Executive Summary

UNICEF and partners jointly took stock of the progress achieved for children since the beginning of the Country Programme 2010-2015 at the MTR conducted in 2013, and agreed on the future programme directions.

A new law on Early Childhood Development (ECD) approved in 2013 has enabled diversified provision of quality ECD services, especially for the most vulnerable children. In 2013, 17 new kindergartens were opened in rural areas and preparations for opening of five ECD centres are ongoing. A 2013 assessment confirmed improved child development outcomes in kindergartens and ECD centres in which teachers had been trained on Early Learning Development Standards. Following the implementation of the early literacy teacher education programme, an improvement of six per cent in student outcomes was noted in the literacy of students reading in early grades. New modules based on International Classification of Functioning –Children and Youth (ICF-CY) were introduced in ten pilot primary schools.

A new Law on Justice for Children was adopted and is in force as of December 2013. Key changes include specific provisions on the rights of children victims and witnesses, shifting the focus from juvenile justice to justice for children. A major reform of the process of assessment process of children with disabilities based on the ICF-CY model is under way. This reform will shift the approach to disability from the current traditional medical model to one in line with the ICF-CY approach to disability.

Partnership was established with international academic institutions to modernize the pre-service and in-service training for medical students and patronage nurses. A new training module was developed for patronage nurses to improve their work on children with developmental risks and difficulties. Medical students’ curriculum in paediatrics was revised to include updated and evidence-based modules on health care for children with developmental risks and difficulties.

The corporate alliance established with the Foundation T-Mobile in 2012 to increase supply and demand for quality ECD services resulted in the mobilization of funds for new ECD Centers in poor communities. Six additional private sector partners and multiple media partners joined the initiative. Two additional mobile operators established donation hotlines to support the campaign and 26 media partners including from television, radio, print and online portals provided pro-bono media space.

The 2013 planned activities with the National Commission on the Rights of Children were not implemented, including the development of indicators and reporting tools on the National Action Plan on Children and training for the members of the Commission were not implemented. This was due to the March local elections held in March in which several members of the Commission were involved and also to the replacement in May of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy, who is also chaired the National Commission. In view of the challenges faced by this body to fulfil its mandate, UNICEF will continue exploring with national partners options for a national reporting mechanisms on child rights with national partners.

Engaging with the Parliament is a sensitive and complex process. Party politics and deep divisions along party lines are serious issues affecting child-rights policies and outcomes. It is crucial that all members of the parliament working group are informed timely and simultaneously to avoid polarization and politicization of children’s issues.

Country Situation as Affecting Children & Women

Despite positive macro-economic trends, impact on the most vulnerable groups is yet to be proven. High poverty levels (27 per cent general poverty and 36 per cent child poverty in 2011 according to the State Statistical Office) have remained largely unchanged. The Government continued with the implementation of additional poverty alleviation measures such as public work programmes for the unemployed, and conditional cash transfers for poor families with children enrolled in secondary school.

Child health indicators continued to improve; however, disparities persist based on ethnicity persist. Roma
and Albanian children have 25 per cent higher infant mortality. Stunting prevalence among Roma children at 18 per cent is six times higher than the national average. Access to quality health services for early detection and intervention for children with disabilities is limited with disparities based on place of residence and ethnicity. To address this key bottleneck, UNICEF in collaboration with the MOH and Association of Nurses has initiated the development of a pre- and in-service training programme for patronage nurses to improve their skills in the early detection and referral of children with developmental risks. Closer coordination is being enhanced between the patronage nurses and the Roma Health Mediators at the community level.

Between 2005 and 2012, the number of children in the eight institutions in the country has decreased by 27 per cent from 825 to 597 children of which 64 per cent are with disabilities.[1] However, the on-going de-institutionalization process is limited to three institutions and is not framed into a comprehensive child protection system reform. Provision of outreach prevention and protection services for the most at risk children remains limited. This is mainly due to lack of qualified human and financial resources of the Centres for Social Work (CSWs), and the lack of clear regulations on authority, responsibility and accountability at all levels of social services.

In an effort to address gaps in the quality of services, the Country Programme (CP) supported the creation formulation of by-sub laws and the introduction of a new curriculum for the CSW staff. Standards and procedures for case management and an electronic data collection system were also developed. Lack of official data on the number of children with disabilities remains an important gap. Information is only available for children who are benefiting from some kind of services from the state. The current process of categorization of children with disabilities which is still based on a medical model, is being reformed to bring it in line with the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health – Children and Youth (ICF-CY). The reform will be completed in 2014.

Significant progress was achieved in Early Childhood Development (ECD). The proportion of children enrolled in ECD programmes increased from 26 per cent in 2012 to 34 per cent in 2013.[2] But equity gaps remain wide for the most marginalized children. While 37 per cent of Macedonian children are attending pre-school services, only 3 per cent of Albanians children and 4 per cent of Roma children are enrolled.[3]

The new law on ECD and 27 new by-laws for diversifying the provision of ECD services[4], were adopted by the Parliament in February 2013, including the Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) as a reference for quality, licensing, professional development, inspection, and record keeping. A progress assessment in 2013 showed that children who are attending ECD centres have the best developmental outcomes, followed by children who attend model kindergartens and lastly children who attend traditional kindergartens.

This provided a strong basis for advocating for quality early learning based on ELDS. While ECD has become a national priority and increased commitments were made to expand ECD services, state funding remains very low and public awareness on the importance of enrolling young children in ECD services remains low. The campaign “The First Five are the Most Important” launched late 2013 in partnership with the Foundation “T-Mobile for Macedonia” Foundation, promoted the importance of early childhood development and mobilizing support to open new ECD centres.

Access to primary education is almost universal (98 per cent) and 83 per cent are enrolled in secondary education. Gains in secondary education were made among the poorest children, where the rate has almost doubled, increasing from 34 per cent in 2005 to 62 per cent in 2011.[5] Outcomes in early numeracy, measured in grade four, showed improvements from 38 per cent in 2009 to 58 per cent in 2012.[6] Yet, only 0.5 per cent of children with disabilities attend kindergartens and only 15 per cent are in enrolled in schools.[7]

The Government supported expansion of the “Thinking Mathematics” programme in upper primary education introduced with UNICEF’s support in upper primary education. The MoES also endorsed the modules for in-service training on inclusive education based on ICF-CY. The MoES participated in the multi-country evaluation of the Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda (RKLA) “Inclusion of All Out Of School Children
in Quality Learning in CEE/CIS”. The preliminary findings stress the importance of capacity the need to building capacities at all levels for the implementation of a broad definition of inclusive education.

The frequency of inter-ethnic incidents in schools remains the same and USAID continued to implements the national programme “Inter-Ethnic Integration” programme based on UNICEF piloted models of extracurricular activities and democratic participation. UNICEF embarked on the process of Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) planning for Euro 3.66 million for a national reform on inclusive education in both pre-school and primary education based on its widely recognized expertise and experience in working in education reform with a broad range of partners.

UNICEF's study on "Strengthening Social Protection of Children" study published in April 2013, was crucial in generating information on the coverage and adequacy of benefits, particularly for the most vulnerable communities, including the poorest children and Roma. The study is a first step towards a more comprehensive social protection reform, which will benefit from contributions by other stakeholders such as the World Bank.

[6] Assessment of progress achieved at the end of the first cycle of the implementation of the "Thinking Mathematics in the Early Grades" programme
[7] Based on internal reports from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Bureau for Education Development

**Country Programme Analytical Overview**

The 2013 MTR assessed positively the relevance and effectiveness of the programme in addressing bottlenecks preventing the realization of the rights of the most marginalised children, including Roma and children with disabilities. UNICEF contributed to the creation of an enabling environment for system changes leading to results for children in priority areas.

The capacity of the primary health care system continued to be is being improved to provide accessible, quality care to for children with developmental difficulties and from socially deprived communities (Roma). Strategies included strengthening human resources in the MCH system, both for pre-service and in-service training for patronage nurses doing outreach work. At the community level, the programme supported an enhanced inter-sectoral approach between health and social services in Roma communities.

UNICEF contributed to the development and approval of the new ECD law and by sub-laws that provide a policy basis for universal access to quality early learning opportunities for all children, including the most marginalized. The law addresses the barriers to access of supply and quality by focusing on learning and development rather than on care only and ensuring licensing of ECD teachers on the new ELDS and methods. UNICEF continued to provide technical expertise and capacity development to improve quality of education in early literacy and numeracy and to promote inclusive education. Thanks to the new financial contribution of the Austrian Development Agency, UNICEF supported the improvement of basic numeracy and literacy skills for Roma children.

Addressing the issue of inclusive education, UNICEF supported the development of modules based on ICF-CY and the training of national trainers from academia, government and NGOs. Once the results were achieved, best practices and lessons learned in the education programme (2005-2013) were reviewed and documented as part of the Regional Multi-Country Evaluation on Ensuring access to quality education for all children.

To address the lack of standards and weak quality of social services, UNICEF supported capacity development activities for the Institute for Social Activities. A multi-agency coordination mechanism was established to provide a comprehensive response to children victims of violence.

To expand the role of civil society in monitoring child rights, UNICEF supported two NGO coalitions in
developing and publishing their second annual reports on the situation of child rights and CRC implementation.

The first private sector partnership was formalized in 2013 which aimed at improving access to ECD early childhood development services. The partnership builds on a Communication for Development (C4D) initiative to raise awareness on the importance of ECD and the critical role of parents and caretakers play.

As per the recommendations of the MTR, increased focus was placed on:
1) improving cross-sectoral coordination and services to address the multi-dimensional aspects of children with disabilities, including early detection of developmental needs by outreach health and social workers, proper assessment of children with disabilities, and inclusion into quality learning;
2) improving data collection and systematic use for policy formulation, planning and monitoring;
3) strengthening civil society and child rights monitoring systems;
4) enhancing strategic communication and C4D activities to address persistent negative perceptions and stigma against vulnerable groups.

**Humanitarian Assistance**

N/A

**Effective Advocacy**

*Fully met benchmarks*

In 2011, UNICEF leveraged funds for the Ministry of Health (US $8.5 million from the; Dutch Government) to revive primary health care services for maternal and child health. As a follow up, UNICEF continued to advocate with the Ministry in both evidence-based and equity-focused planning to ensure the effective implementation of this investment plan. Three comprehensive health system performance analyses supported by UNICEF throughout the country programme cycle (assessment of the patronage nursing system, quality of the perinatal care and review of the immunization programme), were used as an evidenced-based platform to inform detailed planning and the finalization of the maternal and child health investment plan in the course of 2013. The purpose of the analyses was to understand and document major bottlenecks in effective coverage of health services for children, preventing equitable and quality delivery of primary health care. Key findings were presented within along the framework of bottleneck determinants which looked, in particular, at the enabling policy, the legal and financing environment and access to adequate and quality services.

**Capacity Development**

*Fully met benchmarks*

In 2013, the programme continued to support the capacity development of key partners in the priority programme areas to deliver better results for children.

Health: Using models from the European Union and following WHO evidence-based practices, in partnership with the National Association of Nurses, the Country Office (CO) Programme supported the development of a new training framework for patronage nurses for early identification of and early intervention for children with disabilities. The training framework builds on the current teaching programme for patronage nurses, and will be integrated at the pre-service and in-service education levels.

In ECD: Within framework of the newly adopted ECD law, six modules for ECD on professional advancement in ECD were developed as well as a module on inclusive ECD were developed. These were used for to develop the capacity development of 148 professionals to support in 8 additional kindergartens with focus on supporting young child development and learning and record keeping based on ELDS in eight additional kindergartens. In addition, following the adoption of the new law and the fact that the new record keeping was mandatory for all ECD providers, UNICEF supported specific training on record keeping training of 154 kindergarten staff from all 55 public and 3 private kindergartens.

In Education: Seventy per cent of lower primary school teachers from 65 per cent% of all primary school
were trained in numeracy, while 44 per cent% of lower primary education teachers from 45 per cent % of primary schools were trained in literacy. Training based on inclusive education modules was provided into ten pilot primary schools.

In the area of child protection: UNICEF supported the capacity development of staff from the Institute for Social Activities (ISA) staff and the Centers for Social Work (CSW). The licensing of Center for Social Work (CSW) staff continued based on the new training curriculum developed with UNICEF assistance in 2011. A series of roll-out trainings were conducted by the ISA, which is responsible for capacity building and standards setting for all CSWs. To date, over 80 per cent0% of CSW staff have been trained. Upon completion of the training, the CSW staff are requested to provide evidence of practical implementation of the acquired knowledge.

The capacity of the Parliamentary Working Group on Child Rights to advocate for a greater allocation of public resources to child-related issues continued to be strengthened and resulted in the working group enhanced in child-related public expenditure trends, which resulted in lobbying with the Government to increase allocations for child-specific sectors in the 2014 national budget, currently being debated in the National Assembly. The Parliamentary deadlock in the first quarter of the year due to the boycott by the discontented opposition parties who were removed during the budget discussions in late 2012 delayed the implementation of the planned study visit of Members of Parliament (MPs) the MPs to the German Bundestag. The visit was intended to foster cooperation between the German and Macedonian MPs sitting in child-rights parliamentary bodies. This activity will be conducted in 2014.

Communication for Development

Fully met benchmarks

In late November, the CO programme launched a social mobilisation campaign to engage and motivate a wide range of partners in building awareness and demand for quality early childhood development services. The campaign integrated a corporate engagement strategy and communication for development efforts to contribute to increasing the supply and demand for quality ECD services.

Recognising that parents believe children should start learning in schools and that preschool (kindergarten) is primarily focused on provision of care as opposed to learning and that parents and ECD professionals do not have knowledge and skills to support holistic development and early learning; the campaign aims to raise awareness about the long term benefits of quality early childhood development; provide resources to care givers to better support and nurture their children in the first five years of life, and equally important, demand quality services.

Furthermore, while ECD has become a national priority with an increased commitment to expanding ECD services, rural and marginalised communities that would most benefit from pre-school services are low priority for state funding. Having identified the potential to engage other partners, the campaign additionally aims to generate support from local municipalities, private companies, and individuals to raise resources to open new services in communities where national government investment is not a priority.

The spirit of social mobilisation was incorporated during the development stage of the campaign. The campaign itself (creative concepts, pre-launch testing, production of multiple campaign assets, media space) was developed with the support of multiple individuals and experts; service providers and media partners who volunteered their time, provided pro-bono services and donated media space. This not only ensured participatory approach, it also generated an estimated US $52,000 USD cost saving to the CO.

The campaign was launched in late November, as such reporting on results is premature; however, based on monitoring mechanisms established as part of M&E framework, the campaign Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/prvite5 got over 3,000 likes with an average of 600 new likes per week and posts reached 100,000 people at the end of December.
**Service Delivery**

**Fully met benchmarks**

The new CSW standards and procedures were endorsed by the Institute for Social Activities. The standards and procedures are based on the Law on Social Protection and the expected result of their implementation is improvement in the quality of services delivered. The standards regulate case management and the delivery of specialized services while the procedures are regulated the details different aspect of CSW work, for example accommodating children without parents and parental care, marriage and family relations, children victims of violence and abuse etc. The on-the-job training for the new standards was completed in all CSWs and implementation will begin in 2014.

**Strategic Partnerships**

**Fully met benchmarks**

The health programme component facilitated partnership and horizontal collaboration between national (the State Medical University, the Nursing College and professional associations) and international partners (Imperial College and Ulster University) to develop pre-service training for medical students and in-service training for patronage nurses in the area of early detection and identification of newborns with developmental risks.

The partnership with USAID supported inclusive education and placed ICF-CY at the centre of all efforts supporting the inclusion in primary and secondary schools. USAID participated in UNICEF-supported workshops and advocacy events regarding inclusive education.

Within the framework of the planned IPA project framework, the EU and UNICEF partnered to support the MoES in implementing a system-wide approach to inclusive and quality learning for all children, that builds on the best practices implemented so far all the while ensuring sustainability and capacity development. As part of this project, the programme will also support horizontal and vertical cooperation between the MoES at the national and local level, local authorities and civil society. The on-going planning for IPA II includes ECD as part of the national priority for providing all children with quality learning.

The education section took part in the OECD Innovative Learning Environments project through documenting on-going experiences in the area of early grade numeracy and literacy teacher education programme, and monitoring and documenting progress in innovative teacher education support mechanisms.

The campaign "The First Five Are the Most Important" campaign was launched at the end of 2013 to promote the importance of early childhood development and mobilize support to open new early childhood development centres. The campaign also aims to mobilize support from multiple stakeholders – local municipalities, private companies, and individuals – to get involved to increase access to quality pre-school. As part of the partnership with UNICEF, the Foundation T-Mobile for Macedonia Foundation donated US $50,000 to open additional early childhood development centres.

Partnership with the two NGO’s coalitions in around child rights monitoring child rights and CRC implementation continued in 2013. It resulted in the publication of annual reports on the situation of child rights in the country. In order to diversify and expand this partnership, an NGO’s mapping exercise was conducted with the help of the UN Human Rights Advisor to identify additional organisations engaged in the area of child rights.

UNICEF and the World Bank continued to be supporting the MoLSP’s i for in-depth reform of the social protection system to increase efficiency and effectiveness for better coverage and equitable access to benefits. The outcomes of the 2013 UNICEF-supported assessment on child benefits are being used in the
ongoing evaluation of the social protection system.

With UNICEF technical support, the Parliamentary Child Rights Working Group conducted two parliamentary hearings, one on justice for children and the other on Early Childhood Development legislation. Following their visit to the juvenile correctional facility in Veles, which highlighted the poor living conditions of detained children, the Working Group (WG) issued a set of recommendations and instructions to the relevant authorities on how to comply with the national legislation. The WG submitted budget amendments to the proposed 2014 financial framework to, aimed at increasing allocations for the child-related social protection components.

Knowledge Management

Fully met benchmarks

In 2013, the Country Office carried out a comprehensive Situation Analysis of Children in the country. The equity focused human rights based approach of the analysis provides a unique insight into the causes of inequities, gaps and bottlenecks in realizing child rights in the country. The findings of the Situation Analysis were used to inform the Mid Term Review process and will guide the identification of priorities for the country programme over the next two years.

The study “Strengthening the System of Social Protection for Children” study, carried out in 2012 in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, was published in April 2013. It identified weaknesses in the system of social protection for children related to the coverage of the most vulnerable children by the existing child benefits schemes, as well as their adequacy. It showed that only a fifth of the poorest children benefited from a child allowance, and that the amount was insufficient to ensure adequate living standards. The findings were used by UNICEF to partner with the World Bank in supporting the Government to conduct reforms of the social protection system as a whole. For that purpose, it is planned to form an inter-ministerial and expert working group is planned to propose the legislative changes.

UNICEF supported a progress assessment of child learning and developmental outcomes based on the Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS). The assessment showed that children attending model ECD centres and kindergartens supported by the programme performed better than those attending traditional kindergartens and children not attending any form of ECD. These results correlate with the types of interactions between ECD staff and young children, their support to holistic child development, and their use of play as the main learning strategy for young children. This evidence supports quality child learning based on ELDS in the country, but also contributes to the learning of other countries in the region that have embarked on similar initiatives.

In the area of early literacy, the CO programme supported a progress assessment of grade four literacy students’ results in grade four of primary education and of teacher’s ability to teach literacy. The assessment included comparison between schools that have benefitted from the UNICEF-supported programme for improving early grade literacy for three years, with schools that were not included in the programme. Preliminary results showed an improvement in student outcomes for 6 per cent in reading, but no improvement yet in writing. The CO UNICEF has documented the early grade numeracy and literacy teacher education programme as part of the OECD Innovative Learning Environments and continued to monitor and document progress in the area of innovative teacher education support mechanisms.

Two NGOs coalitions were supported by the CO in monitoring CRC implementation in the country for selected rights, based on their areas of expertise, such as child participation in schools and adoption. Information produced in their reports was publicly presented, and highlighted key issues of child rights violation. Advocacy around these issues resulted in the amendment of standards and procedures for the or adoption of children, and for increased child participation in education.
**Human Rights Based Approach to Cooperation**

*Fully met benchmarks*

The CO has continued to apply the Human Rights Based Approach (HRBAP) to programming and cooperation with national and international partners to achieve progress in the realization of children's rights in the country. Planning and programming were conducted in accordance with the principles of equity focusing on the impact of programmatic activities on the most vulnerable and marginalized children and their families. The HRBAP Human Rights Based Approach is embedded in the CO’s use of the principle system, strengthening strategies such as the generation and use of knowledge, data and evidence for policy making and implementation; capacity development for the operationalization of laws and policies; and developing strategic partnerships focused on enhancing accountability and demand for rights and entitlements.

Knowledge and evidence generation was done through the Situation Analysis of Children in the country conducted in 2012-2013 generating knowledge and evidence-based data was grounded in the Human Rights Based Approach. It informed the MTR process, and contributed to the UN Common Country Assessment for the next UNDAF, 2016-2020. The Situation Analysis was grounded in the Human Rights Based Approach. The Analysis contributed to improve the understanding of decision-makers, partners and stakeholders of the current status of children's rights in the country and provided valuable data and evidence on existing bottlenecks and underlying causes for the incomplete realization of children’s rights. The Situation Analysis also examined the roles and relationships between duty-bearers and rights holders and analysed gaps in their capacity to fully realise children’s rights. The Analysis informed the MTR process, and contributed to the UN Common Country Assessment for the next UNDAF, 2016-2020.

The CO continued to support NGOs coalitions in the monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the CRC implementation in the country, thus contributing to raising awareness among duty bearers in fulfilling child’s rights fulfilment.

The Country Office actively participated in the UN Working Group on Human Rights and Gender Working group, which is the principal forum where UN agencies share concerns on the situation on human rights in the country and make suggestions to the UNCT to jointly advocate for Human Rights.

Four staff members participated in the two PPP training workshops organised by the RO in 2013. The key elements of the training, including HRBAP were shared and widely discussed with all staff. The training will provide a valuable resource for future programming and using the human rights approach in the CO work in the coming years.

**Gender Equality**

*Fully met benchmarks*

All surveys, studies and evaluations, conducted in 2013 as well as TORs were done using the key gender principles. Gender was mainstreamed throughout all the programmes components, including all project-related matrixes and M&E log frames, which, whenever possible, included segregated data. UNICEF partners, both governmental and non-governmental, were asked to also use "gender lenses" when collecting and analysing data.

As part of the MTR process, the IRs in the revised CPAP matrix were rated against the Gender Equity Marker. Four out of seven IRs were rated at level 3 (Principal objective to advance gender equality) and three at level 2 (Significant contribution to gender equality).
The MICS 4 final report was published in 2013. All MICS data at the individual level of individual respondent levels were disaggregated by gender, and thus provided detailed information on possible differentials. MICS data on children, disaggregated by gender and age, provided important insights into the status of children, including some key indicators for the status of girls e.g. child labour, child discipline, early childhood development, and education. MICS results were widely disseminated among the government and civil society partners for evidence-based policy and advocacy.

UNICEF is a part of the UN Human Rights and Gender Theme Group (HRGTG). Led by UN Women, the group aims to further strengthen coordinated action in the UN working towards greater gender equality and human rights fulfilment. HRGTG regularly meets and discusses the ways on how to better promote human rights and gender equality in the country.

**Environmental Sustainability**

*Initiating action to meet benchmarks*

N/A

**South-South and Triangular Cooperation**

N/A
Narrative Analysis by Programme Component Results and Intermediate Results
Macedonia -- 2660

PC 1 - System strengthening for child rights

On-track

PCR 2660/A0/05/501 By end of 2015, as a result of social sector reforms, the Government addresses targeted disparities in the quality of and access to basic social services for vulnerable children and families.

Progress: The capacity of the primary health system was improved to provide accessible and quality care for children with developmental difficulties and from socially deprived communities (Roma). Strategies included strengthening human resources in the MCH system, both for pre-service and in-service training for medical students and patronage nurses. A new training module for patronage nurses was developed to enhance their work with children with developmental risks and difficulties. The medical students’ curriculum in paediatrics curriculum for medical students was revised as well.

At the community level, the CO supported an enhanced inter-sectoral approach between health and social services in Roma communities to improve access to health care for marginalized groups of children have to health care. Initiated by civil society organizations, the Roma Health Mediators’ Programme was gradually taken over by the Ministry of Health and integrated within the work of the patronage nurses. Initial results of this work look promising. More than 1200 Roma families were reached with services in 2013, while 577 children were fully immunized as a result of the community outreach services.

According to very recently released MoES data, access to ECD services for children 3-6 years of age has increased from 26 per cent in 2012 to 34 per cent in 2013. The newly adopted law on ECD provides the foundation for universal access to quality early learning opportunities for all children, but especially for the most marginalized. The law and relevant by sub-laws allow diversified provision of ECD services and thus resulted in increased opportunities for the Government and municipalities to invest in new kindergartens and ECD centres - 17 new kindergartens were opened in 2013 in rural areas, and five new ECD centres will be opened by the end of the year. A progress assessment in 2013 showed that children who are attending ECD centres have the best developmental outcomes, followed by children who attend model kindergartens and lastly children who attend traditional kindergartens.

In Education, the CO continued to support the articulation of a national vision on inclusive quality education based on the development of five modules for inclusive education and ICF-CY and its implementation in ten primary schools. The progress assessment of teacher knowledge and student outcomes in early grade literacy in early grades showed an improvement of 6 per cent in student literacy outcomes.

A new Law on Justice for Children was adopted and is in force as of December, 2013. Key changes include specific provisions on the rights of children victims and witnesses and, shifting the focus from juvenile justice to justice for children.

The situation of children in conflict and in contact with the law is monitored by the National Council to Prevent Juvenile Delinquency, which has produced an annual report using the indicators framework that was previously developed with UNICEF’s support. Based on this report, the Government and the Parliament issued specific recommendations to improve the situation of this group of children.

New service delivery standards for social work were adopted, which together with the new curriculum for continuous professional development of CSW staff adopted in 2011, will form the basis for the issuance or extension of work licenses for CSW personnel. The on-the-job training for the new standards was completed in all CSWs and implementation will begin in 2014. To date, over 80 per cent% of CSW staff have been trained based on the curriculum.

A multi-sectoral working group led by the MoLSP was established to reform the process of assessment of children with disabilities. A new assessment model, based on the ICF-CY was developed by an international consultant.

With UNICEF support, the National Coordination Body on Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect with UNICEF support was leading the development of a multi-disciplinary model for dealing with child victims of abuse.

An assessment of the secondary legislation in the social, health, education and justice sectors, related to children victims and witnesses was conducted and, which included recommendations on how to improve and align the normative framework with the international standards.

On-track

IR 2660/A0/05/501/001 By end of 2015, national and local authorities’ resource programmes and action plans that address targeted MCH disparities and gaps in the quality of MCH services provided.

Progress: In 2011, UNICEF leveraged funds for the Ministry of Health (US $8.5 million from the Dutch Government) to revive primary health care services for maternal and child health. As a follow up, UNICEF continued to support the Ministry in both evidence-based and equity-focused planning to ensure the effective implementation of this investment plan. Following leveraged funds for the Ministry of Health ($8.5 million from the Dutch Government) in 2011 to revive primary health services for maternal and child health, the Programme continued to advocate for evidence-based and equity-focused planning of the MCH investment plan. UNICEF supported three MCH system analyses on immunization, patronage nursing and perinatal care that were used to inform detailed planning and finalization of the MCH
At the community level, UNICEF addressed bottlenecks of access to health care for marginalized groups of children by partnering with the Ministry of Health and the civil society sector to strengthen the Roma Health Mediator’s Programme. Following successful advocacy by UNICEF CO, in 2013 the Government approved budgetary support to cover salaries of Roma Health Mediators. Furthermore, the programme was integrated within the work of the patronage nurses, and in this regard, UNICEF supported activities to strengthen their coordination and capacity. The strength of this programme lies in its ability to involve civil society, the Government and other stakeholders to address the health issues of Roma families and children, but moreover, to address social determinants impacting health. Initial results of its work are promising with. More than 1200 Roma families were reached in 2013, and while 577 children were fully immunized as a result of the community outreach services.

IR 2660/A0/05/501/002 By end of 2015, all municipalities provide an essential set of diversified ECD services.

Progress: The new law on ECD and 27 new by-laws diversifying the provision of ECD services, were adopted by the Parliament in February 2013. The new ECD law and 27 new sub-laws developed with the program’s support were adopted and approved in 2013. The law addresses the barriers to supply and quality of ECD services by focusing on learning and development rather than on care only. It also provides legal and policy foundation basis for universal access to quality early learning opportunities for all children, including the most marginalized children, such as Roma children and children with disabilities.

The new law and by-laws also include the Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) as a reference for quality, licensing, professional development, inspection, and record keeping. Key aspects of the law and sub-laws include diversified provision, ELDS as a reference for quality learning, licensing, professional development, inspection, and record keeping. The CO provided extended the in-service training support for support on implementation of ELDS to 8 implementation to an additional eight model kindergartens, reaching a total of 18 out of total of 55 kindergartens in the country. These trainings and support enabled kindergarten staff to plan and implement early learning activities with children based on the ELDS, provide support to parents, establish and maintain collaboration with the local community and use ELDS for monitoring and documenting the developmental progress of children.

UNICEF supported the development of new ECD curriculum, called “National Programme for Early Learning and Development” that is mandatory for all ECD providers in the country. The progress assessment conducted at the end of 2013, in model ECD centres and model kindergartens which were trained on ELDS at the end of 2013, showed that children attending ELDS affiliated centres and kindergartens had better results, compared with those children attending kindergartens that were not included in the UNICEF supported interventions. The progress assessment shows that children who attended ECD centres have the best results.

EUNICEF effective advocacy resulted in the mobilization of resources from the British Embassy in the country for interventions promoting the mainstreaming of diversity and multiculturalism in the context of the ongoing ECD reform. As part of a regional initiative, the Austrian Development Agency provided financial support for the expansion of early learning opportunities for Roma children in seven municipalities. The programme supported the development of an in-service training module on inclusive ECD as a basis for implementing inclusive practices in kindergartens and ECD centres in the future.

Access to ECD services remains a major bottleneck as kindergartens are mostly available in urban areas. - UNICEF advocacy with municipalities has resulted in the opening of five new ECD centres as cost-effective models of service delivery for the most marginalized children in Roma and rural communities. UNICEF advocacy with the Government has influenced the opening of 17 new kindergartens in 2013, indicating a as 31 per cent increase in the total number of kindergarten.

To address the bottleneck of inefficiencies and inequities in funds allocation for ECD, UNICEF supported an in-depth assessment and functional analysis of the ECD system as a basis for introducing a new funding formula in favour of the most marginalized children.
Analysis of available data indicates that poor teacher instruction/teaching methodology is the key obstacle to quality education. Teaching methods remain traditional and textbook oriented. It promotes factual knowledge over as opposed to skills development and it is not in line with international standards, especially in areas of early numeracy and literacy. UNICEF provided technical expertise and capacity development to teachers in the areas of early literacy and numeracy as well as inclusive education. Up to date, 70 per cent of all early grade teachers have been trained in early numeracy and 44 per cent in early literacy through programmes in line with international good practices.

Preliminary results of progress assessment of students’ outcomes and teacher knowledge in literacy in schools that have been implementing the programme since 2010 show a 6 per cent improvement in the level of early grade student outcomes related to reading, but no progress in writing. To support national and regional learning and knowledge sharing opportunities for teachers for the purpose of improving student outcomes in early numeracy and literacy, the programme supported the process of developing and documenting best practices on early numeracy and literacy teacher instruction as well as, and the establishment of regional learning and mentoring teams. The experience is being documented and monitored as part of the OECD Innovative Learning Environment Project. With the new contribution of the Austrian Development Agency, UNICEF will support the improvement of basic numeracy and literacy skills off Roma children, the lack of which often leads causes for labelling Roma children to be labelled as children with disabilities.

The capacities for inclusive education is limited at all levels. Teachers lack the skills to lead the inclusion process, while specialized services are not available to provide individual support to children with special needs and often a medical approach to disability and inclusion is imposed as the approach to inclusion. UNICEF supported the capacity development for development of training modules based on ICF-CY to train and training of national trainers that include school teachers, university professors as well as, and representatives of ministries, y, institutions and local NGOs representatives, is based on ICF-CY on the promoting the social model of inclusion which relies on contribution and cooperation among different sectors with other sectors.

To increase demand for services, UNICEF supported the establishment of the Resource Parent Center which will open and the development of a programme to start implementation in 2014. Based on its expertise, technical knowledge and experience, UNICEF was identified as an IPA grant beneficiary (direct grant award modality) for the "Achieving Quality Education Through Providing inclusiveness and Intercultural Learning Environment" project. The operation identification sheet for the project was developed together with the Ministry of Education and Science and at years end it is being submitted for approval to the Ministry of Finance.

The results achieved, best practices and lessons learned in the education programme component during the period 2005-2013 were reviewed and documented as part of the Regional Multi-Country Evaluation on Ensuring access to quality education for all children. As member of the reference group on RKLA4, the CO was fully involved in the MCE process and contributed to regional knowledge sharing and learning.
The National Coordination Body on Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect

With UNICEF support, the National Coordination Body on Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect led the development of a multi-disciplinary model for dealing with child victims of abuse with UNICEF support is leading the development of a multi-disciplinary model for dealing with child victims of abuse which, includes guidelines and training for the work of multi-disciplinary teams that are made up of professionals and training of professional members of the teams from across different sectors.

The MoLSP, with UNICEF support, is reforming the process of assessment of children with disabilities. A multi-sectoral working group under the MoLSP was established and started is working on a new assessment model based on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health. In 2014, increased emphasis will be given to generating knowledge on the situation of children with disabilities and implementing the new model into practice.

### PC 2 - Child rights monitoring and social policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PCR</th>
<th>2660/A0/05/S02 By end of 2015, all partners (Government, CSOs, parliament, media, and private sector) are collectively engaged in budgeting, monitoring child rights and child-focused social responsibility programmes.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Progress</strong>: The economic crisis, among other factors, has had an impact on the general budget allocations affecting children’s rights. Issues persist at the level of planning, allocation as well as utilization of funds, and can be broadly defined as issues of efficiency and effectiveness.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government financial allocations (as a share of total budget) to areas such as education, health and social protection for children have remained largely unchanged for the past three years, but remain below the levels of EU and OECD countries.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The capacity of the National Child Rights Commission (NCRC) remains weak as a result of the continued lack of financial and operational independence. Absence of a dedicated budget and specialized secretariat limits the NCRCs scope and potential to fulfil its mandate to the fullest. UNICEF technical support and advocacy resulted in i) a greater and more transparent participation of civil society, doubling the number of NGO members of NCRC; ii) upgrading the status of NGO members to voting members; iii) revision of the National Action Plan for Children based on the CRC Committee concluding observations, together with a monitoring framework to monitor and report on its implementation; iv) adoption of the revised Action Plan by Government.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The study on child benefits generated for the first time solid evidence on the insufficiency and ineffectiveness of the social benefits to address the needs of the most marginalized children; almost 80 per cent% of families with children in the poorest 10 per centile do not even receive child allowances. Advocacy at the most senior level of MoLSP has led the MoLSP to focus on the findings and the expression of willingness to implement specific recommendations in 2013.</td>
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<tr>
<td>In an effort to expand the role of civil society in monitoring child rights, two NGO coalitions were supported to publish their first two annual reports on the situation of child rights and CRC implementation. Capacity building support has started to show some improvement in their approach, such as shifting from a “desk-review” approach at the national level to “field-based data collection at the local level, better definition of indicators and more active involvement of all coalition members in the monitoring and reporting process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The first private sector partnership was successfully formalized to improve access to early childhood development services. The partnership is a considerable milestone in the implementation of the country office’s fundraising strategy as it taps into the local private sector for the first time, integrating a one-off cash donation and leveraging other mechanisms for fundraising. In addition to fundraising, the partnership also builds on a C4D initiative to raise awareness on the importance of ECD and the critical role of parents in early childhood development.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IR</th>
<th>2660/A0/05/S02/001 By end of 2015, national and sub-national authorities use a reliable disaggregated data system for planning, budgeting, and monitoring to address child poverty and social exclusion.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Progress</strong>: Increased focus was given to raise awareness among the general public and potential data users about the existing child-related data, and on dissemination and promoting of data use by the relevant stakeholders. The State Statistical Office (SSO) and UNICEF held a technical meeting where data and trends from the TransMoneeEE database for the period 1989-2011 was presented to a selected audience. The presentation also included information on how to accessing data on-line. The presentation attracted the attention of local government representatives, and the decision was taken in coordination with SSO to organize workshops for dissemination of local level data in all eight8 regions in the country. The first workshop was held at the end of the year, in the south-east region. Representatives from 10 municipalities participated in the event and received information on availability and access to local level data was available and on how to access it using the SSO website.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The director of the Institute for Social Activities (ISA) asked that the available data be presented to employees of this institution, employees and for employees at the Centers for social work in the country. However, as this request was received at the end of the year, the presentations will be organized in course of 2014.</td>
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<tr>
<td>After introducing the EU-SILC survey, and using the survey methodology for generating data on poverty, the SSO discontinued using the Household Budget Survey (HBS) to report on poverty, as it was not internationally comparable. The SSO will continue publishing data on...</td>
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</table>
poverty compatible with data published in EU countries. The first report using based on EU-SILC methodology was published in 2012, providing information on the situation in 2010. The second report was expected to be published in 2013 containing 2011 data. However, due to technical difficulties, the SSO did not publish the SILC report in 2013 as planned, making data for 2011 unavailable to the public. The report with 2011 data is expected to be finalized and published only in May 2014, widening the gap between data collection and publication. Data on child poverty was not included in the first report. The UNICEF CO will continue support and advocacy to ensure for assuring that SSO produces and publishes child related data in the newly introduced reports.

IR 2660/A0/05/502/002 By 2015, relevant national and sub-national authorities adjust targeted institutional mechanisms that define and govern the volume and efficiency of public funding for social protection and education programmes for children and determine its effectiveness to reach marginalised and socially excluded children.

**Progress:** As reported in 2012, this IR was revised in order to focus on budgeting for children’s rights and. Under this CP focused on ensuring that data and evidence for policy-making in the area of social protection is available. The study on “Strengthening Social Protection for Children: Analysis and Recommendations for a more equitable and efficient Child benefits system” study produced in 2012 was further disseminated to national and international stakeholders. The process that led to the study informed the MLSP of the lack of availability of information on benefits available for applicants. The MLSP took immediate steps to remedy the situation.

As a result of advocacy efforts by UNICEF and partners to improve access to and the quality of social services for the most vulnerable children, the allocation of public funding for social protection and education as a share of the total budget increased by 2 and 2.5 percentage points respectively in 2013 as compared to 2012. In the health sector the increase was 2.2 percentage points. However, the targeting mechanisms still needs to be improved and a monitoring system needs to be put in place to ensure that funding is used to close equity gaps and address the needs of the most vulnerable and excluded children. The CP advocated for the introduction of social protection reforms that would ensure the increased funding goes to the poorest children. The working group established by the MLSP, with the participation of UNICEF and the World Bank and other stakeholders is expected to generate proposals to show how to further improve social transfers and targeting.

IR 2660/A0/05/502/003 By end of 2015, child rights monitoring institutions, including CSOs, monitor and produce accurate and timely reports on child rights.

**Progress:** Technical support to the two NGO coalitions, composed of 28 individual NGO members, as well as capacity building in child rights monitoring continued in 2013. Each coalition produced a monitoring report covering a selected set of indicators. Significant progress was recorded in the performance and the outcomes of the two coalitions. In consultations between UNICEF and the coalitions, it was decided that data collecting and reporting should be additionally strengthened and focused to the issues related to the most marginalized groups of children. The approach implemented this year, in which coalition members with the highest expertise in a specific field shared their experience, data collecting tools and methods with other NGOs interested in these fields, was a successful strategy. One NGO was a leader in monitoring the inclusion of children with disabilities in primary education while another the other led the process in the area of including Roma children inclusion in ECD. This approach resulted in an improved cooperation and networking within the coalitions. It further contributed to capacity building, knowledge sharing as well as in empowering and recognition of the leading NGOs. It was also recognised by the coalition members as a good approach to building their case at the national level - as opposed to individual approach of each NGO having an individual approach. They all agreed that it is better and more useful for their advocacy and fundraising efforts if they present the issues of child rights violation jointly, covering a number of municipalities.

Improvement was achieved in decentralising the approach in data collection and in management of the work of the coalitions. To further increase the effectiveness of the partnership with NGO coalitions, the CO will work on strengthening internal communication between sectors and the communication of each sector with the NGO partners.

Activities with the National Commission on the Rights of Children were not conducted as planned. The CO planned to support the Commission in selecting relevant indicators from the National Action Plan on Children which it could use to prepare an annual report. Additionally, UNICEF agreed to support the development of a web-based reporting tool and training for the members of the Commission on how to use it using the tool. However, neither activity was accomplished both activities were not accomplished, due to the local elections that took place in March 2013 and the changes in the leadership of the Commission, that happened in May. The new chair of the Commission was appointed in June, but a formal meeting of the Commission was never held.

The MICS 4 Final Report was produced and published.

IR 2660/A0/05/502/004 By end of 2015, alliances with parliamentarians, media, and the private sector establish an enabling environment for the fulfilment of child rights.

**Progress:** Through the CO integrated external communication, communication for development (C4D), and corporate engagement, the programme continued to mobilise multiple stakeholders to create an enabling environment for child rights. Progress made in implementing the corporate alliance with Foundation T-Mobile Foundation established in 2012 helped increase the supply and demand for
quality ECD services. The alliance triggered a snowball effect and in 2013 an additional six private sector partners and multiple media partners joined the initiative. Among the partners; four service providers provided pro-bono support to produce campaign assets; two additional mobile operators established donation hotlines to support the campaign; and 26 media partners including television, radio, and print and online portals provided pro-bono media space. This generated an estimated US $e 52,000 USD cost savings to the CO programme and the initial donation received by the Foundation contributed to the opening of five new early childhood development centres by the ECD programme. The social mobilisation campaign designed to contribute to increase in supply and demand for quality ECD services, was officially launched in November and will continue to be implemented in 2014 (see C4D).

Initial discussions were held with the national representatives of the UN Global Compact to establish an initiative to build momentum for mainstreaming child-focus CSR practices. A strategy was developed and focuses promoting the global Children's Rights and Business Principles through: multi-stakeholder advocacy, demonstrating practical application of the principals, documenting local context and developing recommendations for future activities to mainstream child-focused CSR practices within the national CSR agenda.

The Child Rights and the Media course introduced in the State University in 2010 with UNICEF support in a two year post-graduate programme open to journalism students and law students was offered again in 2013. It will be further extended to undergraduate students of journalism as of January 2014. Thirteen the number of students enrolled in this cycle, was 13 making the total number of students completing the course 89.

### PC 3 - Cross-sectoral costs

**PCR 2660/A0/05/800 Effective and Efficient Programme Management and Operations Support**

**Progress:** 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 the Office, administrative / operational tasks to support office functioning and provision of supplies, services and knowledge required to perform administrative tasks. Staff under this PCR includes follows: Representative, Deputy Representative, Operations Manager, Communication Officer, ICT Assistant, Fin/Accs Ass, Executive Secretary, Admin/HR Assistant and a driver.

**IR 2660/A0/05/800/001 Effective and efficient Governance and Systems**

**Progress:** UNICEF provided human resource support through this 'Intermediate Result' with the funds utilized in this IR mainly to help the organization contribute to the achievement of other IRs within the programme component, or across programme component. At country level funds allocated and utilized for hospitality purposes only.

**IR 2660/A0/05/800/002 Effective and efficient Management and Stewardship of Financial Resources**

**Progress:** UNICEF provided human resource support through this 'Intermediate Result' with the funds utilized to mainly help the organization to contribute to the achievement of other IRs within the programme component, or across programme components. At the country level, funds utilized under the travel component were used for regional meetings, knowledge exchange initiatives, trainings, etc. covering all staff under this PCR.

Funds utilized under the operating expenses component of this IR contributed to the overall achievement of CP goals through the provision of facilities to enable the adequate office functioning of the Office (office rental/maintenance, maintenance of ICT equipment and vehicles, as well as provision of office supplies and other administrative related costs (mail courier, office security, internet provider, etc.). Funds utilized under Furniture/Equipment component were used to purchase (replace) ICT equipment, for "digital centres" (replacement of old photocopier, scanners, fax machine, printers and combining in one single machine) and a new office car (trade-in option).

**IR 2660/A0/05/800/003 Effective and Efficient Management of Human Capacity**

**Progress:** UNICEF provided human resource support through this 'Intermediate Result' with the funds utilized in this IR to mainly help the organization contribute to the achievement of other IRs within the programme component, or across programme components in the country programme of cooperation.

At the c country level, funds allocated through this IR were utilised zed for staff wellbeing only.
IR 2660/A0/05/800/888 Human Resources

**Progress:**
UNICEF provided human resource support through this 'Intermediate Result' with the funds utilized in this IR to mainly help the organization contribute to the achievement of other IRs within the programme component, or across programme components in the country programme of cooperation (staff costs – posts of HR/Admin Assistant).

The other components of this IR were used for an all-staff retreat and staff wellbeing. The staff retreat was organized in November 2013. It focused on managing for results and followed up on the issues highlighted by the Global Staff Survey, contributing to staff welfare and morale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PCR 2660/A0/05/880 Development Effectiveness</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Progress:</strong> Higher quality programmes through results - based management and improved accountability of results progressed as planned.</td>
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<tr>
<th>IR 2660/A0/05/880/001 Programme Coordination</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Progress:</strong> Technical leadership for programme outcomes progressed as planned.</td>
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<tr>
<th>IR 2660/A0/05/880/002 Advocacy / Communication</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Progress:</strong> Transparency in information and official documents progressed as planned.</td>
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</table>
Effective Governance Structure

Major management changes took place in the Office over the past year. The former Deputy Representative left the CO in March and was replaced only in June; the Representative left in July and was replaced the same week. In spite of these senior staff changes did not affect, the governance of the Office and the results of the country programme were not affected.

Good governance structure ensured. The office needed to have a good governance structure to ensure quality oversight as there were three majors processes in 2013 taking place during the same year: the off-site audit, the PBR and the MTR. All three processes were successfully completed.

The 2013 management priorities and results were developed early in the year and were included in the Annual Management Plan. Progress towards planned results as well as, and the Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda framework, were assessed during programme and CMT meetings, and corrective actions were taken as needed.

An off-site audit review took place from 11 to 27 March 2013 covering the period January 2012 – to February 2013. No high priority rated observations were made to the Office. However the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations (OIAI) report recommended that the Office takes minor corrective measures and concluded that, subject to the implementation of these measures, the controls and processes in the Office during the period under audit were generally well established and functioning. The Office took immediate follow-up actions to implement the audit recommendations by the set deadlines.

The statutory office governance committees, namely the Country Management Team, the Contract Review Committee, and the Project Cooperation Review Committee met regularly. The Local Joint Consultative Committee met twice in 2013. Programme meetings were held almost every month. The programme meetings assessed the programme management performances, with and outcomes were reported back to the CMT. Operations team meetings were held monthly as well.

With the new management on board in July, the frequency of CMT meetings changed from bi-monthly to monthly. Standing agenda items included updates on the status of action points approved in prior CMTs; review of the Country office management performance indicators, including the financial indicators; and Staff Association related issues. In order to prepare and organize the high level MTR meeting that took place on the 22nd of October, the Management introduced a weekly MTR coordination meetings six weeks prior to the event.

The new Representative introduced weekly all-staff stand-up meetings to highlight the weekly priorities in operations and programme.

Strategic Risk Management

During 2013, no significant changes were noted in the external or internal office environment to alter the identified risk levels in the RCSA. As recommended by the OIAI, the 2013 AMP was updated with a detailed table describing the specific risks and the corresponding management response for each risk category. In 2014, the Office will review the RCSA and the identified risks will be addressed in the Management priorities of the AMP.

During the reporting period, the Office continued to chair the UN Disaster Management Team (DMT). At the beginning of the year, the UN DMT was working closely with the Crisis Management Center, the leading national crisis management authority, to coordinate humanitarian response in regions of the country affected by floods. Emergency preparedness activities of the Office were used as a contribution in updating the Inter-agency Contingency Plan and UN Security Plan as well as Early Warning – Early Action data base. Business Continuity was practiced through off-site working arrangements.
**Evaluation**

The 2013 annual IMEP was developed at the beginning of the year, based on the multiyear (2010-2015) IMEP. In total, four evaluations were planned for 2013 – two country level evaluations and two multi-country evaluations managed by the RO.

They included four evaluations planned for 2013 are the following:
- an evaluation of the implementation of the Lifeskills programme in primary education (country-level);
- an evaluation of the quality of pre-school education based on ECD Standards (country-level);
- an evaluation of inclusive education; (multi-country);
- an evaluation of early learning and school readiness, (multi-country)

The planned evaluation of the implementation of Lifeskills programme in primary education was cancelled by the CMT in the mid-year IMEP review. The subject of the evaluation was similar to the subject of the multi-country evaluation of inclusive education and, as such, the decision was made not there was no need to duplicate the work and spend additional resources.

The evaluation of the quality of pre-school education based on ECD Standards is on-going. It was subject to the availability of funds. The funds were received in the last quarter of 2013 and. The evaluation will be finalized in 2014.

The final report of multi-country evaluation Inclusion of all out of school children in quality learning was in the process of being drafted at the end of 2013 is in the phase of drafting of the final report.

The multi-country evaluation of Early learning and school readiness is in the preparatory stage with. Data collection and country visits scheduled to will take place in February 2014.

Both multi-country evaluations are expected to be finished and evaluation reports finalized in the course of 2014.

**Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology**

During the year, the upgrading towards a more advanced ICT infrastructure in the Office continued and g. Implementation of the global ICT projects, policies and strategies were implemented in a was done in a timely manner. Technical maintenance and prompt help-desk support using by following the guidelines and objectives from Information Technology System and Services (ITSS) ensured non-interrupted system functioning and accessibility.

Remote access to network access was done through Citrix environment hosted locally and in NYHQ. User experience revealed that the internet bandwidth connectivity of 3Mbps/3Mbps was not sufficient to support all the needs of the Office. Services that are becoming more bandwidth dependent. Thorough market research was conducted and, as of next year, the Office will significantly increase its Internet bandwidth to 20 Mbps/20 Mbps at no extra cost.

As a result of the thorough market research, the increasing of the bandwidth will be done with no additional cost for the Office.

As a part of BCP, the Office is equipped with three satellite phone handsets and two BGAN units. Functional LTA for both internet and satellite connectivity was regularly reviewed and updated with appropriate companies.

The Office updated its IA major modernization of the IT equipment in 2013 was done this year. The old printers, scanners, photocopier and fax machine were replaced with two multifunctional machines that combine photocopying, printing, scanning and faxing features.

The Office estimates that the update will significantly benefit this new IT arrangements which will be significant in terms of everyday work. Additionally, the Office has also purchased 15 new laptops, maintaining the office equipment fully in line with UNICEF Hardware Standards.

Obsolete and non-functional equipment identified by PSB was disposed of by using the services of a local IT company that is following the EU directives for disposal and recycling of ICT equipment. Obsolete but usable ICT equipment was donated to implementing partners or used as “trade in” option to reduce prices when purchasing new equipment.
The following releases improved the office ICT infrastructure by renewing outdated releases and were completed by end of 2013:

IT equipment was updated with the following:

a) DHCP and 10.x IP address allocation,
b) VEEAM 6.5 with Patch,
c) Service Pack 1 for Windows 2008R2 Hyper-V and
d) Symantec Endpoint Protection 12.1 RU3

The ICT Assistant continued to provide support to HQ Technical Architecture Team. This year, the team support requested support was related with the global implementation of the Teamviewer tool for remote assistance and deployment of Symantec Endpoint Protection server 12.1. The ICT Assistant provided support to the global User Access Management Team and acted as a Help Desk Analyst for Global Help Desk.

**Fund-raising and Donor Relations**

The CO submitted on time all the four donors’ reports due in 2013 on time. By the end of the year. As of end of the year, the Office had mobilised almost 60 per cent% of the OR ceiling of the 2010-2015 CPD, of which 50 per cent% were Global thematic funds. All OR funds were optimally used, ensuring that all a full utilisation of the expiring PBAs were fully utilised. All RR funds were also utilized and the use of both RR and OR funds was regularly monitored at CMT meetings. In the last two months of the year, the CO received three news contributions.

In During 2013, the Coeducation and ECD programmes signed two multiyear funding projects for a total of about US D $1.4 million. These contributions were from the Austrian Development Agency as part of a three year regional project entitled at “Breaking the Cycle of Exclusion for Roma Children through ECD and Education” (US $ 809,400 USD) and from the Foreign Commonwealth Office (FCO) through the British Embassy in Skopje for the implementation of “Mainstreaming Diversity and Multiculturalism in Early Childhood Development in Macedonia” (USD $529,000). In addition, the CO received a Global thematic fund contribution of US $420,000.

The CO also has received USD $52,000 from the private sector – T-Mobile Foundation for opening kindergartens in marginalised communities. The alliance triggered a snowball effect and an additional six private sector partners and multiple media partners joined the initiative.

The RR allocation was fully utilised. The monitoring of use of RR and OR is a standing item of the CMT agenda. The partnership with the private sector officialised at the end of 2013 resulted in a donation of USD 52,000.

In close coordination with UNICEF Office in Brussels and as part of the EU IPA, the Office started in the process of developing an ECD/ Education project proposal to be funded under the EU Grant Contract Modality. This would bring in an additional Euro The expected additional resources are Euros 3.66 million in funding.

**Management of Financial and Other Assets**

The Office received a satisfactory internal audit rating in the area of operations. The monitoring of management of financial and other assets is a standard item on the CMT agenda.

The Office maintained and achieved the target of no outstanding DCTs for more than six months throughout the year. All operational targets and indicators defined in the AMP for 2013 were fully met. 100 per cent% of the available RR was utilized.

The Office closely monitored the accounting instructions related to the interim and year-end closure of accounts, and met the requirements and the deadlines set by HQ. Bank reconciliations were completed as per HQ monthly closure schedule. The Office successfully managed to process all transactions with no delays, despite the frequent issues associated with VISION.
The Office also took appropriate actions in assigned roles in VISION due to staff changes and the delegation of authority was properly recorded.

The small presence of UN agencies in the country has had an impact on HACT implementation. The former and current Representatives, while acting as United Nations Resident Coordinator, pushed for the renewal of the HACT related macro assessment. The UNCT agreed to conduct the assessment in 2013 in accordance with UNDG guidelines.

A working group represented by UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and RC Office Coordination Officer was established to oversee the macro assessment process and the government was officially notified. The assessment, however, was put on hold due to the lack of updated national financial data., it was decided to put the macro assessment on hold.

The UNICEF office continued to implement the HACT related activities independent of the other UN agencies, through the use of the FACE form, by visiting partners and conducting spot-checks and monitoring field visits. In response to the audit observations and recommendations, the Office developed a 2013 assurance plan, which included the conducting of micro-assessments of partners that were already assessed.

As UNFPA and UNDP are not active in the HACT process, and as financial resources are not the main commodity, we may question the whole HACT relevance in the country.

**Supply Management**

Although the value of the programme supply component in 2013 remained small, there were several procurement processes initiated in the last two quarters of the year. These supplies and services were mainly in support of the activities related to expansion of early childhood development (ECD) services in ten municipalities, and to the development of new and preventive services for children victims of violence.

The procurement activities included furnishing equipment for ten ECD centres and five Child Friendly rooms (CFR) with furniture, toys and learning materials, technical IT and video equipment for the interviewing of children victims of violence, as well as refurbishment of the five CFR rooms.

In addition, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in their effort to increase the effectiveness of the ECD centres. For that purpose, the office was involved in the procurement of equipment for the installation of an attendance recording system in the centres. This included, support for the development of the detailed technical specification for the system and conducting a call for proposals for identification of a company to implement an ECD monitoring information system in 10 pilot kindergartens.

The delivery process has been completed, have now been finalised as well the identification of the most cost effective suppliers were found and the funds have been committed. The delivery of all supplies and services has been arranged for early 2014.

In addition to the Situation Analysis and as reported in 2012, the Macedonia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) and "Strengthening Social Protection for Children" study were printed this year.

As noted in the IT section, the office proceeded to replace obsolete and outdated IT, communication and transport equipment. This included the replacement and purchase of 15 new laptops and related equipment that were acquired through regular procurement. However, for the procurement of one office vehicle and two digital centres, the office used the trade-in modality, thereby reducing costs and ensuring the resulting in cost savings and ecological disposal of the old equipment. While the funds have been committed this year, the delivery of 12 laptops will be completed in January 2014.

As part of the Operations Management Team (OMT) activities, UNICEF, on behalf of the UN agencies conducted bids for procurement of office photocopying paper and internet services that resulted in signing of a long term arrangement with the selected companies.
The Office continued to keep the practice of having the contractors deliver the supplies purchased directly to the end users.

The University Clinic for Infectious diseases used UNICEF procurement services again this year for obtaining ARVs medications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operations (for office use)</th>
<th>Programme</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Items</td>
<td>Amount in $</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. CISCO</td>
<td>5,619.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Laptops and other IT eqp</td>
<td>5,732.50</td>
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<td>3. Laptops and other IT eqp</td>
<td>16,968.00</td>
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<td>4. Digital centers</td>
<td>7,583.00</td>
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<td>5. Vehicle Toyota</td>
<td>7,122.00</td>
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<td>6. Photo Camera and additional parts</td>
<td>2,188.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
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<td>8.</td>
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<td>9.</td>
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Total committed and spent ($) | 45,213.00 | Total committed and spent ($) | 33,046.50 |
Human Resources

Several key and time consuming processes took place in 2013, some times simultaneously, which required the constant mobilization of most of the staff, overburdening the small capacity of the Office. In early 2013, an off-site audit review was conducted.

After their regular tour of duty, both the Representative and Deputy Representative left moved from Skopje in 2013 after their regular tours of duty ended. There was a four month gap between the departure of the former Deputy Representative and the arrival appointment of the new one.

2013 was also marked by the MTR preparation, subsequent CPMP and submission of the PBR. Following the PBR recommendations, the Office proceeded with the abolishment of two national professional positions -: Health Officer (NOA) and Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist (NOB) -, and two driver positions at the GS2 level. Three new positions - , Health and Nutrition/NOB, Child rights system monitoring and evaluation Specialist/NOC and one driver/GS2 part time -, were established,, effective January 2014. The office concluded all recruitment processes were completed by mid-December 2013.

Two out of the three positions were filled, as no suitable candidate was identified for the NOC position. In consultation with the RO, the abolishment of the M&E /NOB was deferred by three months. During this period, the Country Office and the Regional Office will explore options for filling this critical position. As per the recommendations of the PBR, the Office took the necessary actions to ensure a smooth transition of the conversion of the ICT Assistant position to part time as of January 2014.

The Office also invested in learning and development of staff:
Four staff members (Deputy Representative, Operations Manager, Programme Assistant and Social and Economic Policy Analysis (SEPA) Specialist) attended the PPP workshop organized by the Regional office in Istanbul. In addition, the SEPA Specialist took part in the training on Socio-Economic Policies for Child Rights with Equity training, on line with a face to face session in Bangkok, while the Education for Development Specialist, took part in joined the “Quality, and Leadership in Education” training on line with a face to face session in Harvard. The Finance Assistant went to Croatia to learn about financing private fundraising partnerships.

Three staff members were sent on development assignments:
1. The Health Officer supported the RO for CEECIS for 7 months,
2. The HR/Admin Assistant supported the RO for CEECIS for 2.5 months,
3. The Finance Assistant supported the Gulf Area Office in Dubai for 3 months.

To ensure that there is no delays in the key planning activities, including the Situation Analysis, MTR and CPMP process, the SEPA Specialist was acted as Deputy Representative while the Office waited for the new Deputy Representative to arrive and also, while provided support to the health programme during the absence of the Health Officer. Staff on development assignment were provided remote support remotely during their absence thus ensuring continuity of the office working processes.

An all-staff retreat was held in November and was used as an opportunity to follow up on the actions taken to address the results of the 2012 of the morale survey in 2012 and suggested new activities to further improve the working atmosphere in the Office.

The Staff association held elections in December for the new members of the executive committee.

Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings

While the UN presence in the country is small, the Office continued to benefit from long-term arrangements in many areas as part of the OMT annual plan such as: travel, express mail courier, local internet service provider, security services, UN hotel rates, and unified fees for national consultants, interpreters and translators. This arrangement proved to be an efficient way to reduce the workload and staff time related to market research processes conducted by each agency separately. The Office continued with the in-house arrangement for drivers
to work in two shifts thus saving over-time payments. Further, the Office purchased a new car and office equipment using the trade-in modality, thus saving US $ 20,000.

**Changes in AMP & CPMP**

As recommended by the PBR, a few adjustments were made to the staffing structure to allow the Country office to implement the new management strategy and to deliver the planned results for children in line with the core roles of UNICEF in the CEE/CIS region. The 2014 AMP will be developed based on the changes approved by the PBR and the audit recommendations.

Audit recommendations included issues on the RCSA to ensure alignment between high risks identified in the RCSA and the risks in the AMP to enable management to focus on the most appropriate priorities. Following the PBR recommendations, the main changes concerned human resources. This included the abolishment of two national professional positions - Health Officer (NOA) and Monitoring and Evaluation Officer (NOB) - and two driver positions at the GS2 level. Three new positions, Health and Nutrition/NOB, Child rights System Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist/NOC and one driver/GS2 part time, were established, effective January 2014.

Two out of the three positions were filled, as no suitable candidate was identified for the NOC position. In consultation with the RO, the abolishment of the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer (NOB) post was deferred by three months. During this period, the CO and e office and the Regional office will explore further options for to fulfilling this critical position. As per the recommendations of the PBR, the Office took the necessary actions to ensure a smooth transition of the conversion of the ICT Assistant position to part time starting as of January 2014.

**Summary Notes and Acronyms**

Notes
[6] Assessment of progress achieved at the end of the first cycle of the implementation of the “Thinking Mathematics in the early grades” programme
[7] Based on internal reports from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Bureau for Education Development

Acronyms
C4D – Communication for Development
CRC – Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSW – Centers for Social Work
ECD – Early Childhood Development
ELDS – Early Learning and Development Standards
ICF-CY – International Classification of Functioning –Children and Youth
IR – Intermediate Result
ISA – Institute for Social Activities
MCH – Mother and Child Health
MoES – Ministry of Education and Science
MoH – Ministry of Health
MoJ – Ministry of Justice
MoLSP - Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
MTR – Mid Term Review
MoRES – Monitoring Results for Equity System
OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCR – Programme Component Result
SILC – Survey of Income and Living Conditions  
SSO – State Statistics Office  

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<td>2013/900</td>
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<td>2 Assessment of the current process of categorization</td>
<td>2013/004</td>
<td>Study</td>
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<td>3 Assessment of legislation pertaining to violence against children</td>
<td>2013/005</td>
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<td>4 Progress assessment of child development outcomes based on the Early Learning and Development Standards</td>
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Other Publications

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<td>2 Leave No Child Behind (Building Equity for Children)</td>
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<td>3 Children and Women: What the numbers say</td>
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<td>4 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey</td>
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