Executive Summary

In 2012, the Moldova Country Programme mobilised the Government and other partners to place greater focus on equity concerns. The resulting actions are making a difference in the lives of some of the most vulnerable children, including those without parental care, lacking access to early childhood education, living with disabilities and whose well-being is being threatened by maternal/childhood anaemia.

During the year, progress was made in child care reform, with continued declines in the number of children growing up in residential care. The de-institutionalisation targets set in 2007 were surpassed and the Government is now developing a new comprehensive strategy that will continue the reform and place further focus on community services. The Prime Minister's positive response to the UNICEF–OHCHR regional call to stop institutionalising children under three years of age was a major milestone this year, and is anticipated to be translated into concrete targets in the new strategy.

This was also a watershed year for inclusion of children with disabilities. The Programme on Inclusive Education was adopted. In the health sector, early detection and intervention for childhood disabilities was introduced. A new Law on the Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities was passed, following joint United Nations advocacy. These successes were underpinned by UNICEF-supported efforts to generate positive public dialogue on the inclusion of children with disability through interactions with the media, the private sector and other partners.

Significant progress was made in enhancing access to quality early childhood education, with work underway/completed on the opening 80 new pre-school facilities. While the local public authorities played a key role in these initiatives, their level of commitment needs to be more uniform. Efforts need to be made to support the capacity of the local authorities to develop and manage early childhood education and other social services to fully meet the needs of the most vulnerable.

Anaemia affects nearly one-third of pregnant women and children under the age of five years in Moldova. The Government’s decision that requires that all flour be fortified with iron and folic acid is thus critical. Several technical obstacles stand in the way, however, and efforts need to be made to ensure that all local and imported flour is indeed fortified during 2013.

Headway was made this year in making a difference for children in the breakaway Transnistrian region. Regional authorities are now undertaking a comprehensive Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey with UNICEF assistance, as well as a comprehensive assessment of the child care system in an important step towards equity, since institutionalisation rates are twice as high in the Transnistrian region than in the rest of Moldova.

Partnership with the World Bank (WB) facilitated progress in monitoring education reforms to address any negative impact on access. Dialogue with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and WB helped avoid policy recommendations with potential negative consequences for the poorest children and families. Collaboration with a European Union (EU) delegation helped leverage EU budget support for justice for children.

A new Country Programme was finalised in 2012, building on the new United Nations-Republic of Moldova Partnership Framework. A joint Moldova–United Nations Agency Action Plan was also put in place, with strengthened focus on equity, as well as improved United Nations coherence.

Country Situation as Affecting Children & Women

The election of a new President in the Republic of Moldova in March 2012 ended a long-standing political stalemate, and provided a more stable environment for advancing reforms and further pursuing Moldova’s European integration goals, auguring well for accelerating focus on child rights. Significant political changes also took place in the breakaway region of Transnistria, with a change in the de facto leadership for the first time in its 20-year history, opening new possibilities for cooperation and assistance.
In 2012, Moldova suffered the combined impacts of poor rainfall and extremely high temperatures leading to severe drought, with widespread reductions in crop yields and crop failures. The United Nations family assisted with impact assessment, and the government is taking action at the national and local levels to ensure food security, mitigate the impact on the most vulnerable population, including children, and help protect the agricultural and food processing sectors from long-term negative consequences.

Moldova managed to overcome the economic downturn to a large extent; the foundations of growth, however, remain shaky. Following GDP growth of 6.4 per cent in 2011, economic growth is expected at only 0.3 per cent in 2012, in part due to the adverse impact of drought. Remittance-fuelled consumption remains central to the expansion of the economy. Significant inequities between the urban and rural areas remain and remittances continue to be the major means of sustenance, especially for the rural areas, contributing to the continuously growing number of migrants. Over 100,000 children were left behind by migrant parents.

While the incidence of poverty, based on the national poverty line, has progressively reduced from 21.9 per cent in 2010 to 17.5 per cent in 2011, and poverty amongst families with children has also decreased, this indicator is much higher for larger families: In 2011, the rate of childless families living in poverty was 16 per cent compared to almost 37 per cent of families with three or more children.

Moldova is working hard to improve the quality of education, yet Moldovan children are still far behind their peers and the European standards that the country aspires to achieve. Despite the high share of GDP spent on education (8.4 per cent in 2011), the quality of education is still poor, with only 43 per cent of pupils being competent in reading, 39 per cent in mathematics, and 53 per cent in sciences (PISA 2009+ results), placing Moldova below the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average.

Significant declines in child population and the funds spent on oversized infrastructure and staff calls for education reform with the focus on quality, as well as optimisation of expenditures. School system reorganisation, however, may pose obstacles for many children to access schools (especially in the isolated rural areas), hence jeopardising national targets to ensure full access to general compulsory education.

The intermediary target for 2010 to increase the gross enrolment rate for compulsory general education to 95 per cent was already missed, making it challenging to achieve the target of 98 per cent by 2015. The only indicator where significant improvements have been achieved is the enrolment rate in pre-school education, which reached 80 per cent in 2011 (well above the target of 75 per cent).

Poor children, Roma children, children with special educational needs, and children living with HIV still face significant barriers in accessing quality education in mainstream schools, which require better regulation and improvements in institutional capacity and in addressing the social culture of intolerance—all of which remain priorities for UNICEF’s future support.

Infant and under-five mortality rates in Moldova are far lower than in other countries with similar GDP levels, and continue to decline. The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) reduced from 11.7 deaths per 1,000 live births to 10.9 deaths per 1,000 live births between 2010 and 2011. The Under-Five Mortality Rate (USMR) declined from 13.6 deaths per 1,000 live births to 13.4 deaths per 1,000 live births in the same period.

Child deaths in Moldova remain higher than in most European countries, mainly due to accidents and injuries. Children from poor families, large families and Roma children face a higher risk of mortality. The number of children under two years of age vaccinated against measles has not seen a significant improvement (92.8 per cent in 2011). Bottlenecks remain with regard to access to immunisation services for children from certain groups (Roma population, religious groups), due to vulnerability and limited access to information.

Moldova continues fighting HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. In 2011, the incidence of HIV infection was 17.6 cases per 100,000 people, but higher among the youth (18.46 per 100,000 people in the 15–24 age group) and especially those in the breakaway region of Transnistria (45.29 per 100,000 people).

The Mother-to-Child Transmission rate of HIV was at 1.6 per cent at the end of 2011 (better than the 2 per
cent target), but close supervision of children born to HIV-positive mothers needs to be maintained, especially for vulnerable families. A major adverse effect for the HIV-affected population (especially children and adolescents) is social exclusion, stemming from intolerant attitudes and stigma in society.

Moldova has registered significant progress in childcare reform. The overall rate of children living in public care decreased from 1,927 per 100,000 children in 2010 to 1,904 per 100,000 children in 2011. Furthermore, family-based alternatives are increasingly being used and are steadily overtaking residential care. Nevertheless, more than 4,400 children still live in residential institutions and further progress is challenged by a number of factors, including but not limited to stigma for children with disabilities, the low capacity of the local authorities to plan and budget for services and the low professional capacities of social workers. The ongoing reform has not yet benefitted children in Transnistria, where the rates of institutionalisation are estimated to be twice as high compared to the rest of Moldova.

Children in contact with the law are high on the Government’s agenda. The Justice Sector Reform Strategy and the Action Plan (2011–2016) include a separate Justice for Children chapter. The number of crimes committed by minors has been in constant decline, dropping to 1,262 cases in 2011, while the number of children sentenced by court declined by 20 per cent in comparison with 2010. The proportion of imprisonment sentences has not changed significantly, constituting 18 per cent; at the same time, however, probation and unpaid community work were used as alternative measures to detention in 76 per cent of cases in 2011.

**Country Programme Analytical Overview**

During this final year of the 2007–2012 Country Programme, UNICEF programming and advocacy contributed to significant gains in the overall legal and policy environment for children, increased awareness on children’s rights and improved quality of services. It supported the development and eventual adoption of legislative measures (such as penal code amendments in line with the Lanzarote Convention on the protection of children against sexual abuse and exploitation) and the implementation of sector reforms, provision of evidence for policy development, monitoring and evaluation, as well as strengthened capacity of partners.

Strong partnerships with the government, development partners and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) resulted in significant progress in child care reform, child-sensitive social protection and justice for children, which will also remain high on the agenda in the new 2013–2017 Country Programme.

The Moldova Country Office (MCO) identified several areas where joint work in all programme sections brought significant results, such as in the Government’s commitment to end the institutionalisation of all children under three years of age, as well as expanding work with adolescents in the new programme. Communication for Development (C4D) contributed significantly to all aspects of the Country Office’s activities and will be further enhanced, making use of technologies and social networking for stronger advocacy and outreach (including the e-Governance initiative).

In addition, an emerging area, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) was mainstreamed into all aspects of the Country Programme and a pilot project was initiated in 2012. These efforts are complementary and contributing to the overall efforts on disaster risk reduction, prevention and recovery by the United Nations country team in Moldova.

In 2012, the Government adopted the National Decentralisation Strategy and Action Plan, and UNICEF supported the Ministries of Education and Labour, Social Protection and Family in the elaboration and defining of the respective sector strategies. UNICEF will continue to strengthen the decentralized approach to programme implementation in order to harmonise the wider efforts in the country and better target and support the places where disadvantaged children are not being reached.

New opportunities for cooperation in the breakaway Transnistrian region were acted upon in 2012, resulting in UNICEF partnering with the local public authorities and NGOs to initiate the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, as well as assessment of the child-care system in the Transnistria region. Visits by the Special Rapporteur for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg, and his upcoming findings will further sharpen the focus
of future interventions.

UNICEF Moldova continues to coordinate with the donor community and the UN system, expanding partnerships with other sectors, including the media, and civil society, in general, for collaborative efforts and increased investments for children. In 2012, the UN Partnership Framework and Action Plan were signed with the Government, with UNICEF's active involvement as Chair of the Work Group on Human Development and Social Inclusion. This gave UNICEF an opportunity to advocate strong focus on the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children in the next five-year cycle with both the Government and the United Nations.

**Humanitarian Assistance**

Following severe drought in the summer of 2012, the United Nations supported the Government in assessing the impact of the drought and in identifying immediate and longer-term recovery needs. Based on a request by the Prime Minister and, in coordination with the United Nations Country Team, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Food Programme (WFP) supported the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry in assessing the impact of the current drought. UNICEF held consultations with the FAO–WFP team in evaluating the impact on the most vulnerable population.

In addition, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) was mainstreamed into all UNICEF programme areas in 2012. An initial needs assessment initiative with national partners led to the launch of a one-year pilot regional project on DRR, with financial support from USAID–OFDA. The main focus of UNICEF’s Disaster Risk Reduction activities is on prevention and capacity building of the central and local authorities, with particular attention to the disaster impact on children.

**Effective Advocacy**

*Fully met benchmarks*

The Country Office maintains an advocacy strategy that spells out the key advocacy goals for a one-year period, and the evidence, messages, partnerships and opportunities that could be deployed in order to achieve them. The goals are identified based on the work plan objectives, emerging evidence and opportunities identified during the year. In 2012, the advocacy priorities were around children with disabilities, child care reform and justice for children.

Prudent use of UNICEF's convening role has helped add to the advocacy results. A national Programme on Inclusive Education was adopted in 2012, due to the joint efforts of UNICEF and the Ministry of Education's NGO partners, who serve on the Coordination Council for De-Institutionalisation and Inclusive Education, which UNICEF supports. This convening function has helped ensure aligned and consistent messages, and assured the Ministry of the consolidated support of its partners in this important step.

UNICEF joint advocacy with NGOs also led the Ministry of Health to introduce new services for early detection and intervention for childhood disability within primary health care. UNICEF’s support for the Justice for Children Working group, which brings together diverse Ministries and NGOs with common interests, helped consolidate further commitment to ending the use of solitary confinement for juveniles, a goal not yet met, but now a stated objective of the Ministry of Justice. An independent evaluation of progress in justice for children carried out this year with UNICEF support, provided added impetus and evidence to support this goal.

Joint United Nations advocacy has also contributed to the 2012 results. United Nations agencies supported the adoption of a new Law on the Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, which will help ensure ongoing Government support for the inclusion of such initiatives. The Country Office also acted upon the regional call by UNICEF and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to end the use of institutional care for children under the age of three years, and was able to use the regional campaign materials, as well as ongoing initiatives by the Government to gain a commitment to the call by the Prime Minister.
The Country Office increasingly links and underpins advocacy activities with communication for development activities, reaching the general public at the same time as decision-makers. This approach has been used extensively around inclusion and child care reform, where UNICEF has developed campaigns and also worked closely with the media throughout the year, both to encourage positive reporting and to provide expert inputs on these topics in the print and broadcast media. This approach was also extended to two private sector partnerships: One with a popular local coffee house chain, Tucano Coffee, with whom UNICEF launched an exhibition entitled 'All Different, All Equal' and the other with the Moldovan Football Federation, advocating public messages on inclusion and acceptance.

### Capacity Development

*Fully met benchmarks*

### Communication for Development

*Fully met benchmarks*

The successful implementation of the Ministry of Education’s new National Programme on Inclusive Education requires greater community support for the inclusion of children with disabilities into mainstream schools. UNICEF supported the development of a communication campaign and associated materials, including video and audio spots, posters, communication messages, logos and slogans. All were developed working closely with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) active in the field, and were tested with teachers, parents and students.

Communication strategies on the Safe Sexual Behaviour of Adolescents and on Better Parenting were included in the Ministry of Health’s 2013 plan of action to support adolescents in adopting safe behaviour and to improve the parenting practices of caregivers in the area of danger-signs recognition and stimulation of children, with a focus on the increased involvement of fathers.

With UNICEF’s support, the National Public Health Centre conducted a formative assessment on immunisation that allowed the identification and exploring of perceptions, concerns, and perspectives (priorities opinions, beliefs) of key stakeholders (beneficiaries, service providers, opinion makers) on vaccination that may lie at the root of potential resistance to the new vaccines. Research data supported the development of an evidence-based communication strategy to support the introduction of the new Rotavirus vaccine and of a crisis communication strategy.

Guidelines on immunisation for family doctors and guidelines for health workers on how to communicate with parents on vaccination have been printed with UNICEF’s support in order to strengthen health system capacities to engage in an open dialogue with parents and proactively address existing concerns and myths related to vaccines. Leaflets for parents were also printed and a webpage dedicated to immunisation is under development to improve public access to information. Press clubs and field visits with journalists were organised with UNICEF’s assistance to strengthen partnerships between health authorities and the media and to increase transparency.

UNICEF provided support to line Ministries in initiating the development of a communication strategy on the recognition and prevention of violence against children.
Service Delivery

*Fully met benchmarks*

While service delivery is not a major strategy of the Country Programme, there were several valuable inputs in 2012, all in the area of early childhood education, that merit highlighting.

The Country Office serves as the technical lead for Moldova's participation in the Global Partnership for Education, from which the country has now benefitted for a third time, with a contribution of US$4.4 million. These funds are used by the Ministry of Education, exclusively for the expansion and improved quality of pre-school education in the country. With UNICEF technical support, 41 additional pre-schools were identified for rehabilitation/creation, according to transparent criteria prioritizing the most vulnerable communities, where the greatest number of children and/or most disadvantaged children will be able to attend pre-school which they had not been able to attend before. UNICEF provided additional support to help ensure the quality of these services, including helping the Ministry of Education to develop a tool to assess school readiness and a plan for ongoing mentoring of Early Childhood Development (ECD) teachers.

In addition to this ongoing initiative, UNICEF receives funds from the IKEA Foundation and these funds are used to expand pre-school options in communities that do not meet the criteria for opening up a formal pre-school facility. These are generally small, rural communities, and often ones in which the population is particularly vulnerable, including Roma-majority settlements. These facilities, known as community centres, provide quality pre-school services with the participation and commitment of local public authorities, and ongoing oversight and support from the Ministry of Education. Forty such centres were opened in 2012 and two more are planned in the Transnistria region. The sustainability of these centres has been ensured through the commitment of local public administrations in each case to continue financing the centres for at least five years. Support also included the training of teachers, social and medical assistants, mayors and parents on various ECD topics, as well as community involvement in children's education.

The programme has also benefitted from the second year of support from LEGO foundation, with a donation of cognitive toys for use in pre-schools and community centres. The distribution of these toys has also been undertaken using criteria agreed upon with the Ministry of Education to target schools and children in greatest need. Between the two donations, 66 per cent of all pre-school facilities—both formal and community centres—have now received the toys. In order to maximize their benefit, teachers are also being trained to use the toys effectively with children, through a training of trainers supported by the donor.

Strategic Partnerships

*Fully met benchmarks*

Knowledge Management

*Mostly met benchmarks*

Human Rights Based Approach to Cooperation

*Fully met benchmarks*

Gender Equality

*Mostly met benchmarks*
Environmental Sustainability

Mostly met benchmarks

South-South and Triangular Cooperation

In 2012, during the July 1–7 period, a high-level delegation from Tajikistan visited Moldova to learn more about the juvenile justice system reform and progress achieved in the country. The visit was hosted by the Moldovan Ministry of Justice, and organised by the UNICEF Country Offices in Moldova and Tajikistan. Representatives of the Tajik Parliament, Government, Supreme Court and other legal institutions and members of civil society met with their counterparts from Moldova to draw on the good practices and experience that Moldova has to share in juvenile justice. Moldova has made significant progress in this area in recent years and was recommended by the UNICEF Regional Office, as a model country in this respect in Eastern European region.

The Country Office was also approached by UNICEF Egypt on the possibility of hosting a visit of Egyptian health officials, to learn about Moldova’s successes in perinatal care. Such initiatives are an excellent way for the Republic of Moldova to contribute to ‘A Promise Renewed’, since the country has met the global infant mortality reduction targets of this initiative. The country is thus in a good position to share its approaches with other countries, including many with similar/higher income levels, which have yet to meet the targets. The study visit from Egypt is slated to take place in 2013.
Narrative Analysis by Programme Component Results and Intermediate Results

Moldova - 5640

PC 301 - Child Protection

On-track

PCR 5640/A0/03/301 By the end of 2012, children, adolescents and families, especially the most vulnerable ones, increasingly use quality social protection services and child-friendly procedures in the justice system.

Progress:

UNICEF assisted the central and local authorities and supported State-CSO partnerships in promoting child care reforms. These efforts resulted in further decrease in the rate and number of children placed in public care, and increased the use of family-based alternatives. Overall, the ratio of children in residential versus family-based care changed from 65:35 in 2006 to 41:59 in 2011. There were 4,435 children in residential institutions in November 2012, which represents a 62 per cent decline since 2007.

The Government joined a regional initiative and committed to ending the placement of children under three years of age in residential institutions. This will be reflected in the forthcoming Strategy on Child and Family Protection.

Following the successful inclusion of Justice for Children into the national Justice Sector Reform Strategy in 2011, UNICEF continued to provide support to its implementation through advocacy and assistance in policy making, development of services, capacity building and empowerment of children. Advocacy and partnerships helped leverage significant funding as well: EU Justice sector budget support, beginning in 2013, includes performance indicators covering all the areas of child justice. The use of diversion increased, and of those children who passed through the Criminal Justice System, 20 per cent fewer were given custodial sentences compared to 2010. The number of children befitting from free legal aid increased by 85 per cent since 2011.

Prevention of family separation, combating violence against children, and promotion of justice for children are high on the Government’s agenda.

Ongoing dialogue between UNICEF and the Transnistrian authorities resulted in an agreement to conduct assessment of the child care system. This represents an important milestone, since institutionalisation rates in Transnistria are twice as high as in the rest of Moldova.

UNICEF contributed to the adoption and amendment of several child-protection-related laws, including those on the social inclusion of persons with disabilities, accreditation of service providers, adoption and the penal procedure code. The enforcement of these laws will result in better chances for children with disabilities to access community services, to be adopted, in better quality of services provided by state and private providers, and in better treatment of children by the justice system.

Continued discriminatory attitudes towards children with disabilities, Roma and other vulnerable groups, as well as social acceptance of violence against children remain key bottlenecks that UNICEF and its partners continue to address.

UNICEF supported the participation of children, including the most vulnerable ones, in formulating priorities for the forthcoming Strategy on Child and Family Protection.

On-track

IR 5640/A0/03/301/013 By the end of 2012, the social protection system addresses the needs of the most vulnerable children and families and closes the gap access to quality social services, including systems to prevent and protect from family separation, violence, abuse, exploitation, neglect and discrimination.

Progress:

UNICEF assisted the Government in the implementation and external evaluation of the National Strategy and Action Plan 2007–2012 for transformation of the residential childcare system. The evaluation confirmed that
the strategic target of reducing the number of institutionalised children by 50 per cent was reached. The latest administrative data show a decrease by 62 per cent since 2007. The evaluation results and recommendations were used within public consultations for developing inputs for the forthcoming Strategy on Child and Family Protection for 2013–2020.

In 2012, the number of institutionalised children decreased by 22 per cent compared to 2011, whereas the estimated numbers of children in family-type care remained stable. This shows that, despite regional trends, the number of children in public care in Moldova is decreasing.

The de-institutionalisation process, especially closure of auxiliary schools, has accelerated the Government’s action on inclusive education. This includes the creation of new support services for children with special needs in seven counties. UNICEF technical support has helped ensure the necessary regulations. Funding for replication throughout the country has been included in the national 2013 budget.

With UNICEF’s assistance, the Ministry of Labor, Social Protection, and Family (MLSPF) developed and tested a mechanism for inter-sectoral collaboration in cases of neglect, violence and exploitation of children. Since July 2012, this mechanism is being modelled in two counties by a UNICEF-supported local NGO. The action resulted in 149 reports from 10 communities. Good practices and lessons learned from this exercise will help finalize the approach. Once approved by the Government, it will help local medical staff, educators, social workers and police to work closer together and assist children in need of protection.

On-track

IR 5640/A0/03/301/014 By the end of 2012, justice system and police structures increasingly provide child-friendly procedures and services to children in contact with the law or police, in civil and criminal cases, in line with the acquis communautaire and international human rights instruments

Progress: UNICEF continued to support the development of child-friendly procedures and services for children in contact with the law.

Technical support for the implementation of the Justice for Children component of the Justice Sector Reform Strategy and modifications brought to the Penal Procedure Code requires judges and prosecutors to consider a child’s psycho-social situation when making decisions. Interactions with children may now take place in specialised, child-friendly settings and allow for participation in court hearings via video links. The enforcement of these provisions will help prevent re-victimisation of children.

Advocacy work and collaboration with Parliament and the National Council on Child Rights Protection have ensured commitments from senior Government officials and Parliamentarians to ban solitary confinement for children in detention.

Two training packages on juvenile justice were developed. The Police Academy and the National Institute of Justice intend to start using them in 2013.

As part of a regional UNICEF-EU initiative, Moldova hosted a master training for professionals from seven countries. Those countries are now equipped to train their own professionals on juvenile justice. As a regionally recognized leader in promoting justice for children, Moldova hosted and shared its experience with a high-level delegation from Tajikistan, with the assistance of both Country Offices, transferring the acquired know-how to relevant professionals and decision-makers across the region.

UNICEF supported partnerships between the local authorities and NGOs for services modelling in five countries to ensure better protection of children in contact with the law.

UNICEF’s other regional initiative, research on torture and the cruel treatment of children in the justice system, took place in 2012. The final report on this research will proffer evidence on the impact that the violation of rights has on the physical, psychological and social aspects of children’s lives. Knowledge
generated from this research will inform the Government and local authorities in further reform implementation processes.

PC 303 - Equitable access to quality services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On-track</td>
<td><strong>PCR 5640/A0/03/303</strong> By the end of 2012 all children and adolescents, especially the most vulnerable, increase their use of equitable health, early childhood and basic education quality services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Progress:**
UNICEF supported the Government in the development of relevant policies and strategies, institutional capacity building and community empowerment. Due to UNICEF's advocacy efforts and technical support, inclusive education, school enrolment and prevention of drop-outs are high on the Government's agenda. The Ministry of Health renewed its Commitment to Child Survival. The Government adopted the National Programme on Iron and Folic Acid Deficiencies and approved the Nutrition Surveillance Guidelines and child growth monitoring standards; a chapter dedicated to access of adolescents to youth-friendly health services was introduced in the new Law on Reproductive Health approved by Parliament. The Education Decentralization Strategy and the plan of action for the implementation of inclusive education were developed.

All these efforts were complemented by institutional capacity building, including the development of quality education standards from the perspective of child-friendly schools, new concept of education management at the district and institutional levels, the School Readiness Tool, and pre- and in-service curricula for health professionals on adolescent health and development.

To increase the quality of services, professionals from all facilities for reproductive health were trained on applying youth-friendly health services and quality standards for adolescents, especially for those vulnerable and at risk. Public and primary health professionals were trained on response to crisis situations related to immunisation. Professionals from pre-schools and general schools were trained on child-centred methodology, learning outcome standards, curriculum and inclusive education.

With UNICEF assistance, Communication for Development Strategies on Adolescents Safe Sexual Behaviour, Better Parenting, Immunization Crisis Communication and Inclusive Education were promoted to increase the demand of quality services at the local level, especially for the most vulnerable children.

The Government’s efforts to increase the access of the most vulnerable to quality health, early childhood and basic education services in 2012 led to declines in the under-five mortality rate, HIV/AIDS and some sexually transmitted infections incidences among adolescents; an increase in the pre-school enrolment by 2.5 percentage points, a slight increase in primary school enrolment and a slight decrease in disparities between girls’ and boys’ enrolment in primary education; and an increase in the number of children with special educational needs in mainstream schools, as opposed to their number in special and auxiliary schools.

Family doctors now use child growth monitoring standards to monitor 74 per cent of children under the age of 1 year. For the first time, children with special educational needs graduated in compulsory education in mainstream schools and 42 per cent of three-to-six-year-old children benefitted from the use of cognitive toys.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On-track</td>
<td><strong>IR 5640/A0/03/303/014</strong> By the end of 2012, the Government addresses disparities in access to quality pre-school and basic education services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Progress:**
Education system improvements in 2012 are expected to contribute to better access for vulnerable children. The National Programme and Action Plan for School Drop-out Prevention were developed, making use of a UNICEF-supported study which defines the profile of out-of-school children, roles and functions of different
bodies responsible for school enrolment and drop-out prevention. UNICEF and WB monitoring of the effects of the number of classes and schools reduction in the south of the country on children’s access and attendance of compulsory education were used for conceptualizing the school children census and database.

An evaluation of Moldova’s ongoing experience with Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) confirmed that the approach has improved the academic performance of all children and especially of low achievers. Quality education standards were revised to use the CFS approach throughout the education system. A total of 325 educators, 700 teachers, managers and inspectors were trained on child-centred methodology and parents’ involvement. Some 2,000 professionals were trained on the implementation of the learning outcome standards, curriculum and inclusive education.

With UNICEF’s support, the functions of the district departments of education were revised to reflect the newly proposed strategy on education decentralisation, the school syllabus was reviewed, and the school readiness tool was developed.

The programme also contributed to better pre-school access, supporting the opening of 40 community-based pre-schools in disadvantaged rural communities without kindergartens.

As a result of UNICEF-supported interventions, 2,000 additional rural children attended pre-schools, 57,000 more young children benefitted from cognitive toys, the first 39 children with special educational needs graduated compulsory education in mainstream schools, 400 more children with special educational needs attended mainstream schools, 800 more professionals applied child-centred methodology and 100 educators in rural localities benefitted from mentoring services. These efforts will be continuously supported to ensure the reduction of disparities in access to quality education.

On-track

IR 5640/A0/03/303/015 By the end of 2012, the Government addresses disparities in access to quality child and adolescent health services.

Progress:

The National Program on Reducing Iron and Folic Acid Deficiency Disorders was developed with UNICEF’s support and approved by the Government. The guide on best practices on flour fortification was developed, six mills received feeders and pre-mixes for flour fortification and technical regulations on flour, manna croup and cereal bran were modified. These efforts, combined with the new imported flour regulations, aim to address the chronic issues of anaemia, especially among the vulnerable children and those in rural areas.

An iodine urinary excretion study among primary school children and pregnant women was carried out with UNICEF’s support. Results show that 75 per cent of primary school children have adequate iodine intake.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) approved the Nutrition Surveillance guideline and data collection will start in six locations.

Regulation on Early Detection and Intervention for children with special needs was developed to ensure children with disabilities have access to integrated services.

The Child Growth Monitoring Standards (CGMS) were revised by the MoH to include development milestones, autism screening, and a medico-social collaboration mechanism for supporting vulnerable families with children in reducing USMR at home.

Child cards for parents and adolescents have been developed and approved as a tool for improving communication between health staff and parents, and adjusted to the new CGMS.

Adolescents’ access to Youth-Friendly Health Services (YFHS) was incorporated into the new Law on Reproductive Health through UNICEF’s advocacy efforts. An assessment of barriers to HIV Voluntary
Counselling and Testing (VCT) for most-at-risk and vulnerable adolescents was carried out. The results will be used for removing legislative and institutional barriers for adolescents to access VCT services.

Approximately 59,000 adolescents and youth are covered with YFHS. In all, 24 professionals from NGOs improved their capacities in providing HIV/VCT, referral and outreach services to at-risk adolescents.

**PC 304 - Social Policy and Child Rights**

### On-track

**PCR 5640/A0/03/304** By the end of 2012 the fulfillment of child rights is improved through key normative and legal documents, which are evidence-based and operational in reaching the most vulnerable

### Progress:

In 2012, the Government continued its efforts towards the improvement of the situation of children in Moldova and fulfillment of child rights by the development and approval of key normative and legal documents, which also addressed budgeting issues.

A National Decentralisation Strategy and an Action Plan were adopted and line Ministries started the process of elaboration of sector strategies, such as Education and Social Services decentralisation. A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of the National Decentralisation Strategy was developed to measure decentralisation reforms and their 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 for their budget negotiations with the Ministry of Finance (MoF). As a result, the Inclusive Education Programme was included in the Medium-Term Budgetary Framework (MTBF) of the Ministry of Education (MoE) and co-payments for insured persons' visits to physicians (including children) were withdrawn from the MTBF of the MoH.

UNICEF and WB jointly advocated for maintaining the current level of budget allocation for family and child allowances in the context of the consolidation of the 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, thereby reducing inequities.

Joint advocacy efforts with the UN family and the Council of Europe led to the creation of an officially recognised function of Roma Community Mediators and this position was included in the Registry of Professions as an important instrument to promote social inclusion of the Roma population.

The National Council for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), with the support of UNICEF, conducted a review and analysis of the implementation of the respective recommendations, with special attention to the most vulnerable children, in order to assess the progress in addressing key Convention on the Right’s of the Child (CRC) Concluding Observations.

Substantial progress for children was achieved following numerous public debates and increased media interest on subjects related to child rights, particularly on the right to a family environment. All public debates generated around this issue made a strong push for a policy result, with the Government of Moldova committing to ending the placement of children under the age of three years in institutional care.

### On-track

**IR 5640/A0/03/304/016** By the end of 2012, the Government of Moldova, the Parliament and CSOs work together to develop key strategic, legal and normative documents which are evidence-based, operational and reaching the most vulnerable.
**Progress:**

During 2012, the Government, Parliament and civil society organizations continued to improve their dialogue through common initiatives on key national-level strategic issues, such as decentralisation, accreditation of social services, Roma social inclusion, and adoption procedures. With UNICEF’s advocacy and technical support, the MoF, MoE and MLSPF adjusted the per-capita financial formula in general education to inclusive education, aiming to address equity and ensure quality education to the most disadvantaged children. Additionally, social expenditure costs in educational budget were estimated, and policy recommendations were made on the future financing of these costs, jointly with the line ministries, local public authorities and International Financial Institutions.

Two important policy changes were initiated: (i) the profession of Roma Social Mediators was included in the National Registry of Professions; and (ii) the law on the accreditation of social services was approved and followed up by the development of the Registry of Social Services, with the participation of NGOs and other development partners.

The capacity of the Office of the Deputy Speaker of Parliament was strengthened through the provision of communication and legal advisors. This facilitated the development and approval of legal initiatives in the areas of adoption, prevention of child sexual abuse and exploitation and the initiation of a number of initiatives in the area of Justice for Children.

The NCPCR, with the support of UNICEF, contributed to strengthening the capacity of professionals working with children with special educational needs, through dissemination of information and good practices in this area. Government commitment on child participation in the decision-making process and policy development was confirmed and strengthened through the involvement of children in the process of the development of child and family protection strategy, as well as the participation of children in the meetings of the NCPCR.

**On-track**

**IR 5640/A0/03/304/017** By the end of 2012, central and local authorities have increased capacity to monitor child rights and to use evidence-based disaggregated data for policy formulation, implementation and monitoring, focusing on the most vulnerable children.

**Progress:**

In 2012, the capacities of the central and local public authorities (including ministerial policy monitoring units and social assistants) on the application of statistics to monitor the impact of policies, measure changes in the legal and policy framework, and for the justification of new policies were improved. As a result of a joint United Nations effort on strengthening the official statistical system, national counterparts were supported in institutional capacity building, getting exposure to EU/international standards and best practices in statistics, learning from exchange initiatives, and sharing country experience and progress.

In cooperation with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the World Health Organisation (WHO), UNICEF supported capacity-building activities for national partners to improve data availability through the implementation of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) and has successfully advocated with the local authorities to design and carry-out MICS in the breakaway region of Transnistria; the survey was launched in November 2012.

UNICEF’s cooperation with the Government and other United Nations agencies led to data disaggregation improvement and the situation of children and equity gaps have been addressed in national reports and policy documents (including the MDG update, National Human Development Report, National and sector decentralization strategies in education and child protection, National strategy on child and family protection, United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) reporting and others).

Statistical and analytical publications “Children in Moldova” and “Education in Moldova” were published by
the National Bureau of Statistics and disaggregated data was widely disseminated in a user-friendly format, thereby responding to data users’ and policy needs.

To support better monitoring and improve public understanding of and demand for evidence-based monitoring, a training curriculum and a manual for basic statistical literacy for journalists have been developed and will be embedded institutionally into the curriculum of specialized academic institutions.

**On-track**

**IR 5640/A0/03/304/018** By the end of 2012, the media and civil society organizations work together to advocate for the rights of the most vulnerable children and families.

**Progress:**
UNICEF and civil society’s advocacy led to approval of the Law on Accreditation of Social Services, providing a legal framework for the local public authorities to contract and procure community-based social services from NGOs and the private sector. Civil society was also actively involved, together with the UN family and the Council of Europe, in adjusting the national legal framework to enforce the Lanzarote Convention.

The advocacy skills of child rights-oriented NGOs were strengthened through a series of trainings on policy-making and budgeting.

The capacity of the media was increased through UNICEF’s support of the Network of Child-Friendly Journalists, resulting in wider dissemination of child-related issues in the mainstream media. In-depth investigations on child rights infringements were produced and awareness-raising campaigns on promoting a family environment for each child were organized by national TV Channels (Moldova 1 and Publika TV). This contributed to the Government of Moldova’s commitment to gradually stop placing young children under the age of three years in institutional care.

Partnership with the Moldovan Football Association led to the first-ever match (World Cup qualifying round Moldova versus England) dedicated to a social cause—promoting the inclusion of children with disabilities.

UNICEF supported children and the youth to generate discussions through traditional media (One Minute Junior films, radio and TV shows) and on-line platforms (blogging and social media), ensuring that vulnerable children are heard.

The advocacy efforts of UNICEF and partners (Council of Europe, Media NGOs) culminated in two decisions of the Audio-Visual Council, focusing on ethical reporting about children; these are now mandatory for all broadcasters.

Corporate social responsibility culture was promoted through the launch of the Child Rights and Business Principles, an event that resulted in a promising partnership with the Global Compact and the European Business Association. Local PPP initiatives helped consolidate UNICEF’s awareness-raising efforts for diversity and inclusion of the most disadvantaged children.

**PC 305 - Cross-sectoral**

**On-track**

**PCR 5640/A0/03/305** Cross sectoral functions and activities are implemented successfully and on time, enabling the Country Programme to reach results, including the development of strategic cross-sectoral, gender and equity sensitive documents such as UNDAF, CPD an DRR

**Progress:**

The cross-sectoral programme component covered several strategic activities that support the achievement of the Country Programme results: Communication for Development; Government’s commitment to deinstitutionalization of children under the age of three years; the development and finalisation of the 2013–2017 UN-Moldova Partnership Framework Action Plan; finalization and approval of the 2013–2017 UNICEF-
Moldova Country Programme (CPD) and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) as a new, emerging cross-sectoral area.

These activities were closely inter-related, as the previously conducted Situation Analysis and the Gender Assessment was fed into the development of the UNPF/UNAP and CPD. The new Country Programme Document was finalized in conjunction with the UNMPF and their outcomes and key results were linked.

**Progress:**

UNICEF participated actively in the development and finalisation of the UN Partnership Framework and Action Plan, both of which were signed with the Government in 2012, leading in one of the three outcome areas: human development and social inclusion. The Office further contributed to the other two outcome areas: democratic governance, human rights, gender equality and justice; and environment, climate change and disaster risk reduction. The document clearly adopts a human rights based approach, uses equity as the main paradigm and includes all children-related priorities advocated for by UNICEF, such as child rights, equitable access and quality of health, education and social protection services and cash benefits and justice for children.

The 2013–2017 Country Programme Document (CPD) offered the opportunity to strengthen the human-rights basis, gender sensitiveness and equity in the joint work of UNICEF, the Government of Moldova and civil society for the years ahead. Based on the Situation Analysis, Country Analysis and other studies, emerging issues related to disadvantaged children (e.g. child labour, sexual exploitation, and labour migration) were incorporated. Support to the state system was complemented by a stronger collaboration with civil society (including children and adolescents), social change and communication for development, with all of them required to reach out and empower vulnerable children and their families.

**PCR 5640/A0/03/800** Effective and efficient programme management and operations support.

**Progress:**

The Moldova Country Office makes use of clear and strategic planning and oversight processes, to ensure all staff is involved in identifying priorities, setting goals and monitoring progress. Rolling two-year work plans are updated annually and signed by the Government. As this was the last year of the Country Programme, the work plans used in 2012 were the final versions of a two-year planning process, and new ones will be introduced in 2013.

The 2012 Office Management Plan, also produced on a rolling basis, incorporated key work plan objectives and office priorities, as well as outlined how organisation-wide statutory procedures will be carried out, noting staff responsibilities, frequency of meetings etc., and including collaboration within the UN family in Moldova. From these instruments, annual team goals and staff work and professional development objectives are derived and incorporated in individual performance assessments. Emergency preparedness and business continuity plans are also updated annually with the participation of all staff, both to identify risks and to ensure that everyone knows their respective roles in case of an emergency.

Country Office priorities and progress are discussed and monitored through bi-monthly internal programme meetings, monthly all-staff and Country Management Team (CMT) meetings, and through regular discussions and field visits with counterparts and partners, as well as through the mid-year and year-end reviews. Statutory committees are in place in line with UNICEF rules to provide oversight on contracts, recruitment and management of assets. All statutory Committees met regularly and functioned well in 2012. The use of risk management approaches is also an important feature of Country Office management and is described in
In light of the change to VISION, and with guidance from the Regional Office, management indicators were updated and new approaches devised for measurement. Programme and operations assistants led the way in identifying new and innovative approaches to monitoring, and Sections chiefs, Deputy Representative and Operations Manager were responsible for ensuring quality assurance and reporting.

Intra-office communication improvements continued in 2012, including Monday morning stand-up meetings where key events, tasks and priorities are shared and incorporated into a weekly office calendar. Leave for staff and travel schedules are approved in advance on a quarterly basis, with modifications made through agreed and well-communicated channels. The CMT meeting summaries are shared with staff promptly and systematically, so that the whole office is immediately aware of any important office developments or decisions.

**Progress:**

The Country Office makes systematic use of risk management techniques. Each year, the risk profile is updated and an action plan developed to mitigate the key risks. In 2012, this process helped ensure good follow-up of the Office fundraising strategy, as well as high participation by UNICEF staff in the development of the UN-Republic of Moldova Partnership Framework Action Plan, which will guide the joint UN system, as well as agency-specific work for the programme period 2013–2017.

The Risk Profile Action Plan also included clear steps to reduce the risks associated with the change to a new enterprise resource platform, SAP and VISION performance management system, as well as other changes in the external environment. The resulting action plan provides a clear indication of individual and team accountabilities. Progress against all activities in the action plan was reviewed for quality and progress quarterly by the CMT.

Weekly unit meetings were used to reinforce and apply risk management principles. Focal points were established for key functions, such as emergency, risk management, and VISION. Weekly senior management meetings of the Representative, Deputy Representative and Operations Manager were used to further discuss strategic concerns, including those raised in these meetings or statutory bodies. Programme meetings and senior management meetings are used to identify, discuss and respond to changes in the internal and external operating environment. Weekly stand-up meetings helped to agree on the Office and Section priorities, identify risks and opportunities and act on them in an early and timely manner.

In December 2012, a new Office table of authority was endorsed, complying with the required segregation of duties between the authorising, certifying, approving, receiving and paying officers. Delegation of authority letters were co-signed by the staff members responsible and the Representative.

The Business Continuity Plan (BCP) was updated and uploaded into the Early Warning Early Action portal. Information on the portal was updated in 2012 and comments from the Regional Office were incorporated. All staff was involved in the process, ensuring awareness of their roles and UNICEF’s priorities and processes in case of an emergency.

**Progress:**

In terms of financial resources management, the Country Office has achieved programmatic and operational results within the planned resources, registering an overall expenditure rate of 99.95 per cent against all resource types (regular, other and institutional budget). All expiring Programme-Based Approaches
(PBAs) were fully expended.

The Office used VISION tools, such as the Performance Management reports and the Manager’s dashboard, as well as SAP-generated reports, for regular monitoring of financial and other assets. These mechanisms, together with clear accountabilities and good ongoing communication with partners, resulted in having no outstanding Direct Cash Transfers (DCTs) over six months, in line with UNICEF financial management standards. Trainings provided to counterparts on DCT reporting requirements, regular onsite reviews, such as spot checks and planned monitoring visits, have continued to be successfully applied as financial and administrative control systems.

The Country Office consistently uses policies and procedures under the Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfer (HACT), aligned with other United Nations agencies, conducting micro-assessments of counterparts and partners, and jointly determining the risk levels and mitigating strategies.

Regular review and monitoring on weekly, monthly and quarterly basis of management indicators and funds utilisation reports by the Country Management Team and budget focal point are an important mechanism for timely and responsive management of funds and identification of corrective measures to be taken. During the change-over to SAP and VISION, the team developed new ways to keep close track of these indicators at the country level, while becoming accustomed to the new system and reports.

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.

**IR 5640/A0/03/800/003 IR 3: Effective and efficient Management of Human Capacity.**

**Progress:**

Performance management is undertaken systematically, with clear deadlines for Performance Appraisal System (PAS) task definition and discussions monitored by the CMT. All staff had at least two discussions during the year.

The Office applied UNICEF Human Resources policies on learning days, flexi-time, compressed working hours and working from home with positive results. The Office applied compressed summer working hours in order to have shorter Fridays, and the success of this practice led to extending this until the end of 2012, while maintaining a 40-hour work week. In view of its success, this initiative has now been taken on also by UNDP, with whom UNICEF shares the UN House.

The Country Office continued its policy of investing in staff through strategic training and networking opportunities. Staff participated actively in regional networks, through virtual media and participation in Webinars and WebExes, with a focus on VISION. This allowed staff, especially from the general service category, to learn and share experiences and ideas with other offices as part of the rollout of the new system.

During the year, all the staff benefited from diversity training organised by the United Nations. Several staff members also participated in security trainings organised for United Nations agencies in Moldova.
### Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Sequence Number</th>
<th>Type of Report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Moldova 2012 IMEP</td>
<td>2012/900</td>
<td>IMEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Iodine urinary excretion survey</td>
<td>2012/004</td>
<td>Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Research on torture and ill-treatment of children in Moldova</td>
<td>2012/005</td>
<td>Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Situation of Roma in Roma settlements in Moldova</td>
<td>2012/006</td>
<td>Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 In-depth analysis of social expenditures in the education budget system of the republic of Moldova in 2008-2010 and existing practices in the region for funding the education related costs</td>
<td>2012/007</td>
<td>Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Study on out-of-school children in Moldova</td>
<td>2012/008</td>
<td>Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Final Evaluation of the &quot;Reform of Juvenile Justice System in Moldova&quot; Project</td>
<td>2012/001</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Final Evaluation on the &quot;Reform of the Juvenile Justice System in Moldova&quot; Project</td>
<td>2012/001</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Out-of-School Children in Moldova</td>
<td>2012/008</td>
<td>Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 In-depth analysis of social expenditures in the education budget system of Moldova</td>
<td>2012/007</td>
<td>Study</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Other Publications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Children of Moldova</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Education in the Republic of Moldova</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 OneMinJr DVD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Leaflet: Child vaccination. Useful information for loving parents (RO/RU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Immunization in the activity of family doctors. Practical guidelines (RO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Guidelines on how to communicate with parents about immunization (RO/RU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Video and audio spots on inclusive education of children with disabilities (RO/RU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Fir de nisip. Program de prevenire a violenței față de copii. Ghid metodologic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Drepturile copilului monitorizate de copii. Raportul copiilor despre respectarea Convenției ONU cu privire la Drepturile Copilului</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Ghid de monitorizare a drepturilor copilului</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Cum să recunosc un abuz. Carte pentru copii din clasele I-V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Cum să recunosc un abuz. Carte pentru băieți și fete din clasele V-XII</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>