

Executive Summary

2013 was the first year of the Country Programme and particular attention was paid to re-positioning UNICEF's engagement in Romania, with the Country Office as a credible partner and provider of technical assistance. New and traditional partnerships, intense technical assistance for policy development and evidence generation/sharing were emphasised. Media coverage of UNICEF increased five-fold which contributed to this re-positioning and better access to a higher level of decision-makers.

As child rights had become quite invisible in public discourses, top priority was given to putting vulnerable children back at the top of the public and political agendas. Advocacy, partnership development and technical assistance contributed to explicit inclusion of vulnerable children in all strategic documents developed by Romania for the 2014-2020 EU programme cycle– from the EU-Romania Partnership Agreement to strategies on child rights, health, education, Roma social inclusion and youth. 'A Promise Renewed' was signed, and further engagement with the Ministry of Health and other stakeholders resulted into increased support to community nurses.

Leveraging resources for vulnerable children from European and Norwegian funding was emphasised through a new partnership, technical assistance and advocacy. Efforts contributed to the re-allocation of millions of Euros from Norway for community-based services for vulnerable children. EU-related documents, by identifying vulnerable children and their families as a priority, provide a conducive framework for EU funding for the next seven years. The draft Education Strategy allocates 30 per cent of expected EU funding for education to out-of-school children.

Despite new partnerships and engagement with the Ministry of EU Funds and EU institutions, the draft agreement between the Ministry and UNICEF, which would have formalised the UNICEF Country Office's role as technical assistance provider, was not signed. The discussion will be pursued in 2014.

Working with other partners did not succeed in increased funding and human resources from national and sub-national authorities towards services for the prevention of school abandonment, violence against children and child institutionalisation. This remains a crucial bottleneck that UNICEF has prioritised for 2014.

Local fundraising remained challenging in 2013. The Office is re-focusing its efforts on fewer but larger corporate partnerships and most importantly private individual fundraising, with new tools tested last year and staff redeployment.

The development of traditional and new partnerships constituted a core strategy in 2013. UNICEF used its convenor role to strengthen an integrated approach to community-based services for children by bringing together the ministries of social protection, health and education, and proving the cost effectiveness of these approach and services. The Office's engagement with EU institutions and national counterparts around the EU agenda was significantly strengthened through support and participation in events in Bucharest and Brussels, evidence sharing and technical assistance. UNICEF increased its cooperation with the World Bank in the areas of education and social inclusion, and partnerships with international finance institutions will remain a priority in 2014.

Country Situation as Affecting Children & Women

While macro-indicators improved significantly in Romania, child poverty remains among the highest in Europe while resources allocated to social, education and health sectors decreased. In 2012, 47 per cent of children aged 0-6 were at risk of poverty and social exclusion in Romania, compared to 41 per cent of Romanian adults and 26 per cent of children in the EU[1].

Romanian children face a deprivation rate of over 70 per cent [2], the highest in the EU. More than one in four children do not eat a proper meal every day, and do not have new clothes or footwear [3]. Inequities particularly affect children from very poor families, living in rural areas, from Roma communities and those with disabilities.

In 2013, Romania accelerated its absorption of EU funding, and developed strategic documents required to access European funding for 2014-2020. Education remained under-funded with its budget representing 3.2 per cent of the GDP. Social protection expenditure is low compared to other EU countries, and only 2 per cent of expenditure (excluding pensions) is allocated to social inclusion services for vulnerable families.[4] In health, hospitals take over 50 per cent of the budget, leaving primary health care and community-based services under-funded [5]. Coordination among sectors to develop policies and provide services for children remains sporadic, although Ministries of Education, Health and Social Protection are increasing their cooperation at all levels.

The number of children in institutions decreased to 22,124 in 2013. However, the number of children in public care remains constant at around 60,000. Institutionalisation of children under three is restricted but still allowed, with over 700 of them in institutions. Social services often fail to identify and assess vulnerable families and children, and to propose integrated solutions with other local actors. Violence remains a major issue, with 30 per cent of children living in poor families exposed to violent disciplinary methods [6]. The high tolerance to violence against children affects even social workers' assessments [7].

The social protection system focuses on social cash benefits, while prevention and counselling social services stay underdeveloped. Yet, some analysis shows that means-tested cash benefits do not necessarily reach the poorest families, partly due to the lack of social workers on the ground [8], especially in rural areas [9]. Although NGO services have grown, certain vulnerable groups are poorly covered.

Improving the performance of the education system in terms of universal access and quality learning remains challenging. The Law of Education created a framework for reforms but its operationalization remains problematic. While participation in preschool education reaches 78 per cent, those who do not access it are often vulnerable children who need it most.

The early school leaving rate was 17.4 per cent in 2012, above the EU average of 12.8 per cent, and far from the 2020 target of 11 per cent. The share of rural early school leavers with a disadvantaged socio-economic background (where Roma are overrepresented) is significant. While the results of PISA 2012 show that Romanian students made progress in mathematics and science, 40 per cent of them can perform only very simple mathematics, scientific or reading tasks [10]. Bottlenecks include social determinants such as poverty, social norms (especially related to Roma children and children with disability) and parental skills, as well as educational causes such as poor qualification of school staff, overloaded curriculum, poor cooperation between parents and schools, and lack of cross-sectoral collaboration.

In health, there is a consensus that primary and preventive services should be emphasised. Identification and early intervention services and referral systems for vulnerable groups are poorly developed, resulting in overuse of hospitals. The infant mortality rates in Romania remains among the highest in Europe at 9.4 per cent[11], compared to EU average of 4 per cent. The recrudescence of the HIV/AIDS epidemic among high risk populations is causing serious concern[12]. The proportion of all new HIV cases attributed to injecting drug use rose from 3 per cent in 2010 to 30.6 per cent in 2012[13].

Out of the two million adolescents in Romania (aged 10 to 17 years), 42 per cent have drunk an alcoholic beverage at least once; 23 per cent smoked at least one cigarette; and 5.4 per cent of adolescents over the

age of 14 have already used some kind of drugs^[14]. While adolescents have been mostly absent from the national dialogue and political agenda, in 2013 the new Ministry of Youth and Sports started the process to develop a new Strategy on Youth, which will include adolescents.

Child rights monitoring needs to be further developed. While Romania collects a large amount of data, disaggregation is insufficient, limiting the identification of vulnerable children, and impacting the development of evidence-based policies. The Deputy Ombudsman who oversees child rights has limited mandate and means that do not allow meaningful independent monitoring. While many NGOs provide services to vulnerable children, they are not present everywhere in the county. They face serious financial limitations, and few focus on policy development or monitoring. The low quantity and the quality of media reporting on children's issues contributes to the overall invisibility of children's issues on the agenda.

Local fundraising remained difficult in 2013, with the few resources available from the corporate sector widely scattered, and private individual fundraising still under-developed.

[1] Eurostat-SILC

[3] Innocenti Report Card #10 (2012) and #11 (2013).

[4] Eurostat, data 2010

[5] Report National Health Insurance House 2012

[6] Helping the invisible children Model, second evaluation report (2013), UNICEF

[7] Helping the invisible children Model, first (2011) and second evaluation report (2013), UNICEF

[8] Conclusive study conducted within the project "Improving organizational effectiveness of the child protection system in Romania" implemented in partnership with the NGO Solidarité Enfants Roumains Abandonnés (SERA) Romania and MLFSPE, first (2011) and second evaluation report (2013), UNICEF

[9] Preda (coord., 2011), UNICEF project; IRECSON (2011), MMFPS and SERA Romania (2012).

[10] Programme for International Student Assessment, OECD, 2013

[11] WHO, European Health for All Database, 2011

[12] National Institute for Infectious Diseases, Romania;
http://www.cnlas.ro/images/doc/1_decembrie2013.pdf

[13] <http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/publications/mer-idu-outbreaks.pdf>

[14] State of Adolescents in Romania; UNICEF, CURS, ISE 2013
http://www.unicef.org/romania/UNICEF_Study_State_of_adolescents_in_Romania.pdf

Country Programme Analytical Overview

Signing the 2013-2017 Romania-UNICEF Partnership was an opportunity to promote children's wellbeing on the public agenda. The new partnership brought together Romania's EU status, UNICEF global expertise and local capacity.

The partnership focuses on disparity reduction, equity and social inclusion of vulnerable children. It supports authorities to exercise good governance to reduce child deprivations, strengthen partnership with NGOs and private sector, while seeking to leverage additional resources for children.

UNICEF is positioned as a technical assistance partner who can share evidence-based policy options to

accelerate reforms; to leverage budgets for children; to convene partners and mobilise political will; to generate and share knowledge on vulnerable children.

In 2013, UNICEF advocated and provided evidence for the development of integrated community-based services in health, education and social protection for disadvantaged children from rural areas, and Roma communities and those with disabilities. Evidence was generated by two models on school inclusion and community-based services implemented in 100 communities. Evaluated independently, models show how legislation and policies can be implemented or further developed. Strong evidence was produced on the impact of social workers, community nurses, school mediators and inclusive schools on social inclusion, reducing children institutionalisation, improving access to education, health and benefits, and providing prevention/support services to children and families. In 2014-2015, model components are expected to be incorporated into the normative framework and leverage funding for scaling up.

New evidence was generated on out-of-school children, vulnerable adolescents and children with disabilities, with findings and recommendations incorporated into new strategies, which will mobilise national and European funding (e.g. the draft education strategy foresees 30 per cent of EU funds for education for out-of-school children).

The development of plans for 2014-2020 European funding (around US\$52 billion) dominated the year as it should bring Romania closer to EU countries, and boost reforms in education, health and social protection in an equitable manner. UNICEF provided technical assistance to the development of national strategies in: Health, Education, Youth, Child Rights, Roma Inclusion, as well as inputs into the Romania-EU Partnership Agreement.

Much work was done to increase the profile of child rights on the public agenda, to combat prejudice and to mobilise political support for vulnerable children, especially those children with disabilities, Roma and victims of violence. Media coverage of children's issues and UNICEF increased dramatically. UNICEF and the Chamber of Deputies initiated an innovative agreement for the provision of technical assistance and joint advocacy. The Chamber committed to establishing a Child Rights Commission for vulnerable children.

Starting with the launch of the SOWCR, and in partnerships with ministries, Parliament and civil society, a campaign on children with disabilities raised awareness and mobilised political will for the development of a new strategy, for which UNICEF's assistance was requested.

UNICEF led UNCT efforts to support Roma social inclusion. A National Conference (with EU Commissioner for Social Inclusion and Minister of Social Protection), UNICEF's presentation at the EU Forum on Roma and technical assistance for the revision of the Roma Strategy contributed to make the rights of Roma a higher priority.

Humanitarian Assistance

N/A

Effective Advocacy

Fully met benchmarks

As the visibility of child rights and UNICEF had reduced considerably in previous years, it was imperative to strategically increase communication efforts (including advocacy) to re-position both at the top of the public and political agenda.

A two-pronged strategy was implemented, using private and public advocacy. Based on wide consultations with partners as well as evidence generated through studies and models and a bottleneck analysis, UNICEF prioritized four advocacy issues:

1. *Every child has the right to grow up in a family environment*
2. *All children should benefit from basic health, education and child protection services*
3. *Every child should have access to inclusive, quality education, starting at an early age*

4. *All children should be treated equally without any discrimination*

These key issues were communicated on the basis of strong evidence and along with policy options. UNICEF systematically raised them with partners and counterparts at all levels in all its advocacy and communication efforts, including in the two integrated communication and fund-raising campaigns implemented during the year: first on children with disabilities, and second on combating violence against children. For each issue, the Office worked and advocated in close collaboration with governmental and non-governmental partners.

These efforts resulted in a joint proposal signed by Ministers of Social Protection, Education and Health that requested the Ministry of European Funds to allocate a significant amount (expected to be around US\$28 million) from Norwegian Grants for scaling up the implementation of integrated social services. This funding should also help leverage millions of euros from European Structural Funds to progressively ensure universal access of children to basic services over the period 2014-2020.

Another result was that the campaign on children with disabilities reached millions of viewers, and combined with high level advocacy, contributed to mobilising political will to develop a new strategy on the rights of people with disability, aligned with the European strategy.

For the first time, and as part of a new partnership, UNICEF, the president of the Chamber of Deputies and the Minister of Social Protection organised a debate at the parliament on child rights, attended by representatives from the parliament, the government and civil society (including young people). The Chamber also took the commitment to set up a special Commission for Vulnerable Children, which would propose legislative initiatives for children.

Active engagement with traditional and online media resulted into a five times higher coverage of children's issues and UNICEF. This was achieved through a series of high profile events involving the Prime Minister, the President of the Chamber of Deputies, several ministers and parliamentarians, civil society and youth. As the media play an influential role in Romania, this strategy significantly contributed to re-positioning child rights as key issues and UNICEF as a credible partner. UNICEF also sought to develop long-term partnerships with the media, such as the collaboration with two national TV channels for the two awareness and fund-raising campaigns.

Capacity Development

Mostly met benchmarks

The Country Programme places a strong emphasis on developing capacities for the realization of the rights of all children. This role was demonstrated in 2013 at central and local levels, by providing learning opportunities, engaging key actors in common endeavours, and jointly generating evidence for equity- and child-centered reforms.

UNICEF provided technical assistance and worked closely with the Ministry of Social Protection in the formulation of a new Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of Child Rights for 2014-2020. In this nationally owned process, governmental and non-governmental actors were mobilised to seek progress by sharing expertise and reaching a consensus on priorities.

2013 was a crucial year to ensure the sustainability and capacity of the Federation of NGOs for the Protection of Children (FONPC) as a leading actor and partner to the government of Romania. A complex process of internal assessment and consultation resulted in a better positioning of FONPC as a trusted convenor and an active participant in policy development. The capacity of FONPC to collect, analyse and disseminate data related to the child rights monitoring and to reflect this data into the draft alternative report to the Committee on the Rights of Children and into the new child rights strategy was also strengthened.

A new partnership with the Ombudsman's Institution that included both structured learning activities and the sharing of international instruments and good practices was initiated. UNICEF supported the development of its capacity to carry independent research in sensitive areas of child rights. The result is not only a quality

report on the rights of children in detention, but also an increased capacity to work with and better defend the rights of vulnerable children.

At sub-national levels, through joint implementation of models in 100 communities, key public stakeholders were supported to develop their planning, implementing and monitoring capacities, while also integrating a human rights-based approach. Resources for working with children at risk were strategically provided and public - private partnerships at local level highly encouraged. Independent evaluations have already provided evidence that , in these 100 communities, the local public system has increased its capacity to provide integrated services to vulnerable families and children that are relevant, effective and sustainable.

As UNICEF started working closely with the new Ministry of Youth, a priority was to develop its capacity to better understand and address challenges faced by adolescents in its mandate. This process included joint research on Determinant Analysis, technical assistance in the strategic planning process (resulting in the new Youth Strategy) and experience exchange with Kosovo authorities.

The Seminar on the Transition from Institutional to Family and Community-based Care, jointly organised by the Ministries of Social Protection and of European Funds, UNICEF, The European Expert Group and the NGO Hope and Homes, in collaboration with the European Commission, enhanced knowledge of over 100 participants from the government and civil society on how the European Structural Funds can support the development of a range of integrated services for people (including children) at risk of institutionalisation or in institutions.

Communication for Development

Mostly met benchmarks

Using determinant analyses, UNICEF identified social norms such as discrimination against children with disabilities and Roma children, and violence against children as key determinants impeding the equitable realisation of child rights.

UNICEF worked with the NGO Impreuna and 100 schools in the School Attendance Initiative to promote education among schoolchildren and their parents and empower them to take decisions about their future education. The component of "Roma Role Models" introduces to children people of Roma origin who succeeded professionally, overcoming various barriers. Guidelines were developed for teachers so that Roma Role Models can be replicated in an additional 1,000 schools and then gradually taken over by the Ministry of Education nationally.

UNICEF tested for the first time an integrated national campaign to raise awareness on discrimination against children with disabilities. Entitled "See the child first", the campaign used the opportunity of the SOWCR to gather and share with stakeholders evidence on the bottlenecks affecting the rights of children with disabilities to advocate with the government and the parliament for a more comprehensive and cross-sectoral approach to disability and to raise awareness of the general public. Over 10 million people viewed the campaign on TV or online. The Ministry of Social Protection is developing a strategy for the inclusion of people with disabilities and has requested UNICEF's technical assistance to ensure that children would be included. The communication campaign included fund-raising for the continuation of UNICEF's work in this area.

Romania joined the global campaign on stopping Violence against Children. Global spots, adapted with national Goodwill Ambassadors, are broadcast on TV and online. This national campaign will be prolonged by a three-year C4D programme involving parents, children, professionals working with children, authorities and the media, to decrease tolerance towards violence against children, and assist parents to positive discipline.

Service Delivery

Fully met benchmarks

This is not applicable to the work of UNICEF in Romania as the country is classified as an upper middle income country, it has the capacity to and does undertake its own procurement of essential supplies for children.

Strategic Partnerships

Fully met benchmarks

UNICEF systematically mapped out potential partners, including decision-makers and influencers. Key partnerships were initiated, and traditional partnerships with the Government and NGOs were brought to a higher level.

As vulnerable children need integrated services, UNICEF focused on strengthening partnerships and cross-collaboration with and among Ministries. For the first time, Ministers of Social Protection, Education and Health submitted a joint proposal for external funding for scaling up integrated services. UNICEF convened several ministries and civil society representatives around cross-sectoral issues such as vulnerable adolescents, early childhood development, child rights, Roma and children with disabilities. It contributed to the creation/revival of institutionalised cross-sectoral working groups on adolescents and ECD, and to the involvement of all stakeholders in the development of new/ revised strategies on youth, child rights and Roma.

A new partnership was initiated with the Ministry of European Funds. A joint Memorandum of Understanding is being finalised for the provision of technical assistance by UNICEF to future beneficiaries of European Funding to help accelerate fund absorption and ensure that funding is used strategically for vulnerable families.

UNICEF partnered with the Ministry of Youth to support research and a participatory planning process resulting in a draft youth strategy and national action plan. A joint exercise to map the existing services for adolescents and youth was initiated.

The Chamber of Deputies and UNICEF started implementing the first ever partnership that included the commitment to establish a special Commission on Vulnerable Children. UNICEF is developing cooperation with relevant Commissions (health, education etc.) to provide them with technical assistance. UNICEF and the Chamber jointly launch the SOWCR and the campaign for children with disabilities, and organised a public debate on the situation of the child rights and a high level fundraising gala. This partnerships significantly contributed to raise children's issues on the public and political agenda.

UNICEF Romania, working closely with UNICEF Offices in Brussels and Geneva, started engaging EU institutions, particularly the Parliament and the Commission (DG Employment and DG Region). For instance, UNICEF supported and participated in the seminar "Children's Health - investment in our future" organised by Romanian MEP at the European Parliament. UNICEF Romania presented on Roma children social inclusion at the EU Forum in Brussels. The National Seminar on transition from institutional to community care and the Conference on Roma Social Inclusion, both in Bucharest, organised in collaboration with EU institutions, provided opportunities to highlight and share challenges, good practices and policy options for vulnerable children in Romania.

UNICEF partnered with a broad range of traditional and online media to raise awareness and put children's rights on the public agenda. UNICEF engaged media partners to support the awareness and fund raising campaigns dedicated to children with disabilities and violence against children. The media coverage of children and UNICEF was multiplied by five.

The Office engaged the largest electricity provider in Romania to feature awareness messages on violence against children and an opportunity for donation on invoice envelopes sent to 2.5 million customers, as a step towards a Customer Fundraising Programme.

Knowledge Management

Mostly met benchmarks

Based on a joint mapping of knowledge gaps, extensive research was conducted on disadvantaged or at risk children and adolescents. Most research was conducted together with counterparts and partners and integrated into national processes. All studies involved key stakeholders. Results were systematically disseminated and used for evidence-based advocacy and technical assistance as inputs into policy development.

The first determinant analysis on Romanian adolescents generated essential information on adolescent's knowledge and practices, including vis-à-vis substance abuse, HIV, sexual behaviour, use of media and Internet. The wide-ranging evidence generated by this study informed two major policy processes: the formulation of the National Youth Strategy and action plans by the Ministry of Youth; and the National Strategy on the Protection and Promotion of Child Rights, drafted through a cross-ministerial effort led by the Ministry of Social Protection. Provisions targeting at-risk and vulnerable adolescents were incorporated into both documents.

The Ombudsman for Child Rights, in close cooperation with UNICEF, conducted a pioneering research on the rights of children deprived of liberty. This was the first time an independent institution documented the situation of minors in detention and re-education facilities. By using perceptive, specially designed data collection instruments and interviewing a representative sample of the detained child population, this report offers a solid foundation for evidence-based policy adjustment. As relevant ministries were involved in the process, and the study will be launched at the parliament, it is expected that measures will be taken on the basis of the new evidence.

As modelling of community-based services is a key strategy of the Country Programme to generate evidence for policy developments, independent evaluations are important milestones. The intermediate evaluation of this model produced evidence-based recommendations to improve the protection of vulnerable children and their families by the social protection system. Preventive community services were proved less expensive and more effective than the current system. The need for new methodologies and procedures for assessing vulnerable children and their families was highlighted. The report credibly demonstrated how standard social inclusion and poverty reduction policies failed to reach vulnerable children and proposed solutions such as real time monitoring and periodical targeted households surveys. The evaluation was used in the situation analysis and priority setting of several strategies for 2014-2020 such as the strategies on Social Inclusion, Health, Education, Roma Social Inclusion, and Children's Rights. As these strategies will provide a framework for the allocation of EU funding, additional resources are expected to be leveraged, including for the transition from institutional to community-based care and the provision of minimum package of services for vulnerable children and their families.

The Out-of-School Children Report was developed by the Ministries of Education and Social Protection, the National Institute of Statistics and UNICEF, and part of a global initiative to map out the profile of these children. The findings and recommendations were integrated into the draft national strategy on education (and will mobilise significant European funding) and made the issue of out-of-school children more prominent in the education debate.

Human Rights Based Approach to Cooperation

Fully met benchmarks

The new Country Programme has adopted a human rights-based approach, which underpins everything that UNICEF does- from determinant analyses to advocacy, policy advice and partnerships. Data used is disaggregated by sex, geographic origin, age and ethnicity in order to expose disparities, which are hidden behind average figures.

UNICEF supported the largest child protection federation of NGO to gather data and inform in a participative manner from over 70 national and local NGOs and from children for the alternate report to the Committee on

the Rights of the Child.

Finally, UNICEF used its convening role and expertise to support the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection in its leading and convening role in the drafting of the new Child Rights Strategy. The situation analysis and the priority framework were anchored in the cluster of rights from the Committee on the Rights of the Child reporting guidelines.

Gender Equality

Partially met benchmarks

Environmental Sustainability

Initiating action to meet benchmarks

South-South and Triangular Cooperation

In 2013, an exchange of experiences took place between Kosovo and Romania in order to learn about innovation labs with and for adolescents, but also to facilitate the exchange of experiences for the development of national strategies on youth and adolescents in both places. 2013 was an important year for initiation and start of work on adolescents and youth in Bulgaria, with support from Romania office. A joint plan, including the development of governments' capacity to address adolescents and youth and also to increase partnerships between civil society in both countries, was developed. It is expected to be implemented in 2014 with study tours and knowledge exchange between Romania and Bulgaria.

During the Ministerial Conference on Education in Istanbul, Romania's Minister of Education and technical staff from the Ministry of Education shared good practices from Romania regarding the inclusion of Roma and other vulnerable children in the education system.

Narrative Analysis by Programme Component Results and Intermediate Results

Romania - 3660

PC 1 - Social Inclusion and Disparity Reduction

PCR 3660/A0/05/801 Reduce disparities, increase equity and promote the social inclusion of vulnerable boys and girls.

 On-track

IR 3660/A0/05/801/001 Key Stakeholders support and enhance knowledge, attitudes, practices and services to promote holistic and equitable development in the early years

Progress: Following UNICEF advocacy and technical assistance in the development of documents related to the 2014-2020 EU programme cycle, early childhood education and care are being incorporated in several strategies in health, education and social inclusion. UNICEF continued to convene stakeholders in health, education and social protection to promote an integrated approach. The Minister of Health signed "A Promise Renewed" and committed to address infant mortality, focusing on reducing rural/urban disparities and scaling up home visitation, targeting communities with the highest under-5 mortality rates.

Within its community-based services model, UNICEF produced evidence on the impact of home-visiting of vulnerable families with young children, especially by community nurses and Roma health mediators. In partnership with WHO, this evidence was used for the development of the 2014-2020 Strategy on Health, the Law on Health Services and the adjusted basic package of health services, which will result in the scaling-up of community health. UNICEF and MoH advocated with Norway and Switzerland for the expansion of community health services in vulnerable communities in four counties. This work is also linked to UNICEF's technical assistance in the area of cash benefits, where the Office works closely with the World Bank and the Ministry of Labour. While results are encouraging, additional efforts to ensure nationwide implementation are required.

UNICEF developed a Knowledge Attitude Practice study on parenting for young children, focusing on vulnerable families. Based on results and the evaluation of the community-based services model, the Office is preparing a communication for social change strategy to improve parents' knowledge on positive disciplinary methods, as part of a three-year campaign to combat violence against children. Significant progress was made to ensure that the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative was taken over by national authorities in 2014. A last evaluation for certification and recertification of 32 maternities is on-going in partnership with NGOs.

 On-track

IR 3660/A0/05/801/002 Authorities at the national and subnational levels, communities and caregivers provide services and an environment conducive to the access of disadvantaged children, especially Roma, to quality, inclusive education

Progress: UNICEF continued to work with the Ministry of Education, NGOs and local authorities to demonstrate that integrated approaches at school, family and community levels are relevant, effective and efficient for the prevention and reduction of school dropout and absenteeism, and for advancing social inclusion of vulnerable children.

Evidence from local models, together with the launching of the Study on Out-Of-School Children in Romania, was used by UNICEF to advocate for the inclusion of early school leaving prevention into the Government's 2014-2020 programming in education. The draft National Education Strategy includes a pillar on prevention and reduction of early school leaving and earmarks 30 per cent of the potential 2014-2020 EU funding.

UNICEF also used modelling and research evidence to contribute to the development of secondary legislation in the areas of education and social inclusion, such as the establishment of quality standards for child-friendly schools, and to input the Early School Leaving and Lifelong Learning strategies. Complementing World Bank's assistance for the introduction of per capita funding, UNICEF, together with Ministry of Education and the Institute of Educational Sciences produced specific evidence on per capita funding impact on disadvantaged schools. Recommendations are expected to be used for the adjustment of the formula, to ensure that schools with vulnerable children receive adequate funding, and thus contribute to reducing the equity gap in education.

At the Regional Ministerial Conference organised by UNICEF and the Government of Turkey, the Romanian Ministry of Education shared good practices and endorsed the Call for Action on "Education Equity Now".

Together with NGOs and schools, UNICEF continued to address social norms impeding full access and participation of vulnerable children to quality inclusive education through the promotion of parenting programmes and positive Roma role models. This was recognized as good practice at the European level and is being evaluated for potential replication.

 On-track

IR 3660/A0/05/801/003 Basic and specialized services are increasingly available to adolescent boys and girls, especially vulnerable ones, who are empowered to practice safer behaviours

Progress: As this constitutes an emerging area of work for Romania, priority was given to generate evidence on the situation of adolescents, develop partnerships, build capacity and raise awareness.

In close collaboration with the new Ministry of Youth, UNICEF developed a determinant analysis on adolescents, using an innovative methodology to elicit information from very vulnerable adolescents. The findings and recommendations were incorporated into the draft 2014-2020 Strategy and Action Plan on Youth, as well as in the draft Child Rights Strategy. Vulnerable adolescents were identified as coming from Roma communities, poor families, having disabilities and living on the street.

UNICEF convened the first cross-sectoral meeting of representatives from the Government and civil society on adolescents, thus contributing to setting up a Working Group on adolescents and youth, comprised of representatives from several Ministries and civil society. This Working Group acts as a core group of experts and influencers for advancing adolescents' rights, especially excluded ones, on the political agenda. An exchange of experience took place in Kosovo to learn about innovation labs with and for adolescents.

In close partnerships with NGOs, central and local authorities, UNICEF tested innovative interventions to increase adolescents' participation in the life of their communities, to build their entrepreneurial skills and to increase their access to the labour market. Over 220 girls and boys, aged 14-24 years, from Iasi, Cluj and Focsani increased their entrepreneurial skills and constitute agents of social change among other adolescents and youth.

To increase the capacity of adolescents and youth services, a mapping exercise of such services was initiated in five urban settings (Bucharest, Cluj, Iasi, Constanta and Timisoara) and will serve as a basis to develop a model of integrated services for adolescents with fewer opportunities in Romania during the coming years.

 On-track

IR 3660/A0/05/801/004 National integrated social protection system and other stakeholders provide effective quality continuum of services, and support protective norms and behaviours for children and families with special focus on protection from and prevention of any form of violence, especially child separation

Progress: In close collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLFSPE) and local authorities, UNICEF is providing evidence that community-based services are effective and efficient for prevention of violence and separation of children from their families, through the implementation and evaluation of a model, implemented in 32 rural deprived communities. Evidence produced by the 2012 evaluation contributed to redesign the minimum package of services, integrating social assistance with community health. This evidence is also used by the Government in its 2014-2020 programming exercise, including in the draft National Strategy for Children's Rights, with focus on transition from institution to community-based care.

Much progress was made towards external leveraging resources to reducing gaps and disparities in a strategic and sustainable manner. UNICEF is now well positioned to provide technical assistance to the Government of Romania in the accession and utilization of EU and Norwegian funding. MLFSPE assisted by UNICEF and NGOs, is updating its strategic and normative framework, including primary law on children's rights and related secondary legislation. Particularly noteworthy is the draft of the common order of the MLFSPE, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education for the unique evaluation methodology of children with disabilities.

In line with the European Commission's Communication on Social Investment Package and Recommendation on Investing in Children, and as part of the 2014-2020 EU programme documents, UNICEF is providing technical assistance to the MLFSPE for the development of the Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy. This includes the scaling up of basic social services and reducing number of people (including children) at risk of poverty and social exclusion. Complementing World Bank's assistance to reform cash benefits scheme, UNICEF is engaged in providing policy options for the design of the Minimum Insertion Income with focus on vulnerable families with children.

PC 2 - Strengthening governance and partnerships for child rights

PCR 3660/A0/05/802 Public authorities, in partnership with civil society, international organizations and the private sector, will exercise good governance to reduce child deprivation and advance the rights of girls and boys, both nationally and sub-nationally

 On-track

IR 3660/A0/05/802/001 Central and decentralized authorities and key stakeholders increasingly monitor child rights through an integrated monitoring mechanism to support evidence-based policies for the well-being of disadvantaged children.

Progress: In 2013, priority was given to revising the normative framework in light of the upcoming EU budget cycle, leveraging fund for vulnerable children and strengthening child rights monitoring.

As the Government of Romania engaged stakeholders in the development of strategic documents to access EU funding for the period 2014-2020, UNICEF provided technical assistance for the drafting of the National Strategies in: Education, Health (together with WHO, as part of UNCT support), Child Rights, Youth, and for the revision of the Roma Inclusion Strategy (as lead agency for UNCT support). The draft Education Strategy, using evidence generated through a study supported by UNICEF, intends to allocate 30 per cent of potential funding to the inclusion of out-of-school children.

A Memorandum of Understanding between UNICEF and the Ministry of EU Funds is being finalized, which will allow beneficiaries and managing authorities to draw on UNICEF expertise, using EU funding for the period 2014 - 2020. UNICEF advocated successfully for the re-allocation of Norwegian funding for vulnerable children, based on evidence generated through its models. This is being followed by a discussion on the potential provision of technical assistance by UNICEF to accompany this new funding. This technical assistance would help Romania access more funding for vulnerable families, and ensure that this funding is used strategically, efficiently and effectively for the advancement of social reforms and the realization of child rights.

The process to further develop the capacity of public institutions to collect, analyse and report on child rights data is advancing and will expand once mechanisms for operationalizing the Child Rights Strategy will be in place with UNICEF support. The Country Office contributed to strengthening the capacity of the Ombudsman Institution to document the protection of the rights of children in conflict

with the law. A national survey conducted in detention and re-education facilities for minors is expected to alert concerned Commissions of the Parliament and governmental institutions on the need to significantly enhance the enforcement of juvenile justice legal provisions and regulations. A mapping and assessment study on national child rights data collection systems has been initiated. Based on a comprehensive diagnosis, the study will formulate practical recommendations on systems' harmonization and development with a renewed emphasis on equity data.

 On-track

IR 3660/A0/05/802/002 By 2017, public authorities, civil society, private sector, media and general public are engaged in sustainable long-term partnerships to advocate and mobilize resources for vulnerable children in and outside of Romania

Progress: Intense communication efforts contributed to raising children's profile on the public and political agenda, including through eight widely covered events and two national campaigns, multiplying media coverage of children's issues and UNICEF by five. High-profile events included the launch of the Out-of-School Children Report with the Minister of Education, of the first study on adolescents with the Minister of Youth and the Conference on Roma Social Inclusion with the Minister of Labour and the European Commissioner for Employment (as part of UNCT support).

Under the new partnership with the Chamber of Deputies, advocacy and awareness raising events, such as the launch of the SOWCR with the President of the Chamber and the Minister of Labour (kicking off a campaign on inclusion of children with disabilities), contributed to the Government's commitment to a new strategy on people with disabilities and the request for technical assistance from UNICEF.

On Child's Rights Day, UNICEF, the Chamber of Deputies and the Ministry of Labour hosted an unprecedented debate on child rights, gathering representatives from all political parties in the Parliament and civil society. On the same day, as part of the global Violence against Children (VAC) campaign, an Awareness and Fundraising Gala was organized with the President of the Chamber, the Prime Minister, four Ministers, and representative from the corporate and media sectors. Locally adapted global VAC spots were picked up by 15 TV stations, including the National Television which signed a partnership with UNICEF for a four months campaign on this issue. The economic crisis continued to affect UNICEF's ability to fundraise locally. Several options are being explored to ensure future sustainable income from private individuals such as SMS pledge and face-to-face and through corporate access to customers and employees.

A new partnership with Smiley, a famous and respected pop singer, made him a Goodwill Ambassador who will support UNICEF to engage new audiences: adolescents and children, in line with Country Programme priorities.


 On-track

IR 3660/P0/05/802/003 Support fundraising activities funded by PFP solely

Progress:

To support the full implementation of the new 2013-2017 Country Programme, UNICEF Romania developed and started implementing a comprehensive fundraising strategy that integrated international and local fundraising. As a result of its efforts, the Country Office mobilized over 100 per cent of the Other Resources (OR) ceiling for 2013, and the already raised around 90 per cent of its 2014 ceiling. The top funding sources were thematic funding for education, the German and UK National Committees for UNICEF and GDF Suez. Funds for programmes were also mobilized during 2013 from the Swiss National Committee for UNICEF, the Wella Foundation, thematic fund education and 7 per cent was set-aside. UNICEF's engagement with Norway and Switzerland was of a different nature as the Office collaborates with them to coordinate advocacy and actions in sectors of common interest, and make its expertise available in these areas. Given the eroded, highly fragmented and relatively new Romanian CSR market, building successful corporate partnerships relies on strong sustainable fundraising instruments, for which progress was made in setting the stage with a new slate of partnerships in 2014. More emphasis is being put on private individual fundraising, with several new techniques tested in 2013. Romania was the third country in the world where UNICEF tested SMS pledges. Face-to-face was also further tested, and with the assistance of UNICEF Croatia, lessons learned were documented. On the basis of these promising results, the Country Office will invest in individual pledges in 2014.

PC 3 - Cross Sectoral

 On-track

PCR 3660/A0/05/800 Effective and efficient programme management and operations support to programme delivery

Progress: UNICEF Romania was audited by the Office of Internal Audit in March 2013. The audit found that key controls were functioning well and made some recommendations that have all been implemented by November 2013. In governance, the audit noted that the statutory structure of the office had been clearly defined and included committees and teams with clear terms of reference, which function as planned. The Rolling Management Plan is up to date, key performance indicators are monitored regularly by the CMT and corrective actions taken to address bottlenecks. Delegation of authority procedures is followed, Table of authority up to date.

 On-track

IR 3660/A0/05/800/001 Effective and efficient governance structures and systems to adequately manage risks and achieve programme results.

Progress: The statutory structure of the office is clearly defined and includes committees and teams with clear terms of reference, which function as planned. Key agreements reached in the meetings of various teams are documented and their implementation are monitored by the Country Management Team (CMT).

The Rolling Management Plan 2013-2014 (RMP) describes the key programme and management priorities, as well as staff responsibilities and accountability, which were established in consultation with staff. The RMP is continuously used for measuring and revising performance indicators, as this is as a standing point on the CMT monthly meetings agenda. Corrective actions are taken to address the identified bottlenecks.

The Office follows policy prescribed procedures for delegating authority and the table of authority is updated as required. Staff are informed on the accountabilities related to their specific roles.

During first quarter of 2013, the Country Office finalised the revision of all its business processes to enhance its efficiency and effectiveness. These processes are documented and shared to ensure consistency and compliance.

Risk Management is one of the areas identified by the audit report as needing strengthening. Actions were taken to establish a more thorough follow-up mechanism to ensure that action plans developed to manage high and medium-high risks are effectively and efficiently implemented. The Office's risk and control library was updated to adequately consider the risks related to the achievement of the planned results of the new country programme and is regularly monitored.

All staff participated in a meeting on enterprise risk management (ERM) policy, with updates on the last changes in ERM matrix. The Risk and Control Self-Assessment was updated through a participatory and prioritisation process. In May 2013, the CMT reviewed and approved the Risk and Control Library (RCL) and the subsequent action plan, which were shared with all staff. The CMT reviews the RCL quarterly for needed changes/ escalations of risks and monitor action plan implementation.

EWEA updated with participation from all staff in July 2013. ERM profile updated in June 2013, approved by the CMT, including action plan which will be monitored quarterly starting Q3 (September CMT meeting.)

 On-track

IR 3660/A0/05/800/002 Effective and efficient management and stewardship of financial resources and of other assets of the organization

Progress: Monthly bank reconciliations were done regularly and on time, the financial data recorded in SAP is accurate and clearance is done on a regular basis. The Office continued to use the bank optimisation tool on the intranet for reporting cash balances, and inputting cash forecasts. Replenishments were done as per the agreed procedure, permanently checking with Treasury in NYHQ in order to use the best exchange rate available (HQ versus local.) Budget monitoring is a continuous task and the review of implementation rate is a standing item on the agenda of the monthly CMT meetings. The implementation rate was over 98 per cent at the end of 2013, both for regular and other resources. Over 99 per cent of the grants were utilized within their validity date.

The Contracts and Partnership Cooperation Agreements Review Committees (respectively CRC and PCARC) are established and functioning. During 2013, six PCAs were reviewed by the PCARC, and one contract by the CRC.

Direct Cash Transfers (DCTs) made up 52 per cent of the 2013 programmable amount for the country programme. During 2013, Romania office had no unliquidated DCTs over nine months.

In 2013, as agreed with the auditors, UNICEF Romania developed and implemented an assurance plan that is appropriate to the risk exposure of the Office to ensure that risk management focused on high-risk partners. The implementation is continuously monitored by the CMT.

A simplified macro-assessment was undertaken in September 2013, helping the Office to formalize the risk environment in which UNICEF is working.

 On-track

IR 3660/A0/05/800/003 Effective and efficient management of human capacity, including staff development and learning


Progress: Country Office took a result-based approach to identify the competencies required to pursue its agenda in Romania for the period 2013-2017 and translated them to positions. Rapid changes in the local fundraising environment required some further adjustments. In 2013, new positions were created: senior Policy and Knowledge Coordinator, Senior Communication and Fundraising Manager, Youth and Adolescents Specialist, Child Rights Monitoring Specialist, Local Partnership Officer, Contract (supply) assistant position, and recruited against. Also the Fund Raising Manager position was blocked for recruitment, and a Fund Raising Officer temporary position was created and recruited against. The job profile and the name of the Corporate and Events Officer were changed to Fund Raising Officer to reflect the shift in the local fundraising strategy towards private individuals.

The Local Training Committee had three formal meetings during 2013, and a number of additional ad hoc consultations, as required. The Committee identified the competency gaps in the Country Office and developed a strategy to strengthen the knowledge base of staff members. The strategy was endorsed and monitored by the Country Management Team. Over 80 per cent of the training activities initially planned were implemented, both group and individual learning. The Integrity Awareness on line training was followed by required staff.

In April 2013, taking into consideration the results of the Global Staff Morale Survey and the fact that that 25 per cent of the team was

new compared to 2012, a two-day staff retreat was organized, aiming to improve team functioning, and increase effectiveness by understanding the need for common commitment to team goals. As a result, staff members have acquired a better understanding of themselves and each other, and the implications of diversity in terms of communicating and working together. Some principles were adopted by the Country Office to strengthen mutual respect, open communication and better support.

Performance evaluation discussions took place regularly as required, with honest feedback encouraged by the management and local staff association. Staff are aware of locally available counselling and peer support, and UN Care is implemented in the Office.

 On-track

PCR 3660/A0/05/803 Monitoring and evaluation

Progress: Progress as planned

 On-track

IR 3660/A0/05/803/001 The Country Programme uses a cross-sectoral, human rights and result-based, gender sensitive approach and risk management to evidence-based planning, monitoring and evaluation & fundraising

Progress: Progressing as planned

Effective Governance Structure

UNICEF Romania was audited by the Office of Internal Audit in March 2013. The audit focused on governance and included reviewing supervisory and regulatory processes that support the country programme, such as: advisory teams and statutory committees, identification of UNICEF priorities and expected results, performance measurement, delegation of authorities, risk management, ethics etc. The audit found that key controls were functioning well and made some recommendations that have all been implemented.

The statutory structure of the office is clearly defined and includes committees/teams with clear terms of reference, which function as planned. Key agreements reached in the meetings of various teams are documented and their implementation are monitored by the Country Management Team (CMT).

The Rolling Management Plan 2013-2014 (RMP) describes the key programme and management priorities, as well as staff responsibilities and accountability, which were established in consultation with staff. The RMP is continuously used for measuring and revising performance indicators, as this is as a standing point on the CMT monthly meetings agenda. Corrective actions are taken to address the identified bottlenecks.

The Office follows policy prescribed procedures for delegating authority and the table of authority is updated as required. Staff were informed on the accountabilities related to their specific roles.

During the first quarter of 2013, the Country Office finalised the revision of all its business processes to enhance its efficiency and effectiveness. These processes are documented and shared to ensure consistency and compliance.

Risk Management is one of the areas identified by the audit report as needing strengthening. Actions were taken to establish a more thorough follow-up mechanism to ensure that action plans developed to manage high and medium-high risks are effectively and efficiently implemented. The Office's risk and control library was updated to adequately consider the risks related to the achievement of the planned results of the new country programme and is regularly monitored.

All staff participated in a meeting on enterprise risk management (ERM) policy, with updates on the last changes in ERM matrix. The Risk and Control Self-Assessment was updated through a participatory and prioritisation process. In May 2013, the CMT reviewed and approved the Risk and Control Library (RCL) and the subsequent action plan, which were shared with all staff. The CMT reviews the RCL quarterly for needed changes/ escalations of risks and monitor action plan implementation.

All actions identified in the audit report were implemented by November 2013.

Strategic Risk Management

As mentioned in the previous section, the risk profile for Romania, shown in the Risk and Control Self-Assessment (RCSA), was reviewed and updated in June 2013. It follows the global policy and template, and provides a baseline of key risks and associated controls and responses that may impact the achievement of UNICEF's objectives and results in Romania. For each of the identified risk, prevention and responses have been developed and their implementation is followed up and monitored by the Country Management Team.

The Business Continuity Plan (BCP) was updated in March 2013, and incorporated staff changes and other required revisions business process related.

Information on the Early Warning and Early Action portal was updated in July 2013. The exercise was coordinated by the EWEA Focal Point, but all staff were involved in the process, ensuring awareness of their roles and UNICEF's priorities and processes in case of an emergency.

Business continuity in terms of Information and communication technologies is closely monitored, including

maintaining a backup Internet connection, with a separate ISP. Key users have VPN installed on their laptops, in order to ensure remote access to organizational IT applications and systems, and a refresher training sessions was held in the last quarter of 2013 presenting to all staff options for remote connection.

Security issues are addressed at the UN level, together with other United Nations agencies participating in the Security Management Team meetings.

Operations staff members are aware of the financial and administrative management for emergency guidelines, which facilitate timely response in case of emergencies. Key programme staff were trained on UNICEF emergency response.

Evaluation

The new Country Programme places a renewed emphasis on the relevance and quality of research, including evaluations which it conducts in collaboration with key partners. The capacity of the Country Office was strengthened in this regard, and full use was made of the regional and global feedback mechanisms. This contributed to an increase the credibility of UNICEF as a provider of technical assistance and evidence.

UNICEF uses a five-year Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (IMEP) for the period 2013-2017 and a rolling IMEP for the first two years (2013-2014). The 2013 IMEP included six studies in the areas of: adolescents; parenting; financing the pre-university educational system; out-of-school children in the upper-secondary education; costing and budgeting of the National Strategy on Early Childhood Education; and an overview of the status in key areas of the National Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of Child Rights. It also comprised three evaluations: a joint evaluation of 2005-2012 National Anti-Drug Strategy, an intermediate evaluation of the community-based services model, and an intermediate evaluation of School Attendance Initiative. Finally, the IMEP encompassed a review of national child rights data gaps and data collection systems, and a "Partner data collection activity" (TransMonEE). Two studies and a monitoring system output had to be postponed to 2014 following delays in national strategic planning and execution of relevant public policy instruments.

The Country Office fully observes UNICEF Evaluation Policy and has put in place a management process for evaluations. While it is hard to document a practice of independent, high-quality evaluations in Romania, the relative scarcity of such products cannot be attributed to the absence of required capacities. UNICEF made and will continue making sustained efforts to widely disseminate the calls for proposals for all planned evaluations and studies so as to ensure the participation in competitive processes of the most professional and experienced service providers. At the same time, UNICEF staff members provide detailed feedback to contracted organizations/experts at all stages and on all deliverables, as a process for strengthening local capacities. Counterparts such as ministries and local authorities are systematically involved in evaluations and studies, which also contribute to capacity development. Of note, the latest completed evaluation of the Community-based services model was rated as highly satisfactory in the Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System.

The regular and independent evaluation of local models is an essential and integral part of the Country Programme. This type of evaluation has two purposes: during the implementation phase, assess the efficiency and effectiveness of models and make recommendations to adjust components; at the end of the implementation, assess the impact of the model and make recommendations for its scaling up. This gives UNICEF the evidence and the confidence to propose policy options based on independent evidence.

With the establishment of the Child rights monitoring position in the Office, better planning and the provision of swift support supported the timely formulation of management responses, and is expected to increase consistency in the use of findings and recommendations.

Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology

Continuing good practices from previous years, the Information Communication Technologies (ICT) function helped UNICEF Romania team by providing appropriate ICT solutions and expertise to pursue UNICEF's

mandate in Romania.

The key points from 2013 activity are as follows: a) Systems availability targets were met; b) Disaster recovery and business continuity requirements were followed; and c) Outdated hardware was upgraded or replaced, with functional equipment donated to implementing partners (NGOs) as per the Property Survey Board recommendation. Used supplies and defective hardware was recycled or disposed in a secure, environment-friendly and safe manner.

The main ICT projects completed during 2013 were the following:

- a) Server hardware and configuration upgraded to work in a fail-over cluster architecture, and storage space upgraded to a modular smart array solution. Both upgrades were done according to UNICEF standards and industry best practices. The new configuration highly improves availability of the systems.
- b) Half of the user hardware was upgraded to increase users' efficiency in using ICT systems and to ensure mobile, remote connection to corporate ICT systems.

Lotus Traveller was installed on all smart phones available to users, in order to make access to Lotus Notes and corporate email easier. Blackberries will be gradually replaced by Samsung smart phones, as per ICT global policy and recommendation.

Proactive measure of improving users access to data and easier retrieval were taken: a search function on file name and content was implemented on the public shared drive, and an ftp server is available for sharing big sized files.

The online pledges from individuals using UNICEF's website as an entry point and integrating web-based messages with a TV campaign continued, as the tests done in 2012 proved successful. As a result, in 2013 there was increased use of the UNICEF website and social media (mostly Facebook). Advocacy with telecom companies to leverage their resources and network to implement SMS-pledges with their customers continued in 2013, and UNICEF Romania was one of the first three UNICEF offices to implement an SMS pledge campaign during the third quarter of 2013.

Fund-raising and Donor Relations

To support the full implementation of the new 2013-2017 Country Programme, UNICEF Romania developed and started implementing a comprehensive fundraising strategy that integrated international and local fundraising. As a result of its efforts, the Country Office mobilized over 100 per cent of the Other Resources (OR) ceiling for 2013, and the already raised around 75 per cent of its 2014 ceiling. It should be noted that since 2007, bilateral donors have progressively left Romania with the exception of Switzerland and Norway, which focus their funding on civil society and authorities. UNICEF's engagement with Norway and Switzerland is of different nature as the Office collaborates with them to coordinate advocacy and actions in sectors of common interest, and make its expertise available in these areas. Therefore, UNICEF Romania's fundraising depends on National Committees, funding from HQ, corporate and private individual donors.

All donor reports were submitted on time and all queries from donors were swiftly addressed. PBAs that expired in 2013 were committed at 100 per cent. In 2013, only the locally raised PBAs with general purpose (not earmarked) were extended, in order to cover the period until the Mid-Term Review (June 2015).

The implementation rate is monitored monthly, as a standing point on the agenda of the Country Management Team. InSight reports are used, together with the Monthly Regional Monitor report to monitor implementation rates. The overall implementation rate (Regular and Other Resources) for 2013 was over 98 per cent.

The top funding sources were thematic funding for education, the German and UK National Committees for UNICEF and GDF Suez. Fund for programmes were also mobilized during 2013 from the Swiss National Committee for UNICEF, the Wella Foundation, thematic fund education and 7 per cent was set-aside.

Given the eroded, highly fragmented and relatively new Romanian CSR market, building successful corporate

partnerships relies on strong sustainable fundraising instruments, for which progress was made in setting the stage with a new slate of partnerships in 2014. More emphasis is being put on private individual fundraising, with several new techniques tested in 2013. Romania was the third country in the world where UNICEF tested SMS pledges. Face-to-face was also further tested, and with the assistance of UNICEF Croatia, lessons learned were documented. On the basis on these promising results, the Country Office will invest in individual pledges in 2014.

Management of Financial and Other Assets

The Office of Internal Audit concluded at the end of its 2013 audit that the controls and processes over operations support were established and functioning satisfactorily. There was one action for improvement agreed upon and implemented during the second quarter of 2013, namely strengthening management of consultants and contractors. The consultants' business process was revised to reinforce competitive selection, contract start date and compulsory P11 forms. The process was discussed with all staff and endorsed by the Country Management Team (CMT). Related key performance indicators (KPIs) were added to the list of existing KPIs in the Rolling Management Plan, and are monitored monthly.

Budget monitoring is a continuous task and the review of implementation rate is a standing item on the agenda of the monthly CMT meetings. The implementation rate was over 98 per cent at the end of 2013, both for regular and other resources. Over 99 per cent of the grants were utilized within their validity date. Unfortunately, budget monitoring is cumbersome as reports need to be manually updated. InSight reports do not allow the monitoring of Other Resources annual implementation, as annual allocations are not available in the system.

Monthly bank reconciliations were done regularly and on time, the financial data recorded in SAP is accurate and clearance is done on a regular basis. The Office continued to use the bank optimisation tool on the intranet for reporting cash balances, and inputting cash forecasts. Replenishments were done as per the agreed procedure, permanently checking with Treasury in NYHQ in order to use the best exchange rate available (HQ versus local.)

The Contracts and Partnership Cooperation Agreements Review Committees (respectively CRC and PCARC) are established and functioning. During 2013, six PCAs were reviewed by the PCARC, and one contract by the CRC.

Direct Cash Transfers (DCTs) made up 52 per cent of the 2013 programmable amount for the country programme. During 2013, Romania office had no unliquidated DCTs over nine months.

In 2013, as agreed with the auditors, UNICEF Romania developed and implemented an assurance plan that is appropriate to the risk exposure of the Office to ensure that risk management focused on high-risk partners. The implementation is continuously monitored by the CMT.

A simplified macro-assessment was undertaken in September 2013, helping the Office to formalize the risk environment in which UNICEF is working. Out of 11 standard indicators recommended to be assessed in the standard macro assessment, one was identified as a significant risk (follow-up action to audit reports by state institutions), six moderate and four low. The conclusion was that the Court of Accounts, which is the external public auditor of Romania, has the capacity to undertake audits up to international standards. Therefore, in its relation with governmental partners, UNICEF can rely on the capacity of national authorities to audit implementing partners. UNICEF will continue to conduct assurance activities that include reviews of implementing partners' financial management systems and transactions as suggested in the Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers framework.

Supply Management

In 2013, all procurement activities were done locally, encompassing supplies such as printed materials, a few pieces of furniture for the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative, ICT equipment and some programme supplies for schools that are part of the School Attendance Initiative. Programme staff members monitored the distribution and use of supplies by end-users through regular field visits. UNICEF staff also provided support in the limited procurement of goods as part of PCAs signed with partners.

Out of a total US\$490,000 spent on procurement, 52 per cent represented services, and 48 per cent goods. Some 60 per cent of the goods purchased in 2013 were programme supplies.

In the first quarter of 2013, the procurement business process was revised, and VISION transactions have been standardised and streamlined to increase efficiency and effectiveness. As the new staff member got trained and knowledgeable in UNICEF supply management procedures, the procurement of goods has been centralized to Operations. The procurement of services will also gradually move to the Operations section to ensure better accuracy of data and achieve time efficiency.

In 2013, one Long-Term Arrangement (LTA) was established, as a result of a bidding process done in collaboration with UNDP and UNHCR, for a common travel agency. During 2013, UNICEF bought services in value of US\$49,000 from the travel agency, consisting in air tickets, accommodation, and conference/meeting organizing etc. The main gain is that the LTA saved staff time. However, in certain occasions, especially related to organizing conferences related to programme activities, other offers were sought and, depending on the services and prices provided, best value for money was used as the main criteria for working with other companies.

UNICEF Romania office does not have a warehouse and does not keep inventories (programme supplies) on stock.

Human Resources

As part of the preparation for the new Country Programme, the Country Office took a result-based approach when identifying the competencies required for pursuing its agenda in Romania for the period 2013-2017 and translated them to positions. Rapid changes in the local fundraising environment required some further adjustments. Subsequently, in 2013, the following changes were implemented:

1. New positions were created: senior Policy and Knowledge Coordinator, Senior Communication and Fundraising Manager, Youth and Adolescents Specialist, Child Rights Monitoring Specialist, Local Partnership Officer, Contract (supply) assistant position, and recruited against.
2. The Fund Raising Manager position was blocked for recruitment, and a Fund Raising Officer temporary position was created and recruited against.
3. The job profile and the name of the Corporate and Events Officer were changed to Fund Raising Officer to reflect the shift in the local fundraising strategy towards private individuals.

The Local Training Committee had three formal meetings during 2013, and a number of additional ad hoc consultations, as required. The Committee identified the competency gaps in the Country Office and developed a strategy to strengthen the knowledge base of staff members. The strategy was endorsed and monitored by the Country Management Team. Over 80 per cent of the training activities initially planned were implemented, both group and individual learning. The Integrity Awareness on line training was followed by required staff within the given timeframe.

In April 2013, taking into consideration the results of the Global Staff Morale Survey and the fact that that 25 per cent of the team was new compared to 2012, a two-day staff retreat was organized, aiming to improve team functioning, and increase effectiveness by understanding the need for common commitment to team goals. As a result, staff members have acquired a better understanding of themselves and each other, and the implications if diversity in terms of communicating and working together. Some principles were adopted by the Country Office to strengthen mutual respect, open communication and better support.

Performance evaluation discussions took place regularly as required, with honest feedback encouraged by the management and local staff association. Staff are aware of locally available counselling and peer support, and UN Care is implemented in the Office.

Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings

During the first quarter of 2013, UNICEF Romania finalised the revision of internal business processes. The Table of Authority was revised to allow a smooth flow of the process steps, in order to streamline and make processing of transactions more efficient, while respecting appropriate segregation of duties. It aimed at bringing more clarity and efficiency to routine work, so that staff could spend more time on strategic tasks.

The Office continued to use Skype and video conferencing to save on communication and travel costs. Opportunities for reducing support costs negotiated at the end of 2012 were implemented in 2013: service provider contracts were re-negotiated resulting in 16 per cent reduced fees for copier servicing and 60 per cent discount on bank commissions for all internal transfers.

New copier equipment was purchased in December 2013, for which the negotiated price per copy is 30 per cent lower than the arrangement with the previous service and consumables provider. After confirming the quality of services during the trial months, all equipment will be switched to the new prices to achieve further savings.

UNICEF Romania continued to be part of the E&E (Efficiency and Effectiveness) global initiative and member of the Field Reference Group working on identifying opportunities for simplification and efficiency gains in business processes and transactions – with focus on PCAs and DCTs.

UNICEF Romania continued to be located in the UN House, facilitating communication among UN agencies, with the rent paid for by the host Government. This financial support which amounts 32,000 € per month for the rent, is gratefully acknowledged by the Country Office. Common agreements for travel, courier, and telecommunication services were maintained in 2013 together with UNDP, UNHCR and WHO. These agreements provided cost benefits by combining volumes.

Changes in AMP & CPMP

The Country Office developed and implemented a Rolling Management Plan for 2013 – 2014 which was updated a couple of times during the year to include additional key performance indicators to be monitored by the Country Management Team, updating the training plan and composition of statutory committees, etc. These updates were based on the audit recommendations and mid-year review.

For 2014, a submission to the February PBR is envisaged, including the creation of a new position Advocacy and Communication Officer, and regularizing a temporary appointment into a fixed term position for the Youth and Adolescents Specialist. The Rolling Management Plan will be reviewed and updated at the beginning of 2014, but no major change is expected as the Country Office is in the first years of the Country Programme and the Rolling Management Plan was developed for 2013-2014. A more thorough discussion and revision will take place during the Mid-Term Review in 2015.

Summary Notes and Acronyms

BCP	Business Continuity Plan
CBS	Community Based Services
CEE/CIS	Central and Eastern Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States
CERME	Centrul Roman de Modelare Economica [Romanian Centre for Economic Modelling]
CMT	Country Management Team
CO	Country Office

CP	Country Programme
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CPMP	Country Programme Management Plan
CRC	Contracts Review Committee
CPD	Country Programme Document
CRIPS	Centrul de Resurse si Informare pentru Profesiuni Sociale [Resource and Information Centre for Social Professions]
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CWD	Children with disabilities
DCT	Direct Cash Transfer
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care
E&E	Efficiency and Effectiveness
ERM	Enterprise Risk Management
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOR	Government of Romania
GS4	General Services – level 4
IMEP	Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
IPSAS	International Public Sector Accounting Standards
MLFSPE	Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Protection and the Elderly
MNE	Ministry of National Education
MYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OR	Other Resources
PBR	Programme and Budget Review
PCARC	Partnership Cooperation Agreements Review Committee
PER	Performance Evaluation Report
PWD	People with disabilities
RCSA	Risk and Control Self-Assessment
RENINCO	Reteaua Nationala de Informare si Cooperare pentru integrarea in comunitate a copiilor si tinerilor cu cerinte educative speciale [National Information and Cooperation Network for Community Integration of Children and Youth with Special Educational Needs]
RMP	Rolling Management Plan
RR	Regular Resources
SMT	Security Management Team
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
VISION	Virtual Integrated System of Information

Document Centre

Evaluation

	Title	Sequence Number	Type of Report
1	2013 IMEP FOR ROMANIA	2013/001	IMEP
2	The Evaluation of the National Anti-Drug Strategy	2013/003	Evaluation
3	State of Adolescents in Romania	2013/004	Study
4	Helping the 'invisible' children. Second Evaluation Report	2013/005	Evaluation

