

### Executive Summary

The first year of the country programme saw good progress in further advancing social sector system reforms, particularly those aimed at equity and social inclusion. This agenda was additionally advanced and supported through partnerships with key actors such as Parliament, the private sector and civil society. Among the most significant achievements of the year was the launching and use of the [Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey](#) (MICS4) data, which provided important evidence about progress in child well-being and highlighted disparities between the general population and vulnerable groups, notably the poorest quintiles and Roma. The data, particularly from the Roma sample, informed policy development in the education and health sectors, was used in equity-focused research, and was integrated into advocacy with partners and through National Ambassadors. Furthermore, MICS4 fed into focused knowledge generation and advocacy on [Roma early childhood inclusion](#), with the process of developing a national report on Roma Early Childhood Inclusion mobilizing engagement and greater commitment within the Government and among partners. Important progress was also made in advancing reforms in the social welfare sphere, including the development and use of social protection indicators to improve system monitoring, the development of by-laws for the 2011 Law on Social Welfare, and the establishment of and capacity building for new community services for families of children with disabilities in 41 municipalities.

Delays in the finalization of a situation analysis on school drop-out (conducted by the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) in collaboration with the World Bank) have slowed down UNICEF's implementation of its planned work on this issue. With the key analysis now available on the causes of school drop-out and system gaps and bottlenecks, work in this important area will accelerate in 2012. The second programme component, which focuses on strengthening independent structures for accountability and rights-holders' demand for entitlements, is a new and innovative approach for UNICEF. While groundwork was laid for key partnerships, further work is required to build complementarity and synergy under this programme component, and to ensure strategic and coherent demand for system reforms to benefit the most disadvantaged.

Partnership with the European Union was further strengthened this year as UNICEF proved itself to be a reliable source of analysis and evidence in addition to its role as a programming partner. Cooperation with Parliament matured and took on new dimensions, as the Working Group on Child Rights made decisive steps to fulfill their oversight role through field monitoring legal provisions on inclusive education and a public scrutiny hearing on their findings. The Working Group has been recognized both globally and regionally as an example of good practice.

### Country Situation

The year was marked by important steps forward in Serbia's EU accession process. Significant effort was made by the Government to adapt its legal framework in line with EU requirements and the two remaining individuals for whom indictments had been issued by The Hague were arrested. Nevertheless, the October [recommendation](#) of the European Commission to grant Serbia EU candidacy status emphasized the outstanding issue of normalization of relations with Kosovo. Since then, progress has been slow, with internationally mediated talks producing modest results and tensions in northern Kosovo continuing. The [European Council decision](#) on the candidacy status of Serbia, expected on 9 December, was postponed until March 2012 pending a further normalization in relations with Kosovo.

On the economic front, modest growth of approximately two percent is estimated for 2011 (compared to one percent in 2010). In September, following amendment of the state budget, the IMF approved a new 18-month precautionary [stand-by agreement](#) worth USD1.5bn. However, unemployment continues to rise, reaching 24% which, combined with the foundering economic recovery and dissatisfaction with government austerity measures, is expected to drive voter decisions in the upcoming elections scheduled for the first half of 2012.

The economic crisis resulted in a significant increase in [poverty](#) to 9.2% in 2010 (compared to 6.9% in 2009). Those most affected are children below 13 years of age, populations in non-urban areas, households with more than five members and persons with lower education levels. The dearth of opportunity in rural areas is driving continued migration from rural towards urban areas, evidenced in the [2011 National Census](#) which also showed a 5% decrease in the total population of Serbia over the past ten years.

At the same time, [MICS4](#) shows visible progress in most areas, both at the national level and among Roma living in Roma settlements. Nutrition is the only area demonstrating slight downward trends, with the prevalence of mild to moderate stunting increased and exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months of life practiced by fewer mothers compared with 2005.

Despite overall progress, however, important disparities remain. The under-five mortality rate of children in Roma settlements, which has been halved in comparison to five years ago, is still twice the national average: 15 versus eight per thousand. Among children aged 3-5, 44% in the general population attend preschool programmes while in disadvantaged groups, the percentage drops to half that figure or even lower. Regarding primary education, the percentage of Roma school-age children that currently attend the first grade has increased, although disparities are still visible at enrolment and even more prominent in attendance and completion rates for primary education. Early marriage and child-bearing are other areas of disparity, with as many as 14% of Roma girls aged 15 to 19 reporting being married before the age of 15, and one third having their first child before turning 18.

MICS4 findings were complemented by the [1st National Report](#) on Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction in the Republic of Serbia. The report, produced by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, has been established as a regular tracking tool on the status of social inclusion and poverty trends and is informing policy development and implementation.

On the policy front, there has been significant progress. The new Law on Social Welfare, which UNICEF helped to shape, was adopted by the Parliament in March 2011. If adequately implemented, this law has the potential to significantly improve the social protection and inclusion of children. It prioritizes community-care and limits residential care (e.g. ban on institutionalization of children under three), brings non-state actors into the social-care service provision system (through introducing community-service standards and licensing of service providers), increases coverage and amount of cash assistance for the poorest, strengthens internal oversight/control systems and provides mechanisms for the continual development of social care in the country.

This has also been a critical year for further development of education sector policies, with particular focus on inclusion. Implementation of the 2009 Law on the Basis of Education has advanced, and specific monitoring of the inclusive provisions by the MoES as well as by the Parliament (the latter supported by UNICEF) have both identified progress and remaining challenges. In addition, work continued to reform the education financing system, with UNICEF supporting a study on the costs of inclusive education provisions and possibilities for additional funding for students with special needs. Two draft laws on Primary and Secondary Education (adoption expected in 2012) further define rights outlined in the general education law.

The coming year will be dominated by the elections, both in terms of campaigning and post-election consolidation, which is expected to have an impact on the implementation of ongoing reform processes (most notably in the education, social welfare and justice sectors).

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

[MICS4](#) reveals that Roma children remain among the most deprived, along with children in households from the poorest quintiles, those from rural areas and those whose mothers have low educational levels. These dimensions are often overlapping and mutually reinforcing. Furthermore, children with disabilities (physical

and/or intellectual), particularly those living in institutions or isolated from community life, are deprived of opportunities to grow up in a supportive, inclusive environment. Across these groups, inequities are visible in education achievements (completion and drop-out rates), health status (mortality and immunization rates), unequal access to services/opportunities and insufficient protection from violence, all of which undermine child development outcomes.

While Serbia's legislation and policy framework is being adapted to ensure inclusion and prevent discrimination, implementation is still not advanced and requires sustained commitment and coordinated effort from all relevant sectors. The lack of financial resources to fully support inclusion measures is a serious constraint in this time of economic crisis and budget cuts. In addition, discriminatory practices by public service providers are also a major factor. Inequitable regional development/investment is another important constraint, affecting both the availability and quality of services, as many entitlements fall within the mandate of municipal government. Finally, ensuring an adequate, multi-dimensional response to child poverty continues to be a challenge. Such a response must combine cash transfers with services across different sectors, as well as articulated demand for entitlements and close monitoring of government's accountabilities.

### **Data/Evidence**

The country programme is monitoring trends and progress achieved in relation to the status of the most vulnerable children. Comparability between [MICS 3](#) and [4](#) as well as greater disaggregation of data enabled improved monitoring and use of data to influence policy. For example, evidence on progress in the area of Roma health was an important argument in favor of continuing government and donor support for Roma Health Mediators (RHMs). At the same time, a slow increase in preschool enrolment was used to advocate for greater attention to and investment in the development of the Education Strategy of the Government and planning of UNICEF's Early Childhood Development (ECD) interventions.

Through discussions with partners in the social policy sphere (Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government and the Network of CSOs for Children of Serbia (MODS)), the state program of child allowances was identified as an area that requires closer analysis given the high amount of resources yet lack of evidence on effectiveness of the targeting. UNICEF conducted a secondary data analysis that confirmed serious issues in targeting and called for a more robust survey as a basis for policy recommendations. Findings that emerge from the UNICEF analysis will be complemented with qualitative research conducted by MODS among poor families with children to triangulate and additionally validate the data.

The child care reform process in Serbia has advanced significantly, making it possible to begin looking at the effect and impact of new measures. In this regard, UNICEF, in partnership with the School of Social Work of the Belgrade University, recognized the need to develop a sustainable tracking system which can provide evidence as to whether decisions made within the system are in the best interest of the child. It will also look at the impact of community services for children with disability on children and their parents.

### **Monitoring Mechanism**

Knowledge generation is an essential part of the country programme strategy. To improve the identification of the most disadvantaged and the understanding/knowledge of their situation, a combined approach is used, including analysis of key indicators, more in-depth understanding of exclusion, regular consultation with partners and field monitoring visits.

UNICEF makes wide use of available government statistics (from administrative sources and surveys) for analysis and reporting. In many instances, children are not clearly visible in general survey reports, so secondary analyses are conducted on issues of importance for children. This has been particularly useful in the area of social protection entitlements in order to determine their effectiveness in reaching the most

deprived families and children. In general, when studies are developed based on secondary analysis, data from different sources is triangulated to ensure accuracy (qualitative and quantitative surveys, official surveys and NGO ad-hoc surveys). However, because the existing statistics systems are not sensitive enough to provide data on either disadvantaged groups (e.g. Roma, disabled) or all determinants of social exclusion, UNICEF complements the data with additional surveys, such as MICS. In 2005, [MICS3](#) introduced a Roma sub-sample which was repeated in [MICS4](#) in 2010. This survey is still the best source of reliable and disaggregated data on indicators of well-being of Roma women, children and households in general.

In order to ensure systematic tracking of progress, a specific monitoring framework has been designed by the Country Office that links all Country Programme Action Plan ([CPAP](#)) indicators and targets with data sources. This framework has been the basis for planning and development of additional surveys/data collection initiatives conducted by UNICEF or partners that will generate missing data to enable holistic monitoring.

### **Support to National Planning**

The country program is supporting evidence-based policy making through enhancing the availability of quality data and capacities of national partners to use this data.

One aspect of this is improving the quality of administrative data. In most cases, policy revisions are not reflected in corresponding revisions of administrative data collection instruments. Additionally, data collection instruments do not allow for disaggregation and hide disparities under the generally good indicators presented for the whole population. UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MoLSP) and the Institute for Social Protection (ISP) to revise data collection instruments so that they are in line with key social protection indicators, defined based on new legislation. Governmental staff are being trained to analyze the data and produce analytical reports and policy recommendations.

The Ministry of Health was supported to further elaborate the database of records made by RHMs during their visits. The aim of this exercise is to generate indicators needed to monitor the health status of Roma children and women. The better defined indicators will also enable improved monitoring of the performance of RHMs.

UNICEF is also supporting the Statistical Office of Serbia (SORS) to enhance the availability of data through the revision of the [DevInfo](#) national database. Through addition of new indicators, the revision will enable monitoring and reporting on the realization of national MDGs and social inclusion and poverty reduction goals. Within this process, particular attention is given to improved availability of data at the municipal level through the creation of DevInfo Municipal Profiles that will enable local authorities and other partners to monitor progress in implementation of strategies and plans. Data identified by municipalities as needed for decision-making will become available in customized, user-friendly profiles. The key national data producer institutions (Institute of Public Health, Institute for Social Protection, etc.) are supporting this initiative by arranging data transfer mechanisms with SORS.

Capacities for data-driven decision-making of local authorities from four of the most deprived districts are also being continuously upgraded through tailor-made trainings and peer-learning from more advanced municipalities in the area of monitoring and evaluation.

Partnerships aimed at improved monitoring of policy implementation have also been established with the Parliament, the Ombudsman of the Republic of Serbia and selected civil society networks, particularly with regards to social inclusion and protection from violence.

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

### Country Programme Analytical Overview

The country programme has and will continue to have an overall focus on supporting Serbia's social sector reform process, prioritizing equity and social inclusion. Emphasis is placed on system strengthening strategies, including: the generation and use of knowledge, data and evidence for policy making and implementation; capacity development for operationalization of laws and policies; and strategic partnerships focused on enhancing accountability and demand for rights and entitlements. Underpinning all of these approaches is effective advocacy.

As the country programme is singularly focused on realizing the rights of excluded children, the strong emphasis on equitable policies and programmes will continue. In this regard, [MICS4](#) data, which reveals critical disparities in the enjoyment of rights, is a key source of data for planning and advocacy purposes. With elections planned for spring 2012, UNICEF will make effective use of the MICS4 data to inform policy debates and influence the new Government's formulation of its policy priorities, helping to ensure the continuity of the reform processes. In addition, analytical work on costing and financing of inclusive education services and improved targeting of key pro-poor benefits will be essential contributions to anticipated policy debates in the coming year.

Support to the operationalization of new legal provisions (notably in the education and social welfare sectors) will continue through capacity development, strengthening of administrative data collection and monitoring systems, and technical assistance to modeling and standard setting for new services and programmes. The knowledge generated on costing and financing will also be used for developing practical planning and budgeting tools to help ensure that new services are inclusive and delivered in an equitable manner.

### Effective Advocacy

*Mostly met benchmarks*

UNICEF advocacy on Roma early childhood development and inclusion was prominent throughout the year. It began with the generation of knowledge through two main processes. The first was [MICS4](#) which included, for the second time, a separate sample of Roma living in settlements. This valuable data made it possible to detect trends in the situation of Roma children and families and identify disparities between Roma living in settlements and the general population in Serbia. The second process was a Roma Early Childhood Inclusion ([RECI](#)) national report prepared through close collaboration with the UNICEF Regional Office, the Open Society Institute and Roma Education Fund. This report brought together secondary analyses of data and policies in a meta-analysis, combined with specially designed focus group discussions, to add qualitative inputs and a consultative process to prepare recommendations.

The MICS 4 data and the key findings and recommendations of the RECI report then served as a basis to advocate for a strong focus on Roma early childhood inclusion in the National Strategy on Education, the revision of the National Roma Action Plans and the EC-organized Seminar on Roma Inclusion. Of particular significance was that UNICEF successfully rallied key partners (line ministries, local and international NGOs and independent institutions) around a common set of priorities for young Roma children, intensifying the impact of its advocacy. The results can be seen in the clear prioritization of Roma early inclusion in the strategies and plans mentioned above.

Beyond Roma early inclusion, MICS4 data was an important basis for advocacy efforts in the second half of the year, including advocacy on violence, early childhood development, education and select health issues. Data was cited systematically by UNICEF at all public events and media interviews as well as by partners in

their own work. MICS4 was particularly appreciated because it revealed a disaggregated picture of the situation and allowed for the identification of disparities among key population groups. UNICEF had the opportunity to contribute data and analytical inputs into the [report](#) of the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe on his mission to Serbia in June 2011. Focusing on discrimination (a key theme of his mission), UNICEF used MICS4 preliminary data and analysis to highlight both progress and remaining disparities and challenges, particularly for Roma and poor children.

The MICS4 data were also used to bolster advocacy messages conveyed by UNICEF National Ambassadors, notably tennis stars Novak Djokovic on early childhood education, especially for those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and Ana Ivanovic on the importance of reading and the presence of children's books at home. Thanks to their "star power" in Serbia, their advocacy had tremendous resonance with parents and children and was extremely well covered by local media.

### **Changes in Public Policy**

UNICEF played a key role in influencing the content and adoption of the 2011 Law on Social Welfare. The organization's work over the past four years to support the MoLSP's reform of the child care system made a clear contribution to the new law. In particular, joint work is reflected in the law's prioritization of community care and limits on residential care (e.g. ban on institutionalization of children under three); the introduction of community service standards and licensing of service providers; increases in the coverage and amount of cash assistance for the poorest; and the strong focus on internal accountability mechanisms.

In 2011, the Republic of Serbia also revised its 2005 Law on Health Care. As part of this process, UNICEF and partners analyzed existing health legislation in light of international standards and facilitated consultations. The result was the identification of two key gaps in the area of adolescent health which were eventually addressed by amendments to the law.

The first gap related to equity. The 2005 law provided free health insurance for all children through the age of 15. For those older than 15, school attendance was required in order to access insurance. While provisions were made for out-of-school children to apply for health insurance, this required complex administrative procedures which were a barrier for the most vulnerable adolescents. The amendments to the law ensure mandatory health care coverage for all children until the age of 18, regardless of their educative status.

The second gap was related to respect for children's views and privacy. The 2005 law recognized the right to independent, informed consent to medical intervention for competent adolescents older than 15. However, provisions related to confidentiality of medical records were not in line with the consent provision – allowing parents to be informed through access to medical records without consulting the adolescent. Thanks to strong advocacy, the law revisions have corrected this inconsistency. However, the change has provoked intensive debate amongst health professionals and the broader public. Using the Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comments as a framework, UNICEF and the Ministry of Health organized a public hearing with parliamentarians and the media, which resulted in increased understanding of the rights of adolescents to participate in decision-making regarding their health. As a follow-up, UNICEF and partners plan to prepare an education package for health professionals and parents on the right of adolescents to be heard, focusing on privacy and confidentiality.

In line with CRC Recommendations, in 2010, the Ombudsman's Office initiated the drafting of a Child Rights Act. UNICEF contributed to this process last year by preparing an ex-ante analysis of legislation and convening an initial consultation on the nature of the law, drawing on international good practice. In late 2011, the first draft of the law was discussed at a workshop and ongoing public consultation to which UNICEF is contributing is planned for 2012.

### Leveraging Resources

Since 2005, the UNICEF-supported School without Violence programme has had a demonstrable impact on reducing violence in the education system. From its start in 54 primary schools, the programme has grown to cover 197 primary and nine secondary schools at the end of 2010. While it is a joint programme with the MoES, it is solely financed through UNICEF's local fundraising efforts, and thus expansion has been relatively slow and incremental. Convinced of the programme's positive impact on children and the school environment, the MoES decided in late 2010 to invest in the scaling-up of violence prevention efforts. To expand the coverage and reach of the programme, the Ministry allocated resources from the loan provided by the World Bank as part of its Decentralization of Integrated Local Services (DILS). Using a peer-support approach, the additional funds were made available in the form of grants to selected schools that had successfully completed the SWV programme. The grantees were expected to support at least two additional schools in their locality to partially or fully reach the standards of the SWV programme. During 2011, grants to 37 primary schools were approved (4,500 EUR each), resulting in the engagement of an additional 86 schools in violence prevention activities. This represented a 44% increase in the number of Serbian primary schools implementing violence prevention initiatives. In addition to the grant for inclusion of new schools, the project also supported capacity building of schools to become resource centers and potential model schools. It also piloted a new model for disseminating knowledge and skills in this area, contributed to horizontal learning and networking between schools, and supported innovations and new approaches for further integration within the education system.

### Capacity Development

*Mostly met benchmarks*

Capacity development continues to be a key dimension of the country programme. Significant efforts are made to ensure that capacity development goes beyond training to include components of mentoring, horizontal learning and sustainable results.

Capacity development in the area of child care system reform continues to be a major priority. In the context of the new Social Welfare Law, which sets community care as a priority, UNICEF provided key contributions to capacity development. These efforts dovetailed with a three million Euro grants scheme provided by the European Union for scaling-up existing community services and creating new ones. UNICEF's role included support for the development and licensing of new training programmes to align them with minimum standards for services and the national accreditation system. Key actors (municipal authorities, service managers and direct care givers) from 41 municipalities, half of which are less-developed, learned how to ensure that services are equitable and reach the most marginalized children with disability. They were also trained in how to plan, establish and implement day-care, respite and home-help services for children with disability and their families. They should jointly contribute to increased access to community care for families with children with disability in 25% of municipalities in Serbia. An additional focus of the capacity development was on strengthening the fostering system to make it more accessible to children with disability.

More generally, municipal authorities and offices (most notably youth offices) in 13 less-developed municipalities in Southern Serbia benefited from capacity development in the areas of monitoring and evaluation. Following a capacity gap and learning needs assessment of local officials, a special training course was developed to enhance their understanding of and skills in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of municipal plans, programmes and budgets. The training underlined the importance of the use of data and led to the identification of key municipal data needs which will be the basis for new local DevInfo municipal profiles. Another follow-up includes a peer learning initiative in which municipalities that have successfully developed evidence-based policies and plans for social inclusion will be capacitated to share their experiences with other municipalities.

Complimenting this is work with municipal youth offices to build their project monitoring and evaluation skills in connection with new services they are offering, particularly targeting vulnerable young people in their localities. The aim is to strengthen their overall monitoring capacities, and in particular, to assist them in tracking the effectiveness, impact and added-value of new, innovative services for possible scaling-up. In addition to a series of training events, this initiative also includes a mentoring component and horizontal learning.

### Communication For Development

*Partially met benchmarks*

Communication for Development (C4D) approaches are fully integrated into UNICEF Serbia's programming. In 2011, one example of this was work undertaken with the MoLSP. Given that Centers for Social Work (CSWs) are the first communication point between a marginalized individual/family and the state, their C4D role has been recognized both by UNICEF and the Ministry. UNICEF supported CSWs to develop their communication plans (as an integral part of their planning processes) and provided capacity building support for their implementation. This involved strengthening the skills of case managers to utilize a variety of channels to inform the communities they serve on how CSWs can help the most marginalized in vulnerable situations. It also included concrete capacity building efforts focused on one-to-one communication with clients – especially children and youth. While the training built communication skills of individual case managers, such practice is unfortunately only systematically applied in municipalities with pro-active leadership.

C4D continues to be an important approach used in the Country Office's work on violence prevention in schools. In 2011, research in schools revealed a poor understanding of and discriminatory attitudes towards children with behavioral problems. UNICEF worked to change the widely held view of parents and educators that these children are "guilty" and "a lost cause". To this end, UNICEF collected good practices from schools which successfully identified children showing behavioral problems and, through positive disciplining methods, have made an effective change. Human interest stories and a short film were produced and widely disseminated through public media. UNICEF National Ambassador Ana Ivanovic, a well-respected role model for children and adults, lent further visibility by gathering peer teams from schools to discuss this issue publicly, encouraging children to support their peers. This was complemented by capacity building and mentoring of teachers and school professionals on how to better support children with behavioral problems. While attitudes of school professionals seem to be slowly changing, as proven by increased reporting on the development of individual plans for such children and increased submission of case studies from schools, this is still a very sensitive issue and will require a long-term focus on changing public views about the rights of children and good child rearing models.

### Service Delivery

*Fully met benchmarks*

Not applicable.



### Strategic Partnerships

*Mostly met benchmarks*

Advances in the partnership with the European Union were achieved through joint programming for social inclusion of children with disability and UNICEF's contributions to the EU's review of Serbia's application for membership. This began with an analysis and commentary on Serbia's responses to the Questionnaire, followed by participation in in-country consultations on social and economic rights, written inputs to the draft Commission Opinion and Analytical Report and follow-up meetings with DG-Enlargement in Brussels. UNICEF further strengthened its cooperation with the EU by providing inputs into its Social Inclusion Seminar on Roma. In this context, it succeeded in drawing attention to the importance of investing in early childhood development by organizing a field visit to an inclusive preschool and presenting evidence during the seminar. In addition, UNICEF led the drafting of a UNCT comprehensive brief on Roma in preparation for the seminar.

Partnership around juvenile justice reform was stepped up as a tri-partite cooperation between UNICEF, the Ministry of Justice's Council on Advancing Juvenile Justice (JJ Council) and the Government of Norway was established. UNICEF's [Assessment of the JJ system](#), finalized in early 2011, was used as a basis for defining the Norwegian implementing partner's work-plan and made an important contribution to a national conference on diversionary measures, jointly organized by all three actors. As part of this cooperation, the JJ Council reviewed and endorsed recommendations for improving the JJ data-management system (developed with UNICEF support) and requested relevant authorities to introduce necessary changes to their data-gathering instruments. UNICEF's contributions to the tri-partite partnership will continue in 2012, particularly in defining and piloting diversionary procedures to be principally funded by the Norwegian Government.

In the area of expanding preschool education, partnership with the EU-funded IMPRESS project, a 3.6 million Euro project aimed at increasing the coverage and quality of preschool education, has already yielded some positive results. Close cooperation was established in data collection, which is contributing to a UNICEF study on costing of preschool education, as well as to the development of tools for municipal authorities to support their planning and management of the preschool network. Defining programme coverage has also been collaborative, with UNICEF and IMPRESS jointly analyzing municipalities with the poorest preschool coverage and programming complementarily.

The partnership with the Serbian Parliament evolved, with focus on the latter's oversight role. UNICEF assisted the Parliamentary Working Group on Child Rights to develop a monitoring tool which they used to prepare an independent report on implementation of inclusive provisions of education legislation. In doing so, they were able to assess the law's implementation along with the results achieved and barriers encountered, and to gather information on whether budget allocations are sufficient and used in accordance with the law. The report was presented at a public scrutiny hearing which was well-received by concerned ministries and triggered follow-up action.

Corporate alliances were expanded, demonstrating positive results for children. The partnership with Telenor and the Ministry of Health continued to demonstrate good practice in CSR and was awarded the VIRTUS Excellence Award for long-term partnership between profit and non-profit sectors.

### Mobilizing Partners

Work has begun to strengthen civil society partners to systematically monitor violations of children's rights and the implementation of inclusive policies relevant to children. These same partners are also being mobilized to use the results of their monitoring to engage in a more active and constructive policy dialogue with state decision-makers on removing bottlenecks to full policy implementation and improving responses to violations of children's rights by state social service providers. For example, UNICEF collaborated with a legal-aid NGO to identify and overcome bottlenecks regarding civil registration of the most vulnerable Roma

families in Southern Serbia. In addition to resolving specific cases, the NGO partnered with municipalities to raise awareness and provide practical guidance on the steps and requirements for civil registration.

UNICEF Serbia also initiated partnerships with existing NGO networks focused on analyzing available data on violence against children and conducting primary research on selected violence-related issues that are not visible in general statistics. This includes violence against children with disability, and the effects on children of violence against their mothers. The analysis and research of the NGO coalitions will provide the base for establishing a stronger, evidence-based policy dialogue with the Government. This cooperation is also providing the CO with an opportunity to expand its partnerships, most notably with women's rights organizations and disability rights organizations.

A major partnership mobilized in 2011 was the engagement of tennis star Novak Djokovic as UNICEF National Ambassador for Serbia. Through the efforts of the UNICEF Headquarters' Division of Communication (DOC), Novak Djokovic joined the UNICEF family and elected to focus his advocacy on the importance of early childhood education, particularly for the most disadvantaged children. Following his appointment in September, he visited inclusive pre-school programmes and spoke publicly on this issue, linking it to his own childhood opportunities.

The Serbia Country Office participated in the global UNICEF Partner Survey in 2011. According to the findings, UNICEF is positively perceived by its in-country partners, and particularly recognized for its responsiveness to partners' priorities and its open and transparent communication. The findings will be used to further advance partnerships based on shared interest and mutual accountability.

UNICEF Serbia expanded its advocacy channels to mobilize the general public by integrating digital and social media into the fundraising and brand positioning strategies. Social media, including websites, Facebook and a YouTube channel, were used for raising awareness, advocacy, sharing knowledge and fundraising. The [Facebook fan page](#) (13,151 fans) and [YouTube channel](#) (18,332 visits) have proven effective, particularly during the emergency appeal for the Horn of Africa and in relation to School without Violence. The [UNICEF Serbia English](#) language website has been revamped to reflect the priorities and strategic goals defined in the new Country Programme 2011-2015.

### Knowledge Management

*Mostly met benchmarks*

UNICEF continued its efforts to generate knowledge on the most vulnerable children in order to influence policy-making and implementation.

To address current inefficiencies in education financing, Serbia is moving towards the use of a per capita funding formula. UNICEF recognized that this could provide an incentive for schools to educate all students more equitably, including students with special educational needs. In this context, and in close cooperation with MoES and the World Bank (which is supporting the Ministry to develop per-capita financing), UNICEF conducted a study to define and cost appropriate minimum services packages for inclusive education, based on the Serbian legal requirements. The study has been welcomed by all partners due to its transparent and practical cost calculations and constructive recommendations, and will be an important resource for planning at both national and municipal levels.

When it comes to preschool education, Serbia is in the process of developing a national education strategy which includes non-compulsory preschool. As a result of UNICEF's advocacy and strategic use of MICS4 data, the draft strategy prioritizes increased preschool coverage, especially for the most vulnerable. To further encourage policy reform in this area, UNICEF is supporting the Government by undertaking a study

to assess the cost implications of different models of expanding and ensuring equity in preschool coverage.

In order to shed more light on the effectiveness of child allowances (in monetary terms, the biggest means-tested social assistance programme aimed at the well-being of children in Serbia), UNICEF supported a secondary analysis on the targeting of this programme. The study revealed high exclusion (60%) and inclusion errors (57%) and is now being followed up with complimentary primary research to be completed in early 2012 in order to provide specific recommendations to enhance the impact of this benefit on reducing child poverty.

MICS4 and other survey data have shown significant disparities between rural and urban children in a number of domains. In order to more deeply explore the multiple deprivations faced by rural populations and to inform the drafting of the National Plan of Rural Development, a Study on Access to Services in Rural Areas for Women and Children was undertaken by UNICEF in 2010-11. The recommendations of the study were used to influence the National Plan which has integrated provisions to improve the position of women and children.

UNICEF and its partners organized study visits to UK and Italy for teams of government representatives and local professionals engaged in the process of de-institutionalization and transformation of regular children's homes. The visits were an integral part of ongoing transformation processes and were valuable for exposing partners to good practice in the use of small group homes and community services. The visits also fed into the process of developing standards for community services for children with disability. Furthermore, they will contribute to the development of preparatory procedures for children with disability moving to fostering and separate standards for small group homes.

### Human Rights Based Approach to Cooperation

*Mostly met benchmarks*

UNICEF Serbia participated as a country case study in the "Global Evaluation of the Application of a Human Rights Based Approach in UNICEF Programming". Serbia was selected for its work in the area of child protection, specifically child-care system reform. The case study aimed to document how, using a rights-based situation analysis, the CO has influenced the normative frame and built capacities of both duty bearers and rights holders to prevent and reduce the institutionalization of children.

When it comes to programming, there has been a strong emphasis on accountability. Accountability mechanisms are being strengthened both within the system and through partnerships with independent monitoring and oversight mechanisms, namely Parliament, the Ombudsman's Office and civil society. Particular focus has also been placed on promoting awareness of rights and greater demand for entitlements, particularly through partnership with self-representational groups.

Of particular significance during the past year has been UNICEF's work with Roma Health Mediators (RHMs). The RHMs are employed by the Ministry of Health to serve as a bridge between Roma families and the formal health system. Their role includes health education, raising awareness about rights and entitlements and creating demand for and use of quality health services.

Through an individual advocacy approach, RHMs have helped vulnerable Roma rights holders to navigate often complex systems in order to claim their rights. This work has not been limited to the health sector as RHMs have also identified out-of-school children and facilitated their entry into the school system and assisted families to access their personal documentation and social welfare benefits. In addition, they have made an important contribution to strengthening accountability within the system by playing a watchdog function for Roma rights. Through systematically documenting and reporting

bottlenecks in the system (including when entitlements are not granted to clients in accordance with regulation), they are building the accountability of state duty bearers to equitably serve this disadvantaged group.

### Gender

#### *Partially met benchmarks*

The programme continued to integrate gender equality in selected areas. Of particular relevance was the initiation of activities aimed at empowering Roma mothers. Many studies have been conducted in Serbia on the position of Roma women which found that they are generally subordinate to and economically dependent on their husbands. Cultural practices and tradition tend to prevent women from studying or being employed and they often live in isolation from mainstream society.

At the same time, they are the primary care givers for children and are responsible for their early development. MICS4 data indicate that only 77% of women living in Roma settlements (aged 15-24) are literate. One third have their first child before turning 18, which creates a host of challenges in terms of fostering their children's development. More generally, MICS4 reveals that households in Roma settlements are less likely to have children's books at home, and parents are less frequently engaged in support for early development than the general population.

Given the critical role played by Roma mothers, in 2011, UNICEF decided to expand its existing programming with Roma children to include Roma mothers. The programming, run in Development Education Centers (DECs), has been implemented since 2001 in eight poor municipalities with significant Roma populations. The aim was to provide free preschool programmes to better prepare Roma children for mainstream school entry.

The additional activities added this year focus on Roma mothers who are already familiar with the DECs in their communities. The aim is to empower Roma women to play a more active role in household decision-making when it comes to education of their children and increase their parenting skills and capacities for creating a stimulating learning environment at home.

Although it is too early to measure any substantial change, Roma mothers participating in the activities have reacted positively. In order to ensure sustainability of the project, local authorities and representatives of Roma women's NGOs are included in the project and will benefit from training and networking opportunities.

### Environmental Sustainability

#### *Partially met benchmarks*

Rural communities in Serbia are facing a number of challenges in becoming more competitive and sustainable while, at the same time, protecting the environment and fostering social development. As part of the MDGF joint UN programme on [Sustainable Tourism for Rural Development](#), UNICEF has made small grants to municipal authorities in cooperation with rural schools in an effort to bring environmental education closer to children. The selection of grantee partners was based on the expected contribution of their projects to poverty reduction, rural school development, environmental protection and gender

equality. Their main goal is to strengthen the links between rural and urban schools and to position rural schools as centers for child development outside the regular curriculum on subjects related to sustainable tourism, nature and environmental protection. As the grants only began in late 2011, UNICEF expects concrete results in 2012.

### South-South and Triangular Cooperation

As Serbia was the first country in the region to conduct MICS4, a great deal of effort was invested in the customization of questionnaires and sampling techniques. This investment was transferred to other countries in the region and was particularly valuable for Macedonia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina as there is no language barrier. All MICS4 materials, including questionnaires and training materials, and experiences were shared with and appreciated by colleagues in those offices. Particularly important was exchange related to the sampling of the Roma population given the technical complexity of this undertaking and the need for regional comparability of findings.

**Country Programme Component: Systems-strengthening for social inclusion**

**PCRs (Programme Component Results)**

PCR	EQRank	OTDetails
By the end of 2015, more excluded children and families benefit from education, social welfare, and justice services, in line with new legislation.		3 FA1OT10, FA2OT1, FA2OT6, FA4OT3, FA5OT5

**Resources Used in 2011(USD)**

Resource Type	Planned for 2011 (as per CPAP ceiling )	Allocated in 2011	Estimated Year-End Expenditure	%Spent (4)/(3) * 100
OR-E	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
OR-R	2700000.00	2468426.00	2423610.00	98.18
RR	275000.00	230000.00	222958.00	96.94
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,975,000.00</b>	<b>\$2,698,426.00</b>	<b>\$2,646,568.00</b>	

**Results Achieved**

This programme component brings together intermediate results in support of reforms in education, social welfare and justice, health, and evidence-based policy making.

In support of **education sector reform**, UNICEF contributed to the establishment of a sustainable system to monitor inclusion and analyzed the costs of inclusive education. Work also began to model closer cooperation between regular and special schools in order to facilitate full inclusion of children with disabilities into mainstream schools. Preschool-focused programming accelerated, with substantive inputs into the Education Strategy development, a study on the costs of providing preschool for all children, and the design of flexible, alternative preschool programmes in ten least-served municipalities. A long awaited MoES situation analysis on school drop-out was released which will guide UNICEF's prevention work in this area. Finally, violence prevention in schools advanced, with nearly 300 primary schools implementing violence prevention activities and an agreement reached on forming a Violence Prevention Unit within MoES for 2012.

**Social welfare reform** was advanced with the adoption of the new Law on Social Welfare which creates an inclusive and pro-poor legal framework. UNICEF supported the development of by-laws that will ensure its implementation, including in the areas of financing, service standards, and accountability mechanisms. At the same time, efforts have been invested in building the capacity of local government to develop and deliver services for children with disability. Work has continued to strengthen fostering of children with complex disabilities, transform small residential homes and de-institutionalize the large-scale residential institution, Kuline. The reform process is showing results; since 2008, children and youth in residential care dropped by 29.5% and increased by 27% in foster care. Work to increase protection of vulnerable children and adolescents continued through equipping professionals with guidance and skills to implement violence protection by-laws and further definition of diversion measures for children in conflict with the law. To respond to the needs of vulnerable youth in Southern Serbia, UNICEF supported partners to initiate new services, such as education centers, volunteer services and youth clubs. These services are jointly supported by municipalities and UNICEF and should help promote social cohesion and development of local youth structures.

**Health system strengthening** was focused on securing MoH commitment to standardize support for breastfeeding and early bonding practices, with implementation plans developed in 2011. Cooperation with RHMs continued and focused on strengthening liaisons with other sectors. In addition, sessions were held between RHMs and patronage nurses to strengthen effectiveness of their joint work to increase Roma access

to quality health services.

Work on **evidence based policy making** in 2011 included MICS4; the enhancement of social protection indicators and data systems to better monitor reforms and outcomes for vulnerable children; revision of the [DevInfo](#) database; and knowledge generation on costing of services and targeting child allowances.

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

The key challenge to the reform process is that despite strong commitment from high-level counterparts in all key Ministries, the structures and systems of public administration are not yet accommodating enough to allow for adjustments needed to operationalize the reforms.

Another implementation challenge continues to be weak inter-sectoral collaboration, specifically when it comes to ensuring that all public systems work effectively together to provide inclusive, quality services to children. The experience to date indicates that an inter-sectoral approach bears more results when applied to a specific challenge at field level.

One positive example has been the process of transferring children with disabilities from the large scale residential institution Kuline to community living and ensuring their school enrollment. This specific task has been jointly planned and is being successfully carried out by the MoES and MoLSP. On the other hand, when it comes to juvenile justice reform, the same joint approach has been more challenging and depends on strengthening the capacities and willingness of the relevant actors.

One important lesson has been the usefulness of ongoing mentoring, in addition to formal training, which has proven critical in work with several partners - youth offices, municipalities, schools, etc.

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

A number of key donors, most notably the EU and the World Bank, are also deeply involved in supporting social sector reform processes. Collaboration with the EU has continued on all fronts, including on issues related to Roma inclusion, preschool, and social welfare reform. In the case of the World Bank, cooperation has continued in a number of areas, particularly education, where work on inclusion and violence prevention has been carried out in close partnership. In particular, the work on costing and financing of inclusive education was closely coordinated with the World Bank's assistance to the Government in developing a per-capita funding formula for education. While the development of the per-capita funding formula has progressed more slowly than expected, UNICEF will continue to be engaged to ensure that the recommendations of the UNICEF-supported inclusive education costing study are used.

UNICEF's involvement in three UN joint programmes continued with good results in some cases. While the joint programming approach requires a more intensive dialogue and coordination with other UN agencies in the course of programme implementation, it can also bring greater synergy and impact. Work with municipalities in Southern Serbia benefited from such an approach, particularly with regards to strengthening municipal capacities for evidence-based planning and budgeting. A mid-term evaluation of UN joint programming in Southern Serbia confirmed the relevance of the program as well as a high degree of local ownership. It further revealed program effectiveness in supporting youth infrastructure, access to personal documents as well as health and education services for vulnerable children and youth of different ethnic backgrounds. As many of the joint programmes will end in 2012, work has already begun to develop joint proposals for follow-up initiatives.

### Humanitarian Situations

Not applicable.

### Summary of Monitoring, Studies and Evaluations

The most significant and ambitious study completed in 2011 was [MICS4](#). The field work for both the national sample and the sample of Roma living in Roma settlements was carried out in 2010 while 2011 was dedicated to data processing, data validation and production of the preliminary and final MICS4 reports. The Preliminary report, launched in July 2011, generated significant attention in the media, government and civil society. The preliminary data sets were used for the preparation of the National Education Strategy, for the Opinion of the European Commission on Serbia's Candidacy, for consultations on Roma in Serbia and for the preschool costing study (which will be completed in 2012).

The final evaluation of the UNICEF Serbia implemented project "[Transforming Residential Institutions for Children and Developing Sustainable Alternatives](#)" (2008-2011) was conducted. This exercise evaluated the results and achievements of the project, including its contribution to the implementation of the Social Welfare Development Strategy and the development of new policies and legislation in the area of child care. The evaluation recommendations were translated into action through a process of supporting the closure of large residential institutions for children and the transformation of three regular child-homes into small group-homes for children with disability with possible transfer to foster families. The upgrading of the social welfare monitoring system was further supported, resulting in revised instruments for data collection. The recognized need for better monitoring of the work of residential institutions was addressed through agreement with the Ombudsman's Office to oversee the ongoing transformation of the three regular child homes into small group homes.

In close cooperation with the MoES and the World Bank, UNICEF conducted a study to define and cost out appropriate minimum services packages for inclusive education based on the Serbian legal requirements. The study has been welcomed by all partners due to its transparent and practical cost calculations and its constructive recommendations, and will be an important resource for planning at both national and municipal levels. In addition, UNICEF provided technical assistance to the creation of indicators for baseline data collection and annual monitoring of inclusive education, coordinated by the World Bank and implemented by SORS and other partners.

### Future Work Plan

The work to support system reforms and strengthening will continue in 2012, with a focus on extracting lessons and good practice, and deriving standards from the local modeling of inclusive services, including those with youth offices and cooperation between regular and special schools. In addition, the model of deinstitutionalization of children with severe disabilities and their transfer to small child homes and foster care will be monitored, assessed and documented for future deinstitutionalization efforts. Support to the implementation of EU grants for community services for families with children with disability will continue, with emphasis on ensuring access of the most marginalized, sustaining service quality and addressing issues of sustainability.

New models of alternative, inclusive preschool programmes will be implemented and carefully monitored in order to document results for eventual scaling-up. Likewise, models of diversionary services for children in conflict with the law will also be launched in collaboration with key juvenile justice partners.

The situation analysis on school drop-out, conducted by the MoES in collaboration with the World Bank, will be used as a basis for defining programmatic interventions to prevent drop-out. Particular emphasis will be placed on supporting schools for early recognition of children at risk and development of school- and community-based programmes and services for these children.

Support to evidence-based policy making will continue, using MICS4 data for secondary analysis and other



research studies as strategic inputs to influence the agenda and priorities of the new Government in the second half of the year. The revision of the National DevInfo database will also be important in order to generate regular data for monitoring social inclusion and poverty reduction processes and progress towards meeting national MDGs. Planned assessments will be undertaken in: a) case-management in CSWs; and b) protection of children from violence. These will serve as a basis for further system strengthening in these critical areas.

### Country Programme Component: Social accountability for child rights

#### PCRs (Programme Component Results)

PCR	EQRank	OTDetails
By the end of 2015, Serbia has strengthened infrastructure and civic and private engagement for the sustained realization of children's rights		2 FA5OT5, FA5OT6

#### Resources Used in 2011 (USD)

Resource Type	Planned for 2011 (as per CPAP ceiling )	Allocated in 2011	Estimated Year-End Expenditure	%Spent (4)/(3) * 100
OR-E	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
OR-R	1600000.00	978740.00	938266.00	95.86
RR	55000.00	155000.00	149193.00	96.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,655,000.00</b>	<b>\$1,133,740.00</b>	<b>\$1,087,459.00</b>	

#### Results Achieved

This programme component brings together intermediate results aimed at strengthening partnerships with civil society, engagement with independent institutions to advocate for social inclusion and monitor policy implementation, and with private sector and media to leverage results for children.

**Civil society partnerships** focused on evidence-based advocacy. Most significant was support to the Network of CSOs for Children of Serbia (MODS) to increase its influence in formulating public policies and help it to more effectively mobilize demand for and access to entitlements by the disadvantaged. MODS gathers 45 organizations advocating for improvement in access and quality of social services for children, reduction of social exclusion and child poverty, and increased, transparent public budgeting. Through UNICEF support in 2011, the network increased membership, adopted its Strategic Programme Document for 2012-2014, established two operational thematic groups, took active part in policy making processes and conducted a baseline survey on municipal practices for children and adolescents' participation in decision-making.

Additional work on evidence was the update of the comprehensive analysis of Serbian legislation from a child rights perspective conducted by UNICEF and the NGO Centre for Child Rights. The analysis, which is a living tool, became an essential reference for Government, civil society, Parliament, and independent institutions.

**Engagement with independent oversight and monitoring bodies** was largely focused on partnership with the Parliamentary Working Group on Child Rights, ongoing since 2008. The emphasis was on strengthening the Parliament's oversight functions. MPs paid special attention to monitoring implementation of laws related to children with disabilities, including posing parliamentary questions to the executive branch

of Government on funding and provision of services. The Working Group, with UNICEF assistance, produced a [handbook for parliamentarians](#) on the rights of children with disabilities. The WG also began systematic monitoring of implementation of laws/strategies. Following monitoring visits to selected schools, MPs held a public scrutiny hearing to share findings and recommendations, noting the need for improved inter-sectoral cooperation and additional budgetary allocations to ensure inclusion of the most vulnerable children into mainstream schools.

Based on the findings of UNICEF's 2011 "Analysis of the Roles and Effectiveness of Child-Rights Accountability Institutions in Serbia", development of systematic, long-term cooperation with the Ombudsman's Office and the Commissioner for Protection of Equality began. Tri-partite collaboration was established to publish a Serbian language compilation of international standards on child rights which will be disseminated to judges, prosecutors and police.

**Alliances with existing and new corporate and media partners** were expanded throughout the year. To foster systemic change in media reporting on child rights, UNICEF facilitated two university departments of journalism to integrate an elective child rights course into their graduate degree curricula. These courses began in the 2011-2012 academic year and will be permanently offered going forward. Partnership with the private sector entailed multi-faceted approaches that integrated fundraising, sales and advocacy. For example, the bookstore chain Laguna promotes reading to children, sells UNICEF products and cards and collects donations. Private sector fundraising grew by more than 300% in 2011, including fundraising for regular resources for the first time.

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

Even though a good foundation was laid for strengthening partnerships with civil society and independent institutions, progress towards defining specific partnership modalities and objectives was slower than expected. This was primarily due to the need to establish a new type of relationship with partners, one in which the aims and needs of both parties are fulfilled.

In 2011, a breakthrough was achieved in addressing the main constraint to private sector fundraising - the lack of banking facilities for receipt of contributions from private individuals and the corporate sector. UNICEF succeeded in negotiating procedures with the Central Bank that facilitate donors' contributions. Contracts in line with the new procedures for credit cards payments were signed with two banks, thus facilitating contributions.

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

Belgrade University is emerging as a key partner for research on child-focused policy and practice. Two joint research projects were initiated with the Department for Social Work, both in the area of child care reform. The first research looks at the outcomes of community services for children with disability and their families, while the second looks at the decision-making processes of authorities when placing children in care and at how and when such decision-making is re-assessed. The studies present a first step in a longer-term effort to build this Department's capacity to engage in policy-shaping research initiatives. It also makes a contribution to improving the quality of research projects for post-graduate studies. Results and policy recommendations are expected in 2012 and 2013.

UNICEF, in collaboration with the Serbian chapter of the Global Compact, organized a national consultation on the draft Child Rights Principles for Business as part of the global consultation process. The response to the draft principles was enthusiastic, with strong participation of top companies and key NGOs. It resulted in thoughtful, strategic recommendations, as well as a strong commitment to influence the content and eventually implement the Principles. UNICEF plans a national launch of the Principles in early 2012 and further consultations with business leaders and associations as a basis for more systematic and strategic collaboration with the private sector.

The partnership with Parliament matured to become more systematic and substantive. This year's focus on the oversight function, especially related to education inclusion, demonstrated that with limited technical input from UNICEF, the Working Group is able to proactively take initiative and carry out its functions well. The Working Group has been recognized as an example of good practice and was invited to present its work at global and regional meetings of IPU in 2011.

### **Humanitarian Situations**

Not applicable.

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

As a first step in expanding partnerships with independent institutions in Serbia, a study entitled "[An Analysis of the Roles and Effectiveness of Child-Rights Accountability Institutions in Serbia](#)" was conducted in the first part of 2011. The objectives of the study were to assess the effectiveness of accountability institutions in fulfilling their mandate and to recommend opportunities for partnership. The outcome was the identification of capacities, gaps and strategies for strengthening alliances with institutions that have formal or informal mandates to hold the Government accountable. Institutions covered by the assessment were the Parliamentary Working Group on Child Rights, the Ombudsman's Office, the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality, the National Council for Child Rights, and national child-rights NGO networks and coalitions. The findings and recommendations of the study are being used as a roadmap to create more strategic cooperation with independent bodies, to improve external oversight and monitoring of how system reforms are benefiting the most vulnerable, and to assist in creating demand for entitlements from the most vulnerable groups.

In partnership with the MODS Network, a [baseline study](#) was conducted on child and youth participation in decision-making processes at the local level. The research, conducted in 20 Serbian municipalities, provides insight into current practices for involving children and youth in local decision-making. The study assesses not only the existence of mechanisms for participation, but also the quality of child and youth involvement and explores the extent of youth activism at the local level. Approximately 2,000 high school pupils and 40 local officials were interviewed during the research process. The main findings show that the level of participation is generally quite low, and most stakeholders believe it should be increased. Although 63% of local officials say that there is a mechanism for youth participation in their communities, young people believe they are not involved enough in community life and decision-making. The research results will be the basis for recommendations for creating conditions conducive to greater participation of children and youth.

### **Future Work Plan**

This programme component will be prioritized for acceleration in 2012, with the launching of strategic partnerships with the Ombudsman's Office, Commissioner for Equality and selected NGO networks. The planned cooperation with the Deputy Ombudsperson for Children will primarily revolve around violence against children, and specifically focus on an enhanced advocacy campaign when it comes to corporal punishment, a sensitive issue in Serbia. This will include public debates, media "conversations" and pro-active consultation with children and young people, ensuring that their views are made widely known and are taken into account in policymaking.

UNICEF will continue to actively support strategic civil society networks and partners. Partnership with the MODS Network will advance through enabling greater independent monitoring of the implementation of CRC and violations of children's rights, particularly in the area of protection from violence. Related to this, UNICEF will facilitate and broker greater dialogue between MODS members and public policymakers, with the aim of enhancing social inclusion and improving the identification, monitoring and responses to violence against children in social services. Other civil society partnerships will be initiated with parents to promote the importance of, and demand for, quality and accessible early childhood services.

Although parliamentary elections are planned for spring 2012, the strong cooperation with the Parliamentary Working Group on Child Rights is set to continue. The elections will affect the composition of the group, but the inclusion of this group in the Parliamentary Rule Book as a Standing Committee of the Parliament will ensure its continuity. UNICEF is committed to providing high quality technical support to the group and will continue to focus on strengthening legislative and oversight functions.

Enhancing media accountability with respect to ethical standards regarding the protection of and reporting on children will continue in 2012. This will be done through developing strategic partnerships with key media outlets on specific child rights issues and application of social responsibility. Professional training for practicing journalists will be facilitated to enable them not only to ethically cover issues related to children, but also to monitor and analytically review the state of Serbia's children and the realization of their rights.

### Country Programme Component: Cross-sectoral

#### PCRs (Programme Component Results)

PCR	EQRank	OTDetails
Cross-sectoral activities support the realization of planned programme results.	0	FA6OT9

#### Resources Used in 2011(USD)

Resource Type	Planned for 2011 (as per CPAP ceiling )	Allocated in 2011	Estimated Year-End Expenditure	%Spent (4)/(3) * 100
OR-E	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
OR-R	400000.00	130666.00	82428.00	63.08
RR	120000.00	120000.00	51800.00	43.17
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$520,000.00</b>	<b>\$250,666.00</b>	<b>\$134,228.00</b>	

#### Results Achieved

Due to the nature of this programme component, specific outcomes are not defined. Achievement of results is described within the other two programme components.

#### Most Critical Factors and Constraints

Not applicable.

#### Key Strategic Partnerships and Interagency Collaboration

Not applicable.

#### Humanitarian Situations

Not applicable.

#### Summary of Monitoring, Studies and Evaluations

Not applicable.

#### Future Work Plan

Not applicable.

### Effective Governance Structure

Based on the approved CPD, the CO and the Government of Serbia signed a CPAP for the period 2011-2015 in December 2010. Building on this, two-year work plans were developed for the planned country programme results.

The integrated budget submission for 2012-2013 was completed with planned support costs maintained within the current restricted levels, despite the strengthening of Euro and country inflation (the estimated inflation for 2011 is 8%).

The CMT regularly monitored the six programme and five management results in the AMP. Looking at set performance indicators, the majority of programme and management objectives were met. The CMT effectively guided and monitored the change management processes and office preparations in relation to the roll-out of new business standards, processes and systems (i.e. VISION, IPSAS, etc.). CMT also managed and monitored the Building Maintenance and Savings Plans. A mid-year review of programme and AMP progress was conducted and found most plans to be on-track. Due to preparations for VISION roll-out, the end-year review was held in January 2012.

Office committees functioned effectively throughout the year, with emphasis on standards of participation, quality and timeliness of review, and effective communication. CRC and CRB committees were established at area-office level to review submissions for both Croatia and Serbia offices.

To effectively manage the transition to new policies and systems, the Office organized a number of briefing sessions and trainings. Throughout the year, information and planning sessions were held in Business Standards, Internal Control, Accounting and IPSAS and Contracting, based on an internally developed training package tailored to office needs. SAP/VISION training was implemented in November and December with condensed core subjects and modules training for all team members and more comprehensive training for relevant staff in finance, HR and supply. The team also discussed new business roles and procedures and related distribution of assignments.

The Office continued to actively represent the CEE/CIS region in the VISION Global Field Reference Group through participation in the User Acceptance Testing workshop, Global SAP ToT and continued engagement on relevant topics and remote testing of the system.

### Strategic Risk Management

The CMT monitored actions taken to address the priority areas identified in the Risk and Control Library included: four strategic areas (government accountability, access to OR funding, knowledge generation, and governance structures), three programmatic (performance metrics, joint projects and decision-making) and operational and financial risks (confidence in knowledge of organizational policies, and funding and resource management). With significant training invested in improving staff understanding of business standards and internal control, progress was made in ERM implementation in the areas of governance structures, knowledge of control systems and confidence in risk informed application of regulations and funds management. In this regard, staff had the opportunity to actively discuss the impact and application of policies and procedures. A draft Knowledge Management Strategy was developed and will be finalized in 2012. UN coherence for effective delivery of UNICEF's core mandate remains an area of challenge for the Office, with differing UN agency administrative and HR policies and procedures impacting the effectiveness of joint programmes.

Serbia has an effective emergency management system, with the Ministry of Interior as the leading governmental body for direct response and coordination of stakeholders. During 2011, UNICEF supported capacity building on disaster risk reduction and emergency response in education for relevant partners.

Further work will be crucial in building effective cluster teams at national and local levels to implement emergency responses in the sectors of education, child protection, water and sanitation. The main risk factors in Serbia are floods and landslides, most likely occurring in Central and Eastern Serbia and Vojvodina, with a limited magnitude. Instability along the border between Serbia and Kosovo over the past six months has not produced any major unrest.

The CO successfully migrated the EPRP to the EWEA system. In addition, business continuity, IT disaster recovery plans, security documents and staff lists were regularly updated. A UNCT exercise to test the zone warden and security system was carried out in 2011, and resulted in an updating of relevant information and procedures.

The impact of SAP/IPSAS implementation on the workload and distribution of assignments was discussed by management at length. It was recognized that careful monitoring and oversight will be required to ensure that the distribution of work is balanced and manageable. The replacement policy will need to be re-visited to ensure that every function has a first and secondary replacement. Ensuring the level of segregation envisaged by the new internal control policies will be challenging given the limited number of staff carrying out multiple functional and financial roles.

### Evaluation

Based on the new CP IMEP covering the period 2011-2015, the bi-annual IMEP for 2011-2012 was developed and revised during the mid-year review. Regular monitoring of foreseen IMEP activities was performed by the M&E focal point in the Office.

The Office conducted one major evaluation in 2011, namely of the UNICEF implemented project "Transforming Residential Institutions for Children and Developing Sustainable Alternatives" (2008-2011). The project was instrumental to the social welfare reform process, informing new legislation and plans for transformation of existing services. The evaluation findings and recommendations were the basis for a management response which is under implementation.

The evaluation methodology and draft report were quality assured by the Regional Office facility, resulting in substantial revisions. This experience confirmed a lack of national capacity for high quality evaluation, meaning that in the foreseeable future, international expertise will be required. This must be planned and budgeted accordingly.

### Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology

The continued availability of ICT resources and quality of IT services, including hosting of IT infrastructure for the Croatia Office, were ensured through effective technical maintenance of ICT infrastructure, prompt helpdesk support and secure remote access via Citrix and Cisco VPN clients for all users. Effective business continuity and ICT disaster recovery plans are in place.

The Office's internet connectivity is adequate for the increased demands of the new business systems, including VISION/SAP, Performance Management in SharePoint, and expected Microsoft Exchange and Unified Messaging. The primary link functions on a high-performance fiber-optic connection with built-in failover to a reliable back-up link in case of failure. The local area network was assessed and partially re-designed and the firewall was replaced to improve internal and external connectivity and bandwidth. The Office participated in two global ITSS pilot projects. The first included the migration of all office servers to both a virtual environment and the new operating system (Windows Server 2008 R2 Hyper-V). This resulted in more advanced features for end users and IT technical management, and enabled testing of

new backup software for all virtual and physical servers. The second project was the testing of and providing recommendations for the implementation of the new backup software for all virtual and physical servers, which should become new UNICEF ITSS backup standards in the upcoming years. The software should enable easy disaster recovery and failover/failback, providing real and independent business continuity.

Within the global UNICEF office modernization project, all workstations were migrated to the new operating systems – Windows 7 and Microsoft Office 2010 suite. Technologically obsolete but functioning ICT equipment was written off and donated to implementing partners, while out-of-order equipment was disposed of in an environmentally secure manner.

### Fund Raising and Donor Relations

In 2011, seven donor reports (six progress and one final), reviewed by the Deputy Representative for quality assurance, were sent on time. The Office did not receive any official feedback from donors on the quality of the reports; however, some donors expressed their appreciation of the excellent communication established with UNICEF project teams. Positive feedback was received from the UNICEF Brussels Office and the European Commission for the final report for the project “Transforming Residential Institutions for Children and Developing Sustainable Alternatives” which was submitted several months before the deadline.

An estimated 40% of the CPD OR ceiling had been raised by the end of 2011 (the first year of the CP). The activities planned for 2011 in the MYWP 2011-2012 were fully funded. All PBAs were utilized as planned, while special emphasis was placed on the monitoring of PBAs close to their expiration date. The office management closely monitored the implementation of planned activities through regular programme meetings and reviews, quarterly progress reporting and frequent bilateral consultations.

In 2011, the Office increased the use of digital and social media for private sector fundraising. This proved especially valuable during the Horn of Africa crisis when the Office generated a high level of public interest for financial donations. Over a period of 12 months, the CO managed to raise a total of 730,000USD in spite of the economic crisis which continues to impact Serbia. This includes revenues from sales and donations from the private sector and individuals.

### Management of Financial and Other Assets

The CMT regularly monitored contributions management, programme implementation and DCT management through a set of management reports. Programme implementation was also regularly discussed in programme management meetings and regular feedback was provided during all-staff meetings. In 2011, the Office had one DCT outstanding more than nine months and three outstanding over six months in the first two quarters, which were all liquidated by the end of the third quarter. Of the approved OR ceiling for 2011 (4.7M), the entire amount was raised and 72% utilized (3.4M). Expenditure rates for 2011 were 93% for RR, OR and SB. All expiring PBAs were fully expended. May and October interim closures were implemented successfully. Bank reconciliations and month and year end closures were completed in a timely manner.

The HACT micro assessments of relevant Serbian Ministries and governmental agencies were completed in cooperation with the UN Country Team. A common finding is the lack of external auditing of financial statements and some inadequate internal control processes, rendering the majority of assessed partners in the category of moderate risk. As part of the office-agreed Programme Assurance Plan, the Office has conducted 51 field trips and 62 spot check visits of major counterparts.

Within its VISION preparation actions, the Office has successfully completed the data cleansing process (partners, vendors etc.) for migration of data to VISION, review and writing-off of obsolete property and distribution or disposal of publication/programme supplies.

When it comes to building maintenance, the Office invested in the renovation of the roof and basement premises and procured an entry roll-up ramp to enable building access for persons with disability. The Office financed these works with a USD 18,300 grant from the Capital Asset Funds and USD 2,700 from the office support budget. The renovation of the basement space secured premises for office archives and storage space for PFP products as the external warehouse was closed down in 2011 as a cost savings measure.

Having achieved significant savings in 2009 and 2010, the Office Savings Plan stayed within current allotments for support costs, with some limited additional savings.

### Supply Management

The total value of supply procurements amounted to USD 280,253 in 2011. The Office completed 80 market research processes and five ITB processes for local procurements. The supply components consisted largely of printing programme publications and promotional materials for private sector fundraising and sales campaigns. Of the 62 total requisitions, 21 were for procurement of printed materials. Procurement of promotional materials for fundraising and sales campaigns consisted mainly of brochures, posters, newsletters, UNICEF postage stamps, T-shirts and leaflets.

As part of projects which support better monitoring and data-based policymaking at the municipal level, IT equipment was purchased for municipalities in four of the most deprived districts in Serbia. IT equipment was also bought for UNICEF staff use along with various office and miscellaneous supplies.

The total value of institutional service contracts in 2011 amounted to USD 404,413. This included 59 institutional contracts for support services, including: telemarketing, press clipping, communication materials development and design, translation, photocopying, logistics support, travel booking and conference organization, security, premises and equipment maintenance, and internet connectivity. Solicitation processes were organized for all service contracts.

One of the most significant constraints in supply management was the continued practice by suppliers to quote services and supplies in Euro. When quoting in local currency, provisions are often added to hedge against currency risk or limiting the offer to a shorter period. This local business practice causes frequent increases in local currency prices due to changes in the Euro exchange rate or the inflation rate. The impact is twofold – firstly, affecting the quality standards and efficiency of procurement processes and secondly, causing increases in the cost of procured services and supplies, thereby affecting USD-based budgets.

### Human Resources

As envisaged by the new CP, the Social Policy Specialist, Partnership Specialist and Knowledge Management Officer were appointed in 2011. During 2011, the Office completed recruitment processes for the Education Specialist and the upgraded post of Youth and Adolescents Development Specialist, and initiated the Operations Manager recruitment, all using CBI methodology. The CO continued to provide support to the Croatia Office for recruitments and HR administration.

The CRB is established at the area office level and reviews cases for both the Croatia and Serbia offices. At the 2010 PBR, UNICEF Serbia proposed the abolishment of the GS4 posts of Administrative Assistant-



Programme and Administrative Assistant-Operations, with the aim of concentrating and streamlining administrative support within the Office. A new position of Administrative Assistant (GS5) was established in their place which would support both operations and programme. The PBR approved the submission, effective January 2012.

Since then, however, the situation has changed with the introduction of VISION/SAP and IPSAS-compliant standards. It is now clear that the changes will increase the workload and bring a stricter segregation of functions. In this context, an extension of the two existing Administrative Assistant posts until the end of 2013 was sought and approved. A review of this decision will be conducted at the MTR in mid-2013, when there will be an overall review of the country programme and a better understanding of the impact of VISION/SAP.

Performance planning according to the new PAS system was completed, with mid-year progress reviews and discussions taking place for all staff.

The CMT and the Local Staff Development Committee played an active role in identifying competency gaps and supporting staff training. Staff development priorities included internally developed training in Business Standards, Internal Control and Accounting - IPSAS for all staff and training in SAP-HR and SAP/VISION. In addition, relevant staff were trained in public finance management, evaluation, the peer support volunteer role, health promotion, health communication and risk communication, emergency education response, human security, and two staff began the supervisory skills training programme.

Designated staff from programme, finance, HR and supply areas participated in VISION Regional ToT trainings in Antalya, Istanbul and Geneva during the fall. These staff members subsequently facilitated the SAP/VISION training in the Office and are equipped to serve as Super-Users to support staff in SAP implementation.

The Staff Association (SA) actively contributed to promoting Work/Life Balance policies through briefings on and promotion of flexible working arrangements. It also supported active staff participation in transition processes to VISION and IPSAS and led the related discussion about changes in business roles and workload. The SA also played an active role in diverse team building events. The newly elected SA Chairperson took part in regional SA training in Zagreb.

### Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings

The Office continues to realize savings through the use of common services and contracts at the UN level in banking, travel agent and conference organization, procurement of stationary, cleaning supplies, courier, hotel services and others. This has resulted in significant savings in staff time needed to manage these processes and has achieved more favorable rates and cost savings thanks to the increased bargaining power of the UN as a relatively high value procurer.

Following significant savings achieved in 2009 and 2010 as per the Savings Plan, the Office stayed within current allotments for support costs and realized some smaller additional savings. The largest share of the savings can be attributed to closing down the warehouse. Storage costs were reduced from USD 24,000 in 2009 and USD 19,000 in 2010 to USD 1,500 in 2011, when the PFP warehouse was closed. Other significant savings were realized through the abolishment of one driver post; rationalization of transport administration; cost reductions in vehicle maintenance, when old vehicles were disposed of; and renegotiation of ISP services. Moderate savings were realized on the supplies and materials budget line through paper use rationalization.

### Changes in AMP and CPMP

In relation to the introduction of SAP and the new Internal Control Framework, the Annual Management Plan for 2012 will include an office assessment of the functional-SAP roles, a re-distribution of assignments amongst support staff, and a revised replacement scheme. CMT will monitor the appropriateness and efficiency of the assignment of roles and once the system is fully up and running at mid-year, it will determine if further review of the workload and/or revision of work processes is required.

### Summary Notes and Acronyms

AMP	Annual Management Plan
C4D	Communication for Development
CEE/CIS	Central and Eastern Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States
CMT	Country Management Team
CO	Country Office
CP	Country Programme
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CPD	Country Programme Document
CPMP	Country Programme Management Plan
CRB	Central Review Board
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSW	Center for Social Work
DCT	Direct Cash Transfer
DEC	Development Education Centre
DILS	Decentralization of Integrated Social Services
DOC	Division of Communication
EC	European Commission
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EPRP	Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan
ERM	Enterprise Risk Management
EU	European Union
EWEA	Early Warning Early Action
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer
HR	Human resources
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IMEP	Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPSAS	International Public Sector Accounting Standards
ISP	Institute for Social Protection
JJ	Juvenile Justice
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG F	Millennium Development Goal Fund
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MICS	Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey
MODS	Network of CSOs for Children of Serbia
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoLSP	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
MYWP	Multi-Year Work Plan
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OR	Other Resources
PAS	Performance Assessment System

PBA	Programme Budget Allotment
PBR	Programme and Budget Review
PPP	Preparatory Preschool Programme
RECI	Roma Early Childhood Inclusion
RHM	Roma Health Mediators
RR	Regular Resources
SA	Staff Association
SB	Support Budget
SORS	Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia
SWV	Schools without Violence
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
VISION	Virtual Integrated System of Information

### Document Centre

#### Evaluation

	Title	Sequence Number	Type of Report
1	Transforming Residential Institutions for Children and Developing Sustainable Alternatives	2011/002	Evaluation
2	Implementation of the 2005 Juvenile Justice Law in Serbia: Assessment of Diversion, Alternative Sentences, and Child Victim Protections	2011/003	Study
3	Access for women and children to services in the rural areas of Serbia and proposed measures to improve their situation	2011/005	Study
4	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS 4)	2011/004	Survey
5	An Analysis of the Roles and Effectiveness of Child-Rights Accountability Institutions in Serbia	2011/007	Study
6	Roma Early Childhood Inclusion (RECI) Report	2011/008	Study
7	Youth in South Serbia - Inclusive Development Social Survey in Jablanicki and Pcinjski Districts	2011/009	Study
8	Analysis of the practice of involving the children and youth in decision-making process in local self-governments in Serbia	2011/010	Survey
9	Model of Costing of Inclusive Education in Serbia - A Case Study of 10 Municipalities	2011/006	Study

#### Other Publications

	Title
1	Advancing the Rights of Children with Disabilities - Handbook for Parliamentarians

#### Lessons Learned

	Title	Document Type/Category
1	Development of social protection indicators strengthens data collection systems and monitoring and evaluations processes	Innovation

#### Programme Documents