

# Country Office Portal

## Annual Report 2011 for Macedonia (The former Yugoslav Republic of), CEE/CIS

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### Executive Summary

The expansion of both the number of children who participated in Early Childhood Development services and of services to underserved areas gathered momentum this year. Based on the UNICEF-supported study (Fair Play) which provided a costing and strategy for expanded ECD services, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MoLSP) introduced the revision of the applicable legal codes. There is now an increased interest and demand at the municipal level for ECD services: five municipalities allocated funding for new ECD centers and five others centers (established with UNICEF support) were taken over by municipalities. The private sector is also beginning to show interest in supporting ECD services with the establishment of one center fully backed by private resources. A partnership agreement for further ECD expansion was approved by the board of a major telecommunication company. Preliminary MICS 4 results show an increase in ECD coverage from 14% (2006) to 22%.

Implementation of the "Schools Free of Violence" campaign drew decision makers' attention to the issue of violence in schools while closely engaging rights holders. The campaign ran for two months in 20 media outlets that provided pro-bono media services. Some 7,800 youth were engaged in the campaign (through a video making competition, flash mobs in 16 cities, and a theme song competition). A website developed with contributions from teachers provided resources for schools to develop their action plans against violence and received 60,000 visits since its establishment.

The Centers for Social Work (CSW) Electronic Database developed by UNICEF was officially launched and is for the first time generating disaggregated data on children and families receiving any type of social work assistance. The use of the database became mandatory for CSWs this year.

Progress in the implementation of the Child Friendly Municipalities (CFM) project has been disappointing. Obstacles include insufficient human, technical and fiscal capacities at the local level as well as limited planning and prioritizing capabilities at the municipal level. A quick assessment of CFM activities demonstrated that the CFM approach in the current country context is neither efficient nor effective in fully achieving the programme goals. The assessment recommended that the programme refocus resources on improving budget allocation and decentralized funds management in education as the sole sector that is fully decentralized. A full evaluation of CFM is scheduled for the MTR.

The partnership with the EU to promote child rights in general and the rights of the most vulnerable in particular continued. The local EU delegation and UNICEF jointly conducted five journalist briefings on different aspects of the Justice for Children system and the EU included the country's key child rights issues in its annual progress report.

Effective coordination with USAID in the process of designing their new \$5.2 million project on inter-ethnic education ensured synergies and complementarity of programme interventions and led to incorporation of successful UNICEF-supported pilots (see report on PCR 1). The CO also effectively collaborated with the World Bank and USAID to build a common vision for strengthening pre-service teacher training.

### Country Situation

Based on the latest SSO report, the poverty gap index increased from 9.4% in 2003 to 10.9% in 2010. The report clearly shows that the economic crisis has hit children and households with children the hardest. While the relative poverty rate is 30.9% (2010), this rate is 39.2% for households with children. Poverty among children aged 0-17 has increased to 37%, an increase of nearly three per cent since the previous year.

Early parliamentary elections, and the impact this had on key ministerial staff, many of whom are politically

appointed, slowed programme implementation. The strengthened presence of the opposition has made it more difficult for the governing party to push laws through the Parliament as efficiently as before.

A national census was delayed and ultimately cancelled until further notice due to the fact that an agreement could not be reached on its method and timing.

The ratification of the International Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities was completed in December. Prior to its ratification, a 45-member inter-parliamentary group was created to promote the rights of people with disabilities. This group will oversee the implementation of the Convention and should ensure the compliance of all domestic legislation with the provisions of the ICRPD.

IMR and perinatal mortality showed the most significant annual decline in the past decade: IMR dropped by 35% (reaching 7.6 per 1000) and the latter by 25% (reaching 12.7 per 1000). However, both indicators are still two times higher than the EU average, with geographical differences ranging from 30% to 50%. Anemia in children is 21.8% compared to 26% in 1999, and 16.7% in the European Region. It is significantly higher in two out of the eight geographical regions, one of which is the poorest. The prevalence rate is the highest among Albanian (30%) and Roma (34%) children. Anemia among women increased from 12.8% in 1999 to 19.2%. In three out of eight geographical regions, anemia is above 20%. Albanian women (25%) and women in the poorest quintile have the highest rates (IPH, 2011). Prevalence of stunting (10.3%) has not changed since 2005 and remains higher among Roma children (24%) and Albanian children (12%). Coverage of community MCH services varies across regions but the delivery of efficient services is hampered by lack of trained staff in communities most in need. On average, community nurses visit only 50% of all pregnant women, with an average of only one visit in 80% of health centers. Underutilization of antenatal care is at the expense of over-utilized newborn visits. A lack of formalized communication and referral systems are key factors preventing more balanced provision of MCH services.

Preliminary MICS results (2011) show an increase in ECD coverage from 14 to 22%, attributable to increased awareness about and investment in ECD. At the national level, the decision of MoLSP to develop a new Law on ECD which incorporates provisions for equitable and universal access to quality services will further help increase coverage. At the local level, municipalities are increasingly investing in ECD services. The first ECD center supported by the private sector in Bitola paves the way for a more strategic partnership and cooperation with the private sector.

The primary education completion rate increased from 83% in 2005 to 97%; however, Roma still remain the most disadvantaged group, with 70% completion rate and 80% transition rate to secondary education (vs. the national rate of 98%). An estimated 15% of children with disabilities attend mainstream schools. In this context, inclusive education has emerged as a government priority and is articulated in documents related to both national IPA planning and the Programme-based approach to donor coordination. Publicized instances of inappropriate treatment of children with disabilities in kindergartens and schools generated a public debate and led parents of children with disabilities on policymakers.

In order to address the trend of separation along ethnic lines in schools and municipalities, there is a need to introduce ad hoc mechanisms for tackling on-going separation and interethnic disputes while, at the same time, continuing the debate for investing in the implementation of a long-term integrated education strategy. Several severe cases of violence in schools (one resulting in the tragic death of a secondary school student) triggered a public debate which generally focused on intensifying security measures and punishment. The UNICEF-supported programme on Reduction of Violence in Schools implemented in all primary schools contributed to shifting the discourse to the need to implement a whole school development approach for positive behavior.

Comprehensive reform of the social work delivery system is currently underway. This is spearheaded by the National Strategy for the Development of Social Protection, 2011-2021 (NSDSP). The key component of this reform is the introduction of a licensing process for all social work professionals that will be based on a standardized in-service training curriculum and nation-wide social work delivery standards.

In the third year of implementation of the Law on Juvenile Justice, a number of impediments were identified. The key constraint is the absence of free legal aid for children in conflict and in contact with the

law. A working group led by the Ministry of Justice was created to address the gaps; the work of the group is currently in process.

Preliminary MICS 4 results show an overall positive change in attitudes towards violence (6% reduction in the number of women believing a husband is justified in beating his wife/partner for any reason). The overall increase in reported cases of domestic violence also signifies the gradual fading of a culture of silence and creation of an environment where victims feel more secure to step forward. Reporting of cases of child abuse has also increased, contributing to a greater demand for services.

### Who are the deprived children in your country context?

Economic data shows that the GINI index has increased from 38% in 2003 to 44.2% in 2008 [1] (last year for which data is available), and is currently the highest among all Western Balkan countries. Disparities are evident across economic quintiles, ethnicity, and urban/rural areas. Roma children as well as children in the poorest quintiles and in rural areas are the most disadvantaged.

[table converted to list]

Indicator	National	Roma	Urban	Rural	Poorest	Richest
Pre-school attendance	22%	4%	37%	6%	0.3%	59%
Acceptance of domestic violence	14.5%	25%	7%	24%	34%	2%

Other indicators illustrating disparities include: use of improved sanitation facilities is 72% among the poorest vs. 100% among the richest; primary school completion rate is 70% among Roma vs. the national average of 97%; prevalence of stunting is 19.5% among Roma children vs. the national average of 7%; and school entry rate is 62% among the poorest Roma vs. the national average of 98%. And yet, according to the Open Society Institute, only about 0.01% to 0.02% of the national budget targets the Roma population [2]. Children with special protection needs are also among the most disadvantaged, including children with disabilities, children in institutions, street children, and children in conflict with the law.

[1] World Bank, available at: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI>

[2] Nadir Redzepe, "Chronic Deception: A Brief Analysis of Roma Policies in Macedonia", Open Society Institute – Macedonia, p. 6, available at: <http://www.romadecade.org/publications>

### Data/Evidence

The CO conducted MICS 4 and included a separate sampling for Roma (the most marginalized group), as well as a second stage screening of children with disabilities in order to provide better insight on the situation of the most vulnerable and excluded groups (see section on "the most deprived").

In cooperation with MoLSP, the CO also supported provision of evidence-based analysis to reform the system of child cash-benefits. The analysis examined whether social financial benefits reach the most marginalized and needy families and led to important findings regarding the gap between eligible and actual recipients of social financial assistance of any kind. This knowledge is crucial when deciding on system reforms and introducing changes to increase uptake, and improve targeting and efficiency of cash benefits. In the next phase, UNICEF and its partners will conduct a field survey on the situation of welfare beneficiaries to determine the transparency, effectiveness and efficiency of the social benefits application process.

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In the health sector, two studies highlighted disparities affecting children and families. The community nursing assessment provides insight on how the system functions, what disparities exist (see situation analysis for details), and how to make the system more efficient, sustainable and equitable. The nutrition survey likewise generated data on disparities across wealth quintiles, ethnicity, and regions (see situation analysis for details). The data has been used to support the MoH in drafting a national nutrition strategy and five-year investment plan, as well as a strategy to expand community nursing.

Production of two studies on ECD in 2010 (Fair Play and Roma Early Childhood Inclusion) with findings related to equity contributed to building the case for investing in ECD. These reports contributed to the development of a new ECD Law and increased commitment of partners at various levels to invest in broad ECD system reform (see report on PCR 1 results). These reports provided very strong evidence on existing inequalities in terms of access and financing based on ethnicity, wealth quintile and geographical location and highlighted recommended action for a broad system reform. National consultations and launch of the reports mobilized actors at different levels to improve equitable access to quality ECD services.

The assessment of inclusiveness of the education system based on CFS standards informed the public debate on inclusive education. Rather than focusing on the need to deploy specialists for children with disabilities in all kindergartens and schools, as is currently the case, the recommendations of the assessment are calling for investments in in-service and pre-service education, financing, screening mechanisms and parental involvement. The assessment was used in advocacy with partners at all levels.

### **Monitoring Mechanism**

As indicated in the IMEP, no evaluations were planned for 2011, but evaluation of several programmes will start in 2012. In the meantime, the CO has employed different mechanisms to monitor progress in achieving goals:

Data from MICS3 have served as the baseline for a number of indicators (as per CPAP). In these cases, programme progress will be assessed by comparing MICS3 results with those of MICS 4. This is particularly relevant to PCR 1, IR 1.1 and to some extent 1.2 indicators.

MICS4 was designed to provide information on the most excluded populations. A separate sample for Roma will yield information related to this minority group which is the most disadvantaged. This office was the second CO that helped pilot a second stage screening of children with disabilities as part of MICS4. In the absence of any data or assessment on the situation of children with disabilities, such a methodology will help generate more accurate information on childhood disabilities in the country.

In cases where no baseline data existed, the CO conducted studies at the beginning of the programme. Examples include the baseline study on the use of teaching and learning methods in literacy and numeracy, in line with CFS standards, and assessment of violence in schools. The findings of these studies will serve as a basis for evaluating achievements in IR 1.3.

In case of IR 1.4, the database that was developed with UNICEF support for CSW (2010-2011) will provide information on the users of social services, including children in need of special protection and children from disadvantaged families. Moreover, the Justice for Children Indicator Framework (JCIF), developed with UNICEF's support to gather data on children in conflict with and in contact with the law, was endorsed by national institutions. The National Council for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (NCPJD) will use this data to report to Parliament and the Government on an annual basis.

The CO has also developed an internal database for tracking budget allocations across social sectors and at a decentralized level, as well as the situation of child poverty and unemployment. The database is updated regularly and is used for advocacy with the Parliament, policymakers, and other stakeholders as well as for informing programme strategies and shifts.

Field monitoring visits and progress reports by implementing partners have been used to monitor implementation progress and RWP activities. On average, 12 field visits per year were conducted by each programme staff to Roma settlements, rural areas, project sites, and child care institutions. Monthly programme meetings were held regularly to review progress against RWPs and AMP key priorities, identify implementation constraints and find ways to address them. The CO held an internal mid-year review in June, with each IR manager reporting on progress and bottlenecks using the traffic light method. Specific follow-up action points were agreed on for each IR.

Sectoral annual review meetings were held with all key stakeholders that informed preparation of the annual report as well as formulation of the next RWPs (2012-2013).

### **Support to National Planning**

The focus of the country programme on system strengthening necessities continuous engagement of partners to track, assess and evaluate programme progress and outcomes. A number of sectoral assessments have been conducted so far (e.g. on ECD, Inclusiveness of the Education System, assessment of juvenile justice system, and immunization system). The assessments included recommendations and concrete steps to address gaps, including those in monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. These recommendations were in most cases translated into action plans adopted by the Government. Moreover, support for development of standards, certification and accreditation systems in social work, ECD, and MCH (see reports on PCRs) has contributed to partners' capacity for systematic monitoring and tracking.

UNICEF also provided support to the National Child Rights Commission (NCRC), a national inter-ministerial body tasked with monitoring the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and optional protocols, as well as the National Action Plan for Children (2006-2015). This included technical and financial support to transform the NAP into a document that is easier to implement and monitor, with baselines and indicators for the key outcomes. The revised NAP is expected to be adopted in January 2012. As an active member of the NCRC, UNICEF also provided the NCRC with up-to-date information, organized capacity-building activities for its members, and counsel on the functioning and organization of the NCRC.

Support was provided to MoLSP for the development of the 2011 operational plan for a National Strategy for the Development of Social Protection (2011-2021). In 2012, UNICEF will support the development of a multi-year operational plan which will include a results framework to serve as the basis for tracking and monitoring progress against the targets. Similarly, the CO supported the National Council for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency, the body responsible for annually reporting on the situation of children in the justice system, to prepare its first report to the Government and Parliament. The methodology developed in this process will be used by the Council for all future reports.

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) that was established to monitor the progress and constraints in the implementation of a two-year Justice for Children Project (EU funded) continued to issue quarterly progress reports. The PSC, which is comprised of representatives from all the relevant ministries, introduced a good practice this year by inviting the partners directly responsible for implementation of project activities to present their activities and progress reports at the meetings. As a result, the PSC members had a clearer understanding of project progress and bottlenecks and were more closely involved in their monitoring.

The CO also provided technical support for the MCH planning process in order to promote planning based on evidence and cost-benefit analysis; however, a more systematic approach in this area will start in 2012. This will include the development of a legal and institutional framework to define roles and responsibilities of institutions in the process of planning, budgeting, implementing and monitoring MCH programmes. Guideline for institutions will be developed along with relevant training for their use.

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### Any other relevant information related to data/evidence?

#### Country Programme Analytical Overview

Advocacy will constitute a substantial part of the CO's work in 2012, largely supporting system reforms and improving the normative framework in different sectors. This will include the reform of the child cash benefit system based on evidence from an on-going study, adoption of the ECD law that provides equitable and universal access to quality ECD services, adoption of the revised Juvenile Justice Law, the national nutrition strategy, and the national Policy on Reduction of Violence in Schools. Advocacy efforts will also include dissemination of MICS4 results that highlight disparities and identify the most disadvantaged children across different indicators.

A cross-cutting strategy to support system strengthening for child rights will be capacity development through development of national pre-service and in-service curricula (inclusive education, ECD, and Safe Motherhood), training national institutions on the use of new curricula (including full implementation of in-service training for CSW, ECD service providers, and teachers), and extension of training for reduction of violence in schools to secondary schools.

Service delivery will focus on supporting pilot models and/or introduction of critical new services. This will include a pilot on inclusive education practices, development of pilot on outreach social work services for children at risk of violence and abuse, as well as the introduction of multi-disciplinary response teams for children victims of abuse and violence (pending availability of funds). UNICEF will also continue to support ECD planning and service delivery at the local level, with a focus on the most disadvantaged children (children in rural areas, Roma, and Albanian children).

With the new Parliamentary Working Group on Child Rights in place, UNICEF will continue its partnership to build the capacity of the new working group with the ultimate aim of establishing a permanent formal Child Rights Committee dedicated to regularly advising law makers, holding the Government accountable and advocating for child rights issues. The details of the corporate alliance with the telecommunication company to expand ECD services will be defined and formalized, and the partnership with the EU and key donor agencies such as World Bank and USAID will continue.

The development of a C4D strategy on inclusive education will be initiated in 2012, and the brand campaign on ECD will also include a C4D element on the importance of holistic child development.

To promote the child rights agenda at the local level, the strategy has been shifted from supporting a child friendly municipalities pilot to improving budgetary allocations for children at the decentralized level as well as funds management in the fully decentralized education sector.

As part of its work on knowledge management, the CO will complete the study on child cash benefits in 2012, and start preparatory work for the MTR. Support to NGO coalitions for child rights monitoring will continue, as well as assistance to the National Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Council for its reporting based on the Justice for Children Indicator Framework. UNICEF will also work with the State Statistical Office to update data collecting tools and introduce new indicators related to child protection.

#### Effective Advocacy

*Fully met benchmarks*

Advocacy efforts resulted in a higher buy-in for ECD system reform at all levels. Findings from the studies produced in 2010 (Fair Play and RECI) clearly highlighted the existing inequities in terms of access to and quality of ECD provision. These findings were used to advocate with the MoLSP for the rights of the most deprived children, i.e. those in rural areas, in lowest quintile families, and Roma and Albanian children. As a result, the MoLSP agreed to embark on a process of developing a new law on ECD that incorporates the recommendations of these studies. Similarly, advocacy with municipalities, especially those that are not benefiting from the current funding for ECD, has increased their demand for more equitable investments. In the same way, findings of the Assessment of the Inclusiveness of Education System were used in programme events (roundtables and workshops) to influence the course of the debate, shifting the focus from investment in a more biomedical approach towards a system approach to inclusiveness.

Following 2010 approval of a large grant from the Dutch Government (8 million USD) for rehabilitation of the MCH system, UNICEF provided technical assistance to MoH to formulate both the development and the implementation phase of the project. The approach was intended to ensure the project maintains a strong equity focus, in particular for the community-based MCH interventions. This resulted in the following: **i)** preparation of a detailed plan for the development phase of the project. The plan has been approved by the Dutch Government and will be enclosed as Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement, which is expected to be signed in the first quarter of 2012; **ii)** completion of an assessment of the community nursing system. This component, along with immunization and perinatal care, represents the third main pillar of the project. The assessment has provided a separate equity analysis and will serve two purposes: preparation of a feasibility plan to invest in this area, and an action plan to reform the community nursing system and ensure equitable service delivery.

The legal gap analysis on justice for children identified gaps in the normative framework and provided a set of recommendations that were used by the Ministry of Justice as the basis for amending the Juvenile Justice Law (JL). As a member of the working group for the revision of the law, UNICEF advocated and directly influenced the shaping of provisions. In addition, through its advocacy, UNICEF has kept the key developments in the field of justice for children on the agenda of the relevant Ministries and the EU. In 2012, UNICEF will follow-up with a public hearing with Parliament and a national conference in order to ensure that international standards and best practices are fully embedded in the revised JL.

Long negotiations with the corporate sector came to fruition with the approval of the board of a local telecommunications company to engage in a strategic partnership to support the ECD programme (see Strategic Partnerships). The partnership agreement will be formally signed in 2012.

### **Changes in Public Policy**

The CO made efforts to ensure that child rights issues remain on the agenda of policy makers and are reflected in the strategic and operational documents of relevant national institutions. With UNICEF's advice, MoLSP has started to reform the current legislation to ensure wider access to and improved quality of ECD services, as well as to improve administration of the system of child benefits. UNICEF also helped the National Child Rights Commission to revise the National Action Plan for Children (2006-2015) in line with the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The revised Action Plan is a comprehensive document containing provisions and commitments to introduce important legislative changes across all public sectors that influence the lives of children.

Two main studies were completed in 2011 which will inform major public health policy changes in the coming year. Namely, the assessment of the community nursing system will inform development of the new regulatory framework for community nurses, i.e. new professional standards, scope of work and practice protocols, along with changes in the financing scheme of services provided. On the other hand, the nutrition survey among women and children has generated evidence for formulating a new national nutrition strategy and a five-year investment plan.

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The MoES was supported to establish two working groups tasked with developing the National Policy, Strategy and Guidance for Reduction of Violence in Schools, and a programme document for implementation of certain strands of the National Strategy on Integrated Education (focusing on teacher education, curricular/extra-curricular activities). Technical assistance was provided for the development of both policy documents that will provide the platform for safe schools and for the implementation of a critical National Strategy for Interethnic Education.

### **Leveraging Resources**

Long negotiations with the corporate sector came to fruition with the approval from the board of a local telecommunications company to engage in a strategic partnership to support the expansion of ECD services in vulnerable communities. The corporate alliance will include a direct cash donation and activities to mobilize additional resources from the private sector.

In ECD, as part of the support to local ECD planning and budgeting, a total of five municipalities allocated funding for the opening of five new centers, while five old centers (established with UNICEF support) are now taken over by municipalities. In Bitola, the second largest city in the country, the private sector invested in opening a new ECD center, paving the way for the engagement of other private companies.

Upon the successful roll-out of the training programme on reduction of violence in all primary schools (with UNICEF support), the City of Skopje allocated funding to expand this programme to all secondary schools in the capital.

Moreover, UNICEF was the catalyst, supporting a local NGO to secure funds from the Swiss Embassy to open the first ECD center in one of the underserved areas with a high Roma population.

UNICEF continues to work with the MoH and the Dutch embassy to ensure that the host country is able to meet conditions necessary for the release of over \$8 million of funds leveraged last year for the MoH to strengthen the provision of mother and child health services.

Fund raising has been hindered by the fact that key donors (for example the Netherlands, Norway, and USAID) are either scaling down or ending development assistance to the country.

### **Capacity Development**

*Mostly met benchmarks*

The findings of a desk review, together with the results of a training needs assessment for CSW staff conducted at the beginning of the year, were used to design and develop a comprehensive in-service training curriculum for CSW staff. Technical support was provided by an international group of consultants that worked closely with the Institute for Social Activities (ISA), the national institute responsible for training and continuous education of staff of CSWs and child care institutions. The process helped improve the capacity of ISA and provided them with tools to conduct future training. Moreover, an advisory group comprised of CSW practitioners was created to support the process and to assist with the roll-out of future training. The ToTs were conducted in 2011 and cascade trainings for all CSW staff will be conducted by ISA in 2012. Finally, the in-service training curriculum was included within the program for licensing CSW staff and will serve as a critical component for issuing and renewing licenses for social work practice.

Capacity development in ECD was based on the nationally adopted Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS) which promote the holistic development of the child and focus on child outcomes. The process of ELDS validation indicated current capacity gaps. Based on these findings, strategies for capacity development were formulated. The strategies addressed improving the skills of kindergarten staff and educators from ECD centers, and the development of a national in-service training programme as the basis for accreditation of ECD providers. It also included monitoring and evaluation instruments based on ELDS, and ELDS based materials and manuals.

In the education sector, capacity development efforts were based on several baseline assessments that indicated gaps in the knowledge and skills of teachers to deliver quality instructions in areas where students demonstrated poor performance, including numeracy, literacy, life skills and positive behavior. The other identified gaps related to inclusion of children with special education needs. Examples of capacity building support include numeracy and literacy training which was developed based on the analysis of the country's results in TIMSS and PIRL. The teacher training programme in line with international standards was informed by an assessment of identified areas where students show low results as well as an assessment of knowledge and skills of teachers to provide quality instructions.

Following the development of in-service practice guidelines for antenatal and neonatal care in 2010, a training programme for continuous professional development of service providers was created. This process had been put on hold for the last seven years and was revived in 2011. The in-service training programmes covered 80% of gynecologists working on antenatal care and 50% of neonatologists working in maternity hospitals. More importantly, this training programme will be sustained in the coming years as MoH has allocated funding from its own resources and has also managed to leverage additional resources from the Dutch Government with UNICEF's support. In this regard, MoH will develop a three-year national training plan in the first quarter of 2012.

### Communication For Development

*Fully met benchmarks*

The "Schools Free of Violence" C4D strategy was implemented, complementing the programme training and policy development. Developed in 2010 by a multi-sector group (see 2010 COAR), the strategy aimed to challenge the acceptance of "violence" in communication and discipline and to address the tendency of parents, teachers, and students to shift the responsibility of addressing violence in schools to others. The main component focused on **mechanisms to promote child participation and engage children in the change process**. Using media (song, dance, video, and social-media) to inspire children's participation, a **campaign theme song** performed by popular celebrities was produced with lyrics written by children who won a **national competition**. The music video was uploaded on YouTube by the CO and others (all together 13,032 views). Using Facebook and word-of-mouth, an estimated 4,500 youth engaged in preparations, and over 2,500 performed **flash mobs** in sixteen cities. A **one-minute-video competition** was organized to document and inspire whole-school action (140 entries were received; however, based on the level of engagement, it is estimated that close to 3,000 youth and teachers were involved in the development). An integrated **media campaign (TV, radio, print, outdoor, and web) ran for two months on 20 media outlets** that provided pro-bono media space. While serving to deliver campaign messages, the media campaign also directed traffic to a **web resource** [[www.beznasilstvo.mk](http://www.beznasilstvo.mk)] **developed with contributions from teachers**. The site has had approximately 60,000 unique visits since its establishment. The website provides resources to help schools develop action plans; resources for teachers on classroom management, behavior for learning teaching styles, and non-violence curriculum and classroom activities; and tools for **parents on positive child-discipline methods**. M&E activities included 24 FDGs to pre-test materials and creative concepts; a baseline on attitudes; mechanisms to monitor participation throughout the rollout; and an additional 24 FDGs and a survey to evaluate 2011 efforts

conducted in December (report due in Jan 2012).

Communication initiatives to support Justice for Children (J4C) reform continued in 2011. The CO convened five **journalist briefings providing synthesized information (on changes and reform implementation challenges) and direct access to experts and senior EU and UNICEF officials. This in turn, helped journalists pro-actively push the justice for children agenda through the media** (30 media reports were published/broadcasted and seven TV talk show appearances organized with noted improvements in tone and accuracy of reports). **Child-friendly materials** were developed in four languages, including Roma. The materials were pre-tested to check comprehension, acceptance and need for information. A significant difference was noted in responses of children from different ethnic groups (i.e. Roma found comprehension of literal Roma difficult and preferred the Macedonian version). **Communication materials to support professionals' capacity development** were developed and pre-tested, including five short videos (using actors) presenting information on typical cases of children in conflict/contact with the law for use during face-to-face training of professionals; and two brochures highlighting roles and responsibilities of various professionals in the justice system. Training video material was finalised and incorporated in training package.

### Service Delivery

*Mostly met benchmarks*

The CO continued to support ECD centers as a model for service provision to the most marginalized children. In 2011, the main focus was on improvement of physical environment and learning practices in the centers. Two key documents contributed to this improvement: 1) the standards for organization and operation of ECD centers that prescribe parameters and criteria, such as the number of children per group, space per group and per child, minimum working hours, parental involvement, record keeping and communication with parents and community; 2) Programme for work based on ELDS such as tools for planning, organization of activities and observation of child progress and outcomes. Community-based educators were trained utilizing these documents, and centers were observed for progress made against these criteria and standards.

In terms of expansion and buy-in for opening of ECD centers, ten more municipalities were supported in planning and budgeting for ECD, leading to commitment for opening five new centers in the first quarter of 2012 in areas without any kindergartens. Municipalities are providing the space and educators and covering the operational costs. Some municipalities have also covered the costs for refurbishment and equipment.

In terms of quality of support provided in stimulation and learning of young children, parallel observations of practices in both ECD centers and kindergartens showed that ELDS are more explicitly implemented in ECD centers. Field monitoring visits show that in ECD centers, activities are planned and recorded based on ELDS and parents are more actively participating than before (on average, in groups of 18-20 children, there are at least 4-5 parents present, and interest for opening new centers is higher in rural areas). The ECD centers are considered as alternatives to kindergartens for ECD provision in rural and marginalized communities which is stated in the new draft ECD Law. Lessons learned from implementation so far will inform further scaling-up of this model.

The assessment of the community nursing system was conducted to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of home-visiting nursing services and to propose actions to make the system more efficient, sustainable and equitable. Based on key findings of the assessment, a major prerequisite for sustainable service delivery of the community nursing system is development of a regulatory framework (which is currently non-existent). This includes defined professional standards and skills; formulation of scope of work; and practice protocols and referral mechanisms with other service providers at the PHC level.

Consequently, a new financing scheme will be defined to follow these regulatory changes and support the service delivery package.

A pilot Mentoring Programme for children in conflict and contact with the law was developed and implemented by an academic institution responsible for pre-service training of social workers. The initial results have been very promising, i.e. zero recidivism by children enrolled in the programme. The CSW has been fully involved throughout this process, including in selecting the mentors, thus building their capacity to carry out and scale up this model in the future.

### Strategic Partnerships

#### *Fully met benchmarks*

The partnership with the EU to promote child rights in general and the rights of the most vulnerable in particular continued through joint press briefings and field visits. The CO also effectively collaborated with the World Bank and USAID to build a common vision for strengthening pre-service teacher training. Under two Joint Programmes, UNICEF continued its partnership with UNDP, UNESCO, WHO, UNFPA and UN Women and jointly communicated results on and advocated for Inter-ethnic relations and Domestic Violence at national and local levels (see key strategic partnerships under PCR reports).

The partnership with the local Microsoft office and the British Council ensured that child online safety conference and communication activities targeting children focused on issues beyond online security (i.e. protection of personal data). The CO was able to ensure that issues related to cyber violence (risks of sexual abuse and exploitation, exposure to violent or inappropriate images, and cyber bullying) were brought into focus.

The CO private sector (PS) partnership strategy was developed in 2011 based on market research and lessons learned (i.e. need to lower the minimum guarantee amount) from previous on-going negotiations with local corporations. The strategy foresees multiple forms of private sector engagement (i.e. maximizing PS skills for programme innovations and influencing corporate business practices and social responsibility agendas as part of programme sectorial work). It defines the CO approach to engaging with the PS to mobilize financial resources for children. The CO will establish a long-term corporate alliance that mobilizes funds from the company itself, while additional funds will be mobilized through a campaign targeting corporate clients and employees. Pitch proposals were developed for two priority programme areas and presented to three corporations and one association. After long negotiations with a local telecommunication company, in December, the board approved an alliance proposal to accelerate ECD programme goals.

The CO partnership with the Parliament was delayed due to a political crisis, including a delay in re-establishing a working group for children (November). Despite these disruptions, key parliamentarians and technical staff continued to participate in UNICEF-supported activities designed to build Parliament's oversight capacity and ability to influence budget allocations to ensure full implementation of child-focused laws, strategies and programmes. Key MPs participated in a regional UNICEF and IPU conference. A draft agenda for action (follow up to a 2010 oversight hearing) was developed with UNICEF support and presented to the chair of the working group. A technical review (from a child rights perspective) of the proposed 2012 budget was conducted with UNICEF support and the summary presented to all members of the partner parliamentary committee as reference materials during the debate. Preparations for a public hearing on Justice for Children reform and field visits for parliamentarians are underway and planned for early 2012.

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### **Mobilizing Partners**

Targeted pitch proposals were developed and presented to corporates operating in the telecommunication, banking and consumables markets and one association. After long negotiations with a local telecommunication company, in December, the board approved a UNICEF corporate alliance proposal to accelerate ECD programme goals. The alliance includes direct cash donation, campaign to mobilize additional resources, and events to support the establishment of ECD centers in rural communities.

The parliament agenda for action proposes oversight activities focused on the most vulnerable communities.

The Parents Resource Center (to be set up in 2012) has included in its action plan a mapping of services for inclusion of children with special education needs, existing organizations, the relevant legal framework, and parents of children with disabilities in order to take the first steps towards creating a network of solidarity and raise awareness on inclusion, with a particular focus on the importance of parental involvement.

### **Knowledge Management**

*Mostly met benchmarks*

The conduct of MICS4, which included a separate sampling of Roma and a second stage screening of children with disabilities, shed light on disparities between urban/rural areas, among wealth quintiles, and between different ethnic groups. The results of MICS4 will be critical for the update of the situation analysis, in particular the situation of the most disadvantaged children.

As part of its partnership with two NGO coalitions, UNICEF supported the development of their capacity in monitoring the situation of child rights and the CRC implementation in the country. This cooperation has also contributed to other positive outcomes for the CSO members of the coalitions, including strengthening their internal communication (e.g. communication among NGOs with similar interests or fields of work), improving the organization of existing networks, and recognizing that knowledge generated through the process of monitoring should drive advocacy, lobbying and fundraising efforts of the coalition members.

The CO provided technical assistance to MoH to develop the national nutrition strategy and its five-year investment plan. The approach included capacity building and knowledge transfer to national institutions (MoH, Health Insurance Fund and the Institute for Public Health) in generating the nutrition situation analysis not merely through assessing the health impact, but through monetizing the consequences of malnutrition. This process was followed by the development of an action plan along with cost-benefit analysis of all the proposed interventions, as well as impact on the most disadvantaged communities, such as Roma and households living in the lowest wealth quintiles. The cost-benefit analysis also provides a basis for creating fiscal space for larger investments in the area of nutrition. Follow-up advocacy activities will continue in 2012 to ensure that the nutrition strategy and its investment plan is endorsed by the Government.

The Electronic Database for CSWs allows for the first time the storage of accurate electronic files for all users of social services. The database generates reports disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity, social risk, region, etc., enabling decision-makers to create policies based on evidence. In 2011, use of the database was made mandatory for all CSWs throughout the country and replaced the old paper-based filing system.

The National Council for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (NCPJD) is the highest national body for monitoring, coordinating and reporting on children in the justice system. The NCPJD was involved in the process of developing the Justice for Children Indicator Framework from the onset. The indicator framework was discussed at NCPJD sessions and training was provided to council members. As a result, the NCPJD

adopted the framework as its official methodology for reporting to the Government and to Parliament.

In the education sector, as part of the CFS programme, the CO summarized the country's experience in mainstreaming and scaling up CFS standards and resources into a CFS manual (still in draft). The manual serves as a resource for national counterparts (policy makers, municipalities and primarily schools, but also for other countries in the region implementing CFS).

Also see C4D section for related information.

### Human Rights Based Approach to Cooperation

#### *Fully met benchmarks*

A key component of the C4D strategy on "Schools Free of Violence" was the participation and engagement of children as rights holders throughout the process. This included a children's national competition for the campaign theme song lyrics, engagement in preparatory activities and performing in flash mobs in 16 cities. It also included a one-minute video competition in schools for children to present their views on a whole-school approach to addressing violence. Ongoing M&E activities reveal that some 7,800 children were engaged at some point in the campaign (see C4D section for details).

In 2011, the CO launched an initiative for mobilizing and supporting parents of children with special educational needs (SEN) to support their children's inclusion in education and other aspects of life. The initiative included the opening of a Parent Resource Center (PRC).

A needs assessment with parents conducted in preparation for workshops identified areas for improvement from the parents' perspective, as well as areas in which parents need support to be effective advocates for the inclusion of children with SEN. A major identified issue was the prevailing attitude that support to children with SEN is charity work rather than a child's right and the obligation of stakeholders at different levels to support his/her progressive realization, protection and promotion. Initial activities focused on the application of HRBA, which included facilitating and achieving consensus on immediate steps to be undertaken by stakeholders as duty-bearers on one side and parents as rights holders on the other side. A process of formulating a vision, mission and values, as well as short-term and long-term priorities of the future PRC, was rooted in this approach; parents were supported in obtaining relevant information and were trained in how to more effectively advocate and lead for inclusion. Activities included collection of data and information on existing laws, sub-laws and regulations related to inclusion, as well as the collection of more detailed data on the number of children in regular and special schools, and mapping of available services and organizations working in this area. By the end of 2011, advocacy events led by parents revealed a shift in their understanding of inclusion. Parents mobilized resources and undertook first steps for the establishment of the PRC which included identification of premises and the development of an annual work programme for 2012.

UNICEF's work with CSOs on capacity building in monitoring the implementation of the CRC in the country is yet another example of the CO's support for capacity building of duty bearers to fulfill and protect children's rights. Monitoring the CRC implementation and using the concluding observations of the CRC Committee as the main framework for monitoring was enthusiastically accepted by CSOs and was a motivating factor in their engagement in data collection.

### Gender

*Partially met benchmarks*

In response to the findings of the gender mainstreaming assessment conducted in 2010, the CO stepped up its efforts to effectively mainstream gender in its planning and data collection. It ensured that a strong gender perspective is incorporated in the design of all data collection activities conducted or supported by UNICEF. All ToRs for such activities were reviewed internally by the gender focal point to ensure that gender aspects are duly reflected in them. For example, the database for CSWs that was developed with UNICEF support is designed to provide gender disaggregated data for all included indicators. The software is being used by CSW staff to record and manage the cases, including the gender dimensions among children in need of special protection, and disadvantaged and excluded children. Similarly, UNICEF supported the development of a system for monitoring the implementation of the Juvenile Justice Law. This system and the adopted monitoring indicators are also gender sensitive and will provide gender disaggregated data in relation to the implementation of the Law.

In working with CSOs on monitoring and reporting on the situation of children, the members of the coalitions were trained on the importance and relevance of gender disaggregated data and were instructed on how to collect it when possible. Besides providing more programme relevant data, this approach has helped increase gender sensitivity in the work of partner CSOs.

As part of the UN Joint Programme to address domestic violence, UNICEF has joined efforts with other agencies in increasing awareness on the impact of domestic violence on children and women, improving the legal framework for their protection, and strengthening service delivery for the victims.

### Environmental Sustainability

*Partially met benchmarks*

The CO continued to build its partnership with the Ministry of Interior's Office of Crisis Management, the government body charged with coordination in case of a natural disaster. UNICEF was charged by the UN Disaster Management Team to lead efforts in conducting a joint UN simulation and training with the Crisis Management Office. Planned for December 2011, the exercise was to be jointly facilitated by OCHA and the CEE/CIS regional emergency officer. However, due to demands related to office preparation for VISION, the exercise was postponed until the first quarter of 2012. In 2011, the country chaired the European Forum for Disaster Risk Reduction. The CO participated in meetings associated with the chairmanship, and briefed Special Representative of the UN for Disaster Risk Reduction Margareta Wahlstrom in preparation for her visit to Macedonia. In 2002, the CO conducted an assessment of earthquake risks in the country's schools. The CO tried to identify the necessary funding to update this assessment.

### South-South and Triangular Cooperation

Following a regional conference on CFS held in Skopje, an exchange visit was coordinated for an eight-member delegation from different governmental education institutions from Kosovo to share first-hand information on best practices in CFS. Technical support was also provided by the CO's implementing partner who visited Kosovo. Similarly, two participants from Kosovo (a government representative and a UNICEF staff member) were included in the workshop for the development of a national ECD in-service training programme to help with the conceptualization and design of a similar process in Kosovo.

## Country Programme Component: System strengthening for child rights

## PCRs (Programme Component Results)

PCR	EQRank	OTDetails
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.		3 FA1OT11, FA2OT1, FA2OT7, FA4OT7

## Resources Used in 2011(USD)

Resource Type	Planned for 2011 (as per CPAP ceiling )	Allocated in 2011	Estimated Year-End Expenditure	%Spent (4)/(3) * 100
OR-E				
OR-R	1460000.00	2206528.65	2165137.10	98.12
RR	411000.00	459675.00	459446.56	99.95
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,871,000.00</b>	<b>\$2,666,203.65</b>	<b>\$2,624,583.66</b>	

## Results Achieved

Following approval of a US\$8 million grant from the Dutch Government, the CO continued its technical assistance to MoH to formulate both the development and implementation phase of the project, and to ensure it maintains a strong equity focus. Building on the findings of the nutrition survey, the national strategy and investment plan were developed, along with a cost-benefit analysis of the proposed interventions to create fiscal space for larger investments in nutrition. To address the gap in quality of MCH services, UNICEF supported an in-service training programme for 80% of gynecologists working on antenatal care and 50% of neonatologists in maternity hospitals. Allocation of MoH resources has ensured sustainability of this training programme.

For the first time, a standardized in-service training curriculum was developed for all CSWs and Child Care Institutions which will serve as the core foundation for the upcoming process of licensing all CSW staff. In conjunction, standardized training tools were developed for all Justice for Children professionals that will be used by national training institutions. The counseling center for children and families at risk of violence, the first of its kind in the country, is now fully operational and is to be replicated by the MoLSP in other municipalities.

Six out of ten planned Local Councils for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency were established in pilot municipalities. A successful pilot Mentoring Program for children in conflict with the law was also launched.

MoLSP was supported in drafting the new ECD law that includes provisions for an equitable and quality ECD system and in developing a draft national ECD training programme based on ELDS as a basis for accreditation. Ten new municipalities allocated and mobilized resources for ECD and 20 local ECD centers provided services to 1,447 children 0-6 years in marginalized communities. [http://www.unicef.org/tfymacedonia/Ran\\_detski\\_razvoj\\_za\\_web\(1\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/tfymacedonia/Ran_detski_razvoj_za_web(1).pdf)

Five modules for inclusive education (IE) in-service and pre-service teacher training were finalized with national stakeholders (teacher training faculties, local NGOs, BED, and MoES). Parents of children with special needs were mobilized to establish a Parent Resource Centre and to include their children in all aspects of life (See HRBA part for more information).

A partnership with BED to improve the quality of education resulted in the following: 1) training of all

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primary schools in the country on reduction of violence; one third of trained schools are already implementing a whole-school development approach to address violence while the rest have drafted their school plans; 2) implementation of new teaching instructions in numeracy and literacy in early grades increased from 22% and 10% of primary schools to 43% and 22%, respectively; 3) training of all secondary schools on LSBE and its implementation in primary schools.

To enhance multiculturalism in the education system, the following was accomplished: 1) extracurricular activities piloted in 2010 informed the development of a teacher manual, scaling up of activities in three targeted municipalities and development of an action plan for scaling up at the national level; 2) establishment of models for youth-based centers in three target municipalities involved around 3,000 youth from different ethnic groups in multicultural activities.

### **Most Critical Factors and Constraints**

Limited fiscal space, weak capacities and limited technical knowledge at national and local levels continue to pose challenges for programme progress across the social sector.

Efforts to reform ECD were constrained by limited understanding of holistic child development and focus on child outcomes as per the ELDS. In general, ECD is understood as simply a component of school readiness and care, rather than a more holistic approach to childhood development. Moreover, ECD in-service training and monitoring of outcomes are completely lacking. Going forward, there is a strong need for reallocating state subsidies and mobilizing for reforms that would increase the efficiency of existing ECD services and help ensure higher coverage levels for those living in rural areas, those in the bottom two quintiles, and other vulnerable groups. In the education sector, all activities were planned and fully implemented in cooperation with MoES and related institutions, yet further efforts and evidence-based advocacy are needed to change attitudes when it comes to important interventions for advancing inclusive education. For example, rather than focusing on deploying more specialists for children with disabilities, emphasis should be placed on investing core state resources.

In order to address weak coordination and centralized decision-making within public health institutions, UNICEF agreed with the MoH to outsource studies to local research institutions as a way to provide technical support. With new leadership in the MoH following the June 2011 elections, UNICEF initiated intense communication to ensure that new public health decision-makers understood the benefits of UNICEF's equity model and appropriately established priorities, with dedicated financial resources.

The process of establishing Local Councils for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency had to be adjusted due to early parliamentary elections as well as the need for further advocacy with municipal authorities to ensure their full engagement. Several NGO partners were selected to work closely with the municipalities.

### **Key Strategic Partnerships and Interagency Collaboration**

Within the framework of the UN joint programme on domestic violence, UNICEF and other UN organizations were able to reach a wide number of counterparts to strengthen the state's response to domestic violence. Although there is still room for improving coordination, in the third year of implementation, the programme continued to build on earlier programme success. For example, the National Coordination Body is now fully functional; a country-wide NGO network is operational and provides free legal aid for domestic violence victims; a public-awareness campaign is continuously implemented; and new services targeting victims and perpetrators have been introduced.

In the education sector, coordination was realized in three major areas: 1. Inter-ethnic education - UNICEF and USAID coordinated the conception and design process of a new \$5.2 million USAID programme on interethnic education to ensure complementarity of interventions supported by both organizations. USAID incorporated successful UNICEF-supported pilots (e.g. manual for extracurricular activities, CFS school self-

evaluation framework, and CFS standards related to multiculturalism and democratic participation); 2. System strengthening for teacher education was identified as an area for future cooperation between USAID, the WB, EU and UNICEF. Several consultations have been held so far, and UNICEF's contribution will be based on findings from the Teacher Shortage Study and content standards related to multiculturalism, inclusive education, numeracy and literacy. 3. Consultations with the WB have been held in relation to the new phase of Conditional Cash Transfers. Moreover, the three agencies (WB, USAID, and UNICEF) jointly supported MoES for the country's participation in the TIMSS; its results are to be issued in early spring.

Under the MDG-F supported programme (financed by the Government of Spain) on enhancing inter-ethnic dialogue and collaboration, UNICEF works in partnership with UNDP, UNESCO, and several national and local government and non-government bodies, encouraging a collaborative approach to decision-making, strategy development, and joint communication of results (such as joint fact sheets and dedicated page on UN website). The MDG-F program has constructively and jointly advocated for activities in the specific areas of intervention: governance, education and society.

Substantial progress was made in ensuring wider partnership between UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA and UNAIDS to provide long term technical assistance to MoH and other public health institutions in order to improve its capacity for planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring of public health programmes. An agreement was reached for each agency to provide specific assistance based on its area of technical expertise. The common approach will include development of a legal and institutional framework that will define roles and responsibilities of all the relevant public health institutions which are involved either in planning or implementation and monitoring of the programmes. Capacity building trainings will follow to ensure full acceptance and implementation of the new legally assigned roles.

As chair of the UN Social Inclusion Working Group, UNICEF worked with UNDP, WHO, UNFPA, UN Women and other resident UN agencies to support the Government in drafting the operational plan for implementation of the National Social Inclusion Strategy (approved in 2010).

## Humanitarian Situations

N/A

## Summary of Monitoring, Studies and Evaluations

- In the health programme, two major studies were completed in 2011 – an assessment of the community nursing system and a nutrition survey among women of reproductive age and children under five. The community nursing assessment was conducted with the intention to better understand how effectively community Mother and Child Health services have been functioning and how to make them more efficient, sustainable and equitable in the context of a major investment plan of the Government to revitalize this component of the health system. Based on key findings of the assessment, a major prerequisite for sustainable service delivery under the community nursing system is development of a new regulatory framework (currently non-existent), along with a new financing scheme to follow regulatory changes and support equitable delivery of health services.

- The objective of the nutrition survey was to generate new and comprehensive data on malnutrition among women and children (similar study last conducted in 1999). More importantly, the data was used to understand the current health and economic impact of malnutrition, including its effect on widening health inequities, and to formulate a national nutrition strategy and five-year investment plan. Key findings from the survey show that anemia is clearly a common public health problem. No significant improvement is observed in anemia among children since 1999 (25.7% vs. 21.8% in 2010). For women of reproductive age, there has been an increase from 12.2% in 1999 to 19.2%. Significant disparities were found in anemia rates among Albanian and Roma communities (between 5% to 10% difference), as well as in the two out of eight poorest development regions in the country.

- A legal analysis gap on existing justice for children of primary and secondary legislation was

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completed. The main purpose was to assess its compliance with the international justice for children standards and identify gaps that should be further regulated. Some of the findings related to the terminology used in different regulations; the lack of minimum safeguards for the most basic of legal principles, i.e. presumption of innocence, and protection of child victims and witnesses; and poor implementation or enforcement of provisions in current law. For example, free legal aid is currently not being provided to those children in conflict with the law who require it for steps in the legal process prior to a court appearance.

### Future Work Plan

In 2012, UNICEF will continue to support the Government to improve evidence-based planning of MCH programmes and policies, both at the national and local level. This process would be enhanced by the development of a legal and institutional framework to define roles and responsibilities of institutions in the process of planning, budgeting, implementation and monitoring of MCH programmes. Consequently, guidelines for institutions will be developed along with relevant training for their use. Other key areas of work will include additional technical assistance concerning implementation of the MCH project co-financed by the Dutch Government. In that context, priority will be given to initiate reforms of the community nursing system and define its legal framework in order to ensure that the government investment plan in this area is meaningful and sustainable. Finalization and endorsement of the national nutrition strategy and its fiscal implications will require extensive policy dialogue with key decision makers. A new partnership will be established with the state medical universities to extend technical support for revision and update of pre-service training in the area of Safe Motherhood in accordance with international standards and best practices.

In the education sector, work on system building will continue, with a focus on inclusive education through development of pre-service and in-service curricula and normative framework, piloting inclusive schools, and supporting a Parent Resource Center. Training on Violence Free Schools will be expanded to remaining secondary schools, and capacity development in areas of literacy and numeracy teaching methodology will continue. In the area of ECD, support for the system reform and strengthening will continue, including development of a normative framework (sub-laws for the new ECD law and standards), data collection (development of database) and capacity development (in-service training programme and curricula and parenting skills). UNICEF will support ECD planning and service delivery at the local level, with a focus on the most disadvantaged or under-served children (children in rural areas, Roma, and Albanian children).

To protect children from violence, abuse and exploitation, future work will focus on building the normative framework for child protection, capacity building and prevention services for children at risk. More specifically, this will entail the assessment of secondary legislation, the development of service delivery standards, adoption of Justice for Children bylaws, the full implementation of CSW in-service training curriculum and the licensing process, development and implementation of outreach social work services for children, and the introduction of multi-disciplinary teams for children victims of abuse and violence.

### Country Programme Component: Child rights monitoring and social policy

#### PCRs (Programme Component Results)

PCR	EQRank	OTDetails
By the end of 2015, all partners (Government, CSOs, Parliament, media, and the private sector) are collectively engaged in budgeting, monitoring child rights and child-focused social responsibility programmes.		1 FA5OT1, FA5OT6, FA5OT7

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### Resources Used in 2011(USD)

Resource Type	Planned for 2011 (as per CPAP ceiling )	Allocated in 2011	Estimated Year-End Expenditure	%Spent (4)/(3) * 100
OR-E				
OR-R	500000.00	574359.47	568301.36	98.95
RR	276000.00	232191.83	231631.37	99.76
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$776,000.00</b>	<b>\$806,551.30</b>	<b>\$799,932.73</b>	

### Results Achieved

Successful UNICEF advocacy efforts led to the decision to revise the existing National Action Plan for Children (2006-2015) in line with the recommendations of the CRC Committee. The revised document will be presented to the Government in January 2012. It is a substantial improvement to the earlier version both in terms of formulation of plans and results as well as its monitoring and reporting framework (previously non-existent). Great steps were also taken in providing evidence-based recommendations to reform the current system of child cash benefits. MoLSP has initiated a legal-reform process to ensure the social assistance programme provides sufficient assistance to meet the essential needs of the most marginalized children. At the local level, the CO assisted three select municipalities in better expenditure planning and budget management in the area of education, as education services remain the most decentralized. At the same time, UNICEF, in cooperation with UNDP, is engaged in supporting the fiscal decentralization process at the central level by providing expertise in the area of education funding and education funds transfer formulas.

Alliances and partnerships with Parliament, media, and the private sector contributed to building an enabling environment for the fulfillment of child rights. Implementation of C4D strategies contributed to an increase in stakeholder engagement to eliminate violence in schools and towards creating an enabling environment for justice for children reform (see Section 4: C4D). The CO efforts to influence the private sector's social responsibility agenda and mobilize resources for children (see Section 6: Strategic Partnerships) came to fruition with the board of a local telecommunication company approving a corporate alliance proposal to expand ECD services in vulnerable communities. Parliament's commitment to improving oversight and budget allocations to ensure implementation of child-focused legislation was confirmed by the re-establishment of a working group for children (after snap-elections) and plans to formally adopt an agenda for action (see Section 6). Increased interaction, production, and dissemination of communication products for the media have ensured the media's access to synthesized information for pro-actively promoting child rights. Introduction of social media (facebook) has provided a new channel to interact, update on progress, and generate support.

The CO continued support for the CSOs in building their capacities for monitoring and reporting on the situation of children. The list of indicators for NGOs to monitor the CRC (focusing on concluding observations of the CRC Committee) were defined and finalized with participation of the two NGO coalitions established in 2010, and support was provided to build their capacity in data collection and report preparation. The coalitions selected coordinators responsible for managing and supervising the data collecting process. Data collecting took place in the period April-September, and NGOs reports will be published in 2012. MICS4 was conducted in partnership with IPH, with a separate sampling of Roma, as well as second stage screening of children with disabilities to yield data on the most disadvantaged (see section on data and evidence). TransMonee dataset was updated, with data that is internationally comparable.

### Most Critical Factors and Constraints

Weak administrative capacities and lack of reliable, accurate and timely data represented a challenge for the delivery of timely results, especially at the local level. Fiscal constraints, which are intensified by the global economic crisis, make advocacy for increased social sector spending on children (education, health and

protection), especially for the most vulnerable ones, a constant challenge.

Progress on Child Friendly Municipalities (CFM) was constrained by lack of political support and funds. A quick assessment of CFM activities recommended scaling down the number of pilot municipalities, and demonstrated the need to refocus resources on improving budget allocation and decentralized funds management in the fully decentralized education sector.

The major constraint faced by the CO in conducting MICS4 was related to the second stage disability assessment. The CO decided to include the disability module as it provides valuable data on the situation of a marginalized group of children for whom almost no data exists in the country. However, the CO encountered two challenges. First, it was not able to recruit a consultant who could provide expertise for the assessment in a timely manner. Second, the final methodology for the assessment was not available at the time when the assessment was meant to be prepared and conducted. Moreover, the lack of a global methodology for field assessment makes it difficult to make global comparisons of data collected through this process.

Follow-up to the parliamentary alliance was delayed due to early elections in June. This led to the working group for children being re-established only in late November. While political will for focusing on children's issues exists, greater efforts are needed going forward to build institutional capacity for conducting independent parliament oversight.

Ability to negotiate long-term corporate alliances was constrained by a lack of strategic approach to CSR in the corporate sector and limited capital available for long-term alliances. The National Commission for the Rights of Children was inactive for more than seven months due to the political situation and elections. Some activities planned for 2011 had to be moved to 2012.

### **Key Strategic Partnerships and Interagency Collaboration**

Partnerships with 20 private media (TV, radio, print and internet portals) were negotiated and established to support the broadcasting and publication of the schools free of violence PSA and print materials. The formation of these partnerships was paramount to the success of the campaign achieved at minimal cost.

A partnership with civil society to monitor the situation of children and CRC implementation started in 2009 with UNICEF providing support to an NGO coalition in preparing a shadow report on the implementation of the CRC. The partnership was continued in the following years and extended to a second NGO coalition with the objective to build their capacity to monitor the situation of child rights in the country. In this partnership, UNICEF provides technical support, capacity building and expertise, while civil society organizations invest their staff, local knowledge and networking capabilities. The diverse structure of the coalitions, with NGO members from different municipalities, makes it possible to collect data at the local level. The partnership resulted in the submission of a shadow report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2009. Starting from 2012, it will also produce NGO annual reports.

In the area of Social Policy, human rights, health, gender-based issues and decentralization, UNICEF coordinates and consults with all the UN agencies present in the country, as well as non-resident ones (such as UNESCO). Inter-agency work is coordinated at regular meetings of four thematic working groups: social inclusion, decentralization, HIV/AIDS and Gender and Human Rights. The theme groups report biannually to the UN Country Team on individual agency activities, as well as joint activities implemented by two or more agencies. The results and lessons learned are shared and serve to inform and advocate for the implementation of the important sectoral reform.

### **Humanitarian Situations**

N/A

### **Summary of Monitoring, Studies and Evaluations**

MICS4 was conducted in 2011, using two samples – one for the general population and one for the Roma population living in Roma settlements. Data gathering took place in the period April-July. The study will provide evidence of existing inequities, as Roma population is one of most vulnerable and excluded groups. It is also expected that the survey will expose inequities in the general population, based on different variables including ethnicity, place of residence (urban/rural, disparities among regions), and wealth. The CO was the second UNICEF office to conduct a childhood disability second phase screening as part of MICS4 to provide better insight on the situation of childhood disabilities in the country. The data collected through MICS will be used for advocacy purposes, planning and adjusting programme interventions. It will also be used to monitor progress at the CP level.

A comprehensive assessment of child cash benefits in the country is underway. The aim is to provide concrete, evidence-based recommendations to MoLSP to introduce substantial reforms creating efficiency gains and improved targeting of the most marginalized children which will lead to poverty alleviation. The openness of the Ministry to review the child protection law that also regulates social benefits is promising and has led to the initiation of an official review of existing legislation, a process which relies heavily on the findings and evidence generated by the UNICEF-supported cash benefit study.

Also see C4D for details on monitoring and evaluation of C4D activities.

### **Future Work Plan**

The work on reforming the system of child cash benefits in the country will continue well into 2012. The legal reform has substantial fiscal implications and would require careful consideration by a number of stakeholders. UNICEF will continue to advocate for the reform of the child benefits system based on evidence from the cash benefit study.

In 2012, work in the area of decentralization will undergo significant changes. The previous Child Friendly Municipalities framework within which UNICEF's activities at the local level were planned and implemented will be replaced. The lessons learned and structures created under this initiative will be used in a more targeted approach, focusing on public finance management in the area of education and child care as well as on the collection and use of local equity based indicators for policy planning and design.

UNICEF will continue to support partners, government and non-government, in their efforts to monitor the situation of children and the implementation of the CRC. Support to SSO for providing local-level data to the municipalities is planned and expected to improve use of data in municipal planning and budgeting for children.

The CO will also work on supporting a selected number of municipalities in evidence-based planning and budgeting for children using data provided by SSO. MICS4 dissemination and additional analysis will take place in 2012, offering updated information on inequities and disadvantaged groups in the country, as well as on trends and changes (compared to MICS 3 results from 2006).

As part of its alliance building and partnership efforts, UNICEF will define and formalize a corporate alliance with a telecommunication company and oversee implementation of multiple partnership activities (campaign and events). A mechanism will be established to channel one-off donations from the private sector to programmes for children. The evaluation of 2011 C4D efforts to eliminate violence in schools will be finalized and selected targeted efforts will begin to support an expansion of work to combat violence to secondary schools. The implementation of on-going communication activities related to justice for children will be completed in 2012. The programme will initiate the C4D strategy for inclusive education (to be rolled out in late 2012-early 2013). The CO will also develop content and facilitate interaction with the media to address limited access, research, and information otherwise needed to pro-actively push the child rights agenda forward.

## Country Programme Component: Cross-sectoral costs

## PCRs (Programme Component Results)

PCR	EQRank	OTDetails
Support programme implementation	0	FA6OT9

## Resources Used in 2011(USD)

Resource Type	Planned for 2011 (as per CPAP ceiling )	Allocated in 2011	Estimated Year-End Expenditure	%Spent (4)/(3) * 100
OR-E				
OR-R	40000.00	17000.00	16999.00	99.99
RR	60000.00	72037.00	71942.80	99.87
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$100,000.00</b>	<b>\$89,037.00</b>	<b>\$88,941.80</b>	

## Results Achieved

Cross-sectoral issues such as monitoring and evaluation, gender, advocacy and communication, etc are largely covered under different programme IRs (see programme component results for details). The country programme has separate IRs on communication and advocacy (i.e. Alliance Building and Partnerships for Children), and monitoring and evaluation (Child Rights Monitoring System, and Generating and Using Child Related Data). Only 2.5% of the total expenditure was related to cross-sectoral issues and this was mainly for support functions (drivers and miscellaneous costs).

## Most Critical Factors and Constraints

N/A

## Key Strategic Partnerships and Interagency Collaboration

N/A

## Humanitarian Situations

N/A

## Summary of Monitoring, Studies and Evaluations

N/A

## Future Work Plan

Preparations for the Mid Term Review in 2013 will start in the second half of 2012.

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### Effective Governance Structure

The 2011 Annual Management Plan (AMP) reflects key annual priorities critical to the achievement of the CP planned outcomes. It includes management priorities and indicators, performance management and co-ordination. All the statutory office governance committees such as CMT, CRC, PCARC, LPSB, SP/CRB, SA and LTC were functional. JCCC was also established at the beginning of the year. The well-established practice of all staff bi-weekly meetings served to keep staff updated on the latest developments, discuss on-going activities, raise staff issues, and ensure coordination. In addition, the Office continued with the practice of having separate monthly programme as well as operations meetings.

The office CMT met five times in 2011. Standing agenda items include updates on the status of agreed programme and operational indicators.

In 2010, all RWPs were prepared and signed for a period covering 2010-2011.

Office preparation for VISION migration started early in the year and was a fixed item on the CMT agenda throughout the year. The Office completed the activities related to data cleansing and migration, staff training and ICT readiness for the new software application in line with all agreed deadlines.

The CO continued to send bank reconciliations on a quarterly basis to DFAM and exercised good bank optimization in securing month-end closing balance within set benchmarks. The Office took the initiative and agreed with the Kosovo Office to conduct a PEER review of both offices. The PEER review results showed satisfactory performance of both offices. The SMT and security focal points continued to perform their role related to security of staff and premises. UNDSS CO continued to organize security orientation sessions for the new staff. The Office has an updated Building Evacuation Plan and Office Fire Plan in place.

### Strategic Risk Management

Emergency preparedness activities in 2011 included regular update of country risk profile and key preparedness actions at the Early Warning Early Action web data-base. Additionally, UNICEF, as the lead organization in the inter-agency group for disaster management, coordinated the preparation process for a joint UN-Government emergency simulation exercise which should be carried out in the first quarter of 2012.

All staff participated in the Risk Control and Self-Assessment exercise and development of RCSA library. Nine medium-high risk areas were identified, the bulk of which was in programme area. Identification of a small number of risk areas allowed the Office to focus on the action points and to incorporate the discussion of RCSA library into programme management discussions. Moreover, in an all staff meetings in December, progress on RCSA action points and new developments were formally reviewed.

The CO has a business continuity plan which is updated annually. Political and other developments which may affect programming are discussed regularly in all staff meetings, programme meetings, and CMTs.

### Evaluation

The CO has an up-to-date IMEP with no evaluations planned or conducted in 2011. A number of evaluations are scheduled from mid-programme cycle onward.

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### Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology

- a) N/A
- b) N/A
- c) Besides existing Citrix remote access as part of migration to Windows 7 operating system, Cisco VPN Client was introduced. In several cases where the Office is using IPSec connection, it was noticed that there is a need for future improvement of the system. The expectation is that some issues will be solved when the new Open System connection is introduced.
- d) As part of the UN common services, LTA was established with the local internet service provider and local mobile operator.
- e) The CO is using services of local IT companies that are promoting the EU directives for reducing and recycling of ICT equipment identified for destruction by the LPSB.
- f) Following UNICEF Technical Architecture standards, the Office migrated all computer workstations to MS Windows 7 operating system and MS Office 2010 package.

The CO has ordered two last generation servers (G7) which facilitate a reduced hardware footprint and more efficient and flexible utilization of computing power by migrating the servers to Windows 2008 Hyper-V environment.

At the end of the year, there was a successful and smooth shutdown of ProMS services and implementation to new platform VISION, including organizing a five-day training for all staff.

An ICT assessment was conducted by the CEE/CIS Regional Telecommunications Manager (RTM) from 16-18 February 2011. The assessment report by the RO positively rated the majority of areas within the ICT function. Following the assessment recommendations, the Office has procured three Satellite phones IsatPhone Pro handsets together with adequate annual service plan.

### Fund Raising and Donor Relations

- a) Nine out of 11 donor reports were submitted on time, one with a 24 hour delay.
- b) Total OR planned for PCR1, as per the CPAP, was \$1,460,000, but the actual OR used in 2011 (including RR set-aside) was \$2,206,528. However, it should be noted that the bulk of the funds were thematic funds for education/ECD programme (68% of total OR funds), giving a distorted image of the overall PCR1 funding status. In reality, child protection is severely underfunded given chronic protection related issues in some segments of the population. The health programme is also underfunded. The total OR planned for PCR2 was \$500,000, and the actual OR funded was \$573,655 (including RR set-aside); however, 54% of these funds were RR set-aside funds for MICS, leaving the entire PCR2 below the actual planned OR.
- c) The office had three expiring PBAs this year, all of which were fully utilized (100% expenditure rate).
- d) Financial implementation and budget utilization of different projects, including expiring PBAs, are regularly reviewed in monthly programme meetings as well as in CMTs.
- e) UNICEF is part of both JPs in the country, one on domestic violence and the other on enhancing inter-ethnic dialogue and collaboration (MDG-F funded by the Spanish Government). UNICEF provided timely inputs for progress reports to donors on JPs, organized and led field trips for ambassadors from donor countries, and maintained close work relationships with key donors. For information on private sector partnership, see section on leveraging resources.

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### Management of Financial and Other Assets

Management of financial and other assets is a regular item on the CMT agenda, thus ensuring regular monitoring and action taken in budget utilization, liquidation of direct cash transfers, as well as donor reporting status. The monitoring of the Direct Cash Transfers (DCTs) released to Implementing Partners (IPs) was strengthened through regular field visits. Expenditure and liquidation of cash transfers to IPs was closely monitored and the Office had no reporting on outstanding DCTs over nine months. The Office had a spot check visit by the EU office in the country and received positive feedback that all systems and transactions were transparent, well-documented, and in line with EU standards.

The total RR spent was 100%. The office had three expiring PBAs this year, all of which were fully utilized (100% expenditure rate). No OR for emergencies was received during the reporting period.

Bank reconciliations were completed on time with no outstanding un-reconciled items during the period. The CO is recognized as a "low risk" office by DFAM and continued to report on bank reconciliations on a quarterly basis to DFAM, mainly because of the short timescale for bank recording and reconciliation.

The CO continued to optimize local bank account balances. Quarterly and monthly cash forecasts, bi-weekly replenishment requests, and month-end positions were all carefully reviewed and monitored, and were posted on the Bank Optimization site accordingly. Consultation with respective sections with regards to replenishments was extensive and comprehensive to ensure full consideration of all options. The Office took the initiative and agreed to have a joint PEER review with the Kosovo Office.

As part of the UN common services, UNICEF was elected as the Chair of the Operations Management Team for 2011. Almost all activities agreed on for the period were completed. Among others, UNCT tasked the OMT to conduct a real estate market research for a potential UN Common House. The OMT presented the results to the UNCT, after which the country team decided to postpone looking for a possible new joint premise given that the study found no cost savings. The UNCT will continue to follow up with the Government on the outstanding request for joint premises provided by the Government.

### Supply Management

As a result of minimized direct service delivery support, similar to the previous years, the expenditure against supply component in 2011 remained insignificant. The Office mainly procures locally due to a well-developed local market and easy access to the requested supplies.

The Office used offshore modality only for procurement of scales for MICS4. The SD in Copenhagen was fully supportive and managed to deliver the scales within ten days after the order was placed.

The major component of office procurement was related to printing (~ 40%). In order to avoid back and forth communication with suppliers, the Office introduced the practice of sharing all requests for design, layout and printing of publications with the communication section for review, prior to sending out the requests for quotation.

Apart from printing, other noteworthy procurement activities were:

1. Five non-formal ECD centers were equipped with furniture and toys as part of the effort to expand access to quality ECD services for rural and marginalized children;
2. 43 computers were procured for the Basic Courts in support to the Justice for Children project (funded by EU).
3. Two servers were procured to ensure that the Office is compliant with the most recent UNICEF ICT standards.

The Office kept the practice of having contractors deliver the supplies to end users.

Procurement services were used again in 2011 for obtaining ARVs medications by the University Clinic for Infectious Diseases.

As part of identified joint activities at the OMT meetings, UNICEF conducted two bidding processes on behalf of UN agencies: one for procurement of office stationary and one for procurement of internet services.

### Human Resources

Apart from several recruitment processes for consultants to provide expertise and technical support in specific sectors, there was only one recruitment process initiated for the temporary position of an ECD Officer. The short-listing and interview process was completed, but in view of the uncertain funding situation in 2012, it was decided that the process would be put on hold until funds were fully secured. In addition, a new driver position was established, effective 01 January 2011, as a result of the 2010 PBR process.

Given the core roles and responsibilities of two staff on temporary appointments that were integral to the successful conclusion of specific projects with finite mandates and funding, the Office received approval for extension of these two NO category positions beyond 364 days:

- Child Protection Officer whose primary responsibilities were associated with the UNICEF component of a UN Joint Programme on domestic violence, and
- Inter-Ethnic Education Officer funded through and working entirely on a joint UN MDG-F project.

The Office accepted an internship application in the area of ECD in the first months of the year. In addition, as part of the global P&G sabbatical partnership, the Office hosted a P&G volunteer to help develop a private sector fundraising strategy and related pitch documents.

The Office supported and responded to the OTR process for several staff members who were identified as eligible for permanent contracts by sharing all necessary documentation to support their further review.

In light of migration to VISION, training plans for staff mainly focused on VISION orientations and trainings. The Office had five super users trained in different fields and had the Deputy Representative as a member of the Global VISION Core Group. End-user training was organized for all staff in two batches during November and December, as well as small training sessions for relevant staff on specific functions in the system.

In terms of performance management, a robust monitoring and follow-up process resulted in 100% completion of all PERs by the stated deadline.

A new Staff Association Executive Committee was elected in 2011. The Office kept the practice of having mechanisms for addressing staff issues – a suggestion box where staff could anonymously raise issues; and having staff issues as a regular topic of the CMT agenda.

In addition to the existing mechanisms, a JCC committee was established, comprised of three members of the management and three members of the Executive Committee of the Staff Association. The committee managed to meet three times in order to discuss and address administrative and human resources matters of general concern to all staff.

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### Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings

The Office identified a possible partner and made initial plans to conduct an environmental audit of the office premises. This will include information on recommended weather-proofing, heating and water systems that could reduce recurrent high utility costs.

Greater use of Skype and VOIP has greatly reduced international phone charges.

### Changes in AMP and CPMP

No significant changes are envisaged in next year's AMP.

### Summary Notes and Acronyms

#### Acronyms

AMP – Annual Management Plan  
 BED – Bureau for Education Development  
 CFM – Child Friendly Municipalities  
 CFS – Child Friendly Schools  
 CO- Country Office  
 CPAP – Country Programme Action Plan  
 CSO – Civil Society Organization  
 CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility  
 CSW – Centers for Social Work  
 ECD – Early Childhood Development  
 FGD – Focus Group Discussion  
 HRBA – Human Rights Based Approach  
 IE – Inclusive Education  
 IMEP – Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan  
 IMR – Infant Mortality Rate  
 IPA – Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance  
 IPH – Institute for Public Health  
 ISA – Institute for Social Activities  
 JCIF - Justice for Children Indicator Framework  
 JIL- Juvenile Justice Law  
 JP – Joint Programme  
 LSBE – Life Skills Based Education  
 MCH – Mother and Child Health  
 MICS – Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey  
 MoES- Ministry of Education and Science  
 MoH- Ministry of Health  
 MoI – Ministry of Interior  
 MoLSP – Ministry of Labor and Social Policy  
 MoJ – Ministry of Justice  
 NCPJD – National Council for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency  
 OTR – One Time Review  
 PRC – Parents Resource Center  
 P & G- Procter and Gamble  
 PGI – Poverty Gap Index

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PIRLS – Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

RECI - Roma Early Childhood Inclusion

RWP – Rolling Work plan

SEN – Special Education Needs

SSO – State Statistical Office

TIMSS – Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

WB – World Bank

Document Centre

**Evaluation**

	<b>Title</b>	<b>Sequence Number</b>	<b>Type of Report</b>
1	National nutrition survey among women of reproductive age and children 6-59 months of age	2011/1	Survey
2	Inclusive education as a part of Child Friendly Schools framework	2011/2	Study
3	Empowerment of Roma women and their children's early childhood development opportunities and school attendance	2011/3	Study
4	Community nursing assessment with equity analysis	2011/4	Study
5	A legal gap analysis of the child justice system	2011/5	Study

**Other Publications**

	<b>Title</b>
1	Inclusive Education as Part of a Child-Friendly Schools Framework
2	Life Skills Based Education Manual
3	Multicultural workshops Manual for primary schools
4	Multicultural workshops Manual for secondary schools
5	Handbook – Reducing Violence in schools – how to change things
6	Training manual "Literacy in early grades"
7	Training manual "Thinking Mathematics in early grades"
8	School self-evaluation manual

**Lessons Learned**

	<b>Title</b>	<b>Document Type/Category</b>
1	Violence in School C4D	Innovation
2	Efficient advocacy for equitable ECD Services	Lesson Learned

**Programme Documents**