Executive Summary

This year saw further advancement of Moldova’s commitment to realisation of child rights in the country, with UNICEF Moldova supporting the Government, international partners, civil society, and child rights champions to achieve results for children. As the world celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on November 20th 2014, UNICEF Moldova took a year-long journey to the day, with a series of advocacy and communication events and activities reflecting Moldova’s achievements, acknowledging the major contributors and flagging the remaining issues to tackle with an equity focus.

The unfinished agenda in the areas of social inclusion and protection of vulnerable children, and in equitable access to health and education, was flagged again with the publication of Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 4 (MICS). The report shows that disparities remain for children in poorer families and those in rural areas. The most pronounced disparities are for children’s early learning, with only half of the poorest children attending early childhood education programmes (compared to 88 per cent of richest). Health disparities also persist, with higher rates of stunting, anaemia and iodine deficiency among the poor and rural families.

UNICEF’s cooperation with the Government of Moldova actively targeted the remaining disparities and made considerable progress. Food fortification for iron and iodine has been mandated and capacity building of local producers is underway. Access to early childhood education and care was extended to the poorest families. Considerable progress was made for the inclusion of children with disabilities and special education needs in mainstream schools; increasing from 2,300 in 2012 to 7,660 in 2014. Slow but steady progress is being made in improving Roma children’s access to education and social services, and qualitative research completed this year will help accelerate these efforts.

With UNICEF’s support, the Government of Moldova initiated dialogue and experience exchange with several countries in the Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States region (CEE/CIS). The experience of Lithuania in the area of social protection, the success of Bulgaria and Serbia in integrating Roma children into mainstream schools and Kazakhstan’s flour fortification achievements were topics of mutual visits and further planning. Formal cooperation was agreed between the governments of Lithuania and Moldova, establishing long-term collaboration and technical support to improve social protection and social assistance in the country.

This year saw approval of the National Child Protection Strategy 2014-2020, an important step toward protecting Moldova’s children from violence and abuse. In addition, a national inter-sector mechanism was established to refer cases of violence and neglect between the police, social welfare, health, and education sector. The mechanism is now operational in 35 per cent of the country’s districts and will continue its expansion to reach country-wide coverage.

UNICEF has supported changes to the regulatory framework related to juvenile justice, and amendments of the Penal Procedure Code on child-victim friendly interviewing were approved by Parliament in July 2014.
MICS4 also revealed that a broad swathe of children is exposed to high levels of violence in homes and at schools, with 76 per cent of children having experienced a violent method of discipline. A new parenting strategy was drafted with the support of UNICEF and is on its way for adoption by the new Government. Communication for social change was used to promote positive parenting, with celebrities and young people sharing messages through traditional and social media. Within a partnership with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Child Rights Information Centre, UNICEF supported the creation and training of cross-sectoral teams in almost 1,000 communities to strengthen parenting skills. Initial monitoring shows that mothers and fathers were empowered to apply positive parenting at home.

The Association Agreement between the Republic of Moldova and the European Union (EU) was signed in 2014, reconfirming mutual commitment to support Moldova’s commitment to the rule of law, democracy and human rights standards and principles. A unique feature of this Agreement is a specific chapter on the rights of the child, which is the result of intense advocacy by UNICEF Moldova. The chapter specifically refers to cooperation on the prevention and combating of all forms of exploitation, abuse, neglect and violence against children, as well as the improvement of systems of identification and assistance of children in vulnerable situations, alleviation of child poverty and strengthening the capacity of parents and caretakers.

As part of a broader United Nations (UN) initiative, UNICEF supported confidence-building between the two banks of the Nistru River, providing technical support on care for newborns and pregnant women and improving immunisation capacity.

**Humanitarian Assistance**

Though no humanitarian assistance was provided in 2014, UNICEF Moldova continued its efforts to attain better preparedness for potential natural disasters and resilient communities. In this regard, information materials were distributed in schools to ensure that both staff and scholars have the necessary knowledge and skills to prevent and mitigate the adverse effects of key natural disasters. In addition, the Early Warning/Early Action portal was updated to reflect new information for preparedness and rapid response.

**Equity Case Study**

UNICEF Moldova continued in 2014 strengthening the evidence base on most vulnerable and excluded populations to ensure that decision-makers at national and local levels, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and communities possess relevant and up-to-date data to support programming and better understand the specific barriers to and bottlenecks that create inequities. Beyond data, additional research was conducted and used throughout the year to focus on specific vulnerable groups and service areas.

The MICS4 report was successfully launched, with data and analysis distributed throughout the entire year and picked up by other organisations, journalists and partners. The results reveal that Moldova has made remarkable progress in many areas, including health, education and nutrition, and the overall situation of children and women has improved significantly in recent years.

Still disparities remain, and many indicators show persistent discrepancies between those living in urban and rural areas. Poverty remains a key driver of existing disparities that need to be further addressed. Children from the poorest families have almost two times fewer opportunities than the richest to attend early education programmes. They also have fewer chances to learn
with their fathers. Children from the poorest families are affected by stunting nearly four times more than children from the richest families and have two times higher risk of being anaemic. Use of improved sanitation facilities varies greatly between rural areas, where only 9 per cent of households use flush toilets, compared to 75 per cent in urban areas.

MICS4 also revealed worrying trends that cut across wealth and geography. Moldovan children experience high levels of violence in homes and in schools, and there is a need to provide parents with education on positive discipline. Substance abuse among adolescents is high; half of all adolescent boys started drinking before age 15. Coupled with low comprehensive knowledge on HIV/AIDs prevention, young people face considerable risks.

To ensure a complete set of data on all children in the country, UNICEF Moldova assisted stakeholders in the Transnistrian region to conduct MICS5 to improve the available relevant data for assessing the situation of children and women, with special emphasis on disaggregated data for identifying existing disparities in the areas of health, nutrition, education and social protection.

Participatory Qualitative Assessment on Roma
Roma represent one of the most vulnerable groups in Moldova, facing discrimination and multiple barriers to social inclusion. The poverty rate among the Roma population is 65 per cent, with an even higher incidence in families with children. They are also less likely to access community services. Roma children enter the educational system later and leave it earlier than non-Roma groups. Only two out of ten Roma children go to a kindergarten or a community centre, as compared to eight out of ten children nationally. Only half of Roma children enrol in primary and secondary education (90 per cent in non-Roma populations).

To better understand the institutional and social barriers for Roma children and families to access community services, UNICEF Moldova partnered with ‘Dacia’, a non-governmental organisation, to conduct a participatory assessment in three communities populated by Roma. The research used a wide spectrum of data collection methods, from traditional to less formal, to explore various perspectives on the reasons why Roma families do not use community services. It explored both institutional and social barriers, including social norms, interaction between different Roma groups and between Roma and non-Roma populations. It also explored gender aspects, how social norms affect Roma boys and girls in using services and going to school, and also how Roma mothers and fathers participate in their children’s up-bringing.

Preliminary data identified a series of external factors affecting social inclusion of Roma (stigma and discrimination, limited and poor quality community services, poverty), but also factors within the Roma community that influence their isolation, including discrimination within the community, stigma of families/mothers who send their children to kindergarten, early marriage and strongly defined gender roles. Collected data will be consulted and validated with local communities and national stakeholders in early 2015. The findings are expected to support the Government, local public authorities, NGOs and communities to adopt evidence-based decisions.

Reducing disparities in new-born care
In accordance with the revised Child Growth Monitoring Standards approved by the Ministry of Health (MoH) in 2013, new-borns should be visited by primary health care professionals within three days of discharge from the maternity and on the 14th or 15th day of life. With UNICEF Moldova support, an assessment of Child Growth Monitoring Standards implementation was made in order to capture progress and remaining gaps for vulnerable children. The assessment
was undertaken in primary health care facilities in 11 districts and two municipalities.

The results show a seven per cent increase since 2012 in new-borns benefitting from a first home visit. With 99 per cent now reached, almost each new-born is visited within the first three days. However, there is a significant discrepancy between children visited in urban areas (99 per cent) versus rural (92 per cent). With regard to the second home visit on the 14th-15th day of life, there was also a considerable increase, from 80 per cent in 2014 compared to 50 per cent of new-borns visited in 2012, but again with rural and urban disparities.

The study showed that 96 per cent of new-borns from vulnerable groups were visited by the primary health care physician within three days after discharge from the maternity and 95 per cent on the 14-15th day of life. Although this assessment revealed an encouraging trend in comparison with 2012 data, when only 83 per cent of new-borns from vulnerable groups were visited by primary health care nurses within three days after discharge, continuous efforts should be made to ensure access by vulnerable children to quality services and the reduction of urban/rural disparities.

**Summary Notes and Acronyms**

CEE/CIS – Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States  
CMT – Country Management Team  
CRC – Convention on the Rights of the Child  
DCT – Direct Cash Transfers  
ECD – Early Childhood Development  
ECE – Early Childhood Education  
EU – European Union  
EVA – Especially vulnerable adolescents  
FFI – Food Fortification Initiative  
GPE – Global Partnership for Education  
HACT – Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers  
HQ – Headquarters  
ICT – Information Communication Technologies  
LTA – Long Term Agreement  
MARA – Most at-risk adolescents  
MICS – Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey  
MoE – Ministry of Education  
MoH – Ministry of Health  
MoIA – Ministry of Internal Affairs  
MoLSPF – Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family  
MP4R – Managing Performance for Results  
RKLA – Regional Knowledge Leadership Area  
RO – UNICEF Regional Office  
SEN – Special Education Needs  
UNCRPD – UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities  
WB – World Bank  
YFHC – Youth Friendly Health Centre  
YFHS - Youth-Friendly health services

**Capacity Development**

UNICEF Moldova prioritises capacity building that addresses systemic bottlenecks to reaching the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children and is based on a shared analysis and
understanding with partners.

In the area of justice for children, a legal and policy assessment was finalised in 2014, providing evidence on limitations in law and practice and the limited role of psychologists and social workers in the legal system. This is being used as evidence for advocacy to improve capacity building for legal and justice actors. In addition, 20 mediators were trained nationwide to improve the use of diversion for children in conflict with the law. To address the lack of consistent and reliable disaggregated data, the development of national justice for children indicators, based on global indicators, was underway in late 2014.

UNICEF Moldova contributed to improving knowledge and skills of Youth-Friendly Health Centers (YFHC) on HIV testing and referral, in accordance with the guideline on provision of HIV Testing and Counselling for adolescents. Around 40 specialists and managers of YFHCs developed their skills in monitoring and data collection, using newly developed software. Another 150 YFHC staff and Government counterparts have improved skills in counselling and reaching the most vulnerable and at-risk adolescents.

As a result of capacity-building activities, health professionals from the four largest maternities of the Transnistrian region possess better knowledge and improved practical skills to deliver quality services to pregnant women and new-borns. Additionally, health managers from all seven maternities learnt how to use the ‘Birth Weight and Age at Death Boxes for an Intervention and Evaluation System’ tool to analyse major causes of perinatal mortality.

Support was provided for strengthening the capacity of psycho-pedagogical assistance services at central and district levels to support inclusion of children with special educational needs in regular schools. Staff of the services were trained and supported with tools for child development assessment and integration in mainstream schools. UNICEF Moldova supported piloting of mentoring at the pre-school level – an innovative approach to teaching and learning. Accordingly, 320 local mentors ensured knowledge transfer to 9,815 professionals, 46 per cent of whom received individual mentoring.

**Evidence Generation, Policy Dialogue and Advocacy**

UNICEF Moldova and other child protection partners have continued to use evidence generated earlier and in 2014 from independent evaluation and research in the area of child care in their advocacy, technical assistance and practical support; for instance, to influence reform in foster care with improved regulations, and in the development of the Action Plan for the Child Protection Strategy 2014-2020. UNICEF Moldova and think-tank partners completed a costing exercise resulting in the inclusion of the newly created post of child protection specialist at local/community levels into the Medium-Term Budgetary Framework.

UNICEF Moldova and the local think tank ‘Expert-Grupo’ provided support to Parliamentary commissions to mainstream child rights and gender considerations into policies and legal documents. UNICEF and Expert-Grupo developed and shared with national stakeholders evidence and recommendations, which in turn influenced the new law on public finances for social services, policies for supporting families with multiple children and the development of the pre-school education system.

UNICEF Moldova’s advocacy efforts led to the mainstreaming of the mentoring concept, an innovative approach to teaching and learning, into the new Code of Education and Education Strategy 2020, and development of the cross-sectorial Strategy on Parenting. The findings of
research on demand and supply for Early Childhood Development (ECD) and child care services undertaken jointly with UN Women informed the development of new policies and laws.

UNICEF Moldova's advocacy efforts led to the development and official approval of the 'Regulations on Effective Communication with Media' by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA), Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family (MoLSPF), MoH and MoE. Guided by UNICEF Moldova and the Association of Independent Press, the Broadcasting Coordination Council developed a methodology for monitoring child rights on TV and presented the results publicly. The monitoring emphasised the improvement in reporting on sensitive child rights issues in Moldova and concluded that journalists are more aware of ethical standards as compared to few years ago, and are more committed to respecting them.

Partnerships

In health and education, UNICEF Moldova developed partnerships with organisations across the CEE/CIS region. A strong partnership with the Roma Education Fund on the desegregation and increased participation of Roma children in education involved counterparts from Serbia and Bulgaria. Another partnership, with the Food Fortification Initiative (FFI) and Kazakh and Moldovan Association of Millers contributed to keeping food fortification issues on the agenda of the Government.

Under the umbrella of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), UNICEF Moldova strengthened partnerships with and between central and local governments and the World Bank (WB), which led to a significant increase in Early Childhood Education (ECE) programmes.

UNICEF Moldova continued to explore strategic partnerships with media by supporting the Child-Friendly Journalists Network, aiming to improve media capacity to report on child rights and respect ethical standards. Three press clubs and one public debate were organised, resulting in more than 50 stories and nine investigations on child rights infringements. As a result of this media material, a few cases of child rights infringements were resolved successfully after intervention by national or local public authorities.

Partnership with Moldova’s Football Federation was established to increase child rights promotion through sports. Around 300 children from vulnerable backgrounds all over the country watched a special football match, played equally, by boys and girls, which contributed to promoting CRC and empowering disadvantaged children to understand and claim their rights. Through this event UNICEF Moldova launched the CRC @25-anniversary campaign to review the progress made in the lives of children over the last two decades and draw public attention to the challenges they still face.

External Communication and Public Advocacy

UNICEF Moldova continued to use various opportunities to promote child rights and to foster civil society participation in pushing for positive social change for the benefit of children, especially the most vulnerable ones. MICS data were successfully launched and distributed throughout the entire year and picked up by other organisations, journalists and partners. The special event organised in partnership with the Government on the occasion of International Children’s Day brought an EU perspective to the child rights agenda.

A two-month campaign, dedicated to 25th Anniversary of the CRC, was led by UNICEF Moldova. Public events, media stories, debates, journalistic investigations and other initiatives involving children, their families, celebrities and opinion leaders were conducted to highlight
practical action to reach the most excluded children, celebrate progress since 1993, identify gaps and point the way forward. The campaign started with a special football match, played by boys and girls in mixed teams, organised jointly by UNICEF and the Moldovan Football Federation. ‘Innovation for Equity’ Activate Talk involving celebrities and opinion leaders was broadcasted on national television and live-streamed on a special global UNICEF web-portal. The campaign culminated in a special event on 20 November, when UNICEF presented awards to eight child rights champions in the country. The event was attended by high-level officials and attracted considerable media attention.

A special effort was undertaken by UNICEF Moldova to increase public engagement through social media. In 2014, UNICEF expanded its digital presence and created a Twitter account, gaining nearly 150 national and international followers in just a few months. Special initiatives were organised on the topic of violence, breastfeeding, youth and the CRC. A special contest on Facebook was organised on the occasion of the CRC@25 anniversary. All UNICEF Moldova ‘fans’ were invited to upload a photo from childhood with a message about child rights in the past and today. The campaign’s message reached an audience of more than 27,000 people, the engagement rate doubled and UNICEF Moldova’s Facebook page reached its 2014 target of 7,000 ‘likes’.

### South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation

Efficient delivery of social assistance is a great challenge for transition countries due to continued changes in poverty and vulnerability profiles, shifting demographics and economic transformation, particularly in the context of economic adjustment programmes. To improve social protection for vulnerable families with children, UNICEF Moldova facilitated cooperation with another transition country in the region, Lithuania, resulting in a Cooperation Agreement between the respective social welfare ministries. Promising practices on various aspects of social protection were identified and examined, of which some will be fully or partially replicated by Moldovan authorities. Under consideration are revisions in the institutional set-up of quality control of social services, institutional infrastructure for continued strengthening of social work capacity and human resources in primary social assistance. These are systemic changes that will improve social assistance delivery, therefore directly improving the wellbeing of families with children.

Through collaboration with Bulgaria and Serbia, Moldovan counterparts learnt effective practices on the desegregation and increased participation of Roma children in education. Another project implemented in cooperation with UNICEF Kazakhstan and FFI contributed to transferring international and Kazakh experience and knowledge related to introduction of mandatory flour fortification to prevent micronutrient deficiencies among vulnerable groups and the general population.

### Identification Promotion of Innovation

Reaching parents through SMS (Moldcell)
UNICEF Moldova initiated a partnership with Moldcell, a national mobile network operator with more than 1 million users, to reach parents with messages to improve their parental practices. Around 30 short text messages will be sent to parents and caregivers through an SMS-broadcast service to inform them about key practices to ensure proper care and support the development of their child. The messages cover information on danger signs, health issues, child development and non-violent parenting, and they will support parents to adopt better child-rearing practices and improve their communication with their children. The initiative will be launched in 2015.
Mentoring for ECE

ECE requires a dramatic shift at the classroom level, from teacher-centred to child-centred practices. In order to produce such a change, there was a need to model innovative approaches to teaching and learning through mentoring for professional development in the work place. With UNICEF Moldova support, the concept of mentoring was mainstreamed into the new Code of Education and Education Strategy 2020, and mentoring was successfully piloted under the GPE project implemented by the Government in cooperation with the World Bank.

Mentors successfully mastered new knowledge on child-centred and inclusive education, and in turn, provided training to 9,815 educators and managers through collaborative learning; 80 per cent of educators took advantage of group mentoring and 46 per cent of individual mentoring. Recent studies show that 83 per cent of the educators involved in the mentoring apply Early Learning Development Standards and Professional Standards and 79 per cent of educators apply child-friendly approaches. Accordingly, 80 per cent of children met Early Learning Development Standards and 88 per cent of 6-to-7-year-old children display critical thinking abilities.

In order to institutionalise mentoring, there is a need to include mentoring into the list of services financially supported by the state (in accordance with provisions of article 57 of the new Code of Education); set up a monitoring/evaluation system; organise in-service training for national mentors on a regular basis and document and share good practices.

Support to Integration and cross-sectoral linkages

UNICEF Moldova has supported cross-sectoral approaches to child rights issues this year by actively supporting the National Council for the Protection of Child Rights in forging linkages between justice, police and social sector ministries. This was achieved through regular meetings, joint monitoring trips to the field and round tables on cross-cutting issues. The approval of the national inter-sector referral mechanism on cases of child abuse and neglect was developed with technical assistance from UNICEF Moldova and its partners – the National Centre for Child Abuse Prevention and Child Rights Information Centre. At a more local level (thus far), UNICEF Moldova and its partner Institute for Penal Reforms have achieved the approval of an inter-sectoral cooperation mechanism to improve diversion and other support services for children at risk of coming into contact with the law in Moldova’s second largest city, Balti, with four more districts in the process. Over 200 children have benefitted from the services.

UNICEF Moldova supported cross-sectoral cooperation on parenting and played a convening role in involving the line ministries (MoE, MoLSPF, MoH) and civil society. As a result, the strategy on parenting was drafted and is going through public discussions. In tandem, a training programme on inclusive ECD and parenting was delivered to 926 cross-sectoral community teams, comprising preschool teachers, medical staff and social workers from all rural localities of the country. Initial monitoring of the innovative parenting intervention shows that mothers and fathers were empowered to apply positive parenting at home, but that more work is needed to build the capacity of teams.

Human Rights-Based Approach to Cooperation

The Country Programme is focused on addressing inequalities and strengthening rights of disadvantaged groups of children and people, including persons living with disabilities, the poor and people from ethnic and other minorities. UNICEF Moldova advocated for equal access of
children to quality education and promoted desegregation of Roma schools and classes. As a result of advocacy, capacity development and community mobilisation, central and local education authorities and Roma parents succeeded in mainstreaming Roma children from a segregated school into the neighbouring school, which will give Roma children better chances to develop their full potential.

Inclusion of children with disabilities in regular pre-schools and schools was promoted through a continuous communication campaign targeting teachers, educators and parents. As a result of evidence-based advocacy efforts, duty-bearers’ and rights-holders’ acceptance of young children with disabilities in mainstream pre-schools increased to 36 percent in 2014 (in comparison with five percent in 2010) and 1,321 young children with special education needs (SEN) attended regular preschool groups. At the same time, the number of children with disabilities and SEN in mainstream schools increased from 2,300 in 2012 to 7,660 in 2014. Part of this increase is due to improved identification of children with SEN, though a steady 33 per cent decline is also noted in the total number of children in special schools. UNICEF Moldova's work on inclusive education contributed to a joint UN initiative to advance implementation of the CRPD.

UNICEF Moldova's child protection programme developed plans for research strongly grounded in a Human Rights Based Approach – with legal, policy and practice assessments in justice for children, adoption, guardianship and social work analysed in relation to their adherence to international treaties and standards. UNICEF Moldova has further pulled together the concluding observations related to justice for children of all relevant treaty bodies and assessed them on progress for rights-based advocacy, especially in light of next year’s State Party Reporting.

### Gender Mainstreaming and Equality

**1. Identifying and understanding gender-based disparities**

UNICEF Moldova contributed to better availability of gender-disaggregated data through the MICS4 survey and MICS5 in the Transnistrian region. Although the majority of indicators do not reveal considerable gender disparities, the data shows particular challenges for fathers and boys. Adolescent boys in particular have disproportionately high rates of substance abuse and experience higher rates of violence.

Gender was also mainstreamed into research initiated in 2014. The qualitative assessment on institutional and social barriers for Roma families and children to access community services, ensured that both men and women are part of the community teams created to support the research. At the same time, the research explored gender aspects related to social inclusion of Roma, how the decisions taken by Roma parents affect boys and girls and gender-related norms within the Roma community. The research is expected to produce gender-sensitive evidence to be used to improve decision-making and programming.

**2. Changing social norms on violence and parenting**

Qualitative research on social norms that influence physical punishment of children involved both men and women (parents and caregivers) and aims to discover whether they apply different disciplinary methods, as well as how boys and girls are differently affected by physical punishment and what norms support violent parenting practices in Moldova. Research data will support implementation of evidence-based interventions focusing on prevention of violence against children.
UNICEF Moldova also initiated a series of activities promoting positive parenting practices for both father and mothers. It supported the MoE to train, under a GPE initiative, multidisciplinary teams in 926 communities to enable them to work with families and empower fathers to take an active role in child development.

Environmental Sustainability

UNICEF Moldova continued its efforts to strengthen children’s environmental education. In this regard, informational materials were distributed in schools to ensure that both staff and scholars have necessary knowledge and skills to prevent and mitigate the adverse effects of key natural disasters.

UNICEF’s environmental footprint was reduced through efforts to minimise wastage of electricity, paper and other resources. The Mid-term Review (MTR) of the Moldova Country Programme in early 2015 will provide an opportunity to review environmental sustainability as part of joint UN efforts within Delivering as One.

Effective Leadership

UNICEF Moldova established and used a number of instruments, mechanisms and oversight processes to ensure appropriate functioning, reduce risks and monitor relevant indicators in 2014.

Following an off-site audit in June 2013 by the Office of Internal Audit and Investigation and report on actions in 2013 and early 2014, the case was closed in 2014, with all six actions recommended by the Office of Internal Audit and Investigation (medium risk) fully implemented.

The Rolling Management Plan of 2013-2014 was further amended in 2014 – adjusted to the changes in staffing, functions, and programme work plans – and adopted for 2014-2015. A comprehensive document guiding Country Management Team (CMT) and senior management, it clearly defines objectives and priorities, staff responsibilities, statutory meetings and committees, including collaboration within the UN family. Along with management indicators, close monitoring of different committees as per plan allowed continuous improvement in their functioning.

In addition to the Management Plan, the Office Emergency Preparedness, Risk Profile and Business Continuity Plans are instruments that were updated and monitored continuously. The risk of possible programme delays due to elections by end-November 2014 received close attention; mitigation actions were undertaken to ensure implementation before the election date.

A number of mechanisms, especially the monthly CMTs and bi-weekly programme meetings, were used to improve UNICEF Moldova’s work processes. Based on the new InSight system, regional monthly reports and reports generated internally, the management indicators were reviewed on a regular basis at CMT and programme meetings. The improved and adjusted Risk Profile and Action Plan were subject of discussion and follow-up at several CMTs. CMT meeting discussions were summarised and shared with all staff. Additional work flows for institutional and individual contracting processes, travel preparation and Contracts Review Committee functions were adopted to facilitate and accelerate procedures for effective programme implementation. The new Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) procedures were introduced, with assistance from Headquarters (HQ) and Regional Office (RO) visitors. Statutory committees are in place, in line with UNICEF rules, to provide oversight on contracts, recruitment and asset management. The weekly wrap-up and planning meetings were
continued in 2014, involving information-sharing and collective planning and awareness on all important events and activities by UNICEF staff. Monthly all-staff meetings and regular quarterly Joint Consultative Committee meetings were held to follow up on important staff concerns and address them accordingly.

While smooth functioning was ensured by travel and leave plans and relevant designation of Officers in Charge, there were numerous activities to ensure improved capacity both at professional and general services level, both for improved performance and opportunities for further career growth. Training of staff in managing for performance, peer counselling, and emergency Information Communication Technologies (ICT) was organised with support of the RO/HQ.

Financial Resources Management

UNICEF Moldova management regularly reviews donor contributions, budget allotments and constraints and financial procedures and cash assistance to ensure smooth programme implementation. The CMT monitors performance on key indicators: Regular Resources were spent at least 92 per cent, 100 per cent of donor funds were used within expected timeframes, and UNICEF Moldova had no outstanding Direct Cash Transfers (DCTs) over nine months.

In terms of financial resources management, UNICEF Moldova has achieved programmatic and operational results within the planned resources, registering an overall expenditure rate of 92 per cent against regular resources and 89 per cent against other resources. All expiring Programme Budget Allotments were 99 per cent expended.

Vision tools such as InSight portal, management reports, the results assessment module, country and regional dashboards as well as SAP-generated reports for regular monitoring of financial and other assets, were all utilized. These mechanisms, together with clear accountabilities and good, ongoing communication with partners resulted in having only US$9,686 in outstanding DCTs over six months, in line with UNICEF financial management standards (1 per cent).

UNICEF Moldova consistently uses policies and procedures under the HACT, aligned with other UN agencies, conducting micro-assessments of counterparts and partners, and jointly determining risk levels and mitigating strategies. Training on the 2014 HACT guidelines was provided to management through a CEE/CIS Regional HACT Training in Chisinau; UNICEF Moldova staff also benefited from expertise and consultancies of HQ experts.

Regular review and monitoring of weekly, monthly and quarterly bases of management indicators and funds utilisation reports by the CMT and budget focal point were an important mechanism for timely and responsive management of funds and identification of corrective measures to be taken.

Improved monthly cash forecasting resulted in better planning in terms of funds availability and streamlining of payment process, as well as on-time reporting and bank reconciliation.

Fund-raising and Donor Relations

In 2014 UNICEF Moldova continued further strengthening and extending donors relations, establishing new ones, and focusing on fundraising, effective implementation and reporting on provided donor funds.
UNICEF Moldova was instrumental in supporting National Committees and their donors for communicating on programmes implemented in Moldova. UNICEF hosted two Dutch Lottery teams, as well as Dutch, Belgian, Spanish and French National Committees’ communications staff, media and celebrities who widely broadcast the situation and UNICEF Moldova's achievements.

As in other middle-income countries, the pool of donors for Moldova is limited. However, new opportunities and efforts allowed UNICEF to receive new funding from several sources; the OAK Foundation, Swiss Government and Netherlands Government allocated funding for 2014 and beyond for Youth and Child Protection. Additionally, EU and Swiss Government support to the UN family for confidence-building measures allowed UNICEF to receive funding for joint health programmes on two banks of the Nistru River.

UNICEF Moldova had a number of bilateral meetings with the donor community for funding and leveraging resources for children. With very limited focus on areas of UNICEF’s mandate, and more preference for direct funding to the local civil society, which has grown in programming and implementation capacity, the existing donor community remains UNICEF’s ally in advocacy efforts to provide funding to civil society for effective programmes implemented with UNICEF’s inputs. The EU Delegation and the Swedish, British, and U.S. governments, as well as many others, are active contributors to UNICEF’s work.

UNICEF has discussed fundraising for joint UN projects and the Multi-Donor Trust Fund instrument.

While in 2013 the percentage of Other Resources funds raised against the ceiling was 37 per cent, in 2014 it has amounted to 60 per cent.

**Evaluation**

During the reporting period UNICEF Moldova participated in four multi-country programme evaluations. Key results were assessed in child protection, justice for children, ECD and child health. Several in-country missions took place during 2014; information collected and substantial inputs provided to the draft and final reports. The results of these evaluations will be shared at the country level in 2015. An additional multi-country evaluation, on the Young People’s Media Network Initiative, provided UNICEF Moldova the opportunity to assess investments in increasing young people’s capacity to advocate for child rights through the media. Participation in these evaluations enabled UNICEF to evaluate programmes in a cost-effective manner.

In line with 2014-2015 International Measurement Evaluation Programme, UNICEF Moldova initiated one stand-alone evaluation of HIV/AIDS services for the most-at-risk adolescents and youth. This end-of-project evaluation, funded by the Dutch NatCom, was begun in 2014; the report will be available in 2015.

In 2014 the Evaluation Office in New York made an independent assessment of the quality of all evaluations conducted in 2013 at global level. An evaluation of a Joint UN project on ‘Strengthening the national statistical system in Moldova’ was included on the list of the best UNICEF evaluations. As part of the management response, joint work of UN agencies on addressing existing challenges in producing and using good quality disaggregated data in evidence-based policies continued in 2014. A new joint programme is in the planning stage.
Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings

The Table of Authority was updated on 6 August 2014 with appropriate delegation of authority signed by relevant staff as per financial and administrative policy.

Throughout the year, UNICEF continued to benefit from UN-agreed long-term agreements (LTAs) for in-country transportation and fuel supply, institutional translation and printing services, as well as extensive use of rosters for individual translation, editing, photography, travel agents and hotel directory. These arrangements helped increase efficiency and reduce transaction costs through economies of scale.

The implications of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review for UNICEF Moldova were transformed from a Business Operations Strategy into a one-year Work Plan developed by UN Moldova Operations Management Team, under the lead of UNICEF. The Work Plan is focused on optimising current business practices by using LTAs, rosters and the One UN platform to share information and data and further strengthen linkages and cooperation between UN agencies, especially in supporting and assisting specialised agencies with limited presence and resources.

Supply Management

UNICEF Moldova continued to provide in-country support related to procurement of vaccines through the Global Alliance for Vaccine Initiative (GAVI) on behalf of the National Centre for Public Health. The planned amount for 2014 for vaccines totalled US$795,770. UNICEF also placed an order for cold chain equipment (total value of US$75,511) to ensure proper vaccine storage and distribution in the Transnistrian region.

UNICEF updated the internal business process for institutional services to include an internal time log document.

Following internal review of ICT compliance, UNICEF undertook procurement of new ICT equipment required for normal office functions through a direct order under existing LTAs, for a total value of US$16,729. Local procurement of ICT hardware is not the best option due to the developing local market, uncompetitive prices and difference between UNICEF ICT standards, compared to offshore procurement. This is applicable as well to procurement of programme supplies: the local market cannot ensure the necessary quantity and quantity of the goods needed for programme implementation.

In accordance with Moldovan law and relevant procedures, UNICEF has to apply for granting of humanitarian status and/or tax exemption for each import of programme/emergency supplies. In 2014, the Customs Service was issuing all necessary clearance/tax exempting documentation within three days from submission, and no delays were encountered through the year.

Throughout 2014 seven contracts above the country threshold of US$30,000 were submitted to local Contracts Review Committee with a total value of US$396,232. Signed minutes with recommendations were submitted for review and approved within three days.

Security for Staff and Premises

UNICEF Moldova is committed to applying UNICEF and UN security standards and procedures to ensure the security of staff and programmes. It participated in regular UN Security Management Team meetings during 2014, with briefings on the security situation in the country and Transnistria region, security incidents and updates on Minimum Operational Residential
Security Standards and Security Risk Assessment for Moldova. Security level two for Moldova and level three for Transnistria were approved by the Security Management Team in February 2014.

In October, a new UN Department of Safety and Security regional Security Adviser was appointed for Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus. Given the recent situation in Ukraine, the Security Plan was changed to include the route through Romania instead of Kiev and updates were added to the Armed Conflict and Civil Unrest sections. No major changes were recorded for travel advisory and security clearance systems for in-country trips.

Staff members were advised on preventive measures and the Ebola situation worldwide. All new UN personnel received a security briefing from the Country Security Focal Point.

The Business Continuity Plan and Early Warning Early Action portals were updated in 2014. UN security phone tree and radio checks were conducted five times, with UNICEF participation, including two satellite phones checks, one fire alarm test and one evacuation drill.

**Human Resources**

UNICEF Moldova continued a policy of investing in staff through strategic training and networking opportunities. Staff participated actively in regional networks, through virtual media and participation in webinars through Lync.

Performance management is undertaken systematically, with clear deadlines for Performance Appraisal System task definition and discussions monitored by the CMT. All staff had at least two performance-related discussions during the year. Training on Managing Performance for Results (MP4R) was organised for all staff by the Regional Office Human Resources Specialist. The Operations Manager was trained within MP4R Training to trainers on MP4R as CEE/CIS regional resource person.

UNICEF is committed to active participation in UN Cares, and in 2014 the HIV focal point (also post-exposure prophylaxis custodian) conducted an informative activity during and all-staff meeting on HIV epidemics in the country, means of transmission and 10 UN Care standards, and on the Post-Exposure Prophylaxis kit.

During 2014 a staff member (ICT Assistant) was trained on satellite connectivity as part of emergency risk management and response and has participated in face-to-face training on emergency telecommunication. All staff completed Basic and Advanced Security in the Field online courses.

UNICEF Moldova applied UNICEF’s Human Resources policies on learning days (four of 27 staff utilised the regional practice of 10 learnings days), flexi-time, compressed working hours and working from home, yielding highly positive results.

The results of 2014 local and regional staff surveys were discussed during the all-staff meeting and at the staff retreat. The training on Positive Communication was organised for all staff by a specialised training company. During the staff retreat presentations and group discussions took place on issues raised in the surveys, and solutions and concrete steps to be undertaken were discussed.
UNICEF Moldova migrated from Lotus Notes to Outlook smoothly, with no disruption to work.

Access to the corporate email, documents, calendars and contacts improved with easy-to-use Outlook Web App and cross-platform smartphone apps. The Cloud-based Office Suite improved effectiveness and efficiency in elaboration, sharing and access to documents between staff members and partners outside UNICEF. The new conferencing tool (Lync), which provides instant messaging, webinars and online meetings with screen-sharing options, and voice or video conferencing for anyone, including non-UNICEF users, is a great cooperation tool that allows staff members to collaborate with outside partners from all around the world.

UNICEF Moldova is present on all main social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, country website) that, together with traditional media, represent important tools for the promotion and realisation of child rights in the country through awareness-raising, information, advocacy and behaviour-change campaigns. All these tools were used extensively for the promotion of child rights. A special campaign in 2014 was dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the CRC. The campaign’s messages were widely promoted in social media, reaching national and international audiences and further promoted on UNICEF’s regional and global websites.

UNICEF reduced its ICT footprint by migrating to Cloud-based Office Suite services, which allowed discontinuation of the old Lotus Notes mail server. Additionally, other services will be migrated to the Office 365 software suite to standardise and ease user experience, as well as decreasing the use of resources.

**Programme Components from RAM**

**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:**
To address disparities in access to quality education, health, protection and justice UNICEF worked with the Government of Moldova to strengthen the enabling environment. Landmark steps were taken to improve the policy and legal framework for children’s protection from violence and abuse, including: the National Child Protection Strategy 2014-2020, approved this year, and a national inter-sectoral mechanism to refer cases of violence and neglect between social sectors and the police. UNICEF provided support to the roll-out and costing of these measures. With UNICEF’s support, a law governing Moldova’s independent human rights institutions was adopted by the Parliament in April 2014, ensuring the independence of a separate ombudsperson for children. Unfortunately selection was delayed due to parliamentary elections.

In education, the policy and legal framework for inclusive and quality education for all children was consolidated in a new Code of Education and sector strategy: Education 2020. Responding to assessments showing that parents’ competencies and skills are quite low, UNICEF, the Government of Moldova and GPE partners this year drafted a cross-sectoral strategy on parenting for children aged 0-to-18. The strategy will be finalised and implemented in 2015.

Improving the availability and quality of services, facilities and information for vulnerable children...
across sectors was a major focus of the programme, mainly achieved by capacity building, using 'models' to demonstrate new approaches, providing evidence and facilitating horizontal knowledge exchanges with other countries in the region. Investments in improved monitoring will continue to strengthen the ability of UNICEF, the Government of Moldova and partners to track progress in reducing disparities and ending exclusion and abuse.

Following a UNICEF study on foster care services in 2013, foster care regulations and minimum standards were revised to align them with international standards. Steady progress is being made in ensuring children’s right to a family environment, reflected by a 67 per cent reduction in the number of institutionalised children since 2006. Stakeholders across the justice system continued to receive in-service training, and UNICEF’s model for diversion of children with ‘anti-social’ behaviour – based on inter-sectoral cooperation and specialised services – is beginning to change the treatment of children in conflict with the law. A set of ‘justice for children’ indicators were agreed, based on UNICEF’s 15 global juvenile justice indicators and others related to child victims of crimes.

To reduce under-nutrition in children and pregnant women due to lack of iron and folate, UNICEF assisted the Government in capacity building for local production of fortified flour and coordinated technical support from the Kazakh Association of Millers and Food Fortification Initiative. Continued capacity building and advocacy is needed to ensure implementation and availability of the products. UNICEF continued its efforts aimed at improving the quality of services provided to pregnant women, new-borns and children in the Transnistrian region, training health professionals from maternities of the region and facilitating improvements to cold-chain supplies.

The capacity of the national network of Youth-Friendly Health Centres to prevent and test for HIV was supported with new national guidelines and in-service training. Counselling and referral systems for at-risk adolescents were bolstered. Since the MICS showed high rates of substance abuse among adolescents, this is expected to be an area of increased focus. Monitoring systems, including software and training, were improved.

The education sector modelled new approaches for the inclusion of children with disabilities, integrating rehabilitation services into five mainstream pre-schools, so that children can receive specialised services while receiving an education with their peers. A model for childcare for children aged 0-to-3 was successfully developed with communities. Evaluation and costing is planned for 2015, before advocacy for national scale-up.

National scale-up of best practices saw the training of 320 early education mentors across the country. The mentors reached 86 per cent of pre-school teachers and provided direct coaching support to near half of them (46 per cent). Due to this initiative, 75,000 young children demonstrated improved cognitive and non-cognitive skills. In homes, a guide for working with parents of young children (0-to-7) was used by nearly 1,000 community teams to strengthen parent’s competencies and skills. Monitoring shows that mothers and fathers are applying the new skills.

Continuous efforts to reduce disparities in access to education saw renewed efforts in Roma communities, resulting in one community agreeing to send some children to school. Capacity-development activities, combined with continuous communication targeting of parents and teachers, yielded a two-fold increase in the number of children with special educational needs attending regular schools and a continuous decrease at special schools. A reported 1,321 young children with special education needs were mainstreamed into regular preschool groups.
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 National Child Protection Strategy 2014-2020 was approved this year, an important step toward protecting Moldova's children from violence and abuse. In addition, a national inter-sectoral mechanism was established to refer cases of violence and neglect among the police, and the social welfare, health and education sectors. National roll-out of the mechanism started with UNICEF support to five districts and has currently reached 13 out of 37 districts, with support from NGO partners. A costing study by UNICEF led to the inclusion of community-level child protection specialists in the Medium-term Budgetary Framework, but by end-2014 only a few positions had been filled.

Steady progress was made in ensuring children’s right to a family environment, with a 67 per cent reduction in the number of institutionalised children since 2006. Following a UNICEF study on foster care services in 2013, the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family (MoLSPF) revised foster care regulations and minimum standards to align them with international standards. UNICEF presented recommendations from its childcare assessment in the Transnistrian region, and recent developments show that these are being taken on board by the local authorities.

The National Council on the Protection of Child Rights convened roundtables to discuss important cross-sectoral issues with district administrations. It also successfully established a multi-sector working group on deinstitutionalisation to ensure a comprehensive approach to the remaining challenges. The Council also organised a visit to one residential institution, which initiated the process of integrating children into local schools.

In a bid to increase access of vulnerable youth to relevant social services, five youth centres in Chisinau are improving their services as a result of having shared experiences with organisations from Ukraine, Romania and other towns in Moldova, and through improved child participation. The aim is to become more appealing to young people and to better support services and referral. By year-end, the 40 trained caregivers had reached over 300 adolescents with centre-based activities and through outreach.

To improve social protection for vulnerable families with children, UNICEF facilitated South-South cooperation with Lithuania, resulting in a Cooperation Agreement between the respective social welfare ministries. The collaboration is particularly aimed at systemic changes for more effective social assistance delivery.

Moldova is making an important step in UNCRPD implementation by switching from an evaluation of disability based on pathology to one on functioning. Upon UNICEF’s advocacy and technical assistance, a road map was drafted for using the ICF-CY for assessment of child disability.

OUTPUT 2 Community Empowerment

Analytical Statement of Progress:
The capacity of Moldova’s justice system to respect and promote child rights is steadily improving, with a focus on strengthening the legal basis for applying child-friendly procedures and alternatives to detention. Stakeholders across the system, including criminal investigators, prosecutors, defence lawyers, judges and probation counsellors continue to receive in-service training using the juvenile justice manual developed by UNICEF Moldova in 2012. For example,
between 2013 and 2014 the National Institute of Justice alone organised 25 training seminars for over 600 justice staff.

The way cases are assigned, however, remains arbitrary; as a result many children do not benefit from child-sensitive proceedings. Services to support diversion remain scarce and assessments of each child to find the best solution for their reintegration are limited. UNICEF’s model for diversion of children with ‘anti-social’ behaviour, based on inter-sectoral cooperation and specialised services is beginning to change this. The model, implemented in five districts, was adopted by one district and is under finalisation in the remaining four. Over 200 children, both below and above the age of criminal responsibility, and their parents benefited from these services. In several cases children in conflict with the law benefited from mediation services by one of the 20 mediators trained nationwide. These successes, combined with results from current research on prevention services for children in conflict with the law (and at risk), will be used for further advocacy.

The multi-sectoral technical working group on justice for children coordinated by the MoJ remains a key actor in justice reform, with consistent support from UNICEF Moldova. Based on UNICEF’s legal assessment, it has proposed several changes in the regulatory framework related to juvenile justice, such as on the length of pre-trial detention for children. It has also successfully advocated for amendment of the Penal Procedure Code on child victim-friendly interviewing, approved by Parliament in July 2014, limiting the number of interviews to be held with child-victims and regulating the status of the ‘interviewer’. Finally, it recently drafted a set of justice for children indicators to be recognised across institutions to enable harmonised data collection and analysis, based on UNICEF’s 15 global juvenile justice indicators as well as indicators related to child victims of crimes.

With UNICEF’s support, a law governing Moldova’s independent human rights institutions was adopted by the Parliament in April 2014, ensuring the independence of a separate ombudsperson for children. Unfortunately the selection of an ombudsperson was delayed due to parliamentary elections.

OUTPUT 3 Community Empowerment

Analytical Statement of Progress:

To promote children’s right to health, UNICEF is working with the Government of Moldova to reduce different forms of under-nutrition. Mandatory flour fortification with iron and folic acid was approved in 2011 and over the past year, based on revised technical regulations, UNICEF assisted the Government in capacity building of civil servants, millers, laboratory staff and other professionals involved in production and quality assurance of fortified flour. In this regard, two study visits to Kazakhstan and a follow-up workshop in Chisinau were organised in collaboration with the Kazakh Association of Millers and Food Fortification Initiative. Continued capacity building and advocacy is needed to ensure implementation and availability of the products.

UNICEF continued efforts aimed at improving the quality of perinatal care services provided to pregnant women and new-borns in the Transnistrian region. As a result of training organised this year, health professionals from the four largest maternities of the region possess better knowledge and improved practical skills for delivering quality services. To standardise the quality of services delivered to pregnant women and new-borns, clinical protocols for major perinatal diseases were printed and disseminated to all obstetricians and neonatologists.
Additionally, health managers from all seven maternities learnt how to use the BABIES (Birth Weight and Age at death Boxes for an Intervention and Evaluation System) tool to analyse major causes of perinatal mortality.

UNICEF supported the revision of the “Future Mother’s Guide” and its translation into Russian, providing information to young women from the Transnistrian region and their families on pregnancy and how to take care of new-borns and themselves in the post-partum period. The guide was printed and handed over to medical facilities in the Transnistrian region, to be provided to all pregnant women during the next two years. These activities will be complimented by other communication outreach efforts under development.

Following a comprehensive assessment of cold chain needs in the Transnistrian region, UNICEF identified a list of needed cold-chain equipment and launched the procurement process, so that proper storage and high quality of available vaccines is ensured in all medical facilities of the Transnistrian region. This support targets a vulnerable group of children. To better inform current and future policies related to perinatal care, nutrition and immunisation of children, UNICEF supported three studies and assessments, including in the Transnistrian region, which will be also useful for targeted advocacy.

OUTPUT 4 Community Empowerment

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF supported the provision of quality services for adolescents through Youth Friendly Health Centres in all 35 districts and two municipalities. Over 130,000 adolescent boys and girls benefited from youth-friendly health services (YFHS) in 2013, through the provision of integrated services and information on STI/HIV, unwanted pregnancy, mental health and substance abuse; 15 per cent were high-risk and especially vulnerable adolescents. YFHCs provided more than 97,000 interventions.

In 2014 UNICEF focused on strengthening the services provided by the YFHC network. The “Guideline on provision of HIV testing and counselling (HTC) services for adolescents” with special focus on most at-risk and especially vulnerable adolescents (MARA, EVA) was approved by the Council of the Ministry of Health. In addition, the in-service curriculum on provision of YFHS was approved by the State Medical University and piloted in 2014. To improve monitoring across the network, custom software was developed and tested, and training provided to 40 specialists and managers of YFHCs through capacity building events and supportive supervision visits. As a result, up-to-date, reliable data is becoming available and can be used to develop targeted, equitable policies.

More than 100 service providers (NGOs and YFHC) improved their knowledge and ability to work in HIV prevention, including testing and referral, in accordance with the guideline on provision HTC for adolescents. Moreover, around 100 specialists improved their skills in provision of youth-friendly health services, including counselling, in accordance with quality standards for adolescents in the areas of sexual and reproductive health and mental health, including mental and behavioural disorders.

To provide cross-sectoral services better tailored to the needs of MARA and EVA, 50 staff from local public authorities in five districts (Orhei, Donduseni, Orhei, Ungheni and Ribnita) strengthened their capacities and improved local referral systems for at-risk and vulnerable adolescents. Additionally, 50 outreach volunteers improved their skills in reaching MARA and
EVA and disseminated informational materials among them. As a result, almost 1,000 at risk adolescents were tested for HIV.

**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:**
UNICEF continued its support to the Government for promoting inclusive education of children with disabilities. Traditional and social media campaigns continued, encouraging parents to enrol children with special needs into mainstream schools. Positive practices and human interest stories on inclusive education were continuously presented through TV talk shows and debates, as well as print media. Several Moldovan celebrities joined the communication campaign on inclusive education, promoting social and school inclusion of children with limited physical and mental abilities.

To address social norms around physical punishment of children, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education in strengthening the capacities of primary school teachers in Chisinau and Causeni districts to promote positive parenting messages. A campaign in social media was initiated; a special Facebook page dedicated to parenting was created, and gained 1,370 followers. The page provided practical information to parents on how to discipline their children without violence. Local celebrities (journalists, writers, singers, bloggers, actors) were involved in promoting positive parenting messages, and TV and radio talk shows on national stations were used to inform parents about non-violent parenting.

UNICEF also continued to support the identification, registration, assistance and referral of cases of child abuse, neglect and exploitation through the education system. Representatives of the education sector from all districts are now better able to recognise, register and refer cases of child abuse, following training and coaching activities. In the period between January and May, 6,282 cases of child abuse were identified by teachers; 5,824 of which were resolved through involvement by educational institutions, while 458 cases were referred to legal or social sectors.

**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 2014 UNICEF continued supporting the Government of Moldova in its efforts to increase access of children with disabilities and special educational needs and Roma children to mainstream education through advocacy, capacity development, knowledge generation, and modelling and community mobilisation.

Based on lessons learned from Bulgaria and Serbia under horizontal cooperation established through a UNICEF initiative, and as a result of advocacy, capacity development and community mobilisation, central and local education authorities and Roma parents succeeded in mainstreaming Roma children from Vulcanesti segregated school into the neighbouring school in Cioresti.

Support was provided for strengthening the capacity of psycho-pedagogical assistance services at central and district levels to support inclusion of children with special educational needs in regular schools. All 238 staff of the services were trained and provided with tools for child
development assessment and support for inclusion in mainstream schools. The 166 members of school multidisciplinary teams and managers of all 83 schools from three districts were supported with training for the implementation of inclusive education, identification and referral of children, use of resources and collaboration with psycho-pedagogical assistance services.

Inclusion of children with disabilities in regular schools was promoted through a continuous communication campaign targeting teachers and parents.

Capacity building and communication helped increase the share of parents accepting children with disabilities in regular pre-schools to 40 per cent.

Two Rehabilitation Centres for children with disabilities were set up in Nisporeni and Ceadir-Lunga and 130 professionals, parents and local government representatives benefited from training on inclusive education, supporting the social inclusion of 59 children with disabilities.

The renovation of 25 preschools ensured social inclusion and access to early education for 1,100 vulnerable children.

Modelling of services for children under three in 10 targeted communities ensured access to quality early learning and care services for up to 200 young children. The community-driven development approach facilitated direct involvement and ownership by beneficiaries and was essential to ensure the sustainability of newly created services. Availability of such services, in addition to ensuring a child’s full development, can also significantly improve the ability of women to get and stay employed.

Capacity development activities, in synergy with continuous communication targeting parents and teachers, yielded a two-fold increase in the number of children with special educational needs in regular schools and a continuous decline in this number at special schools. About 1,321 young children with SEN were mainstreamed into regular preschool groups.

**OUTPUT 7** By 2017, education authorities at national and local levels apply new quality education standards for improved teaching skills, learning environment and learning outcomes in ways which reduce disparities.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
The new Code of Education and sector strategy Education 2020, which place special focus on inclusive, quality and relevant education and lay the groundwork for further promotion of education reform, were approved in 2014.

UNICEF developed the concept note, draft cross-sectoral strategy on parenting and guide for working with parents in cooperation with line ministries, academia, civil society and the WB. The School Readiness Tool and Guide were approved by the National Curriculum Council, and 320 young boys and girls improved their performance due to their application. Sanitary and Hygiene Norms for preschools were developed, in consultation with line ministries and practitioners.

All district departments of education received guidance and started developing strategic and operational plans for educational development at the local level, with a focus on increased equity in access and outcomes.

UNICEF Moldova initiated a plan of action and training of school managers for the implementation of quality standards from the perspective of child-friendly schools.
Support was also provided for strengthening the capacity of 45 resource persons from all education faculties and teacher training colleges, in-service teacher training institutions and NGOs, including 35 people responsible for inclusive education in districts and 100 teachers from 39 schools on child-centred education. The 380 national mentors trained on child-centred education ensured transfer of knowledge to 9,815 pre-school teachers, inspectors and managers. A large number of pre-school teachers took advantage of group (7,213) and individual (4,192) mentoring, benefiting 75,000 young children.

All 238 staff of district level psycho-pedagogical assistance services were trained, and participate now in child development assessment, as well as making recommendations and supporting children with special educational needs in mainstream schools. A total of 105 teaching supervisors from all district departments of education strengthened their capacity to supervise and support teachers implementing individual educational plans.

To improve the school environment, 105 district-level specialists – 35 for primary education, 35 for civic education and 35 for education activities – were trained on violence prevention and its integration into the school curriculum.

Training on inclusive ECD and work with parents was delivered to 926 cross-sectoral community teams, comprising 2,529 preschool teachers, medical staff and social workers from all rural localities.

UNICEF supported monitoring of innovation at local level. For instance, 40 key mentors monitored group and individual mentoring trainings and changes in practices, concluding that 1,020 caregivers, including fathers, apply positive parenting practices.

**OUTPUT 8** Capacity building of partners at national and community level in assessing community vulnerability and support in developing at least 2 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 mainstreaming the DRR concept in the education sector and provided a number of recommendations to be included in the sector strategy (Education 2020), enhancing schools’ preparedness and children’s participation in reducing vulnerability to disaster risk. Informational materials were distributed in schools to ensure that both staff and scholars have the necessary knowledge and skills to prevent and mitigate the adverse effects of natural disasters.

With the conclusion of the initiative, new avenues for incorporating DRR into UNICEF Moldova’s programmes and advocacy will be explored during the Mid-Term Review in 2015.

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

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Governance and budgets for child rights:
In 2013 the Government continued efforts to improve the situation of children in Moldova and fulfilment of child rights through the development and approval of key normative and policy documents, which also addressed funding and budgeting issues.
A National Decentralisation Strategy and Action Plan were adopted. UNICEF supported line ministries, through experts and advice, to elaborate sectoral decentralisation strategies for education and social services. A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the new strategy was also developed, to measure decentralisation progress and its impact on the most disadvantaged population.

Government capacity in the area of public finance management has been continuously strengthened. UNICEF provided technical support to help line ministries prioritise and defend actions that benefit the most marginalised children during budget negotiations with the Ministry of Finance. As a result, the Inclusive Education Programme was included in the Medium-Term Budgetary Framework of the MoE, and co-payments for visits to physicians (including children) were abolished by the MoH.

UNICEF and the World Bank jointly advocated for maintaining the current level of budget allocations for family and child allowances, in the context of the consolidation of cash assistance programmes. This mitigated the risk of a decline in the remaining safety net available to families with children who have lost access to other payments due to ongoing social protection reforms, leading to reducing inequities.

UNICEF supported the Government in addressing the CRC committee observations on implementation of the Optional Protocol from September 2013, and will assist the Government in preparations for CRC reporting due in early 2015.

Transforming social norms for inclusion and positive parenting:
UNICEF addressed social perceptions of children with disabilities through information and awareness-raising activities. A participatory qualitative research in three Roma populated communities to assess social and institutional barriers for Roma children and families to access social services is ongoing; resulting data is expected to influence development of interventions in the area of social and school inclusion in 2015.

To address social norms around physical punishment of children, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education to strengthen the capacities of 926 community teams to promote positive parenting messages at the local level. A campaign in social media was initiated, with a Facebook page dedicated to parenting created, currently followed by 1,370 people. Local celebrities were involved in promoting positive parenting messages, and TV and radio talk shows on national stations were used to inform parents about non-violent parenting. An innovative partnership with a national mobile communication provider was initiated to promote positive parenting practices through the use of text messages.

To better understand social norms influencing physical punishment of children, a qualitative assessment was conducted. Initial findings show that parents justify the use of violent methods to discipline children by the fact they never learned other ways of imposing discipline. Some parents also truly believe in physical punishment. Many parents, however, would like to avoid violent practices, if they were aware of alternatives. Research data will be shared with relevant stakeholders at the beginning of 2015 and will be used for further planning in prevention of violence against children and promotion of non-violent parenting.

Engaging partners for child rights promotion
Children’s participation and right to expression was promoted across traditional and social media. A network of young bloggers participated in media events and awareness-raising initiatives, leading to higher awareness on parenting skills, violence, HIV prevention and social
exclusion of marginalised children. Videos produced by vulnerable and under-privileged adolescents were produced as part of the ‘One-Minute Juniors’ workshop and presented to Parliament members.

UNICEF continued to explore strategic partnerships with media by supporting the Child-Friendly Journalists Network, aiming to improve media’s capacity to report on child rights and respect ethical standards. UNICEF’s advocacy efforts led to the development and official approval of the Regulations on Effective Communication with Media by partner ministries. Capacity building for the ministries was organised by the Association of Independent Press (AIP). Guided by UNICEF and AIP, the Broadcasting Coordination Council undertook monitoring of child rights on TV and concluded that journalists are more aware of ethical standards as compared to few years ago, and are more committed to respecting child rights.

OUTPUT 1 Community Empowerment

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF built the capacity of Parliamentary Commissions to mainstream child rights, equity and gender into policy, normative and legal documents. Policy recommendations, analytical reports and impact assessments were presented and discussed with key decision-makers and at public discussions organised around child-rights related issues. In addition, technical assistance was provided to line ministries on mid-term budgetary planning, to improve child-friendly budgeting. UNICEF and think-tank partners completed a costing exercise, resulting in institutionalisation of child protection specialist positions at local/community levels. An assessment of funding needs to implement the National Inclusive Education Programme was also completed.

Due to successful UNICEF advocacy, horizontal cooperation and long-term partnership between Moldovan and Lithuanian social protection ministries was established. Lithuanian partners presented a comprehensive approach to social sector reform: improvement of processes, data, administration, strengthening of human capacities, fund management, quality control etc. Good practices will be transferred and adjusted to the Moldovan context, with support from UNICEF and the Lithuanian Government.

Results of the Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey were publically disseminated in April, and the data is being widely used for policy, advocacy and programming by national and international partners. UNICEF provided technical assistance to local authorities in the Transnistrian region on MICS5 and capacity building through workshops and trainings. Finalisation of the MICS5 report was progressing well by end-2014, with continuous support from the UNICEF RO and HQ.

In cooperation with UNFPA, support was provided to the National Bureau of Statistics for conducting a quality assessment of the 2014 Moldova Population and Housing Census.

Challenges remain due to the lack of an integrated, holistic approach on structural reforms in the social domain, limited local capacity to generate evidence and to use data for policy analysis. These remain high priorities for UNICEF in the coming period.

OUTPUT 2 Children, families, media, civil society organizations and state institutions, through a national dialogue initiate change on key social norms around violence, child labour, separation of children from family environment and discrimination

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 civil society organisations and psychologists were periodically involved in public debates to explain the negative impact of social exclusion of children with disabilities and of child abuse on children and their families.

UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education and the Child Rights Information Centre in addressing the social norms on physical punishment of children in Causeni District and Chisinau Municipality. Some 150 primary school teachers received training and coaching to change their perceptions of child discipline, so that they become resource persons in the area of positive parenting at local level. A series of public events on parenting were organised in Causeni and in Chisinau with parents, teachers, psychologists and university teachers to stimulate debate around the issue of non-violent parenting. Journalists and bloggers were supported to write articles and posts to support positive parenting practices.

A partnership with a national mobile communication provider was initiated to promote positive parenting practices using mobile communication technologies and organise events for parents. A qualitative assessment on social norms that influence the physical punishment of children was conducted. The findings point to various social factors that influence whether parents adopt or avoid violent discipline practices. Research data will be shared with relevant stakeholders at the beginning of 2015 and used for further planning in prevention of violence against children and promotion of non-violent parenting.

A participatory qualitative research in three Roma populated communities (Soroca, Vulcanesti and Otaci) to assess social and institutional barriers for Roma children and families to accessing social services is ongoing, the resulting data is expected to influence the development of interventions in the area of social and school inclusion in 2015. Profiles of these communities were created (with demographic data and availability and use of services) to complement the qualitative research.

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:
Children’s participation and the right to expression was ensured through School of Young Bloggers - a vibrant network of 55 young bloggers, including from Transnistrian region. In 2014, the young bloggers actively participated in the press clubs, media field visits, and organised flash-mobs and other awareness-raising initiatives, leading to greater awareness about parenting skills, violence, HIV prevention and social exclusion of marginalised children.

Two ‘One-Minute Junior’ workshops, in Balti and Orhei, resulted in 27 compelling videos produced by vulnerable and under-privileged adolescents who gave voice to their struggles, ideas and aspirations. The short films about their lives were presented to Parliament members and local authorities.

UNICEF continued to support the Child-Friendly Journalists Network and improved media’s capacity to report on child rights and respect ethical standards. Three press clubs and one public debate were organised, resulting in more than 50 stories and nine investigations on child rights infringements. As a result of these media initiatives, a few cases of child rights violations were successfully resolved after intervention by national or local public authorities.
UNICEF’s advocacy efforts led to the development and official approval of ‘Regulations on Effective Communication with Media’ by the Ministries of Internal Affairs, Education, Labour, Social Protection and Family, and Health. Capacity building for the ministries was organised by the Association of Independent Press (AIP). Guided by UNICEF and AIP, the Broadcasting Coordination Council undertook monitoring of child rights on TV and concluded that journalists are more aware of ethical standards as compared to few years ago, and are more committed to respecting child rights.

A partnership with Moldova’s Football Association was established to increase child rights promotion through sports. Around 300 children with vulnerable backgrounds from all over the country watched a special football match, played equally, by boys and girls. The event served as the launch of the CRC@25 anniversary campaign, reviewing progress made in the lives of children and drawing public attention to the challenges they face.

Several public events, press clubs and talk shows were organised, such as the ‘Innovation for Equity’ Activate Talk involving celebrities and opinion leaders, which was broadcast on national television and live-streamed on a special global UNICEF web-portal. The campaign culminated in a special event on 20 November, when UNICEF gave awards to eight child rights champions in the country. The event was attended by high-level officials and attracted considerable media attention.

**OUTCOME 3** The component will support effective operations, country office management and administration, cross-sectoral and United Nations system activities, including monitoring and evaluation, as well as midterm reviews and programme documentation.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
Cross-sectoral activities have supported common activities by UN Moldova in areas such as promotion of human rights and joint communications. UNICEF contributed to work of the Human Rights advisor assigned to the Resident Coordinator’s office through OHCHR. Notable achievements of the joint work in 2013 include a report and action plan for the Transnistrian region by the Secretary-General’s Special Rapporteur on human rights; UNICEF-led successful joint advocacy on maintaining independence of the Ombudsperson for children’s rights; support to the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty during her visit, and making children’s rights and issues highly visible to the public and the Government; a joint visit to one Roma-populated community and successful advocacy to end the segregation of Roma children by enrolling them in school; support to preparations for the periodic review of Moldova by the Committee on the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, including, for the first time, the Transnistrian region of the country, thanks to partnership with a local NGO.

Joint communication activities resulted in the elaboration of joint advocacy messages on human rights and equity for the UN Country Team, under the Delivering as One and Communicating as One modality; organisation of the UN Human Rights Gala annual event in December, recognising individual activists and civil society organisations’ contributions to improving human rights in Moldova in 2013. The bilingual “UN Magazine” publication, issued quarterly, promoted the UN’s joint work with the general public, including the UNICEF-led national ‘ENDViolence’ campaign.

**OUTCOME 4** Effective and efficient programme management and operations support programme delivery
OUTPUT 1 Effective and efficient governance structures and systems to adequately manage risks and achieve programme results

Analytical Statement of Progress:

A number of improvements were made to ensure that governance, systems and internal control mechanisms are functioning well, mainly by reviewing and updating 2014-2015 Rolling Management Plan, 2014 Risk Profile and Checklist, 2014 statutory committees’ composition (primarily Country Management Team) and TORs.

The Table of Authority was revised and last updated on 6 August 2014 with appropriate delegation of authority signed by relevant staff as per financial and administrative policy.

With regard to security, the Business Continuity Plan and Early Warning Early Action portal were updated in 2014. UN security phone tree and radio checks were conducted five times with UNICEF participation, including two satellite phone checks, one fire alarm test and one evacuation drill.

Internal communication improved due to weekly status of work meetings, wrap-up meetings on every Friday, bi-weekly programme meetings and monthly CMTs with clear agenda and minutes with responsibilities and deadlines for actions, signed and circulated to all staff.

Throughout the year, the local IT system operated well. A review of IT equipment took place at the end of year and UNICEF migrated from Lotus Notes email to MS Outlook, reducing its ICT footprint by migrating to Cloud-based Office Suite services.

OUTPUT 2 Effective and efficient management and stewardship of financial resources and of other assets of the organization

Analytical Statement of Progress:

UNICEF Moldova reviews regularly its intranet inSight portal and dashboard to ensure that all alerts are addressed in due course. At year end the Regional Dashboard showed all main indicators to be on track, except one DCT with the Roma Education Fund that was outstanding over the six-month period (0.01 per cent, below the target of 1 per cent).

The Bank Optimisation portal was updated on at least a quarterly basis, and cash forecasts on a monthly and quarterly basis were compiled for efficient cash planning and use of financial resources. Bank reconciliation was completed within the terms of 2014 closure and bank reconciliation deadlines.

As per year-end closure of accounts instructions, UNICEF Moldova completed the schedules and uploaded them on DFAM SharePoint by reviewing and updating balances on main general ledger accounts.

To optimise ongoing work-processes and ensure that they reflect all necessary requirements, office workflows and internal business practices were reviewed for individual contractors, institutional contracts and travel, including lead time for each step. The review process took place with staff participation and information was circulated to all with appropriate guidance to links, templates and resource information.
**OUTPUT 3** Effective and efficient management of human capacity, including staff development and learning

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
In 2014 UNICEF Moldova recruited one admin/supply assistant on a temporary appointment to fill in a gap in the procurement assistance area, given the resignation of the FT post incumbent. At year-end, UNICEF’s structure included 28 fixed-term positions, three of which were vacant for more than three months.

UNICEF Moldova participated in a CEE-CIS region-wide exercise on process workflow and full-time employment review for Global Shared Service Centre.

With regard to staff-wellbeing, a staff retreat was organised in Vadul-lui-Voda (Moldova) during 27-29 November 2014, with one-day of training on positive communication and two days of group discussions and team exercises on several issues identified by recent staff morale survey conducted by Regional Office. Staff actively participated and were represented on all key committees.

UNICEF Moldova completed required 2013 PAS/e-PAS; staff have regular feedback discussions with managers and supervisors as part of 2014 PAS/e-PAS. All staff participated in a ‘Managing Performance for Results’ training facilitated by the Regional Office on 16-18 September 2014.

All staff were informed about the policy and use of flexi-time, working from home and learning days (four of 28 staff used the 10 learning days’ policy).

Attendance monitoring reporting and the leave plan were revised and updated to ensure smooth and updated records in VISION.

**Document Center**

**Evaluation**

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**Other Publication**

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