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<tr>
<td>APSSC</td>
<td>Asia Pacific Shared Services Centre</td>
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<td>ARNEC</td>
<td>Asia-Pacific Network on Early Childhood</td>
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<td>BSC</td>
<td>Business Support Centre</td>
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<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of All Types of Discrimination Against Woman</td>
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<td>CMAM</td>
<td>Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition</td>
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<td>Country Offices</td>
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<td>Country programme Document</td>
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<td>CPIE</td>
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<td>Child Protection Systems Mapping and Assessment</td>
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<td>CRC</td>
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<td>Communication for Development</td>
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<td>DRR</td>
<td>Disaster Risk Reduction</td>
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<td>Enterprise Risk Management</td>
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<td>ESCAP</td>
<td>Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific</td>
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<td>GAIN</td>
<td>Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition</td>
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<td>Gender-based Violence</td>
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<td>Global Partnership for Education</td>
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<td>IBR</td>
<td>Integrated Budget Review</td>
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<td>IR</td>
<td>Intermediate Result</td>
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<td>KPI</td>
<td>Key Performance Indicator</td>
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<td>Master of Arts in Social Policy</td>
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<td>MoRES</td>
<td>Monitoring Results for Equity System</td>
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<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goal</td>
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<td>MRM</td>
<td>Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on Grave Child Rights Violations in Situations</td>
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<td>Pakistan Early Child Development Scale-Up</td>
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<td>PPTC</td>
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<td>RMT</td>
<td>Regional Management Team</td>
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<td>ROSA</td>
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<td>ROMT</td>
<td>Regional Office Management Team</td>
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<td>RUTF</td>
<td>Ready to Use Therapeutic Food</td>
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<td>RWPs</td>
<td>Rolling Work Plans</td>
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<td>South Asian Coordinating Group on Action against Violence Against Children</td>
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<td>SACOSAN</td>
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Part One: Executive Summary

Political instability continued in the region. Afghanistan entered a critical time period as preparations got underway for elections and withdrawal of international military forces in 2014. Concerns were high about the impact of the political and security transition that has already shown evidence of an economic downturn, including loss of jobs, under-employment and increased insecurity. In Bangladesh political tension and civil unrest prevailed throughout the year while in the Maldives, presidential elections were disrupted by violence.

In January 2014, India celebrated three years without recording a case of wild polio virus. This unprecedented progress against polio paves the way for polio-free certification for South Asia with reported cases in Afghanistan showing a reduction from 38 cases in 2012 to 14 cases in 2013. Pakistan however experienced setbacks in 2013 with the number of polio cases increasing despite the effectiveness of strategies to reduce vaccination refusal rates.

Staff security in Afghanistan and Pakistan continued to be a major concern in 2013 and early 2014. In January 2014, UNICEF Afghanistan lost two staff members after a restaurant in Kabul was bombed. Polio workers in Pakistan continued to be targeted in attacks, severely hampering the polio eradication campaign.

Despite progress in many of child-related MDGs, widening disparities and inequity within, and among countries, continues to be a major challenge. Throughout 2013, the Regional Office made several strides forward to strengthen the enabling environment and address inequity all programmes. In October, UNICEF ROSA supported the 2nd High Level Meeting on South-South Cooperation for Child Rights in Asia and the Pacific, held in India. The meeting brought together ministers from both South Asia and East Asia and the Pacific. It concluded with a final declaration aimed at increasing cooperation for the realization of children’s rights, improved knowledge and information sharing on early childhood development, addressing children in urban environments and providing opportunities for adolescents. An important complementary step was the successful development of ROSA’s Regional Strategy on Adolescents in 2013, which strengthened the partnership between the India Country Office, the Regional Office and Ikea towards a coherent regional approach to adolescent programming.

The Regional Office also successfully put children with disabilities higher on the regional development agenda in South Asia, by pooling expertise and experiences to begin an inclusive education initiative focusing on increased learning opportunities for children with disabilities. Another major initiative was the technical support provided to SAARC for the conceptualization of the Regional Framework for Nutrition in South Asia. The Framework provides guidance to national governments for the conceptualization of inter-sectoral approaches to maternal and child nutrition. South Asia continues to be heavily characterized by significant gender inequalities and low social status of girls and women. Spearheaded by the launch of the UNICEF End Violence against Children Campaign, advocacy by ROSA ensured the engagement of the South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC) in these campaigns.

With about 65 percent of the world’s open defecators in South Asia, including 621 million in India alone, the availability and use of improved sanitation facilities is a critical development priority. The 5th South Asia Conference on Sanitation hosted by the Government of Nepal and supported by the Regional Office brought 400 participants, including Ministers responsible for sanitation programmes. Importantly the conference finalized a declaration which committed all stakeholders to accelerate the sanitation social movement to achieve an open defecation free South Asia by 2023. In 2013, the Regional Office supported high level advocacy, drawing greater attention to sexual reproductive health and HIV protection for adolescents engaged in sex work in the region at the 11th International AIDS Congress in Asia Pacific.

The Regional Office and Country Offices increased the standard of performance monitoring in South Asia. After developing a checklist to improve the quality of progress statements in Insight, ROSA’s Regional Advisors critically reviewed progress statement for all Intermediate Results for all country offices in the region. The initiative, which improved the quality of performance management in the region was welcomed by country offices. Evaluation capacity was strengthened in the region through a

1 Ibid.
commitment with country offices at the Regional management team meeting to a regional evaluation strategy for high quality evaluations in 2013.

The effectiveness and efficiency of UNICEF operations was improved through the establishment of Business Support Centres (BSC) throughout the region, including in ROSA, to unify Virtual Integrated System of Information (VISION) transactions offering faster more streamlined processes.

**Shortfalls**

Relationship with international financial institutions needs greater attention in South Asia. While an MOU has been signed with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), joint programming remains in its infancy. Plans are progressing to include a discussion on strengthening relations with both the World Bank and the ADB at the Deputy Representatives meeting in 2014.

Capacity development in the Regional office, with the advent of the Business Support Centre was an issue requiring attention increasing attention in 2013. In response to changing workloads among general service staff, which came out of centralizing VISION transactions, the Regional Office embarked on capacity development sessions especially on knowledge management and research.

**Partnerships**

Regional partnership with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) continues to be strengthened. A draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between SAARC and UNICEF ROSA was tabled in 2013 and joint action plans developed in HIV, Health, Water and Sanitation, Nutrition, Education, HIV/AIDS, Social Policy, Evaluation, and Child Protection. A regional SAARC strategy on HIV/AIDS for 2012-2016, a SAARC actionable framework to address the common challenge of sanitation and SAARC Regional Guidelines for Action on Nutrition were finalised in 2013.

UNICEF continued its close partnership with WHO within the ‘One Polio Team’. The team has also accelerated implementation in 2013 working together in both Pakistan and Afghanistan eradication campaigns. In November, the Afghanistan TAG recognised that a year of no polio cases in the South region was clear evidence that the country is on track to achieve the goal of polio eradication. Challenges remain in the East along the border with Pakistan and within Pakistan.

ROSA continued its partnerships in regional UN networks including the Asian Pacific UN Development Group meetings as well as the Nepal UNCT Security Management Team. ROSA actively participated in joint work with WHO, UNICEF, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Rotary International towards polio eradication.

**Part Two: Trends and Progress in the Region**

South Asia has over 600 million people under the age of 18, which is the largest number of children and adolescents of any region in the world. It is also the region most prone to disaster impacts; a flash flood event in India’s Uttarakhand State in June 2013 cost at least 5,000 lives and affected more than 2 million people. In Pakistan, a powerful earthquake measuring 7.2 on the Richter magnitude scale struck Balochistan province on 24 September 2013, killing 386 people and affecting more than 185,000.

The risk to the region of natural hazards, conflict and insecurity was the focus of greater regional efforts in 2013 to strengthen risk-informed programming across countries (i.e. programming that is informed by disaster risk, climate change and conflict analysis). As well as natural hazards, the region is affected by ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Afghanistan entered a critical time as preparations got underway for elections and withdrawal of international military forces in 2014. The conflict between anti-government elements and the Afghan and international armed forces has displaced 612,000 people, including an additional 64,000 people in 2013 alone. Concerns were high about the impact of the political and security transition that has already shown evidence of an economic downturn, including loss of jobs, under-employment and increased insecurity. In Pakistan, polio workers continue to be

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2 State of the World’s Children 2013, UNICEF May 2013
targeted. As the peace talks between the Government and the Taliban continue to falter, the Pakistani military launched a large-scale operation against militants’ strongholds in North Waziristan along the country’s tribal belt bordering Afghanistan. In Bangladesh political tension and civil unrest prevailed throughout the year while in the Maldives, presidential elections were disrupted by violence.

In January 2014, India celebrated three years without recording a case of wild polio virus. This unprecedented progress against polio paves the way for polio-free certification for South Asia with reported cases in Afghanistan showing a reduction from 38 cases in 2012 to 14 cases in 2013. Pakistan however experienced setbacks in 2013 with numbers of polio cases increasing despite the effectiveness of strategies that reduced vaccination refusal rates to lower than any polio-endemic country. The increasing number of attacks against Government, NGO health workers and security forces in Pakistan present serious challenges to polio eradication efforts.

Significant yet mixed progress has been made in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). In 2013 regional highlights included the adoption of the new Children Act in Bangladesh which harmonizes the definition of the child with the CRC. The Ministry of Women and Child Development in India initiated the process of developing a National Plan of Action for Children which is to take forward the recommendations and concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Also in India the pre-sessional working group, during which UNICEF and civil society members briefed the Committee on the Rights of the Child, took place for the 3rd and 4th periodic report and the initial reports on Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OPAC) and the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (OPSC). Pakistan is the only country in the region that has not ratified the OPAC; it should also be noted that no country in the region has yet ratified the new Optional Protocol to the CRC on a communication procedure.

Other than Bhutan and Sri Lanka the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) has been ratified by the 6 other countries in the region. However as yet no country has submitted their first report. Seizing the opportunity to place children with disabilities higher on the development agenda in South Asia, in 2013 ROSA pooled expertise and experiences from all levels of the organisation to begin an initiative on inclusive education which focuses on increasing learning opportunities for children with disabilities across the region. Despite gains and progress in achieving many of the child-related MDGs, widening disparities and inequity within and among countries continues to be a major threat to the wellbeing of children. It is also recognized that any gains made for children in the early years in the region must be consolidated as children, especially girls, move through to the adolescent period. Whilst adolescence is a time of both tremendous opportunity and vulnerability for all boys and girls, adolescent girls in South Asia are a particularly important but vulnerable population as the region seeks to progress toward the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) thus spurring the development of ROSA’s Regional Strategy on Adolescents in 2013.

According to the 2013 MDG Report the pace of change in South-Asia is too slow to meet the MDG1 target of halving the people who suffer from hunger. Underweight prevalence of children is highest in South Asia than anywhere else in the world (33 percent). Sri Lanka which is on track to meet most MDGs is also struggling to achieve MDG1 with a fifth of all children in the country underweight. With one in four children stunted in the region the negative impact on children’s overall development from early chronic undernutrition is particularly worrisome. More than a quarter of adolescent girls are underweight in South Asian countries; 26 percent of adolescent girls in Nepal, 35 percent in Bangladesh and 47 percent in India register Body Mass Indexes below 18.5. Nutrition inevitably remains a major multisectoral regional priority facilitated by the strong collaboration with UNICEF and SAARC for the conceptualization of the Regional Framework for Nutrition in South Asia.

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8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
As reported in the 2013 South Asia Regional Study on the Global Initiative of Children Out-of-School, despite the significant achievements in achieving MDG2 with enrolment rates in primary education reaching 90 percent in 2011, the reality remains that millions of children are still out of school. The study shows that 27 million children between the ages 5 to 13 are out of school in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The majority of excluded children live in rural areas. The study sheds important insights on the patterns of exclusion; survival rates to final grade of primary school are alarmingly low in Bangladesh (40 percent) and in Pakistan the dropout rate in the last grade of primary education in 43 percent. The study has contributed to evidence for better policies and opportunities to address school exclusion, particularly of the most marginalized children.

While gender disparities within education in the region appear on track to meet the MDG3 gender parity target, South Asia continues to be heavily characterized by significant gender inequalities and low social status of girls and women. Spearheaded by the launch of the UNICEF End Violence against Children Campaign, campaigns in 2013 were undertaken in both Nepal and India to mobilise public opinion to speak out against violence against children. Advocacy by ROSA ensured the engagement of the South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC) in these campaigns. In July 2013 Afghanistan’s combined initial and 2nd periodic reports on its implementation of CEDAW were discussed at the 55th session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The concluding observations resulted in a strong focus on addressing violence against women, non-discrimination and participation of women and particularly the issue of harmful practices against girls (and women), girls’ education and child marriage.

Since 1990 South Asia has reduced its under-five mortality rate by half however with an estimated total number of deaths at 2.1 million each year – more than half of which are in India - the pace of decline still remains insufficient to reach MDG 4. Over half (53 percent) of all under-five deaths in the region occur in the neonatal period. Whilst the Maldives for example has had great success in reducing neonatal mortality between 1990 and 2012 by 87 percent, the share of neonatal deaths in most other countries has risen considerably. This has necessitated stronger efforts to accelerate newborn interventions in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Nepal with extensive newborn policy and program analysis taking place in all five heavy burden countries in 2013. Continued engagement in other partnerships such as GAVI and the global health and nutrition coalitions is also critical to the achievement of MDGs across the region.

Many countries in the region do not have strong vital registration systems for births and deaths, which presents a challenge in accurately reporting on changes in maternal mortality and MDG5 across the region. It is estimated that the region still accounts for 29 percent of the global burden of maternal deaths. With almost half (46 per cent) of girls married in South Asia before the age of 18, South Asian countries consequently have high proportions of teenage pregnancies. Maternal deaths related to pregnancy and childbirth are an important component of mortality for girls aged 15-19. With the exception of Sri Lanka and the Maldives, the number of women giving birth without the assistance of a skilled birth assistance in the region is very low at around 50 percent with persistent and widening urban-rural gaps in all countries. Most countries have a long way to go therefore to achieve this milestone which significantly contributes to prevention of maternal deaths.

All countries are on track to achieve MDG6 however evidence shows that the future size of South Asia’s HIV epidemic will depend heavily on the scope and effectiveness of HIV programming targeted towards key affected populations, especially the young cohort. Young key populations at higher risk – such as adolescent males who have sex with males, adolescents who sell engaged in sex work, and adolescents who inject drugs with contaminated injecting equipment – face additional challenges to HIV treatment, care and support. Many adolescents in the region lack the information, education, services and supportive environment to prevent HIV transmission for a variety of reasons, for example interventions

12 ibid.
17 Lost in Transition: Current Issues faced by Adolescents living with HIV in Asia Pacific, 2013 Asia Pacific Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS, UNICEF and UNESCO Publication
that target sex workers over 18 generally do not address the specific needs of adolescents under 18. In 2013 the regional office supported high level advocacy, drawing greater attention to sexual reproductive health and HIV protection for adolescents engaged in sex work in the region at the 11th International AIDS Congress in Asia Pacific.

According to the 2013 WHO-UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme Report, the proportion of people using improved sanitation increased from 29 percent in 2000 to 39 percent in 2011, while the proportion of people practicing open defecation fell from 55 percent to 41 percent. Sanitation coverage in South Asia however is much below the world average and the region is not on track to achieve the MDG 7 sanitation target. About 65 percent of the world’s open defecators live in South Asia. Large inequities persist, with the poorest living mostly without sanitation. With 621 million open defecators, India accounts for about 90 per cent of the people without toilets in South Asia. This was brought to the forefront during the 5th South Asia Conference on Sanitation hosted by The Government of Nepal bringing together 400 participants involved in sanitation, including Ministers responsible for sanitation programmes. The conference declaration committed all stakeholders to accelerate the sanitation social movement to achieve an open defecation free South Asia by 2023.

UNICEF’s regional partnerships with the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) continued to advance in 2013 with jointly agreed annual plans on important actions in HIV, Health, Water and Sanitation, Nutrition, Education, HIV/AIDS, Social Policy, Evaluation, and Child Protection. ROSA’s work with SAARC is critical to advance MDG8 and strengthen the enabling environment of policies, programmes, and budgets in the region.

Part Three: Analysis of Programme Strategies and Results in the Region

3.1 Overview of Programme Strategies
Capacity Development (including South-South Cooperation)
Countries in the region are undertaking various activities to enhance the capacities of government counterparts at all levels as well as of institutions and systems, with the support of the Regional Office. Most activities are centred around trainings and technical assistance in the areas of MNCH, PEI, polio, health, education, child protection, evaluation, early childhood development, and emergency preparedness, among others. Some activities also support institutionalization of trainings through national institutes such as in evaluation.

Strengthening country offices, as well as Government counterparts, in monitoring results for the most deprived was an ongoing priority of the Regional Office throughout 2013. Based on the application of MoRES, level 3 monitoring and community based dialogue was strengthened in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan. As a result of joint RO and Country Office activities in strengthening real-time community monitoring, the capacity of district level officials as well as local governance structures and planning has been reinforced.

Capacity development support is most often integrated into regional sectoral programming, e.g. in health, education, evaluation where regional support is provided through regional advisors. ROSA together with UNICEF HQ, EAPRO, USAID, WHO, SCUS and the Government of Nepal, hosted nine countries for the regional new-born consultation. Together with UNICEF HQ, innovative pilot projects were initiated in introducing improved management information systems in vaccine and cold chain supplies with PATH, BMGF, WHO and other local organizations. Partnership with WHO EMRO and GAVI was strengthened for advancing PCV introduction in Afghanistan and Measles campaign preparation in Pakistan.

The Regional office has worked with Country Offices to strengthen capacity development for disaster risk reduction, emergency preparedness and emergency response (e.g. in Bangladesh, Bhutan). A number of Country Offices (Nepal, India, Pakistan, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Maldives) integrated DRR and/or climate change in educational curriculum and promoted comprehensive school safety approaches.

18 Ibid.
19 Progress on Drinking Water and Sanitation 2013 Update, WHO-UNICEF Global Joint Monitoring Programme
20 Ibid.
In India, several States are introducing trained frontline workers called Swachetadoots (sanitation motivators) for sanitation triggering and facilitation. In India, UNICEF introduced the WASH Bottleneck Analysis Tool in two States, while in Sri Lanka used the Service Delivery Assessment, another tool for systematically analysing major bottleneck in the government rural and urban water supply and sanitation programmes.

A major achievement in South-South Cooperation was UNICEF ROSA’s support to the 2nd High Level Meeting on South-South Cooperation for Child Rights in Asia and the Pacific, held in India. The meeting convened partners from both South Asia and East Asia and the Pacific and concluded with a final declaration. The Declaration focused on the realization of children’s rights, improved knowledge and information sharing on early childhood development, addressing children in urban environments and providing opportunities for adolescents.

Effective Advocacy
The weight of ROSA’s advocacy and communications work, in line with the new Strategic Plan, is on strengthened advocacy based on evidence.

Recognizing that the public perceptions can make the most difference in terms of attitudinal change, media partnerships in the region with communications networks enabled allowed regional themes to reach a wide and more influential audience. ROSA scored a coup with the agreement to have Sachin Tendulkar, the world famous Indian cricketer to act as UNICEF Ambassador for sanitation and hygiene. Sachin will promote themes such as safe hygiene practices as part of the effort to eliminate open defecation in the region.

ROSA in collaboration with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), the Global Partnership for Education, and the Understanding Children's Work programme continued to carry out the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children in the region. The initiative has led to a more comprehensive data on out-of-school children in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and in-depth analysis on barriers keeping them from school. It has also identified sound policies to address school exclusion, particularly of the most marginalized children.

In Afghanistan UNICEF’s strong advocacy has resulted in the development of key national policies and plans such as the policy on Community Based Education as well as the Nutrition Action Framework. The CO is approaching advocacy mostly from a communication point of view with some front office involvement -as opposed to an integrated Advocacy Strategy with clearly identified processes led by the different components of the CO.

The India Country office produced a document titled Guiding Framework for Public Advocacy for Policy and Social Change which has identified critical advocacy priority issues related to child protection, child survival, elimination of OD, and providing quality education. ICO is in the planning process of developing an advocacy strategy, mostly at the state level.

Communication for Development
UNICEF's regional polio programme is mandated by the Global Polio Eradication Initiative to conduct Communication for Development programmes to actively engage parents and caregivers to be aware of polio Supplementary Immunization Activities and to accept oral polio vaccine for all children under five, every time it is offered.

Extensive social mobilization networks have been supported by the regional office in India (Social Mobilization Network - SMNet), Pakistan (Communication Network - ComNet), and Afghanistan (Immunization Communication Network - ICN), where almost 10,000 social mobilizers conduct door-to-door Interpersonal Communication to build demand at the community level and tackle refusals. The regional office has also sought to strengthen communication convergence within national polio campaigns around routine immunization, colostrum and exclusive breastfeeding until six months of age, hand washing with soap, and the use of ORS and zinc to tackle diarrheal episodes.

Community social mobilization networks engage key community influencers and religious leaders to actively engage parents and support community and mothers meetings in advance of immunization campaigns. These evidence-based communication networks provide micro planning support and validation, and supportive supervision and monitoring of government vaccination activities. Media
support and mass media campaigns on print and electronic media are conducted prior to and during campaigns, and high-visibility IEC including posters, banners and other materials are disseminated.

Capacity development activities are held with frontline workers and an extensive monitoring and evaluation network tracks coverage and refusals to allow for real-time in-course corrections during and between campaigns.

**Strategic Partnerships**

In 2013 UNICEF expanded its partnership with the Secretariat of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) with activities involving member states in almost the full range of sectors that UNICEF supports, which strengthens the potential for South-South cooperation among SAARC member states. The SAARC-UNICEF MoU was revised and shared with the SAARC Secretariat at the end of the year. The MoU will be tabled at the SAARC Council of Ministers meeting for endorsement in February 2014.

Regional Frameworks on Nutrition and Sanitation, as part of a joint SAARC-ROSA workplan were finalized at a Regional Consultative Meeting in May and presented at the 4th meeting of SAARC's Technical Committee on Health and Population Activities in October. The Committee agreed to circulate the Frameworks among Member States for their views/comments and to present them before the meeting of SAARC Health Ministers for adoption/approval in 2014.

A Policy Dialogue on Adolescents and a Review meeting on the SAARC regional strategic framework on children affected by HIV/AIDS in South Asia were held in September producing country-level policy actions and recommendations respectively. In close collaboration with WHO, ROSA hosted the regional Asia-Pacific PPTCT task force meeting. Its recommendations provide strong guidance for PPTCT scale up in the region.

ROSA continued to support the South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC), a SAARC Apex body. In 2013, UNICEF and other core members in the South Asia Coordinating Group on Action against Violence against Children (SACG) supported SAIEVAC in organising the 2nd and 3rd regional meeting of National Action and Coordinating Groups against Violence against Children (NACGs), established in seven countries (some with support from UNICEF COs) to support SAIEVAC at country-level; 3rd SAIEVAC Technical Consultation on harmful practices and the SAARC Chief Justices and parallel SAARCLAW Conference. All meetings resulted in recommendations which are being followed up by SAIEVAC and its partners. Throughout the year SAIEVAC demonstrated its convening capacity as well as its capacity for providing a platform for awareness raising and exchange of information between countries in South Asia.

ROSA continued to work with EAPRO, UNESCO, the Asia-Pacific Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC), and the Korean Institute of Child Care and Education to further promote early childhood development in Asia-Pacific. The partnership culminated in the holding of the Asia-Pacific Regional Policy Forum on Early Childhood Care and Education in Seoul in July 2013 which further raised policy makers' awareness of the importance of ECD.

**Knowledge Management**

In 2013, the Regional Office increased its commitment to strengthening the knowledge management function of the Regional Office, with all programme sections and operations committed to advance the collection, analysis, dissemination, and exchange of knowledge on proven strategies from the region and globally. In preparation, the Regional Office undertook a study of knowledge management systems and practices in ROSA as well as the needs and demands by Country Offices. Following an assessment of strengths, weaknesses and opportunities, a knowledge management strategy for ROSA was drafted. The strategy is currently being finalized and will be launched in the first part of 2014.

The Regional office continued to support data generation and dissemination on the situation of children in 2013. Technical support was provided to three MICS participating Country Offices - Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan as well as to other child related surveys such as the Bhutan's Child Labour Survey and Violence Against Children Study. ROSA also played an instrumental role in the completion of the Regional Study of the Out of School Children Report. Efforts were made to effectively disseminate data through the creative info graphics presenting the situation of adolescents in South Asia using
secondary data. The Regional office extended its support to Country Offices in generating knowledge to improve programming, especially for priority areas e.g. Adolescents case studies.

Throughout the year, ROSA remained active in sharing state-of-the art knowledge through the organisation of several sector network meetings and webinars. Of particular significance for Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan and the Maldives, was the organisation by the Regional Office of a webinar on “Child Rights in Islam”, with the presence of an eminent external speaker to present the topic and share other Muslim Country experiences. Inter-country knowledge exchange on implementation of MoRES was also facilitated through network meetings and regional/HQ webinars.

The review of the 2013 Country Office Annual Reports highlighted that significant evidence on the situation of children and/or programme performance is being generated in all the countries of the region but knowledge is not systematically being used and shared. There is further need for developing capacities in analysing data, ensuring quality, and using evidence to strengthen advocacy and programming related to the Strategic Plan’s seven outcomes.

**Human Rights-Based Approach to Cooperation**

UNICEF continued to develop capacity of different stakeholders on child rights. In Afghanistan, law enforcement officials and community leaders continue to be trained on CRC and child rights and Islam. Afghanistan also developed a county programme, with Regional Office support, with realization of child rights at the core.

Significant yet mixed progress has been made in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). In 2013 Bangladesh adopted a new Children Act in which harmonized the definition of the child with the CRC. In India the Ministry of Women and Child Development began development of a National Plan of Action for Children based on the concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Also in India UNICEF participated in the pre-sessional working group for the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the 3rd and 4th periodic report and optional protocols. Pakistan is the only country in the region that has not ratified the on Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OPAC). Other than Bhutan and Sri Lanka, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) has been ratified by the 6 other countries in the region. However as yet no country has submitted their first report.

**Gender Equality and Mainstreaming**

In April 2013 ROSA completed a regional gender review. The purpose of the review was to assess UNICEF achievements between 2010 and 2012 in mainstreaming gender equality into all aspects of work across South Asia in line with the Gender Policy and the Strategic Priority Action Plan. The review identified that significant progress has been made in putting foundations in place to implement UNICEF’s gender equality mandate.

While achievements and progress was reported in each of the eight main areas of change identified in the SPAP, Country Offices are not yet achieving optimum results\(^\text{21}\) and efforts to implement priority actions set out in the SPAP, the review noted that many have been ad-hoc in nature. According to the review, Gender Focal Points/Teams played and will continue to play a critical role in institutionalizing gender mainstreaming within offices, and need to be supported and incentivized to undertake this role. The review further identified areas in programming, advocacy, communication and administrative and operational processes required needs to better mainstream gender equality across areas of work.

While the region leads global efforts in resource allocation and expenditures for gender equality results, almost a quarter of UNICEF-assisted programmes in South Asia contribute only marginally or not at all to gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women. Sustainability of progress is therefore a concern. Lack of human and financial resources available to support both ROSA and CO gender mainstreaming efforts could undermine progress made to date.

\(^\text{21}\) In order to transform UNICEF into an organization of excellence in promoting gender equality, the SPAP lays out eight areas of change: accountability and strategic framework; capacity and knowledge; leadership, influence and advocacy; programming; ‘doing what we advocate’; partnership; financial resources; and communications.
The review provided a number of recommendations for HQ, regional and country offices. By the end of
the year implementation of selected recommendations was well underway, including, but not limited to:
- Extension of the SPAP, including through finalization of a specific plan for 2013 (Bhutan and Sri Lanka);
- Revision of the ToRs of the gender team (Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, ROSA);
- Inclusion of participation in gender team included in (e-)PAS (Nepal) and gender focal person’s task included in PAS (Bangladesh);
- Gender is a regular feature on the agenda of the CMT (Afghanistan, Maldives);
- Capacity development of staff ongoing (Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and ROSA) or planned (Maldives).

The review was cited by UNICEF Headquarters as an exemplary effort which also contributed to the
global level review.

Environmental Sustainability
Environmental sustainability, climate change and disaster risk reduction are priorities for the region in
order to safeguard child survival, well-being and rights. Technical support was provided to Country
Offices on mainstreaming environmental consciousness, DRR, climate change adaptation (CCA) and
resilience in country programmes. Child-centred risk assessments - piloted in Nepal, Pakistan and India –
helped in introducing risk-informed and climate-sensitive action planning based on a combination of
sectoral and multi-sectoral approaches that often encapsulate environmental sustainability.

UNICEF ROSA organized a regional workshop on risk-informed planning in April while the Indian
Country Office in collaboration with UNDMT India organized a South Asia Consultation on Climate
Change Adaptation in Delhi in June to highlight the importance of adaptation and synergies between
DRR and CCA. Several Country Offices worked at the policy level to advance child-centred approaches
to DRR and CCA and integrate climate change and disaster risk management into local development
planning.

3.2 Overview of each MTSP Focus Area

3.2.1 Young child survival and development (YCSD)

Major initiatives – Progress over the course of the year was strong, despite unfilled posts, reactive
challenges like responding to emergencies in different regions, and changing management
arrangements for YCSD.

ROSA contributed extensively in newborn policy and program analysis in all five heavy burden countries
in South Asia and co-hosted the ENAP (Every Newborn Action Plan) consultation in Kathmandu. High
level advocacy and support for evidence-based programing in Bangladesh, Nepal and India were
channelled through development of country/context-specific evidence-based child survival packages.

ROSA contributed to strengthening cold chain and logistics management, communication for
development, preparation of maternal and neonatal tetanus elimination sustaining strategy
development, initiating equity improvement plans in high priority countries, and other technical support
and quality assurances in the region. In Polio, there was overall strong progress in the implementation
of polio eradication-specific plans in 2013. India remained polio-free for a third year, qualifying South-
East Asia to be certified polio-free. Afghanistan saw its case count fall to just 14 cases including just one
in the Southern Region, one of the world’s most persistent reservoirs of poliovirus. In Pakistan the
poliovirus was geographically contained and genetically restricted to the smallest areas of the country
in history. Multiple country-support missions were carried out, including representing ROSA at the India
Expert Advisory Group and Pakistan and Afghanistan Technical Advisory Group meetings, participating
in the Pakistan Brain Trust exercise focusing on tackling access issues in FATA/KP areas of Pakistan,
conducting a Communications for Behaviour Change Capacity Development Workshop in Afghanistan,
leading the Afghanistan Programme Communications Review, and providing HR surge support in India
and Pakistan. In India, support was focused on assisting the development of the Social Mobilization
Network Transition Plan and documentation of lessons learned.

A major initiative was the technical support provided to SAARC for the conceptualization of the Regional
Framework for Nutrition in South Asia, which was approved by SAARC’s Technical Committee for Health
and Population. The Framework provides guidance to National Governments for the conceptualization
of inter-sectoral approaches to Maternal and Child Nutrition. This effort was mirrored in India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, where UNICEF country offices provided technical support to their national governments and development partners for the development and scale up Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Plans. With support by the European Union (EU), UNICEF Regional Offices for Asia and the Pacific (EAPRO-ROSA) supported a multi-country effort to improve the quality of counselling and reporting on infant and young child nutrition. Although ROSA’s work on Maternal and Child Nutrition was constrained by the parameters of the EU-funded project (limited to two countries in South Asia), a knowledge management framework that will document the results and lessons learned through the EU-supported Maternal and Child Nutrition programme in Asia was agreed upon.

In Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal and Bangladesh, UNICEF support enabled governments to implement their sanitation programmes using principles of community approaches to total sanitation (CATS). UNICEF ROSA, Nepal and India also provided inputs to the global evaluation of CATS. UNICEF and the Government of India hosted a global WASH-in-Schools Learning Exchange, which offered the 10 participating countries an opportunity to share their progress institutionalizing mass hand washing in schools, including five countries in South Asia.

Key results registered in 2013 – In-depth health system and policy analysis for the newborn interventions in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Nepal enabled countries to realign their maternal newborn strategies with the findings of the analysis. Evidence-based planning in eight UNDAF districts was supported, as was the monitoring of investment case implementation in five districts of Nepal. There was strong buy-in of Governments in Bangladesh and India for the Call to Action. MoRES rollout occurred in three provinces of Pakistan, up scaling to UNDAF districts in Bangladesh in selected unions, and 15 priority districts in Nepal. Case studies from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India and Nepal were published in a compendium of case studies for ‘innovative approaches to maternal and newborn health’ by UNICEF Health Section at HQ.

The knowledge, attitude and practice study on barriers in access and utilization of immunization services in Pakistan was initiated by PCO with ROSA technical support. There was follow-up of implementation of effective vaccine management improvement plans in Nepal, Bhutan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh. Capacity building of UNICEF EPI focal points through participation in the regional training and meetings occurred. In Polio in the Eastern Region of Afghanistan, an Emergency Response Plan was initiated, built on the India response model. In Pakistan, assistance was given to the preparation of the 2014 National Emergency Action Plan. In both Afghanistan and Pakistan assistance was given to the preparation of National Emergency Action Plans.

The Government of Nepal organized the 5th South Asia Conference on Sanitation, with 400 participants involved in sanitation in the region, including Ministers responsible for sanitation programmes. The conference declaration committed all stakeholders to accelerate the sanitation social movement to achieve an open defecation free South Asia by 2023. Nepal’s sanitation social movement continued to produce extraordinary results, achieving open defecation-free status in the remotest villages and districts. In Afghanistan, UNICEF is supporting community-led total sanitation approaches in five focus provinces.

The major partnerships – The regional office together with UNICEF HQ, EAPRO, USAID, WHO, SCUS and Government of Nepal, hosted nine countries for the regional newborn consultation. Together with UNICEF HQ, innovative pilot projects are being initiated in introducing management information systems in vaccine and cold chain supplies with PATH, BMGF, WHO and other local organizations. Partnership with WHO EMRO and GAVI strengthened for advancing PCV introduction in Afghanistan and Measles campaign preparation in Pakistan.

Held under the leadership of the World Bank President and the UNDP Administrator, the Chiefs of the Executive Board reviewed Nepal’s progress report on the MDG target for sanitation, prepared with inputs from UNICEF Nepal and ROSA. The draft of the SAARC regional action framework for sanitation was endorsed by its Technical Committee on Health and Population, and will now be submitted for Ministerial approval.

Constraints/factors for success, lessons learned, value added by RO - Capacity of country offices in evidence-based policy and program planning needs to be sufficiently enhanced through institutionalization of the process. ROSA has contributed in providing guidance and bringing equity as
a priority agenda in all programming. Monitoring results for equity systems has also contributed in mainstreaming equity-focused programming and monitoring in UNICEF programs at national and sub-national levels in countries. However, verticality needs to be avoided and MoRES should be taken as a tool for result-based monitoring among the most deprived that should be integrated into existing monitoring systems. Convergent monitoring is an important dimension of MoRES but purposeful convergence and operational modalities poses a huge challenge.

While well-functioning and adequate cold chain and logistics management is perceived as an important area for increasing immunization coverage and introducing new vaccines in the routine schedules, national governments’ investment and commitment is low. More efforts are needed to advocate for an increase in spending as well as donor contributions to improving the supply chain. India’s polio programme produced a knowledge sharing website, seven films documenting the social mobilization programme, and undertook production of a coffee table pictorial book documenting India’s gold standard polio Supplementary Immunization Activities.

UNICEF-Nepal is supporting the operationalization and documentation of point-of-use fortification of complementary foods with multiple micronutrient powders (‘sprinkles’) while UNICEF-Bangladesh supported the drafting, approval and roll-out of the national legislation on universal fortification of edible oil with vitamin A. These are good examples of the up-stream, knowledge-based technical support that needs to be a primary focus of UNICEF Nutrition programming in South Asia. Good practices and lessons learned were comprehensively documented by UNICEF-India through a vast knowledge generation effort - including a series of peer-reviewed articles and publications on nutrition for children under two with a particular focus on Infant Feeding, Micronutrient Nutrition (supplementation and fortification), and Therapeutic Feeding.

### 3.2.2 Basic education and gender equality

**Major initiatives:** ROSA and Country Offices’ (COs) efforts to ensure equity remains a priority in the education agenda of South Asia governments were diverse and covered all available strategies. Efforts were made to influence education sector plans at national levels (Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka) and provincial level (Pakistan). Work at decentralized levels also continued through direct interventions with governmental counterparts, communities and civil society. ROSA contributed to strengthening the evidence base and advocacy regarding the most vulnerable children through the Global Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI), and the work on children with disabilities. ROSA provided technical support, facilitated partnerships and promoted cross-sectoral and inter-country learning between the governments and COs. For example, to accelerate the process around Education Sector Plan in Sri Lanka, a Ministry of Education-UNICEF delegation visited Nepal to attend the Joint Annual Review of the Education Sector Plan, while Afghanistan’s experience on the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) has assisted relevant decision making in Bangladesh.

Major regional initiatives were around 1) MoRES (all COs), 2) the OOSCI (Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka) which seeks to improve data and policies on children excluded from education, and 3) inclusive education for children with disabilities (Bangladesh, Bhutan and Maldives). Activities linked to these initiatives included data analysis, studies, training, capacity development workshops and in-country assessments. The learning has been translated into country-specific action plans in which the identified capacity gaps are addressed through introduction of the Simulation for Equity in Education model (Pakistan), phase II of the OOSCI (Nepal) and technical assistance in inclusive education for children with disabilities (Bhutan, Maldives and Bangladesh). ROSA has played a strategic role in intensifying capacity development around these themes by involving global, regional and country resources, consequently contributing significantly to UNICEF’s global thinking.

ROSA continued to work strongly on providing a voice to South Asia in global education developments. The successful Asia-Pacific Post-2015 education consultation gave space to bottom-up participatory process involving civil society and youth, and fed into the global meeting in Dakar. Pakistan and Bangladesh made full use of the opportunity of the ‘All Children Learning’ meeting organized within the UN Secretary General’s Global Education First Initiative to trigger actions on accelerating results in education, including increased openness on data use, more investment for education and increased focus on learning outcomes.
Key results registered in 2013: Pakistan and Nepal which started new Country Programmes in 2013, made programmatic shifts focusing on bridging the gap between learning and access, and linking upstream work with monitoring results at district level. ROSA contributed to the development of a global learning metrics by participating in consultations and facilitating CO inputs.

Within the Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy (PBEA) Programme, several provincial Education Sector Plans in Pakistan have been informed by the conflict sensitive analysis and more emphasis is now placed on marginalized groups, including out-of-school children. The initiative to focus on education in areas affected by civil strife and with ethnic minorities is rolling out in India. Four states now have comprehensive work plans to find local, feasible solutions to improve access to quality education that contribute to social cohesion. In order to position Multi-Lingual Education as one key strategy to support peacebuilding and social cohesion, initial work has been done in Nepal and India. Maldives and Bhutan enhanced their Education Contingency Plans with support of ROSA and are now better prepared to respond to shocks and crisis affecting the education system. In the interest of equity, support has been extended to Sri Lanka to keep small schools open.

Major partnerships: As in the previous year, 2013 showed an intensified relation with the GPE in facilitating country processes to access GPE funding (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Pakistan), and ensuring that GPE engagement and funding impact Education Sector Plans positively in terms of equity (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, and Pakistan). In Afghanistan, UNICEF continued to function as Supervising Entity, while in Pakistan UNICEF took the responsibility for Managing Entity to provide technical assistance to the Sector Plan development. The wide range of experiences in South Asia have been actively shared with UNICEF’s global education and partnership community so lessons can be drawn.

Within the context of Early Childhood Development (ECD), established partnerships have continued with high intensity throughout 2013, especially related to the Asia-Pacific Early Child Care and Education Forum: a collaboration between ROSA, EAPRO, UNESCO, the Asia-Pacific Network of Early Childhood, and the Government of South Korea. In Bangladesh, India and Nepal, more emphasis has been placed on inter-sectoral nature of ECD triggered by the adoption of national policies and mandates while in the Maldives the focus has been on strengthening quality pre-school education. Linkages were made to the ECD discussions at the 2nd High Level Meeting on Child Rights and wider efforts in the region. Close collaboration with UNESCO was also reflected in shared publications on the education for All (EFA) End of Decade Notes, and the Post 2015 consultations. A joint UNICEF (EAPRO-ROSA) and UNESCO presentation on MDG 2 at the Asia-Pacific Regional Directors forum offered crucial opportunities to bring in new ideas. Collaboration with the UNESCO Institute of Statistics was maintained with intensive work on OOSCI, including continued technical assistance, collaboration at country level, and a joint technical regional workshop for all eight countries.

Common constraints and factors: In 2013 an exceptional high share of education staff in the region moved on, inevitably leaving gaps due to recruitment processes. Moreover, it has been difficult to recruit for all posts, including for ROSA where challenges in recruitment for the PBEA programme has led to delayed implementation especially regarding research.

The collaboration with SAARC is slower and less-action oriented as initially planned. However, ROSA continues to exert strong influence by drafting a concept paper for the SAARC Education Ministers meeting in 2014. The collaboration with regional networks/organizations for joint research and advocacy, including through the United National Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI) offers more opportunities that will be used to expand collaboration to more regional networks and/or organizations for joint research and advocacy in 2014.

Validated good practices and any lessons learned: UNGEI local networks continued to flourish in Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan while work in the area of Young Champions continued in the same countries and in Bhutan and Maldives in 2012 with Bhutan learning from the Nepal experience of giving a voice to the youth via radio and youth clubs. Awareness on gender issues has also been raised among Afghanistan education officials. The UNGEI cause and forum are still relevant for all countries in South Asia and demand continued to be expressed by the countries. The lesson learned is that innovation in conceptualization, messaging, and partnerships is required to reach the fullest potential of UNGEI and to achieve girls’ empowerment and gender balance.
Stronger ties were established with specific UNICEF National Committees (e.g. South Korea, Netherlands, Japan) on top of existing relationships under Schools for Asia which produced several communication materials, case for support, and $9.04 million raised in 2012-13 for Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and ROSA.22 A noteworthy practice is that the investment in donor relationship went beyond fundraising; substantive interaction from ROSA’s side with the Government of the Netherlands and Norway has been beneficial for mutual understanding and overall global relationships. As part of the OOSCI, good practices and lessons learned from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka were shared to all eight countries at the regional OOSCI meeting.

**ROSA’s added value:** ROSA contributed to equitable access to quality basic education through far-reaching initiatives on knowledge generation, strong emphasis on capacity development in countries, and influencing regional and global positions and thinking. The OOSCI has been leading the effort for equity in education in the region. With ROSA’s leadership, the India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and South Asia reports were finalized and launched strategically, sharing the results and thinking behind the initiative widely. Awareness on how to reach excluded children has been increased with more commitment from different stakeholders (including GPE) within the sector-wide plans across the region, including initiatives on multiple pathways to basic education.

ROSA provided high quality guidance and much appreciated support to COs, Headquarters and other Regional Offices. Technical assistance and strategic responses across the region, including strengthening of inter-country collaboration resulted in a strong regional education network. This was also reflected in the very positive and high number of feedback to the ROSA Client Satisfaction Survey, and the high figure of country requests in the Country Support Matrix responded to. On the conceptual level and influencing UNICEF global positioning, ROSA has also been advocating strongly for equity in South Asia and global agenda setting and shown leadership on inclusive education for children with disabilities, out-of-school children and multiple pathways to basic education.

### 3.2.3 HIV/AIDS and children

**Major initiatives** – ROSA continued working in partnerships with regional UN agencies, through Inter-agency Task Teams on HIV/AIDS and Young People (IATT/YP), the Interagency Task Team for PMTCT and the Interagency Task Team for Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV, contributing to several regional initiatives.

As a chair of the regional Interagency task team for PMTCT for 2013, ROSA hosted a bi-regional 11th PMTCT task force meeting, bringing together 110 mid and senior level delegates from 20 countries, including those from international agencies, national programmes and civil society, and technical experts from UNICEF and WHO HQ. The meeting provided a new guidance on rolling out PMTCT implementation specific to the Asia-Pacific HIV epidemic; emphasizing on aiming for 95 per cent coverage of all pregnant women while commencing with high burden districts. Only this will make elimination of vertical transmission of HIV possible. 24 out of 25 countries in Asia Pacific have adopted the PMTCT elimination target and 2 countries in South Asia (Nepal and Sri Lanka) have committed to the dual goal of eliminating parent-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis. During this meeting, it was recognised that only 1 per cent of HIV-positive pregnant women in South Asia region (compared to 43 per cent of HIV-positive pregnant women in East Asia-Pacific region) were receiving the most effective ARV for the prevention of parent-to-child transmission of HIV or PMTCT. The meeting advocated for greater linkages or integration of PMTCT in MCH, and scaling up of various models of delivery of PMTCT services, which can increase access of services to pregnant women, including those at high risk of HIV transmission, and those with partners belonging to groups at higher risk of HIV.

Through supporting participation of South Asia Countries, ROSA facilitated sharing of country experiences at the International AIDS conference for Asia Pacific (ICAAP) held in Bangkok in November 2013. The ICAAP was attended by over 4000 delegates, and facilitated discussion on regionally relevant issues. The conference facilitated sharing of good practises in the Asia Pacific region. High-level advocacy drew strong attention to the gap of SRH and HIV services to adolescents, particularly for adolescents selling sex and those engaged in the practice of men having sex with men.

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22 The actual total figure could be higher as the final figure would only be available in April 2014. The amount also includes funding commitments which may only be remitted to UNICEF Country Offices in 2014.
In 2013, the UN agencies and Civil Society Partners through Asia-Pacific Interagency Task Team on Young Key Populations (YKP) successfully raised the profile of adolescents/YKPs at regional/international events, ensuring their meaningful participation and leadership in strategic processes. ROSA contributed to the analysis of national strategic plans on HIV and AIDS in Asia-Pacific (to be published in 2014), reviewing the extent of inclusion YKPs in national strategic plans as well as in comprehensive national strategies. Furthermore, a systematic review of issues faced by adolescents living with HIV in Asia Pacific was conducted, and report published as “Lost in Transitions: Current issues faced by adolescents living with HIV in Asia Pacific”.

UNICEF ROSA developed a Regional Strategy on Adolescents in South-Asia, addressing key issues facing adolescents in South Asia and plans to support countries. UNICEF ROSA also developed an operational guidance note on how to support the mainstreaming of HIV programmes in South Asian Countries. The guidance note builds on findings from the assessment study on the UNICEF HIV mainstreaming as well as the UNICEF HIV vision paper 2014-2017 which highlights the importance of leadership at the country level as well as accountability and coordination. UNICEF and SAARC supported a regional consultation assessing country’s progress in working with children affected by AIDS, and reached consensus that these needs should be addressed as part of other services for vulnerable children.

**Key results registered in 2013** – Since the 11th PPTCT task force meeting, Sri Lanka has held its first national consultation on eMTCT of HIV and syphilis, and discussed the way forward in meeting the elimination goal. Nepal is scaling up its PPTCT services to 39 high burden districts, with future plans to cover 75 districts. India has adopted a dual approach to scaling up, including rolling out a phased approach to adoption of PPTCT in high burden districts (which contribute to up to 80 per cent of mother to child HIV transmission) while integrating HIV testing as part of a package of services delivered in antenatal services. Bhutan, Pakistan and Afghanistan have also rolled out PMTCT services integrated in MCH services at different rates. UNICEF ROSA in collaboration with WHO SEARO developed a regional guidance tool on making eMTCT operational, through integration of PMTCT services in MNCH. The tool is shared with countries in South and East Asia, to support their scale up of PPTCT services.

Recognizing that adolescents and young people faced challenges in accessing reproductive health and HIV services, a review of laws and policies that impact on young people access of services, “Young people and the Law in Asia and the Pacific” was published. This led to increased recognition of barriers among policy makers. The ROSA HIV programme supported capacity building in programming for adolescents/YKP through a regional short course: “Understanding the needs of Young key Affected Populations in Low/Concentrated HIV Epidemics”. Furthermore, capacities of 82 programme managers and policy makers involved in programming for adolescents and were strengthened through the NewGen Asia Leadership Short Course.

**The major partnerships** – ROSA consolidated its main partnerships based on the previous years’ achievements with collaboration with SAARC on issues concerning children affected by AIDS. ROSA also continued its leadership role in the Asia-Pacific Interagency Task Team on Young Key Affected Populations, as well as the Asia-Pacific UN PPTCT Task Force.

**Common constraints and factors** – In South Asia, absence of data on HIV services continues to pose a challenge including from India which is the largest contributor of HIV positive pregnant women. Early infant diagnosis of HIV was acknowledged to be an area for which South Asian countries lag behind, and concerted effort is required for services to meet demand. While UNICEF country offices in the region have elected to mainstream HIV programmes, the lack of clarity on the approach and accountability has resulted into delays in achieving some of the HIV related results. The relative lower incidence of HIV within big populations demands innovative targeted interventions to be mainstreamed or linked to existing health systems to reach the set targets of elimination. It is recognised that high risk populations in South Asia are “harder to reach” than in other regions.

**Validated good practices and lessons learned** – A systematic approach to understand factors which has a potential to drive the HIV epidemic has been undertaken by Bangladesh, where following Bangladesh’s participation to a capacity building training to understand the needs of adolescent and key affected populations, the country conducted mapping of high risk populations and developed a national strategy which is now being implemented with participation of adolescent and young key affected
populations. While this is a government led initiative, it is implemented by local NGOs and supported by multiple stakeholders.

Regional Office “value added” to MTSP Focus Area 3 – ROSA HIV and AIDS programme supported both the regional office and UNICEF Country Offices refine HIV mainstreaming strategies across the various sectors. The regional office also provided guidance on what are considered “state of the art” intervention approaches, which are of high impact and relevancy to a low HIV prevalent region where new HIV cases are “hard to reach”. Furthermore, the ROSA HIV AIDS section continued to play a lead role in representing the region in UN task teams, identifying and delivering on UNICEF’s accountabilities within the division of labour. For UN agencies.

3.2.4 Child protection from violence, exploitation and abuse

Major initiatives – UNICEF HQ spearheaded the launch of the End Violence against Children campaign (#ENDViolence) at the end of July, which included a Public Service Announcement (PSA) by UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Liam Neeson (“Making the Invisible Visible”). While reinforcing existing programmes throughout the world, it aims to mobilise public opinion to speak out against violence against children. In Nepal, UNICEF supported the Government to launch the national campaign with a world renowned Buddhist Nun urging citizens, lawmakers and government, including through a locally adapted PSA, to break the silence surrounding violence against children. UNICEF India launched a social media campaign targeting online audiences combined with offline media outreach, blogger involvement, and celebrity and civil society engagement, including a PSA with actor and Goodwill Ambassador Amitabh Bachchan. Advocacy by UNICEF ROSA ensured the engagement of the South Asia Initiative to End Violence against Children (SAIEVAC) in the campaign, which added a message from the SAIEVAC Director General to the PSA, which is posted on its website.

Building on the mapping and assessment of the child protection system (CPS) undertaken in Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Pakistan, UNICEF ROSA organised a regional CPS workshop for UNICEF and government staff to exchange experiences, provide an overview of the approaches to building child protection systems, reflect upon the implications of the findings of the mapping process towards building / strengthening systems and to continue the country specific dialogue for strengthening systems and identify key steps to take forward. The latter was done through drafting of brief follow up plans by the country delegations. The workshop demonstrated that while progress has been made, countries are at different stages in adopting a systems approach to CP therefore requiring a different type of support from UNICEF.

ROSA also supported capacity development of UNICEF and partner staff in child protection in emergencies (CPIE). This included support to training in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Nepal and a regional Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) training. These trainings resulted in active follow up on the MHPSS training in most countries that participated and CPIE sub-cluster members programmatically aligning more closely with core CPIE work in Afghanistan. ROSA used these activities to launch the concept of CPIE National Resource Pools. The overall goal of such a pool is to capacitate a pool of CPIE experts in-country from government, (I)NGOs and UNICEF to adequately prepare for, mitigate and respond to CP concerns in emergencies. Nepal is currently testing this concept.

Key results registered in 2012 – With support from UNICEF, progress continues to be made in law and policy reform. The parliament in Bangladesh adopted the new Children Act, which harmonizes the definition of the child with the CRC and among other issues, confers legitimacy for leveraging a national budget and resources for child protection systems and justice for children through the promotion of a child-friendly justice system with a focus on restoration. The Act also promotes family based alternatives to support children in need of protection. In India, support provided by UNICEF to the Ministry of Women and Child Development has led to finalizing the national strategy on child marriage and to developing a national action plan – the first specific national vision and policy on the issue.

Strengthening human resource capacity remains a key component of UNICEF support in the region. Labour inspectors and counsellors in Bhutan through their training in child rights and child labour now have the capacity to identify, report and refer child labour and other child protection issues. Quality of child-friendly justice services improved in Bangladesh through the training of police officers, border guards, lawyers and probation officers.
With regard to **coordination**, the Government of Nepal with support from UNICEF and INGOs developed the first ever harmonized guidelines for case management. In Sri Lanka, UNICEF is leading a group of key INGOs in the CP sector which is ensuring a more harmonised approach to working with Government.

Development of **information management systems** also progressed in the region. Most advanced is Bangladesh, where UNICEF is supporting a pilot online Case Management System and the Birth Registration Information System which towards year end registered an estimated 95 million births. In India, the “track child” Management Information System (MIS) portal is functional, and initial training for use of portal and data entry has been completed in all States while in Pakistan, with UNICEF support, modules for the Child Protection MIS were developed.

On **birth registration (BR)**, in Afghanistan, the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Public Health and Central Statistic Organization, with support from UNICEF and WHO, completed a national comprehensive Civil Registration and Vital Statistics policy that informed development of a ten years multi-sectoral plan. Additionally, a web based database was developed and installed and registrars trained on its use and management. UNICEF’s supported the setup of an institutional structure in Birth and Death Registration through the newly amended Act in Bangladesh. This structure aims at maintaining the BR Information System and accelerating the rate of registration within 45 days through enforcement of institutional linkages with immunization of new born. In addition to an analysis and costing of the BR system and a feasibility study on using cellular technology for augmenting BR rates, a systematic bottleneck analysis to ascertain the causes of low birth registration rates in Pakistan was conducted, with all three components feeding into the formulation of overarching provincial strategies to address the issue of low registration. Additionally, a national media campaign on BR, including the release of two television commercials and six newspaper testimonials on national and regional print and broadcast media outlets, reached millions of people across Pakistan.

In the area of **justice for children**, UNICEF Bangladesh is supporting a restorative justice pilot which resulted in the adoption of non-judicial proceedings by justice, child welfare and community-based child protection committees for children accused of petty crimes. A three day National Child Justice conference organized with technical support from ROSA, sensitized the key child protection partners in Bhutan on the current child protection situation in the country, the international instruments and the best practices in the area of child justice and resulted in a draft roadmap with concrete interventions to strengthen the child justice system. In the context of discussions to amend the Juvenile Justice legislation concerning children between the ages of 16 and 18 who are accused of committing serious offences, India CO supported two national-level consultations and facilitated dialogue and discussions among CSOs through various platforms, including a coalition of organisations working on child protection. As a result, the CSOs developed a well-articulated and nuanced position to oppose amendments to the existing legislation, especially a lowering of the age at which children are tried and sentenced as adults. In Nepal, eight new juvenile justice benches have been established at district level, while advocacy and assistance by UNICEF has also resulted in the commitment of the National Legal Aid Committee to better respond to cases of women and children referred to the 75 District Legal Aid Committees. And finally in Sri Lanka, UNICEF’s support to the Police and Attorney General’s Department in the implementation of Standard Operating Procedures related to the timely processing of child abuse cases resulted in 820 (45 per cent) cases with investigation files that were complete with police investigation and judicial medical reports out of 1,789 reported cases, and of these 820 cases, 427 (52 per cent) had been concluded leading to either prosecution or discharge of the suspect as of December.

With regard to **alternative care for children**, in Maharashtra and Rajasthan, India, revised guidelines to implement state level family strengthening and non-institutional alternative care programmes were put in place with support from UNICEF under the ICPS, while Karnataka introduced the same programme with a focus on children affected by AIDS. In Sri Lanka, UNICEF partnered with the Department of Probation and Child Care to prevent institutionalisation of children and promote family-based care. This contributed to 2,329 children benefitting from interventions designed to prevent family separation and another 437 institutionalised children (227 girls/210 boys) were reunified with their families in the four targeted Provinces leading to a 2.4 per cent reduction in institutionalised children in these areas.
**Major partnerships** – ROSA continued to support SAIEVAC. In 2013, UNICEF and other core members in the SACG supported SAIEVAC in organising the:
- 2nd and 3rd regional meeting of National Action and Coordinating Groups against Violence against Children (NACGs), established in seven countries (some with support from UNICEF COs) to support SAIEVAC at country-level;
- 3rd SAIEVAC Technical Consultation on harmful practices;
- SAARC Chief Justices and parallel SAARCLAW Conference.

All meetings resulted in recommendations which are being followed up by SAIEVAC and its partners. Throughout the year SAIEVAC demonstrated its convening capacity as well as its capacity for providing a platform for awareness raising and exchange of information between countries in South Asia.

UNICEF’s strong partnership with the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled in Afghanistan resulted in the Ministry issuing a guidance note to all provinces and asked all its provincial directorates to take over Child Protection Action Networks (CPAN) responsibility from UNICEF supported TA as of first July 2013. In this note all CPAN officers were tasked to work according to the CPAN TOR. Also worth mentioning is UNICEF’s partnership with the Central Monastic body in Bhutan which resulted in the launch of the Dratshang’s permanent Child Care and Protection Office and the establishment of an emergency shelter by His Holiness the Je Khenpo, the Chief Abbot. This will provide children in the monastic community with increased access to child protection support and services.

**Common constraints and factors, validated good practices, lessons learned, added value ROSA.**

While commitment may be present within the line Ministry responsible for child protection, resource constraints continue to hamper accelerated child protection results. Some UNICEF child protection programmes also faced funding constraints, such as Afghanistan (regular programme and CPiE), Pakistan (CPiE) and Sri Lanka (regular programme). The resource challenges within government are however not limited to finances, but also include challenges in relation to human resources ranging from the absence of (qualified and trained) staff to the high turnover of staff to unclear roles and responsibilities and sometimes conflicting mandates. Service delivery capacity of CP institutions is often weak, fragmented and in need of better coordination.

Monitoring results for equity systems (MoRES) has contributed to a stronger focus on data collection, evidence building and monitoring in UNICEF child protection programmes at national and sub-national levels in a number of countries. It is however important that country offices have the flexibility to adapt the “MoRES methodology” to their circumstances. This would allow country offices to better integrate this with existing initiatives. Additional technical support in ROSA assisted in providing the section and eventually the region and HQ with a better picture of the implementation of MoRES and its relevance to child protection.

Building on experience in 2012 and in 2013, ROSA identified that the practice of ad hoc training did not substantially contribute to country level capacity in CPiE, let alone sustainability of efforts by both COs, the region and the global Child Protection Working Group. This has led ROSA to develop the concept of establishing national resource pools on CPiE. This concept informed ROSA’s capacity development activities in CPiE in 2013, including ensuring the right participants were invited and active follow up with participants.

**3.2.5 Policy advocacy and partnerships for children’s rights**

**Major initiatives**
The focus for the Social Policy section in 2013 was on supporting the *Second High Level Meeting on South-South Cooperation for Child Rights* (HLM2) which was hosted by the Government of India in Delhi in October and was instrumental in strengthening regional partnerships. All eight countries from South Asia participated in the meeting, in addition to 24 countries from East Asia and the Pacific. This presented an opportunity for countries in South Asia to learn from East Asian peers that face comparable issues – for example, the delegation from Pakistan had exchanges with Indonesia on expanding the coverage of social protection for adolescents, while the Maldives was able to discuss issues related to the high cost of service delivery in remote islands with delegates from the Pacific.
Key results
Many of the results achieved throughout 2013 are associated with the HLM2 and its three thematic areas: adolescents, children in urban settings, and fulfilling child rights through early childhood development. UNICEF ROSA prepared thematic background papers on these three topics in collaboration with EAPRO. The papers were peer reviewed by a large group of academics, government counterparts and partner organizations and directly influenced most of the country presentations. The meeting concluded by adopting the New Delhi Declaration, in which countries committed to increase their efforts to address disparities among adolescents, children in urban settings and in the provision of early childhood development services. ROSA and Country Offices will support governments in implementing the Declaration throughout 2014 and beyond. The Declaration is available at: http://hlmdelhi2013.org/images/HLM2-Declaration.pdf

In preparation for the HLM2, ROSA co-hosted a Regional Policy Dialogue on Adolescents with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in Kathmandu in September. The Dialogue resulted in all eight countries spelling out priority policy recommendations to enhance policies for adolescents in their respective countries. These recommendations identify action points for government, civil society, academia, adolescent representatives and UN organizations. In some countries in the region, work on implementing these priority actions has already begun. For example, Bangladesh is currently formulating a National Adolescent Policy drawing on inputs from the Policy Dialogue with support from the UNICEF Country Office.

In addition the work that took place in the context of the HLM2, the Social Policy section also continued its regular work building the capacity of partners for data collection and use for evidence-based policy making. As in previous years, ROSA published the South Asia Statistical Pocketbook which is used by Country Offices and other partners in their day-to-day work. This year’s edition included new tables with data on adolescents and children in urban settings. As in 2012, the Regional Advisor for Social Policy taught a one week course on research methods for excluded, hidden and marginal populations at the University of Essex which included UNICEF staff from different regions and countries (half the seats are reserved for UNICEF participants) as well as doctoral students and researchers. To increase the participation of South Asian staff and partners in the future, Social Policy initiated a partnership between the University of Essex and the Institute of Policy Studies to promote an advanced training on Applied Research for Equity Analysis and Policy.

In 2013 ROSA also stepped up its support to Country Offices on child-sensitive social protection. This included providing technical assistance to studies on the extent to which existing social protection systems are child-sensitive, as well as supporting the Nepal Country Office with a survey to monitor the implementation of the child grant. ROSA also worked with UNICEF Headquarters on a module on social protection for the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS). Due to the high level of demand for support on social protection from Country Offices, it will be one of the priority areas for 2014.

On social budgeting, Country Offices, and in particular Bangladesh, worked on advocacy to improve the national budgeting process in order to address equity gaps by targeting allocations and the quality of spending for effective social services. There has been a strong call to protect investments for children, improve the quality of expenditure, dedicate funds to address inequity (such as tackling the high level of child malnutrition and urban deprivation) and move towards child-sensitive social protection. ROSA also collaborated with the Bhutan Country Office in exploring the potential of mainstreaming the child-friendly budgeting concept with gender-responsive budgeting.

Major partnerships
The HLM2 provided an opportunity strengthen partnerships with countries and regional organizations. Advocacy events also took place in collaboration with other UN agencies and in the context of the Asia-Pacific UN Development Group. In May 2013 UNICEF co-hosted a Round Table on the Effects of Migration on Children Left Behind with UNFPA and UN Women at the UN’s Asia-Pacific High Level Dialogue on Migration. As a result of the Round Table, the meeting’s Outcome Document makes reference to the rights and needs of children – both as migrants and when they are left behind by migrating parents. The Outcome Document fed into the UN General Assembly’s High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development which was held in New York in October 2013. In December ROSA supported the UN’s Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism and the UNG in organizing an Expert Panel Discussion on Implementing the Global Development Agenda: Asia-Pacific
**Perspectives on Partnerships and Means** during the Sixth Session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals at the General Assembly in New York.

**Common constraints and factors**
The demand for social policy in the region continues to grow due to the changing macroeconomic environment, political unrest, persisting financial crises, and rising levels of inequality in many countries in the region. Despite an organizational call for a stronger upstream policy role at the country level, and increased requests for technical support by sectors in areas such as social protection and policy analysis, resources and capacity remain very limited. Few Country Offices (2 out 8) in the region have a full time Social Policy Specialist. Therefore, it has become evident that the ROSA Social Policy section has to work more with sector colleagues and build their capacity on upstream policy work and issues such as social protection.

**Regional Office value added**
Throughout 2013 ROSA played a key role in promoting solid equity focus on policy analysis, advancing regional partnerships and supporting South-South cooperation through the HLM2. Given the growing demand for upstream policy work, ROSA has also been instrumental in providing technical assistance and direct support to Country Offices, especially on social protection, decentralization and local governance, and applied research.

**Part Four: Management and Operations**
*(Please note progress on the 2013 work plan is provided as an Annex. It can be viewed in its entirety, with indicators and targets through Insight)*

**https://icon.unicef.org/apps01/perfasmnt/Pages/Reporting.aspx**

**4.1: Overview of Achievements in 2013 Against the Regional Office Management Plan**
Equity-focused programming continues to be strengthened in the region. Following approval of five out of the eight country programmes in the region in the last two years (including: Sri Lanka, Nepal, India, Pakistan and Bhutan) most countries have solid foundations for equity programmes through the CPD or cCPD formulation. Afghanistan was the only country in 2013 to develop a programme planned for presentation to the Annual Board meeting in June, 2014. Further enhanced equity programming comes largely from Monitoring for Results in Equity (MORES) rollout which emphasises community level dialogue, sub-national planning and regular monitoring. In 2013, the Regional Office supported the integration of MoRES in the Afghanistan SITAN as well as followed up with rollout in Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan through regional knowledge sharing.

ROSA continued efforts to promote convergence across different sectors through network meetings and other joint initiatives. There was also strengthened action and advocacy on equity issues through the dissemination and discussion of various ROSA-supported research including a policy dialogue on adolescent and studies on out-of-school children.

Regional Office worked on Transitioning to the new Strategic Plan 2014-2017 that will start in January 2014. The new Strategic Plan is synchronized with UNDP, UNFPA and UN-Women strategic planning cycles and aims at achieving 7 results/outcomes. At the regional level, the two-year Regional Office Management Plan (ROMP) ended in 2013 while the new 4-year ROMP aligned with the global UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014-17. The ROMP was approved by the Executive Board in September. ROSA also received additional resources for its implementation, 1 million dollars extra for each year of the ROMP.

In 2013 ROSA had some notable milestones including the visit of the UNICEF Executive Director, Antony Lake, in October 2013 to Afghanistan and India during the High Level Meeting in India. The Deputy Executive Director, Geeta Rao Gupta visited ROSA and the Nepal Country Office in April.

The office had a significant turnover of staff in the past 2 years with 40 per cent new staff in 2012, including Deputy Regional Director and Regional Director, and 25 per cent new staff in 2013.

Talent search/recruitment of highly qualified staff with special attention to gender balance continued to be ROSA focus. All vacant posts in 2013 have been filled. New recruitment policies and streamlined processes have been reinforced at regional and country office level, resulting in quality recommendations, efficiency and harmonization. 159 NPO cases from 8 Country Offices in the region
were reviewed and approved by the Regional Director. Noticeable improvement in gender balance made for IP in ROSA (from 64F/36M to 50F/50F). The India CO reached 52F/48M ratio in the National Professional Category.

Gender Parity remains a challenge in the region, especially in emergency countries (Afghanistan and Pakistan). The challenges to find and recruit qualified females continue due to various factors including cultural norms, lack of educated women in non-traditional sectors, and insecurity.

The regional office supported and guided concerned countries to develop and implement change management plans aimed at preparing staff, providing career guidance and counselling, re-profiling and training on CBI, especially for those staff on abolished posts. Special emphasis was placed by the regional office and regional staff association on supporting staff move out of prolonged assignments in emergencies/hardship duty stations.

Noticeable achievements were made in staff capacity development through a well-designed joint 2013 ROSA/NCO Staff Learning Plan which paid special attention to national staff, especially Programme Assistants. The capacity development activities aimed to strengthen their skills and knowledge with tailored training on emerging roles following the establishment of BSC in ROSA.

Staff well-being for ROSA remained a priority. There has been a good progress in the implementation of the Global Staff Survey action plans at regional and country level to address staff issues identified as priorities to improve staff morale, such as promotion of work-life balance and flexible time policies, use of Peer Support Volunteers, career development guidance and stress management. ROSA HR followed up with CoOs on mid-year and end-year progress reports. Overall completion rate of 2012 PER completion rates for ROSA and COs were very good (100 per cent), except for Afghanistan and Pakistan with 97 per cent and 98 per cent respectively.

ROSA is part of UN Cares Programme in the workplace which promotes the implementation of the ten minimum standards to reduce impact of HIV/AIDS in the workplace. Country Offices also prepare and participate in joint activities. On stress or other concerns, peer support volunteers and stress counselors are available to assist staff.

The effectiveness and efficiency of UNICEF operations in South Asia was improved in 2013 through the introduction of shared services for selected operations functions in some countries and the use of automated systems to efficiently support the processing of the transactions. ROSA directly support offices in India, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Maldives and Bhutan in 2013 to advance effectiveness and efficiency issues. Support included missions by the Regional Chief of Operations and the Business Analyst (a post established exclusively for 2013 to advance effectiveness and efficiency actions in the region) to help offices revise office structures and to develop and introduce new standard operating procedures. ROSA supported Pakistan, Nepal and Bhutan to develop and finalize their submissions to the regional Integrated Budget Review (IBR).

On key performance indicators, most of the country offices in the region exceeded the benchmark of budget utilization for RR and IB funds (90 per cent-95 per cent) by the end of the year—which is a marked improvement from the previous year. Outstanding DCTs for more than 9 months was within the benchmark of 1 per cent in all offices at the end of the year except Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The two exceptions are due to specific circumstance: Pakistan—due to adjustments awaiting the Comptroller’s approval at the end of the year and Sri Lanka due to government procedures which require allocations to pass through the National Treasury—which delays the receipt of funds by implementing partners. This structural situation is under review by the UN Country Team in Sri Lanka.

Offices in South Asia have established good practices for securing closure of Travel Authorizations for completed travel, while there is scope for reducing the number of open Authorizations in Pakistan and India. Most Country Offices in South Asia are fully MOSS compliant. There is however scope for strengthening the compliance of Zone Offices, subject to availability of funds. ROSA now has a Regional Security Manager on staff, who will include support to MOSS compliance within the scope of his responsibilities.

ROSA renovated its building premises in 2013 after two decades of limited maintenance investment in the compound. The renovations followed the establishment of a 15 year lease with the landlord. The
Operations Section oversaw the renovations following receipt of a Local Procurement Authorization from Supply Division, which also provided advisory support for the compound’s solar power system that will address a significant share of ROSA’s power needs in an environment of power cuts which reach 20 hours/day. Following several months of relocation to an adjacent hotel, ROSA staff returned to the ROSA compound in early February 2014.

Cost Efficiency and Effectiveness:
All offices in the region, including ROSA, made important advances in efficiency and effectiveness in 2013 through the consolidation of shared services in both operations and programme areas for processing transactions in VISION. These actions are complementary and not duplicative of the actions to be taken in all country offices with the introduction of the UNICEF Global Shared Services Centre in coming years.

The key principles for adopting shared service approaches in South Asia were to:
- Focus on core programme activities and delivering results for children
- Avoid duplication of functions and processes
- Achieve economies of scales
- Increase the efficiency of operations and quality of output

In ROSA, the shared services are mainly for programme transactions and administrative functions, while finance and supply needs are undertaken by the Nepal Country Office Business Support centre—following a Service Level Agreement developed by the two offices. The establishment of the Business Support Centre in ROSA has led to a significant restructuring of the role of Programme Assistants toward programme-related actions, which is supported by a group training plan in new skills in programme monitoring and knowledge management.

Sri Lanka CO has strengthened the services provided by its BSC launched in 2012 with the adoption of automated systems such as push & track (document management system) and travel2field (TA for local field travels). The country offices in India and Nepal had already centralised their finance function in 2012. In 2013 ICO and NCO have developed a BSC Programme respectively for Delhi and Kathmandu. Bangladesh CO has gone through a thorough and documented process for establishing a full fledge BSC (programme, supply finance and admin transactions). The centre in Bangladesh will be operational in 2014. In 2013 the offices in Maldives and Bhutan downsized their operations section. The Maldives office has secured support from Sri Lanka for payment processing and bank reconciliations through a process which has been notably smooth and easy to operate. The Bhutan office will follow a similar model with the Nepal office in 2014. Pakistan CO and Afghanistan CO have structures endorsed by the RO in 2013. Their implementation is planned for 2014.

Country Offices have also reported additional cost savings measures; the most significant ones include:
1) India reported an estimated savings of US$150,000 as a result of encouraging in-house and WebEx meetings. 2) Savings of around US$190,000 was realized by Nepal by using LTAs for travel and transportation and holding meetings through WebEx.

Budget submissions Pakistan, Nepal, and Bhutan were reviewed by the Integrated Budget Review (IBR) team of the Regional Director, two Representatives, and others in March 2013. As of end-2013, the three countries have implemented most of the recommendations endorsed by the IBR. In 2013, ROSA also used the mail-poll IBR mechanism to approve urgent post changes that are within the authority of the Regional Director to approve. Three IBRs were conducted through mail poll: two for Afghanistan related to their Polio Programme structure and one for Bangladesh for the establishment of shared services for programme transactions.

The Regional Contingency Fund was fully utilized, giving priority to offices with urgent requirements. The fund allocations were reviewed and approved by the IBR before distribution.

4.2 Oversight Function and Oversight Related Accountabilities
The Regional Office continued to monitor country office performance through the quarterly Key Performance Indicator (KPI) reports. The year-end KPI report was also used during the review of Country Office Annual Reports. With the release of the InSight Regional Dashboard in the last quarter of 2013, ROSA actively used the Regional Dashboard and the Performance Management Reports for
performance monitoring—especially for the use of RR/IB funds, to promote full use of OR funding before expiration and for completion of performance assessments for all programme and operations results.

The Regional Office participated in audit entrance (Afghanistan internal audit, India external audit) and exit meetings (Bangladesh) to ensure that the regional perspective is taken into account in the finalization of each audit report, to fully understand the issues—which will facilitate future support to the audited offices, and to ensure that audit recommendations are practical and implementable. ROSA has also supported Bangladesh in the preparations for the audit.

ROSA monitors the status of HACT implementation in the region, including an assessment of actions in all country offices. The assessment found wide range of good practices and level of implementation. However, as raised by the different internal audits, the availability of a quality assurance and its effective implementation remain an area of further improvement globally in UNICEF. In 2014 the Chief of Operations meeting will include the development of good practices in the area of HACT for application in the region.

### Part Five: Evaluations, Research, Studies, Surveys and Publications

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<td>Out of School Children in South Asia videos (Three versions of the same video: x1 2 minute version, x1 12 minute version for international audiences, x1 11 minute version for Bangladesh)</td>
<td>2013</td>
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Children in urban settings videos (Two different 3-4 minute videos: x1 3 minute profile on boy from Bangladesh, x1 3 minute profile on adolescent boy from Afghanistan).  

2013 Video  
Children in urban settings

Assessment of the evaluation function

Following the conduct of an assessment of the South Asia evaluation function, a Regional Evaluation Strategy was developed by ROSA in collaboration with country offices and approved by the Regional Management Team in April 2013. The Strategy is aligned with UNICEF’s Evaluation Policy 2013. It contains a range of country-level, ROSA and joint commitments relating to the evaluation function, the quality management of specific evaluations and national evaluation capacity development. Country offices subsequently developed implementation plans, based on these commitments, explaining country-specific approaches, and defining timeframes for their operationalization.

One of the most immediate responses by country offices was to redefine evaluation processes and strengthen quality assurances measures, including the use of reference groups for all evaluations. Moreover, most terms of reference, inception reports and draft reports have been shared with ROSA, including both the evaluation and the respective programme sections, for feedback. Since late 2013, ROSA has entered into a contract with an external consultancy firm that provides detailed feedback on such draft documents, based on a quality frame that is used UNICEF-wide.

While the number of evaluations conducted in the region fell from ten in 2011 to six in 2012, the rating by the Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System has improved – with only one out of the six evaluations considered to be of inadequate quality (in 2011, half of the ten evaluations were deemed inadequate). The number of evaluations conducted in the region has fallen further, with only three evaluations likely to be reported for 2013 – one each from India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. This decline may relate to higher evaluation standards acting as a disincentive, or requiring some time to being properly established. During 2013, most country offices invested in building evaluation-related capacity of staff, enabling their participation in national and regional evaluation training events.

A number of country offices were actively involved in initiatives to support national evaluation capacity development. Both Bhutan and Nepal conducted national workshops with the respective planning commissions, and in collaboration with other United Nations partners, with a view to identifying opportunities to strengthen the enabling environment for evaluation, building institutional capacities and fostering civil society engagement. A similar initiative was conducted with the State of Gujarat in India, and is underway in Pakistan. The grass is always greener on the other side. In the meantime, both the India and Bangladesh have further strengthened their engagement in the delivery of development evaluation programmes with the Indian School of Business and BRAC University, respectively, and Sri Lanka provided significant support to the Sri Lankan Evaluation Association in the conduct of its biennial evaluation conference.

ROSA has been actively engaged in regional evaluation-related initiatives, including the Evaluation Conclave organized by the South Asian Community of Evaluators, as well as the United Nations Evaluation Development Group for Asia and the Pacific. Overall, the evaluation function in the region’s country offices has gained more visibility, particularly where country office leadership has prioritized it, and the further implementation of the Regional Evaluation Strategy promises to yield a larger number of high quality and utilization-focused evaluation that will provide evidence for UNICEF’s policy advocacy work and programming.

Part Six: Innovations and Lessons Learned

The Regional Office (RO) and Country Offices (COs) increased the standard of performance monitoring in South Asia. After developing a checklist to improve the strengthen of progress statements in Insight, ROSA’s Regional Advisors critically reviewed progress statement for all Intermediate Results for all country offices in the region. The initiative, which led to the revision of progress statements throughout the region was welcomed by country offices.
ROSA included a review of the use of the Gender Equality Marker (GEM) in its checklist for assessing IR performance reporting\textsuperscript{23}. The assessment of Country Office mid-2013 performance assessment reports, identified both over-rating and under-rating the GEM as well as a need for a thorough review of the use of the GEM at country level. To assist country offices in doing that ROSA conducted a refresher webinar on the GEM for all COs at the end of the year.

**Part Seven: Report on UN Reform and Inter-Agency Collaboration**

2013 saw Bhutan, A Delivering As One self-starter country submit a common CPD to the June 2013 Executive Boards of UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA. Significant support was provided to the Afghanistan UNDAF by ROSA as the convening agency. In-country support was provided through the deployment of the Regional Chief of Programme and Planning to Afghanistan by UNICEF ROSA for several months. UNDP Asia-Pacific, as co-convening agency also deployed staff to help in the drafting process. Recurrent postponement of consultations with the Afghan Government however led to delays in finalizing the UNDAF. The UNCT however spent significant time ensuring alignment with the Government’s planned Development Decade.

Throughout the year UNICEF ROSA continued its support for strategic direction and programme oversight in the region through the Peer Support Group of the UNDG-Asia Pacific and participated in discussions on the future of the PSG.

**Delivery as One Pilots**

The big achievement in Delivery As One in South Asia, was the approval of the Bhutan UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA common country programme (2014-2018). Bhutan, beginning in 2008, is a self-starter in Delivering as One (DaO). The Delivering as One (DaO) approach in Bhutan has brought together the Government and the UN to increase the coherence of programmes and lower transaction costs. In addition to a new five-year Country Programme (2014 – 2018) the UN in 2013 moved into a common UN Building complete with Common Operations Services.

Guided by the One Programme architecture in line with Human Rights & Result Based Approach to Programming the Bhutan Country Programme is premised on three dimensions: i) Policy and Enabling Environment; ii) System, Services and Supply and; iii) Demand Promotion (in direct resonance with MoRES and Barriers/Bottlenecks Analysis. From the initial stages of formulating the new One Programme in late 2012 and throughout 2013, UNICEF was a key player and ensured relevant issues including the emerging ones relating to children, youth and women of Bhutan were adequately covered in the One Programme (2014-2018). Within the ‘Delivering as One’ (DaO) approach, the UN Theme Groups continue to be an effective forum for enhancing synergies, resolving common issues and avoiding duplications amongst implementing partners and UN agencies. The completion and movement of the office into the new UN House in the fourth quarter of 2013, as well as the establishment of common ICT infrastructure allowed the office to make significant efficiency gains.

In 2013 Pakistan the office transitioned to a new Common Country Programme as part of the One Plan II. The five-year CCPAP developed in partnership with UNFPA and UNDP - and endorsed by GoP – was a unique achievement considering the size and complexity of the Country Programme and the necessity to focus on short-term humanitarian interventions in a disaster-prone region. The OPII adopted a management structure more flexible, risk-sensitive, cost-effective and evidence-based and focused on joint programming rather than joint programmes. In the absence of a major humanitarian disaster for the first time in four years, the transition allowed UNICEF to take advantage of lighter processes and scale up systems-strengthening work with newly-autonomous provincial governments

**CCAs/UNDAF**

In Afghanistan development of the UNDAF took place during a critical time period as preparations got underway for elections and withdrawal of international military forces in 2014. The previous UNDAF was extended by one year to 2014 to align it to the Government of Afghanistan’s national development framework 2015-2024

\textsuperscript{23} For the planning phase: Is the GEM for the IR appropriately selected based on the IR and/or indicators? 0 - Not at all; 1 – Partially; 2 – Fully. For the reporting phase: Indicator Status - Are the indicator status updates referring to progress towards gender equality when the IR GEM rating was selected as principal or significant; IR Progress Statement - If the IR GEM rating was selected as principal or significant, does the progress statement describe the contribution to advancing gender equality and/ or the empowerment of girls and women?
UNICEF in the Maldives used the mid-term review of the country programme along with an MTR of the UNDAF to advocate with partners and the Government for the strengthening of an equity focused approach towards children of the Maldives.

**Regional Quality Assurance mechanisms**
Throughout the year UNICEF ROSA continued its support for strategic direction and programme oversight in the region through the Regional Director’s team. ROSA also supported the Regional Peer Support Group of the UNDG-Asia Pacific particularly on development of the Afghanistan UNDAF. Participation in the Peer Support Group is constrained by the fact that it is based in Bangkok necessitating only virtual contact.