

Executive Summary

In 2011, half way through the 3-year programme cycle, Bulgaria CO initiated a thorough review of the current partnership cooperation and a comprehensive situation analysis of children and women. As a result, together with partners, UNICEF is invited to develop a new 5-year programme (2013-2017). UNICEF is recognized as a powerful advocate for the most disadvantaged children and a credible force mobilizing support and resources for change.

The CO continues to provide substantial input into key policy developments relevant for children. In 2011, policy advocacy efforts resulted in the adoption of the Concept on Justice for Children, drafting of a new Child Act, and implementation of the previously adopted Vision on De-institutionalization.

An important contribution was provided to the on-going child care system reform through developing models of new services to replace large residential care institutions. Preventive community-based social services were developed together with the local government in Vidin Region, quality foster care was developed together with NGO partners in nine regions, and a range of integrated health and social services is being developed with local authorities in Shumen Region to prevent abandonment and placing of children age 0-3 in residential care. In addition, Bulgaria CO successfully completed work with all 28 regions to enhance capacity to plan services for vulnerable families at the local level. All of the above efforts were integrated into government policies and are to be scaled up through EU funds.

ECD interventions are the key strategy to reduce inequities and multiple deprivations among most marginalized groups of children. In 2011, Bulgaria CO stepped up advocacy for ECD, targeting the general public through a comprehensive C4D campaign focused on parents' behaviors and parenting support. At the same time, the CO engaged with the health system and professionals aiming to change practices, increase capacities and develop policies and standards for better protection of maternal and young child health.

Following the extraordinary success in local resource mobilization through TV fundraising in 2010, the CO managed to maintain strong public support, raising a more stable and predictable income. Over 60,000 people follow UNICEF's work and messages on Facebook, and www.unicef.bg site has 8000 unique visits monthly. Over 3000 committed donors were acquired, existing corporate partnerships were upgraded, and new partnerships were developed. In 2011, UNICEF raised around USD 700,000 locally.

The main shortfall was the low reduction of poverty. In a country still affected by the financial crisis, the Government prioritizes strict fiscal discipline. While this has a positive effect on macroeconomic stability, it negatively affects the poorest families with children who are left out of social assistance schemes. Poverty continues to deprive boys and girls from 65% of the families with three or more children. Further efforts are needed to promote effective targeting of social assistance.

Although significant efforts were made, effective and cross-sectoral budgeting still remains a challenge and hampers the development of new services that are more inclusive and responsive to the needs of children and families.

In addition to the Government, local authorities, CSOs and media houses, Bulgaria CO is enhancing and broadening its partnership with business sector in relation to the "Child Rights and Business Principles" platform.

Country Situation

In 2011, Bulgaria continued to struggle with the negative effects of the economic crisis and progress towards certain MGDs remains uneven. At the same time, there were efforts and resource mobilization that

improved results in child protection reform and showed reduction of the number of children in institutional care. The Government pursued ambitious reform agenda in all public sectors, including child rights and welfare. Developing community services to replace old residential care facilities and reduce the number of children in institutions became among the key policy areas funded by EU structural funds. Even though Bulgaria is lagging behind when it comes to the absorption of funds (18.83% for December 2011) [1], this is a guarantee for achieving better results. A project funded through a WB loan was launched aiming to ensure social inclusion among children 0–7 from risk groups, such as low-income families, vulnerable ethnic groups, and children with disabilities.

A number of strategic policy documents were developed to guide the reform process [2]. A new Child Act is in the process of being developed which proposes more guarantees for child rights protection. Strong Government commitment towards deinstitutionalization has led to a stable decrease in the number of children living in residential care. In 2011, 5,695 children (0.49% of the child population) lived in old residential care facilities, compared to 1.5% of children in 1996 [3]. The number of foster families is increasing; according to the Agency for Social Assistance, in December 2011, there were about 970 foster parents. However, the risk of institutionalization is still high, especially for children from poor families, young children and children with disabilities. Overall, the poverty level continues to be higher than 20.7 %, in some regions reaching 26.8% among children and 65.2% among families with three or more children [4]. Vulnerability to poverty among Roma and rural populations is higher and there is direct link between poverty, education, access to health and ethnicity. Budgetary allocations for social policy programmes were reduced from BGN 891 million (2009) to BGN 691 million (2010) [5]. Although the economy is showing some signs of revival, GNI per capita dropped from USD 6,603 in 2008 to 6,240 USD [6]. Unemployment rates have increased from their lowest level of 5.6% in 2008 to 10.2% [7] and the rate of youth unemployment (aged 15-24) is double the average (17.1% for the first trimester in 2011) [8]. Social protection, health and education systems remain fragile and lack coordinated. Access to social services for some population groups like children with disabilities and vulnerable ethnic minorities is still difficult, especially in remote rural settings.

Pre-school enrolment rates increased in the above five age group, covering 80% of children. However, primary school enrolment rates (grades I-IV) have dropped down from 100% in 2005 to 91.5% in 2010/2011 [9]. Enrolment rates for higher grades of primary education (grade V-VIII) are 80.6%. The main factors leading to reduced school attendance are poverty, poor school readiness and difficulties related to the command of the Bulgarian language, early marriages/pregnancies, de-motivation due to low quality of education curricula, and long distance to school facilities. The quality of education has also dropped – 40% of Bulgarian 9th-graders are functionally illiterate (2009 PISA survey).

The rate of juvenile crime has slightly increased; in 2010, it was 2,437.7 per 100,000 for children aged 14-17 (compared to 2,084.2 in 2009) [10]. A Concept on Child Friendly Justice was adopted but its implementation is slow and the judicial, social and education systems still cannot address the needs of children in conflict with the law.

Under-five mortality rate is showing some reduction, reaching 11.1%, infant mortality is 9.4% even though in some areas of the country with predominantly Roma populations, these rates reach 28.4 % [11]. The percentage of children with low birth weight increased to 8.7% in 2010 [12]. The number of parents without health insurance is increasing and this has a negative effect on children's access to health. Twelve percent of children aged 0-3 are not assigned to a doctor [13]. According to official data, the rate of immunization is above 96% but 67% of all the cases in Europe during the measles outbreak in 2010 occurred in Bulgaria and resulted in 21,927 infected people and 24 deaths, of which 20 were children. The situation is worse in largely marginalized Roma communities with difficult access to health care, lack of health awareness among parents and poor sanitary and housing conditions. The 2011 census revealed that 7% of dwellings do not have any sanitation facilities [14]. Although the total number of HIV positive cases is about 1400, a 20% yearly growth of the newly registered cases is observed.

In 2011, no major natural disasters requiring large scale humanitarian or social intervention occurred. As part of the constant monitoring of the situation, UNICEF commissioned SitAn of women and children in Bulgaria, prepared in cooperation with relevant governmental institutions and based on data from the 2011

census [15]. At UNICEF's request, a TransMONEE 2011 compilation of statistical data was prepared [16]. UNICEF provided data for the Country Reports on Indicators for the Goals (CRING) 2010 which was used to update UNICEF's global statistical databases on the situation of children and women. In December 2011, Bulgaria presented its 4th and 5th report on the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights [17]. A key external study used was "Roman children at risk in the child protection system of Bulgaria", Kukova, Sl., BHK, Sofia 2011 [18].

[1] www.eufunds.bg

[2] <http://www.strategy.bg/Default.aspx?lang=en-GB>

[3] UNICEF SitAn, 2011

[4] Eurostat, 2010

[5] Public Finance Management Survey, Oxford Policy Management, 2009/2010

[6] www.databank.worldbank.org

[7] National Institute of Statistics, www.nsi.bg

[8] UNICEF SitAn, 2011

[9] National Institute of Statistics

[10] TransMonee, 2011

[11] UNICEF SitAn 2011

[12] National Institute of Statistics, 2010

[13] National health Insurance Fund www.nhif.bg

[14] According to WB survey for Roma form 2007, in Roma dwellings the percentage goes up to 47%.

[15] <http://www.nsi.bg/EPDOCS/Census2011final.pdf>

[16] <http://www.transmonee.org/>

[17] <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cescr/cescrwg47.htm>

[18] <http://issuu.com/bghelsinki/docs/bhk-2-11-eng>

Who are the deprived children in your country context?

Based on information from the 2011 census, relevant research data and the 2011 SitAn, the following factors are identified as affecting inequities for children and families: low or no income, ethnic minority, disabilities, rural-urban divide and deprivation of adequate parental care. Among the most deprived groups are families living in poverty, mothers without health insurance, children who have dropped out from school and boys and girls with low levels of education, young unemployed people, people with disabilities, people living in remote and rural areas and ethnic minorities.

The causes of these inequalities are complex, but mostly related to poor access to health, social and education systems, insufficient coordination at the policy level and lack of enforcement of the existing government policies, social norms and harmful practices.

Three distinct groups of the most disadvantaged children facing multiple deprivations and social exclusion are:

- Roma children facing the highest poverty levels, high child mortality, poor living and sanitary conditions, poor nutrition, limited access to health, education and social services, inappropriate parenting practices, early marriage and teenage pregnancies, and discrimination;
- Children with disabilities, with no appropriate access to education, health and social services;
- Children living in residential care institutions deprived of parental care and having limited access to quality health and education services and facing social isolation.

Data/Evidence

As part of the constant monitoring of the situation of children and women, UNICEF commissioned SitAn of women and children in Bulgaria, drafted in cooperation with relevant governmental institutions, including the National Statistical Office. In 2011, a national census took place (the previous one was in 2000) and UNICEF CO requested desegregated data on key areas from the National Statistical Office. The SitAn included a special vulnerability analysis together with a bottle neck analysis. Based on the collected data, experts from key institutions focused their attention on the most at-risk groups.

At UNICEF's request, the TransMONEE 2011 compilation of statistical data was prepared. The 2011 Country Analytical Report examined the feasibility of new indicators and disaggregation for the current indicators of the TransMonEE database. This was done in order to facilitate the sensitivity of the TransMonee data base to identify vulnerable groups.

UNICEF Bulgaria provided data for the Country Reports on Indicators for the Goals (CRING) for 2010 which was used to update UNICEF's global statistical databases on the situation of children and women. In 2011, the study of the reasons for the abandonment of children 0-3 in institutions was accomplished with the objective to bridge critical knowledge gaps.

Based on official data (both national and Eurostat) and relevant research and studies, UNICEF placed the rights of excluded children and families at the forefront of discussions about advancing the country's child rights and social protection agenda.

UNICEF continued to support the building and use of evidence and data in programme planning at the local level, paying particular attention to municipalities that are part of the Child Friendly Cities initiative.

A combination of high quality analytical work and structured advocacy around the nature of inequities among ethnic minorities and strategies to overcome them was at the center of the rapid assessment of high-risk communities in the Shumen region.

However, despite the strengthened capacity of information gathering, there are serious issues related to data collection. Access to reliable and quality data regarding the Roma minority continues to be a challenge. At times, there are inconsistencies in available official data and structured information about sources and methodologies used is often unavailable, limiting possibilities of meaningful analysis. Disaggregation is not systematic and often does not consider key drivers of inequities.

Monitoring Mechanism

As mentioned above, UNICEF CO is tracking, assessing and evaluating results for the most deprived

children and families mainly by collecting and analyzing pertinent data, commissioning studies and evaluations, reporting on results and monitoring visits.

Part of the constant monitoring of the situation of children and families is the SitAn of women and children, prepared in cooperation with relevant governmental and non-governmental institutions, including the National Statistical Office. The 2011 national census provided valuable data and important information on progress achieved as well as on problem areas. Different analyses were prepared based on national and local data assessing the situation of the most vulnerable groups.

The yearly based compilation of statistical data TransMONEE is a very useful resource for tracking progress and comparing results not only in Bulgaria, but also among other countries in the region.

In all project interventions, appropriate monitoring mechanisms are included, with a focus on the most deprived. At the same time, due to reasons beyond UNICEF's control, two of the planned 2011 evaluations were postponed despite widespread recognition of their importance.

In summary, comprehensive and comparable data enabling the assessment of results for the most deprived children and families is not always available.

Support to National Planning

UNICEF is working closely with the State Agency for Child Protection, Agency for Social Assistance, Ministry of Health and other relevant institutions aiming to support their capacity in monitoring and evaluation. Even though the national information system managed by the State Agency for Child Protection faces operational obstacles, data is gathered regularly and annual reports are produced on the level of implementation of the National programmes for child protection. SACP has recently commissioned an evaluation of the implementation of the National Strategy for the Child and Bulgaria CO provided assistance to the planning and design of the evaluation.

Bulgaria CO, in its work with international organizations, national and local governmental and non-governmental partners, and main research and donor organizations, places great emphasis on the need to track results for the most excluded groups. In addition, being part of the monitoring committee on the implementation of the Action Plan on deinstitutionalization, UNICEF is helping to track progress achieved in this area.

Any other relevant information related to data/evidence?

Following the bottle neck analysis, Bulgaria CO elaborated on key determinants. However, important data for baseline indicators is missing, especially on children with disabilities, Roma children, health access of pregnant women, etc.

Country Programme Analytical Overview

The following key strategies are used by Bulgaria CO:

- Policy advocacy for child care system reform, including legislation changes, capacity development on central and local levels, budget analysis, demonstration modeling of the new services, knowledge management, and monitoring of results.
- Evidence based advocacy for ECD interventions, policies and standards affecting health and development of young children, with focus on the most marginalized children and families.

- C4D and partnerships with civil society, local governments, media and the private sector in support of child rights.

In 2011, the Government of Bulgaria continued to pursue a complex child care and social protection reform. UNICEF actively participated in strategy and policy developments, including legislative changes. Testing models of good practices at the local level, combined with analytical work, has informed government strategies. A study on the reasons of abandonment of young children was completed, informing the development of new approaches and integrated services which provide a combination of health and social interventions, and extensive outreach work within the communities and with families.

The financial crisis has put social expenditure under pressure. The Government aims to mobilize more funds from European Structural Funds to support the development of new services for children. UNICEF continues to provide valuable input into this process on account of its unique position to influence the leveraging of significant resources for sustainable change. A budgetary analysis of allocations and expenditures for existing institutional care for children age 0-3, supported by UNICEF, aims to strengthen the efficient use of resources and direct funds towards new community-based services and family support interventions.

More needs to be done to tackle root causes of inequality to reduce multiple vulnerabilities faced by some children and families. Support to marginalized families and those unable to provide for their children requires strengthening social protection measures, changing social norms and behaviors in the excluded groups, as well as changing attitudes in mainstream society.

The strategy to focus on ECD interventions is endorsed by all stakeholders, yet greater measures need to be taken to ensure clearer lines of accountability among Government ministries. Capacity gaps were identified, preventing access to health services, early education and overall development of young children. These gaps include: outdated approaches to maternal and child health and nutrition of young children, widespread prejudice against children with developmental risks and disabilities, poor public health education, insufficient capacity of health, social and early education services to provide inclusive services to most-at-risk families and children, poverty and poor living conditions, poor education of parents and gender roles (especially within ethnic minority groups).

UNICEF's programme and mission are well supported through broad partnerships with civil society organizations, media, the private sector, individual donors and corporate partners. The CO continues to build alliances and a broad base of supporters, successfully using social media and other communication channels.

Effective Advocacy

Mostly met benchmarks

In 2011, the Bulgaria CO was engaged in a number of high level advocacy initiatives. UNICEF was represented in the OP Human Resource Development Management Committee which manages the European Social Fund. A number of programme initiatives funded through this programme were informed by the work that UNICEF carried out in social services planning and development, career development of social workers, development of foster care and deinstitutionalization.

The CO actively participated in the elaboration of a new draft of the Child Act, a comprehensive law based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Technical assistance and expertise were provided and supported the Government's efforts to address important child rights issues, including the right of the child to live in a family, child participation and justice for children. The CO continues to participate in public debates prompted by the draft Child Act, including in Parliament.

Within broader child care system reform, in 2011, the programme focused primarily on closing institutions for children aged 0-3. The Call for Action "Stop placing children 0-3 in institutions" launched by the RO was supported in Bulgaria with a number of activities aimed at government, local authorities, professionals and the wider public. As a result, the draft Child Act included a ban for placing children 0-3 in institutional care. Through putting in place preventive services, alternative family care and the eventual closing of the infant home in Shumen, the CO advocates for and informs broader government action plan for closing infant homes.

Juvenile justice has been a concern for UNICEF since the legislation regulating treatment of children in conflict with law was outdated and not compliant with international standards. Through advocacy with the Ministry of Justice and other concerned bodies, the Council of Ministers adopted the Policy Concept on Child Friendly Justice. This document stipulates important changes that need to be introduced when children come into contact with the justice system, and embarks on the reform of the child friendly justice system.

A national conference on ECD, co-organized with the MoH, brought together around 350 participants, policy makers, national experts, CSOs, media and prominent international speakers. It was an important advocacy event around key priorities for early child development and helped to define some of the key challenges and action points for UNICEF and partners.

The Annual Meeting of Child Friendly Municipalities was the culmination of a number of advocacy events organized as part of the Child Friendly Cities Initiative. Following local elections in autumn, Bulgaria CO sent a pledge letter to all newly appointed mayors, suggesting for their consideration some possible actions to advance the realization of child rights. The letter received positive feedback from many mayors.

Strengthening corporate social responsibility through working with the private sector is an effective advocacy tool for building wide support for UNICEF's programmes and child rights in general. The new global platform "Child rights and business principles" is a strategic tool for engaging with the business sector beyond fundraising.

Changes in Public Policy

In 2011, UNICEF supported some key changes in policies and legislation.

The new draft Child Act has been developed with wide participation of different stakeholders and in consultation with civil society and children. A new legislation will introduce child rights and the best interest of the child as an overarching and guiding principle for all government policies. Its significant focus on support to families and prevention of risks will necessitate a number of changes in public policies related to families and children, transforming the focus from reaction to problems towards prevention and assistance. It also proposes a ban on placing children aged 0-3 in institutional care. The legislation will require a whole new approach and changes in the landscape of family support and child care and protection policies and strategies. However, public debate around the law also reveals that some parts of society do not accept child rights as a social norm.

As part of the process on developing a new legislation for children, changes were introduced in the Social Assistance Act and are reflected in the planning, development and provision of services for families and children. Changes are now being presented to Parliament for discussion.

The Government's Policy Concept on Justice for Children, adopted by the Council of Ministers in August 2011, is the main instrument for changing key policies on justice for children. It strives to make a more child friendly justice system and promotes better treatment of children in conflict with the law. The Concept recommends that outdated legislation and system is replaced by a new one based on the best interest of the child principles and offering a number of diversion and alternative services. An action plan is currently being prepared.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Science has recently embarked on the development of a new Law on Pre-school and School Education to replace the outdated regulations governing the education system and to enable the introduction of EU recommendations and policies on education.

Leveraging Resources

As a valued contribution to the child care system reform, UNICEF supported the development of new models of services to replace the old system based on residential care. The new services were tested and documented to inform government policies in the area of social services planning and delivery. A model of regional planning of social services was developed with the aim to reduce disparities in accessing social services across different regions. Based on lessons learned, and with additional technical support, the Government continues to work on further strengthening the capacities at the regional and municipal level. This work will be funded through the EU SF with USD 4.2 million.

UNICEF engaged with partners to develop a model of quality foster care, outlined by the government as an important alternative to residential care. Over the period of three years, exceptional success was achieved in nine pilot regions, informing the development of a government programme for further scaling up of foster care services across the country, with funding from the EU funds. The programme will cover 81 municipalities, with funding of USD ten million.

One more example of leveraging resources for children is the work on closing one infant home (residential care facility for children age 0-3) in the Shumen Region. In 2010, Bulgaria CO engaged in a strong advocacy campaign, gaining political will, public awareness and support as well as resources for the development of new services, subsequently leading to closure of the infant home. Almost USD one million was raised from citizens and the business sector, and the progress is regularly reported on. Using this example, the Ministry of Health is pursuing closure of eight infant homes, with USD 11 million committed from the EU Funds.

One of the major constrains for the implementation of the ambitious government reform agenda has been the capacity of the social workers in child protection departments. Closely related is the lack of comprehensive career development and training for both the statutory and non-statutory services. The CO worked with MLSP to draft a programme for competency-based career development of social workers at all levels. A concept paper developed with technical assistance from UNICEF will bring an additional amount of USD 6.6 million from EU funds.

Following the adoption of the new Policy Concept on Justice for Children, Bulgaria CO managed to raise USD 1.3 million with the help of the French National Committee for the work on juvenile justice reform.

According to the CO's fundraising strategy and PFP guidelines, efforts are directed to maximizing UNICEF's locally raised income through strategic corporate partnerships and developing a base of committed donors leading to pledge (unrestricted) donations. In 2011, funds were mainly raised in support of ECD activities.

Capacity Development

Mostly met benchmarks

In 2011, Bulgaria CO has contributed to capacity development of the child protection system, with emphasis on better planning and monitoring of social services, including statutory services (child protection departments), local governments and non-governmental organizations acting as service providers. Capacity for planning and provision of quality foster care was further strengthened through the UNICEF-supported

National Resource Centre for Foster Care which has developed and delivered a comprehensive training programme and established quality standards for foster care.

Targeted capacity strengthening interventions were provided to government partners from the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Agency for Social Assistance, State Agency for Child Protection and Ministry of Health for planning and management of EU funded projects.

Training and facilitation were provided at the district and municipal level for social service strategies and plan development in all 28 districts. New strategies and plans of actions are based on proper needs assessment, enabling local governments to provide adequate social services to vulnerable people.

Through the work in the Shoumen Region on changing the type of care for the youngest children at risk of institutionalization, local health and social institutions, CSOs and local authorities were trained and supported to develop new approaches and services for community-based and family-based care.

Communication For Development

Mostly met benchmarks

C4D efforts of Bulgaria CO focused on three main areas:

- Promoting alternatives to residential care, especially preventive support to families and foster care, including fostering children with disabilities and very young children.
- Highlighting the importance of ECD, parenting skills, attitudes and behaviors, and the role of the health sector in supporting parents and children.
- Building donor culture and supporting UNICEF work for children.

Foster care promotion continued in 2011 with a three month documentary series 'Life as it is – Foster families' produced together with bTV, the biggest TV station in Bulgaria. This series aimed at raising awareness and support for foster care and motivating new foster families. Broadcasted once a week, it presented real life stories of 11 foster families over a seven month period. Topics related to the effect of placing children in institutions were publicly discussed, involving foster parents, experts, and policy makers. Key media partnership ensured broad pro bono use of mass communication channels. The immediate result of the campaign was a doubling in the number of calls to the info line, and increased number of foster families licensed. More than 200 media cuts on the topic were reported.

Changing attitudes and behaviors in providing care for the youngest children at risk of abandonment is promoted through UNICEF-supported work in the Shoumen Region. In September 2011, the opening of the Family Centre was accompanied by a media campaign focused on the importance of preventive work with families. More than 80 media cuts were reported. Foster care for the youngest children and children with disabilities was promoted. Introducing foster care for these two groups of children presents a significant step towards institutional and individual behavior change as it is still widely opposed by public sector professionals and the general public.

In June, an advocacy and fundraising ECD campaign "Hear me now" was introduced with special focus on the importance of the first three years, the complexity of parenting and the needs of family support. The media partnerships included: 23 TV outlets, 18 radio stations, eight companies providing outdoor channels; more than 60 print media and over 300 websites. The campaign started with a national conference on ECD, bringing together experts and policy makers. An outdoor event was held and attended by a large number of families, ten celebrities and 20 media partners.

In November, a long-term advocacy and fundraising campaign "Blagodetel" was launched aiming to build donor culture and increase the number of pledge donors to UNICEF. Media partnerships include: 12 TV outlets, nine radio stations, nine companies providing outdoor events, with more partnerships still to come. The most prominent national celebrities joined the campaign, calling for continuous support to the advancement of child rights.

Service Delivery

Mostly met benchmarks

UNICEF CO in Bulgaria is not engaged in direct service delivery. The country programme aims to improve government policies, promote accountability and build capacity for planning, management, delivery and monitoring of service provision of public sector and non-government service providers at the national, regional and local level in order to reduce disparities in access to social services. Within this process, UNICEF works with various partners (NGOs, local authorities and government bodies) to develop new services. Through the provision of technical assistance, advocacy and support, UNICEF indirectly contributes to better service delivery.

Strategic Partnerships

Fully met benchmarks

Strong collaboration with key government counterparts continued in 2011, in particular with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Justice. Strong and productive mutual support exists between the Bulgaria CO and the National Network for Children representing over 100 NGOs.

Consultations with UNFPA, WHO and WB on different issues related to children have supported better implementation of programme interventions. Partnership with some international NGOs like OAK Foundation, Open Society Institute and Lumos played an important role in enhancing deinstitutionalization and monitoring child poverty.

Partnership with the Parliament continued to develop through good interaction with some MPs. Members of the Parliament participated in a UNICEF and IPU supported meeting in Armenia.

A key media partnership with bTV, the most popular TV channel and long-term partner of UNICEF, has also continued.

Through work on regional planning of social services and the Child Friendly Cities Initiative and in collaboration with the National Association of Municipalities, UNICEF is positioned as a relevant and valuable partner to local governments. This is of utmost importance in this recently decentralized country.

The CO develops and maintains partnerships with the corporate sector in order to mobilize resources and promote corporate social responsibility. In addition to individual partners, UNICEF also engages with business associations, such as Global Compact or Donor Forum. This is in line with the global PFP strategy for fewer long-term integrated partnerships that are of a higher value and provide possibilities for new channels for donations and delivery of greater impact for children.

Mobilizing Partners

Mobilization of government partners and institutions is primarily organized through the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy which is UNICEF's key partner in Bulgaria. Partnership with the Ministry of Health was strengthened through the joint organization of an international conference on ECD and the provision of technical assistance for the implementation of a complex DI programme for closure of infant homes. Other major partners, such as the State Agency for Child Protection and Agency for Social Assistance, are having a crucial role both in policy discussions and implementation of joint interventions for children.

Good interaction with the National Network for Children has continued in 2011. The network now unites more than 100 NGOs working for children and has thus become an important instrument for advocacy and monitoring of child rights. The Network has also been acting as a critical partner to the Government in monitoring the commitments for children.

Partnerships with local governments have been fostered through the Child Friendly Municipalities Network. The network has become an important platform for scaling up child rights issues, such as child participation and sharing of good practices in relation to social inclusion of the most vulnerable children.

UNICEF has played a crucial convening role when it comes to strengthening public-private partnerships. Corporate partnerships with media, such as bTV and key businesses (Pireus Bank, "Happy" restaurants chain, etc.), have supported awareness raising on child rights and are building a network of solidarity for children and UNICEF's mission in Bulgaria.

Knowledge Management

Mostly met benchmarks

UNICEF's contribution to the knowledge and better understanding of the situation of children and their families in Bulgaria is highly appreciated by national and local partners. In 2011, the Situation of Children and Women in Bulgaria was assessed. Various documents related to child and family support services, communities at risk, and foster care were produced.

Main SitAn findings were presented to government partners, initiating discussions and planning of adequate measures. SitAn includes an assessment of emergency risks for the most marginalized groups of society. Preparation of the SitAn was commissioned to key researchers from Open Society Institute. The National Statistical Office also played an active role. The Task Force included representatives from all relevant government institutions, discussing the results and possible recommendations.

Although the research on reasons for abandonment of young children was not officially published, the report was distributed to experts and presented to the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, State Agency for Child Protection, Agency for Social Assistance, National Network for Children and academics.

TransMonnee data base was disseminated among all partners, media and the larger public and its format is found to be very useful.

Within the framework of regional planning of social services, deinstitutionalization and foster care development, a number of tools were presented and disseminated. These include the Guidelines for a Family Counseling Centre, a rapid assessment of the high-risk communities in the Shumen region, a comprehensive analysis of the results from the regional planning of social services 2009–2010, and a manual for participatory regional planning of social services. Additional documents included publications of a training programme for candidate foster parents summarizing the experience gathered in the pilot

project that UNICEF is supporting, and a collection of materials on children and parents entitled "How to talk, listen to and play with the child" which were distributed to professionals working with children.

UNICEF Bulgaria translated and launched the Call for Action to end placing children under three years of age in institutions. It had an additional positive effect on the process for deinstitutionalization of the youngest children.

UNICEF translated to Bulgarian and distributed key studies and documents in the field of deinstitutionalization, ECD and Child Friendly Justice. Kevin Browne's publication "The risk of harm to young children in institutional care" was disseminated in Bulgarian.

UNICEF carried out an evaluation of the National Network for Children. The evaluation was presented at their annual meeting in front of all members and donors

In 2011, UNICEF Bulgaria published the 2010 annual report in a special user-friendly format, emphasizing good models and successful practices.

Human Rights Based Approach to Cooperation

Mostly met benchmarks

The main policy document addressing issues of children - National Strategy for the Child 2008–2018 - has been developed by the Government of Bulgaria using HRBAP. Child rights are mainstreamed through all components within the existing country programme, thus engaging all partners in better understanding and promoting child rights approaches.

The new draft Child Act is also based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and attempts to streamline child rights in all areas, including strengthening of the systems and capacity of duty bearers - the state and its institutions, NGOs and civil society in their role as service providers and advocates for child rights and families and parents as the key responsible parties for child wellbeing. Substantial funds from the European Structural Funds programme have been earmarked to address the issues related to the rights of children to live in a family and have access to social and health services.

A fundamental framework for all Bulgaria CO interventions and activities are the 2008 CRC Observations to the Bulgarian Government, together with some of the General Comments of the UN CRC. In 2011, Bulgaria CO followed the list of issues in connection with the periodic reports of Bulgaria concerning articles 1 to 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In addition, UNICEF is regularly following the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights regarding children and their families. However, poor access and uptake of health, social and education services by marginalized groups within society, together with increasing disparities, point out to the need for further promotion of human rights and child rights and HRBAP. Strengthened accountabilities of duty-bearers and enhanced monitoring are needed along with better informed and empowered right-holders.

Gender

Partially met benchmarks

Bulgaria CO has been invited to become part of the National Council on Gender Equality and has participated in the meetings of the Council. The collection of gender disaggregated data was identified as a necessity for better analysis and monitoring of the situation of women. The situation is most serious in regard to disadvantaged minority groups where gender issues are particularly severe.

This was also revealed in UNICEF-supported research on reasons for abandonment of young children where gender roles are identified as one of the main contributing factors for child abandonment and relinquishment (i.e. the decision is not made by mothers but the dominant male figure in the family, be it the father of the child or the mother's father). Traditional practices of early marriage in some minority groups are forcing many girls to leave school early and give birth before the age of 18.

The development of new integrated services as part of the complex child protection and social protection reform takes into account gender issues. The design of services and the specific interventions are addressing key gender stereotypes primarily through engaging and promoting the participation of women and girls and strengthening their knowledge and awareness on family support, family planning, and access to health and social services. Further efforts will be made to tackle social norms and the traditional roles of men.

Environmental Sustainability

Fully met benchmarks

Bulgaria CO does not have any major impact on the environment and climate change. In UNICEF-supported activities, consideration is given to environmentally-friendly solutions.

The CO is trying to reduce impact on the environment by introducing an internal recycling policy.

South-South and Triangular Cooperation

n/a

Country Programme Component: Social inclusion and reduction of child poverty

PCRs (Programme Component Results)

PCR	EQRank	OTDetails
By 2012 Bulgaria advances the fulfillment of child's rights through further reform of its child welfare systems		2 FA1OT4, FA1OT8, FA4OT1, FA4OT2, FA4OT5, FA4OT10, FA5OT1, FA5OT2, FA5OT5, FA5OT6, FA5OT7, FA5OT8, FA5OT9

Resources Used in 2011(USD)

Resource Type	Planned for 2011 (as per CPAP ceiling)	Allocated in 2011	Estimated Year-End Expenditure	%Spent (4)/(3) * 100
OR-E				
OR-R	1900000.00	1262660.27	1195103.41	94.65
RR	400000.00	402263.68	315210.70	78.36
Total	\$2,300,000.00	\$1,664,923.95	\$1,510,314.11	

Results Achieved

Implementation of this programme component has been slightly modified to reflect the organization's sharpened focus on equity and a more explicit response was directed to the most marginalized groups of children. The ongoing reform of child and social protection systems was supported to benefit the most disadvantaged children who are hard to reach. Public expenditure analysis of budgets for infant homes will enable reprioritization of resources in favor of programmes supporting community services benefiting deprived children. High level advocacy to mobilize political will for bridging the equity gaps among children was provided through UNICEF's participation in working groups and policy development fora on issues like Roma inclusion, juvenile justice, gender equality, etc.

Government commitment to child rights was supported through expert inputs into drafting the new Child Act based on the CRC. The draft law puts more emphasis on adequate support to families as a prerequisite for the complex child welfare reform agenda. Subsequent public debate revealed that the child rights agenda is not yet fully understood and endorsed by society as a whole, and Bulgaria CO continues with advocacy efforts to support the new legislation.

As part of the overall reform, support was provided for the elaboration of several government projects funded through EU funds for strengthening capacity for planning, provision and management of social services and capacity development of the child protection system. UNICEF-supported efforts, including modeling of new services and C4D approaches, have led to a tenfold increase in the number of foster families. In order to contribute to the deinstitutionalization process, the CO works with partners in the Shoumen Region on developing a network of family support services and alternatives to residential care, leading to eventual closure of the residential care institution for children age 0-3. Based on this example, and with technical support from UNICEF experts, the Ministry of Health has designed a project for the closure of eight more infant homes, with support from EU SF amounting to USD 11 million. All these efforts have been reflected in the draft Child Act, proposing a ban on the placement of children age 0-3 in residential care. Another model for a range of preventive services on the community level was developed in the Vidin Region and provides a comprehensive package of family support services in this very poor and remote region.

Advocacy for ECD approaches has resulted in greater openness of different government bodies. In particular, MLSP is utilizing a WB loan to develop ECD services in order to facilitate social inclusion. The national conference on ECD, hosted by MoH with UNICEF's assistance, raised awareness on issues like access to

quality services for maternal and child health, nutrition and parenting support. Based on the provided recommendations, a number of initiatives are being pursued on strengthening parenting practices, development of outreach work and ECD standards validation.

The evaluation of the National Network for Children conducted in 2011 led to a useful discussion on the role of civil society in lobbying and advocacy for child's rights and the need for further capacity strengthening.

Most Critical Factors and Constraints

- The complex DI reform undertaken by the Government revealed the need for strengthening capacities in the planning, management, delivery and monitoring of projects and services. The UNICEF office was required to increase its support to Government, local authorities and NGOs by providing technical assistance, models and resources.
- The ambitious child protection and social assistance reform agenda depends to a large extent on Government policies for poverty reduction and social inclusion of the most disadvantaged groups, especially Roma. Strict fiscal discipline and budgetary reductions have stretched social budgets and put them under pressure, with reductions in social payments which mostly affects the poorest.
- Cross-sectoral budgeting for new, innovative services still presents a challenge. It requires further capacity building and better coordination between the sectors.
- Reforms in juvenile justice and health systems were initiated. Despite political support, the reform process is slowed down due to that fact that not all professional groups are on board.
- Capacity of NGOs, especially Roma NGOs, to actively participate in advocating for issues concerning Roma people is weak. Public discussions about important strategy and legislative documents were rarely attended by Roma NGOs, as a result of which issues that affect them are not given due priority in the policy agenda.
- A specific constraint faced by the Office is lack of Early Childhood Development experts, which has slowed down implementation of the ECD component.
- Introduction of VISION and the need for all office staff to undergo a number of trainings has slowed down implementation of programme interventions at the end of 2011, and is likely to continue in the first months of 2012.

Key Strategic Partnerships and Interagency Collaboration

- Cooperation with government ministries and agencies, such as the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, State Agency for Child Protection, Agency for Social Assistance, and Ministry of Health agencies has been particularly relevant in the area of policy and advocacy, and development of programmes for leveraging EU Structural Funds.
- A strategic alliance was established with the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and the State Agency for Child Protection for the work on the new draft Child Act.
- The Ministry of Health has become a key partner in working on deinstitutionalization of infant homes as well as for early childhood development interventions.
- Partnership with the Ministry of Justice and Education was central to the development and approval of the new policy concept for juvenile justice system reform.
- Local government partnerships were critical for the success of pilot projects and scaling up of good practices. The Child Friendly Municipality Initiative brought in more members to the network, thus ensuring larger commitments towards child rights.
- UNFPA has partnered with UNICEF, providing financial contributions towards programmes on family planning, thus increasing the effects of interventions in selected areas.
- Strong cooperation with civil society organizations as well as prominent researchers and opinion leaders had a significant effect on strengthening the lobbying and advocacy efforts of the office in relation to key issues, such as Roma, health and development of young children, foster care and child rights as a whole.

Humanitarian Situations

n/a

Summary of Monitoring, Studies and Evaluations

- Research on the reasons for child abandonment and placement of children in infant institutions in Bulgaria
- Rapid assessment of the high-risk communities in the Shumen Region
- Situation Analysis of Children and Women in Bulgaria
- Comprehensive analysis of the results from the regional planning of social services 2009–2010

Future Work Plan

Work on child care system reform will continue in 2012. The main focus will be on providing technical assistance for closing infant homes and developing a sustainable and effective network of community based social services. The development of a financial mechanism for transforming funding for institutional care towards family support services and the elaboration of financial standards of new services will be a priority for enhancing social protection reforms. Promotion for long term sustainability of the newly developed social services such as foster care will be ensured through continuous support and dialogue with the Government for improvements in services planning, funding, inclusive delivery as well as monitoring of the milestones and evaluation of results.

ECD interventions will include age validation of Early Learning and Development standards, the development of parenting education approaches for different target groups, and health/social outreach work. Technical support will be provided to the Ministry of Health in developing capacity to assess the quality of perinatal practices using WHO standards.

Technical assistance will be provided in the area of juvenile justice to support the situation analysis of children in correctional schools, with a particular focus on their need for services and support to families.

Analytical work and review of working models for school drop-out prevention will be carried out with the objective to build strong advocacy arguments for targeted measures aiming to increase school enrolment and decrease the number of children dropping out of school.

Country Programme Component: Social mobilization and communication for development

PCRs (Programme Component Results)

PCR	EQRank	OTDetails
By 2012, government, private sector, media, civil society and the public enhance partnerships for programmes for children		2 Support 4, FA5OT7

Resources Used in 2011(USD)

Resource Type	Planned for 2011 (as per CPAP ceiling)	Allocated in 2011	Estimated Year-End Expenditure	%Spent (4)/(3) * 100
OR-E				
OR-R	100000.00	177727.57	177720.51	100.00
RR	200000.00	221692.98	216832.73	97.81
Total	\$300,000.00	\$399,420.55	\$394,553.24	

Results Achieved

Bulgaria CO is applying an integrated approach to communications, social mobilization and private sector fundraising, focused specifically on promotion of family based care, damaging effect of residential care and importance of early years of life.

The foster care campaign, started in 2010, continued with a three month documentary series 'Life as it is – Foster families' produced together with bTV (biggest TV channel in Bulgaria). It contributed to a better understanding of alternative family care and doubled the number of calls on the specially established line for foster parents. More than 200 media cuts were reported.

The opening of a Family Consultative Center in Shumen was supported by media and an advocacy campaign for good parenting and foster care, with emphasis on fostering children with disabilities and young children (80 media cuts were reported).

An advocacy and fundraising ECD campaign "Hear me now" focused on the importance of the first three years of a child's life and parenting support. The media partnerships included: 23 TVs, 18 radio stations, over 100 outdoor points, 60 print media, and 300 websites. A special podcast was created in the most popular mothers' forum. A national conference "Let's Grow up Together!" brought together over 350 experts, NGOs, and media. An open air event was attended by more than 1000 families, ten celebrities and 20 media partners.

The Child Friendly Municipalities Initiative (CFM) proved to be a valuable tool for child rights promotion at the community level. It was supported by a thematic website launched with the aim to improve communication and best practice sharing among members of the Bulgarian CFM Network.

A video workshop "One Minute Junior" brought together children aged 10-15 from a marginalized Roma community in Stara Zagora. Many impressive documentaries were produced, and one was nominated for an annual award.

A UNICEF-supported Golden Apple advocacy event was organized by the National Network for Children and recognized the contribution of prominent individuals to child rights realization in Bulgaria.

UNICEF's 65 year anniversary was used as an advocacy and donor cultivation event, bringing together 160 partners.

Strong communication and advocacy channels include <http://www.unicef.bg/> with more than 8,000 visitors per month and UNICEF's Bulgaria Facebook page with more than 60,000 followers.

Local fundraising has achieved stable growth over the last three years. In 2011, focus was placed on enhancing corporate partnerships, developing an individual monthly giving programme, and developing new donation channels, with the following results:

- three new corporate partnerships (Piraeus bank: developing fundraising affiliated card, promotion of monthly giving; Borika: developing of ATM donations software; Mania: customer fundraising and monthly giving).

- Upgrading previous partnerships (MKB Union Bank: triple the number of payroll donors; Happy: double the corporate donation giving; Douglas: double the number of payroll donors).
- Development of a monthly giving programme supported with a wide advocacy and media campaign in November 2011. The media partnerships include: 12 TVs, 9 radio stations, and over 100 outdoor points. A total of 3,177 monthly giving donors were acquired.

In 2011, UNICEF raised USD 689,125.00 for programme activities in Bulgaria.

Most Critical Factors and Constraints

C4D and fundraising faced certain difficulties in communicating, advocating and fundraising (when it comes to both media and the public) for topics related to ECD. One of the main reasons for the lack of response stemmed from the limited recognition of the importance and the urgency of these topics.

The second very important obstacle is the stigmatization of the Roma community in Bulgaria, supported by negative reflections in the media. Roma children are experiencing the greatest levels of deprivation and child rights violations; creating public support for the realization of their rights thus presents a significant challenge.

Considerable constraints were also experienced in fundraising due to stringent privacy protection regulations, rigid banking system, and an underdeveloped individual monthly giving culture.

Key Strategic Partnerships and Interagency Collaboration

In addition to close collaboration with government counterparts, UNICEF has identified a number of strategic partners in other sectors of society. Strong and productive mutual support exists between the Bulgaria CO and the National NGO Network for Children. A partnership with the Bulgarian Association of Municipalities is instrumental in further development of the CFM Initiative. UNICEF has maintained and developed a strong partnership with bTV, the most popular TV channel, but works closely with many other media houses.

In 2011, a significant focus was placed on enhancing corporate partnerships and developing the individual giving program with a long-term goal of recruiting a large base of monthly donors and new donation channels development.

The strategic partnerships in 2011 are:

- Piraeus bank: developing fundraising affiliated card and promoting a monthly giving program to UNICEF by the cash-desk officers in every bank office.
- Borika and Bulgarian Bank Association: developing ATM donations software and delivering it to the banks for implementation (innovation on the Bulgarian market).
- Interactive Media services: developing and maintaining a platform for mobile donations.
- Three biggest mobile operators in Bulgaria: providing and servicing free of charge UNICEF's text message number.
- EasyPay and Epay: over 1000 cash-desks in Bulgaria and web-based platform for free of charge donation to UNICEF.

Humanitarian Situations

n/a

Summary of Monitoring, Studies and Evaluations

- Evaluation of the National Network for Children

Future Work Plan

Integrated activities related to resource mobilization, communication and advocacy will continue to be focused on the importance of child rights promotion, with particular emphasis on the importance of ECD and family based care.

New advocacy and communicational activities will be designed and implemented to support children in conflict with the law as well as children dropping out of school.

Communication on foster care will continue both at national and local levels with a special focus on young children and children with disabilities.

Behavior change communication approaches will continue to be used as key strategy of the programme, especially related to parenting in most marginalized communities.

Media, corporations, civil society and individuals will be engaged in sustainable, long-term resource mobilization for children in Bulgaria and elsewhere.

The fundraising activities will continue to ensure sustainable funding for the UNICEF programme in Bulgaria and will aim to contribute to UNICEF's global mission.

The main focus of fundraising in 2012 will be:

- Supporting the development of the giving culture in Bulgaria and recruiting more monthly giving donors to UNICEF will generate substantial RR income, enabling Bulgaria CO to provide more flexible funding in support of its programmes.
- Moving beyond corporate philanthropy to promotion of "Child Rights and Business Principles" in accordance with the agreement with Global Compact.
- Advocating and fundraising for emergencies.
- Improving the communication and reporting.

Country Programme Component: Cross-sectoral costs

PCRs (Programme Component Results)

PCR	EQRank	OTDetails
Staff Related Costs and Operating Expenses		1 FA6OT1, FA6OT9, Support 1, Support 3

Resources Used in 2011(USD)

Resource Type	Planned for 2011 (as per CPAP ceiling)	Allocated in 2011	Estimated Year-End Expenditure	%Spent (4)/(3) * 100
OR-E				
OR-R				
RR	150000.00	153937.93	130646.21	84.87
Total	\$150,000.00	\$153,937.93	\$130,646.21	

Results Achieved

Cross-sectoral costs cover support to all programme components and to the office operational needs not covered by SB. The salary of the M&E Officer was funded within this component, ensuring ongoing monitoring of programme activities, evaluations and knowledge management. The post of Senior Driver is also covered, as well as some operational expenses not covered by SB (such as the cost of communications, office cleaning, some of the training activities, etc.).

Most Critical Factors and Constraints

n/a

Key Strategic Partnerships and Interagency Collaboration

n/a

Humanitarian Situations

n/a

Summary of Monitoring, Studies and Evaluations

n/a

Future Work Plan

n/a

Effective Governance Structure

As per the Audit Summary of Observations, Bulgaria CO has "satisfactory" governance structure and practices. Based on OIA recommendations, the office developed an action plan and systematically addressed all areas for improvement. At the end of June 2011, all Audit Observations were closed successfully.

Work planning with partners is reflected in the Rolling Work plan while clearly defined roles and responsibilities within the office are spelled out in the AMP and through individual performance planning.

Programme review meetings are held quarterly, while the Country Management Team meets more often, on average once a month. A set of indicators to be monitored by CMT is defined in the AMP. However, regular information exchange, day-to-day coordination and briefings on important developments and policy recommendations happen at regular weekly all-staff meetings.

A Staff Association was established in 2011 with elected representatives (instead of previously existing Staff Focal Point), and JCC meetings were initiated.

Throughout the year, the Table of Authority was reviewed and adapted to correspond to office needs and capacities. A Business Continuity Plan was reviewed and updated. Various internal committees (CRC, PSB, CRB and others) continue to function and closely follow UNICEF rules and regulations on implementation.

Performance Evaluation Reports were completed on time.

The Office has tested and reviewed BCP, developed DRP and conducted fire drills. A security warden system is in place. Staff members were given the opportunity to take a first aid course and attend security briefings. The EWEA system is being updated, although it is too demanding and not relevant for the Bulgaria CO situation.

Strategic Risk Management

Bulgaria Office Risk Library was reviewed and amended in March 2011. Four medium-high and two medium-low risks were identified that may impact the achievement of UNICEF's objectives and results in Bulgaria.

Corresponding controls and risk response were identified. Medium-high risks are associated with Aid Environment, Partners Relations, Knowledge Management, Process, Procedures and Controls. Medium-low risks are associated with Capacity for Programme Management and Programme Strategies.

The office has worked on mitigating the risk through gradual implementation of the risk controls. A proposal for strengthening the office structure was submitted to the PBR and approval for a new post has been received. New business processes have been developed to better meet the needs of the growing office. The Business Continuity Plan was updated, following a testing exercise organized on 16 June, 2011. Disaster Recovery Plan for IT was developed. The Intranet based Early Warning Early Action has been regularly updated during the year to reflect some developments in the country, like minor earthquakes, which happened several times, causing no human or material damage.

Evaluation

The 2011 Integrated and Monitoring Plan (IMEP) was revised and adjusted to the changing needs of the Country Programme, actual workflow, priorities and government plans and capacity. Overall, the plan has achieved 80% of its planned activities. Two studies and two evaluations have been postponed due to recent programmatic developments and changes in partners' priorities and are being inserted into the IMEP 2012.

Led by the necessity of commonly recognized issues based on official data, experts from relevant government ministries and other institutions were included in the SitAn Process. Apart from credibility and ownership of the process, this was also beneficial for the enhancement of their monitoring capacity.

Partners were informed and consulted on a regular basis during the preparations of all the studies, research and evaluations in order to guaranty better quality and adequate management responses.

Bulgaria CO is benefiting from the support provided by the Regional Office in reviewing both Terms of Reference for evaluations and draft evaluation reports. Direct assistance from RO M&E adviser and regular information flow from HQ had a positive impact on the planning and quality assurance of the M&E activities.

National capacity for evaluations does not always allow analysis in line with UNICEF standards. Although Bulgaria has some research institutions, gaps remain in evaluation capacity, especially for evaluation of complex programmes and policies. The evaluation function is limited in the national institutional framework and usually only internal monitoring and audits are performed. Country-led evaluations are still not a priority. In order to review implementation of action plans, there are mechanisms in place but they often require involvement of other stakeholders and are only document-based.

The ongoing projects funded within the framework of EU Structural Funds include certain monitoring mechanisms, but up to now, no major or strategic evaluations have taken place. However, for the first time in 2011, the State Agency for Child Protection commissioned an evaluation of the ongoing implementation of the National Strategy for the Child and results are expected to be ready in 2012.

Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology

2011 marked a significant improvement for Bulgaria CO in terms of ICT. All working stations are now upgraded and compliant with Windows 7 and the latest ICT requirements of UNICEF. The old hardware/ PCs are in the process of cleaning data and will be donated to implementing partners. This will allow smooth work processes with regard to VISION implementation and transition. A Video Conferencing Unit was received from the Regional Office, and several other hardware devices were procured locally, including a server and multifunctional device for office needs. As a result of successful cooperation with local vendors, LTAs for ICT equipment will be established in 2012. A second and independent internet access through Wi-Fi router was established as a reflection of the BCP requirements. The office equipment provides timely, reliable and secure information flow.

The relationship with the Regional Office ITSS Division was further developed. As all business applications and email servers are based in the RO, Bulgaria CO continues to rely on the IT services provided.

As a result of moving out of the UN House in 2010, Bulgaria CO was lacking appropriate local ICT support. Two ICT focal points were not trained to work with the local server, and outsourcing was not an option. The decision was made to establish a part-time TA post. This reflects the need for authorization to be granted to a staff member for various ICT processes. The recruitment process was finalized and an ICT Assistant was appointed in December 2011. Especially in light of the expected relocation to new office premises and the need to establish an internal network, the ICT Assistant will be of vital help to the Office.

In 2011, Bulgaria CO achieved some further improvements:

- Development and introduction of software for ATM donations. The platform was developed by a local private company and enabled PFP division with a new channel for fundraising via all ATM devices of the partner bank. The cost for development and installation of the software was donated to UNICEF;
- Enhanced website performance. Direct links for donations were designed and uploaded to the website. Improved functionality allows more direct information flow to all interested parties;
- Increased popularity of the UNICEF Bulgaria web site and Facebook page where current initiatives are published, bringing transparency to the work performed by the CO.

Due to limited capacity of the global support team, Bulgaria CO was not able to obtain, install and use Donor Perfect to keep donor data safe and available for use. A locally developed system has been maintained, with some difficulties, and installation of Donor Perfect is expected in February 2012. As UNICEF tries to reduce its print on the environment, the CO introduced several recycling policies, including responsible disposal of unusable electronic waste, used batteries collection spot, and separation of paper, plastic, and glass for recycling. Various energy saving activities were also introduced throughout the year.

Fund Raising and Donor Relations

In 2011, UNICEF CO raised funds from different sources nationally and internationally. Funds were received for the three major programme activities from UK NatCom (USD 239,000 for foster care), Danish NatCom (USD 214,000 for community based social services) and French NatCom (USD 514,000 for juvenile justice). An additional amount of USD 765,000 is committed from the French NatCom.

At the same time, efforts were made to maximize income from local private sector fundraising.

The following key achievements were reached in 2011:

- Three new corporate partnerships (Piraeus bank: developing fundraising affiliated card; promotion of monthly giving to UNICEF; Borika: developing ATM donations software; dress-chain Mania: customer fundraising, monthly corporate, and payroll donations).
- Leveraging all corporate partnerships from previous years (MKB Union Bank: triple the number of payroll donors; restaurant chain Happy: double the corporate donation giving; perfumery Douglas: double the number of payroll donors).
- Development of monthly giving programme, launched with a wide advocacy and media campaign in November 2011.

Through local private sector fundraising, UNICEF CO raised USD 689,125.00 for programme activities in Bulgaria and secured 3,177 monthly giving donors.

At the end of the second year of the current programme cycle, Bulgaria CO reached 78% of the approved OR ceiling (funds available), and 90% of the OR ceiling for the 3-year cycle with the committed funds. 47% of OR available in 2011 came from local private sector fundraising.

100% of the donor reports were sent on time. Donor Focal Point monitors due dates and alerts responsible Programme Managers. During the year, nine PBAs have expired with a utilization rate of 99,9% .

Management of Financial and Other Assets

In 2011, the office continued to implement the recommendations regarding financial management from the Internal Audit performed in 2010 with a rating of "Satisfactory". Assignment of authority and delegations of financial controls were extended to reflect the office structure. The Table of Authority was

reviewed to strengthen the segregation of duties. New supervisory controls were established, e.g. stamping of invoices for payment. There are procedures in place ensuring timely and accurate recording of PFP income. At the end of each month, contributions are reported to DFAM with a table indicating the amounts received per PBA. The Annual Revenue and Expenditure Report (RER) was submitted to PFP.

Bank reconciliations were performed in a timely manner to ensure matching between the bank data and data in ProMS. Financial controls were used to identify and prevent possible gaps. Bank charges increased by 23% compared to 2010, reflecting increased office activity. There is also a four times increase in the interests received, due to PSFR funds in CAA in April 2011.

In terms of cost management, at the end of 2011, the office managed to sign a contract with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Government-provided rent free premises. After repair works are performed at the beginning of 2012, the office will move and save the amount currently paid for rent.

An inventory/physical count of the assets was performed in the last quarter in relation to VISION transition process and in accordance with IPSAS requirements. All items correspond to Lotus Notes Database records. The value of NEP at the end of 2011 is \$89,495.68, which is an increase throughout the year of \$31,288.37 or more than 53%. This is mainly due to the purchase of a new vehicle and some ICT equipment. The local PSB committee met and made the decision to donate old ICT equipment to implementing partners.

Global Performance Indicators:

- As per the DCT monitoring report, there are 0% of outstanding DCTs over 9 months;
- RR spent in 2011 is 85%;
- 90% of ORR spent;
- 1 PBA was extended within the year and another 1 was extended to the end of 2012. The rest were used within the original duration of the PBA life. New PBAs were created for PFP/ PFSR activities. PBA expenditure rate is 88%.

Supply Management

The Office does not have a dedicated supply staff members and significant supply activities. In the Support Budget, procurement is represented in the purchase of basic network and communications equipment for the new office. For local procurement, the office follows the general supply processes guidelines. Additional assistance is received by colleagues in the Regional Office and from the region. There is no international procurement in 2011.

Human Resources

Bulgaria CO was in a difficult situation in the middle of the year when a C4D Officer resigned for personal reasons and the Operations Officer passed away after a severe illness. The office immediately started recruitment processes for these two key positions. The new C4D Officer started in September and the new Operations Officer at the end of October. This situation presented a significant challenge to existing staff, especially those who were assigned one or more components of the Operations Officer's job, considering the increased workload due to migration to VISION.

Following Audit Recommendations, the staffing structure was reviewed in order to more adequately reflect the capacity of the office, and a request was submitted to the Regional PBR in February. PBR conclusions allowed for a change in funding source for one post and approved the establishment of the following posts:

- ECD Officer (NOA), OR funded
- PSFR Officer (NOA), funded by PFP

- PSFR Assistant (GS4), OR funded
- Driver (GS2), OR funded
- Admin Assistant (GS5), funded from SB.

Apart from the ECD Officer, other posts were approved as of January 2012. The CO advertised the opening for ECD Officer in 2011 but failed to find a suitable candidate. The post was advertised again at the end of 2011. Recruitment for the driver was finalized in December; FR Officer and FR Assistant are under currently recruitment. The office also decided to recruit an ICT Assistant on TA (part time) in order to have proper capacity and access to systems. The CO gives due consideration to achieving gender balance.

Particular attention was given to developing capacity of staff through training and networking:

- 1 NO trained in Management Performance for Supervisors training
- M&E Officer - M&E Meeting
- Communications and Fundraising team attended Fundraising Forum and the CEB meeting
- Executive/HR Assistant was trained on HR in Sarajevo
- Operations Officer received induction training
- Representative attended Fundraising Forum, Advocacy Workshop and Public Finance Management Training
- Induction for C4D Officer was provided in RO
- 2 SMs attended PSV training
- 2 Programme Assistants attended Supply Training in Copenhagen
- 4 super-users were trained in Antalya, 4 attended Supply Chain Management training in Bucharest; SAP-HR training was provided by RO to all staff.
- HR/Executive Assistant and Finance Assistant attended SAP HR & Payroll training in Zagreb
- VISION training performed locally for all staff
- 2 senior SMs enrolled in Management Development Programme to continue in 2012
- On-line courses and webinars were also utilized as a way of learning.

All PERs were completed by end of Feb 2011 for local s/ms. All staff members and office based consultants responded to the Global Staff Survey. Two PSVs are available and provide support.

UNICEF also facilitated and conducted activities relevant to all UN staff in Bulgaria: language exams, Comprehensive Local Staff Salary Survey and Place-to-place Survey. As a result, salaries of national staff will be slightly increased in 2012, 5.9% for GS category and 3.2% for NO category.

Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings

At the end of 2011, the office managed to sign the contract with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Government-provided rent free premises. This will result in cost savings from rental payments. There is an improvement and cost reduction on travel expenses - \$92,506 for 2011 vs \$114,110 for 2010 (decrease by 19%). During 2011, better and more cost-effective conditions were achieved on some operational expenses, such as telephone and office consumables.

Changes in AMP and CPMP

Following the Summary of Observations of Internal Audit received at the end of 2010, Bulgaria CO included a detailed description of staff accountabilities into AMP and appointed one staff member to monitor PBA expiry dates. The staffing structure was reviewed in order to more adequately reflect the capacity of the office and a request was submitted to the Regional PBR in February. PBR conclusions allowed for a

change in funding source for one post, and approved establishing five new posts effective as of January 2012 (except for ECD Officer). AMP for 2012 will incorporate the newly recruited staff and their respective roles and responsibilities.

Management of the office, as defined by AMP, experienced considerable challenges during the course of 2011 due to prolonged illness and passing away of the Operations Officer. Temporary redistribution of tasks and responsibilities was necessary until the new Operations Officer was recruited and provided with initial training. During this period (July-November) Bulgaria CO received support from Romania CO and from the Regional Office. However, the heavy workload related to regular office activities and migration to VISION was mostly distributed among staff members in the office. All data cleansing, reports and required training were completed on time.

In 2012, Bulgaria is submitting the new Country Programme Document (2013-2017) with a changed programme structure. The accompanying CPMP will reflect changes in programme and staffing structure and envisage needs for the next five years. A request for adjustments and changes will be submitted to the September PBR.

Summary Notes and Acronyms

ATM - Automatic Teller Machine
BGN – Bulgarian Leva
C4D - Communication for Development
CFC – Child Friendly Cities
CFM – Child Friendly Municipalities
CMT – Country Management Team
CO – Country Office
CP – Country Programme
CPMP – Country Programme Management Plan
CRB – Contract Review Body
CRC – Contract Review Committee
CRC – Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRING – Country report on indicators for the goal
CRM – Customer relationship management
CSO – Civil Society Organizations
DCT – Direct Cash Transfer
DI – De-institutionalization
ECD – Early Childhood Development
EU - European Union
EU SF – Structural funds
GoB – Government of Bulgaria
HRBAP – Human Rights Based Approach
ICT - Information and Communication Technology
ITSS - Information Technology Service
LTA – Long-Term Arrangement
MDG – Millennium Development Goals
MLSP – Ministry of Labor and Social Policy
MOFA – Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MEYS – Ministry of Education, Youth and Science
NEP – Non Expendable Property
NGOs – Non-governmental organizations
NSO – National Statistic Office
OR - Other Resources
PBR – Programme and Budget Review
PFP – Private Fundraising
PSB – Property Survey Board

RR - Regular resources
SACP – State Agency for Child Protection
UNFPA – United Nations Populations Fund
WB – World Bank
WHO – World Health Organization
WGs – Working groups

Evaluation

	Title	Sequence Number	Type of Report
1	Research and Survey on the reasons for child abandonment and placement of children in infant institutions in Bulgaria	2011/01	Survey
2	Comprehensive analysis of the results from the regional planning of social services 2009 – 2010	2011/02	Study
3	Rapid assessment of the high-risk communities in Shumen region	2011/03	Situation Analysis
4	Evaluation of the National Network for Children NGO	2011/04	Evaluation
5	Situation Analysis of Children and Women in Bulgaria	2011/05	Situation Analysis

Other Publications

	Title
1	Manual for training of foster parents
2	UNICEF Bulgaria Annual Report 2010 (in English and Bulgarian)
3	How to talk, listen and play with children (in Bulgarian)
4	The Risk of Harm to Young Children in Institutional Care (in Bulgarian)
5	Manual for Regional Planning

Lessons Learned

Programme Documents