

## Moldova

---

### Executive Summary

In 2015, UNICEF support to the realization of the rights of all children in the Republic of Moldova was provided in a challenging political, economic and social environment. The problems faced by financial sector resulted in diminishing revenues from export, shrinking remittances and devaluation of the national currency. The deteriorating economic situation led to political instability: the Government was appointed twice during the course of 2015 with a short lifespan in both cases. Since October 2015, Moldova has been governed by a transitional Government.

Despite these difficulties, UNICEF's support demonstrated the results of an effective collaboration with the national and sub-national state structures, civil society, donor community, and all other partners towards the realization of children's rights. Children remained high on the Government agenda. With UNICEF Moldova effort, the chairmanship of the National Council for Protection of the Child Rights to the Prime Minister. The partnership with the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman was strengthened. A collaborative effort between European Union (EU), German Development Cooperation and UNICEF at the global level brought to fruition the "Integrating Child Rights in Development Cooperation Toolkit," launched in the country and followed by training of national cadres.

In 2015, UNICEF Moldova provided technical support and major inputs into national policy development to improve the situation of children and women. The cooperation was guided by the priorities set in the Country Programme for 2013-2017, the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014-2017 and Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda (RKLA) for children.

Evidence generation and policy advocacy supported policy change. Collaborative efforts ensured advancement of social and justice sectors' reforms. UNICEF Moldova supported the development of an Action Plan to implement the Child Protection Strategy 2014-2020. Child-friendly criminal proceedings, in line with the new provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code, were advanced and supported by intensive capacity-building of prosecutors, judges, criminal investigation officers, legal aid lawyers and psychologists. To strengthen the collection of disaggregated data, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA) introduced a set of national indicators on the subject of justice for children.

UNICEF Moldova, in cooperation with professionals and institutions from the right bank of the Nistru River, enhanced the skills and capacities of 90 per cent of the health professionals from the left bank on emergency care, young child nutrition, effective vaccine management and interpersonal communication.

Capacity building of education professionals led to a 35 per cent increase in attendance of children with special educational needs (SEN) and children with disabilities (CWD) in regular schools, compared to 2014. The Child Friendly School (CFS) Standards and the School Readiness Tool were adopted by all schools and pre-schools in Moldova. Positive parenting methods and skills were transferred to professionals (educators, health workers and social

assistants) in target areas, with additional mentoring working with caregivers of children under seven years old. Various professionals (lawyers, judges, prosecutors, psychologists, educators) improved their ability to address gender-sensitive needs.

In 2015, UNICEF Moldova led joint efforts of the United Nations in Moldova on Social Protection and Education Outcome areas within the Delivering as One framework. UNICEF Moldova strengthened partnerships and developed new partnerships with civil society and the private sector. A new partnership was established to prevent family separation and abandonment of young children; address children with disabilities; and to create specialized services at community level to de-institutionalise children. The partnership with the NGO Alliance, a civil society alliance on child and family protection with a membership of over 120 organizations, ensured regular reporting on Convention of the Rights of a Child (CRC) implementation.

The Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the Country Programme (CP) undertaken in 2015 reconfirmed overall focus on social inclusion, protection of children, and social change for full realization of child rights. The challenges with social protection of vulnerable families; violence against children; and the need to prioritize social inclusion of the Roma minority and of children with disabilities were emphasized. Greater effort to address the inadequate public financing with a focus on vulnerable children was advised in view of current country challenges.

### **Humanitarian Assistance**

In 2015 there were no major natural disasters affecting Moldova. Political instability resulted in a number of peaceful demonstrations throughout the year, but without any impact requiring humanitarian assistance.

### **Mid-term Review of the Strategic Plan**

The implementation of UNICEF CP in 2015 in Moldova focused on addressing disparities in access to quality education, health, protection and justice services for disadvantaged children and families as per the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014-2017.

Progress was achieved in strengthening the governance structures and making them more child-sensitive and equity-oriented and on changing social norms to ensure social inclusion.

Capacity building of psycho-pedagogical assistance services and communication tripled the number of children with special education needs who enrolled in mainstream schools in the last three years.

Important milestones in child and adolescent wellbeing were reached through strengthening Youth Friendly Health Services (YFHS) and promoting good practice in care (both parental and institutional) for children under three years. The focus was on mainstreaming gender specific approaches in all actions.

Challenges remained with the still-weak cross-sectoral cooperation and the need for effective joint efforts of both local and central authorities to ensure a comprehensive approach towards protection of children.

The 2015 Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the Country Programme of Cooperation 2013-2017 reconfirmed its focus on social inclusion and protection of children, both relevant for Moldova country context and well aligned with UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014-2017 and Regional

Knowledge and Leadership Agenda priorities on child protection, education, young child and adolescents' wellbeing, and social protection. The key CP strategies such as evidence-based advocacy, capacity building, and partnership development for advancement of child rights led to tangible results and implementation of various legislative and normative changes in education, justice for children, and social protection sectors.

The MTR process emphasized the need for greater focus on remaining challenges and bottlenecks for adequate social protection of most vulnerable, poor and at-risk children and adolescents. Generated evidence revealed barriers to inclusive education still exist for Roma children, children with disabilities, urban boys, and children from the poorest quintile.

The need for stronger data collection, allowing flexible adjustment of government policy, emerged for all sectors. Real-time data tracking with more complex indicators is required to tackle issues such as out-of-school children and child poverty.

The economic transition and declining demographic trends put pressure on social sectors. As it becomes more difficult to restructure and justify expenditures, greater emphasis on child-centred public financing is needed, including innovative budgeting in education, child protection and health sectors.

The justice sector needs to adopt international good practice in dealing with children who are in contact with the law. Child abandonment must be prevented with adequate community-based services linked with relevant state-supported incentives. Positive parenting, inclusion of minorities, and change of social norms to prevent violent disciplining of children should be at the heart of all interventions. Tracking and addressing the needs of out-of-school children and violence in schools remain a priority as well.

With the deteriorating socio-economic situation, greater efforts must be invested in ensuring adequate social protection and establishing social safety nets to respond to the needs of vulnerable and marginalised children and adolescents, especially those left behind due to economic migration of their parents.

Linked with the precarious political situation, an enabling environment is needed for a more active adolescent participation in public life, including in high-level legislative and normative framework debates. Adolescents' awareness on healthy lifestyle requires a special attention in Moldova.

In conclusion, stronger cross-sectoral collaboration and multi-level, multi-sectoral interventions are required, and will be prioritized for the following years of CP implementation.

## Summary Notes and Acronyms

BIR – Bureau of Interethnic Relations

CCF – Child, Community, Families

CEE/CIS – Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

CFS – Child Friendly School

CMT – Country Management Team

CO – Country Office

CRC – Convention on the Rights of the Child

CRIC – Child Rights Information Centre

CSOs – Civil Society Organizations

CWD – Children with Disabilities  
 DCT – Direct Cash Transfer  
 ECD – Early Childhood Development  
 ECE – Early Childhood Education  
 ELSR – Early Learning and School Readiness  
 EMIS - Education Management Information System  
 EU – European Union  
 HACT – Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers  
 ICT – Information Communication Technologies  
 IMEP – Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan  
 IT – Information Technology  
 LPA – Local Public Authorities  
 LTA – Long Term Agreement  
 MCE – Multi-Country Evaluation  
 MDG – Millennium Development Goals  
 MICS – Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey  
 MLSPF - Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family  
 MoE – Ministry of Education  
 MoIA – Ministry of Internal Affairs  
 MoH – Ministry of Health  
 MoJ – Ministry of Justice  
 MTR – Mid-Term Review  
 MP4R – Managing Performance for Results  
 NBS – National Bureau of Statistics  
 NGO - Non-Governmental Organization  
 OHCHR – Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights  
 PRIME - Prioritized Research, Impact Monitoring and Evaluation  
 PwC - PricewaterhouseCoopers  
 RAM – Results Assessment Module  
 RKLA – Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda  
 SEN – Special Educational Needs  
 SMT – Security Management Team  
 TOR – Terms of Reference  
 UN – United Nations  
 UNDP – United Nations Development Programme  
 UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund  
 UNPF – United Nations Partnership Framework  
 UNPRPD –United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities  
 WASH – Water, Sanitation, Hygiene  
 WHO – World Health Organization  
 YFHS – Youth Friendly Health Services

## Capacity Development

In 2015, UNICEF Moldova support to the Republic of Moldova built the capacities of over 4,200 professionals from the education, health and justice sectors.

More than 1,300 education professionals were trained on use of child-friendly school (CFS) standards, school readiness tool, and on promoting positive parenting. UNICEF Moldova supported the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in improving data recording and collection by education institutions. This will ensure that the

number of children with disabilities in mainstream education system is well captured and used in policy decisions.

The capacities of 90 per cent of the health professionals from the left bank of the Nistru River on emergency care, young child nutrition, effective vaccine management, and interpersonal communication were enhanced in cooperation with professionals and institutions from the right bank of the river.

A total of 952 professionals (educators, health workers and social assistants) were mentored on working with caregivers of children under seven years of age. Nearly 3,450 caregivers in vulnerable situations benefitted from improved counselling services, and 1,020 caregivers demonstrated improvement of their skills. More than 1,200 professionals (lawyers, judges, prosecutors, psychologists, educators) were trained to respond to gender-sensitive needs.

A communication for development (C4D) strategy that addresses social norms; ensures inclusion of minorities and children with disabilities; and prevents violent disciplining and bullying, was developed in 2015. The strategy proposed new approaches to generate greater demand for services, especially within the poorest communities, and to promote adolescent participation.

To improve data collection, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA) introduced a set of national indicators on justice for children. Discussions were held with Ministry of Education to strengthen Education Management Information System (EMIS) to allow collection of data reflecting disparities in educational outcomes.

### **Evidence Generation, Policy Dialogue and Advocacy**

In 2015, UNICEF Moldova invested in evidence generation to promote policy dialogue. The analysis of the legal frameworks on guardianship and adoption; a study on the capacity of the social workforce assessing the quality and coverage of social services; and a study on resilience of the social protection system and its ability to address stress and idiosyncratic shocks on poor households led the Government to commit to reforms of the child care and justice systems. Important child protection measures were incorporated in the Action Plan for the Child Protection Strategy 2014-2020.

A study conducted with the participation of Roma representatives provided evidence on institutional barriers and prevailing social norms that prevent Roma children from accessing services. It supported advocacy to promote Roma inclusion in education. Consequently, UNICEF Moldova strengthened collaboration with the Bureau of Interethnic Relations (BIR) to mainstream child rights in the National Action Plan on Roma 2016-2020.

Based on analysis findings of mechanisms for funding inclusive education, UNICEF Moldova developed recommendations for the Ministry of Education on inclusion of children with disabilities and special educational needs in regular schools.

To protect breastfeeding practices, UNICEF Moldova advocated with the Ministry of Health to align legislation with provisions of the International Code of Marketing for Breast milk Substitutes and the subsequent World Health Assembly Resolutions.

UNICEF Moldova supported the Government in moving towards child-centred public expenditures. In partnership with PricewaterhouseCoopers Audit SRL (PwC), UNICEF Moldova

supported the Ministries of Education and Finance to conduct a national assessment of the cost of services in crèches and kindergartens. The study will be a basis for developing per-capita funding formula for child-centred Early Childhood Development (ECD) services in line with children needs.

## Partnerships

The cooperation and support to the National Council for Protection of Child Rights chaired by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova and the cooperation with the Ombudsman for Child Rights' Office were milestones in strengthening national structures to address Child Rights' issues in the country.

A partnership with a national Civil Society Organizations (CSO), Child, Community, Family Moldova (CCF Moldova) was established to prevent child separation and abandonment, and to pilot community-level specialized services for de-institutionalized children under three years old and children with disabilities, on both banks of the Nistru River.

In partnership with the NGO Alliance Alternative, reporting on the CRC implementation and monitoring the EU-Moldova Association Agreement was on-going.

UNICEF Moldova supported the Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Education on deinstitutionalization and inclusive education issues. Jointly with TransFORMA foundation and CCF Moldova, UNICEF Moldova promoted human rights education in 70 schools and built capacity on the application of CFS standards, with focus on inclusion.

Collaboration of UNICEF Moldova with the Bureau of Interethnic Relations, European Roma Rights Centre, Roma Education Fund, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and Roma local CSOs leveraged support for the new action plan on Roma inclusion for 2016-2020.

A partnership between UNICEF, the Association of Perinatal Care, WHO and UNDP in the Confidence Building Measures programme improved the quality of perinatal care and immunization services in Transnistrian region.

## External Communication and Public Advocacy

In 2015, UNICEF Moldova became an early adopter of the UNICEF's Global Communication and Public Advocacy Strategy 2014-2017. Throughout the year, UNICEF organized various advocacy and public awareness events engaging more than 4,500 participants.

Social media was used extensively for heightened visibility and public engagement with increased outreach. (People reached: Facebook 7,500, Twitter 8,000, and YouTube 3,500.) UNICEF Moldova Advocacy Country Kit was published and widely shared with all partners and relevant websites. The CO webpage was renewed, and reached 1,800 unique visitors per month. UNICEF participated in the global campaigns #FightUnfair and #orangetheworld, with a focus on child equity and violence against women and girls, which increased the number of impressions on social media by five times in three days.

UNICEF Moldova actively supported the UN 70th anniversary celebrations in producing a promotional video on inclusive education and screening One Minute Junior movies focusing on child discrimination. UNICEF also continued to play an active role within the One UN

Communication Team.

Within the World's Largest Lesson initiative, UNICEF Moldova Representative taught a lesson about the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Molesti village. Children learned about the Sustainable Development Goals focusing on range of issues including ending extreme poverty, tackling climate change and ensuring quality education for all children.

A Special Olympics football mini-tournament engaged more than 200 athletes with mental disabilities and contributed to changing perceptions and promoting inclusion of children with disabilities.

The Deputy Prime Minister, EU and German Ambassadors, and UNICEF Moldova Representative launched the "Integrating Child Rights in Development Cooperation Toolkit" which was produced due to joint UNICEF, EU, German Development Cooperation efforts at the global level. The event engaged key Moldovan officials and national cadres and raised awareness and capacity on mainstreaming child rights in development cooperation.

### **South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation**

UNICEF facilitated a dialogue between local public authorities (LPAs), schools and communities on Roma integration in localities highly populated by the Roma population in Centre and North of the country. These consultations were organized as a follow-up to South-South exchange visits to Bulgaria and Serbia to learn from their experiences. Lessons learnt from the exchange visits were used for the establishment of a partnership with the Bureau of Interethnic Relations and to support development of new plan of action on Roma for 2016-2020.

Efficient delivery of social assistance is a challenge for transition countries due to volatile poverty and vulnerability profiles, shifting demographics and economic transformation, particularly in the context of economic adjustment programmes. In 2015 UNICEF supported an exchange visit to Lithuania resulting in a Cooperation Agreement signed between the relevant ministries of the Republic of Moldova and Lithuania on improving the social protection of vulnerable families with children. Promising social protection practices were identified in Lithuania for full or partial replication in Moldova. To allow quality control of social services, improvement of the institutional infrastructure to further enhance social work capacity and strengthening the human resources capacity in primary social assistance the revisions in the institutional set-up are under consideration.

UNICEF continued to promote flour fortification with iron and folic acid. The largest Moldovan bakery introduced eight types of bread fortified with iron and folic acid. Stakeholders that benefited from South-South exchange visits to Kazakhstan on flour fortification, including public health professionals, representatives of LPAs, millers and staff of the largest Moldovan bakery discussed challenges and lessons learnt during an inter-sectoral workshop organized by the National Centre of Public Health. Recommendations were provided to the ministries of Health and Agriculture to implement the National Programme on reduction of iron and folic acid deficiencies in 2012-2016.

### **Identification and Promotion of Innovation**

An innovative approach was used to study the access to services for Roma children. There was ownership as the Roma community representatives had a leading role at each stage: conceptualization, development of the methodology, collection and interpretation of data, and

validation of results. The study participants identified education as key to ending the cycle of poverty, discrimination and exclusion. They expressed interest to work with authorities to ensure access of Roma children to education.

In 2015, the Child Friendly School (CFS) standards were introduced in all schools in Moldova. The standards assess: inclusiveness, efficiency, gender sensitivity, healthy and secure environment and democratic participation. School managers were trained on the application of the standards for school self-assessment. The results will be used as baseline to measure progress of applying CFS standards in all schools, and for the adjustment of funding mechanisms to improve the quality of education.

An innovative approach was used for early childhood education (ECE) teaching and learning. Preschool teachers and performance were monitored at the workplace. Results were documented and shared on national, regional and global websites, social media platforms and national TV programmes.

UNICEF Moldova supported initiatives to prevent violence against children in all its forms. The Child Rights Information Centre (CRIC) was supported to develop an online application to prevent child abuse. The application informs the users through a quiz composed of simple, child-friendly questions about violence against children at home and at school. It will be fully functional in 2016.

In addition to the alternative report on implementation of the CRC prepared by CSOs, UNICEF Moldova supported and initiated the development of additional commentary that reflected the voices of children nationwide.

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

With UNICEF Moldova advocacy, the Government approved an inter-sectoral mechanism that addresses cases of child abuse and neglect. In 2015, UNICEF Moldova supported its application at sub-national level with capacity building and developing mechanisms and tools. Cross-sectoral teams of professionals from the education, health and social systems benefitted from mentoring on how to work with parents and promote positive parenting.

A cross-sectoral approach for inclusive education led to better inclusion in schools and better provision of adequate support to children with special educational needs. Through collaboration of the National Bureau of Statistics and the Ministry of Education, disaggregated data tracked enrolment of children with disabilities in mandatory education. Monitoring the situation of de-institutionalized children, who are reintegrated into families and schools, improved cooperation between the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection, and Family (MLSPF) and the MoE at local level.

UNICEF Moldova disseminated the findings of Multi-Country Evaluation on Early Learning and School Readiness (ELSR), thus setting the foundation for a long-term cooperation on positive parenting between education, health, social and child protection services. Cross-sectoral working groups on parenting children under three years old were established by the National Council for the Protection of Child Rights, led by the Prime Minister.

To develop a comprehensive model to prevent family separation and promote de-institutionalization of children under three years old, a partnership between UNICEF, MoH, MLSPF, Local Public Authorities (LPA) and CCF Moldova was built. The partnership worked to

transform the institution for young children in Balti from a residential care institution to a community social service facility, and to increase the number of foster families specialized in young children, establish social crèches, and build capacity of health and social work professionals to identify and support vulnerable pregnant mothers.

## Service Delivery

UNICEF Moldova was not involved in direct service delivery in Moldova. Collaboration with the Government and civil society partners was focused on advocating for reforms and ensuring adequate access to and quality delivery of national services to vulnerable children. UNICEF Moldova supports partners to generate evidence with national and international expertise and good practice, and supports partners to strengthen service delivery.

## Human Rights-Based Approach to Cooperation

The 2015 Mid-Term Review (MTR) confirmed UNICEF Moldova's focus: address disparities and inequities; and strengthen the rights of disadvantaged groups including children with disabilities and with special educational needs, poor families with children, and ethnic minorities.

With UNICEF Moldova advocacy, capacity development of local professionals and community empowerment with involvement of Roma parents, segregated schools were discontinued and Roma children were mainstreamed in regular schools. Inclusion of children with disabilities in regular pre-schools and schools was effectively promoted, and over 10,000 school-age children benefited from the individual approach, guidance and support to learning in 2015.

The CO supported national participation at the regional Disability Measurement Workshop and the development of an action plan by the MLSPF.

UNICEF was part of the UNPRPD project in the Republic of Moldova, which focused on Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and was implemented with UNDP, OHCHR and WHO.

Moldova's progress in implementing the 2009 Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child was monitored, and the Ombudsman's Office was supported to organize a conference on the subject. Civil society partners developed an alternative CRC implementation report with UNICEF Moldova's support.

UNICEF Moldova engaged in active dialogue with Parliament to raise awareness of parliamentarians, adopt laws with a special focus on children, and to ensure commentaries of children on draft laws.

In 2015, the launch of the EU-UNICEF "Integrating Child Rights in Development Cooperation Toolkit" provided practical tools and guidance to mainstream child rights in development cooperation.

Child rights were reflected in the National Action Plans on Child Protection and on Roma. Substantial evidence on adoption, guardianship, barriers in access to services for children from Roma communities, and resilience of social protection system was generated in 2015. The findings and recommendations were discussed with stakeholders and incorporated in relevant plans.

## Gender Mainstreaming and Equality

While the office did not implement a specific gender-related programme in 2015, gender was mainstreamed in all UNICEF-supported interventions in Moldova. Gender specific considerations were part of the CFS standards and the National Action Plan of the Child Protection Strategy 2014-2020, the by-laws on mentoring and the draft cross-sectoral Strategy on Parenting.

UNICEF collaborated with UN Women, youth CSOs and local authorities for the “Orange the World” Global Initiative to fight violence against women and girls, and also organized a digital campaign and events to raise awareness and discussion on challenges and solutions in different localities.

UNICEF Moldova applied a gender lens in all C4D interventions, using gender-sensitive language in communication materials, applying the “He for She” approach, and giving boys and girls equal engagement and representation in images.

Although the CO does not have a gender specialist, interventions in 2015 were gender-focused and aimed to fight gender-related inequalities among children. All gender activities were in line with Central and Eastern Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS) Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda (RKLAs) and with national policies on education, health and child protection to contribute to realization of child rights and fulfil national obligations.

## Environmental Sustainability

UNICEF Moldova supported central and local authorities to assess WASH in pre-schools nationwide. Detailed information on preschool children and staff’s access to quality water and sanitation facilities, and on hygiene practices, in all 1,453 pre-schools was prepared for advocacy and to raise government and donor attention on the issue.

In order to contribute to environmental sustainability, the CO made measures to reduce its environmental footprint: printers were set by default to print double-sided and to return back to single copy printing after each use; colour printing was very limited. All IT equipment (laptops/printers) were set up for low-energy consumption by implementing “sleep mode” policy. Recycling batteries and IT equipment was set up at the UN house premises, and a box installed at the building entry.

The CO was part of the UN workgroup to identify options for improving the office energy footprint. An energy audit was performed for the shared premises. Solutions were identified and will be implemented as per developed and approved plan.

## Effective Leadership

The political environment in Moldova was precarious. Frequent Government transitions coupled with a deteriorating economic situation hindered CP implementation.

A number of improvements were made to ensure that governance, systems and internal control mechanisms in the CO functioned well. The Rolling Management Plan, the Risk Profile and relevant checklists, and the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the statutory committees (Contract Review, Partnership Review and Publication Committees) were reviewed and updated. The Business Continuity Plan (BCP) and Early Warning Early Action (EAEW) portal were updated as

per current situation in the country. The Country Management Team (CMT) reviewed the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) on quarterly basis to ensure appropriate financial and budget management in programme implementation.

UNICEF Moldova internal communication was improved by continuation of the regular staff coordination meetings (weekly wrap-up meetings, monthly programme meetings and monthly CMT meetings). Efficient management and stewardship of financial resources and other assets was ensured through monthly follow-up on funds utilization. On-going work-processes were optimized with the introduction and implementation of adequate internal business practices and workflows with clear timelines and accountabilities.

UNICEF Moldova's partnership with other UN agencies continued in the framework of the voluntary Delivering as One. UNICEF Representative chaired the UN Results Group on human development and social inclusion, and UNICEF led two Outcome Areas, on education and social protection.

### **Financial Resources Management**

In 2015, the CO achieved programme and operational results within the planned resources, registering an overall expenditure rate of 100 per cent against Regular Resources (RR) and 99 per cent against Other Resources (OR). All expiring Programme Budget Allotments (PBAs) were 100 per cent expended. CMT and Programme meetings regularly reviewed and monitored financial indicators and fund utilisation on weekly, monthly and quarterly basis, which was important for the timely and responsive management of funds and the identification of corrective measures.

The CO used Vision, InSight portal, Management Reports, RAM portal, Country and Regional Dashboards and SAP-generated reports for the regular monitoring of financial and other assets. These tools, together with clear accountability and good on-going communication with partners, resulted in no Travel Authorizations (TAs) open for more than 15 days, no outstanding DCTs over six months, and no partner to receive cash transfers over US\$100,000 in the past 60 months without assessment.

The CO introduced and used new guidelines and rules under the Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT), applied new procedures on partnership with CSOs, reviewed HACT Audit Assurance Plan and regularly communicated with the Regional Office to ensure InSight HACT compliance dashboard.

In 2015, two contracts above the required threshold of US\$ 30,000 were submitted to the local Contracts Review Committee. Four time-bound LTAs for transportation and translation services were reviewed as well. Signed minutes with recommendations were submitted for review and approved in due time.

The CO continued the practice of monthly cash forecasting, payments' processing twice per week, regularly reviewing the schedules posted by the Division of Financial and Administrative Management (DFAM) on Sharepoint, and timely uploading monthly bank reconciliation reports.

### **Fund-raising and Donor Relations**

Limited local investment in social services was compounded by the prolonged political crisis that

froze budget support by the EU and financial institutions. UNICEF-supported programmes benefited from donor funding provided by the Governments of The Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland; contributions from the Belgian National Committee and OAK Foundation; and thematic funding on education and child protection.

The Swiss Government was the strongest supporter of UNICEF Moldova, specifically for the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), youth friendly services, and confidence-building between the two banks of the Nistru River.

Swedish Government funds supported Parliament to address child rights in legislation development work. Funding from the OAK Foundation supported the joint funding of de-institutionalization programmes implemented by national CSOs.

UNICEF, UNDP, WHO and OHCHR were part of the UN Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) project implemented in Moldova. Within this partnership, UNICEF's work focused on Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities promoting inclusive education. In 2015, after successful reporting on the implementation of the first phase of the project, UNICEF was granted additional funds for further promotion of inclusion of children with disabilities in regular schools.

UNICEF leveraged significant donor funding for CSOs' work on deinstitutionalization, justice for children and violence against children. The EU committed its support through partner funding on de-institutionalization.

In 2015, UNICEF Moldova joined the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund. Donor funds were expected through this mechanism to UNICEF, UNDP and WHO for joint implementation of the maternal and child health project.

## Evaluation

In 2015, the CO successfully transferred the Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (IMEP) into Prioritized Research, Impact Monitoring, and Evaluation (PRIME) system. All activities were tracked regularly and milestone achievements monitored. The recommendations from evaluations and research, including RO-led Multi-Country Evaluations (MCE), were discussed with counterparts and used for policy changes in education, health, social protection, and justice sectors.

Key recommendations of Multi-Country Evaluation (MCE) on Child Rights to Supportive and Caring Family Environment (Regional Knowledge and Leadership Agenda/RKLA1), focused on the deinstitutionalization of children under three years old and children with disabilities, were incorporated by the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family (MLSPF) in the Action Plan to the Child Protection Strategy 2014-2020. UNICEF initiated a partnership with CCF Moldova to prevent early childhood separation and develop community-level services for children removed from the residential system.

UNICEF Moldova contributed to MCE on Increasing Access and Equity in Early Childhood Education (RKLA3), which received an "Outstanding Best Practice" rank and will be presented to the Executive Board in February 2016. Findings were transferred into a joint action plan with UNICEF and the Ministry of Education. The lead role played by UNICEF in revitalizing the Early Childhood Education (ECE) sub-sector was highly appreciated by the Government and recognized as one of the best models of cooperation in education to be extended beyond the

sub-sector.

Moldova was part of MCE within RKLA6, finalized in 2015, “Progress in Reducing Health System Bottlenecks Towards Achieving the MDG4 Goal”, which proved UNICEF's strong role in reduction of child mortality.

An end-of-project evaluation of the interventions to promote an integrated approach to service delivery to most-at-risk adolescents and youth provided information to improve services and identified existing gaps in service delivery. The report was rated “highly satisfactory”.

Management Responses to evaluations were properly followed-up and progress noted as part of mid-year and annual review processes.

### Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings

UNICEF Moldova improved the internal procedures by introducing simple formats (“activity logs”) that facilitated timely and relevant completion of tasks as per main business processes. The Table of Authorities was last updated on 30 September 2015 with appropriate delegation of authority signed by relevant staff as per Financial and Administrative Policy. The new CertMan system was used, and relevant reports were reviewed accordingly.

UNICEF Moldova is co-sharing common services and UN House management with other UN agencies. The CO contributed to the annual plan of the UN Operations Management Team (OMT) and contracted two institutional services (signing four agreements with two translation companies and two transportation companies) under long-term arrangements on behalf of UN in Moldova.

The CO benefited from other UN long-term arrangements on fuel supply, internet, travel management and rosters of individual translators, editors, photographers and hotel directory. Continued use of UN-agreed long-term arrangements contributed to increased efficiency and reduced transaction costs.

### Supply Management

UNICEF Moldova provided in-country support for procurement of vaccines through the Global Alliance for Vaccine Initiative on behalf of the National Centre for Public Health. The amount spent by Government of Moldova in 2015 for vaccines totalled US\$ 631,035. The CO procured a cold-chain equipment with total value of US\$ 77,759 to ensure proper vaccine storage and distribution in the Transnistrian region of Moldova.

Following internal review of ICT office compliance, the CO procured new ICT equipment required for appropriate office functioning through:

- local procurement, for a total value of US\$ 5,814, and
- off-shore procurement, via direct order under the existing LTAs (or via SD when no LTA was available) for a total value of US\$ 6,749.

A new office vehicle was procured in 2015 to replace an office vehicle over ten years old with 180,000 km on it. The total cost was US\$ 27,413.

The overall amount of the supplies procured reached US\$ 513,885.

<b>UNICEF Moldova 2015</b>	<b>Value in US\$</b>
Programme supplies	77,759
Administrative supplies	39,976
Services	396,150

In accordance with the Moldovan legislation and relevant procedures, the CO worked closely with the Customs Services to timely receive all necessary clearance and tax exemption documentation.

UNICEF Moldova continued the practice of delivering supplies directly to the implementing partners, hence there was no need to maintain a warehouse in 2015.

### **Security for Staff and Premises**

With the political tension and rapid changes in the political landscape and government composition, UNICEF Moldova applied all necessary security standards and procedures and stayed vigilant throughout the year. Relevant measures were put in place, especially during public demonstrations, even though they were expected to be peaceful. The office staff worked from home for a day of particularly intensive demonstrations, with security threats in areas adjacent to the UN House. No incidents were recorded in the reporting period.

The UNICEF Representative is a Designated Official a.i., with relevant responsibilities in 2015 such as participation at and contribution to UN Security Management Team (SMT) discussions, decisions and meetings during 2015. The SMT meetings included regular briefings on security situation in the country, status on security incidents and updates on MORSS and Security Risk Assessment for Moldova. Security Level two for Moldova and level three for Transnistrian region continued to be applied by SMT.

No major changes were recorded in travel advisory and TRIP security clearance system for in-country trips.

All new UNICEF staff received a mandatory security briefing from the local UN Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) field security associate. UNICEF Moldova drivers benefited from specialised training on preventing and avoiding traffic accidents and additional mitigation measures. The staff members were advised on preventive measures against bank card fraud. Four staff members received first medical aid training. Security focal point was briefed on office surveillance.

The BCP and EWEA portal were updated in 2015. The UN security phone tree and radio checks were conducted four times with UNICEF participation, including four satellite phones checks. Systematic evacuation drills were organized for the UN house agencies with participation of UNICEF Moldova.

### **Human Resources**

The CO continued to implement a policy of investing in staff with strategic training and networking opportunities. Staff participated actively in regional network meetings and virtual meetings organized through Webinars and WebExes including, but not limited to, RKLAs, human resources and procurement. The senior management and supervisors provided regular

coaching to newly recruited staff.

Performance management was conducted on an on-going basis and feedback provided by supervisors. The deadlines for Performance Appraisal System (PAS) were met under close monitoring of completion by the CMT. All staff had at least two performance-related discussions during the year. In 2015 new staff members participated at the training on Managing Performance for Results (MP4R) organised by UNICEF Romania, to complement the training organized in Moldova in 2014 for the office staff.

The results of the most recent Global Staff Survey were extensively analysed by all CMT members and discussed at CMT meetings. Relevant follow-up plans were developed and implemented throughout the year. Training activities were implemented to address the revealed by the survey issues, including special sessions at staff retreat and a training on Positive Communication delivered by a specialised company. All staff participated at a two-day training on written communication as part of the office-learning plan. The results of the staff survey were widely discussed at all-staff and LJCC meetings.

The CO continued its commitment to the UN Cares. All staff was updated on 10 minimum standards on HIV in the workplace, and new staff passed a mandatory on-line training on HIV.

The CO applied UNICEF Human Resources policies on learning days, flexi-time and working from home that yielded positive results.

### **Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology**

Constant and efficient support to office functioning through Information and Communication Technology (ICT) services were ensured in 2015 through effective technical maintenance of ICT infrastructure in accordance with ITSS objectives and standards.

The active use of Office 365 Suite improved effectiveness and efficiency in document elaboration, sharing and access by staff members and partners. The conferencing tool Skype for Business (including Instant Messaging, Webinars and Online Meetings with screen sharing options, and voice or video conferencing) were excellent tools that allow staff members to cooperate and deliver their message to partners around the world.

In cooperation with the UNICEF service provider, the out-dated firewall hardware of Moldova Office was replaced by upgraded server. Out-dated functional IT equipment (10 laptops, nine monitors, five printers) were donated to implementing partners following Local Property Survey Board recommendation. Used supplies and defective hardware were recycled or disposed of in a secure, environment-friendly and safe manner.

In order to enhance UNICEF Moldova response to emergencies, a satellite handset was purchased and staff members were trained on its use. Procurement of a new core UPS for main servers and network equipment ensured continuous and secure IT services provided for office needs.

## ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS

**OUTCOME 1** The Government addresses disparities in access to quality education, health, protection and justice services for disadvantaged children and families.

### **Analytical Statement of Progress:**

In 2015 UNICEF continued to support the Government of Moldova social and economic reforms with focus on further improving the situation of children and ensure social inclusion and protection of children's rights.

### **Education**

In 2015, UNICEF advocacy to promote the quality and inclusiveness of education contributed to achievements in gross enrolment rate in pre-schools including the integration of Roma children from segregated schools, and children with Special Education Needs (SEN) and children with disabilities into mainstream schools. Recommendations from UNICEF study on barriers in access to services for Roma children will contribute to the new National Action Plan on Roma to be developed through partnership between the Bureau of Interethnic Relations, European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), Roma Education Fund, UNHCHR and Roma local NGOs. The Child Friendly School (CFS) Standards were introduced in all schools, and education system staff was trained on their application. District level education authorities were supported for the development of methodological guidelines, strategic programmes and education action plans (including costing) mainstreaming children's rights and gender sensitiveness. The Early Childhood Education Curriculum was revised to bring equity perspective; by-laws on mentoring were developed and local mentors were trained on the use of School Readiness Tool. The work of educators, medical and social assistants with caregivers of children under seven was strengthened through mentoring. UNICEF Moldova supported a costing of ECD services. Data will be used for the development of per-capita funding formula.

### **Health**

In 2015 UNICEF supported the revitalization and improvement of service provision to adolescents through Youth Friendly Health Centres (YFHS). As a result, the number of adolescents benefiting from YFHS increased with 14 per cent in comparison to 2013. However, most-at-risk adolescents' access to YFHS remained low (at 8 per cent). A study assessing barriers in access to YFHS for most vulnerable adolescents supported the development of comprehensive behaviour and social change communication packages promoting healthy lifestyles. UNICEF successfully advocated for the removal of barriers that limit access to health services for the young, by ensuring that the new Law on Health Care incorporated relevant articles allowing adolescents over 14 years old to access health services without mandatory consent of a caregiver.

UNICEF supported the Government in aligning the national legislative and normative framework to the provision of the International Code of Marketing for Breast milk Substitutes, and for the revision of the criteria for accreditation of maternity wards, with focus on integration of Baby Friendly Health Initiatives (BFHI) and prophylactic of mother-to-child HIV transmission (MTCT).

UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health to assess the implementation of the Child Growth Monitoring Standards. Identified challenges in implementation will be addressed through capacity-building focusing on young child nutrition; early detection and intervention of developmental delays; better monitoring of child development milestones; and promotion of the

home visiting component of health service provision. Capacities of health professionals from the Transnistrian region of Moldova on obstetrical emergencies care, neonatal resuscitation, interpersonal and crisis communication to promote immunization and young child feeding and nutrition were built. Cold chain equipment was procured for and delivered to Transnistrian region along with a training on effective vaccine management.

### **Child Protection**

In 2015 UNICEF supported the development of the Action Plan to the National Child Protection Strategy. Costing exercise budgeted services and provisions for strengthened monitoring of de-institutionalization were incorporated. Adolescent recommendations to the revised Law on Special Protection of Children at Risk, and Children Separated from Parents, were submitted to the Parliamentary Committee on Social Protection.

There was progress on children's right to a family environment with a 46 per cent decrease of children under 18 years of age in institutions, and 69 per cent increase in children being placed in foster care since 2010. Evidence generation on guardianship, adoption and social work supported legislative amendments and further uniformity in practice.

UNICEF continued to guide and promote the inter-sectoral cooperation for identification and referral of cases of child violence, abuse and neglect. Revised inter-sectoral regulations contributed to an increased number of reported cases and quality support provided to children, and allowed the gathering of more reliable data

The capacity of Moldova justice system to respect and promote child rights improved. The per cent of children convicted fell by 25 per cent since 2006, and the number of children sentenced to prison fell by 20 per cent. Forty five per cent of child offenders were diverted at the criminal investigation stage. The rate was relatively lower (28 per cent) in the five most vulnerable districts of the country due to an increase of serious offences committed by children and the lack of community services. Case assignments were still arbitrary and individual child case assessments remained limited. UNICEF continued to promote and build capacity of legal system stakeholders on child-friendly interviewing and on improving the quality of the state guaranteed legal aid through development of quality standards for legal assistance. UNICEF supported the work of the technical working group on Justice for Children contributing to legislation amendments, including on the length of pre-trial detention of children and revisions of the Penal Procedure Code establishing compulsory child-sensitive criminal interviewing for children under 14 years of age. A set of Justice for Children indicators, based on UNICEF's 15 global juvenile justice indicators, were approved by an inter-ministerial decision (MoJ and MoI).

**OUTPUT 1** By 2017, child and social protection system have functional continuum of services and cash assistance, focusing on prevention of family separation, violence and exploitation, response and treatment of victims.

### **Analytical Statement of Progress:**

The development of an Action Plan to the National Child Protection Strategy 2014-2020 was undertaken in 2015 with broad participation of development partners, civil society and public. A costing exercise was conducted to ensure realistic budget estimation and planning against the indicators of the Action plan.

The national inter-sector mechanism for referral of cases of violence and neglect between the police, social welfare, health, and education sector, was approved in 2014 and rolled-out with UNICEF support to seven districts and further expanded in 15 out of 37 districts of the country

by civil society partners. The revised sectoral procedures and regulations of the Ministries of Education, Health, Internal Affairs and Social Protection contributed to a greater number of reported cases and support provided to children, and allowed the gathering of more reliable data.

Steady progress was made in ensuring children's right to family environment, 69 per cent increase in children being placed in foster care since 2010. Based on recommendations from UNICEF studies on guardianship, adoption and social work conducted in 2014-2015, MLSPF prepared a comprehensive package of legal amendments to the existing legal framework addressing existing gaps and contributing to uniform approach in practices. UNICEF initiated a partnership with the NGO CCF Moldova to prevent early childhood abandonment and support de-institutionalization of children under three and children with disabilities, including in the Transnistrian region. The project will strengthen the cooperation between the health and social sectors to identify and support vulnerable parents (mothers). It will pilot a model of community-based services for de-institutionalized children (including those with disabilities) and will advocate for adequate support to these services through government incentives (RKLA 1)

A UNICEF facilitated south-south cooperation (SSC) with Lithuania resulted in a Cooperation Agreement signed between Moldova's and Lithuania's Social Welfare Ministries aiming at systemic changes for more effective social assistance delivery. A multi-sector working group on deinstitutionalization was established with the National Council on the Protection of Child Rights to ensure coherent action addressing child disability amongst the Ministries of Health, Education and Labour and Social Policy. UNICEF supported civil society partners in developing alternative reports to CRC, reflecting the voices of local NGOs, youth and children nationwide (RKLA 8).

UNICEF provided technical assistance to draft a road map on the use of the ICF-CY framework for assessment of child disability (RKLA 6 and 8).

## **OUTPUT 2 Community Empowerment**

### **Analytical Statement of Progress:**

The capacity of Moldova justice system to respect and promote child rights improved. The number of children convicted reduced by 25 per cent since 2006, and the number of children sentenced to prison by 20 per cent. The percentage of child offender cases that were diverted at criminal investigation stage in five vulnerable districts remained low at 28 per cent; the nationwide diversion rate was 45 per cent. This was due to the growing number of heavy offences committed by children and the lack of community level services. Case assignment was arbitrary and individual child case assessments were limited. UNICEF's model for diversion of children with 'anti-social' behaviour, based on inter-sectorial cooperation and specialized services, was adopted in two districts and is under finalization in another three.

Child friendly interviewing was piloted in two districts and 65 judges, prosecutors and criminal investigation officers were trained. A six module training was delivered to 100 psychologists improving the quality of psychological assistance provided to children in contact with the law.

The quality of state-guaranteed legal aid for children in contact with the law improved. Quality standards for legal assistance of cases involving child offenders, victims and witnesses of crimes were developed in partnership with the National Legal Aid Council and disseminated amongst 500 lawyers encouraging lawyers' specialization and contributing to better understanding of child-sensitive justice. Additionally 80 layers received specialized training. External quality monitoring peer-review mechanism was used to assess the work of 60 legal aid

lawyers on 150 cases involving children. Final evaluation report demonstrated a good level of performance and 68 per cent of the monitored lawyers ranked the mechanism as “highly efficient”.

The technical working group on Justice for Children under the Ministry of Justice, supported by UNICEF’s legal assessment, proposed various changes in the regulatory framework, including on the length of pre-trial detention of children. The Penal Procedure Code established compulsory child-sensitive criminal interviewing procedures for children under 14 years old. (Art. 110-1). A set of J4C indicators for harmonized data collection and analysis was approved through an inter-ministerial decision (MoJ and MoI). Indicators are based on UNICEF’s 15 global juvenile justice indicators plus indicators related to child victims of crimes.

A new Law on People’s Advocate (Ombudsperson) was adopted in 2014, however, due to political instability and frequent change of governments, an Ombudsperson on Child Rights is yet to be selected.

### **OUTPUT 3 Community Empowerment**

#### **Analytical Statement of Progress:**

With UNICEF support, an assessment of the Child Growth Monitoring Standards’ implementation was carried out. A slow onset of the application of the standards by health professional was noted (new tool for screening for autism, referral to social care in case of children with social risk) requiring additional capacity building and strengthening of the home visiting component of health service provision. There is necessity for interventions in young child nutrition, and early detection and intervention in case of developmental delays and disability, as well as monitoring of developmental milestones.

In 2015, UNICEF supported the revision of the criteria for accreditation of maternity wards with focus on integration of Baby Friendly Health Initiatives (BFHI) and prophylactic of MTCT of HIV in maternity wards. The efforts will continue with a revision of the antenatal care standard to ensure access of vulnerable pregnant women to quality antenatal care, including for HIV positive women and women from or with partners from key risk population groups (sex workers, drug users).

UNICEF worked with the Government on aligning the national legislative and normative framework to the provision of the International Code of Marketing for Breast Milk Substitutes. Assessment of Attitudes and Practices on Exclusive Breastfeeding among Mothers and Health Professionals and Assessment of Compliance with ICMSB were carried and recommendations identifying relevant amendments to laws and regulations were provided to authorities. UNICEF supported technically a national assessment on WASH in pre-schools. Detailed evidence on the access of children and staff to quality water and sanitation facilities, and of hygiene practices in all 1,453 pre-school institutions supported central and local authorities’ planning and promoted lifelong health from an early age.

Capacities of health professionals from the Transnistrian region of Moldova on provision of obstetrical emergencies care and resuscitation were strengthened. Paediatricians and epidemiologists improved understanding and abilities of interpersonal and crisis communication to promote immunization. An additional 200 health professionals (neonatologist and family doctors and nurses) improved their capacities on young child nutrition and on promoting and supporting exclusive breastfeeding. Over 90 per cent of managers in Public Health and Mother and Child Health from Transnistrian region improved knowledge and skills in Effective Vaccine

Management. Cold chain equipment was procured and delivered.

UNICEF supported the European Week on Immunization and Global Week on Breastfeeding with involvement of decision makers, national stakeholders, civil society and community.

#### **OUTPUT 4** Community Empowerment

##### **Analytical Statement of Progress:**

UNICEF supported the provision of quality services for youth through Youth Friendly Health Centres (YFHCs) in all 35 districts and two municipalities. The percentage of adolescents benefiting from YFHS rose 14 per cent since 2013; about 70,000 adolescent boys and girls benefited from the YFHS in the first six months of 2015. However, the number of most at risk and especially vulnerable adolescents' access to YFHS in 2014 was low at 8 per cent. In 2015, assessment of the barriers to access to YFHS was carried out in all 37 YFHCs and the needs of most vulnerable adolescents in five YFHS. Results revealed that barriers to access are linked with prevailing social norms, limited awareness and demand (service seeking behaviour). requiring the development of comprehensive behaviour and social-change communication strategies promoting healthy lifestyles at local level. A communication for social change module for YFHS professionals was developed and further capacity of YFHS professionals, local stakeholders and youth volunteers will be built.

With UNICEF support, a working group of lawyers and specialists from YFHS assessed the existing legislation in order to recommend lowering the mandatory parental consent from 18 years to 14 years old, which is an age-related barrier to accessing health services. Recommendations were developed for the draft of the new Law on Health Care (Health Code) to form articles that will permit adolescents over 14 years old to access health services without mandatory consent of parents and/or caregivers. The report, with recommendations and justification for legislative change, was endorsed by the Ministry of Health, Department on Primary Health Care and Law Department in June 2015.

UNICEF ensured adolescents' participation and comments to the revised in 2015 Law on Special Protection of Children at Risk, and Children Separated from Parents. Consultations with 35 adolescents from different regions of the country were held. Representatives from the Parliamentary Committee on Social Protection, Health and Family, the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family, municipal and mayoral social assistants and specialists informed participants on the provisions of the law and implementations challenges and discussed possible option to address gaps and shortcomings. Recommendations from adolescents linked with required improvement of various implementation aspects, including relevant budgetary allocations, were submitted for consideration to the Parliamentary Commission for inclusion in the revised version of the law.

**OUTPUT 5** Families, professionals and other community members apply positive child-care practices and support inclusion of most vulnerable children and adolescents.

##### **Analytical Statement of Progress:**

Through mainstream and social media campaigns and engagement of Moldovan celebrities UNICEF promoted inclusive education by encouraging parents to enrol children with disabilities in mainstream schools. Positive practices and human interest stories were presented on TV talk shows, in debates and in print media. Due to the campaign, children with disabilities in special schools from dropped from 1,807 to 1,538 in the last school year.

UNICEF continued to support Ministry of Education in building the capacities of primary school teachers in Chisinau and Causeni districts to promote positive parenting and address social norms around physical punishment of children. A Facebook campaign was followed by 1,370 people. Engagement of local celebrities, TV and radio talk shows on national stations shared practical information to parents on non-violent parenting. The final draft of a cross-sectoral Parenting Strategy was put up on the Ministry of Education site for public discussion. Through partnership with the Child Rights Information Centre (CRIC), 30 key messages on violence against children were developed and disseminated on a regular basis to promote positive parenting.

Capacity-building on issues of violence in schools raised teachers' and children's ability to identify and solve issues of violence. As a result, teachers identified 6,282 cases of child abuse: 5,824 of them were solved by the educational institutions, while 458 cases were referred to legal or social sectors.

UNICEF, in partnership with Ministry of Health, conducted an information and awareness-raising campaign during World Breastfeeding Week. A UNICEF-produced video spot promoting breastfeeding was aired on national and local TV stations. The video and leaflets were shared with health institutions for their waiting rooms. Visibility events, including TV and radio interviews and a "march of breastfeeding mother" were organized to promote breastfeeding.

A comprehensive C4D strategy of Moldova CO on behaviour change and changing social norms was developed including: inclusiveness and equity for children with disabilities and Roma minorities; violence against children; positive parenting; ECD; and healthy lifestyles. Partnership with Youth Media Centre was initiated to develop comprehensive and participatory Positive Parenting portal. An all-star song integrating various behaviour change messages is under production and will be used within the Education through Entertainment activities in 2016.

**OUTPUT 6** By 2017, the government at all levels in close coordination with other stakeholders has and uses clear mechanism for enrolment and retention in pre-schools and schools of all children, with special focus on children in disadvantaged situations.

#### **Analytical Statement of Progress:**

In support of the education reform to increase access to education for the most vulnerable children, UNICEF Moldova generated knowledge and evidence and monitored child rights to support policy dialogue, advocate and communicate on social issues and social norms. The CEE/CIS RKLA 4, 3 and 1 multi-country evaluation results contributed to the wider development process in the country, influencing reforms on inclusive education and deinstitutionalization, including recommendation to monitor the situation of deinstitutionalized children.

Support provided to central and local education authorities, and community mobilization, resulted in the integration of the first Roma children from a Roma segregated school into mainstream school. Results from a study assessing barriers in access to services for Roma children and their families were validated and contributed to the development of UNICEF strategy on Roma. Collaboration fostered around Roma issues with Bureau of Interethnic Relations, European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), Roma Education Fund, UNHCR and Roma local NGOs leveraged ERCC funds to promote Roma inclusion issues. Technical assistance from UNICEF and European Roma Rights Centre for the evaluation and development of a new National Action plan for support of Roma population was provided.

Capacity building of 238 staff from psycho-pedagogical assistance services at central and

district levels, coupled with communication efforts, led to a 70 per cent increase in the number of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in regular schools since 2014, while 44 per cent of children with disabilities were included in regular schooling.

Results from monitoring of the integration in mainstream schools of deinstitutionalized children were shared with relevant authorities. A comprehensive plan of action is under development by MLSPF, with strong focus on a strengthened monitoring of the situation of de-institutionalized children.

With UNICEF support, the MoE and National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) collected data on children with disabilities and children with special educational needs in regular education institutions. Data will be used to inform programming with an equity focus.

To ensure public expenditure efficiency and safeguard universal access to pre-school education and early development for all young boys and girls, including those with special needs, UNICEF, in cooperation with PricewaterhouseCoopers, supported line ministries to cost ECD services in crèches and kindergartens nationally. The collected disaggregated data will be a basis to develop of per-capita funding formula and providing adequately-financed services in line with children's needs, especially the most vulnerable.

**OUTPUT 7** Awareness raising, promotion of dialogue and community empowerment.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

In 2015 UNICEF continued to support the Government at central and local levels to improve the quality of education, learning environment and learning outcomes for all children.

To promote quality-learning environment in all schools, 1,300 school managers, one from each school, were trained on the application of Child Friendly School (CFS) standards for school self-assessment and development. In addition the 35 heads of district methodological centres also learned about CFS standards and the type of support they can offer to schools in their application.

Local education authorities were given technical support to develop methodological guidelines, samples of strategic programmes and education action plans. A total of 74 heads and deputy heads of district departments of education were trained and 34 strategic plans on education were developed (one for each district). In 18 districts the plans were submitted for local council approval. Collaboration and partnerships with transFORMA Foundation and CCF Moldova promoted human rights education and CFS inclusiveness in 70 schools in Moldova.

The Early Childhood Education Curriculum was revised to bring equity perspective and reduce gaps from early childhood. By-laws on mentoring were developed and disseminated. About 300 local mentors were trained on the use of the School Readiness Tool and ensured knowledge transfer to all 1,400 educators nationally. Strong Advocacy and Communication for Social Change, coupled with on-going mentoring of educators and local social partnerships, contributed to a change of mind-sets and ensured inclusion of Roma children and children with disabilities in mainstream school. More than 952 educators, medical and social assistants were mentored and their performance in working with caregivers of children under seven was monitored. Thus support to the poorest and most marginalized caregivers in 340 localities (36 per cent of the country) was provided, and their parenting skills were improved.

Results from the Multi-Country Evaluation on RKLA 3 were shared at a round table with

representatives of line ministries, academia, civil society, practitioners, UN and diplomatic missions accredited in the country.

Knowledge on innovative and best early childhood education practices were documented and shared on national, regional and international web sites, social media platforms and national TV programmes.

**OUTPUT 8** Capacity building of partners at national and community level in assessing community vulnerability and support in developing at least two local plans in DRR and Emergency Response, involving community members including adolescents.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

Building on an initiative started in 2013, UNICEF advocated for development of safety norms for schools. All 1,300 school managers were trained on applying CFS standards in regard to disaster preparedness.

**OUTCOME 2** By 2017, governance structures and social attitudes are more child-sensitive and equity oriented

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

In 2015, UNICEF's support to realization of children's rights in the Republic of Moldova was provided in a challenging political, economic, and social environment. The collapse of three leading banks in late 2014 created substantial deficit in Moldova's public finances. This, coupled with diminishing revenues from export and an estimated decrease of one third of remittances, led to a deteriorating economic situation and political instability. Government changed twice and since October 2015 Moldova is with a caretaker Government.

Despite this environment, the Government, civil society partners and donors remained committed to the fulfilment of children's rights. In 2015 UNICEF Moldova worked to strengthen governance structures to be child sensitive and equity oriented, with evidence and advocacy for policy and regulatory framework amendments and by building capacity at national and sub-national level.

With UNICEF advocacy the National Council for Protection of Child Rights was brought under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister. The partnership with the Office of the Ombudsman for Child Rights was strengthened.

UNICEF invested in adequate public financing for children through costing for the Action Plan to the National Child Protection Strategy, and strengthening YFHCs and ECD service provisions. Support to develop strategic programmes and Action Plans strengthened the decentralization process. UNICEF studied the mechanisms of budgetary allocation in Moldova to identify relevant recommendations for sector Ministries and Ministry of Finance.

In 2015 UNICEF monitored implementation of the concluding observations of the CRC. The allocation of adequate financial resources to implement relevant legislation was challenging due to the deteriorating socio-economic situation in the country. State budgets do not have separate expenditure lines for implementation of children's rights. Implementation of children's rights is entrusted to budget implementers (sector ministries and local public authorities), usually reflected in their annual budget programmes. Without specific legislative provisions, budget allocations for the fulfilment of child rights may lose precedence in budget priorities of sector planning, especially within a Moldova's challenging overall economic situation.

While key legislative amendments were made, human resource capacity to execute programmes was limited. For example, a social assistant specialist on child protection and care in the family and community was approved by Ministry of Labour, Social Policy and Family, but hasn't been recruited due to limited financing. State level financing for targeted specialization of judges and lawyers who deal with children in conflict with the law is unavailable. Implementation of Child Growth Monitoring Standards was constrained due to limited investments in building health professionals' capacity in using new tools.

A new Law on People's Advocate (Ombudsperson) was adopted in 2014, however, due to political instability and frequent change of governments, an Ombudsperson on Child Rights is yet to be selected.

UNICEF Moldova supported the strengthening of the in-country capacity to collect, analyse and use data on children with disabilities by supporting participation of representatives from key line ministries at a regional workshop on the topic. As a result, statistical forms and guidance were adjusted to allow collection of disaggregated data on enrolment of children with disabilities at both pre-school, primary and secondary school level. UNICEF Moldova provided technical support for the collection of MICS5 data for the Transnistrian region. UNICEF Moldova, in partnership with UNDP, UN Women and UNFPA supported the development of the strategy on strengthening the national statistical system 2015-2020. The strategy covers social statistics, focusing on quality of data collection and its use in the area of poverty and social inclusion, education, health and social protection. UNICEF Moldova supported the National Bureau of Statistics to develop periodical theme publication, "Children of Moldova" providing time series and brief analysis of the situation of children in the country.

UNICEF Moldova strengthened partnerships and developed new partnerships with civil society and private sector. A partnership with CCF Moldova was established to address prevention of early childhood separation and abandonment and to pilot community level specialized services for deinstitutionalized children under three and children with disabilities in Moldova, including in Transnistrian region. Alternative reporting on CRC implementation, and monitoring of the EU-Moldova Association Agreement, was ensured through the partnership with NGO Alliance (comprising 127 Moldovan NGOs). A new partnership with the Centre for Investigative Journalism was established to set up an advocacy lab for journalists reporting on social issues and with Youth Media Centre to establish a participatory portal promoting positive parenting.

Additional efforts were invested in addressing social norms, especially the inclusion of children with disabilities and children from minority groups. Parents, teachers, civil society partners and psychologists were periodically involved in public debates on the negative impact of social exclusion of children with disabilities and children from minorities, and on violence against children. The study on barriers to Roma children and their families in accessing services contributed to the development of a comprehensive communication for social change package. To address the social norms related to violent disciplining of children, efforts were taken to equip the parents with skills to avoid violence and to practice positive forms of parenting.

## **OUTPUT 1 Community Empowerment**

### **Analytical Statement of Progress:**

UNICEF Moldova supported the work of the National Council on Protection of Child Rights, chaired by the Prime Minister and focusing on strengthening the inter-ministerial and inter-

sectorial collaboration in the development, implementation and monitoring of child-related policies and programmes.

Adolescent inputs to the revision of the Law on Special Protection of Children at Risk, and Children Separated from Parents (Law #140) were submitted to the Parliamentary Committee on Social Protection, Health and Family. Technical support was provided for the development of the Action Plan for the Child Protection Strategy. Technical support was provided for various justice system legislative changes, including on the length of pre-trial detention of children. The Penal Procedure Code established compulsory child-sensitive criminal interviewing procedures for children are below 14 years of age. UNICEF Moldova worked with the Government to align the national legislative and normative framework to the provision of the International Code of Marketing for Breast Milk Substitutes. UNICEF Moldova supported the Bureau of Interethnic Relations in initiating preparations for the development of the new National Action Plan on Roma. IN partnership with the think-tank “Expert Group” and Moldova Parliament, UNICEF Moldova participated to policy dialogues and discussion on the draft Law on Social Allowances for Children; social services financing by local authorities in the context of the decentralization; Development of non-government/private sector services for children (kindergartens and crèches); Childcare leave reform and social support for families with children; and availability and cost of preschool services.

With support of UNICEF Moldova, Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS) Regional Office in-country capacity to collect, analyse, understand, use and disseminate data on children with disabilities was strengthened. A regional Disability Measurement Workshop was attended by the representatives of the National Bureau of Statistics and key line ministries (Education, Health, Social Protection). As a result, data collection on children with disabilities in schools improved, and statistical forms and guidance were adjusted with disaggregated data available in 2016.

UNICEF Moldova supported the finalization of MICS5 data collection for the Transnistrian region. Capacity of CSO partners on UNICEF policy in M&E was strengthened. UNICEF conducted a number of research efforts supporting MLSPF to assess the current social protection system for a timely and flexible response to the needs of all vulnerable children and families facing shocks, disasters, and crises in Moldova. Assessment report was validated jointly with Government counterparts in October 2015.

**OUTPUT 2** Awareness raising, promotion of dialogue and community empowerment.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

UNICEF addressed social perceptions on children with disabilities and violence against children through information and awareness-raising activities. Parents, teachers, representatives of NGOs and psychologists were periodically involved in public debates to discuss negative impact of social exclusion of children with disabilities and of violence against children. (RKLA 1 & 4)

UNICEF contributed to the development of “Education-2020” strategy and continued to support to Ministry of Education to ensure quality and inclusive education for all in a safe school environments. Quality education standards for primary and general secondary schools were developed with UNICEF support, and more than 1,000 teachers and school managers were trained to identify and address cases of violence. Short educative movies were screened in schools showing case-studies of physical, verbal and psychological violence. In addition, targeted informative materials (guides, leaflets, brochures) on different forms of abuse, including emotional abuse in schools and bullying, were developed for parents and teenagers and

information on how to deal in such situations provided.

With UNICEF support, close to 1,236,000 children, parents and professionals were informed and sensitized about violence against children and its prevention methods; 205,000 copies of a publication on the subject were distributed.

The study on barriers to Roma children and their families in accessing services, conducted with the extensive participation of Roma leaders and communities, was validated and supported the evaluation of the current plan and the development of the new plan on support to Roma population.

To address social norms and reduce the percentage of caregivers who believe that physical punishment is necessary for disciplining children (15 per cent), consistent efforts were taken to equip the parents with skills on how to avoid violence and how to practice positive forms of parenting and disciplining. Overall, 139 school managers and 110 primary school teachers benefited from capacity building on how to organize activities with parents, discuss about child development and promote positive parenting. (RKLA 10)

**OUTPUT 3** NGOs, media, private sector and children are actively engaged in a public dialogue for the development and monitoring of child related policies and promotion of child rights.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

In 2015, UNICEF Moldova became an ‘early adopter’ of UNICEF’s *Global Communication and Public Advocacy Strategy 2014-2017*.

Awareness-raising events focused on global priorities for children. The celebration of Breastfeeding Week promoted breastfeeding practices and included social mobilization component led by the ‘Mama alapteaza’ (mothers initiative). Social media increased visibility and a public engagement with broad outreach was achieved. (Facebook 7,500 hits, Twitter 8,000, YouTube 3,500 views.) UNICEF Moldova Advocacy Country Kit was finalized and placed on UNICEF website. The CO web page was renewed and had 1,800 unique visitors per month. UNICEF participated in the global campaigns #FightUnfair and #orangetheworld focusing on child equity and violence against women, which increased impressions on social media by 500 per cent in three days.

Contributions to the “Ziarul de Gardă” Newspaper “UN Corner” included topics on ECD with focus on children in institutions and impact of poverty on young brain development.

UNICEF supported actively the UN 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations by producing a promotional video on inclusive education and screening a One Minute Junior movies focusing on child discrimination. UNICEF Moldova played an active role within the One UN Communication Team.

For the [World’s Largest Lesson](#) Initiative, the UNICEF Moldova Representative taught a lesson on the SDGs in Molesti village, Ialoveni district. Children learned about the Global Goals issues including ending extreme poverty, tackling climate change and quality education for all children.

A mini Special Olympics football tournament engaged more than 200 athletes with mental disabilities and contributed to changing perceptions and promoting inclusion of children with disabilities.

Moldova Deputy Prime Minister, EU and German Ambassadors and UNICEF Representative launched the "Integrating Child Rights in Development Cooperation Toolkit" produced with joint UNICEF, EU and German Development Cooperation efforts. The event engaged key Moldovan officials and raised awareness on mainstreaming child rights in development planning.

Partnerships with mainstream media raised awareness on children's rights and built media capacity to address, ethically, child rights' issues. UNICEF Moldova maintains partnerships with journalists, including investigative journalists. In November 2015, UNICEF Moldova initiated a partnership with the Centre for Investigative Journalism to develop an Advocacy Lab on Child Rights and a web platform producing engaging, multimedia content.