessment Input Form in ERM was duly up-dated. Corresponding risk mitigation strategies and action plans were developed or up-dated. Throughout 2014 the most significant risk was related to the continuing political instability due to the resignation of the Government in June and early parliamentary elections in October 2014. To address this risk, UNICEF Bulgaria focused on strengthening its interaction with national authorities at different levels – middle management and technical level, engaged more actively with local authorities and expanded its network to include a greater diversity of partners.

In 2014, UNICEF Bulgaria took steps to align with the requirements of the new HACT framework. Regional training was provided for the Policy and Knowledge Coordinator and the Operations Officer. A request for proposals for performing macro and micro assessments were issued at the end of the year.

The annual staff retreat was used for thorough discussion on programme and management issues, with focus on “theories of change” for each programme output. This contributed to improving internal communication, better understanding of programme goals and strategies between different units of the office and enhanced team spirit.

**OUTPUT 2** Financial Resources and Stewardship

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
In 2014, UNICEF Bulgaria continued to implement the recommendations from the last Internal Audit (rating “Satisfactory”) related to financial management. The assignment of authority and the delegations of financial controls reflect the office structure and are in line with the requirements of VISION. The Table of Authority was regularly updated to reflect changes within the office and the segregation of duties. Procedures were put in place to ensure timely and accurate recording of private sector fundraising (PSFR) income. At the end of each month the contributions were recorded in Vision and reported to UNICEF’s Division of Private Fundraising
and Partnerships with a table indicating the amounts received per Programme Budget Allotment (PBA).

Bank reconciliations were performed on time to ensure matching between the bank data and data in VISION. Financial controls were used to identify and prevent possible gaps. The office operates with two banks: a PSFR bank account in the Piraeus Bank, and PSFR US dollar, Euro, and Bulgarian Lev (current) bank accounts in the Raiffeisen Bank.

UNICEF Bulgaria occupies Government-provided rent free premises. Compared to the amount previously paid for rent, UNICEF Bulgaria continued to realize savings amounting to US$50,000.

An inventory/physical count of the assets was performed in quarter four in accordance with International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) requirements. All items correspond to VISION records. The local PSB committee took a decision for donating old and outdated equipment.

In 2014 UNICEF Bulgaria received from the RCF additional funds for specific equipment for communications and fundraising activities, and for repair work for the office premises.

Global Performance Indicators:
- The outstanding Direct Cash Transfers (DCT) over 9 months at year end was 0.03 per cent of the total DCT amount;
- 100 per cent of Regular Resources were utilised;
- 57 per cent of available Other Resources for 2014 was utilized, and the remaining 43 per cent was rephrased to 2015;
- All grants were used within the original duration of the PBA life.

OUTPUT 3 Human Capacity

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF Bulgaria is actively addressing changing capacity needs in order to achieve defined results for children, through identification of capacity gaps, proposing adjustments in staffing structure, timely recruitments and utilization of external expert help, and through investment into staff development and wellbeing.

In the beginning of 2014, a Policy and Knowledge Coordinator (National Officer-D) was recruited. Two General Service staff, Communication Assistant and Programme Assistant, had discontinued their contracts at the end of 2013, which became a challenge because of the global freeze on recruitment of General Service posts. The capacity gap was bridged by recruiting staff under temporary assistance. A request to the Programme Budget Review was submitted at the end of 2014 to approve a Data Analyst post (General Service-5) in order to strengthen the fundraising team.

OUTPUT 4 Travel

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Expenses for duty travel decreased by 25 per cent in comparison with 2013. However, other travel costs increased, including those related to training (US$32,425), travel of consultants and other external experts (US$81,112), mostly due to intensified programme activities and
investment in staff development. In its efforts to optimize travel expenses, UNICEF Bulgaria used direct access to Travel Agent’s online reservations system, providing access to real-time data about airplane tickets and hotel accommodation worldwide.

OUTPUT 5 Maintenance of premises

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF Bulgaria occupies Government-provided rent free premises. Compared to the amount previously paid for rent (for smaller premises), in 2014 UNICEF Bulgaria continued to realize savings at the amount of US$50,000 and this also had a positive impact on maintenance, utilities, security and other related costs.

In 2014, UNICEF Bulgaria received from the RCF additional funds for specific equipment for communications and fundraising activities, and for repair work for the office premises.

OUTPUT 6 Communications

Analytical Statement of Progress:
In 2014 UNICEF Bulgaria continued to improve its ICT system. A number of adjustments were performed in line with the organization’s requirements, including procurement of new hardware for the end users and new mobile phones – smart devices with access to email, VPN Cisco AnyConnect access installation for office laptops. The migration from Lotus email to Outlook (Office 365) was done successfully for all users in UNICEF Bulgaria. All these changes increased the potential for distance working. The Office 365 and Lync are contributing to reduction of costs with improved communication and information exchange.

The second and independent internet access through Wi-Fi routers coverage was improved. The office equipment now provides more timely, reliable and secure information flow, and the possibility to work from anywhere with internet.

As all business applications and email servers are based in the Regional Office or headquarters, UNICEF Bulgaria continues to rely on those information technology services provided. Overall support for end users in the office was provided simultaneously.

In addition, further improvements were achieved as follows:
- The new channel for receiving recurring (pledge) donations via mobile phone (sms) was further developed. Website performance was further enhanced;
- Improvement of mobile access, with popularization of the use of VPN and mobile devices;
- Increased Videoconferencing flexibility via Interoffice Videoconferencing Mobility;
- Renewal of contract for mobile telephony with optimization of the cost.

UNICEF Bulgaria maintained the website unicef.bg and a Facebook page aiming to reach local audience for advocacy and resource mobilisation purposes.

OUTPUT 7 UN joint arrangements

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF Bulgaria facilitated and conducted activities related to safety and security of all UN staff in Bulgaria and their dependents. The Representative served as the UN Designated Official for safety and security, and the Operations Officer is as the Country Security Focal Point.
In 2014, UNICEF Bulgaria also facilitated Place-to-Place survey for the International Civil Service Commission, collecting useful information on the cost of living for international UN staff in the country, which is used for determination of the post-adjustment index for Bulgaria. Other joint services, facilitated by UNICEF, included the Language Proficiency Exams and Memo on UN Holidays in 2015 for all UN staff in Bulgaria.

OUTPUT 8  Staff welfare

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
The local Staff Association worked actively in the office and contributed to the Regional Staff Association. The legal requirements related to social insurance for national staff and training opportunities for General Service staff were among the issues raised, as well as concerns related to GSSC. UNICEF Bulgaria staff welcomed the decision of Executive Director to establish additional leave with pay for maternity.

UNICEF Bulgaria practiced flexible work arrangements, using work from home when appropriate. All staff members were actively encouraged to take part in the Global Staff Survey in 2014.

Only one International Professional staff member uses the electronic Performance Appraisal System (e-PAS), while other staff members are using paper-based PAS. All Performance Evaluation Reports (PERs) were completed on time for 2013, while the planning and reviewing phases for 2014 were observed as per global deadlines.

OUTPUT 9  Equipment

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
An inventory/physical count of the assets was performed in the last quarter in relation to the annual closure and in accordance with International Public Sector Accounting Standards requirements. All items correspond to VISION records.

The local PSB committee met and took a decision for donating old and outdated equipment.

In 2014, UNICEF Bulgaria received from RCF additional funds for specific equipment for communications and fundraising activities, and for repair work for the office premises.

OUTCOME 4  Cross-sectoral costs

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
All major operational benchmarks and objectives of the year 2014 were met, as described in detail in the corresponding sections of the Country Office Annual Report.

OUTPUT 1  Staff Related Costs

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Implementation of the Country Programme was supported by a Driver, ICT Assistant, Receptionist and external support (consultant) to the communication section. Additionally, periodic medical exams for all office-based personnel was arranged. A staff retreat was organized to discuss the Theory of Change for each Programme output.
OUTPUT 2 Operating Expenses

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Implementation of the Country Programme was supported with external translation services related to documents and official meetings, as well as support related to communications, travel, postal services and maintenance of premises (including utilities).

OUTPUT 3 Training

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Capacity gaps were also addressed through regular on-the-job training and an orientation package for new staff, exchange of knowledge, external training and networking as well as stretch assignments.

Representative: Designated Official Security Training
Policy and Knowledge Coordinator: Advanced PPP, HACT, Advances in Social Norms Change, Strategic Media Skills for Senior Managers, Induction in PFP and Regional Office, Gender Equality
Child Protection Specialist: Strategic Media Skills for Senior Managers, DLC programme
Child Rights Monitoring Specialist: Trans Monee training on impact evaluation
Programme Assistant: PPP, Gender Equality and language proficiency exam in Russian
Operations Officer – Contracting of Corporate and Institutional Services, HACT, CIPFA-ongoing, DLC, peer review with UNICEF Georgia, and mentoring support to newly recruited Operations Officer in Romania.
Finance Assistant - Introduction to Accounting (online)
ICT Assistant – Orientation in Supply and Procurement, language proficiency exam in Russian
HR Assistant – Peer Support Volunteer training, CIPFA (ongoing), and a 2-month development assignment with Regional Office Human Resources
Drivers – Safe Driving
Communication Officer – Communication for Development (C4D) training with Ohio University,
Communication Assistant – Digital Fundraising Workshop, Child Rights (e-learning)
Fundraising Officer Individual – Digital Fundraising Workshop, DLC programme

**Document Centre**

**Evaluation**

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# Other Publication

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