Executive Summary

Within the first year of the 2012-2016 Country Programme (CP), UNICEF continued to support the Government in improving social inclusion and child rights protection by providing best practice models and supporting their integration into systems. Significant efforts were invested in effective advocacy and capacity development; knowledge generation and use; an evidence based approach to policy making; and strengthening strategic partnerships focused on enhancing accountability for child rights implementation. The Government of Croatia appreciated UNICEF’s contribution to social development efforts, its technical assistance, and results in raising social awareness about key challenges and equity gaps.

The Country Office (CO) greatly contributed to amplifying children’s voices in reforms, new policy development and setting standards for meaningful and inclusive child participation. In particular, UNICEF supported the creation of a Children’s Shadow Report on the CRC which gives a children’s perspective on foster care and offers their recommendations (publication “What Children say About Foster Care?”).

The Government signed a pledge called “A Promise Renewed”, renewing its commitment to accelerate progress on maternal, newborn and child survival, and thereby further lower the neonatal mortality rate. The network of maternity wards achieving baby friendly status expanded and reached 84% of all maternity wards. This was followed by an increase in exclusive breastfeeding practices.

The first national helpline for parents and caregivers of young children (aged 0-6), as a new ECD support model, was successfully established and endorsed by the Government and relevant ministries. In the first 6 months, the service successfully handled over 3,400 queries from all the Croatian counties, including the least developed areas. It also received queries regarding especially vulnerable children. Although this unique parental service was very well received by parents and experts, there is a concern that its sustainability may be threatened by budgetary cuts after it’s handed over to the Government in 2013.

Similarly, decreased spending in the education sector affected the sustainability of the Violence-free School programme. Although an external evaluation showed that approximately 70% of teachers and 80% of children from participating schools stated that the programme should be continued or and that they would recommend it to all other schools, in 2012 MoE was unable to financially support the programme.

Deficiencies in data collection and analysis present a particular problem in Croatia. For example, only in 2013 is the country expected to develop a central registry of social transfer recipients, allowing for more efficient policy development, planning, and implementation in this area. Similar problems persist in other sectors, where disaggregated data are not systematically available. UNICEF continued its role as a subject-expert partner that supports and facilitates relevant data/information gathering and provides inputs to help address social exclusion.

CO continued to build long-lasting partnerships with the private sector, especially with regular donors, reaching total of 15,700 active monthly donors by the end of 2012, who contributed over US$ 777,000 which constituted 45% of total PSFR income. These results ensured monetary stability for the self-funded CO. The fundraising activities created notable social mobilization in the country and fostered multilateral relations with our donors who also become beneficiaries of and advocates for of UNICEF programme activities.

Country Situation as Affecting Children & Women

Although Croatia’s overall development indicators compare favourably to those of other countries in the region, four consecutive years of deepening and prolonged recession including two years of negative GDP growth have resulted in increased unemployment, inflation and an exacerbation in regional disparities. These negative trends have had an impact on the most vulnerable children and women in Croatia.

a 2012 UNICEF-commissioned survey on the availability of community-based services for young children, 20% of parents of young children stated that they “barely make ends meet every month”.[1] This finding corresponds to a rising national at-risk-of-poverty rate (from 20% to 21.1%), with single-
The survey also revealed that children from families with low socioeconomic status represent the highest share of the 31% of all 6-year olds not included in any form of pre-school education. It has been estimated that annually 0.10% of Croatia’s GDP is lost due to long-term reduced productivity caused by lack of pre-school education and 0.19% due to stunting and poverty. These results show that new policy responses are needed to support families of low socioeconomic status living in rural areas to improve the chances of the most disadvantaged girls and boys.

In addition to those living in poverty, two other groups of children are particularly disadvantaged. According to the Ombudsperson’s 2011 Annual Report, children with disabilities continue to be excluded from pre-school services despite the positive legislation. More than 2000 children with disabilities, aged 5-14, are referred to special schools because of insufficient support given to regular schools to provide access, transport and teaching assistants to accommodate them. To improve the inclusion and education of Roma children, in 2012 the Government plans to introduce 2 years of compulsory pre-school education for young Roma children within the newly adopted National Programme for Roma. This initiative is part of the action plan the Croatian Government introduced in its role of 2012/2013 Chair of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015.

Compared to the EU average (Croatia is expected to become a full member of the EU in 2013), public spending on children and families in Croatia lags behind at 1,75% of GDP compared to the EU27 average of 2,3% of GDP, and focuses mostly on social financial transfers, while only one third is invested in services. The level of access to services and resources for youngest children is determined by the place of residence. The fact that services are highly decentralized, especially for young children, also impacts the level of access. The share of children aged 3-6 included in pre-school services varies between 75,5% in the City of Zagreb and 21,1% in Viroviticko-podravska county. The economic crisis has exacerbated disparities and many municipalities have cut down on investing in kindergardens. In 2012, the Government adopted new provisions in the Law on Pre-school Education introducing 1-year compulsory pre-school education nationwide. Monitoring the implementation of these provisions will be necessary to support the equity gap between youngest children.

For the first time in recent history, children aged 0-14 now make up the smallest age group (15,2%) in Croatian society. Aging society (average age 41,7) is creating additional challenges for policy responses in the current economic and political context.

Children with disabilities remain the most vulnerable among children in institutions. Despite the overall progress towards family-oriented care, children with disabilities are more likely to be placed in institutional care, as support for their inclusive education is not available in their communities, and they are referred to so-called special schools that combine placement and education.

In March 2012, the Government adopted the new Social Welfare Act, re-introducing Centres for Social Welfare as the basic unit for implementing of social policy at the local level thus simplifying procedures for administering social welfare benefits and introducing databases of potential adopting families. One of the bottlenecks hindering deinstitutionalization is the availability of data on children in institutions and on foster and adoptive families. Collection and analysis of disaggregated data remains a challenge to developing policies aimed at for closing the equity gaps. An external analysis of public sector efficiency commissioned by the Government in 2012 identified health, social welfare and education as priority sectors for structural reforms.

In 2012, the Government increased the VAT rate from 23 to 25%, with the reduced rate of 10% on baby food. In response to the changes in fiscal policy, parental associations have argued that the lower VAT rate on baby food favours formula and processed baby food producers and is not taking into account fresh fruits and vegetables that make up an important part of healthy baby’s diet. Along with the increase in prices of gas and electricity as well as rising food prices, the increase in the VAT rate contributed to growing inflation which
stood at an estimated to be 3% at the end of the year. [6]

An external evaluation of the UNICEF-supported Violence-free Schools programme confirmed the need for a structured response to peer violence in schools and the need for continuous support in violence prevention within the education system, as positive results were shown to reverse when quality prevention efforts stopped or got reduced. [7]

A recent survey on academic achievement of children aged 9-11, indicated that academic achievement positively correlates with early education and kindergarten enrollment, support for learning in the family and at school, the level of violence at school, school location (urban/rural), a positive attitude of students towards learning, higher socioeconomic status of the family, and higher parental expectations related to their children’s education. [8]

To support new policy initiatives aimed at improving the situation of children living in poverty, UNICEF commissioned the first national study on poverty and material well-being of preschool children with results to be presented in Q3 2013. A UNICEF-supported study on the situation of children with disabilities in institutions conducted in 2012 will contribute to the national de-institutionalisation agenda with results to be distributed and discussed in Q2 2013.

**Country Programme Analytical Overview**

2012 was the first year of the new CP 2012-2016 and the first year of the newly elected coalition government. Strong equity-focused policy advocacy efforts supported the work related to ECD, child care system reform, juvenile justice, child participation and child rights monitoring.

In addition to wide dissemination of the Situation Analysis, the Determinant Analysis was conducted for two key areas: Child’s Right to Family Environment and Young Child Well-being. These analyses informed the design of interventions under the new CP. During 2012, the CP addressed important barriers and bottlenecks.

Progress was achieved with the adoption of several policies, strategies and plans, which focused on creating an enabling environment for vulnerable children. These include the National Programme for Roma; Law on Social Welfare; Amendment of Law on Preschool Education; National Health Strategy, including establishment of the new Council for Children and initiation of new NPA for children. The CO supported NGO partners to monitor child rights implementation through CRC reporting.

On the disaggregated data gathering and analysis front, CO provided support in collecting reliable data on children and families to NSO and line ministries.

Quality of services was improved through capacity building for health workers, social workers, early intervention specialists, and kindergarten and primary school teachers, amongst others. The CO is working with government partners on improving the sustainability of the quality training needed for improved service delivery.

CO’s support to one of the main supply related bottleneck, ECD and ECI services development, aimed at strengthening inter-sectoral cooperation and reaching out to the most marginalized children. CO continued to support the development of universal programmes for families with young children, such as parenting skills at the community level, parental helpline support, including parents living with children with disabilities and those living in poverty. CO focused on providing support to ECI by improving standards for disability assessment boards or categorisation commissions, to be in line with CRPD; advocating for the integration of ECI elements into the agendas of each relevant sector; and building the capacities of professionals to provide inclusive early education.

CO continued supporting the Government in strengthening the child protection system and completing the transformation and reinstitutionalisation processes. It did this by identifying the underlying bottlenecks, determining the capacities of social welfare professionals, supporting the transfer of knowledge and building
capacity for deinstitutionalisation, advocating for children’s voices to be heard, and identifying the best practices and modalities to provide quality family based care for the youngest children. The partnership on justice for children was stepped up, with focus on data generation and transfer of knowledge in case management practices.

Engagement with the media, corporate partners, donors, policy makers, high profile supporters and CSOs contributed to social mobilisation addressing the needs of the most vulnerable children in Croatia and internationally. UNICEF messages for parents and a call to action for children reached almost all households in Croatia through mass media, direct mailings, cinemas, social networks and retail shops. This outreach resulted in regular monthly support from 15,700 individual donors and more than 45,000 one-time donations, raising a total of U$1.75 million.

**Effective Advocacy**

*Mostly met benchmarks*

The national process of deinstitutionalisation was supported by adding children’s views to reforms taking place. CO supported development and launch of the first national report covering children’s experiences in foster care, as well as their recommendations to decision makers. The report, “What Children Say About Foster Care”, was launched in a joint UNICEF/Ministry of Social Policy and Youth event and shared with social welfare professionals.

The CO partnered with the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children, the Croatian Film Association and other partners to organise the fourth edition of Children’s Rights Festival, a unique inclusive 4-day event to celebrate the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. More than 5000 children from 8 cities in Croatia participated in inclusive screenings of films produced by children and youth. Inclusion was promoted through screenings of films adapted for visually and hearing impaired children, inclusive workshops and through a local public advocacy campaign titled “Being different – that is something we all share”. The festival was supported by the leading cinemaplex company in Croatia and other media outlets providing in-kind support. Additionally, the festival was endorsed by the President of Croatia.

**Capacity Development**

*Mostly met benchmarks*

Capacity development continues to be one of the key approaches of the CP. One example is in the area of child protection, in the context of the new Juvenile Courts Act which sets alternative measures as a priority. UNICEF strengthened partnership and cooperation between the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth, the Ministry of Justice, Judicial Academy, the State Attorney’s Office, the Association for Out-of-Court Settlement and Mediation in Criminal Proceedings and the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation University of Zagreb. Despite the fact that the model of out-of-court settlement was introduced in Croatia ten years ago, it is only practiced in three towns in Croatia.

UNICEF supported the development of a training package for key actors (future mediators, state attorneys for juveniles and other professionals working in the Social Welfare Centres and State Attorney’s Office) and insurance of equitable service. Special training that will enhance knowledge and skills of key actors will start in January 2013. Significant efforts are made to ensure that capacity development in this area goes beyond training. In addition to a series of training events, initiative will also include mentoring component, regular supervision and horizontal learning in order to reach sustainable results.

In the area of IECD and inclusive education, CO also supported strengthening the capacities of professionals and communities through inclusive educational initiatives. In partnership with the Ombudsman for Children and the Ombudsman for Persons with Disabilities and with the participation of the international child rights advocate, Gerison Lansdown, the CO organised capacity building on children’s right to an inclusive education,
for kindergarten principals and local government representatives and based on the *See Me, Hear Me* guide to using CRPD. This initiative increased awareness and knowledge of the benefits of inclusive preschool education for all children as a major step in achieving social transformation towards right-respecting societies and social justice.

The CO organized an additional capacity building exercise with the support of Gerison Lansdown for journalists in order to increase the knowledge of Croatian media on human rights-based reporting, particularly with regard to children with disabilities. This resulted in concrete and immediate increased engagement of some media in promoting and protecting the rights of children with disabilities.

In line with the focus on social inclusion of vulnerable and marginalised children, CO in an alliance with the Teachers’ Training Agency supported a series of educational seminars and supervisions for primary school teachers in order to: increase their capacities to practice inclusive education and improve their attitudes toward inclusion; to empower boys and girls with disabilities by helping them understand their status as rights-holders and encouraging them to claim their rights by becoming informed advocates of CRPD. The educational programme *It’s About Ability* started to be independently governed by Teachers’ Training Agency.

**Communication for Development**

*Mostly met benchmarks*

**Within the ECD services for vulnerable children**/Models of ECD services programme component, a public advocacy campaign promoting the launch of the new parental helpline and center to support young child development called “Little Phone” was carried out from May to December 2012. “Little Phone” was launched as a result of a survey for parents of young children conducted in 2008, in which parents indicated that a help phone line would be the most suitable channel for receiving support and advice on ECD. This finding was re-confirmed in the survey on the availability of community-based services carried out in 2012.

The campaign introduced to parents the benefits of the new service which is available to all parents, nationally. Campaign materials were developed in cooperation with parental association, visiting nurses and development psychologists. The execution of the campaign was supported by in-kind donations of major media outlets including: the national daily newspaper, a weekly lifestyle magazine, 20 radio stations, outdoor media company, internet portals, the biggest national cinemaplex company and the National TV station. Along with the mass media campaign, more than 150,000 cards with information about the new service were distributed through maternity wards, family centres and sent and given to people directly.

The launch of the campaign received high publicity with more than 45 press clips were recorded, including 2 TV clips in the main evening news. The campaign resulted in more than 3250 calls and 140 e-mails received from May to December 2012. In the monitoring report from September and October 2012, 50% of all callers said that they found out about the service through the mass media, 24% of callers said that they received a promotional card, and the rest found out either from social networks, or from friends, families and acquaintances as well as visiting nurses.

**Service Delivery**

*Mostly met benchmarks*

UNICEF research among parents of young children found that parents often make serious mistakes, but that they also seek professional support/help and expect that help to be available at the moment when they need it. In response to this need and in accordance with the NAP, Early Childhood Counseling Centre, a support line and an internet counseling service was set up for parents and other caretakers of young children, including children with neurorisks and disabilities, as well as of fostered and adopted children. The service was set up in partnership with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Policy & Youth and City of Zagreb.

Monitoring of 6-month service provided evidence that this new and unique national service is efficient in
enabling parents/caretakers from all 21 Croatian counties to get useful, practical, timely and expert information on and support in dealing with specific problems and doubts regarding early parenting and young child care, pregnancy and childbirth, child nutrition, child care, safety, child development, communication, role of parents, including information and referral to other services at the community level. There were a number of inquiries regarding vulnerable children, including those with neurorisk and disability, as well as those living in remote or underdeveloped areas. The specific goal for 2013 is to identify and agree on sustainability mechanisms, in cooperation with relevant government and local institutions.

**Strategic Partnerships**

*Mostly met benchmarks*

CO’s partnership with the Ombudsperson for Children and Coordination of NGO’s for children was strengthened through the joint organization of the Conference „Policies for children: European Union, Council of Europe, Croatia“, which looked at the current status of child rights promotion and protection, in the context of Council of Europe documents and standards and Croatia’s approaching accession into the EU. The Conference was organised in the Croatian Parliament and strongly supported by Parliament Committee members. They emphasised their determination for an active participation in the process of advancing regulatory frameworks and developing new strategies for reducing equity gaps and providing fully child rights implementation.

This was a timely opportunity to indicate the need for a new approach in the new NAP for children One, which is more focused on a holistic approach to the child development and based on clear results and aggregated indicators as opposed to the current practice of partial and incomplete data and indicators based on activities, rather than concrete results. The participants of the conference also identified the need for a meaningful and continuous dialogue among relevant partners and a shift toward impact guided strategies, plans and activities.

In its fifth year, the Schools for Africa Project partnership with primary and secondary schools expanded to include kindergarten children and now numbers more than 80,000 children, 15% of all children in Croatia, who are actively involved in the programme activities which include a fundraising component. Total funds raised amounted to US$ 88,000.

Scaling up of Face-to-Face fundraising, as a primary channel for acquisition of new pledge donors, created a strong platform of 15,700 active regular donors. This channel of fundraising, being highly risk averse in an economy deeply affected by recession, has potential for steady growth in the upcoming years and has contributed US$ 777,000, or 45% of total funds raised in 2012.

**Knowledge Management**

*Mostly met benchmarks*

UNICEF promoted KM to generate, collect, disseminate and promote the use of information and data, recommendations and lessons learned on the most vulnerable children, in order to influence policy-making and implementation. In 2012, based on the expressed needs and in close cooperation with government ministries, CO published and disseminated two key publications, undertook 3 new studies/surveys, worked with partners to provide technical support to 2 more studies/surveys, and finalised 1 evaluation and 1 survey that was taken over from the previous year.

The beginning of 2012 was marked by the new Situation Analysis, prepared in close cooperation with the Government, and launched in Parliament by the Vice Prime Minister and the Ombudsperson for Children. The publication, “What Children Say about Foster Care” showing the results of a study of children’s perspectives on foster care with recommendations for improvements - was launched by the Minister for Social Policy and
Youth and widely shared among the stakeholders. The report is seen as being instrumental in creating new policies.

A Study on the Situation of Children with Disabilities Placed in Institutions - an analysis of bottlenecks and barriers was initiated in 2012 to be finalized in Q2 2013, will be instrumental in reforming the child care system and the deinstitutionalisation process.

The research „Intensified Care and Supervision-ICS- in Croatia” will provide insights about alternative measures for juvenile offenders, focusing on three types of characteristics: the juvenile, the measure leader and the process before and during the sanction.

The Research on Poverty and material well-being of preschool children in Croatia was initiated with expected results in Q3 2013.

In answer to an increased demand for knowledge regarding Roma children, CO provided technical support for and content inputs into national RECI research. In addition, UNICEF, together with UNDP and UNHCR, manages the analytical research on the Roma population in Croatia paying special attention to the fulfillment of to child and women’s rights.

A major external evaluation was conducted in 2012 of the UNICEF supported project “For Safe and Enabling Environment in Schools” which aims to prevent and reduce violence among children in schools, to support an enabling and stimulating school environment and to create safe conditions for children to learn, play and develop.

Comprehensive and nationally representative quantitative and qualitative research on community-based support services for parents of young children, with information on the extent to which the policy interventions in Croatia provide parents of young children with adequate and sufficient support, as well as how much the services currently available respond to the actual needs/priorities as defined by parents themselves, was finalised. Results will be widely presented in Q1 2013 and used for the development of new NAP for children as well as local plans of actions.

**Human Rights Based Approach to Cooperation**

*Mostly met benchmarks*

CO continued to promote and apply the HRBA in all types of partnerships. CO supported development of two alternative reports on the CRC. One is prepared by the Coalition of NGO’s for children, and the second, for the first time in the country’s history, by children themselves. This first national children’s Shadow Report on the implementation of CRC is a result of discussions held by children in Children’s Councils, which have been established in towns and municipalities and awarded child friendly status.

Children with disabilities continue to experience barriers in realising their right to an education, especially early education. Even though Croatia has a long history of universal access to education it also has a long-standing tradition of a medical approach to disability and children with disabilities are often unwelcome in and excluded from regular preschools. Hence, CO continued to promote the rights-based approach to inclusive education in the early years. In partnership with the Ombudsman for Children and the Ombudsman for Persons with Disabilities, and with the support of child rights advocate Gerison Lansdown, CO organised a conference for duty bearers in order to help them increase their capacities and meet their obligations. CO contributed to positive social transformation by increasing awareness and knowledge on the benefits of inclusive preschool education for all children as a major step in achieving social transformation towards right-respecting societies and social justice. CO continued to advocate for a participatory approach involving community members, local organizations and parents of children with disabilities in the development and implementation of inclusive educational initiatives.

In the line with the focus on social inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized children and their families, CO in
partnership with the Education and Teacher Training Agency and NGOs, continued to empower and support children as rights-holders. It provided support in developing the capacities of children to claim their rights by teaching them what their rights are.

**Gender Equality**

*Mostly met benchmarks*

All studies, surveys and evaluations conducted in 2012 respected the gender dimension. Segregated data was included whenever possible in CO’s programmes and project-related matrixes.

**South-South and Triangular Cooperation**

The Croatian CO Programme Coordinator and the newly appointed Social Policy Officer were hosted by the Serbian CO team and introduced to the social policy initiatives and upstream efforts in Serbia as well as to their experiences in collecting and providing disaggregated data relevant for programme modeling and policy shaping. These insights were seen as valuable in helping further processes to improve social protection measures and address social exclusion of the most vulnerable children and their families in Croatia. At the same time, Croatian CO staff members provided significant amount of relevant information on the recently conducted SitAn process and shared their programme experiences with Serbian colleagues. This lessons-learned and knowledge sharing activity presented an important opportunity for mutual capacity development and cooperation, demonstrating at the same time the cumulative UNICEF pool of expertise for building sustainable changes in child protection area.

CO organised and facilitated a study visit by a high level Azerbaijani delegation to Croatia. The delegation was led by the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Social Policy and Health and Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Protection of the Population. Through a series of meetings, discussions and field visits, the delegation was familiarised with the Croatian legal framework and minimum standards and by-laws on social services related to most vulnerable groups of children (especially children with disabilities). It also learned about forecasting and budgeting of social services, accreditation and contracting of community-based organisations, and NGOs for provision of social services, monitoring the quality of services and meeting minimum standards, standards and rules applicable to the staff of service delivery agencies, their ethical aspects, training and case management mechanisms and coordination among key actors responsible for provision of integrated services and social inclusion. This resulted in knowledge sharing, opportunities for future cooperation on new initiatives in Azerbaijan in the areas of child protection and early intervention.

In cooperation with UNICEF Ukraine, the CO supported the participation of a Croatian expert on Child Friendly Cities in the CFC Conference in Ukraine. CO also supported UNICEF Bulgaria in building internal capacities for more efficient fundraising from individuals.
Narrative Analysis by Programme Component Results and Intermediate Results
Croatia - 1030

PC 1 - Alliances for equity and social inclusion of the most vulnerable children

PCR 1030/A0/06/001 ECD services for vulnerable children ensure that girls and boys from the poorest families, including those with disabilities and developmental risks and those from the Roma minority benefit from: i) inclusive, community-based preschool services for children and families; ii) family based early childhood intervention programmes and services and iii) perinatal care services and better parenting education.

Progress: Due to the changes related to the new government and reorganisation of ministries during 2012, no sufficient efforts were invested by the key ministries in a systematic approach to development of community based programmes/services. This responsibility was left to local self-governments which are burdened with low budgets. A number of relevant strategies, legislations and documents are still to be developed and/or adopted (NAP for Children, Social Welfare Act, Preschool Education Act, Preschool Curricula). UNICEF continued to model and support several initiatives in developing ECD and parenting community services in cooperation with the MoH and the newly formed Ministry of Social Policy and Youth. It also supported the collection of data on the most vulnerable children (Roma children, children living in poverty) as well as data on the parents’ opinions on the availability and accessibility of services, which showed a deficit of services and confirmed regional differences (urban and rural).

Although recognising the merits of Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) services for CWD within the new Social Welfare Act, the provision of successful evidence-based ECI programmes remains inconsistent and limited by institutional and financial obstacles, and the lack of an intersectoral approach. UNICEF focused on advocacy and increasing awareness within the central government and among professionals of what ECI can achieve. It also focused on providing technical support on data collection, developing measurement tools that will help identify the support needs of CWD aged 0-6 and advocating for effective coordination between ministers on defining joint cross-cutting policy on ECI.

Regarding Roma children’s right to access ECE, UNICEF advocated for the necessity of quality and inclusive preschool education and provided expertise to support the new National Strategy for Roma Inclusion (2013 - 2020). This strategy pushes for progress in the inclusion of Roma children in preschool programmes and gives recommends least two years of compulsory preschool education for Roma children.

IR 1030/A0/06/001/001 By the end of 2016, national and local authorities provide quality, inclusive community-based parenting and ECD support services to the most disadvantaged boys and girls and their families.

Progress: Accessibility and availability of inclusive preschool and ECD community-based services remains a challenge in Croatia. There are still regional and urban-rural differences in the provision of ECD services, accompanied by the economic uncertainty of a growing number of families with young children.

The national survey on the accessibility of the ECD services, conducted by UNICEF in 2012, showed that 56% of parents of children aged 0-6 experienced financial difficulties; they expressed a need for better accessibility to kindergartens and other services for children, as well as a need for more information on available parenting support services and more free-of-charge support services. This mostly applies to families living in rural areas of Croatia, those living in poor socioeconomic conditions or those with three and more children, as well as families with children with disabilities.

In 2012, UNICEF continued to support the Government of Croatia in developing universal programmes to support families with young children. In partnership with line ministries, a national telephone helpline was established, providing information and support to parents and other care-takers of young children. UNICEF also supported the further development of the Parenting Skills Programme in the county family centres and...
local kindergardens as a form of the service at the community level. In answer to demand, the development of a parenting support programme for parents of children with disabilities has been initiated.

**IR 1030/A0/06/001/002** By the end of 2016, the social welfare and health system, in cooperation with local authorities, provides comprehensive, quality services accessible and responsive home-based early childhood intervention services to most vulnerable families and children.

**Progress:** The new Social Welfare Act includes Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) services as one of the community-based supports for CWD aged 0-7. However, ECI services are limited at the local level due to: a lack of financial resources; inadequate capacity of current programmes and professionals for delivering ECI services; slow deinstitutionalisation and transformation of social welfare homes to community-based care services providing, among others, ECI services, and the absence of a multisectoral approach in developing ECI services. Promoting ECI services requires a twin-track approach: capacity improvement of universal services to detect children at risk of developmental delay and further support in linking and transitions between universal and specialist/targeted services. Recent UNICEF research indicates that 25% of identified newborns with neurorisks and 22% of those with developmental delays were not referred for further assessment and follow up after release from the maternity ward. This indicates that there is no cross-sectoral coordination in providing ECI services.

In 2012, CO focused on providing support in: improving standards for disability assessments boards or categorisation commissions, to be in line with CRPD, ICF–CY and SIS in cooperation with the Croatian National Institute of Public Health; advocating for the integration of ECI elements into the agendas of each relevant sector; and building the capacities of professionals for inclusive early education in cooperation with the Association for Early Childhood Intervention.

In order to provide equitable access to ECI services for CWD, in 2013 CO will focus on providing technical support to: identify and address service gaps for the needs of children with disabilities/developmental delays and their families; increase the capacities of healthcare professionals to detect developmental delays early; improve coordination across and within sectors for delivering ECI services; and develop quality and equality standards of ECI delivery.

**IR 1030/A0/06/001/003** By end of 2016, the application of BFHI, including parental education outreach programmes for the most vulnerable groups, is incorporated in the practices of maternity wards and primary health care services nationwide.

**Progress:** In 2012, the Government adopted a "Health Development Strategy 2012 – 2020" in which, for the first time, development and implementation of breastfeeding programs is included, providing a platform for the incorporation of breastfeeding programmes into the healthcare system. However, the recession continues to have a strong impact on the incorporation of breastfeeding programmes into the healthcare system.

The rate of exclusive breastfeeding continues to increase in 0-2 months but stagnates after 3 months and drops for infants aged 6 months and older, among other things, as a result of a non-adopted "National Plan for Breastfeeding" and no legislation in the application of the Code of Marketing for breast-milk substitutes. Despite the progress, the most vulnerable children (in NICU and prematurely born) are still not focused on in the positive BFH changes because of the professionals’ attitudes and resistance to changing established practices.

Regarding BFHI sustainability, the Ministry of Health initiated the incorporation of BFHI indicators in Quality and Accreditation of the Healthcare institutions. An additional significant challenge that lies ahead is the incorporation of Mother Friendly criteria in maternity ward practices because of the traditional attitudes of the professionals and their resistance to changing established medical/hospital practices.

In 2012, UNICEF continued with system strengthening and the capacity development of health professionals through the provision of assistance to the professional societies of the Croatian Medical Association and the
Ministry of Health by educating educators at the Pregnancy Courses with the aim to standardize prenatal courses at the national level. The challenge that remains is achieving the goal of having prenatal courses available to the most vulnerable and at risk parents-to-be (uneducated, poor, Roma and/or with disabilities pregnant women and their partners from rural areas). Therefore UNICEF continues to advocate for the incorporation of prenatal courses in the National Programme of Population Health Protection.

**PCR**

1030/A0/06/002 Country infrastructure for child rights strengthened for the increased realization of child rights, through: i) increased prevention and intervention to protect children from violence, abuse and neglect, ii) the planning, budgeting and monitoring policies and decisions of national and subnational authorities, which will increasingly address social exclusion of children iii) the increased engagement of public and private stakeholders in supporting childrens’ rights.

**Progress:**

This PCR aims to support system reforms by strengthening the infrastructure dedicated to realizing child rights, enhancing the awareness and voices of rights holders and most vulnerable groups, promoting community and family based services and fostering inclusion. Due to the changes related to the new government and the reorganisation of ministries in 2012, little effort was invested in a systematic approach to prevention and intervention for protection of the most vulnerable children and their families. A number of relevant strategies, legislations and documents are still to be developed and/or adopted (NPA for Children, Social Welfare Act, Foster Care Act and a number of by-laws). UNICEF continued to support the social welfare system regarding improvements in public care for the most vulnerable children by advocating, providing data and information and capacity development for social welfare professionals and decision makers.

In 2012, UNICEF supported the independent process of monitoring child rights, conducted by the NGOs and by children themselves. This resulted in shadow reports that were submitted to the CRC.

A partnership around justice for children was stepped up through cooperation between UNICEF, relevant ministries and other relevant stakeholders who made an important contribution to the up streaming of diversionary measures and strengthening child protection system that enables adequate support to child victims, witnesses and offenders.

In 2012 partnerships with individuals and corporate sector resulted in US$ 1,845 ML funds raised and 9% increase over planned. Individual donations made 87% of total funds raised. Besides corporate alliances, used primarily as a fundraising platform, CO has initiated first analysis on existing Corporate Social Responsibility activities in Croatia to further advance child rights from Corporate Engagement side. Besides raising funds for national activities, CO continued contributing to UNICEF international causes through regular donations, school collections and multi-country corporate alliances totaling US$ 285K.

**IR**

1030/A0/06/002/001 By the end of 2016, the child protection system applies a case management approach to its child clients and ensures the availability and functioning of specialized services in accordance with international standards and the best interests of children.

**Progress:** Strengthening the child protection system and completing the decentralisation of social sector and public care services for children, together with the transformation of residential institutions and deinstitutionalisation processes remain critical determining factors for advancing the infrastructure and increasing the realization of child rights.

In 2012, UNICEF’s work with the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport contributed to identifying the underlying bottlenecks related to placing the most vulnerable children (CWD and children aged 0-3) in institutions, and determining the knowledge and capacities of social welfare professionals. UNICEF continued to support the social welfare system in its improvements in public care for children without appropriate parental care through a continuous transfer of
knowledge and capacity on foster care and deinstitutionalisation. UNICEF mobilised resources and partners in advocating for children’s voices to be heard in the process of improving foster care in Croatia and gathered relevant stakeholders around identifying the best social welfare practices and modalities to provide quality family based care to young children.

A partnership around justice for children was stepped up through cooperation between UNICEF and the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth, the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior Affairs and the State Attorney’s Office. UNICEF initiated research on the quality of increased supervision and care for juvenile offenders and made an important contribution to the up streaming of diversionary measures (out-of-court settlement) at the national level. UNICEF’s contribution to the partnership will continue in 2013, particularly focusing on the on-going transfer of knowledge and capacity to a critical mass of professionals in case management practices.

IR 1030/A0/06/002/002 By end 2016, national and local authorities collect, analyse and use disaggregated data in policy making, management and accountability in processes related to addressing the social exclusion of children and their families.

**Progress:** The usage of disaggregated data in policy making, management and accountability presents one of the most important challenges in addressing the social exclusion of disadvantaged children and their families. One of the most significant sociopolitical moments in 2012 was the change in government which influenced the structure and functioning of the child protection/wellbeing sector. The newly founded Ministry of Social Policy and Youth, among others, became responsible for ensuring children’s rights protection and for providing supportive measures for children’s wellbeing. Although the new NAP design was delayed, by the end of 2012 a working group to further its development was established and new members of the Council for Children appointed. Through participation in this working group, UNICEF will continue to help strengthen national capacities and advocate for an evidence-based approach in creating national policies and strategies, based on recent SitAn, TransMonEE and other research data. The Government regularly recognises and invites UNICEF, as a confident and subject-expertise partner, to support and facilitate processes of gathering relevant data/information and provide inputs for further addressing social exclusion. Throughout 2012, a strong partnership and an undoubted commitment of the relevant ministries to supporting research/studies and other joint efforts advancing social measures for reducing equity gaps was evident. Regarding the child protection monitoring system, UNICEF provided a Country Analytical Report and continued to support the NSO to collect data for the TransMonEE database. At the annual review meeting, ministries were introduced to the observed challenges when collecting data and the necessity to standardise existing indicators. It was commonly agreed that further efforts be invested in the collecting, analysing and the usage of disaggregated data for an equity based approach in supporting the most excluded children, in which UNICEF will keep its role of a committed convener and cooperation facilitator.

IR 1030/A0/06/002/003 By 2016, alliances for children, involving the private sector, CSOs and the media inform policy and practice, advocate for child rights and leverage resources for national and international programmes for the most vulnerable children.

**Progress:** In 2012, CO has further strengthened the engagement of private individuals and the corporate sector in mobilizing resources for the fulfillment of child rights. The CP was supported by regular monthly donations from 15,700 individuals, which contributed to 45% of overall programme budget.

The economic recession affected corporate partnerships resulting in lower cash donations. This trend, however, has been mitigated by two new partnerships and alternative cash generation activities. An initial mapping of existing child friendly corporate policies indicated room for UNICEF engagement, mainly with large companies that are pursuing corporate social responsibility policies. The majority of corporate partners identified supporting employees in their parental roles through child friendly corporate policies as the area in which they would need UNICEF support.
PC 800 - Cross-sectoral costs

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>PCR 1030/A0/06/003 Cross-sectoral costs</th>
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<td><strong>Progress:</strong> The major achievement under this PCR is the correct and timely processing and implementation of activities enabling a smooth functioning of the Country Office. Those activities, as described for each IR here below, include Human Resources to support programme implementation, administrative/operational tasks to support office functioning and provision of supplies, services and knowledge required to perform administrative tasks.</td>
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IR 1030/A0/06/003/001 Operating expenses

**Progress:**
UNICEF provided human resource support with funds utilized to mainly help the organization contribute to the achievement of other IRs within the programme component and across programme components. Staff costs included consultants providing cross-sectoral support. Also, funds utilized under this IR contributed to overall achievement of CO goals through office logistics, communication, warehouse service and travels.

IR 1030/A0/06/003/002 Management and Support - Multiple FAs

**Progress:**
UNICEF provided human resource support through management and support - Multiple FAS IR with the funds utilized to mainly help the organization contribute to the achievement of other IRs within the programme component and across Programme components in the country programme of cooperation. Staff costs included the posts of Head of Office and Programme Coordinator.

PCR 1030/A0/06/800 Programme Support

**Progress:**
Major achievements for this PCR are: correct and timely processing and implementation of activities that enabled smooth functioning of CO operations and office as a whole. Those activities, as described in the IRs below, included the HR aspect of support to the office, administrative/operational tasks required to sustain office functioning on daily basis and provision of supplies, services and knowledge required to perform administrative tasks. Also includes Fundraising and Sales component where Country Office Private Sector Income Generation Strategy 2012-2016 was developed to cover fundraising and sales plans for 2012-2016.

IR 1030/A0/06/800/001 Governance and Systems

**Progress:**
UNICEF provided human resource support through Governance and Systems IR with the funds utilized to mainly help the organization contribute to the achievement of other IRs within the programme component and across Programme components in the country programme of cooperation. Staff costs included the posts of Operations Officer and Communications Officer.
IR 1030/A0/06/800/002 Financial Resources and Stewardship

**Progress:** UNICEF provided human resource support to help the organization contribute to the achievement of other IRs within the programme component and across Programme components in the country programme of cooperation. Staff costs included the posts of Operations assistant, Finance Assistant and Driver/Merchandising Clerk. Funds utilized under Operating expenses component of IR contributed to overall achievement of CO goals through office administration, office furniture and equipment, and the security and maintenance of vehicles.

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**Effective Governance Structure**

The Country Office started the new CPD cycle 2012-2016. Following a satisfactory audit report in 2011, during 2012, CO continued to implement and follow up on the recommendations provide in the report. CMT continuously monitored funds utilization and overall implementation of AMP. Particular emphasis was given to the follow-up of the GSS. LSA was strengthened and its constitution amended which also had positive impact on functioning of JCC.

Following new circumstances that emerged only after submission of CPMP, and with guidance from PFP, CO prepared the Private Sector Income Generation Strategy 2012-2016 which presents an optimal framework for securing growth needed for sustainable funding of programme activities within the country as well as further contributing to international causes.

The following formal governance mechanisms are in place: CMT, Contract Review Committee, PCA Review Committee, Joint Consultative Committee, Local Property Survey Board, Central Review Body, Local Training Committee.

Financial authorities were assigned through the roles in VISION and with table of authority (ToA) that was updated in December 2012 to reflect staff changes in the office and implementation of lessons learned with VISION across the organisation.

The CO held a total of 17 CMT meetings, 7 All-staff meetings, 3 Operations meetings and 3 Fundraising strategy meetings in 2012. In addition, 6 programme meetings were conducted to assess progress on implementation and review the standards set by the programme implementation indicators.

The UNICEF Office in Croatia continues to receive support from the Area Office (AO) in Serbia. The Area Representative is responsible for management support, and the operations team in the AO supports specific functions in the Croatia office.

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**Strategic Risk Management**

The Risk Control & Self-Assessment Report (RCSA) which reflects 2011 and 2012 was updated in 2012. The update looks at possible risks related to VISION system implementation, the lack of clarity and constant change during the year regarding definitions and distribution of roles in the system. The office established a parallel system for monitoring of roles and their usage in the system and conducted additional trainings to improve understanding of the roles. Also the Operations team developed guidelines for staff members with clear workflows of documents in SAP for most used transactions. With all those mechanisms, the office successfully managed the risks.

Intranet-based Early Warning Early Action for emergency preparedness and the office Business Continuity Plan were updated to ensure adequate level of readiness, timely response in relation to potential emergency situations and business continuity standards. The next update will be done in 2013 in response to a test of the BPC and will include all the changes in processing transactions. All UN staff Basic Security Training was
provided in 2012 by the Regional Security Advisor and a fire drill exercise was conducted at the end of the year.

### Evaluation

Based on the new CP, IMEP 2012 was developed and regularly reviewed during the year. The CO planned and conducted one major external evaluation in 2012 of the UNICEF supported project “For Safe and Enabling Environment in Schools”, which aims to prevent and reduce peer violence in schools, to support an enabling and stimulating school environment and to create safe conditions for children to learn, play and develop.

The quality of the evaluation methodology, TOR and draft report were controlled by the Regional Office facility and resulted with a request for substantial revisions. This confirmed the lack of national capacity for evaluation at expected standards. For the foreseeable future, international expertise will be required, and this must be planned and budgeted for accordingly. Financing external independent evaluations remains a challenge for CO due to high expenses and limited financial resources, influencing the overall performance of the evaluation. CO regularly conducts internal evaluations of ongoing or completed activities.

Overall findings of the evaluation report indicate that the project increased the knowledge and awareness of the key duty bearers, but at the same time did not produce the desired change in behaviour and tion in the level of peer violence and bullying in schools. Approximately 70% of teachers and 80% of children from the participating schools indicated that the project should be continued in their school and they would recommend it to other schools as well.

Recommendations given in the evaluation report include restructuring program content, improving of program implementation (more active involvement of parents and establishing stronger relations with local communities and NGOs), increasing relevance, and sustainability through enhancing national ownership. Findings of the evaluation were discussed with stakeholders at a validation workshop and shared with the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport, the Education and Training Teacher’s Agency, and the Office of Ombudsman for Children. The management response, to the evaluation report, based on the given recommendations and in compliance with the guidance on management response, will be ready by the end of January 2013.

### Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology

All ICT resources and services are in line with UNICEF policies. In 2011, the office procured all necessary hardware to support implementation of the SAP, Windows 7 and Microsoft Office 2010 Suite. The quality standards equally include continued availability of all IT resources, remote access via citrix accessed by all users, efficient user support and effective business continuity. Some of the IT resources (Citrix server and Lotus Notes) are still hosted by the Serbia office.

The office internet connection remained the same, leased line 2 Mbit/s and Office is planning to upgrade link to 4 Mbit/s in 2013 in order to improve use of SAP/VISION, Microsoft SharePoint and as a preparation to support Microsoft Exchange (messaging), and Unified Communications. To ensure business continuity, additional ADSL backup link (8192/768kbit) continues to be available and was tested in 2012.

Communications equipment (switchboard and telephones) were upgraded with a new IP based infrastructure, with more incoming lines for better availability and direct numbers for all staff members which also decreased costs of the telephone service in 2012.

A Hewlett Packard G5 server was mounted and installed to support the Windows 2008 virtual platform. All physical servers were migrated into the Windows 2008 virtual platform. Implementation of server was postponed until early 2013.
Video conference equipment was regularly upgraded with new software and in use to improve collaboration activities among different groups within the region and any other respective parties.

**Fund-raising and Donor Relations**

All allocated funds were efficiently utilized throughout the year before the PBA expiration. A monitoring mechanism is in place to ensure the efficient and timely use of funding. Utilisation of PBAs and expiration of PBAs is on the standing agenda of all CMT meetings.

The self-funded CO continued its successful record of private sector fundraising activities in 2012 raising US$ 1.757 million, 5% more than predicted, in spite of the economic recession deeply affecting Croatia since 2009. 2011 income from Cards and Products, gross of US$ 440,000 amounted to PBA of US$ 140,000 received in April 2012.

**Management of Financial and Other Assets**

The CO received a ‘satisfactory’ internal audit rating in Operations Support in the internal audit in December 2010 and continued with implementation of good practices in 2012.

The Country Management Team (CMT) had 17 meetings in 2012 and discussed management issues related to office strategic directions, program/management priorities, funding, major program planning, work processes, HR issues, training/learning, office/staff security and other management aspects. CMT decisions were regularly shared with all staff through staff meetings and minutes are filed in a shared folder.

Performance indicators for programme, communication, operations, fundraising and partnerships continue to be monitored by the CMT through an internally developed MMR and a monthly monitor report developed by the CEECIS Regional Office in 2012. The report covers monitoring areas such as core resource management, donor reporting, grants expiration, direct cash transfers (DCTs), audit observations, premises and the Regional Contingency Fund. The CO data presented in the monthly report were duly reviewed by the CMT.

Croatia Office regularly submitted bank reconciliations regularly and before deadline in SAP. In 2012, the office did not have any DCTs that were outstanding more than 6 months.

Expenditure rates for 2012 were 91% for RR (GG PBA which is valid until end of March 2013), 78% for OR. All expiring PBAs were fully used.

**Supply Management**

The total value of procurements (supply requisition component) amounted to USD 225,758.

The total value of institutional service contracts in 2012 amounted to USD 303,632 in institutional contracts for translation services, distribution centre/warehouse management, telemarketing services, press clipping, communications material design services, travel, accommodation and conference organization, maintenance services for premises, vehicles and equipment, security services, internet connectivity and other services.

In 2012, the supply component consisted largely of printing programme publications and promotional materials for fundraising and sales campaigns. Procurements also included the purchase of supplies for conferences, office stationary and miscellaneous supplies. The office purchased new computers to align with IT standards and technological requirements for migration to Windows 7.

In compliance with UNICEF policies, the necessary mandatory activities were performed in order to control/secure CO’s assets, including physical counts (twice a year), random checks and monitoring.
asset focal point is responsible for appropriate recording, monitoring and reporting of all activities related to assets. Programme supplies were regularly processed through the VISION warehouse module and physical count was conducted twice in 2012. The newly introduced management system VISION also resulted in better monitoring and reporting on the procurement processes and inventory.

Human Resources

With approved 2012-16 CPD/CPMP and taking into consideration the new staffing needs, in the 2012 the CO has managed to conduct and finalise the recruitment of a Social Policy Officer and a Finance Assistant. The office still relies heavily on the expertise of consultants on SSA contracts.

In 2012, an additional capacity gap assessment was performed as part of preparations for JSP and within the CP 2012- 2016, to determine the optimum staffing capacity and competencies required to support the implementation of the new CP and growing needs in the Fundraising sector.

In addition, an assessment was made of which competencies need to be improved in-house and which can be out-sourced, procured through partnerships, or filled through SSA contracts.

PAS discussions were held regularly, and individual SMs responsibilities in PAS were linked to AWP’s and AMP’s key results and to overall achievement of CP priorities and results. Regarding SM development and learning, a two-day retreat was organized for all SM’s and in-house consultants, devoted to the two main subject-themes: personal development and team work. All staff members passed Managing people for results training and results of the training will be implemented in PAS discussions for 2012 to be conducted in early 2013.

All staff members and individual consultants, travelling for UNICEF, passed the Basic Security in the Field training II before the deadline of 01 June 2012 and all staff members passed the Basic Security Training provided by the Regional Security Advisor.

Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings

In 2012, the CO used many pro-bono services of advertising agencies, professionals, social media agencies and others to reduce the costs of producing awareness-raising materials and brand building. In partnership with media outlets, free advertising space and time was secured.

The office procured an additional multifunctional copy machine and started phasing out single printers per room in order to save money on expensive cartridges. The Multifunctional copy machine also saves time with a very fast, double-sided scanning option which was used by all staff members.

A new telephone infrastructure with GSM gateways Office resulted in lower telephone costs since the majority of calls are donor related, from office phone to mobile phone.

In 2012, Skype and Polycom VC became main gateways for free of charge international calls replacing the use of land lines or office mobile phones.

Changes in AMP & CPMP

The rolling management plan (RMP) for 2013-2014 will include the lessons learned from using the VISION system for one year. It will not only include organisational findings but also the CO’s perspective on indicators to be monitored and table of authority (ToA). Also, RMP will include changes in composition of office committees and will cover strategic organizational changes that occurred in 2012.
Summary Notes

[1] Ipsos Puls Survey 2012 Report, not published
[4] Zdenko Babic, Faculty of Law, Centre for Social Welfare Studies, Economic aspects of investing in young
    child development, comparative overview, November 2012
[7] Institute Ivo Pilar, External evaluation of the “For Safe and Enabling School Environment” project in
    Croatia 2012
[8] National Center for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement: Progress in International Literacy Study
    and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, 2012
Ombudsperson for Children, Annual Report 2011
UNICEF, Situation Analysis, 2011/2012