Maharashtra State Report
FINAL
Oct 13, 2014

END TERM EVALUATION OF CHILD RIGHTS PROJECT

Submitted By:                                                                 Submitted To:

An ISO 9001:2008 Organisation
Evaluation of Child Rights Project

Maharashtra State Report

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unicef

Submitted By:

new concept

An ISO 9001:2008 Organisation
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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGG</td>
<td>Adolescent Girls Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASHA</td>
<td>Accredited Social Health Activist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWC</td>
<td>Anganwadi Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>AWW</td>
<td>Anganwadi Worker</td>
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<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>Block Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>BDO</td>
<td>Block Development Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>BEO</td>
<td>Block Education Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>BLTF</td>
<td>Block-Level Task Force</td>
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<td>BPL</td>
<td>Below Poverty Line</td>
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<td>BSY</td>
<td><em>Bal Sangpan Yojana</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bt</td>
<td><em>Bacillus Thuringiensis</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community-Based Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCE</td>
<td>Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCI</td>
<td>Child Care Institution</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>CFS</td>
<td>Child-Friendly School</td>
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<td>CFSS</td>
<td>Child-Friendly Schools and Systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLPRA</td>
<td>Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>CMPO</td>
<td>Child Marriage Prohibition Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNCP</td>
<td>Children in Need of Care and Protection</td>
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<td>CP</td>
<td>Child Protection</td>
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<td>CPC</td>
<td>Child Protection Committee</td>
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<td>CPSU</td>
<td>Central Project Support Unit</td>
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<td>CRC</td>
<td>Cluster Resource Coordinator</td>
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<td>CRC</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisation</td>
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<td>CWC</td>
<td>Child Welfare Committee</td>
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<td>CWPO</td>
<td>Child Welfare Police Officer</td>
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<td>DAC</td>
<td>Development Assistance Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCLTF</td>
<td>District Child Labour Task Force</td>
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<td>DCPO</td>
<td>District Child Protection Officer</td>
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<td>DCPU</td>
<td>District Child Protection Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCU</td>
<td>Data Collection Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIET</td>
<td>District Institute of Education and Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>DISE</td>
<td>District Information System for Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>DoE</td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
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<td>DoH</td>
<td>Department of Home</td>
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<td>DoL</td>
<td>Department of Labour</td>
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<td>DPO</td>
<td>District Project Officer</td>
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<td>DSJE</td>
<td>Department of Social Justice and Empowerment</td>
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<td>DWCD</td>
<td>Department of Women and Child Development</td>
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<td>DWCDO</td>
<td>Department of Women and Child Development Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECCE</td>
<td>Early Childhood Care and Education</td>
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<td>ECE</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
EUR  Euro
FC  Field Coordinator
FGD  Focus Group Discussion
GC  Gender Coordinator
GoI  Government of India
GoM  Government of Maharashtra
GP  Gram Panchayat
GPP  Gram Panchayat-Based Planning
GR  Government Resolution
GRC  Gender Resource Centre
HH  Household
HQ  Headquarters
ICDS  Integrated Child Development Services
ICPS  Integrated Child Protection Scheme
IDI  In-depth Interview
IEC  Information, Education and Communication
IFA  Iron-Folic Acid
ILO  International Labour Organisation
JCL  Juvenile in Conflict with the Law
JD  Joint Director
JJA  Juvenile Justice Act
JJB  Juvenile Justice Board
JSY  Janani Suraksha Yojana
KGBV  Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya
KP  Kendra Pramukh
KRA  Key Result Area
MIS  Management Information System
MHRD  Ministry of Human Resource Development
MLA  Member of Legislative Assembly
MLC  Member of Legislative Council
MM  Meena Manch
MoU  Memorandum of Understanding
MP  Member of Parliament
MPSP  Maharashtra Prathmik Shikshan Parishad
MRM  Meena Raju Manch
MSCERT  Maharashtra State Council of Educational Research and Training
MS-CIT  Maharashtra State Certificate in Information Technology
MSCPCR  Maharashtra State Commission for Protection of Child Rights
MSCPS  Maharashtra State Child Protection Society
MT  Master Trainer
MWCD  Ministry of Women and Child Development
NCLP  National Child Labour Project
NCIS  New Concept Information Systems
NCPCR  National Commission for Protection of Child Rights
NGO  Non-Governmental Organisation
NIC  National Informatics Centre
NPEGEL  National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level
NRLM  National Rural Livelihoods Mission
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Context
It is estimated that 150 million children aged 5–14 are engaged in child labour worldwide.\(^1\) Child labour is a marked loss of childhood interfering with education and reinforces the intergenerational cycles of poverty. It is associated with exploitation of children who often work in hazardous conditions harming both their physical and mental development.\(^2\) \(^3\)

Child labour is internationally recognised as a violation of children’s rights and defined by Article 32 of the Convention on Rights of the Child (CRC), as “any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education, or to be harmful to the child’s health or physical, spiritual, moral or social development”.\(^4\) Having ratified the CRC in December 1992, India has made considerable progress towards addressing the issue of child labour in recent years with an overall decline by nearly half in the number of child labourers. According to the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), India, an estimated five million children were engaged in child labour in 2009-10 as compared to nine million in 2004-05.\(^4\) While this is a positive development, a significant proportion of children in India have yet to be granted their fundamental human rights. In line with the CRC, UNICEF aims to build a protective environment for children across several States in India.

The Project ‘Promoting Protection and Education Rights of Children in Cotton Areas’ is an initiative that was implemented in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Rajasthan over the period 2009-2013 to tackle the problem of children working in cotton fields. New Concept Information Systems (NCIS) has been commissioned by UNICEF to conduct an evaluation of this Project, which builds on the previous and ongoing IKEA Foundation support to the UNICEF Child Protection Programme.

1.2 Dynamics of Child Labour and Bt Cotton
Child labour in cotton fields is endemic in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. The use of child labour in cotton seed production especially for the purposes of cross-pollination is widespread in all the major cotton and cotton seed producing States of India. Gujarat, Maharashtra and Rajasthan have the highest proportion of children aged 5-14 years engaged in child labour in India. Gujarat and Rajasthan each account for approximately eight percent of child labourers aged 5-14 years in India with Maharashtra accounting for an estimated five percent (NSSO, 2009-10).\(^5\) Gujarat and Maharashtra are consistently among the top producers of cotton in India. The cotton seed production areas in these States in particular are widespread with genetically modified

\(^5\) NSSO 2009-10 data estimates the total number of children aged 5-14 years engaged in child labour in India is 4,983,871 children. The estimated number of child labourers aged 5-14 years in Gujarat is 390,687 (166,432 male and 224,255 female); Rajasthan is 405,936 (136,239 male and 269,697 female); and Maharashtra is 260,673 (120,600 male and 140,073 female). Retrieved May 13, 2014. URL: http://labour.nic.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Divisions/childlabour/NSSOEstimateofChildLabourinMajorIndianStates.pdf
varieties of cotton seeds known as *Bacillus Thuringiensis* (Bt) cotton. It has been reported that Bt cotton cultivation has a high demand for labour per unit area. The absolute increase in area under Bt cotton has increased the overall demand for labour for this crop. Research conducted on child labour in the cottonseed producing State of Andhra Pradesh showed that labour costs for hybrid cottonseed production account for approximately half of the total cost. Farmers employ children because they can make them work longer hours and are easier to control as compared to adult employees. In addition, children work for less money than adult labourers. This exploitation poses serious health problems to children. Children suffer from the harmful effects of pesticides commonly used in cotton production and work for more than 12 hours a day, often suffering from physical, verbal and sometimes sexual abuse. It is estimated that 3.09 million children up to 18 years of age work in cotton growing (cotton picking) in the States of Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Rajasthan. A study in 2004 estimated that 60 percent of children working in Bt cottonseed production in Gujarat were girls. Seasonal migration and trafficking of children from Rajasthan to Gujarat to work in Bt cotton fields are grave concerns. Inter-state migration from the tribal belt of southern Rajasthan to Gujarat affects a particularly vulnerable population of tribal migrant workers. A large number of child labourers are from scheduled caste (SC), scheduled tribe (ST) and other marginalised communities.

### 1.3 Drivers of Child Labour

Child labour is a complex and multi-faceted issue. Widespread inter-generational poverty and social acceptance of child labour are the greatest drivers of child labour. It is widely believed that a child’s income is crucial for the child’s own survival and the household but it is equally true that child labour induces poverty. Social and financial exclusion based on caste, ethnicity, economic status and religion are other contributory factors that perpetuate child labour. Majority children and families working in cotton fields live below the poverty line and belong to SC and ST communities.

Lack of access to education, and low perceived value of education among communities due to poor educational facilities, discrimination and corporal punishment are other crucial factors. It has been found that majority of children working in the cotton industry have either dropped out of school or have never been to school. A study commissioned by the IKEA Foundation reports that absenteeism during the cotton picking season (October-November) led to school drop-outs, which was particularly prevalent among migrant children. Attitudes towards child labour also contribute towards its prevalence. Child labour also has gender dimensions as traditional views prevail that girls will be better prepared for adult life by sending them to work rather than to school.

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6Foundation for Agrarian studies India


9Study commissioned by IKEA Foundation (2008)

The practice of child marriage is a human rights violation and children who are married are more vulnerable to being out of school. Inadequate legislation and enforcement to protect the rights of children only serve to foster an environment that breeds child labour.\textsuperscript{11, 12} Children in cotton and cottonseed farms live and work in exploitative conditions since child labour in agriculture is not regulated under current Indian law and other relevant protective laws relating to trafficking, bonded labour and discrimination against SC and ST and implementation of these laws is also very poor. There is an inadequate protective net with child protection structures in place to address issues of vulnerable children including child labour. Interventions that seek to address the issue of child labour must therefore address a multitude of factors.

\subsection*{1.4 Legal and Programmatic Safeguards}
The issue of child labour in India is being addressed through key child protection legislation including the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, Juvenile Justice Act (Care and Protection of Children) (2000; 2006; 2011) (JJA), and the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (2006). The National Child Labour Project (NCLP) implemented by Ministry of Labour, seeks to rehabilitate child labourers withdrawn from employment. Under the aegis of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) mandates establishment of specific child protection structures to prevent and address child protection issues including child labour.

\subsection*{1.5 Combating Child Labour in Cotton Areas}
The Project “Promoting Protection and Education Rights of Children in Cotton Areas” aims to contribute to child labour reduction in the long term. The Project builds on previous and ongoing IKEA Foundation support to the UNICEF Child Protection programme aimed at reducing child labour in the carpet belt in Eastern Uttar Pradesh, cottonseed production in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, and the metal ware industry in Moradabad. This Project aims at expanding the coverage and impact of interventions aimed at promoting children’s right to protection and education. UNICEF with the support of IKEA Foundation held national-level consultations with Save the Children, an international agency working on child labour in India, to avoid duplication and delineate respective geographic target areas.\textsuperscript{13}

The overall objective of the Project is that “in cotton and cotton seed production areas, children in the age group of 6 to 14 years are not working and are in school”. The Project comprises four components focusing on four planned outcomes, each having a set of sub-outcomes that measures the success of the Project. The Project components and outcomes are:

**Component 1**
Creating and strengthening of child protection structures to adequately protect children against exploitation and abuse.

**Outcome 1**
Child protection structures are in place addressing child labour issues.

\textsuperscript{13}UNICEF, Revised Project proposal to IKEA, 2012.
Component 2
Improving the quality of education to increase enrolment and retention

Outcome 2
Quality education available for all children aged 6-14 years

Component 3
Raising awareness and empowering families and communities so that they take collective action against child labour

Outcome 3
Families and communities take collective action for protection and development of children

Component 4
Addressing exclusion of vulnerable families to service provision and social protection schemes

Outcome 4
Enhanced access to social protection schemes for vulnerable families (out of school children and children without parental care)

The four components under this Project are inter-linked and complement each other to create and strengthen the protective environment for children and provide them with education. The Project’s commencement in 2009 coincided with the introduction of ICPS, 2009 and the Right to Education Act (RTE), 2009 by the GOI (please see Annexures 1 and 2). The Project period (2009-13) is representative of the nascent stages of establishment of child protection structures in line with ICPS and implementation of the RTE.

The Project approach focuses on strengthening of preventative measures by tackling a number of causal factors associated with child labour. This includes advocating for changes to legislation, creating a protective environment for children, strengthening institutional capacity and service delivery of quality education, changing community attitudes, and implementing strategies for poverty alleviation. The logical framework for the Project outlines the indicators for each outcome and sub-outcome along with baseline and target figures and the method of verification for each (please see Annexure 3).

1.6 Project Components

Component 1: Creating and strengthening of child protection structures to adequately protect children against exploitation and abuse

The component aims to ensure that child protection structures are in place addressing child protection issues. The Project views the issue of child labour within the broader context of child protection. The approach therefore endeavours to strengthen the legislative and institutional mechanisms that protect children from exploitation and abuse. In this way, the Project design is linked with Government systems and seeks to strengthen the implementation of key child protection related legislation and Government schemes in India viz. JJA (2000; 2006; 2011) and ICPS; Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006; and Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 at the State, district, block and panchayat/village levels.

Outcome 1: Child Protection Structures are in Place Addressing Child Labour Issues

The five sub-outcomes under component 1 of the Project are as follows:

1.1. Child Protection structures under labour and ICPS/JJ are in place and functioning at State, district, panchayat and village level.
1.2. Monitoring systems to track and target children at risk have been established and maintained through village-level database

1.3. Civil society alliance has been established and non-Governmental organisations are actively partnering with District Administration for planning and review of child labour interventions

1.4. State and district action plans against child labour have been developed and its implementation is being monitored

1.5. Advocacy platforms strengthened (district-level meeting and recommendations provided) for amending child labour law to include prohibition of child labour in agriculture (Maharashtra only).

Component 2: Improving the quality of education to increase enrolment and retention

Component 2 of the Project seeks to deliver quality education available for all children aged 6-14 years. Child labour is a significant driver for children’s non-enrolment, delayed enrolment and early exit from school. Simultaneously, children not attending school are at risk of engaging in labour. Lack of educational attainment is the most important non-economic factor, which continues to entrench child labour within the vicious cycle of poverty, even in light of increasing economic well-being. To ensure access to education and school retention of children vulnerable to labour and former child labourers, education needs to become socially inclusive, of good quality, and involve a pedagogy, which is child-centred. In addition, effective rehabilitation involves removing children from labour, ensuring access to adequate interim schooling and support to ensure that children catch up on missed years of schooling and reach the correct learning level for their school grade before they join formal schools. This component supports India’s target of Millennium Development Goal # 2 (MDG) to achieve universal primary education by 2015. It also serves to strengthen the implementation of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 and the GoI’s educational framework through Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and pre-school education as part of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) (please see Annexure 2).

Outcome 2: Quality Education Available for All Children Aged 6-14 Years

The five sub-outcomes under component 2 of the Project are as follows:


2.2 Special Training Programme (STP) for child labourers and other out-of-school children up to 14 years in place for mainstreaming children into formal education

2.3 School Management Committees (SMC) and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) monitor and support attendance and infrastructure improvement of schools

2.4 Models of School Readiness Programme (SRP) established for 03-05 year old children

2.5 Evidence-based advocacy for effective targeting and utilisation of resources for education of excluded children


16 Transitional programmes/bridge schooling have been replaced with Special Training Programmes (STP) in line with Right to education (RTE) terminology.

17 VECs and PTAs have been replaced with School Management Committees (SMCs) in line with RTE Act.
Component 3: Raising awareness and empowering families and communities so that they take collective action against child labour

Component 3 of the Project endeavours that families and communities take collective action for protection and development of children. This component seeks to change the mindset and attitude of communities towards child labour. Key actors in society including children, parents, and communities have to be convinced that child labour is a problem and that educating their children will have long-term benefits. The belief that educating a girl is a poor investment as she will marry and leave home should be addressed. Parents who send their children to work and employers do not always recognise the harm caused, especially in the absence of an effective social or moral sanction against the practice. There is lack of information about the health effects of exposure to harmful pesticides in cotton fields, the benefits of education and the future opportunities that a working child will be denied. \(^{18,19}\) Hence, this component is linked with the other three Project components since changing community attitudes to send children to school requires parents and children to see the benefits of quality education (component 2); social protection schemes should provide an opportunity for families to seek ‘viable’ options to supplement family income (component 4); effective monitoring and resolution of child labour cases at the community level is linked with appropriate legislation and institutional mechanisms.

Outcome 3: Families and Communities Take Collective Action for Protection and Development of Children

The three sub-components under component 3 of the Project are as follows:

3.1 Families aware of harm caused by sending children to work and instead send their children to school
3.2 Adolescents, especially girls and women networked and empowered to monitor and tackle child rights violations and protect children’s rights, especially the right to education and to protection
3.3 Community leaders, including PRIs take active role in monitoring child rights issues and take action for preventing child labour
3.4 Advocacy on child labour free farming with farmers and through media

Component 4: Addressing exclusion of vulnerable families to service provision and social protection schemes

Component 4 of the Project seeks to enhance access to social protection schemes for vulnerable families. Households adopt livelihood strategies and coping mechanisms to deal with poverty risks and shocks. Both household vulnerabilities and their response mechanisms impact children. Social protection programmes for families in need will help prevent a relapse to child labour. Investment in social protection schemes is a cost-effective strategy to reduce child labour in the long term. The inclusion of social protection as a strategy to address child labour is also in line with the National Policy on Child Labour (1987), which stipulates “the need to cover child labourers and their families under various poverty alleviation and employment generation schemes”. \(^{20}\)

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Outcome 4: Enhanced Access to Social Protection Schemes for Vulnerable Families (Out of school Children and Children without Parental Care)

The three sub-components under component 4 of the Project are as follows:

4.1 Social protection schemes mapped, reviewed and recommended for revisions to explicitly target vulnerable families, including those having children engaged in child labour and migrants
4.2 Increased awareness among families on social protection schemes
4.3 Systems set up to monitor and link vulnerable families to social protection schemes

1.7 Project Stakeholders and Convergence

The Project was implemented with the support and partnerships of many stakeholders to further strengthen their capacities towards the collective objective of reducing child labour. The Project design promoted convergence through coordination and undertaking joint initiatives in addressing child labour issues.

The Project was supported by IKEA Foundation as the donor agency. It provided funding for the Project to UNICEF at a requested EUR 13.4 million. An additional EUR 1.5 million was raised through other sources amounting to a total budget in excess of EUR 14.9 million (please see Annexure 4 for Project budget).

UNICEF implemented the Project in partnership with the State Governments of Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan with implementation support from Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs). Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) including adolescent groups and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) supported in community sensitisation activities including information dissemination on harmful effects of child labour, importance of education and information on social protection schemes.

UNICEF provided technical expertise and support in all four Project component areas. The UNICEF Chief of Field Office was the lead manager of the Project. Chiefs of Child Protection, Education and Communication for Development (C4D) aided by the respective Sector Specialists provided technical guidance to the Project. The UNICEF Country Office in Delhi was responsible for coordination with the relevant national-level ministries for issues related to policy, advocacy and programmatic response. UNICEF State Offices coordinated with the relevant State-level Government departments and CSOs, community groups and local functionaries for issues related to Project implementation.

At the national level, the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE), Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD), Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) were key stakeholders. At the State Government level, functionaries under the Department of Labour (DoL), Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD), Department of Education (DoE), Department of Home (DoH) and Department of Social Justice and Empowerment (DSJE) were primary stakeholders. In addition, locally elected Government representatives played a crucial role in implementing the Project. CSOs as Project partners in each State played a critical role in implementing the Project. The Project also worked with media groups to raise social consciousness and influence public opinion.

In addition, district-level task forces chaired by District Collectors and membership of relevant line departments, NGO representatives, trade union leaders and UNICEF were formed to plan and monitor the Project as part of their remit of work.
1.8 Project Beneficiaries

Children as rights holders are direct beneficiaries under the Project. The Project targeted children aged 6-14 years in 11 districts across the three intervention States with expected coverage of 4.9 million at risk and vulnerable children including those out of school and in child labour, those working in cotton and cotton seed production as well as in other forms of labour.

In addition, through strengthening of Early Childhood Education (ECE), the Project sought to benefit young children (age 0-5 years) for mainstreaming into formal education and create youth networks to empower adolescents.

The Project design also serves to benefit vulnerable households under component 4 by enhancing their access to service providers and social protection schemes. In addition, through capacity development under the Project design, functionaries under ICPS, education personnel including teachers and Anganwadi Workers and members of community-based organisations are also considered beneficiaries.

1.9 Project Strategy

A common implementation strategy was adopted for the three States in three districts of Maharashtra (Yavatmal, Jalna, and Wardha), six districts across Gujarat (Kutch, Vadodara, Rajkot, Bhavnagar, Banaskantha and Patan) and two districts of Rajasthan (Udaipur and Dungurpur). However, sub-outcomes were adapted to the State-specific context.

1.10 Project Scope

Areas of coverage selected were prone to child labour and with the Project’s equity focus comprised marginalised communities (ST/SC populations) particularly vulnerable to child labour. The Project primarily targeted children at risk of child labour and those engaged in child labour, those working in cotton and cotton seed production and other forms of labour. In addition, capacity of Project partners to effectively implement the Project was considered while determining Project areas. The Project design remains socially inclusive and seeks to create and strengthen a protective environment for all children irrespective of socio-economic background, gender or type of labour.

A limitation in the Project scope of component 2 is the target age group of children between 6-14 years of age as compared to the CRC, which considers children up to 18 years of age. Therefore under Project component 2, service delivery of education for children in the age group 15-18 years of age is not addressed. However, the target age group of 6-14 years is aligned with the RTE. In other Project components, children in the age group of 0-18 years are included to strengthen implementation of JJA, which recognises a child as an individual up to 18 years of age.

1.11 Building Sustainable Structures

The Project focuses on creation of sustainable structures with increased capacities of human resources under the mandate of the ICPS. At State, district and panchayat/village levels, various stakeholders at policy, programme and implementation, and community levels are involved. Capacity building and training of child protection functionaries and key stakeholders at State, district, block and village levels is a key feature of the four Project component areas. In addition, the Project is aligned to strengthen implementation of legislation and Government schemes and advocate for change in legislation in line with the Convention on Rights of the Child (CRC). By working closely with the Government and ensuring
its buy-in, sustainability beyond the Project period can be achieved with potential of scaling up to other districts and/or States in India.

### 1.12 Human Rights, Equity and Gender

The issue of child labour and promoting education for children is congruent with international human rights framework viz. CRC to which India is a signatory. The Project is closely aligned with a number of articles in the CRC (please see Annexure 5 for the pertinent articles in the CRC).

Equity has been briefly discussed in the Project scope. In addition to addressing the issues of child labour and out of school children, by targeting geographical regions of reportedly high incidence of child labour particularly among ST and SC communities, vulnerable children and families most at risk are covered. Specifically under component 4 of the Project, vulnerable families (those with out of school children and children without parental care) are provided the benefits of social protection schemes.

The Project maintains a gender focus by linking with Women’s Self-help Groups (SHGs) and creating Adolescent Girls Groups (AGGs) to empower women and girls at the community-level to address issues of child labour and out of school children. These groups have been provided capacity development/training under component 3 of the Project.

### 1.13 Changes to the Project

The Project is implemented in the changing child protection landscape in India viz. Integrated Child Protection Scheme introduced in 2009 and the Right to Education Act of 2009, which came into force in Apr. 2010. The Project sought a one-year no-cost extension in the first instance to dedicate sufficient time and resources for effective implementation of ICPS and RTE in light of a time lag for ICPS to gather momentum. In addition, any positive changes observed would require longer duration, to demonstrate results than originally envisaged, as evidence for replication. Project duration was therefore planned from Jan. 2009 to Dec. 2013 to deliver results in line with supporting sustainable Government structures and systems. In the second instance, a two month no-cost extension was sought adjusting the Project period from Jan. 2009 to Feb. 2014 in order to complete Project implementation.

Outputs and indicators pertaining to a select few outcome areas were revised during the first no-cost extension period, to be more specific and measurable. Initial output under Project component 4 viz. ‘Partnerships in place to link SHGs to economic and livelihood programmes’ does not feature in the revised logframe since other outputs under this Project component are sufficient to adequately inform progress of the Project in this capacity (please see Annexure 3 for the revised logframe). It is considered that changes made to the Project logframe were appropriate to bring more focus to the Project.
Chapter 2: Research Design

2.1 Purpose and Objective of Evaluation
The purpose of the evaluation is to assess whether the Project, having reached the end of its implementation period, has achieved its objectives and the extent to which these were accomplished. It endeavours to provide an understanding of the challenges faced and highlight key innovations under the Project to inform recommendations for future programming. This includes replication of integrated models of working with children in other States and districts as well as with the Government. The findings will be used by UNICEF to provide a Project report to the donor IKEA Foundation. The overall **objective of the evaluation is to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the Project and to derive recommendations accordingly.**

2.2 Scope of Evaluation
The evaluation covers the entire Project period from 2009 to 2013 in all 11 Project districts of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Rajasthan. The evaluation focuses on addressing the how and why questions related to assessment of achievements viz. the effectiveness and efficiency of the Project, sharing lessons learned, guiding recommendations and determining whether key strategies and activities are replicable and sustainable. The evaluation is qualitative and supplements the quantitative data obtained from prior fieldwork such as the midline survey, 2012 and other quantitative data obtained through the Project’s internal monitoring mechanisms (*please see Annexure 3 - means of verification column in Project log-frame and Annexure 6 for the Project results matrix*).

The evaluation sought to address the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the Project by closely linking research questions on these domains to the four broad Project outcome areas and corresponding sub-outcomes as identified in the Project log-frame. The sub-outcome 3.4 related to advocacy on child labour free farming with farmers and through the media was however not addressed as part of the evaluation, in accordance with the ToR and due to logistical challenges of meeting these stakeholders within the proposed timeframe of the evaluation. Impact assessment as defined by Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria is also beyond the scope of the evaluation. While the evaluation addresses efficiency of the Project, a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis is beyond the remit of the evaluation due to constraints in time and resources. The evaluation is based on the revised log-frame, 2012 (*please see Annexure 3*).

2.3 Methodology of Evaluation

2.3.1 Respondents and Data Collection Tools
The evaluation draws on a mix of primary and secondary research activities. Desk review of relevant documents obtained from UNICEF and those collected through field work was conducted (*please see Annexure 7 for the list of secondary documents*). Since the evaluation aimed to probe beyond quantitative indicators, a participatory approach comprising in-depth interviews (IDIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with key stakeholders was adopted. These techniques were selected to maintain flexibility and probe into areas of interest and were relatively cost-effective.
In line with the evaluation objective, a master list of research questions was developed to investigate the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the Project. Given the rigorous Project log-frame, the master list was closely mapped to the outcomes, sub-outcomes, and indicators outlined in the log-frame. The master list was used to create State-wise three-tiered stakeholder specific (policy-level, programme-level and community-level) tools. In addition, an FGD tool for discussion with the Project target group of children (6-14 years of age) was developed *(please see Annexure 8 for master list of research tools)*.

Purposive sampling was employed to ensure a representative sample of functionaries involved in implementation as well as that of Project beneficiaries.

**Table 1: Evaluation Respondents by Tool**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tools</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Respondents/Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-depth Intervews (IDIs)</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>State Government Officials (Labour, DWCD, SJE, Education/SSA), UNICEF (staff and consultants), Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>District</td>
<td>District Collector and CEO, Labour Officers, DWCD, Education officers, Police, NGOs, CWC/JJB, DIETs, DCPC, Consultants supporting implementation of the Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sub-District (Block)</td>
<td>Block development officers, Line department representatives, Gram Panchayat head, NGO functionaries, CRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Village</td>
<td>PRI, Teachers, SMC members, children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)</td>
<td>District</td>
<td>Line Departments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Block</td>
<td>NGOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Village</td>
<td>VCPC/PLCPC, SMC, village volunteers Adolescent groups/children’s clubs, SHG members, community members/parents, teachers, children (rescued or benefitting from the programme)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.3.2 Maharashtra Respondents

The research team met the various identified stakeholders at the State, district, block and village levels to obtain a diversity of viewpoints. This approach ensured a broad range of findings across stakeholders and recommendations can be targeted to each stakeholder category (policy-level, programme-level, community-level) in order to better inform future programming.

Respondents at the policy level included State and district representative Government officials from the departments of WCD, Education/SSA/MSCERT, YASHADA and UNICEF staff and consultants. At the programme and implementation level, respondents included partner NGO Project staff, block education officials, head-teachers/teachers including MRM facilitators and *Deepshikha prerikas*. Community-level respondents included elected village representatives, AWWs, police *patils, prerikas*, head teachers/teachers, SMCs, AGGs, SHG members, and parents. Children in the age group of 6-14 years were consulted in the evaluation reflecting the age group of the Right to Education Act.

Respondents at the community level comprise women’s SHGs/AGGs thus maintaining a gender perspective in the evaluation with a special focus on women. The inclusion of children in the evaluation recognises that children are social actors with a unique perspective and insight into their own reality. This is in line with Article 12 of the CRC, which States that all children who are capable of forming their own views have a right to express those views freely in all matters affecting them, with the child’s opinion
being given due weightage in accordance with their age and maturity. Further, a mixed profile of children including those who are in school benefitting from the Project and those children migrating and otherwise constituting a vulnerable group such as orphans or children from scheduled caste communities was formed where possible.

Stakeholders and beneficiaries were asked to share their experiences of the Project including the manner in which Project activities have strengthened the protective environment for children at various levels and addressed the issue of out of school children and the challenges faced over the Project period. The extent to which the Project has ensured sustainability particularly through capacity building efforts, scale-up, networking and convergence was probed. Stakeholders were consulted to provide recommendations that will help improve future Project cycles. UNICEF Delhi Office, with support from State offices participated in each stage of the evaluation and were also information providers.

2.3.3 Geographical Sample
Geographical representation was ensured by including all 11 Project districts in the study. As a standard norm, two blocks per district were purposively selected based on capturing the Project’s diversity in terms of socio-economic profile of respondent groups and spatial spread of the Project interventions. The sample also reflected active Project areas to draw out successes and challenges faced by the Project. Similarly, five villages per district were selected based on representative diversity of stakeholders and Project activities. Table 2 below provides proposed and actual geographic primary sampling units (PSUs) for each State.

Table 2: State-wise Proposed and Actual Geographic Sample Selection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSU</th>
<th>Gujarat</th>
<th>Maharashtra</th>
<th>Rajasthan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proposed</td>
<td>Actual</td>
<td>Proposed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3.4 Data Collection Units
The sample of data collection units (DCUs) in each State was developed in agreement with UNICEF. Using the standard norm of DCU/State (see below), the sample of total number of IDIs and FGDs per State was devised. A total of 47 IDIs and 21 FGDs were conducted against a proposed 41 IDIs and 18 FGDs in Maharashtra in the design of the evaluation. The details and State-wise break up of IDIs and FGDs as conducted against planned sample is detailed out in Table 3 below.

Table 3: State-wise DCU sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DCUs/State</th>
<th>Overall DCU Sample in Three States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gujarat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proposed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>IDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is noted that purposive sampling may introduce an element of bias into the evaluation with respondents purposively identified for their contribution of either favourable or unfavourable views of the Project. An alternative random sampling strategy that would limit bias however, was not deemed appropriate since qualitative evaluation requires respondents to provide sufficient information on specific areas of enquiry not guaranteed by random sampling. Bias has been controlled through a representative sample. Further, both primary and secondary research serve to triangulate information and strengthen validity of the findings.

2.3.5 Ethical Considerations

Adopting best-practice in carrying out research and recognising the duty of care towards people involved in the research activities, the WHO Standards and Operational Guidance for Ethics Review of Health-Related Research with Human Participants were consulted to mitigate the possibility of any negative effects arising from the involvement of respondents. Specific ethical guidelines for conducting research with children and young people were additionally consulted viz. Guidelines for Research with Children and Young People - Research Centre, National Children’s Bureau. The research team was also trained to adhere to ethical standards.

All respondents provided informed consent and were informed of their right to withdraw from the evaluation and of data confidentiality. The research purpose and findings were further explained to respondents. After each session, respondents were provided an opportunity to ask researchers any question or contact the research team if they should so wish. Community-level field work was facilitated by local Project partners. State, district and block-level research was facilitated by UNICEF Maharashtra specialists and consultants (please see Annexure 9 for a detailed list of Project partners).

The evaluation design considered the four well-known moral principles that constitute the basis for ethics in research (please see Annexure 10 for a detailed description of the principles):

1) **The Principle of Non-maleficence**: Research must not cause harm to the participants in particular and to people in general.
2) **The Principle of Beneficence**: Research should also make a positive contribution towards the welfare of people.
3) **The Principle of Autonomy**: Research must respect and protect the rights and dignity of participants.
4) **The Principle of Justice**: The benefits and risks of research should be fairly distributed among people.

2.3.6 Evaluation Criteria

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s - Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) criteria for evaluations of development assistance were applied to frame questions and

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guide the design of the evaluation. 24 The criteria was selected on the basis that it best supports the objective of the evaluation as well as its wide-use among major donor agencies and other development stakeholders. 25 Specifically, the evaluation was based on the following research framework.

25 Alternative criteria such as DAC criteria in Evaluating Humanitarian Action was not deemed relevant for this evaluation.
OECD-DAC Criteria and Research Framework

**Relevance**
Relevance refers to the extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor. The evaluation seeks to address the following questions under relevance.

- To what extent was the Project design relevant to the Project objective of ensuring that children 6-14 years are not working and are in school?
- To what extent does the Project design contribute towards creating an enabling environment towards promoting child rights, child protection and elimination of child labour?
- Given the change in the external environment due to new legislations and schemes were there any new opportunities or challenges?
- Did the Project complement the Government policies and strategies?

**Effectiveness**
Effectiveness is a measure of the extent to which an aid activity attains its objectives. The evaluation seeks to address the following questions under effectiveness.

- Did the Project achieve the results in relation to the stated objectives and key performance indicators? How and why/why not? Were there any variations from the outcomes originally proposed? If so, why?
- What was the role of the key players and UNICEF and how did they contribute to achieving the results? If not, State reasons.
- Have the strategies used enabled the Project to meet its objectives? If not, what are the possible reasons?
- What have been the difficulties or constraints that the Project has experienced and how has it affected the results? What are the lessons learnt?

**Efficiency**
Efficiency is a measure of the outputs, both qualitative and quantitative, in relation to the inputs. The evaluation seeks to address the following questions under efficiency.

- To what extent were the resources utilised efficiently? Were outputs delivered on time?
- To what extent was the Project able to leverage Government resources and partner with the Government to enhance the efficiency of the Project? As compared to the budget outlays was any review done to see how these were being utilised and were any changes made as per programmatic progress and linkages?
- To what extent did the activities cover the different population groups especially the marginalised communities?

**Sustainability**
Sustainability is a measure of whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. The evaluation seeks to address the following questions under sustainability.

- To what extent can this model of change be replicable in other programme areas with similar needs? What were the interventions that have been replicated by Government or likely to be replicated?
- To what extent will the partnerships developed with the Government and other partners during the course of the Project contribute to long term sustainability? (including community engagement and ownership)
- How has the partnership with the Government helped in operationalising Project interventions?
As defined by DAC criteria, impact refers to the positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. As per the study ToR, the comprehensive assessment of impact was not part of the remit of this evaluation and therefore this aspect was not focused upon in the evaluation design. The evaluation however did explore what could be done to make the Project more effective to inform recommendations.

2.3.7 Field Work in Maharashtra

The research team consisted of a State coordinator, a field supervisor and two field investigators. The four-member team underwent an intensive five-day training at the NCIS, Delhi office between March 24-28, 2014 on the evaluation protocol, the Project background and all the evaluation tools. All team members could converse, read and write in Marathi, which was crucial to elicit rich data and create a comfortable atmosphere.

Data collection was completed in Yavatmal and Wardha in the first phase of data collection from April 1-9, 2014. State-level interviews were also conducted during the first phase of data collection between Apr 3-7, 2014 in Mumbai and Pune by the State coordinator. Data was collected during the second phase in Jalna from April 17-21, 2014, on account of elections. The research team was accompanied by UNICEF consultants who introduced them to the respondents since the sampling in the study was purposive. This approach ensured meeting with those stakeholders who provided meaningful and relevant information to inform the study.

2.3.7.1 Challenges in Data Collection

- The evaluation period coincided with the election schedule in Maharashtra because of which it was difficult to obtain interviews with Government officials in district-level line departments, as they were on election duty. To overcome this challenge, interviews were planned according to the time and convenience of the respective respondents.
- In some cases, the concerned officials had been transferred to other districts because of which they could not be contacted.
Chapter 3: Findings

The evaluation findings are derived from the desk review of Project documents, and from IDIs and FGDs carried out with stakeholders at policy, programme, and community levels. Findings for each sub-outcome are presented as per the Project log-frame. In line with the objectives of the evaluation, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the four Project component areas are also addressed.

**Project Component 1: Creating and strengthening child protection structures to adequately protect children against exploitation and abuse**

**Outcome 1: Child Protection Structures in Place Addressing Child Labour Issues**

Project outcome 1 focused on setting up of child protection structures at the State and district levels stipulated under ICPS, the GoI’s flagship child protection scheme. To achieve this, the Project adopted a partnership approach with a number of stakeholders to further ensure strengthening of Government systems through which sustainable structures could continue to function beyond the Project period. It is important to consider achievements of the Project in the context of the child protection environment that existed at the onset of the Project.

The Project began implementation in 2009, which coincided with the introduction of ICPS. At the Project onset, there were no child protection structures at the sub-district-level and the district-level child protection structures were in the nascent stages of operationalisation. For setting up of child protection structures, multi-level stakeholders across departments were engaged including the State (DWCD, DoL, DoH), District (Collector, CEO ZP, SP, DWCD, Labour and other line departments) and YASHADA’s (Yashvantrao Chavan Academy of Development Administration) Research and Documentation Centre, Human Development Cell.

The Project has contributed towards creation of a ‘child protection system’. The evaluation found that the promise for scale-up in the Project was realized as Government buy-in was mobilised and notifications for establishment of child protection structures were issued. This was taken forward with the appointment and capacity building of child protection functionaries at State, district, and community levels. The most significant achievement under this outcome was the demonstration of the mode of operation for child protection systems at the sub-district level. The establishment of DCPUs in all 35 districts of Maharashtra resulted in availability of all necessary structures for roll out of the ICPS Scheme. DCPUs are meant to have a staffing strength of 12 personnel. While the key appointments are in place, not all DCPUs are fully staffed. Databases to track and target children at risk of being drawn into child labour have been established at the village level. Project districts thus demonstrated implementation of child protection at State, district, block and village levels through convergence between various departments.
Sub-outcome 1.1: Child Protection Structures under Labour and Integrated Child Protection Scheme/Juvenile Justice Are in Place and Functioning at State, district, Panchayat and Village Levels

Government notifications issued to establish child protection structures
The DWCD, Government of Maharashtra signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the GoI on Aug 13, 2010, to implement ICPS at the State level. The Project succeeded in issuing a total of 18 Government Resolutions (GRs) for establishment and strengthening of child protection structures. These GRs were issued after sustained consultations and meetings among UNICEF, DWCD heads and experts who were collectively also involved in the drafting of these resolutions. The target of issuing seven notifications was exceeded since UNICEF was able to leverage its coordination with the DWCD at the State level and influence the issuing of multiple GRs pertinent to setting up child protection structures. Furthermore, convergence was brought about between child protection structures of different departments as interdependence of these systems had not been acknowledged for effectiveness, prior to the Project. Importantly, Government resolutions were issued for MoU of ICPS, establishment of the State Adoption Resource Agency (SARA), and Memorandum of Association on Maharashtra State Child Protection Society (MSCPS). The MSCPS GR defined members, included bodies, their roles, appointment of staff and meetings and their frequency. These resolutions operationalised the ICPS and set Government mechanisms in motion at State, district, block and village levels as was corroborated by UNICEF and the Deputy Commissioner, DWCD.

Government resolutions provided the impetus and official pressure needed for formalising the work and ensuring accountability of Government officials such as State-level officials, district collectors, BDOs and Sarpanch. YASHADA also sent letters to different tiers of administration including BDOs and collectors as noted during the interaction with the Director, Research and Documentation Centre, YASHADA. Issuing of Government resolutions is indicative of the convergent nature of the Project as UNICEF has worked closely with the Government to internalise the child protection mandate. Even though issuing of these GRs took time because of the inertia of Government systems and the logical need to mobilise key influencers, they proved imperative for further work on the Project since large-scale establishment of VCPCs at the village level would not have been possible without them. The evaluation found that the issuing of GRs was indicative of the commitment and mandate of the Government to scale up child protection to all districts in the State. This process also resolved the interdependent nature of child protection since this focus area spans many departments and the issuing of GRs implies that Government departments will own the process thereby ensuring that child protection does not remain at the Project level but gets integrated into the Government system.

Targets for establishment of child protection structures achieved
At the end of the Project implementation period in 2014, all child protection structures under ICPS at the State level and in the three Project districts of Yavatmal, Jalna, and Wardha in Maharashtra have been established as part of the Project. This was primarily achieved through partnerships forged between GoM, UNICEF, NGO partners and CBOs. Table 4 enlists the child protection structures established under the Project in Maharashtra.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: Child protection structures established in Maharashtra under the Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child Protection Structure</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State-level Child Labour Task Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Child Protection Society</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
State Child Policy formulated and adopted to promote child protection in Maharashtra

As a result of UNICEF’s advocacy with the State, review and enactment of the State Child Policy was achieved. In keeping with the child protection mandate of the Project, UNICEF actively participated in and exerted influence for revision of the Child Policy issued in 2002 to take into account the changing environment and nature and extent of challenges faced by children in the following 10 years.

UNICEF assisted the DWCD in organising meetings and provided technical inputs for formation of the policy. Two drafts of the Child Policy were issued, viz., one by YASHADA and the other by MSCPCR. On account of being the technical expert, UNICEF was mandated by DWCD to combine the two drafts that became the basis for wide consultations led by the Minister, DWCD with Members of Parliament (MPs), Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs), Members of Legislative Council (MLCs), Government representatives, CSOs, CP systems and children and adolescents. In 2012, several State-level meetings were held including divisional meetings held by MSCPCR as was corroborated by the Deputy Commissioner, DWCD. In these meetings, inputs were gathered from rural and tribal organisations. Interactions were also held with children and adolescents whereby 40 children from UNICEF Project areas were consulted along with 100 children from Pune and 120 children from Mumbai. Among children from the Project areas, adolescent girls who were members of Deepshikha groups in their villages were also included. Their involvement highlights that children who were part of the programme also contributed to the formulation of the Child Policy. These consultations ensured representation of inputs from a range of vested stakeholders including those belonging to marginalised communities and facilitated children’s participation.

A GR was issued for the adoption of the revised State Child Policy on Nov 14, 2013. The Policy is a significant step in strengthening the protective environment for children and works towards strengthening social protection as per outcome 4. In essence, the Policy has institutionalised the groundwork carried out on addressing the issues of child protection systems and child labour over the previous three years. According to the interaction with UNICEF, the concept of safe spaces for children (forums for children and adolescents) has also been introduced in the Policy.

Convergence achieved between Government, UNICEF and Civil Society Organisations

From a review of secondary documents and interacting with key Project partners, it was found that the year 2010 was the "start-up" of the Project, as partnerships were formed with Government departments, the district administration and YASHADA. NGOs were mapped and selected as partners in consultation with the District Administration and 80 children’s institutions were mapped. The Gram Panchayat-based Planning (GPP)/microplanning process was initiated and facilitated by YASHADA and SPARSH (an alliance of development trainers formed through UNICEF initiatives in Maharashtra since 1999).26 At the policy

26 http://spar.shcpl.org/about_us
level, UNICEF identifies inertia within Government mechanisms as a hindrance to integrate the ICPS structure with other Government and NGO child protection initiatives.

UNICEF has conducted extensive consultations with key Government officials and also provided technical inputs to strengthen child protection instruments and structures through involvement in State-level resource groups and thematic working groups on child protection under the Project. This has kindled an action-based approach in the administration, which needs to be sustained. These groups were formed as a result of a deliberation meeting held on Sept 9, 2011 chaired by the Minister, DWCD in which 30 civil society organisations participated. The groups met regularly, with facilitation support from UNICEF over one and a half years from 2011-2013 and reviewed aspects like institutional care, non-institutional care, ICPS structures, GR for State Adoption Resource Agency (SARA) and review of Care Plans for Children in Institutions. The work of these groups was shared periodically in review meetings chaired by the Minister, DWCD and in working meetings chaired by the Commissioner/Deputy Commissioner, DWCD.

Establishment of various child protection structures has strengthened linkages between concerned functionaries. For example, the DCPU, Childline and DWCD now hold regular consultative meetings on child protection related issues. According to interactions with policy-level stakeholders, the evaluation found that DWCD and UNICEF have collaborated regularly on documents such as the Care Plan for Children in Institutions and the draft GR for the State Adoption Resource Agency (SARA). Again, this is indicative of convergence as meetings between departments (that would not have taken place otherwise) have been conducted under the Project. The Project has thus demonstrated a model for convergence and resource sharing between departments that can be further strengthened in the future. This is in keeping with the objective of the Project to bolster Government mechanisms and enable them to take ownership of the child protection apparatus.

**State-level child protection structures established**

From the interaction with UNICEF, it was found that at the State level, a tripartite body comprising UNICEF, DWCD, and the State Project Support Unit (SPSU) was set up to draw the roadmap for implementation of the ICPS after Maharashtra agreed to adopt the ICPS in 2010. Following the establishment of the MSCP 2011 as per the Project target, this function has now been taken over by it. UNICEF has played a key role in preparing the Memorandum of Association of the MSCPS that outlines its membership, rules and regulations, including bodies and functions and their roles and responsibilities.

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Staff of MSCPS has been recruited as per ICPS guidelines. UNICEF was initially involved in the functioning of the MSCPS over 2011-2012 (please see Annexure 11 for the detailed membership of the MSCPS).

UNICEF has thus positioned child protection structures with a professional approach i.e. action plans have been prepared for State and district structures, review meetings have been held to assess progress and detailed job descriptions have been prepared for members so that quality human resources are engaged to work in this arena.

**District-level child protection structures established**

District-level task forces (DCLTF), District Child Protection Units (DCPs), Special Juvenile Police Units (SJPs) and statutory bodies like Child Welfare Committees (CWCs) and Juvenile Justice Boards (JJBs) have been established as per set targets by 2011. The Project has ensured that child protection apparatus are in place at the Project district level so that these districts serve as “demonstration districts” and best

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practices and learnings can be drawn from their experiences at the end of the Project period to inform UNICEF and the Government. The notifications issued were imperative to establish CWCs, JJBs and SJPUs across all districts.

**a. DCPUs established to operationalise child protection**

DCPUs were formed as part of the ICPS. In 2012, a GR was issued that outlined the roles and responsibilities of DCPU functionaries. The members of the DCPU have been hired on a contractual basis under fixed pay conditions. In the beginning, DCPUs functioned as individual offices for child protection, apart from the DWCD. Hence, evidence from the ground was presented to the DWCD by UNICEF so as to form linkages between the DCPU and DWCD office at the district level. Gradually over the period of 2012-13, DCPUs were linked with the DWCD office. The evaluation found that UNICEF played an indispensable role in advocating for the merging of the DCPU with the DWCD office and reversal of the decision to operate DCPUs as separate entities. According to the interaction with the DWCDO, Wardha, regular bi-monthly meetings of the DCPU are taking place. The DCPU is linked with the DWCD through the DWCD Officer. In the three Project districts, the best practice of DCPU members and SJPUs attending joint meetings was regularised. The DCPU, Childline and the DWCD hold regular consultative meetings at the district level. From the interaction with the DWCDO, Yavatmal, it was found that State-level quarterly meetings of representatives of all CP structures are also held. To ensure smooth working of the Unit, State apparatus need to institutionalise the structure to attract motivated professionals to posts within the Unit (please see Annexure 11 for detailed DCPU membership).

**b. DCLTFs promoted convergence between district line departments**

From interactions with policy-level stakeholders, it was found that the DCLTF is comprised of the District Collector as its chair, the Labour Officer who serves as Member Secretary of the Task Force, DWCD Officer, Education Officer, representative of NGO, Childline and Home (Police), and other relevant departments deemed appropriate for inclusion by the Collector. The DCLTF is an active body and holds monthly meetings. According to the DWCDO, Yavatmal, the membership of the DCLTF promotes convergence of child protection functionaries. For example, when a child labourer is identified, the case is addressed through the DoL. Subsequently, when the child is rescued, the DWCD is involved in the rehabilitation process by presenting the case before the CWC. The DCLTF has been effective in addressing issues of child labour in coal mines and cotton farming by establishing links with task forces at various levels. According to the DWCDO, Yavatmal, the DLT and BLTF share information related to child protection with each other thus strengthening the child protection response at each level.

**Statutory bodies constituted and strengthened**

**a. JJB members trained**

The evaluation found that by 2011, JJBs were established in Project districts as per ICPS guidelines. All JJB members were trained in utilisation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for missing children under the Project. This training helped provide a structure to their mode of working and all JJBs now follow a standard method that can be updated at the State level. Work of the JJB is centred on needs of the child and they do not look at children as habituated offenders. UNICEF prepared a handy information kit for JJB members that included legal information, newsletters, relevant studies and contacts (please see Annexure 12 for components of JJB kit).

Initially, magistrates were resistant to attending joint training with social workers. To address the resistance towards joint training, UNICEF advocated with the Mumbai High Court’s Juvenile Justice Committee for joint training. Subsequently, UNICEF involved social workers in training, which was of a very high quality conducted by psychologists, social workers and legal experts. UNICEF has since recognised that a single training is not sufficient to provide up-to-date information since the landscape
for redressal of sexual abuse cases has changed since 2009-10. Thus refresher trainings are essential for building institutional capacities. The JJB trainings have been integrated into the training method of the Maharashtra Judicial Academy.

The JJBs were meeting regularly, typically twice a week. They discussed child protection cases, a majority of which were sexual abuse cases. JJBs were facing staffing issues at the time of the evaluation. For example, in the district of Yavatmal, the JJB consisted only of one magistrate and one social worker instead of two social workers as per ICPS guidelines.

**b. Capacities of CWCs developed**

By 2011, CWCs were established in all 35 districts of Maharashtra. The evaluation found that under the Project, a three-fold improvement was brought about in the operationalisation of CWCs through training of CWC members, development of SOPs for CWCs and bringing about convergence at the district level.

Before 2009, the evaluation found that the CWC selection process was marked by political appointments and favouritism. To overcome this bias, UNICEF developed transparent procedures to promote greater fairness through interviews and advertisements. Once selected, CWC members were asked to sign a commitment letter stating that they were not part of any institution, they would attend sittings regularly and would perform their roles diligently. The selection process has now been streamlined through development of a system of interviews by the commissioner’s office. Previously, many candidates would apply because they thought being a CWC member was a ‘status symbol’. UNICEF has worked to ensure that candidates are selected on merit and commitment to the task dedicating a minimum of three hours per week. In Apr, 2013, 110 new CWC members were appointed. Both 145 old and 110 new CWC members were provided with capacity building training during the Project in 2009, 2010 and 2013. CWCs are now competently handling child labour cases received and conducting follow-up.

Thus, under the Project, a set of standard operating procedures for CWC operation has been developed, qualifications of CWC members specified and a merit-based appointment of members conducted so as to make the CWC effective. CWCs have also assisted in issuing notifications for the establishment of VCPCs. UNICEF set up a working group to develop the SOPs for strengthening CWCs. The working group drew on expertise of various child protection professionals including UNICEF representatives, Government representatives from DWCD, CWC members, NGO representatives, alternative care institutions, adoption agencies, lawyers and experts in JJA. The SOPs were issued as a GR in 2010 and are based on the Maharashtra JJA rules. They lay down the legal basis for implementing the JJA and include information on other Acts; outline procedures for CWCs for each case type referred to them; and describe the process of developing a care plan for every child along with the process of rescue, rehabilitation and reintegration of the child. A handy information kit was developed for training of CWC members (*please see Annexure 13 for components of CWC kit*) and CWC members were trained as was corroborated by the DWCDO, Yavatmal.

District-level convergence was achieved in Yavatmal and Wardha as the CWC, DCPU and Childline members met on a monthly basis. Additionally, linkages between VCPCs and CWCs were streamlined, for example, some CWCs made block-level visits and met VCPC members. The institution of CWCs was therefore supported through linkages with ground-level referral systems. VCPC members call the DCPU when cases are identified and the DCPU in turn, refers these cases to the respective CWCs. Establishment of such convergence in these two Project districts was a human resource-intensive process and also took up a considerable amount of time. Since the process has been successfully demonstrated in these two
districts, the onus is now on the State Government to sustain and scale up in the remaining districts of Maharashtra.

CWCs however, are overwhelmed with cases, attributed to a relatively short three-year serving term, which provides insufficient time to address the volume of cases presented. CWCs do not have support staff to deal with enquiries, documentation and administration work. Even though the SOPs have helped them, strengthening of CWCs will require human resources (note-taking and administrative work), infrastructure including office space and regular ongoing training. According to policy-level respondents in Yavatmal and Jalna, CWCs have faced challenges in engaging with the community so that they are aware of CWC to address their grievances and can then seek out the CWC for redressal of cases. CWCs will require support to sustain these processes, as these improvements have been recent (since 2012) and quite human resource-intensive. The State Government will need to take up the responsibility of scaling up these improvements to the rest of the districts.

**SJPUs trained in ethical and child-friendly policing**

SJPUs are a mandated structure under JJA, which stipulates a police officer in every police station trained as a child welfare police officer (CWPO). SJPUs were notified at the district level in all 35 districts of Maharashtra. CWPOs were provided with training and designated in all districts.

It was reported by the Deputy Commissioner, DWCD that the SJPU and DWCD converge when required, demonstrating that SJPUs are functioning bodies. UNICEF has brought about convergence between the SJPU, CWC, JJB, DWCD and Childline so that all these administrative and monitoring bodies related to child protection can call upon the SJPU to take action on the ground for addressing child protection cases. From the interaction with the Deputy Commissioner, DWCD, it was found that SJPUs have also been given training in ethical treatment of children in keeping with the CRC and the need to tackle juvenile offences in a sensitive manner as compared to adult criminals.

From the interaction with UNICEF, it was found that due to short-staffing of the police department, SJPU personnel are not able to work for children and juvenile justice exclusively and get drawn into other tasks like election duty. The Principal Secretary, DWCD who supervises the SJPU has recommended that a full-time nodal officer must be put in place even in the absence of a full-time Special Juvenile Police Officer (SJPO).

**VCPCs formed to address child labour at the community level**

Village Child Protection Committees (VCPCs) have been established as a novel initiative. Prior to the Project, there were no village-level committees to monitor child protection. The evaluation found that VCPCs ensure buy-in and ownership by the community and are evocative of a non-hierarchical approach as was corroborated by NGO respondents and VCPC members from the three districts. VCPCs ensure that the Project does not have a top-down effect and that the community has a channel to communicate with child protection structures at block, district and State levels so that child protection action does not stop at the district level. DWCDs have reacted positively to VCPCs and expressed that the reach of the DWCD has extended to the community as a result. The evaluation found that VCPCs are handling cases in a manner that leads to rehabilitation and linking of vulnerable families to social protection.
The process of establishing VCPCs was facilitated by concomitant setting up of child protection structures at State and district levels, and building linkages between the sub-district and district structures. Interactions with programme-level respondents including NGO counterparts, established that NGOs played an integral role in setting up VCPCs by coordinating with local Government mechanisms including PRIs and block level officials. GRs issued at State and district levels were implemented at block and community levels by issuing circulars and letters to block and panchayat offices. BDOs received written circulars for establishing VCPCs/written letters from the CEO/CWC. Letters were also sent to the Sarpanch and the gram sewak. According to an NGO counterpart in Jalna, in many cases, the BDO’s office helped to implement the resolution to establish VCPCs in their respective blocks by providing the necessary official impetus. The DWCDO, Wardha, informed that VCPCs in many villages have been established with the help of the Sarpanch, the police patil and the gram sewak.

NGOs also held meetings with the community to lay groundwork for establishing VCPCs (this was corroborated by community-level respondents). Discussions on child rights were held in community forums such as gram sabhas. During these gram sabhas, interested community members were identified to be part of the Committee. Microplanning conducted at the outset to collect village-level data was also utilised for establishing VCPCs. The process also helped NGOs to identify individuals in the community who were enthusiastic about child protection. A list of such individuals was then presented in the gram sabha based on which the VCPC members were selected.

The evaluation found that the process of selection of CPCs was carried out in a transparent and democratic manner through community mobilisation. The Project has managed to create a groundswell of support for child protection in a situation where there was no previous understanding in the community on protection. Along with creating VCPCs, an enabling environment for child protection was created in the village that was not restricted to merely setting up the child protection structures. Communities were mobilised through ‘child rights weeks’ and during gram sabhas wherein the issues of child protection were discussed. These discussions were participatory and democratic including men, women and children along with the AWW and ASHA. This sort of social follow-up and consensus-building for the constitution of VCPCs has led to acceptance of their roles by child protection functionaries. This movement and acceptance at the community level has led to the accelerated formation of 1,576 CPCs against the set target of 170.

VCPC membership includes the Sarpanch or a member elected by the gram sabha, AWW, ASHA, police patil, principal or teacher of a primary/secondary (aided) school, chairman of the Village Education Committee (VEC) or School Management Committee (SMC), local community representative (three) (from volunteer organisations, SHGs, Mahila Mandals), one boy and one girl as representatives of children in the 12-18 years age group. This varied membership ensured inclusion of diverse sections of the community. Notably, child representatives were included to represent children’s voices as they are the direct beneficiaries of this Project. VCPCs typically hold meetings once every two months and have exhibited varying levels of activeness. The entire quorum may not be present at every meeting hence, the village
volunteer visits those members who were absent in the last meeting and informs them of the meeting proceedings. Thus, efforts are made to sustain involvement of VCPC members. Village volunteers work in a convergent manner to maintain contact with CWPOs and VCPCs and coordinate with SMCs to update data on out of school children.

Exceeding the target of 170 VCPCs indicates that groundwork by partner NGOs has been successful and village-level CP structures are institutionalised in Project districts. VCPCs should be provided with continuous capacity building training and supportive supervision for sustained activities in the future.

Despite the over-achievement in numbers of VCPCs established, shortage of human resources has been a challenge in formation of VCPCs. At other times, obtaining support of important people viz., Sarpanch in the village proved to be difficult. Sometimes, people held negative perceptions about the VCPC as yet another committee that would not function properly. From interactions with community-level respondents like volunteers and prerikas, instances of accusations by the community that VCPCs had a political agenda, were also reported. These challenges underscore the vital need for community support in addressing village-level child protection issues. Such misconceptions were removed with the help of community leaders and the AWW/ASHA. This is closely linked to community sensitisation on the issue (Project component 3) so as to increase their buy-in of Project objectives. The interface between village, block and district-level child protection structures has not achieved a concrete form yet and is still evolving. Another challenge faced in the VCPC intervention was the long time period of 2-3 years taken up in their establishment, which involved preparing the policy-level environment, issuing Government resolutions, trickling down to block and PRI levels, and mobilising the community. In light of this gestation period, challenges in functioning of VCPCs will require time to overcome and continued support and handholding of VCPS are required to ensure their vibrancy.

**Capacity building of CP structure members to fulfil their roles and responsibilities**

While child protection structures at all levels of administration are in place, not all of them are functioning at optimum levels. Functioning of these bodies depends many times on existing roles like those of District Collectors. Hence, activeness of these bodies depends on initiative and political will exhibited by the District Collector. But at present, the District Collector heads many committees and can be overburdened. Political will at the leadership level, therefore is an essential factor in successful functioning of such bodies. Frequent changes in leadership of district administration have caused loss of Project learning and impetus. While information about child protection has expanded, access to child protection structures at the district level remains difficult. The Project attempted to overcome such challenges by appointing dedicated functionaries based on merit who will deliver high quality work. Capacity building of these functionaries will have to be continuous since child protection is a new area and all these structures are in their formative stages with need of support. Training for all child protection officials has been carried out under the Project and received positively as CP structure members have affirmed that it built their capacities. They have also expressed a desire for future training. Advocacy with the Government has helped bring about qualitative differences in functioning of child protection structures. In Yavatmal district, 16 master trainers (MTs) have been readied for Adolescent Girls Group (AGG) animator training, 15 master trainers have been readied for RTE training, 22 for child protection training, 13 for foundation training and there are 219 resource persons available for microplanning. This pool of trained resources can be drawn upon for future Project cycles.

The training module was developed by UNICEF and provided as an initiative under the Project. Topics covered included issues related to children and child protection; information pertaining to related laws and schemes viz. ICPS, JJA, Child Marriage Act; roles and responsibilities of ICPS functionaries including
VCPC members; and the importance of data collection to assess the current status of children. Information booklets to support learning were provided to trainees. Training was conducted in an interactive manner instead of being solely lecture-based. This is an important aspect of the Project intervention as CP structure members have benefitted from the training and have become more confident in carrying out their tasks. Since these roles are renewed periodically every two-five years, it is important to conduct refresher trainings.

**Table 5: Child Protection Training Details**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Level</th>
<th>Nature of Training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JJB</td>
<td>All members trained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWC</td>
<td>145 old and 110 new members trained</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| District-level | • Senior Police Superintendent, CEO *Zilla Parishad*, Department of Women and Child Development Officer (DWDCO), Primary District Education Officer and the Child Labour Welfare Officer  
                      • AWWs, ASHAs provided with 2-day training on child protection-related issues  
                      • Teachers  
| Block-level    | • VCPC members trained using ToT (Training of Trainers) approach  
                      • Two members from every VCPC in Project districts trained, who in turn, trained the rest of their committee members  
                      • VVs trained for five days on child protection and the importance of education; definition of a child; legal mechanisms for child protection  
| Police         | • 1,400 police officers trained |

In addition to carrying out training for ICPS functionaries, a number of other child protection and education related stakeholders were trained under the Project. Police officers have been informed about the rules and conventions that accompany a sensitive topic such as child protection. For example, before the Project, the police would not respond to being notified by the CWC about a case related to child protection (child labour or child marriage) and if they did respond, they would arrive at the scene in uniform, which is not appropriate. After receiving training, they now respond and arrive at the scene in plain clothes.

Training was also conducted for CBOs and PRIs to sensitise them on issues related to child labour, child marriage and the importance of education. YASHADA actively involved *Deepshikha* trainers in the training of women PRIs and it was observed that interaction between elected women PRIs and adolescent girls had a powerful effect on the women. This promoted women’s empowerment to address the issues of child protection and importance of education.

From the interaction with UNICEF, it was found that earlier, Government trainings were primarily lecture-based but now they are more process-oriented and positioned as dynamic, engaging and informative. The training was appreciated by policy, programme and community-level stakeholders as being both effective and relevant since they were provided with useful information and taught the method of working in the respective child protection structures. Stakeholders in child protection are now aware of the inter-related nature of their roles. They have also been trained in documentation including case studies and maintenance of registers, with streamlining of their roles. As a result of the training, coordination between Government offices, partner NGOs and UNICEF has also increased. DWCD issued circulars for the same, BDOs in Project blocks gave their support and collectors also provided support through DCLTFs. VCPC members, most importantly, have been provided with a mode of operation. For example, a *Sarpanch* from Sharad village in Ghatanji block of Yavatmal shared that they now know the appropriate authority with
whom to register a complaint while freeing a child labourer from a factory owner/proprietor and the requisite official credentials required while doing so.

During training of VCPC members, many people attended initial meetings enthusiastically. However, challenges were faced in sustaining their regular and active participation and many members dropped out. Members were also reluctant to attend remote trainings as they much preferred local trainings. Another challenge faced by the Project was the difficulty in providing comprehensive information and building capacities to requisite levels during the course of one training session.

It was suggested by a programme-level NGO counterpart in Yavatmal that refresher trainings for all stakeholders should be held every three months to ensure optimum effectiveness and this was corroborated by the DWCDO Yavatmal.

**Sub-outcome 1.2 Monitoring Systems to Track and Target Children at Risk Have Been Established and Maintained through Village-level Databases**

A number of monitoring systems to track and target children at risk of child labour have been established. These monitoring systems are useful tools for CP structure members to track missing children and take action based on data. Thus the Project has introduced an evidence-based approach to planning and action to make the child protection efforts more robust. CP structure members have been trained in maintenance and use of these systems. The evaluation found that different stakeholders were linked through the Project. Prior to the Project, there was a lack of tracking and hence the tracking of OOSC was instituted. The GP databases were also used as a source of information. The Project enabled the creation of village-level databases and linked these databases with Track Child. In locations where a tracking system at the village level was absent, a system of tracking OOSC was developed.

**SOPs for missing children used in consonance with Track Child**

UNICEF provided technical inputs to the MSCPS for development of SOPs for missing children. The SOPs were adopted in a multi-stakeholder meeting held by DWCD and UNICEF with civil society, police and CWCs, which was corroborated by the Deputy Commissioner, DWCD.

These SOPs were then used in sync with the Track Child Monitoring and Reporting System (MWCD initiative), which has 3,367 missing children in Maharashtra on its record and 2,199 children have been recovered. The DWCD recovered 1,477 children during the past year.[28]

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28 http://www.trackthemissingchild.gov.in/trackchild/maharashtra

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"Government officials used to come for the trainings including the CDPOs, ICDS supervisors, ASHA, BDO. Their presence exerted pressure on people to take note of educating their children since it was for their development."

- Project-in-charge, NGO Dharamitra, Wardha
Village-level databases enhance community input

Village-level databases have been set up under the Project. A data collection format underpinning the village-level database was developed and provided to active CBOs. Village-level data was collected by trained village volunteers to ascertain the number of children attending school. Youth volunteers selected by the Gram Sabhas were capacitated on a bi-monthly basis to track OOSC since the number of OOSC is indicative of child labour, child marriage and other forms of vulnerability. Volunteers were trained to track OOSC with the eventual responsibility dovetailing into Child Protection Committees (CPCs). Some CPCs also started tracking the OOSC data.

Training provided to volunteers included information on topics such as filling out data formats, soliciting family information and determining the number and age of out of school children. This village-level capacity development is expected to sustain efforts to maintain village-level databases beyond the Project period. Policy, programme and community-level stakeholders corroborated that village-level data has proven useful in assessing the current condition of children – especially of OOSC or those involved in child labour and in planning ahead.

Participatory microplanning provided accurate data

As an initiative under the Project, microplanning was used to obtain social demographic data that could be analysed to identify vulnerable families and children at risk of child labour. The process was facilitated by partner NGOs who worked in collaboration with CBOs. NGO staff visited schools in villages and obtained a list of non-attending children from headmasters and teachers to help ascertain the number of OOSC. CP training was conducted in collaboration with YASHADA. The involvement of YASHADA provided an official mark to the training because of which Government functionaries attended in fairly encouraging numbers. Collaboration with YASHADA has helped to institutionalise training as a core requirement within Government mechanisms. And YASHADA is now equipped to lead and conduct training in the future.

"Under the SSA, information is collected at the village level but that information is quite old and does not mention OOSC clearly. Volunteers who have been trained, collect information at the village level in a logical and organised manner."
- Sarpanch, Sharad Village, Yavatmal

"The database is very relevant because all details were collected from the village. We could then determine the number of OOSC in the village, track children and send them to school."
- NGO respondent, Jalna

Track Child

Track Child is an initiative of the MWCD, Government of India to track the progress of children of every child care institution in the country. It also aims to track every missing child of this country. The Track Child portal has been developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) at the web address: http://www.trackthemissingchild.gov.in/trackchild/index.php. The portal is meant to facilitate networking and integrated action of stakeholders in child protection including Central Project Support Unit (CPSU), State Child Protection Society/Units and District Child Protection Units (DCPU), Child Care Institutions (CCIs), Police Stations, Child Welfare Committees (CWGs) and Juvenile Justice Boards (JJBs). Data entry and updating is done at various levels including Police stations, CCIs/Homes, Shelters, Child Welfare Committees, and Juvenile Justice Boards.
Databases were popularised in the community through *gram sabha* meetings. Village volunteers and AWWs were familiarised with the database so that they would be able to identify child labour cases in the community with the help of the database. *Deepshikha prerikas*, village volunteers and AWWs conducted village surveys to determine the number of child labourers. Other sources of data included information collected under the SSA, but this did not explicitly mention OOSC. Microplanning data, on the other hand, threw up a lot of proxy indicators to track OOSC. According to a programme-level NGO counterpart in Wardha, it is encouraging to note that there was no significant difference (approximately 2-5 percent) between data obtained through the DIET survey and that through microplanning. Data obtained from the DIET survey, microplanning and from village volunteers could be triangulated by NGOs. This triangulation proved to be important since many times, for example, the school headmaster would mark a child as present even if the child was not attending school.

**VCPC members take ownership of updating the database**

Both programme and community-level respondents talked about the use of village-level databases. Village-level databases are updated and additional data added to them by VCPC members and village volunteers in the standard format provided to all VCPCs. Villages also use data obtained through microplanning to track OOSC and working children. The databases have proved to be effective tools in monitoring cases of child labour/OOSC and child marriage. For example, while the practice of child marriage has not yet been eradicated, 66 cases of child marriage were prevented in Yavatmal district as a direct result of maintaining these databases.

The concept of Village Information Centres (VICs) was developed as an innovation by a partner NGO in Jalna. The village data was housed in the VIC and was managed by the village volunteer. Being conveniently located people can easily access information on the current status of their village. These VICs were set up soon after microplanning data was collected.

A number of challenges were faced by the Project in data collection. In the early stages, considerable community engagement had to be undertaken to explain the use of the database to them. There were many misconceptions in the minds of people; for example, some people did not think it was wrong to keep children out of school. To overcome this challenge, several lines of communication were opened with community members by holding *Gram Sabhas* and discussions.

In many cases, people would provide incorrect information or provide information carelessly. Triangulation of data from various sources helped to overcome this challenge. A significant challenge was also faced in meeting those parents who did not send their children to school. Exerciting social pressure was the strategy applied so that they would send their children to school. Parents were informed that under the RTE, education is free and compulsory. Those parents who sent their children to work were told about the harmful effects of child labour. In a few instances, children themselves did not want to go to school despite repeated coaxing by their parents, friends and neighbours. This emphasised the need for community sensitisation to collectively address the issue of child labour/out of school children (OOSC) at the village level.

“VCPCs hold monthly meetings in which SMC members are also present as are the AWW and police patil. Data relevant to the village is presented in that meeting and OOSC data is also obtained. Child trafficking is also stopped at the village level because of the decentralised mode of operation.”

- NGO Respondent, Jalna
Sub-outcome 1.3 Civil Society Alliance Has Been Established and Non-Governmental Organisations are Actively Partnering with District Administration for Planning and Review of Child Labour Interventions

NGOs mobilising community-based action
NGOs have been active partners in implementing the Project. In light of the ICPS and RTE coming into force in 2009, at a time when many structures and processes were in the nascent stages of development, NGOs have played a vital role in supporting the district administration to execute its responsibilities. The evaluation found, for example, that DWCD district offices face a dearth of human resources while having to oversee child-related programme implementation in the entire district. Hence NGO partnership has helped the DWCD to reach out more effectively at village and community levels where they were earlier confined to the district level. NGOs routinely liaised with Government officials and invited them for training and other community-level events of significance. NGOs were particularly active in mobilising the community, as they were able to leverage their proximity and access to the community through grassroots work. UNICEF served to foster the relationship between NGOs and the district administration through activities undertaken by the Project as well as leveraging its close links with the Government.

A challenge faced during Project implementation was the considerable time taken for coordination with Government departments. This was corroborated both by UNICEF and partner NGOs. According to an NGO counterpart in Jalna, initially there was lack of interest at the CEO’s office that prolonged the time required to organise training and other events. This was overcome through repeated visits by UNICEF district and block coordinators, and continuous engagement.

Government stakeholders and NGOs both have expressed their interest in sustaining these partnerships beyond the Project cycle. A total of 17 partnerships between NGO Project partners and the district administration for the planning and review of child labour interventions were established. Majority (14 of the 17 NGOs) of these partnerships will be continued with Government programmes even after completion of the Project period. YASHADA has also indicated that it will continue to coordinate with these NGOs. The organisations are also coordinating with district collectors to take the partnership forward.

Sub-outcome 1.4 State and District Action Plans against Child Labour have been Developed and its Implementation is being Monitored

Child Labour Action Plans developed
The Maharashtra State Child Labour Action Plan was developed in July, 2011. A GR was issued for adopting the State Plan of Action (SPOA) on Aug 17, 2011, and another GR was issued for implementation of the SPOA and the role of the DWCD on Jan 1, 2012. District-level action plans flowing out of the State-level plan were developed for each Project district.

According to UNICEF, a key success factor in the development of plans has been establishing political will. The Maharashtra Chief Secretary was actively engaged in the Project and selected the issue of child labour as one of 10 Key Result Areas (KRAs) of focus over his term. The Child Labour Cell of YASHADA consulted UNICEF to provide key inputs into the State-level Action Plan. District-level action plans were developed by UNICEF through Government partnerships, especially with DoL. UNICEF helped in development of rural
and urban child labour elimination strategies in the action plans. The plans also provide alternatives to child labour, which promote education for children and the enforcement of the RTE. In addition, reaching out to rehabilitation and repatriation services for children is encompassed under the action plans. Social protection was also considered as the plans advocate that social protection schemes should reach child-labour endemic areas. To this end, rescued working children were admitted to residential schools and linked with non-institutional cash assistance scheme of the Bal Sangopan Yojana (BSY). While the plans address a number of issues related to the elimination of child labour, some respondents have suggested that the element of social protection needs to be further strengthened. For example, the DWCD Officer and Probation Officer in the Project district of Yavatmal felt that the compensation of INR 425 under the BSY is not sufficient for families to sustain themselves and that it should be increased to INR 1200. To this end, State-level meetings have been held to increase compensation received by foster families.

**Implementation and review of Action Plans**

It became known from UNICEF that the Maharashtra SPOA is being reviewed by the State through the Coordination Committee. The Committee comprises the Chief Secretary, the Labour Secretary, the Labour Commissioner, YASHADA and two-three NGOs. YASHADA is the implementing agency and was assigned to conduct surveys, evaluate the NCLP and its funding, and adapt the media and communication strategy and materials. DoL sought the help of UNICEF in Project districts for monitoring and review of district action plans. Quarterly reviews of targets set in district action plans were held. A recommendation has been made for review of State and three district action plans. It is anticipated that the new district child labour action plans to be developed will address unresolved issues from preceding plans or where targets were unmet/underachieved.

Work under the Project in development and implementation of child labour action plans has further contributed to the credibility of UNICEF in addressing the issue of child labour. Government administration in Satara district of Maharashtra has approached UNICEF to develop a district child labour action plan. Satara is home to many child labourers in the brick kiln industry and agriculture. The enforcement by DoL in the district has been weak as child labour in agriculture is not considered a child rights violation. Through Project initiatives, scale-up of child labour action plans across districts in Maharashtra is thus taking place. This underscores the need for future capacity development of district-level Government mechanisms to develop and implement child labour action plans. Sharing best practices and lessons learnt stemming from the Project would be useful to inform scale-up of action plans. Allocation of budget for development, implementation and review of district-level plans should be carved out by the State Government following a cost-analysis exercise based on Project findings. UNICEF and State-level partners as well as district administrations who have demonstrated political will should consolidate advocacy efforts with the State Government in this regard.

**Sub-outcome 1.5 Advocacy Platforms Strengthened (District-level Meeting details and Recommendations provided) for Amending Child Labour Law to Include Prohibition of Child Labour in Agriculture**

**Departments support UNICEF advocacy to Centre for amendment of CLPRA**

Advocacy for amendments to the Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act (CLPRA) was spearheaded by UNICEF over the Project period. Consultation meetings were held in Jalna, Yavatmal and Wardha, and Mumbai. A high-profile event to discuss and advocate on the issue of removing the distinction between categories of hazardous and non-hazardous labour as well as raising the age bar for prohibition of all
forms of child labour was held. The event was attended by the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Ministers of Education, DWCD, Labour, Chief Secretary, country representatives of ILO and UNICEF, and the NCPCR.

Former child labourers also participated by providing information on solutions that worked in transforming their own situation from child labour to education. For example, one girl from a denotified tribe used to beg but has now become an activist in her own community. She relayed how a school was built in her community and that all the children now go to school. These cases were identified by UNICEF and served to represent the voices of former child labourers who had been rescued and rehabilitated. The event was an advocacy platform to bring together various actors for amendment of the law. DWCD district offices have also recognised the need for advocacy. To this end, the State Government made recommendations to the Centre appealing for enforcement of rules for action against employment of child labourers in both hazardous and non-hazardous industries. DoL is also referencing advocacy-based efforts of UNICEF on the issue. This is a qualitative shift since previously the DoL had not been a robust actor on the issue, as they did not perceive child labour in agriculture to be a pressing problem. Policy level respondents also felt that further advocacy is required to ensure implementation of recommendations submitted to the central Government for reform of the law.

**DAC Criteria for Component Area 1**

Project design acknowledged the fact that strong legislation for child protection was in place but lacked the structures and mechanisms to support its enforcement. Under component 1, child protection structures were established as per Project target with relevant GRs issued and a record number of village-level CPCs established. Monitoring systems were set up to assess progress and setbacks in child protection on the ground and community-level action was harnessed by NGO partners. Advocacy efforts were also conducted to amend the national law. In this way, child protection structures were created with opportunities for feedback and convergence at all levels instead of a non-inclusive top-down approach. The intervention was implemented in close coordination with Government departments with an aim towards sustainability and institutional strengthening.

**Relevance**

**State-level Structures Set Up and Resolutions Issued Indicate Alignment with Government Processes**

The Project under component 1 ensured the issuing of resolutions and notifications to effectively implement the ICPS, JJA, and Child Labour Act. JJA is an umbrella legislation as every child is taken care of under this Act. For example, in the case of Children in Conflict/Contact with the Law and their rehabilitation, Section 15 of JJA holds supremacy over Child Marriage Act or any other legislation. Project mechanisms set up for child protection in-turn strengthen Government systems for law enforcement and child protection service delivery.

ICPS as the implementation arm of the JJA, mandates establishment of specific child-protection structures and statutory support services for vulnerable children at the National, State, District, Block, and Village levels. In line with ICPS, the Project supported the establishment of Child Protection Societies at the State and District levels and statutory structures. These include Child Welfare Committees, Juvenile Justice Boards, and Special Juvenile Police Units. The Project also supported creation of VCPCs as stipulated under ICPS (please see Annexure 14 for roles of child protection functionaries). While the ICPS provides for strengthening of the broader child protection system, the Project established Child Labour Task Forces at
State and district levels to bring focus to the issue of child labour. The Task Forces are not mandated structures under ICPS but are an initiative under the Project to implement child labour action plans.

To operationalise the ICPS, GRs for establishment of child protection structures were issued at the State level and in all Project districts. Project support contributed in the strengthening of child protection legislation and structures.

**Block-level Structures Set Up**
In addition, although not a focus of the Project design, initiatives were also taken to strengthen child protection systems at the block level. The Project supported creation of Block-level Child Protection Committees (BLCPCs). In this way, the Project extended the remit of its work to strengthen child protection structures at each level of Government administration in Maharashtra. This served to regularise planning, monitoring and response systems by linking various child protection structures at each level. For example, linkages were established between the SCLTF, DCLTF and BCLTF to address issues of child labour and OOSC at each administrative level. The task ahead is to strengthen and improve these linkages. The evaluation found that there was an effort to build convergence by demonstration of such processes and generating data and evidence to support the processes.

**Training of Child Protection Functionaries**
Despite the expansive spread of the Project, it retained its focus on institutional strengthening and capacity-building of functionaries across all levels of child protection structures. This input of the Project ensured activation and functional rigour within systems and contributed towards building an enabling environment for promoting child rights, child protection and reduction in child labour. Training sessions delivered to ICPS functionaries as well as other child protection and education related stakeholders are relevant to the Project objective. Capacity-building was delivered to a number of relevant stakeholders at various levels on child protection including child labour and child marriage issues. Training sessions delivered to ICPS functionaries as well as other child protection and education related stakeholders are relevant to the Project objective. Capacity-building was delivered to a number of relevant stakeholders at various levels on child protection including child labour and child marriage issues. Knowledge of the legislative framework, namely, Child Labour Act, Child Marriage Act, and RTE Act was delivered with information on applying relevant laws and steps that are to be taken. This served to promote law enforcement and a protective environment for children in the State. The evaluation found a notable aspect of the Project in developing all training content including booklets and modules in Marathi, the State language of Maharashtra, to ensure content was adapted to the State context. The promotion of child rights perspective as part of training serves to uphold the CRC and thus foster a protective environment for children.

**Development of Databases as a Resource**
Village-level databases are also relevant to achieving the Project objective of ensuring that children in the age-group of 6-14 years are not working and are in school. Tracking the database assists child protection functionaries to identify and focus on children in need of help and mainstream them into schools. It provides an accurate description of the current status of child protection in villages.

**Effectiveness**

**SOPs Developed at the State-level Adopted Nationally**
The SOPs that were developed under the Project were effectively used in improving the working of CWCs and were also taken up by the MWCD for use across India, which demonstrates their effectiveness.
Exceeding Targets for Setting up Child Protection Structures

All structures under ICPS in the State and in Project districts have been established as per target through support from the Project. Establishment of DCPUs in all 35 districts of the State initially faced challenges but these were overcome through sustained advocacy efforts by UNICEF. Establishment of VCPCs achieved a snowball effect, having exceeded the Project target of establishing 170 VCPCs to 1,576 VCPCs by 2013. This achievement was attributed to UNICEF’s advocacy efforts, which resulted in district administration issuing a circular for formation of VCPCs in all villages of the three Project districts. The process of setting up VCPCs was facilitated by concomitant setting up of child protection structures at State and district levels. NGO partners coordinated with local Government mechanisms including PRIs and block-level officials. These actions combined with the issuing of resolutions for formation of VCPCs contributed to their successful establishment.

VCPCs have been supported by 19,357 PRI members, 8,869 youth volunteers, 2,247 adolescent animators, and 85,000 women. This demonstrates successful convergence of CBOs and PRIs at the village level to collectively address issues related to child labour/OOSC. Actions taken by CBOs and PRIs include tracking OOSC, stopping 108 early marriages and rescuing 4,944 working children and mainstreaming them into schools. Another reason for successful establishment of village-level CPCs is the central focus on child protection at large, instead of solely women and children, which would have served to isolate other demographics in the community. Under the Project, child protection was placed as the responsibility of all community members and advantageous for wellbeing and development of children in the community. The strategy of social mobilisation through child rights weeks and gram sabhas was very effective. The partnerships that were forged across departments and the training resources instituted at all levels made it possible to exceed the targets.

The Project also exceeded the target of training CP members to plan, implement and monitor programmes to address issues related to child labour and OOSC. A total of 3,733 members were trained against a target of 400 members across the three Project districts. The training focused on empowerment of child protection structure members to effectively execute their responsibilities. Sensitisation at the community level has been effective, since the community is now aware of the issues of child labour, child marriage and OOSC. Prior to the Project, the community would not accept that child labour and child marriage were problems but they are now conscious that these situations are violations of children’s rights.

Development of district-level action plans for all three Project districts as per target has resulted in linking 3,106 vulnerable families in over 250 villages with social protection ensuring that children are in school and not working. Establishment of DLTFs ensures implementation of plans and further demonstrates a functional and effective model for convergence. Representation of Government departments in the DLTF has resulted in increased coordination among departments to address issues of child protection with a focus on child labour.

Participatory Approach through Involving Youth in Child Protection

Involvement of village youth has also been a significant achievement since they are now empowered and contact the ASHA, or in some cases even the State Programme Officer (SPO) directly, to report any child protection related cases. The empowerment of children is integral in upholding the CRC so that children are able to take action in decisions that impact their lives. In this respect, the Project has been effective in adopting a human rights perspective.
The target for setting up village-level database in all 2,288 Project villages to track and target children at risk was achieved. Data collected by the Project is being used to monitor cases of OOSC who comprise a vulnerable population of ‘at risk of child labour’. The information is being used by CBOs to identify children at risk and contact them directly for intervention. Community-level stakeholders reported that the database has proven useful as it is a single source of information that can be maintained on an ongoing basis rather than collecting new information every time. YASHADA has stated that the microplanning data has yielded district profiles of a high quality. Since complete information about the family is collected with relation to the financial, social and familial condition, individual solutions can be arrived at for cases of child labour and OOSC.

Effective Linkages between Government and NGOs
Partnership between CSOs and the district administration has been strengthened as a result of joint initiatives. Partnerships with 17 NGOs as per target were strengthened under the Project. This ensured 100 percent coverage of all 17 blocks across the three Project districts.

Recommendations have been Taken into Consideration
Deviation of the Project intervention (as mentioned on page 17 under section “Changes to the Project”) was sufficient to meet all planned targets under outcome 1. However the Project exceeded its targets under this outcome. A total of four meetings as per target were held at the district level to provide recommendations for amendment of the CLPRA, 1986. Consultation meetings held between a number of representatives from various Government ministries, UN agencies and children served to strengthen advocacy platforms for amendment of the law. Recommendations emerging out of the consultation meetings were provided to the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR). These recommendations advocated that the Child Labour Act should be extended to prohibit child labour in agriculture.

Efficiency
For promoting protection and education rights of children, the State of Maharashtra was allotted EUR 40,00,746 by the IKEA Foundation for Project implementation activities. The actual expenditure incurred in the Project over the Project duration of four years (2009-2014) was about 16 percent more than the allotted budget at EUR 4628,468. The Project incurred additional costs under all four components, which were met by leveraging Government resources and by UNICEF.

<table>
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<th>Provided budget</th>
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<th>Diff (Provided - Actual)</th>
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### Percentage distribution across different expenditure heads of IKEA funds transfer

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<tr>
<th>Outcome 1</th>
<th>Outcome 2</th>
<th>Outcome 3</th>
<th>Outcome 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partnership with NGOs/implementing agencies in the state, including their field monitoring costs</td>
<td>Project Implementing Staff- Child Protection specialist, district level coordinators</td>
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#### (Expected)

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<th>Percentage Distribution</th>
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<th>Outcome 2</th>
<th>Outcome 3</th>
<th>Outcome 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>34%</td>
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#### (Actual)

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<tr>
<td>13%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<table>
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The Project has invested EUR 3,92,879, which is more than the amount budgeted under the IKEA Foundation grant (EUR 3,23,981) under outcome 1. According to the IKEA Foundation the final financial report submitted by UNICEF showed that a skewed pattern of allocations in 2013 resulted in increased expenditures in the same year. This was due to: a) start-up delays leading to low absorption of funds in 2009-10; b) delay in approval of no-cost extension leading to suspension of some planned activities; and c) roll over of unutilised funds from previous years for full budget utilisation. Of the total Project expenditure, eight percent was spent on outcome 1.

**Sustainability**

**Ownership Fostered Among All Stakeholders**

The Project is closely aligned with the ICPS bringing increased opportunity to sustain child protection structures and replicate the model in other districts. DWCD and other departments have taken up child protection so that even after Project closure, there is institutional preparedness. Inter-departmental convergence will ensure replication of efforts beyond the Project period with increased Government buy-in. Initiatives by the Government have already begun with a State-level round table meeting to be held on VCPCs with the involvement of all departments. The evaluation found that there is a sense of ownership of the child protection mandate at all levels. This is further demonstrated by the codification of these processes into GRs and SOPs. The SOPs that were developed for CWCs are being used nationally by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD), which is a strong demonstration of the relevance and effectiveness of the SOPs.

**Cadre of Master Trainers Created**

The strategy of training a cadre of master trainers at State and district levels suggests that the Government can draw upon them even after the Project has been completed. The DWCD Secretary has announced that 2014 is the “Year of Training” thus supporting adoption of training modules developed under the Project. To this end, the Government has already institutionalised the CP training module and Government officials are routinely invited to cluster and block-level trainings. The *Deepshikha* training module developed by UNICEF during the course of the Project has also been shared with the gender cell at YASHADA, which is now equipped to conduct trainings. The master trainers that have been created are a sustainable resource at the district level. Some of these master trainers have been integrated into significant flagship programmes of the Government including the ICPS and the NRLM (National Rural Labour Mission). Integrating such trained resources into Government systems of service delivery marks long-term sustainability of Project resources and activities.

**Institutionalisation of Village Database Format**

The State Government has accepted the village database format. This presents a strong likelihood that the database will be replicated in other districts across the State. It was felt that sustainability with regards to maintenance of databases relies on continued coordination between various stakeholders responsible for its up-keep. The State and district action plans will be improved and carried forward even as the Project has reached the end of its cycle.

**Conclusions**

- Government resolutions were issued as a result of UNICEF’s advocacy and engagement with the State for the establishment and functioning of CP structures. These GRs effectively reached down to district, block and panchayat levels, and enabled formation of child protection structures.
- UNICEF’s advocacy has also resulted in formulation and adoption of the improved State Child Policy.
The Policy is a significant step in strengthening the protective environment for children with the introduction of the concept of safe spaces for children. It was developed with inputs from DWCD; experts from NGOs and sectors of education, health and child protection facilitated by UNICEF. In addition, children and community members belonging to marginalised communities from the Project areas were also consulted, thus strengthening the human rights and equity focus to the Project.

- The Project is closely aligned with the ICPS and thus there is increased opportunity to sustain the child protection structures and to replicate the model in other districts of the State. The Project succeeded in garnering support and commitment from DWCD and other departments who have taken up the issue of child protection, so that after Project withdrawal, there is institutional preparedness.

- All structures under ICPS at the State-level and in the three Project districts of Yavatmal, Jalna, and Wardha in Maharashtra were notified and established as per Project targets. These include the State Child Protection Society; District Child Protection Units, Child Welfare Committees and Special Juvenile Police Units in all 35 districts of Maharashtra; Juvenile Justice Boards in each Project district; and 1,576 Village Child Protection Committees. Challenges were faced in establishment of DCPUs in each district; however, this was overcome by UNICEF’s ability to leverage inter-departmental convergence at the district level. Establishment of VCPCs was considerably above the target of 170 due to efforts and ground work of partner NGOs in mobilising PRIs and village communities. Thus, the Project succeeded in creating streamlined child protection mechanisms at various levels, some of which even went beyond the intervention districts.

- State Child Labour Task Force and District Child Labour Task Force were established as initiatives under the Project to bring focus on addressing child labour in Maharashtra. While the child labour task force are in place, it has been found that they are not functioning at optimum levels in the intervention districts. This is so because the functioning of task force depend upon the initiative of the District Collector. The latter is reasonably overloaded due to chairing several committees at the district level. Concurrently, the frequent transfer of Government officials, part of these task forces slows down the momentum and learnings may be lost. Periodic trainings are useful in this regard.

- The Project has contributed to setting-up VCPCs, the critical child protection structures at the village level to create an enabling and protective environment for children with the support of NGO partners and local Government mechanisms including PRIs and block-level officials. The Block Development Officer played a key role in assisting establishment of VCPCs, and in some cases, helping in passing the VCPC resolution. Shortage of human resources and lack of community support were some of the challenges faced by the Project in establishing VCPCs. Community sensitisation on the issue of child labour/out of school children was an important strategy implemented by the Project to mobilise the community to address the challenge. Additionally, a State-level round table meeting on stock taking and planning the way forward regarding VCPCs is being planned. The meeting will involve concerned departments like WCD, Education and Labour, which suggests that sustainability of child protection structures is being proactively considered at the State level.

- The target for setting up village-level databases in all 2,288 Project villages to track and target children at risk was achieved. The databases have proved to be effective systems in monitoring cases...
of child labour/OOSC and child marriage. Similarly, the microplanning process has been an effective tool in providing data and proxy indicators to track OOSC. In some areas, villages are using microplanning data to keep a track of out of school and working children. The standard format, which has been provided to all VCPCs in the Project blocks for maintaining data on out of school and working children, has the potential for being replicated across other districts in Maharashtra.

- The Project was successful in strengthening partnerships between 17 NGO partners and the district administration for planning and review of child labour interventions. UNICEF served to foster the relationship between NGOs and the district administration through activities undertaken by the Project as well as leveraging its close links with the Government. Majority (14 of the 17 NGOs) of these partnerships will be continuing with Government programmes even beyond Project completion. YASHADA has also indicated that it will continue to coordinate with these NGOs.

- The Project has been effective in developing a Maharashtra State Child Labour Action Plan in Jul, 2011. District-level action plans flowing out of the State-level plan were developed for each Project district. A key factor of success in the development of plans has been the required political will. In fact, the Maharashtra Chief Secretary was actively engaged in the Project and selected the issue of child labour as one of 10 Key Result Areas (KRAs) of focus during his term. The Child Labour Cell of YASHADA consulted UNICEF to provide key inputs into the State-level action plan. Efficiencies under the Project have been realised as the Project could leverage Government funds for addressing the issue of child labour. As a result of development of the State Action Plan, the GoM has allocated INR 160 million for its implementation. The Chief Minister has also announced an allocation of INR 200 million for work on elimination of child labour on the World Day Against Child Labour.

- Advocacy efforts for amendments to the Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act were spearheaded by UNICEF over the Project period. A high profile event to discuss and advocate on the issue of removing the distinction between the categories of hazardous and non-hazardous labour as well as raising the age bar for prohibition of all forms of child labour was held. The event served as an advocacy platform to bring together various actors to input into the amendment of the law. These initiatives have helped the DWCD recognise the merit of advocacy. To this end, the Department has made recommendations to the Centre appealing for the enforcement of Rules for action against employment of child labourers in both hazardous and non-hazardous industries. It was reported that the Department of Labour is also aiming to work with UNICEF on the issue as a result of UNICEF-led advocacy efforts.

### Lessons Learned

- There is need for persistent advocacy and State-level consultations to overcome Government inertia and buy-in for ensuring Government resolutions.

- There is a need to implement child protection activities in a professional manner with mechanisms for accountability in place. Higher pay scales for child protection functionaries are needed to ensure their motivation and consistent participation.

- The Government should tackle the financial and human resource constraints by leveraging and allocating funds from various sources.

- Explaining the new concept of child protection to people required considerable efforts. Sufficient time needs to be allocated for conducting training sessions since it was found that single training sessions did not allow for all topics in the child protection training module to be covered. Persistent efforts helped to overcome this challenge. The AWWs, ASHAs, child representatives and farmers’ representatives have all been trained but many of these posts get newly appointed every year because of which their learning does not get passed on. Refresher trainings will be important in this regard.
• The microplanning process is an effective tool for data collection that can be utilised for establishing village-level databases. Compared to other data sources, microplanning provides proxy indicators to track OOSC. Complete information about the family is collected with relation to the financial, social and familial condition and thus individual solutions can be arrived at for cases of child labour and OOSC. It is important to continuously update data so that both the community and administration can use it for child protection.
• Partnership with NGOs is essential for the Government to create and sustain child protection structures at the community level. NGOs are able to work effectively on the ground and can monitor and mentor the work of VCPCs. Also, the DWCD did not have reach beyond the district level and it was the NGO partnerships that were successful in bridging the gap.
• Political will especially at the State level is essential for developing action plans for child labour. This underscores the need for continued advocacy at the State and district levels, and strengthening CP structures at State and district levels.

**Project Component 2: Improving the quality of education to increase enrolment and retention**

**Outcome 2: Quality Education Available for All Children Aged 6-14 Years**

To achieve the objectives of Project component 2, work was done in close coordination with the Department of Education as the primary implementing partner along with UNICEF. Certain partner NGOs were also involved in implementing the intervention at the ground level *(please see Annexure 9 for a list of partner NGOs under Outcome 2)*. The evaluation found that a multi-pronged approach was adopted to improve the quality of education with a focus on improving service delivery of education including its quality, reach and form of delivery. UNICEF made significant contribution through technical inputs, expertise and resources at the Policy level for directly improving the quality of education to positively impact children’s learning in Project districts. UNICEF’s role in infrastructure improvement has been substantial, albeit indirect, through analysis of DISE data focusing on infrastructure concerns as well as SMCs’ efforts on attendance and school infrastructure.

**Sub-outcome 2.1: All Elementary Schools in the Project Areas Providing Quality, Child-friendly Education**

From interviews with UNICEF State Team in Maharashtra and review of secondary documents, the evaluation found that the UNICEF strategy in Maharashtra was to "bring all existing and planned State interventions for elementary education in line with CFSS (Child-Friendly Schools and Systems) strategy by encouraging all stakeholders to look at their roles through the CFSS lens" *(please see Annexure 15 for a detailed description of CFSS and the RTE framework pertinent to the Project)*. Under outcome 2, UNICEF worked closely with the Government to strengthen and improve the quality of service delivery of education.

**CFS standards and guidelines developed**

The RTE Act provides the framework for making schools child-friendly. Under the Project, Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) guidelines were incorporated into RTE guidelines through UNICEF inputs to the SSA for operationalisation of this framework.
According to an interview with UNICEF, the Balsnehi module that had been developed by the State, prior to the Project, was not accompanied by an operational plan i.e. concrete steps to make schools in Maharashtra child-friendly, and had merely included budget guidelines. Hence teachers had been trained about the concept of child-friendly schools rather than their operationalisation. To enhance coordination with Government structures rather than setting up parallel systems, UNICEF advised the State Government to build on what had already been developed rather than repeat the entire process. UNICEF then provided assistance to the State in developing an action-oriented module and checklist (please see Annexure 16) to accompany the first State-developed CFS module. The second module contained concrete action points and acted as a guide for teachers to use funds without the need to solicit extra funding. The Maharashtra State Council of Educational Research and Training (MSCERT) then conducted a training programme for teachers called "Balsnehi Shala" (Child-friendly school) supported by a CFS handbook developed under the Project.

Evidence-based approach employed to implement CFS model
The UNICEF State Teams also pointed to an important aspect of the CFS intervention, i.e. the employment of assessment and data to support implementation activities. UNICEF has promoted an evidence-based approach towards providing education that builds a scientific approach, helps in capitalising on successes identified and overcoming challenges. Towards this aim, the Maharashtra Prathmik Shikshan Parishad (MPSP) and UNICEF developed a self-assessment checklist consisting of 44 points related to RTE compliance, school environment, learning environment and classroom processes. The status of each indicator was to be graded on a five-point scale by teachers for their schools. A review of the checklist indicated that the checklist included suggestions for improvement of these indicators. Teachers were also provided flexibility to implement child-friendly activities in their own manner. The CFS checklist has been adopted by the State Government of Maharashtra for all 35 districts. The checklist was included in the CFS teacher handbook, which defines a child-friendly school as “one that children want to come to and want to learn in”. The handbook was brought out in Feb, 2013 and is an action plan for teachers on actualising child-friendly schools called “Karuya Shaala Balsnehi” (Let’s make our school child-friendly). School administrations have been asked to report on the status of their schools at the district level. UNICEF also informed that it developed a supplementary booklet on RTE for all concerned stakeholders called Shikshan Mazha Hakka Aahe (Education is My Right). One copy of the booklet has been given to every school in the three Project districts. The booklet provides information about the RTE in a simple and lucid manner.

Existing resources and funds leveraged effectively for CFS
The UNICEF State Team reported that the State Government has approved introduction of CFS elements into schools, in line with the RTE Act, and is thus recommending use of available school funds for implementation. UNICEF has provided technical support to schools during this task and given feedback on CFS implementation to the State Government. In interviews with UNICEF functionaries, the Education Officer (EO) Yavatmal and the Block Education Officer (BEO) Jalna informed that the CFS methodology enforced under the Project has promoted low-cost practices that can be implemented across all

Low-cost CFS Elements
- Installing a “suggestion box” in the school outside the principal’s room using materials like paper, plastic, cardboard or cloth
- Installing a dustbin in each classroom
- Bringing posters in the classroom down to eye level of children so that they can see them better
- Celebrating children’s birthdays, giving a rose as a badge of honour to the cleanest child every day.
Government schools in Project districts, despite the varying infrastructure in schools and the socio-economic profiles of students. According to the State Project Director (SPD) SSA, the CFS guidelines were issued on May 6, 2013 and are being implemented in all local-body Government schools, and to some extent in private schools, indicating replicability and sustainability of the Project initiative.

**Cascade mode of CFS training expands number of teachers trained**

**CFS Training**

UNICEF funded the CFS training to realistically implement the CFS model. Success of subsequent training, (described in detail below) implies that capacities of functionaries have been built and that the training modules are planned for mainstreaming by the Government.

**i. HMs/Teachers Trained as Resource Persons**

According to information provided by district and block level DoE officials and Project reports, State-level training of resource persons was held in Wardha in three batches in Mar, 2013 and 45 motivated teachers were selected to become RPs for the three intervention districts. The training imparted to them was hands-on and activity-based. Additionally, a set of three 3-day workshops were held in 2013 in which 130 RPs were trained and provided with copies of the CFS handbook, action plan and other resource materials. They were also provided with a training plan for 2-day field training sessions. These RPs, in turn, conducted block-level workshops in the three districts and trained 3,475 HMs and teachers on implementing the CFS action plan. In contrast, in Yavatmal and Wardha, district-level training of teachers and headmasters (HMs) were organised by the education department. Teachers and HMs expressed that they benefited from the capacity-building training and feel better equipped to deliver child-friendly education in schools. In this manner, the Project built the capacities of the DoE in line with RTE to conduct CFS training, by working closely with Government officials and training them.

**ii. Cluster Resource Coordinators Trained to Effectively Hold Cluster Meetings**

The interactions with UNICEF and the EO, Yavatmal, pointed to the important role of Cluster Resource Coordinators (CRCs), more commonly known as Kendra Pramukhs (KPs), typically have about 10-15 schools to oversee in their cluster. They are meant to be academic guides and regularly visit each school in their cluster. They are also meant to hold regular gata sammelans (cluster meetings) with teachers. The sammelan is supervised by the MSCERT and attended by officials depending on their availability. In each sammelan, one model lesson is taught by a well-performing teacher (different one each time). But being bogged down with administrative tasks and data collection, KPs were unable to provide the stipulated handholding to teachers.

To reverse the above situation, UNICEF partnered with Muktangan NGO to design and implement the strategy to motivate KPs for better teacher supervision. KP training was held in 2012 for 4-5 days in Project districts of Jalna, Yavatmal and Wardha through District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) by RPs from Mumbai. KPs were oriented on their roles and responsibilities under the RTE and instructed to train teachers at the cluster level in gata sammelans on the same. Subsequently, 480 KPs were oriented on CFS action plan. One teacher (usually the principal) from each Upper Primary School (UPS) was trained and in some blocks, the principal and one teacher from each school were trained. These teachers further trained other teachers in their schools. This cascade effect helped the Project to reach out to 10,800 teachers/head teachers, thus exceeding the target of training 3,300 teachers/head teachers.

**Teachers Trained on Implementing CFS Elements**

From interactions with UNICEF and teachers, it was found that the training topics included both RTE-mandated elements of CFS and other low-cost innovations that can be implemented continuously using
available SSA grants and without awaiting additional fund allocations or directives from education officials. Teachers were trained on child-friendly interactions, such as engaging with children in a friendly and encouraging manner, informing them so that they do not feel learning is a burden, and the importance of timely monitoring and assessment of children’s progress. Training was based on the CFS handbook and teachers were also taught to conduct the self-assessment exercise as per the checklist. After assessing their respective schools during training, they were directed to implement any five simple CFS elements in the next five months, so that gains in each school would be cumulative every six months. Thus training was participatory rather than merely instructional.

KPs supported teachers in implementing CFS elements, some of which are now being exhibited by all schools in Project districts. KP training was advantageous as was corroborated by the EO, Yavatmal since they were then able to track progress of each school using school feedback formats. The State Government including the SPD, SSA endorsed the training since it equipped KPs to inspect for RTE compliance by using the checklist and also trained them on developing the action plan for schools to implement CFS methods indicating sustainability of the training module.

**Challenges Overcome During CFS Training**

Scheduling of training was a challenge corroborated by both policy and programme-level respondents. They reported that some teachers expressed inability to attend or showed disinterest in training. Bringing about lasting change in the mindset of teachers was another significant challenge that could not be accomplished during the course of one training and required consistent efforts. Even after the first round of training, some teachers did not show a change in their attitudes. But through subsequent trainings, they were convinced to implement the CFS model in their schools and actually follow the guidelines.

**Schools have begun to exhibit elements of CFS**

During the evaluation, both policy and programme level respondents expressed that since CFS was presented in the training in a non-daunting manner, schools have begun to demonstrate elements of CFS. These include simple changes in seating arrangement wherein children sit in a semi-circular manner to facilitate a roundtable setting instead of the typical linear seating arrangement with long rows of desks. Teachers have also begun to give children more freedom in the classroom to ask questions and make suggestions during the class period. They also celebrate birthdays of children in schools (some committed teachers conduct these activities using their own funds). Schools have put up posters and maps in classrooms, school staircase steps are numbered and staircases have railings. Overall, efforts were made to teach children using activities and enjoyable methods.

Interactions with UNICEF and the EO, Yavatmal presented an important facet about CFS. Prior to the Project, corporal punishment was a common practice in schools and students would not approach teachers as there was an element of fear in the teacher-student relationship. According to the interviews with NGO block coordinators and group discussion with educational resource persons, the evaluation found that since implementation of the CFS approach, interactions between teachers and students have become more informal and friendly.

**Challenges in CFS Implementation**

Some schools are not yet wholly RTE-compliant, as it will take time for CFS concepts to take root, which was corroborated by both policy and programme-level respondents. There are also gaps in provisioning for child-friendly infrastructure but there is no shortage of funds under SSA. Nevertheless, the issue of proper and effective fund utilisation remains a constraint.
Meena Raju Manch recognised as best practice by MHRD

UNICEF informed that before 2012, Meena Manches (MMs) were present in Maharashtra schools. Every school had a MM but limited activities were conducted and the Manch was meant only for girls. UNICEF consulted with the SPD and explained that exclusion of boys from these sessions would not help the larger interests of improving adolescent behaviour. UNICEF then called for a larger consultative meeting with experts from TISS and gender experts wherein an agreement was reached to include boys and subsequently form Meena Raju Manches (MRMs). It was also decided to develop concrete guidelines for MRMs including a calendar of activities.

The decision was taken to set up MRMs in all Upper Primary Schools and cap membership at 20 members. CORO for Literacy, a partner NGO, was involved in MRM training while UNICEF had developed various modules for the same. The training was conducted jointly by UNICEF, MPSP, SCERT and CORO for Literacy. RPs were trained on Meena modules to be used during the MRM sessions. These RPs in turn trained school teachers on facilitating MRM sessions.

The MRM conducts activities on menstrual hygiene; knowing your body; gender and equity; roles of boys and girls; personal hygiene; sanitation; and child rights. The 20 representative member children conduct and lead community-based activities. Interactions with respondents, at the Policy, programme and community levels including MRM facilitator and MRM members, revealed that the MRM intervention has been taken up in a positive manner and influenced the process of gender sensitisation in schools.

According to the SPD, SSA, since 2012, there has been 90 percent compliance for carrying out MRM activities in schools. Initially, the GoI was not convinced about the MRM intervention but nevertheless, the decision was taken to pilot the intervention. The results of a joint review mission on the MRM were presented to the Centre and the State informed the GoI that MRM is a beneficial adolescent intervention with lasting impacts that resulted in recognition of MRM by the MHRD as a best practice. The interaction with the SPD, SSA also revealed that in the academic year 2014-15, MRM budget has been shifted from "innovation head" to an allocation of INR 1000 per school. MRM sessions are being conducted well and the members are confident. One challenge faced on the ground has been in allotting a dedicated day in the week for holding the MRM session as some schools do not yet have a dedicated day/time slot for MRM. The MRM review, which was conducted concurrently with this evaluation will shed more light on this aspect.

Sports for Development implemented to complement classroom interventions

From the interaction with UNICEF, it was found that UNICEF launched Sports for Development (S4D) intervention in the three Project districts. This was also corroborated by the EO, Yavatmal. The S4D intervention was also implemented in a different manner in the KGBVs. Physical Education (PE) instructors in the 43 KGBVs of Maharashtra were trained to better coach children in PE and sports as per the module provided by UNICEF.

The EO, Yavatmal expressed that this intervention has shown encouraging results. On implementing S4D, UNICEF distributed sports kits in 100 villages through the education department and school staff, and volunteers from every village were trained (5-day district level training). In turn, the village volunteers trained children in sports and on the importance of improving health and regular school attendance. For these initial trainings, RPs from Chandrapur were invited and the volunteers were also taken for an exposure visit to Chandrapur. They were trained in sports like volleyball, kabaddi and kho. The evaluation found that the S4D intervention has helped improve the quality of children’s physical education.
experience through effective training of PE teachers and provision of sports equipment. Parents of children were also engaged in games through the S4D intervention and this was a novel experience for them. In this way, communities were also engaged in sports as an enjoyable activity and mobilised to educate their children.

Gender Resource Centres address gender issues and mobilise education strategies

From interviews with the UNICEF State Team, it was found that its partnership with MPSP and Akshara was established to improve the Gender Resource Centres (GRCs) and to develop training modules. In 2012, the SPD had a gender focus and gave serious thought to the provision of a safe space for girls and women to interact and talk about the issues they face. As a result, GRCs in the State were also targeted under the Project.

Currently, there are 56 GRCs in Maharashtra and a UNICEF-appointed person is the Gender Coordinator (GC) for Jalna. GRCs usually operate at the block level and there are also a few in some urban centres. Each GRC has a separate room with educational posters and charts and GRC staff also organise activities like melavas and kite-flying events in the community for women and young girls. Various aspects of equity and gender were explored in the GRC. Before 2013, GRCs were funded by the erstwhile NPEGEL (National Programme for Education of Girls at the Elementary Level). The NPEGEL programme was discontinued in 2013 because of which the SPD took an interest in taking the work forward through new channels. UNICEF worked with the GC in Jalna who also interacted closely with KGBV staff in Jalna, and provided supportive supervision along with mentoring of the KGBV girls.

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs)

KGBV Baseline and Guidelines

Information from UNICEF indicated that the Project also worked with KGBVs in Jalna (not present in Yavatmal and Wardha). KGBVs are residential schools meant for never-enrolled and drop out girls (grades 5-8). These schools work for most deprived girls. Before the KGBV intervention, a baseline study of KGBVs across the State was conducted by UNICEF in collaboration with the Government. Research teams conducting the KGBV baseline included UNICEF consultants, gender coordinators and functionaries from the education department. To ensure impartiality during data collection, gender coordinators were sent to a district different from their work district (please refer to section 2.5 for more details).

The baseline study threw up eye-opening results: There were no previous guidelines on actual functioning of KGBVs and the condition of KGBVs in Maharashtra was abysmal. KGBV facilities were poor (toilets without doors), unknown men were staying in the school and there were issues of protection, health and hygiene. KGBV teachers were also paid much less than Government school teachers. The baseline study also elicited information about the status of monitoring, use of TLMs and engagement with children in KGBVs. There were no operational guidelines available for KGBVs, as the only available guidelines were vis a vis finances. Hence, teachers found it difficult to gain clarity and a sense of uniformity about their roles and responsibilities. The BEO, Jalna, expressed that the posts of head teacher and warden were filled by
the same person. This meant that the same person was supposed to work for 24 hours, thereby undermining the productivity and effectiveness of the human resource.

**KGBV Intervention**

UNICEF committed to demonstrate improvement of KGBVs by piloting the intervention in Jalna. UNICEF assessed that each child would need to be taught as per their learning level so that they could eventually be brought to an age-appropriate learning level. UNICEF partnered with QUEST to implement a graded learning programme for KGBV girls and each girl in the seven KGBVs in Jalna was administered the test to ascertain her progress at the end of the intervention. The teaching focus was on “learn to read and read to learn”. KGBV teachers are hired on a contract basis and have a lower salary; many KGBVs are also short-staffed. Hence UNICEF trained existing KGBV staff to make the learning environment child-friendly. UNICEF did not directly work on infrastructure improvement of the KGBVs and instead reported infrastructure issues that they encountered to the CEO. The local administration in Jalna was also very supportive of the intervention. The CEO conducted surprise visits to the KGBVs to assess their conditions.

Under the Project, two personnel were hired to teach KGBV staff about ways to improve their teaching methods like playing games with children, encouraging them to ask questions, talking informally with them, organising competitions, and song and dance sessions. School libraries were also improved with a two-point focus on keeping books relevant to the children's learning experience and training teachers and children to use the books effectively. The baseline findings reported that many school computer labs were not operational and instead were merely spaces with poorly functioning computers. To generate an interest in reading, the trainers mobilised children to prepare inventories of their libraries. The intervention proved successful as girls in some KGBVs were so enthused that after the training, they brought out their own newsletter and were also taught to draw and prepare cartoons. The intervention has brought about noticeable improvements in the quality of life of the girls. The girls expressed happiness at the learning imparted, which made them confident. Now they express their desire to become teachers, engineers and doctors.

The evaluation findings confirm that the Government of Maharashtra has more teachers than the minimum requirement. UNICEF therefore has been advocating that these surplus teachers can be selected and trained to work solely with KGBVs. UNICEF is willing to partner with QUEST and MPSP and set up a cadre of such teachers to work at the district level. Suggestions have been made to set up a KGBV cell dedicated to overseeing and monitoring KGBVs at the State level. For each district, one or two cadres could be assigned depending on the number of KGBVs in that district. Instead, UNICEF has recommended that there should be a focus on the individual child in KGBVs to meet their unique educational needs and that they will decide a syllabus based on content and methods that work for most children.
Sub-outcome 2.2: Special Training Programme for Child Labourers and Other Out of school Children upto 14 Years in Place for Mainstreaming Children into Formal Education

The Special Training Programme (STP) is an element of CFS and is mandated by the RTE. In this intervention under outcome 2, UNICEF perceived that the State Government felt confident of developing the STP package on its own. The STP package (curriculum and workbooks) was developed by MSCERT, as their expertise lay in curriculum development.

UNICEF supports STP improvement

In the interviews with UNICEF and the SPD, SSA, the processes followed for the STP developed were discussed. UNICEF provided support in improving the service delivery of the programme and held meetings with the SPD’s office to discuss the issue. In keeping with the evidence-based approach of the Project, UNICEF conducted a State-wide review of the STP programme in Mar, 2013. A number of two-member teams consisting of one Government and one UNICEF representative each, visited 40 schools in the State. In order to involve the State administration and keep the survey unbiased, UNICEF requested district education departments to select 15 sample schools out of which UNICEF randomly picked schools to be part of the review.

The review threw up startling results. Only six schools out of those surveyed had functioning STPs. It was seen that in many instances, the head teacher (HT) was running the STP with the assistance of D.Ed. students. Attendance registers recorded very low attendance of children in the programme. Prior to the Project, there was no monitoring body for the STP programme. The initial set of guidelines that had been developed by the State stipulated, among other things, that teachers should develop worksheets for the STP sessions but UNICEF assessed that this was probably not feasible. The SPD, SSA related that based on the review results, CFS guidelines were modified to mandate that SMCs should strictly monitor implementation of the STP programme and STP should be included in the SMC training. UNICEF also conducted a review of STP in Mumbai and found that less than 50 percent of the schools surveyed had STP elements in their schools.

The STP programme was rolled out in 2012 and UNICEF conducted a review of the programme in 2013. In the STP intervention, UNICEF has introduced close and regular monitoring. And through its efforts, the State Government has also begun to realise the value of evidence and data to assess the current status of any intervention and plan ahead.

OOSC linked with STP

As per Government data, there were 5,841 out of school (OOSC) children in the three Project districts in 2013-14, all of whom are currently receiving the STP (100 percent). From the interaction with UNICEF, it
was found that the number of OOSC is a live number and is not static. It depends on the number of children that have dropped out or enrolled recently and is a figure that changes rapidly even at short intervals of time. In 2011, a household (HH) survey was conducted to determine the number of OOSC and based on the reported figure, progress related to OOSC in the Project has been measured. The HH survey was conducted by D.Ed. students with a purpose to inform the policy implications of OOSC. Survey findings did not present gender-disaggregated data but it did point to female-headed households being more vulnerable. In the survey, 7,362 OOSC were identified. Out of these, 37 percent were never enrolled and 30 percent were children with special needs.

All set of evaluation informants (policy, programme and community) in their respective IDIs and FGDs confirmed that local school teachers, SMC members, youth and village volunteers all played important roles in linking OOSC children with the STP. Two village volunteers (VVs) in every village were given RTE training and were key in mobilising and spreading awareness among community members. They acted as child advocates in the community and informed parents about the importance of schooling. They obtained a list of OOSC children from the HMs; microplanning data was also useful.

In many areas, village volunteers have worked on strengthening SMCs and conducted household-level tracking surveys. Using the list of OOSC children, they make household visits, familiarise themselves with the reasons why parents do not send their children to school and then counsel them to link OOSC children with the STP programme. The most common reasons for parents not sending their children to school are financial insecurity and disinterest in/dislike for school. VVs also ensured that parents were aware of their entitlements and had access to social protection schemes so that they were better enabled to work as SMC members.

UNICEF efforts focused on creating awareness about the STP programme among schools and block-level and community-level administration, and to implement STP guidelines. As part of monitoring activities, UNICEF conducted an operational review of the STP in one block and tested learning levels of children enrolled in the STP.

For two years, UNICEF undertook concerted advocacy activities for the STP programme and for conducting household-level surveys to obtain accurate educational information. Earlier, the State would rely solely on school-level data, which was often not accurate and also did not provide background information on the children. This approach led by UNICEF has resulted in the desired change as in Feb, 2014, the State Government has forwarded a proposal for the surveys to be conducted with a budget requirement of INR 12 crore to MHRD.

**Challenges in STP Implementation**

According to UNICEF, reaching OOSC has been a challenge since they are not confined to a pocket or area but are scattered throughout the district. This implies that the STP programme needs to cast a wide net to reach all such children. In Wardha and Yavatmal, more than three percent of children are OOSC. Another challenge has been in improving school attendance of OOSC, even though all these children have been enrolled under the Project. Low attendance can be largely attributed to high expectations from children in the STP programme. OOSC children are expected to spend two hours extra at school (an hour before and an hour after) during the week. These children, having been out of school, are not used to attending school regularly and hence it becomes difficult to sustain their interest. The STP programme therefore has seen poor attendance, which was corroborated by both Policy and programme-level respondents. Additionally, there are also constraints at the teacher level. Conducting the STP programme for the required two hours has been challenging since teachers find it difficult to spend extra hours of
work. In reality, only one hour of the STP session is conducted in a day. The SPD, SSA recommended that the STP should be taught within school hours for its effective implementation and sustenance. He also informed that SMCs are mandated to monitor STP programme implementation and they should be given comprehensive training in monitoring implementation of the STP programme in schools and conducting surveys of the number of OOSC that have been/are yet to be linked with STPs. Given the challenges in STP rollout, the EO, Yavatmal expressed that the STP component should not be replicated.

Sub-outcome 2.3: SMCs and PRIs Monitor and Support Attendance and Infrastructure Improvement of Schools

UNICEF has worked primarily at the State level to prepare the policy environment for SMCs. Monitoring of SMCs through onsite support was done through NGO partners with the help of VVs. As per the RTE, the SMC is typically comprised of: 75 percent parents; one teacher; one NGO representative; one GP representative; and two children (a boy and a girl, typically from grades 5-7).

Training builds capacities of SMC and PRI members

RTE orientation workshops were organised for staff of the 17 partner NGOs after which they trained 842 village volunteers to spread “awareness amongst SMC members and the community on the importance of education and the legal entitlements of children”. UNICEF also informed that it developed an activity-based training module and handbook for volunteers on RTE under the Project in collaboration with the School Education and Sports Department in Sept, 2012. This module was well-appreciated. From the three Project districts, 60 trainers were prepared to train 3,800 volunteers. NGO field and block coordinators conducted the important groundwork of working with village volunteers to strengthen their capacities and activate them.

In 2013, UNICEF supported MPSP to develop an activity-based SMC training module. The module received positive feedback from participants after the training conducted in 2013-14. SMC training was conducted in three phases at the State, district, block and community levels (refer to Table 5). Attendance in the first phase of training was approximately 62 percent and increased in the second and third phases to 70-75 percent. From the review of secondary documents, it was also ascertained that UNICEF provided inputs on the resource material and strategy developed for the training purpose.

Table 5: SMC Training Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Phase</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Apr 20-21, 2013; Balevadi, Pune</td>
<td>All Education Directors, Joint Directors, Department Deputy Directors, DIETs, education officials (primary/secondary/ongoing) and all members of the Zilla Parishad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>District</td>
<td>Apr 26, 2013; district HQ</td>
<td>Three individuals from each block attended the training including BEOs, Education Extension Officers, principal of secondary schools, KP/deputy education officers/DIET lecturers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Block</td>
<td>May 2, 2013; block office HQ</td>
<td>KPs and headmasters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Aug 23, 2013</td>
<td>All Education Directors, Joint Directors, Department Deputy Directors, DIETs, education officials (primary/secondary/ongoing) and all members of the Zilla Parishad.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

29 UNICEF Maharashtra. Pre-final report draft.
30 MPSP. Training Handbooks for SMC members
New Concept Information Systems Pvt. Ltd.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Block</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Third</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jan, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Across stakeholders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three individuals from each block attended the training including BEOs, Education Extension Officers, principal of secondary schools, KP/deputy education officers/DIET lecturers.

KPs and headmasters

School staff

Across stakeholders

**SMCs equipped to prepare School Development Plans**

Under the Project, 4,718 schools prepared SDPs in coordination with SMCs. NGO partners have worked with 744 SMCs to provide handholding support for monitoring school attendance and infrastructure improvement. Earlier, SMC equivalent at the community level was the Village Education Committee (VEC) in which the teacher was the chairperson. Conversely, in the SMC, the parent is the chairperson; hence SMC training becomes imperative to build their capacities for performing their roles and responsibilities. The SDP includes information related to the school and the local needs of the village. According to the SPD, SSA, since the teacher is an outsider to the village, s/he does not have as much affinity towards the village compared to the parents. Parents, comprising a significant portion of the SMC, can provide meaningful contribution towards school improvement. Linkages between SMC and VCPC members have been strengthened since there is an overlap in the membership of the two committees, and this approach ensures cross learning.

**Challenges facing SMCs**

The main challenge envisaged going forward is to ensure that SMCs remain motivated and their skill-building is sustained. UNICEF assessed that a review of the functioning of SMCs would be beneficial both on operational and policy aspects. SMCs have been provided with skill-building training across the State but there are still some shortcomings in their work. The EO, Yavatmal felt that parents come from poor families and are struggling to earn an income because of which many times, they are unable to give full attention to their duties as SMC members or participate effectively in the exercise of preparing the SDP. As a result, the SDPs are typically being prepared by teachers, instead of in a participatory manner between all members of the SMC. This was also corroborated by both Policy and programme-level respondents. UNICEF has estimated that it will take another 5-6 years for the SMCs to function at optimum levels of effectiveness. According to the interaction with an NGO block coordinator, community members continue to raise doubts about the benefits of taking on the role of SMC members. The task ahead is to put in sustained efforts to activate SMCs.

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"In the beginning, while giving training to SMC members, since they themselves have not been educated to a great extent, difficulties were faced in explaining the importance of SDPs to them."

- Sarpanch, Choradha village, Bhokardan block, Jalna district

Another challenge is the two-year term of an SMC member. Every two years, the SMC is reconstituted and learnings and experiences of the previous two years are lost to a large extent. At present, there is a need for monitoring and effective implementation of SMC functioning. The problem of manpower shortage is evident as also the transfer of the SPD. Programme-level respondents reported other challenges faced including lack of interest among community members in attending SMC meetings; and occasional opposition to SMCs from teacher organisations/community members. These challenges were overcome with the support of CEO and officials. Community-level respondents expressed
that at times, there were negative attitudes or a lack of consensus among SMC members, which could be overcome by continuous discussion and regular meetings.

**Sustainability and replication of SMC model**
The sustainability and replication of the SMC training is ensured as the GoI has approved the SMC module and training method developed by MPSP and UNICEF. The SPD, SSA expressed that in the future, RTE compliance of schools will depend on SMCs. He also reported that the State Government has involved the highest levels of administration in the process of SMC training and empowerment, which was evident from the participation of Deputy and Joint Directors, DISE officials, the Secretary and Chief Secretary. The Secretary provided orientation to all officials with a focus on departmental convergence. Hence, the evaluation found that the thrust has been on three pivots: setting up of human resources to administer, train and monitor SMCs; capacity-building; and motivation of SMC members. All of these together are required to enhance the sustainability of SMC interventions.

**Sub-outcome 2.4: Models of School Readiness Programme Established for 3-5 Years Children**

**School Readiness Programme model developed with UNICEF support**
For Early Childhood Education (ECE), UNICEF has actualised the intervention by forging the requisite convergence between the ICDS and MSCERT through consultations and partnership. The Joint Director, MSCERT agreed that implementation has been done partly by institutional mechanisms (commonly known as tartud shasan in Marathi) and partly by UNICEF. MSCERT, with expertise on children’s age-specific learning needs, has defined the strategy for the school readiness programme (SRP)/ECE with ICDS service providers, the AWWs, delivering the SRP to children between 3-5 years of age. *Balshikshankram* (ECE curriculum) was developed by MSCERT and reviewed by UNICEF. UNICEF also conducted a baseline study in 40-50 AWCs, prior to beginning the ECE intervention. The study highlighted that ICDS supervisors were not completely aware of ECE and hence faced difficulties in effectively monitoring/mentoring implementation by AWWs. The ECE intervention, subsequently implemented under the Project, was thus timely and provided both AWWs and ICDS supervisors with a complete understanding of all aspects of ECE education.

**Handbooks and training helped ECE implementation in AWCs**
UNICEF contributed to the ECE programme by developing the strategy and activity-based handbooks for teachers that were to be used by AWWs. The Joint Director, MSCERT specified that each handbook had two sections – one for children in the 3-4+ age group and the other for the 4-5+ age group. The syllabus also incorporated elements of inclusion and gender equity. The handbooks also included a planning section for AWWs to plan their daily teaching schedule. A training package was developed for ICDS supervisors to train AWWs. It included aspects such as understanding the significance of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE); familiarisation with the curriculum and learning materials; and participatory methods of training (mock sessions, songs and skits).

According to an ICDS supervisor in Yavatmal, the ICDS supervisors were trained in Pune every three months during the period of two years 2012-13 adding up to a total of four training sessions. Training was held in four phases: Phase 1 (Jul, 2012) on songs and stories and physical development; Phase 2 (Oct, 2012) on language improvement; Phase 3 (Jan, 2013) on Maths improvement; and Phase 4 (Apr, 2013) on reading and comprehension. After each training session, the supervisors conducted two-day training sessions for all AWWs in their beat (area of supervision). Supervisors received INR 100 per AWW to
provide materials for her training. The training was strategically conducted during mandatory monthly cluster meetings to ensure greater retention. To ensure sustainability of this training process, the Project has ensured that training of supervisors is led by MTs who are external experts involved in developing the ECE package, and will thus be available post-Project closure.

AWWs and the ICDS supervisor of Yavatmal who were interviewed also expressed that prior to the Project, the ECE component in routine ICDS training for AWWs was minor. But through the four ECE training sessions, AWWs were taught to improve their skills in educating 3-5 year old children. The effects of this capacity building are visible as both supervisors and AWWs now express that they understand the method of execution of their roles and responsibilities related to ECE service delivery. The supervisor indicated that training has especially benefitted those AWWs who lacked confidence and motivation. During the Project, a total of 3,963 AWWs were trained in the three Project districts for 16 days spread over a year (two days every month for eight months). The evaluation also found that an ECE schedule (velapatrak) of ECE was developed and distributed to AWCs for AWWs to follow.

The evaluation findings establish that prior to the training, ECE at AWCs was limited to teaching basic songs to children by AWWs. The AWWs would focus on distribution of supplementary nutrition and immunisation, which led to neglect of the ECE component under ICDS. Under the Project, AWWs have been trained and now utilise their time effectively. The AWWs now teach children to recite prayers, maintain cleanliness and dress properly. Both ICDS supervisors and AWWs have become more confident in their roles related to ECE. AWWs have unleashed their creativity and made AWCs bright and vibrant.

The evaluation found that supervisors monitor the ECE component, based on a format developed by UNICEF since Dec. 2013, which is more comprehensive than the previous monitoring format that comprised of solely two indicators – enrolment and retention. They now monitor ECE based on indicators of quality, for example, whether children are paying attention while the AWW teaches. AWWs have also developed a sense of accountability and responsibility for their work. These are perceptible improvements in the quality of education and monitoring that have been brought about under the Project.

**Enrolment of children in Class I changed parents’ perception of AWCs**

Effectiveness of the SRP is easily gauged since transition of children from AWCs to schools has not been difficult. The AWW now provides a list of children registered in the AWC to school authorities; children entering Class I are thus automatically enrolled in the nearest primary school. It is through the Project, that children in the AWC have developed good pre-school skills, and are now far more ready to enter Class I than they were prior to the Project experience. They can identify letters and colours and understand concepts more clearly; and they have also become more disciplined. Attendance of children in AWCs has also increased.

The evaluation found that a major success achieved under the Project has been the changed perception of the parents about the AWCs. They now see progress in their children’s education as children come home and tell them about what they have learnt. They now view AWCs as learning centres instead of merely food distribution centres as they did earlier. Even those parents who had earlier enrolled their children in private schools have now brought their children back to AWCs. Community members and PRI members have also started donating resources like water filters and furniture to AWCs after observing an improvement in the quality of education being imparted to children. After attending the training, women SHG members also donate resources to the AWC.
Policy and programme-level respondents said that ‘best practices from the ECE intervention’ must be documented to cull out learnings. DIETs were also involved in ECE and DIET officials were directed to attend district-level trainings of supervisors; make visits to AWCs and monitor administration of the ECE curriculum. MSCERT has positively stated that UNICEF was physically present through the whole process of modification and improvement of the ECE curriculum, and provided important academic inputs. UNICEF consultants also actively participated in the training sessions.

**Challenges overcome through UNICEF advocacy**

The evaluation found that a significant challenge in developing the ECE model was convening joint ICDS and MSCERT meetings. As a learning, UNICEF advocated for these interventions at the level of the Chief Secretary, which is vital to ensure State buy-in for sustainability. In a positive turn, ICDS has expressed that they wish to develop the ECE workbooks further. UNICEF provided inputs for the workbooks that include information on teaching methodology, including the type of TLMs required. A recommendation was made for conducting training jointly by ICDS and the DoE to ensure sustainability. MSCERT has expressed that they will provide State-level RPs but ICDS should take the initiative since AWCs and training and capacity-building of AWWs are under its mandate. Refresher training will be required since AWWs are not very well-educated and need reinforcement of information. From interaction with an NGO personnel, it was found that negligence by Government officials towards ECE monitoring has been another challenge that contributed to oversight.

**Sub-outcome 2.5: Evidence-based Advocacy for Effective Targeting and Utilisation of Resources for Education of Excluded Children**

UNICEF advocacy establishes U-DISE as valid Education Data Source

Prior to the Project, data collection under DISE was done in a routine manner by the State Education Department and analysed to a limited extent. From a review of secondary documents, it was found that in June, 2012, UNICEF supported an education sector policy retreat chaired by the new Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) School Education, and attended by key education department officials including the SPD, SSA. DISE data analysis was presented to outline the major challenges in operationalisation of RTE in Maharashtra. During the course of such high-level advocacy with the State, UNICEF made a recommendation that DISE should be the only system for collecting educational data so that data is reliable and can be verified and updated.

UNICEF also prepared State, district and block-level data profiles using analysis of DISE 2011-12 data. UNICEF also prepared a dashboard to enable educational planners and stakeholders to access DISE data easily. In 2012-13, UNICEF helped the DoE to analyse U-DISE (U-DISE data includes primary school and secondary school data while DISE includes only primary school data) raw data and prepare the district and block profiles. Data validation exercises were also conducted. According to UNICEF, a GR was issued during the course of the Project to the effect that DISE must be used as the only validated data source by the State. As a positive outcome of the Project, DISE data is now being used for planning, monitoring and reporting. Disaggregated data analysis was conducted, both gender and block-wise, and data was also used to assess RTE compliance.

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UNICEF also strengthened capacities of 75 education department officials to undertake data analysis in the future without external support. They trained the officials in the following: strengthening understanding on educational indicators; calculation of indicators; disaggregated analysis; use of analysis tools (MS-Excel, DevInfo and SPSS); and preparation of powerpoint presentations.

The State was proactive in this aspect and stated that they would conduct data collection and analysis on their own after receiving the training. This is a positive outcome of the Project as it indicates State recognition and acceptance of the usefulness of the intervention. Each district MIS officer works with the district CEO and through training provided under the Project, both these officials have been empowered to handle DISE-related work independently. In 2012-13, the State Government of Maharashtra brought out the DISE and U-DISE reports on its own.

The Maharashtra Government has also conducted State-level workshops on DISE and accuracy of the data has improved with time. A booklet on U-DISE was brought out in 2012. An analysis of DISE was described in the booklet as a handy tool for data analysis.

Validation of DISE as the only verified data source has been extremely useful since the problem of conflicting data sets on school education from various sources has been removed. This will strengthen Government publications by the State Education Department and also help concerned educational stakeholders like research institutions, NGOs and academic institutions in obtaining uniform State-level educational data.

**KGBV-related advocacy by UNICEF activated State-level momentum**

UNICEF reported that under the pro-active guidance and efforts of the SPD, SSA, the UNICEF-led KGBV baseline was conducted with involvement of SPD staff. Baseline findings were shared during a two-day workshop on “KGBVs in Maharashtra: Visioning Pathways to Success” in Apr. 2012. Taking note of the findings, the Secretary declared that the baseline study was significant and regional workshops should be organised to present the results. Based on the workshop discussion and deliberations, several recommendations were made to the State related to improving infrastructure and facilities; enrolment and retention; parent/community participation; finance and procurement; criteria for KGBV staff; quality education and co-curricular activities; monitoring and onsite support; health, nutrition; and child protection and security. Concerned with the findings, key decision-makers – the Education Minister, Additional Chief Secretary and the State Project Director, MPSP took initiative to improve the status of KGBVs.

MPSP, with the support of UNICEF, took immediate steps to build capacities of GCs and block education officers (BEOs). The officials were also sent to Rajasthan to study the best practices in those KGBVs. In Nov. 2012, the first guidelines for functioning and management of KGBVs in Maharashtra were drafted through a participatory approach, with leadership by GCs, BEOs and HMs. These guidelines included all workshop recommendations and were disseminated to concerned officials. In this way, advocacy by UNICEF brought the predicament of girls studying in KGBVs to the fore and helped galvanise action under the direct supervision of the Secretary.

UNICEF has also developed a video with photo documentation of the KGBVs based on the results of the baseline that provides data on the varying conditions of KGBVs in the State. Facts like the condition of their toilets and that some schools have the same meals three times a day, provided documentary evidence on the need for improving the condition of KGBVs. The video was used by UNICEF to conduct
advocacy with the State Government. UNICEF has clarified that the State Government needs to take up the work of scaling-up to remaining KGBVs after studying the pilot intervention in Jalna.

**DAC Criteria for Component Area 2**

Under component 2, the Project worked closely with the State Education Department and brought about improvements in the quality across a section of State education interventions such as the implementation of RTE through child-friendly methods; the STP package for OOSC; the SRP package for 3-5 year old children attending the AWCs; MRMs for adolescent girls and boys; KGBVs for girls from marginalised communities; GRCs as a platform for girls and women in distress; S4D to improve the physical health of children and with community involvement through the SMCs. Significant evidence-based advocacy efforts helped to bring about changes in Policy related to data validity and utilisation of resources for the education of girls from marginalised communities in KGBVs.

**Relevance**

**Alignment with Government Policies and Strategies**

The Project implemented numerous interventions to improve the quality of education being provided to children in schools. All these interventions are relevant to the Project objectives as they complement and strengthen the mandate of the RTE Act, 2009. This basket of interventions was designed to improve children’s learning experiences. Functionaries from the education department were also trained to implement these strategies. Many of the guidelines were developed in a consultative process with workshops and conferences in which Government counterparts participated actively. Data collection and reviews were also conducted in coordination with the Government and Government officials were part of the review teams for the MRMs and KGBVs. Convergent approaches were also used to implement the ECE component by involving both the ICDS and MSCERT. The Project design is thus relevant to the Government’s objective of enhancing convergence, as demonstrated in the Government’s 11th and 12th Five-Year Plans.

The U-DISE has now been recognised as the only verified source of education-related data in the State. UNICEF had advocated at the Policy level and held consultations and workshops for the same. They built capacities of education officials to analyse U-DISE data and create profiles. In the initial years of the Project, UNICEF helped the State in performing data analysis and estimating the Education Development Index (EDI) of Maharashtra.

**Strengthening an Enabling Environment for Child Development and Participation**

The Project assisted in issuing CFS guidelines after policy-level interventions for operationalisation of child-friendly elements in schools. A self-assessment checklist was prepared and a CFS handbook provided to teachers. The importance of training for effective implementation of these interventions was reinforced; and teachers and cluster coordinators were trained in CFS. Training topics included both RTE mandated elements of CFS and other low-cost CFS elements. These simple innovations could be carried out with no additional cost to the school and could be implemented continuously without awaiting additional fund allocations or directives from education officials. Teachers were also trained on child-friendly interactions. A child-friendly environment was facilitated in schools under the Project, which was absent earlier.

UNICEF introduced SRP, an intervention at the ECE level by bringing about convergence between the ICDS and MSCERT to improve the quality of education being provided to children between the ages of 3-5.
years in the AWCs so that they are prepared for formal schooling in Class I. UNICEF has also contributed in developing the strategy and activity-based handbooks for AWWs to facilitate children's activities in their centres. Along with classroom education and activities, UNICEF has highlighted that sports is an important part of childhood learning and has implemented S4D to promote sports among children in schools.

**Focus on Gender Equity and Social Inclusion**

UNICEF's approach under the Project has infused a strong equity focus by introducing strategies to increase participation of girls in education and life skills development, and strengthen gender mainstreaming. Mainstreaming child labourers and out of school children, and educating girls from marginalised families has also worked to increase social inclusion.

MRMs, involving both girls and boys, were introduced in schools to improve adolescent life skills. MRM trainings have improved the confidence of adolescent girls and boys and have brought about gender sensitisation. The MHRD has recognised the intervention as a best practice, which emphasises its relevance.

The capacities of GCs were strengthened and GRCs in the three Project districts were made more dynamic and effective. These centres act as safe spaces for women and adolescent girls, and function as an advocacy centre in the community to propagate the concepts of gender equity and social inclusion.

UNICEF also worked to improve the quality of education being provided in KGBVs to girls in classes 5-8. A baseline assessment of the KGBVs was conducted and the results presented before the highest levels of Government. MPSP supported these efforts and took immediate steps to build the capacities of gender coordinators and BEOs. UNICEF piloted the quality education intervention in the KGBVs of Jalna district to demonstrate to the Government so that they could take the learning from it and scale-up to the remaining KGBVs. Personnel were appointed to move around the seven KGBVs in Jalna and provide support/mentorship to the KGBV staff. The KGBV girls were provided with computer classes, art classes and also with reading materials. UNICEF developed video content based on the results of the KGBV baseline to depict the status of KGBVs in Maharashtra as a useful informational tool. The Government will have to keep the focus on KGBVs so that they are not neglected after the Project period.

In this way, the evaluation found that UNICEF has promoted the evidence-based approach by presenting key information to the Government. The evaluation also found that the S4D intervention was relevant for enhancing the gender equity and social inclusion of girls in education since girls are marginalised and face barriers many times in participating in sports.\(^{32}\) Sports help children and adolescents to develop life skills through the promotion of teamwork, fair play, dealing with competition, winning and losing.\(^{33}\) Since child labourers and OOSC have not had access to continuous education, UNICEF recognised the need to improve the quality of the existing STP programme and link OOSC with it. UNICEF conducted a review of the STP programme and introduced close and regular monitoring of progress in linking children with the STP. To link OOSC children with the STP, village volunteers were trained in the RTE and along with SMC members and local teachers mobilised parents to link their children with the STP.

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Capacity Building of Educational Functionaries
The evaluation found that the Project design has included capacity-building as an important component for successful implementation of Project activities/components. UNICEF has extensive expertise in the field of education and has applied the same to develop training modules and activity-based training sessions. Interviews with SMC members, MRM facilitators, ICDS supervisors and AWWs elicited that they have benefited from the training and it has helped to improve their confidence and skills to execute their responsibilities.

KPs have been trained under the Project, which has enhanced their skills and helped them effectively monitor schools in their clusters. The Project was relevant in strengthening SMCs, mandated in the RTE to effectively monitor attendance and infrastructure improvement of schools. UNICEF supported MPSP to develop the SMC module for strengthening SMCs and provided support in conducting SMC training at State, district and block levels.

Teachers in schools were also trained on facilitating MRM sessions in a gender-sensitive manner that is appropriate for adolescents. AWWs have visibly benefitted as they have now become more confident and begun to understand the method of teaching in a child-friendly manner. ICDS supervisors, having been trained, are also now able to monitor the performance of AWWs in providing ECE. From the interactions with community members including parents, VCPC members and AWWs, the evaluation found that through the Project, children in AWCs have developed good pre-school skills and are now far more ready to begin Class I than they were prior to the Project experience. They are now able to identify letters, colours and understand concepts more clearly. They have also become more disciplined. Attendance of children in AWCs has also increased.

Effectiveness
Exceeding Quantitative Performance Indicator Targets
A comparative assessment between the baseline and evaluation findings presents the achievements/extent of the Project’s effectiveness. At baseline, none of the teachers in the Project districts had been informed about the elements of child-friendly schools and neither were the Project district schools exhibiting child-friendly elements. The evaluation found that the Project has exceeded its set targets and thus effectively implemented CFS training in schools as against the planned target of 3,300 teachers/head teachers, a total of 10,800 teachers/head teachers were oriented on the elements of child-friendly schools.

Elementary schools in all Project blocks of Yavatmal and all blocks of Wardha and Jalna have been oriented on CFS. The original plan of orienting one teacher per school was replaced by orienting all teachers in a school on CFS concepts and quality education to improve learning levels of children. Approximately 3,475 teachers/HMs have developed a CFS action plan leading to an equal number of schools demonstrating CFS elements.

At baseline, it was found that OOSC between the ages of 6-14 years were not attending the STP. The Project has been effective in mainstreaming these children since as per Government data of 2013-14, there were 5,841 OOSC children in the three districts; and all of these children are currently receiving STP (100 percent). The STP programme developed by the Government was more effectively implemented on the ground by activating community-level stakeholders and partnerships like SMCs, VCPCs and village volunteers. At endline, SDPs were developed by 4,718 schools in coordination with SMCs. This is a significant improvement from the baseline status in which none of the schools in the Project districts had
functional SMCs/prepared SDPs. Of the 4,718 SMCs formed against the target of 3,300, 744 SMCs received handholding support to monitor school attendance and infrastructure improvement.

At baseline, none of the AWCs in the Project districts were implementing the SRP. However, at endline, more AWWs were trained under the Project than the set target on the request of the State Government (120 percent as compared to 80 percent). Of the children enrolled in the ECE programme, 93.90 percent enter Class I at an appropriate age as compared to the target of at least 90 percent with: State - 91 percent, Jalna - 98.7 percent, Wardha - 85.4 percent, Yavatmal - 97.5 percent (Source: MPR October, 2013).

**Successful Strategies Employed to Exceed Targets**

The Project has been successful in institutionalising CFS approaches to education in Maharashtra. Guidelines issued have been effective, as they provide an official impetus for introducing CFS elements into schools. The guidelines are being implemented in all local body Government schools and to some extent in private schools. CFS elements recommended by UNICEF are low-cost and hence, were easily introduced into classrooms, without any need for additional Government grants. Schools have begun to demonstrate elements of CFS including improved seating arrangements of children, and increased freedom for children to raise questions.

CFS training imparted to teachers, head teachers and KPs was effective since it built their capacities to perform their tasks effectively in implementing CFS. Trainings were designed in a cascade effect as teachers from each school were trained and instructed to train the remaining teachers in their schools. This approach was effective in reaching a large number of teachers. The KP training was also effective since they could then monitor and track the progress of each school. CFS guidelines and the self-assessment tool developed under the Project were effective as they standardised the operational modalities for activating the child-friendly concept in schools.

Innovative interventions like the MRM and S4D have improved the quality of children’s learning through an extra-curricular activity approach. The MRM intervention has shown good results and imparted gender sensitisation in schools. Since 2012, the SPD, SSA reported that there has been 90 percent compliance for carrying out MRM activities in schools. While the S4D intervention has brought about a positive change in children’s physical development.

The evidence-based approach of UNICEF towards the implementation of the STP intervention has served the Project well since the interventions were then made more focused to address specific problems that were identified. UNICEF has also involved SMC and PRI members effectively and this has made the Project more concrete. However, challenges were faced while preparing the SDPs since SMC members were not equipped with the necessary skills. The evaluation found that essentially teachers were implementing the SDPs indicating that there is a need for more intensive capacity-building and supportive supervision for SMC members to perform their roles effectively. Community members including the SMC, village volunteers and local teachers were mobilised to link OOSC children with the STPs. This proved to be very effective in reaching OOSC children since it was these functionaries who could better reach them rather than external stakeholders. To ensure buy-in and monitoring of the STP programme at all levels, UNICEF conducted advocacy activities with community members on the importance of education. Orientations on the RTE that were held for SMC and PRI members including village volunteers were effective, as they helped these functionaries to become better child advocates in their communities.

Capacities of AWWs have been successfully built up to deliver the ECE programme to children between the ages of 3-5 years in the AWCs. Training on providing quality education was imparted to ICDS supervisors who in turn trained the AWWs in their clusters. This has helped to strengthen the rapport...
between the ICDS supervisors and AWWs. The AWWs have now become more confident and are teaching children in an improved manner. There is increased regular attendance of children at AWCs since their parents have also noticed the improvement in education being provided at the AWC.

Under the Project, activity-based handbooks were developed for the AWWs to deliver the ECE programme to 3-5 year old children at the AWCs.

The intervention also targeted the quality of education being provided in KGBVs in the State. To improve the effectiveness of the intervention, a baseline review was conducted of KGBVs in Maharashtra. The results of the review were presented before key Government officials at the State level. This proved to be effective in galvanising them to work on improving the quality of education being provided in KGBVs. The intervention demonstrated low-cost and high-impact methods to improve the quality and mode of education for girls in the KGBVs of Jalna.

**Efficiency**

The Project has been efficient in achieving all targets under outcome 2 and has surpassed the targets for many indicators. This has been possible because of the low-cost interventions introduced, training imparted to education service providers and the successful convergence between various departments that was essential to trigger this change.

UNICEF’s technical engagement with the State Departments has resulted in the incorporation of the tool (developed with UNICEF support) on child-friendly elements into the State guidelines. This has influenced the use of the annual school grant of **EUR 7.5 million** for the development of child-friendly elements in all **112,016 primary and upper primary schools** of Maharashtra. The Project has efficiently leveraged existing funds available under the SSA and introduced low-cost CFS elements to schools that do not require either additional funds or approval from officials. Additionally, UNICEF supported the State in developing the State training modules and strategy for strengthening of SMCs thereby influencing the use of State budget of over **EUR 3.5 million** per year in 2012 and 2013 and ensuring that all schools in the State have SDPs.

The successful piloting of KGBVs in Jalna district demonstrated significant increase in learning levels of girls enrolled in these institutions. This has led to State commitment for scale-up of the quality intervention in all 43 KGBVs in the State with a financial commitment of **EUR 150,000** for 2014-15. The Project has invested EUR 9,76,801 which is more than the amount budgeted under the IKEA Foundation grant (EUR 7,49,026) under outcome 2. According to the IKEA Foundation’s final financial report submitted by UNICEF, skewed pattern of allocations in 2013 resulted in increased expenditures in the same year due to: a) start-up delays leading to low absorption of funds in 2009-10; b) delay in approval of no-cost extension leading to suspension of some planned activities; and c) roll over of unutilised funds from previous years for full budget utilisation. Of the total Project expenditure, 21 percent was spent on outcome 2.

**Sustainability**

The Project’s results under Component 2 have been possible to a large extent due to the State Government’s partnership and ownership of key components to improve quality education and increased enrolment and retention of children in schools. The progress made in adopting/replicating the various elements of the Project within the State during the Project period signify long-term sustainability.
The CFS checklist developed under the Project has been adopted by the State Government of Maharashtra for all 35 districts. The Government has also approved the introduction of CFS elements into schools in line with the RTE Act and directed schools to use available funds for this. CFS guidelines were issued by the State on May 6, 2013 and are being implemented in all local body Government schools. The State Government including the SPD, SSA endorsed the training since it equipped KPs to inspect RTE compliance, which is essential along with issuing guidelines.

In the academic year 2014-15, the budget for the MRM has been shifted from “innovation head” to an allocation of INR 1000 per school. The results of a joint review mission on the MRM were presented to the Centre and UNICEF informed the GoI that MRM is a beneficial adolescent intervention with lasting impacts. The MRM has now been recognised by the MHRD as a best practice.

In the STP intervention, UNICEF has introduced close and regular monitoring and through its efforts, the State Government has also begun to realise the importance of evidence and data to assess the current status of any intervention and for planning ahead. UNICEF had advocated for two years for the STP programme and for conducting household-level surveys in the State to obtain accurate educational information. Earlier, the State would rely solely on school-level data, which was often not accurate and did not provide background information on children. UNICEF’s advocacy has resulted positively and the State Government has taken ownership and put forth a proposal of INR 12 crores to the MHRD for conducting HH surveys in the State in 2014.

The Government of India has approved the SMC module and training method. In future, RTE compliance of schools will depend on SMCs. The State Government has involved the highest levels of administration in the process of SMC formation, training and empowerment. The orientation was done by the Secretary with attention to convergence through involvement of various heads of department. The focus has been on three pivots: setting up of manpower to administer, train and monitor SMCs; capacity-building and motivation of SMC members.

Training on the ECE package was provided to ICDS supervisors by MTs who had developed the ECE package. These MTs are available for future training as required by the State. Further training has not been planned for 2014 but learning from the pilot will be shared with the ICDS, Government of Maharashtra for incorporation and upscaling of the ECE intervention and training in the whole State.

As a result of advocacy efforts by UNICEF, the State Government issued a GR declaring that DISE will be the only system for collecting educational data so that data is reliable and can be verified and periodically updated. The State Government came out with the DISE profiles in 2013-14 on its own after having been provided with handholding by UNICEF in the previous years. This testifies that the capacities of education officials have been built to requisite capacities to perform the DISE analysis. UNICEF has also recommended to the State that it needs to take up the work of scaling-up to the remaining KGBVs after studying the pilot intervention in Jalna.

**Conclusions**

- CFS guidelines have been institutionalised by the State Government as a result of UNICEF’s concerted advocacy leading to the State Government’s approval for introduction of CFS elements into all schools. Institutionalisation of CFS guidelines has reinforced the RTE Act, 2009 mandate. The CFS self-assessment checklist for schools developed by UNICEF has also been adopted by the State. CFS elements proposed in the checklist are low-cost and can thus be easily implemented by
upper primary schools in the State.

- Teachers were trained on implementation of the CFS model in schools and KPs were trained to monitor its implementation. Hence, the training complemented and followed the CFS guidelines, to actualise the CFS elements in schools. The cascade model employed for teacher training helped in reaching out to a large number of school teachers.
- Along with teacher training, innovations like the MRM and S4D operationalised in schools to ensure educational experience of children included extra-curricular activities for adolescents and concepts of physical education. Majority of the schools are now successfully demonstrating elements of CFS.
- UNICEF was successful in improving the STP programme by providing technical support and convening periodic meetings with the functionaries of SPD, SSA. The State-wide review conducted by UNICEF prior to the intervention, helped in collecting crucial data and insight into the current situation for better planning of the Project interventions. Through the efforts of UNICEF, the State Government has also begun to realise the value of documentary evidence and data to assess the current status of any intervention for effective planning. Based on results of the STP programme review conducted by UNICEF, CFS guidelines were modified to mandate that SMCs should strictly monitor implementation of the STP programme whereas information about the STP programme should be included in SMC training.
- The community was galvanised for linking OOSC with the STP. Local teachers, youth, SMC members, VCPC members and village volunteers have all played important roles in linking children with the STP programme. Village volunteers were trained on RTE so that they were adequately informed to communicate with and mobilise parents of OOSC.
- Training for all levels and types of stakeholders at the implementation, programme and community levels was conducted on various aspects of the RTE. Partner NGOs were trained on the RTE after which they trained volunteers. Field and block coordinators from NGOs along with volunteers, then provided onsite support to SMC and PRI members to actively work for school development. In 2013-14, SMC training was conducted in three phases at State, district, block and community levels, and was well-received. SMC members have been trained to prepare comprehensive SDPs outlining tasks that need to be performed for school improvement along with action plans to execute the SDPs.
- Various training and reference materials have been developed for the stakeholders on the RTE Act. An activity-based training module and handbook for volunteers on SSA was developed under the Project by UNICEF in collaboration with the School Education and Sports Department and brought out in Sept, 2012. A booklet on RTE has been jointly developed by the MPSP and UNICEF for village volunteers called *Shikshan Mazha Hakka Aahe*.
- Inter-departmental convergence between the ICDS and MSCERT has been achieved to roll out the SRP or ECE, as it is more commonly called in Maharashtra. Both these departments brought in their expertise: MSCERT developed the syllabus and content of the ECE package; while ICDS delivered the package through the AWW service providers.
- The ToT model was employed to train the ICDS supervisors after which they trained the AWWs in their cluster and were able to effectively monitor the ECE component delivery under ICDS. The handholding has been considered beneficial by AWWs, reporting increased confidence. The AWWs now teach children at AWCs in a child-friendly approach, in keeping with the RTE mandate. ICDS supervisors also conduct monitoring using the UNICEF format with a focus on indicators pertaining to quality of education rather than merely enrolment and retention.
- Enrolment of children in Class I is automatic as the AWW provides the list of children eligible for Class I to the school authorities. This enables the children to transition smoothly into Class I. Through the ECE intervention, the children have developed good pre-schooling skills, are more
disciplined and can better identify alphabets, colours and also understand concepts. As a result of improved education quality at the AWC, it is no longer perceived as merely a food distribution (or “khichdi” centre). Parents have begun to view the AWC favourably and community members even donate resources to the centre.

- Earlier, the State would rely solely on school-level data, which was often inaccurate and lacked background information on the children. However, due to UNICEF’s relentless advocacy with the Government, a positive development has been achieved with State commitment to HH surveys budgeted at INR 120 million. This is a commendable success of the Project.

- As a result of UNICEF’s advocacy, U-DISE is now the only verified source of education-related data in the State with GR being issued to that effect. A dashboard has also been prepared so that the data is easily accessible online. Capacities of the Education Department have been strengthened to perform the necessary data analysis. In 2013-14, as a direct result of this handholding, the DoE independently brought out the DISE profiles.

- The quality education intervention implemented in Jalna district involved handholding and supervision for the staff of seven KGBVs in the district. Prior to the intervention, a baseline survey of the KGBVs was conducted, which indicated the poor quality of infrastructure and education being provided to the girls. Quality and child-friendly elements were introduced into the schools, namely, art and computer classes for the girls; training staff to be more interested in their work; assessing each girl separately; and providing attention to each child; and setting up libraries.

**Lessons Learned**

- It was not easy to bring about a change in the mindset of teachers during the course of a single training, as they were entrenched in their routine methods of teaching. Continuous efforts are required to bring about a behaviour change among teachers so that their pedagogical techniques become more child-friendly. Despite issuing a GR for schools to comply with the RTE mandate and adapt to child-friendly teaching, some schools are not yet wholly RTE compliant and it will take time for CFS concepts to take root. Non-compliance cannot be attributed to paucity in funds since there are many education grants available under SSA. The issue is to channel the funds in a useful manner to implement CFS techniques and mechanisms in schools.

- Out of school children are scattered throughout the district and outreach poses a significant challenge. Attendance of OOSC children in the STP programme and adherence to the teaching requirement also needs to be improved. Capacities of teaching personnel require to be built up more along with sensitisation and mobilisation of community members to link OOSC children with the STP.

- There is a need for further training of SMCs as they still have a tendency to focus more on budgets and funds rather than assessing the best way forward for school development. Parents are also not contributing effectively to the SMC as had been envisioned and require substantial handholding. Disinterest/demotivation has also been observed among other SMC members including a lack of desire to hold meetings and there has even been opposition to the SMC from teachers and Government officials.

- Convergence between the ICDS and the MSCERT for the purpose of developing the ECE package is essential for smooth functioning of the SRP (ECE) programme. Training the AWW in ECE is also essential since AWWs have low education levels. Training by ICDS supervisors in the clusters, will strengthen their pre-existing rapport with the AWWs.
Project Component 3: Raising awareness and empowering families and communities so that they take collective action against child labour

Outcome 3: Families and communities take collective action for protection and development of children. This component focused on building capacities of communities to address child labour issues and motivate them to send their children to school. The approach aimed at strengthening village-level child protection systems by engaging communities as key stakeholders. Prevailing social attitudes that endorse child labour were targeted through community sensitisation initiatives on the harmful effects of child labour and the importance of education. Capacities of CBOs and PRIs were built to address the issue of child labour and promote school attendance. AGGs were formed and linked with VCPCs and other CBOs/PRIs for collective action to address child protection issues and curb child labour.

Sub-outcome 3.1: Families Aware of Harm Caused by Sending Children to Work and Send their Children to School

Since 2010, the Project engaged in continued community sensitisation. In the first phase, all sensitisation was dovetailed with the core processes of microplanning and holding community events such as child rights weeks and special days. Sensitisation of families was done continuously through the four years and linked to key processes of microplanning and of addressing PRIs, farmers’ groups and women’s groups. The next phase consisted of reaching out to specific groups like farmers, VCPCs and zilla parishads. The evaluation found that sensitisation was conducted both at the micro and macro levels. Interpersonal interactions were conducted with stakeholders like AWWs and women at the micro level. At the macro level, the useful strategy of building an environment conducive to child protection at the district and village levels was employed. Given the large geographical expanse of the Project, this kind of sustained presence and reinforcement of child protection messages proved to be very useful.

“Phulel Mazha Jag” campaign launched to create child protection awareness

The Project adopted a number of approaches for information dissemination on the harmful effects of child labour/OOSC, importance of education and three central legislations, namely, Child Labour Act, RTE Act, and Child Marriage Act. The Project commissioned a range of communication materials including posters, banners, pamphlets and wall paintings that were displayed in Project villages and distributed among communities. Events such as the ‘Child labour Week’ and rallies were held in villages to create community awareness.

The ‘Phulel Majha Jag’ Campaign (My World will Blossom), which was rolled out in 625 Project villages since 2012 was a success as corroborated by several evaluation respondents, such as the village Sarpanch, teacher and police patil. All of them showed a high recall value of the posters, stickers and pamphlets. The campaign was built on outdoor media and mid-media including bus panels, 29 hoardings, 403 wall paintings and distribution of 80,000 stickers and pamphlets to communities. In addition, theatre groups
performed on child rights issues and the RTE. The media also reported cases of child marriage and child labour. The campaign was assisted by the Directorate of Information and Public Relations in 2013, which enabled scaling-up of campaign reach across the three Project districts. UNICEF reported that mid-media was found to be a more effective medium of communication for this outcome than IPC.

Theatre was also effectively used in an effort to use familiar art forms in villages to deliver important messages on child protection in an entertaining manner rather than solely through discussion. UNICEF held workshops for the theatre groups that included traditional performers of Kala Jathas and modern performers to sensitise them on child labour, child marriage and OOSC. To build rapport and engage with rural audiences, theatre groups would first identify a local issue such as village sanitation and discuss it with the community before performing on issues related to child labour and child marriage. This method was very successful in creating village-level awareness in quite a few villages. The groups gave more than 1,000 performances covering all villages in the Project districts. Encouragingly, after the performances, the Sarpanch of the villages came forward and took pledges to ensure that their villages would be made child labour free and child marriage-free.

The evaluation found that such public processes resulted in enhanced visibility for the agenda of child protection. The issues of child protection were hidden from public discussion earlier but after large-scale social mobilisation, they gained public visibility and communities started discussing children's protection. Hence, the Project ensured ownership by communities through such advocacy to ensure that Project activities leveraged community support.

The above strategy brought together a number of stakeholders to disseminate information, including the Government and NGOs. This was corroborated by Policy, programme and community-level respondents. CBOs were empowered as partners to disseminate information. Partner NGOs mobilised local community leaders and CSOs, organised rallies and mass events and invited Government officials to the same, thereby demonstrating convergence at the community level between child protection agencies and Government counterparts. Existing traditional groups were used to bring about a change in the attitudes towards child labour and child marriage. Events such as, ‘child rights days’ were used and volunteers were recruited for social mobilisation. The communication strategy used was far-reaching with the simultaneous use of IPC and mid-media. The strategy incorporated action including resolutions taken during gram sabhas. Multiple communication entry points were tapped in every possible forum and there was a groundswell of ideas that lent support to build a favourable environment for child protection.

**Community structures activated through advocacy and awareness**

The focus on community awareness on harmful effects of child labour and importance of education and their subsequent empowerment to take action for protection and development of children could be achieved through the involvement of UNICEF, Government departments and NGOs.

The Project partnership with 17 NGOs enabled information dissemination in all 2,288 Project villages across 17 blocks. Close ties with the community allowed the NGOs to effectively guide local CBOs including VCPCs, SHGs and village volunteers on engaging with the community and utilising UNICEF communication materials, i.e. banner placement, and distribution of pamphlets and stickers. In addition, building on the microplanning process, NGO partners were able to leverage the rapport they had built with communities and carry out community awareness. This resulted in increased awareness of over 400,000 families on the harm caused by child labour.
Community awareness initiatives under the Project were therefore used to activate CBO structures at the village level, particularly VCPCs, adolescent girls and boys groups and village volunteers. For example, in the beginning, most SHGs did not know how to address child protection issues in their village. UNICEF was able to activate CBOs by supporting them in organising events such as ‘Child Labour Week’, rallies on child protection and important days such as the International Children’s Rights Day. On the occasion of International Children’s Rights Day, 55,000 children were joined by PRIs, farmers and women’s SHGs to participate in rallies and street plays promoting child protection. This initiative also resulted in formation of 125 VCPCs out of the 183 villages participating in the event.

VCPCs, having been trained in child protection, took complete ownership of the work in some villages, worked with the Education Department to access free school transport. In Jafarabad block of Jalna, 21 VCPCs worked together to secure free transportation facilities to respond to the demand raised by 3,741 adolescent boys and girls to attend secondary schools located at varying distances from their village.

Participation of adolescent boys and girls was brought about by providing them with spaces for articulation and addressing their concerns through group discussions. Training provided to AGGs included writing skills, photography, film making, participatory theatre and audio film-making. Adolescent girls, thus motivated, have made one-minute films on their lives and also developed audio content, which they disseminated through community radio. Some of the girls were brought to Mumbai and linked with the Xavier Institute of Communication (XIC) where they showed their films to renowned film critics. At XIC, the girls were also taught to express themselves through writing and photography. They also interacted with the well-known film director Nagesh Kukunoor. Thus, under the Project, efforts have been made to bring about behaviour change in communities through communication and outreach efforts. A notable feature of the Project is the repeated and consistent engagement with adolescent boys and girls to educate them and improve their confidence.

Information on child protection including legislation on the RTE, child labour and child marriage was provided to CBOs through samiti meetings. This training of CBOs filtered down into the wider community through gram sabhas discussions. Training of 7,000 village youth volunteers and 2,000 adolescent animators was conducted through a core group of 67 master trainers in order to track and monitor 4,944 OOSC. Community leaders have also been sensitised about child protection. CBOs were thus effective bodies in motivating communities to participate in village-level awareness activities. At the ground level, dissemination of information to the community was carried out in a fluid manner. Many simultaneous processes were being conducted at the same time including mobilisation by village volunteers, maa-beti meetings and community sensitisation over the Project cycle of four years.

**Challenges in information dissemination to community members**

One of the challenges faced in information dissemination was scheduling community awareness activities during the day as the community people were out at work. Thus many activities were organised in the evening to ensure maximum community participation.

“It was not very difficult to disseminate information after receiving training. Books/information booklets received during the training helped to conduct the discussion in a facile manner in the gram sabha and by putting up the banners, stickers and charts in prominent places in the village, we created awareness among people about the issue of CP. Because of this, people obtained more information about the right to education.”

- Sarpanch, Sharad Village, Yavatmal
Another challenge faced was in the extent of outreach to villages since the same communication method did not prove effective in all villages. For example, in the village of Mahatul, Yavatmal, IEC materials did not play a major part in information dissemination. However, community members reported receiving information on issues of child labour and age of school enrolment through AWWs and the Sarpanch. In some villages such as Mahagaon, Yavatmal, the Sarpanch did not actively engage in community mobilisation and partner NGOs held meetings to mobilise children’s groups and adolescent groups. These individual cases indicate that the strategy of using multiple channels of communication was appropriate since one channel proved to be effective where another was not. Another challenge expressed by policy and programme-level respondents was the coverage of remote areas and socially excluded communities. The issue of seasonal migration of families with children and addressing needs of nomadic tribes was faced as they comprise the hard-to-reach population. Specific communication strategies targeting these groups need to be developed.

Respondents at policy and programme levels also reported on difficulties faced in changing the mindsets of communities, sustaining their interest and ensuring that they adhered to resolutions made during gram sabhas. This challenge was overcome by consistent meetings and interactions with the community.

**Sub-outcome 3.2: Adolescents, Especially Girls and Women Networked and Empowered to Monitor and Tackle Child Rights Violations and Protect Children’s Rights, Especially the Right to Education and to Protection**

The evaluation found that under this sub-outcome, the Project worked on three main components, namely, training in life skills; formation of AGGs; and focus on health of girls and women. The Project developed a specific module on protection and education targeted at these groups and integrated into their activities.

**AGGs formed and trained on adolescent safety and voicing concerns and issues**

The Project mobilised 2,247 adolescent girls groups reaching out to 71,000 girls, exceeding the target by far. The model adopted to form AGGs was selection of one Deepshikha Prerika in the village who facilitated AGG formation. Capacity-building of Deepshikha Prerikas was conducted at the block level. They were then supported by local NGOs and UNICEF field coordinators to identify groups of adolescent girls to form AGGs in the village.

The training served to empower prerikas to address issues that affect them. The training instilled confidence among prerikas, who in turn empowered girls in their communities so that they would not fall prey to child abuse. AGG members were taught about biological development during adolescence and the minimum age for legal marriage (18 years for girls and 21 years for boys) in line with the Child Marriage Act. They were also taught about “good touch” and “bad touch” in the context of child abuse. The evaluation findings confirm that AGGs have now become vocal about child protection issues and are claiming public spaces to hold activities, corroborated by policy,
programme and community-level respondents. AGGs, through facilitation by UNICEF, participated in consultations to present their priorities to the DWCD for the State Child Policy. Inter-departmental convergence has also been achieved in work with AGGs; for example, in Jalna district, the CEO and Superintendent of Police (SP) led a joint campaign to support adolescent girls, youth volunteers and PRIs in reporting cases of child marriage. The evaluation notes this as a significant achievement since in Jalna, child marriage was not acknowledged as a social problem previously. In addition, 300 AGGs attended sessions of the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) and are now being selected to be part of future child protection efforts. Engagement with the Government and Project inputs into policy-making demonstrate that the Project has amplified voices of girls and children in contributing to decisions that impact their lives.

In addition, 75 case studies on OOSC, child labour and child marriage were identified and documented. A 30-minute documentary film on child marriage was broadcast by the IBN Lokmat news channel through UNICEF’s work in Jalna district. IBN interviewed adolescent girls and found a large demand among the girls for education beyond the age of 14 years that will prevent them from falling into child labour in chilly picking and other occupations. In another instance, a girl who was an AGG member and had negotiated with the authorities to provide school transport facilities was interviewed and her story popularised.

**AGGs disseminate information on child protection**

As informed by policy, programme and community-level respondents (including prerikas and VCPC volunteers) AGGs played a major role in carrying out information dissemination on child protection at the community level. This included role plays, putting up posters in the village and explaining child protection issues to communities. For example, a Deepshikha from Wardha related that AGGs organised a big gathering called Vatsavli where they held a circle meeting and performed plays and dances on themes of rights of the girl child, duties, dignity, worth and courage. They have also been effective in enrolling OOSC into schools. For example, in a village in Yavatmal district, the Deepshikha visited the home of a boy who was not attending school to explain the importance of education. After being counselled, his parents permitted him to attend school. Similarly in Jalna district, child marriages of five girls under 16 years of age were stopped by AGG initiatives. AGGs approached the families and explained to them the physical and psychological harm associated with child marriage, which helped in stopping the marriages. A shift in social attitudes among communities has also been observed that can be attributed to empowerment and initiatives of AGGs. For example, in Yavatmal district, social change has occurred whereby earlier the Deepshikha would have to reach out to community members on issues of child labour and OOSC but now community members themselves ask Deepshikhas about the next scheduled meeting.

AGGs also networked with other CBOs such as WSHGs and gram panchayats. AGGs now attend gram sabha meetings in many villages. According to the interaction with UNICEF, maa-beti (mother and daughter) meetings are also held to discuss child protection issues. Therefore, the Project has promoted convergence between CBOs at the village level, thereby enhancing representation of girls and women in village activities.

**AGG formation faces challenges**

Both programme and community-level informants to the evaluation corroborated on the several challenges faced in formation of AGGs. In many cases, parents were not always willing to allow participation of girls in the group sessions. Similarly, some girls felt shy about coming forward for fear of society. Such challenges were overcome by NGO Project partners who supported establishment of AGGs by conducting community meetings. Gram sabhas also played a key role in influencing parents where discussions were held to mobilise communities to take action. It was through such forums that parents
Discussions are constantly held in the Panchayat Samiti about the rights of children. Officials themselves pay attention as well.

- Block Coordinator, Swaraj Gramin Vikas Pratishthan NGO

were made aware of the importance of such issues and thus lent their support in establishment of AGGs. Initially, there were some reports of prerikas being threatened in communities and police intervention was required, particularly during cases of child marriage when the atmosphere in the community was very volatile. Such difficulties were overcome through training provided by UNICEF to AGGs in which effective approaches for engaging with the community were shared. For example, AGGs were trained to respond by saying “I know this is your culture, but what can we do, it is the law?” Celebrations were organised for parents who said “no” to child marriage. It was important to keep the community on board so that they would not perceive AGGs as an opposition group. While AGGs are established structures, they still require handholding and support to monitor and address child rights violations in their communities. For example, in Wardha district, the programme started only in 2012, later than Yavatmal and Jalna, thus reporting less time for AGG activities.

Sub-outcome 3.3: Community Leaders, Including PRIs Take Active Role in Monitoring Child Rights Issues and Take Action for Preventing Child Labour

Over 14,775 community leaders including PRI members were informed on child rights issues and the need for prevention of child labour/OOSC. This achievement was considerably above the Project target of 10,556 community leaders. Awareness activities at the community level promoted sensitization of the community. Under the Project, 5,671 meetings of gram sabhas and other forums were held to discuss issues related to child labour and education and these issues now appear on the agenda of gram sabhas. The evaluation found that community awareness was brought about through a two-fold process of: 1) IEC activities at the community level; and 2) one-day trainings on child protection at the ‘circle level’. (A cluster of GPs is made into a circle and a circle meeting is then attended by PRI members from these GPs. This action-oriented circle meeting is conducted by NGO field and block coordinators).

Capacity-building was done through multi-stakeholder processes and a massive number of trainings were conducted with different groups. While separate trainings were held with village volunteers, many other trainings were held in a mixed format. Such multi-stakeholder trainings forged convergence among different community gatekeepers and were output-oriented with simple action points being discussed during the course of training.

Convergence of community-based structures is also taking place with joint efforts to address issues of child labour, importance of education and child marriage. VCPCs are linked with gram panchayats through two mutual members and this overlap brings about greater convergence between CP structures and PRI members. The influence of such community representatives on communities supports VCPC efforts in community engagement on child protection. In addition, VCPCs, gram panchayats and communities come together on August 15 and January 1 for dedicated discussion on these issues and encourage community resolutions against child labour.

During the evaluation, various community-level respondents reported marked improvements in community attitudes towards addressing issues of child protection and education. A significant number of villages (435 out of 2,288) took pledges to say “no” to child labour. While child labour has not been eradicated completely in these villages, there has been a reduction in child labour in agriculture.

Challenges faced in mobilising community leaders
During the evaluation, policy-level respondents also reported that the enormity of the tasks in terms of engagement with multiple stakeholders across a wide geographical area posed a challenge as each stakeholder needed to be actively engaged to be sensitised and participate in child protection. Ownership of different processes rested with different stakeholders. The challenge of mobilising leaders to help tackle the enormity of the work was addressed by these multi-stakeholder sensitisation processes. Capacity-building was conducted through multiple stakeholders. Massive number of trainings were conducted with different groups while separate trainings were conducted with VVs. A number of trainings were held with the participation of multiple stakeholders which forged convergence and simple actions were discussed. Gram sabhas were held and resolutions were taken with the consensus of community-level stakeholders. Hence, the participatory pace of the Project fostered a sense of ownership and built capacities of village volunteers to become drivers of change in their village. Some village volunteers have gone on to become GP members, contested elections, become Sarpanche and police mitras/pathaks (trustworthy allies of the police) and even secured jobs in NRLM work. The evaluation found that the collaboration of village volunteers with the police is also an example of convergence as the police department mobilised youth to reach out and act as reporters for them in the community. The volunteers assisted the police in resolving cases of child protection including child labour and child marriage.

In the early stages of Project implementation, communities had not fully accepted/supported the Project. Sensitisation of community leaders/PRIs was an important component of this outreach. Another challenge was faced in changing mindsets of community members since some people were hesitant to challenge other community members for fear of spoiling inter-personal relationships. People also harboured differing notions about child labour and some did not find fault with children working in their own fields. Sometimes, parents also exhibited negative attitudes towards education. To bridge this gap, several discussions with the community, facilitated through NGO partners, were conducted.

**DAC Criteria for Component Area 3**

Under component 3, communities have been mobilised including families of children vulnerable to child labour, AGGs have been formed and linked with women’s SHGs with an aim of community-level convergence, and community leaders including PRI members have been trained to take the work of child protection forward after Project completion.

**Relevance**

**Disseminating Information at the Community Level about Government Legislation**

Under the Project, the community was informed on child protection issues including the harmful effects of child labour and the importance of education. In particular, knowledge of three core legislations was imparted to the community, namely, the Child Labour Act, RTE Act and Child Marriage Act. Community members who were unaware of these legislations, prior to the Project, were introduced to the concept of child protection through a variety of communication channels. This sensitisation served to empower communities in taking measures to address child labour/OOSC, prevent child marriage, and ensure that children attended school. In this way, the content of information disseminated was relevant towards achieving the Project objective.

**Child Representation and Gender Equity**

Establishment and training of AGGs under the Project ensured that community-based structures were actively addressing issues of child labour/OOSC. This also brought a strong gender focus to the Project through empowerment of girls to take action on issues that impact their lives. Adolescent boys groups
were also established under the Project. Empowerment of children under the Project upholds the human rights of children to steer their own future in line with the CRC. The evaluation found that the activities conducted under this component helped in building the ‘value for a childhood’ in these communities. The entire component of social mobilisation in the Project has addressed social norms including changing traditional practices that have existed over long periods like early marriage of girls, children working on farms and girls not being allowed to leave their village after puberty.

Adolescent girls also experienced an increase in their mobility as they were able to move around the community even in the evenings. At first, the male family members in their households protested the newfound mobility of the girls but gradually began to accept the practice. Girls used mobile technology to share their issues and problems with NGOs, the police and the District Collector. They also started accessing services like education (in terms of schools and KGBVs) and health. Some AWWS also used the AGG platform to distribute Iron-Folic Acid (IFA) tablets among women and girls in the community. In this way, the link that had been forged between adolescent groups, AWWs and GPs in the form of an adolescent platform started taking the shape of a community-based organisation and further linking with other village functionaries from whom adolescent girls could access services. The visibility of these groups was also enhanced as a result of intensive community mobilisation.

The inclusion of component 3 in the Project is thus relevant to the Project objective of ensuring that children 6-14 years are not working and are in school. The initiatives serve to strengthen community response in addressing issues of child protection and right to education at the village level.

**Effectiveness**

**Increased Visibility of Child Protection at the Community Level**

The Project achieved all targets under outcome 3 as defined in the Project log-frame. All 2,288 villages under the Project were reached with information on harmful effects of child labour, importance of education and age of school enrolment as per target. Information dissemination mobilised 6,359 community-based structures higher than the target of 4,978 to promote enrolment of OOSC. Information disseminated has sensitised communities on issues of child protection including child labour, child marriage and the importance of education. This has fostered community buy-in, which in turn facilitated establishment and support of CBOs such as AGGs to specifically target child protection and education-related issues in the village.

The number of community leaders, including PRI members, informed on child rights issues and need for prevention of child labour/OOSC was 14,775 against a target of 10,556. Focus on issues related to child labour and education were realised through conducting 5,671 gram sabhas or other forums and achieving more than double the Project target of 2,413 meetings. Mobilisation efforts at the community level have led gram panchayats to pass resolutions to make their gram panchayats child labour-free (994 GPs), child marriage (1,036 GPs), and ensure that all children are in school (975 GPs). A significant contribution of the Project has been the activation of these gram sabhas. While they existed in communities to an extent, they were largely non-functional earlier and have been activated through the Project.

Gram sabhas were regularised as a result of community awareness activities spearheading greater inclusion of women in community meetings. Prior to the Project, children’s issues were never discussed in the gram sabha. But now, child rights are being discussed in the meetings and concrete action plans and resolutions are being made.
**AGGs Established as Legitimate Community-level Bodies**
The number of AGGs formed was 2,247 achieving 98 percent of the target of 2,288 AGGs since smaller villages with less number of adolescent girls, merged AGG formation to cover all villages. The number of girls reached, however, exceeded the target with 71,055 adolescent girls trained on issues of child protection and importance of education against the target of 70,000. Similarly, 85,000 women in SHGs were informed about child protection and the importance of education against a target of 80,000 women.

Many AGGs and WSHGs have been effective in addressing village-level child protection cases. These groups networked with other CBOs/ PRIs to monitor and tackle child rights violations and protect children’s rights. The success in addressing 1,919 cases of child labour, 168 cases of OOSC and 4,944 child marriages in Project districts is evidence of the success. Of these, 75 such case studies were documented. Challenges were overcome in establishment of these bodies through training received under the Project as well as community support achieved through village sensitisation.

**Linkages between Key Stakeholders Strengthened**
The evaluation found that the Project posited child labour not as an isolated problem but instead connected it with the community as a whole. The entire problem of child labour was addressed through a systemic approach and every stakeholder involved in child protection, albeit in varying capacities, was involved in the various processes. The community was mobilized to take decisions for building the value for childhood in their area. The Project was also effective in building safe spaces for children and influencing change in attitudes in the community.

The Project was able to forge linkages between the Government, NGOs and communities. UNICEF exerted its influence by way of its positioning vis-à-vis the State. The Project utilised this influence (beyond the capacities of local NGOs) to bring different stakeholders together. UNICEF provided the platform and the collaborative leadership to bring all stakeholders together for roll-out of Project components.

** Efficiency**
To address barriers to school attendance, 21 VCPCs in Jalna district coordinated their action to secure free transportation facilities for children. The demand was raised by 3,741 adolescent girls and boys to facilitate their transition to secondary schools. This initiative has resulted in savings of EUR 27,703 for the families. The evaluation found that existing resources were used effectively by the Project as meeting spaces were availed in AWCs and GP offices for holding various community-level deliberations and advocacy activities. Volunteerism was also employed as a cost-effective method of deploying human resources. Volunteers and *prerikas* worked at the community level without compensation and provided the Project with critical savings in any additional expense incurred on manpower. Overall, the judicious deployment of available budgetary and human resources in the Project augured timely delivery of various activities and established cost-efficiency.

The Project has invested EUR 14,20,728 which is more than the amount budgeted under the IKEA Foundation grant (EUR 13,53,042) under outcome 3. Of the total Project expenditure, 31 percent was spent on outcome 3.
**Sustainability**

**Community Ownership Aligned with Government Support**

Majority of NGO respondents opined that information dissemination activities will only be continued with Government support. It was recognised that partnership between the Government, NGOs, and other stakeholders has been the key success factor in extensive coverage including number of villages reached and the intensity of information dissemination activities carried out. It is evident that if support provided by NGOs and CBOs is suddenly removed, then the enthusiasm of people will be affected as the momentum gained will be lost. But one NGO respondent from Wardha district felt that the Project should be continued with coordination of social organisations and not through Government officials since there is a vast difference between forcing the programme on communities and letting communities initiate activities.

The evaluation found that the community has started taking ownership of many activities and takes responsibility for holding regular GP meetings, deploying VVs and field functionaries in a sustainable manner at the community level. Even though it is possible that these personnel/groups may not be as active, as they were during the Project period, a cadre of community-level functionaries has been created that will work from a trained perspective on child protection. The GR issued mandating VCPCs has served to regularise the working of VCPCs, which is another sustainable element of the Project. The GR mandates that the VCPCs already existing in the three districts will be continued and sustained while new VCPCs will be regularised. However, communities expressed that VCPCs, village volunteers and Deepshikhas will need to be on board as key drivers to continue addressing child protection issues at the village level beyond the Project period. The Deepshikha programme has been adopted by the Government for scale up. This ensures sustainability of this intervention beyond the Project period.

**Conclusions**

- The communication strategy adopted for information dissemination encompassed a range of communication media. These included mid-media such as stickers, hoardings and bus panels. UNICEF had IEC materials ready for use but in this Project, mid-media proved to be a more effective medium for community sensitisation on child protection issues. Mass media was also involved in reporting cases of child marriage and child labour. It was found that theatre performances on child protection-related topics and promoting the importance of education were well-received by the community. The range of sensitisation activities carried out under the Project have served to promote a discourse on child protection issues at the community-level and are thus deemed both relevant and effective in achieving the Project objective. The “Phulel Majha Jag” campaign (My World will Blossom), which incorporated a range of multimedia and theatre components was scaled-up across the three Project districts with assistance from the Directorate of Information and Public Relations in 2013.

- Community-level information dissemination on the harmful effects of child labour and importance of education was used by Project implementing partners to establish and activate community-based organisations. Formation of VCPCs, and adolescent girls and boys groups, led to their mobilisation as active bodies spearheading community sensitisation and addressing issues related to child labour/OOSC and cases of child marriage. The evaluation findings demonstrate that CBOs are effective organs in engaging with the community to successfully address cases of child labour and child marriage, and promote enrolment of children in schools.

- The target for setting up village level databases in all 2,288 Project villages to track and target children at risk was achieved. The databases have proven to be effective tools in monitoring cases of child
labour/OOSC and child marriage. Microplanning has been an effective tool in providing data and proxy indicators to track OOSC. In some areas, villages are using microplanning data to keep track of out of school and working children. The standard format provided to all VCPCs in Project blocks for maintaining data on out of school and working children has the potential for being replicated across other districts of Maharashtra.

- The Project maintained a child rights focus by creating and strengthening adolescent girls and boys groups at the village level. This is in line with principles of the CRC, which recognise that all children who are capable of forming their own views have a right to express their views freely on all matters affecting them, with the view of the child being given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity. The strengthening of 2,247 AGGs and WSHGs under the Project ensures an empowered gender perspective whereby women who are generally socially excluded are capacitated to address issues in their villages pertaining to child labour, child marriage, and importance of education.

- All targets under Project component 3, as defined in the log-frame, were achieved by the end of the Project period. However, the number of adolescent girls groups formed in absolute numbers achieved was 98 percent of the target. This was because the initial target set out was to establish one AGG per Project village but during implementation smaller villages with fewer numbers of adolescent girls formed one AGG across two villages. Thus the total number of AGGs formed appears less than targeted, though the number of girls reached exceeded the target.

- Activities carried out under Project component 3 were relevant in achieving the Project objective that all children aged 6-14 years of age are not working and are in school. Community sensitisation and capacity-building of CBOs and PRIs on child protection with focus on the harmful effects of child labour and child marriage has been successful. Emphasis was placed on the importance of sending children to school. Information on three relevant legislations was disseminated, namely, the Child Labour Act, Child Marriage Act, and RTE.

- Institutional convergence between UNICEF, district administration, NGOs and CBOs/PRIs has been strengthened as a result of village-level initiatives under the Project. Majority NGOs expressed that they will require external support to sustain activities post-Project period related to empowering communities to take collective action for the protection and development of children. Alternately, some respondents considered that activities should be continued with the coordination of social organisations rather than through Government officials. It was opined that the latter approach would ensure a higher degree of community involvement and initiative on addressing social issues as opposed to Government-led programming.

- Sensitisation and training of CBOs/PRIs on issues of child protection and importance of education has served to build the capacity of these bodies to continue to successfully address such issues at the village-level thus promoting sustainability. CBOs/PRIs have expressed the intention of continuing to address these issues with their community beyond the Project period. VCPCs and AGGs are considered essential mechanisms in this regard.

**Lessons Learned**

- To establish VCPCs in areas with lesser community support, repeated discussions with community members, periodic visits to the community to establish rapport and to clear their misconceptions, are required.

- Even after initiation of activities with community members, ensuring their ownership of child protection activities requires persistent efforts so that the momentum is not lost and child protection remains a visible arena at the *gram sabha* level.
Project Component 4: Enhanced access to social protection schemes for vulnerable families

Outcome 4: Enhanced access to social protection schemes for vulnerable families (out of school children and children without parental care)

Social protection schemes offer vulnerable families an alternative to child labour through income support. The Project conducted a mapping exercise of social protection schemes assisting families in poverty. The *Bal Sangopan Yojana* (BSY), a Government scheme was improved from being a mere cash assistance scheme prior to the Project, to becoming a safety net for children and families in crisis. Social protection schemes were promoted at the village level by NGOs and CBOs/PRIs to link vulnerable families with them. A database of social protection schemes listing all beneficiaries of Government schemes was developed for Wardha district.

Sub-outcome 4.1: Social Protection Schemes Mapped, Reviewed, and Recommended for Revisions to Explicitly Target Vulnerable Families, Including Those Having Children Engaged in Child Labour and Migrants

Social protection schemes and their beneficiaries mapped and analysed in Wardha

A total of 90 social protection schemes of the *Zilla Parishad* in Wardha district were mapped under the Project. The schemes are Government initiatives of various departments such as Health, Agriculture, District Rural Development, *Panchayat*, Animal Husbandry, WCD, Education, Social Welfare and the *Panchayat Samiti*. These schemes focus on assisting families in poverty with an emphasis on social welfare, agricultural subsidies, and provision of scholarships and school supplies to children. They included, but were not limited to, the BSY, *Gharkul* scheme, *Indira Awas Yojana* and *Janani Suraksha Yojana* (JSY), while scholarships included provision of 90 percent grant for the *Maharashtra State Certificate in Information Technology* (MS-CIT) for women and girls.

*These schemes have proved very effective in addressing children’s problems. For example, girls in the village would go to pick cotton and received INR three for every five kilograms of cotton. The parents of these girls did not have the money or wherewithal to send their children to school, but after being provided access to schemes they have admitted their children into KGBVs because of which today their children are receiving education.*

- Block Education Officer, Jalna District

Microplanning provided information about beneficiaries of social protection schemes

The microplanning process (also known as the *Gram Panchayat*-based Planning Process or GPP process) was used to identify vulnerable families and understand the reach of social protection schemes. Information on social protection schemes that are applicable in Project areas was collected along with information on beneficiaries. Household surveys conducted by village volunteers helped to identify vulnerable families in the village. Data available from the GP was useful in mapping the vulnerability of families and gain insight into the kind of schemes that had reached villages. This data was analysed to identify and link eligible families to social protection schemes. Microplanning provided many useful indicators, namely, the number of children between the ages of 6-14 years not enrolled in school/not attending school for the past one month/not staying with their families and the number of working children. Hence, microplanning proved useful to mobilise communities, establish village-level databases.
and obtain information on OOSC and families in need of social protection schemes thus serving as a useful tool spanning all outcomes of the Project.

Participation of Government, NGOs and statutory stakeholders in mapping has led to the formation of an integrated hub to accelerate social protection needs so that maximum coverage of vulnerable families can be achieved. Under the Project, a recommendation has been made to YASHADA suggesting that the mapping of social protection schemes should be conducted at the State level. The GoM has recognised the microplanning process to be beneficial and the Deputy Commissioner, DWCD has informed that the Department has undertaken a survey of children falling under the Children in Need of Care and Protection (CNCP) category in the State. The GoM has been using microplanning as a tool to map GPs, which forms the basis for implementation of various flagship programmes and schemes at the State level.

**BSY scheme improved to support children and families in crisis**

In 2012, the BSY scheme was assessed and reviewed by a group of experts constituted by the DWCD on child protection and non-institutional services group and UNICEF. The BSY is a non-institutional family-based care scheme, which assists children of families in crisis by providing cash assistance and other supportive services such as counselling. The Scheme aims to strengthen families so that the functionality of the family is restored, they are able to tide over the crisis (death/disability) and parenting roles are carried out effectively so that the child is safe.

A preliminary review of BSY carried out in 2009 revealed the lack of clarity among all stakeholders and among POs (Probationary Officers) about the purpose of the Scheme and the manner in which it was to be implemented. The original BSY scheme also lacked guidelines on roles and responsibilities due to which each stakeholder was carrying out tasks in an ad hoc manner. These gaps identified were addressed and improved to make the Scheme a safety net for children and families in crisis.

The BSY has also been mandated as applicable for a maximum of three years per child to reduce the dependency and allow new children to register as beneficiaries. UNICEF, being part of the expert group that reviewed the Scheme, helped to redefine the Scheme, make it more holistic, clarify the roles of all stakeholders and link the Scheme to the JJ Act. The BSY was reviewed in light of the JJA and the RTE, both of which stipulated that a child cannot be working and thus helped to bolster the BSY Scheme. BSY, which is a scheme specifically targeted at children, who are the primary beneficiaries of the Project, was improved and brought in line with the Project goals. CWCs now play a role in assigning the Scheme to children in the CNCP category or those who can be deinstitutionalised (reunited with their families).

**Sub-outcome 4.2: Increased Awareness among Families on Social Protection Schemes**

**Community members and organisations sensitised on social protection schemes**

A number of sensitisation activities were conducted to increase awareness among families on social protection schemes using a variety of media to better reinforce information, as was corroborated by community-level respondents. The mid-media activities and outdoor media listed in outcome 3 were used to disseminate information about social protection schemes. Support of youth groups, senior citizens’ groups and Mahila Mandals was also garnered for disseminating information through inter-personal communication (IPC) and mass events like melavas. The approach of making proclamations (town crier approach also called “davandi pitvun”) was effectively used to provide information about new schemes in the village. NGOs were integral partners in carrying out these activities.
The Block-Level Task Force (BLTF) also disseminated information to communities on social protection schemes that were available with the district administration. UNICEF field and block coordinators, and NGO partners mobilised the village Sarpanche while community leaders provide information to the community. CBOS/PRIs were also linked with the initiative to participate in information dissemination. Lists of schemes were put up at gram panchayat offices and gram sabhas were used as channels to inform people about these schemes.

According to an NGO block coordinator in Jalna, the police were involved in gram sabha meetings to control any potential situations of conflict. Other community-based stakeholders in close contact with families, such as teachers and AWWs, were also informed as sources to impart information on social protection. Village volunteers were provided with training on social protection schemes to effectively disseminate information to community members along with NGO field coordinators. Village volunteers coordinated with PRIs and BLTF to share lists of OOSC, women-headed households and migrant families to ensure specific targeting of vulnerable families in need of social protection. In many villages, the gram sewak and talati have used microplanning data to identify and register beneficiaries for social protection schemes. This highlights the equity lens of the Project.

**Need for consistent work on-ground demonstrated**

Communities were receptive to information from external sources only after consistent ground work by external stakeholders. This emphasises the need for continuous community engagement to build credibility. Social protection required a different kind of investment than in the other three outcomes in terms of energy, resources, and specialised inputs to systems, families and economic empowerment. The Project faced a challenge of paucity of time, since by the time the foundation was laid for implementation related to social protection schemes, the Project drew to a close making it difficult to provide sufficient attention to this Project component. This component could not have been implemented at the beginning of the Project since vulnerable families had not been identified. This component would have seen better results with an extended Project period. However, training and handholding provided under the Project and initial mapping of social protection schemes during microplanning has laid the foundation (parshwabhoomi) for further action on strengthening coverage of social protection.

**Challenges overcome during awareness creation**

Implementing partners reported no significant challenges in disseminating information to the community. However, information had to be reiterated to community members and information booklets were used for this purpose.

Conversely, community leaders informed that they faced difficulties in changing local mindsets regarding social protection schemes. In general, people were found to be skeptical about receiving benefits of social protection schemes that translated into a lack of proactiveness in registering for social protection. To overcome this, they presented the topic periodically in gram sabhas. This challenge was also overcome by organising melavas and camps.

**Sub-outcome 4.3: Systems Set Up to Monitor and Link Vulnerable Families to Social Protection Schemes**

**Microplanning data proved useful to monitor and link vulnerable families**
Microplanning data helped to obtain information on vulnerable families. GPP data has also become the base document for use by the BDO and CEO. VCPCs are active bodies in reaching out to the community to strengthen the protective environment for children. The Sarpanch also participated to ensure that appropriate schemes reached eligible families. Community leaders undertook activities like preparing lists of destitute women in the community and those families without safe drinking water such as tap facilities or wells. The databases helped to collect information on various indicators such as village population disaggregated caste-wise; number of pregnant mothers and small girls in the village. This disaggregated data on socio-demographic variables promoted an equity perspective so that vulnerable population groups could be specifically targeted.

Government officials, who attended trainings on social protection, informed the community members about the various schemes for which they were eligible. AWWs and teachers assisted vulnerable families in registering for the schemes. Village volunteers conducted outreach activities with eligible families to inform them about various schemes and helped beneficiaries to open bank accounts. NGO field workers helped community members to fill out the forms. They also extended benefits of other projects being implemented by them to the vulnerable families identified under this outcome.

**Challenges arising during registration of families**

There was a dependency on Government departments to actualise the work and provide benefits of social protection schemes. Decision-making was also influenced by political forces at community and administration levels. To overcome all these challenges, the Project emphasised that the process of linking vulnerable families with social protection needs to be systematised and institutionalised by bringing it under the mandate of line departments with CP structures and NGOs playing crucial roles by following-up with concerned line departments. In many cases, community members harboured misconceptions regarding schemes. For example, it became important to provide reasons to the community if one family received benefits of a scheme while the other did not, since certain schemes are meant only for families from vulnerable communities and not for the general category. There was also an issue of filing requisite paperwork on behalf of beneficiaries. Information had to be repeatedly given to the community. In addition, if a beneficiary was informed about the scheme and registered for it but did not receive the benefits immediately, he/she would become de-motivated and in turn dissuaded others from registering. This highlights the need for active community engagement and handholding during registration. Also, by showing political linkages, some people would manipulatively take benefits of schemes for themselves and their acquaintances.

**DAC Criteria for Component Area 4**

**Relevance**

**Disseminating Information about Social Protection Schemes to Improve Social Inclusion and Gender Equity**

Social protection schemes mapped under the Project focused on economic empowerment of families so that children were not forced to work. Some of the schemes promoted education with particular emphasis on access of girl’s education. This intervention brought an equity and gender perspective to the Project. The mapping of schemes is relevant to the Project objective of ensuring children aged 6-14 years are not
working and are in school since it brought visibility to existing schemes among different stakeholders (PRIs, families, women, and farmers) so that they could access the schemes. This is significant since knowledge and information about schemes is the first essential step to accessing their benefits.

**Improvement of BSY Scheme and Increased Awareness**

Similarly, the BSY scheme, which was assessed and reviewed under the Project is relevant to the Project objective as it strengthens biological and foster families through cash assistance and non-institutional means to care for their children. The Scheme extends to include circumstances that compel children to be at economic risk and to be trafficked, and is thus related to causal factors associated with child labour. Information dissemination activities conducted under the Project are also relevant towards realisation of the Project objective; for instance, while disseminating information about the BSY scheme, community members were also informed that families in crisis would receive benefits only if their children were enrolled in school.

**Effectiveness**

The Project achieved the target of mapping 90 relevant social protection schemes. In particular, UNICEF’s advocacy efforts to strengthen the BSY resulted in the DWCD adopting recommendations into a GR and issuing guidelines for scheme implementation. The BSY GR was issued in Oct, 2013. Coverage of the BSY has increased since the Project began and it currently covers up to 17,000 children in Maharashtra.

Mobilisation of 6,359 CBOs including Child Protection Committees, PRIs, CBOs and special gram sabhas to disseminate information about social protection at least twice each year led to exceeding the initial Project target of mobilising 1,695 community-based structures by 375 percent and ensured that all Project villages were reached. BDOs affirmed that microplanning data had helped to identify beneficiaries by name and reach the most vulnerable sections of society. This achievement also highlights that CBOs are suitable channels to carry out information dissemination activities on the issue of social protection and should be utilised as a resource for conducting such activities at the village-level.

The mapped schemes cover 1,78,346 beneficiaries and persons below the poverty line. In addition, CBOs have prevented 1,681 families in Jalna from migrating by linking them to various social protection schemes and ensuring that children remain in school and are prevented from entering the work force. The Wardha database is being used by the district administration for online monitoring.

**Efficiency**

Issuing of the GR on BSY by the DWCD in 2013 has increased coverage of beneficiaries across Maharashtra. This contributed to improved utilisation of the State’s resources of over EUR 6,17,000 per year to benefit 16,500 children under the BSY scheme.

Information dissemination on social protection schemes led to 3,106 vulnerable families gaining benefits of EUR 344 per family that resulted in leveraging Government resources of EUR 1.07 million for income support of these families.

The Project has invested EUR 1,22,000 which is more than the amount budgeted under the IKEA Foundation grant (EUR 1,09,191) under outcome 4. Of the total Project expenditure, three percent was spent on outcome 4.
Sustainability

Strengthening Top-down Reach of Government Schemes at the Community Level

According to the Deputy Commissioner, DWCD, following the BSY GR, CWC members were subsequently trained on the Scheme in four State-level sessions in Feb. 2014. Training was also attended by DWCD Probation Officers. State capacities have thus been developed to provide benefits of the Scheme. As such, UNICEF has been able to move out of this arena for the Government to take further action. However MoUs need to be signed between the Government and NGO partners to sustain activities with the Government. NGOs expressed that they would not be able to work directly on social protection schemes in the future without a signed MoU. Although they are committed and will continue to make efforts at their level, they would not be able to pay regular visits to villages without a formalised partnership. Since awareness has been created among people on social protection schemes, there is hope that community-based structures will take initiative and sustain activities even after Project completion.

Community Empowerment from the Bottom-up to Avail Schemes

Some members of the community indicated that since the community was already aware, there would be no need to make special efforts to take sensitisation activities forward and that community members in the village/Panchayat would take collective initiative to focus on the issue. On the other hand, some including a VCPC volunteer expressed that the gram panchayat would itself provide information and circulars through the gram sabha to the community. These viewpoints illustrate that community-based structures have the intention of continuing to work on the issue of social protection at the village-level. Many stakeholders expressed that the gram panchayat needs to take the lead in providing information to people through gram sabhas and interpersonal discussions. However, given that social protection schemes themselves may be subject to change over a long term, for example, through revisions to schemes or introduction of new schemes, there is a strong need for effective mechanisms to keep community-based structures informed about developments related to social protection schemes.

Conclusions

- Social protection schemes mapped are relevant to the Project objective of ensuring that children aged 6-14 years are not working and are in school. The schemes identified focused on assisting families in poverty and also promoted girls’ education. This brings an equity and gender perspective to the Project. Information dissemination and registration of families on social protection schemes has led to efficiencies gained under the Project with leveraging of EUR 1.07 million for income support for 3,106 vulnerable families.
- The BSY scheme, which was assessed and reviewed under the Project is relevant to the Project objective as the aim of the scheme is to strengthen families through economic support and counselling so that the children can remain with the family (in non-institutional care) and not need to be institutionalised. Under the umbrella of the scheme, circumstances that compel children to be at economic risk and to be trafficked are included. These circumstances are related to the causal factors associated with child labour. The recommendations formulated under the Project were adopted by the DWCD into a Government resolution and issuance of guidelines for the implementation of the scheme. This has led to efficiencies achieved by the Project with improved utilisation of the State’s resources of over EUR 617,000 per year to benefit 16,500 children under the BSY scheme.
- The Project achieved all targets set out in the Project logframe and is thus deemed effective. Under the Project, 83 percent of vulnerable families have taken the benefits of at least one social protection scheme as compared to the target of 68 percent. As compared to the target of 1,695 community-
based structures, 6,359 community-based structures disseminated information about social protection schemes. All Project villages were reached with information about social protection schemes.

- Microplanning data was utilised by CBOs/PRIs to identify vulnerable families eligible for social protection schemes. This data has also become the base source of information for use by the BDO and CEO. The Project, in collaboration with YASHADA, provided training to NGOs and Village Volunteers on conducting the microplanning process. This has led to capacity building of CBOs for maintaining the village level database linking vulnerable families with social protection schemes. The Maharashtra DWCD, perceiving microplanning to be beneficial, has undertaken a survey of children who fall under the category of children in need of care and protection (CNCP) in the State. The microplanning process is thus an effective tool to aid various stakeholders to address issues at the village level related to child protection and importance of education and improving access of vulnerable families to social protection schemes.

- The Project involved a number of stakeholders to participate in training, information dissemination and registration of vulnerable families on social protection schemes. This included Government officials, AWWs, teachers, NGOs, BLTF, VCPC, PRLs, and village volunteers. Stakeholders played a key role in information dissemination on social protection schemes, assisting beneficiaries with filling out forms and opening bank accounts. This demonstrates the role of various stakeholders in enhancing community/ vulnerable families' access to social protection schemes. Capacity-building of stakeholders in this regard has contributed towards sustainability of these structures in taking forward activities related to improving access of vulnerable families to social protection schemes beyond the Project period.

- As a result of capacity-building of Government officials, UNICEF has been able to move out of the arena of providing benefits of BSY scheme to eligible families. The sustainability of NGOs in continuing to work on improving access to SPSs of vulnerable families at the village level is dependent on Government support. NGOs expressed that the signing of a MoU will serve to ensure that the partnership will be sustained beyond the Project period. Findings from community-level stakeholders indicated that *panchayats* have been empowered through the Project to take forward activities at the community level related to social protection. For example, the *gram panchayat* will issue circulars with information on social protection to the community through the *gram sabha*.

- The data collection process was a challenging task since repeated visits had to be made to households to ensure complete data collection. The task of filling requisite paperwork on behalf of beneficiaries was also a challenge. Information on social protection schemes had to be reiterated to the community on multiple occasions to clarify misconceptions.

### Lessons Learned

- There was a shortage of sufficient resources in terms of time and man-power to overcome challenges related to data collection for the village-level database and linking vulnerable families to social protection schemes.

- Readiness for social protection follows from ground work. By the time UNICEF reached that stage in the Project, they were not able to give it full attention (lack of time). NGO partners had to keep providing information to people about the schemes. Encouragingly, work by the Government on social protection is picking up.

- The challenges faced underscore the need for sufficient resources including man-power and time to be allocated to the process of completing data collection and registering families for SPSs.

- The *gram sabha* is an effective forum to sensitize the community with information on social protection schemes. Village volunteers have been effective bodies in enhancing access to social protection schemes for vulnerable families and are key players in continuing to engage communities beyond the Project period.
CHAPTER FOUR: RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations have been made by various respondents who have been part of the Project implementation or beneficiaries of interventions. Certain recommendations have been made based on the lessons learnt from the Project. These recommendations will serve to optimise the model design of child protection interventions in the future and can also be reviewed in the context of scaling-up and replication of the Project.

Project Component 1: Creating and strengthening child protection structures to adequately protect children against exploitation and abuse

- **Issuing of Government resolutions** – The State Government should issue GRs updating the process and functioning of the CP structures and regarding any relevant changes every year or periodically as required so that they remain vibrant bodies (*please see Annexures 17 and 18 for a detailed list of GRs issued under the Project*).

- **Additional CP monitoring position** – A post can be created within the Government system to monitor village-level databases and the functioning of VCPCs. This post can be created at the block-level or the task can be assigned to the BDO. Quarterly reports similar to the Monthly Progress Reports (MPRs) of AWCs can be created by VCPCs and sent to the BDOs. This will sustain the backward and forward linkages created in the Project.

- **Institutionalising CP structures and legalising VCPCs** - The VCPC should be declared a statutory body and given the right to take binding decisions regarding any problems in the community regarding child protection. A mechanism for assistance of the VCPC should be created at the block level. The Government should institutionalise the gains in child protection achieved in the Project and link these structures with other departments so that the DCPU, SJPU, CWC and JJB remain active institutional mechanisms.

- **Fostering capacity-building initiatives** - The Government should build on capacity-building initiatives undertaken during the Project to train child protection functionaries under ICPS; and education personnel including AWWs, teachers and SMC members; and CBOs and PRIs at the village level. DCPU members have also expressed the desire for continued training and supportive supervision by the DWCD. Training modules developed under the Project should be scaled-up to other districts in Maharashtra. Refresher training modules and implementation plans to conduct refresher training should be developed by the State to ensure that capacity-building of stakeholders at various levels continues to effectively address child protection issues. This training is particularly important for VCPC members at the community level since they get easily demotivated if not provided with regular handholding/support.

- **Increased term and salary of CP structure members** – A serving term of up to three years is inadequate for effective action. Hence, the term of CP structure members can be increased. UNICEF has also advocated for increased salaries for CP structure members and these efforts have been realised to some extent. But more advocacy is needed in this regard so that these posts attract qualified professionals.
• **Replicating village databases** – Village-level databases established under the Project should be replicated to remaining districts of Maharashtra with effective linkages between State, district, block and village levels. Data should be shared and utilised by NGOs and CBOs/PRIs to monitor child rights violations and promote school attendance.

• **Institutionalising microplanning** - Microplanning should be adopted by the State to provide data for scale-up of village-level databases to monitor and track child labourers and OOSC. This is an extremely useful tool for decentralised planning and mobilising communities to actively input for child development. The data is also available for use at the community level.

• **Strengthening VIC concept** - The concept of Village Information Centres (VICs) should be explored further. The Centre housed in each village would provide information about the village so that the community would be able to monitor the current status of their village. This open access to information would empower CBOs/PRIs and the community to monitor child rights issues in the village.

• **Sustaining CSO-Government partnerships** - NGOs should meet with YASHADA and District Collectors to take forward the partnerships forged under the Project so that these are sustained beyond the Project period. Partnerships established under the Project between NGOs and the Government should be maintained. The signing of a relevant MoU would guarantee continued collaboration.

• **Expanding scope of child labour action plans** - The element of social protection should be further strengthened in Child Labour Action Plans through concrete strategies for economic empowerment of families through livelihood assistance and access to social protection schemes.

• **Budgeting for review of action plans** - Allocation of budget for development, implementation, and review of district-level plans should be carved out by the State Government following a cost-analysis exercise based on the findings of the Project. UNICEF and State-level partners as well as district administrations who have demonstrated political will should consolidate advocacy efforts with the State Government in this regard.

• **Further advocacy to strengthen BSY** - UNICEF should continue advocacy efforts to increase compensation received by foster families in the BSY scheme from the existing INR 425 (please see Annexure 19).

• **Sustaining advocacy** - UNICEF should continue its advocacy efforts since further advocacy is required to ensure implementation of the recommendations submitted to the central Government for reform of the CLPRA.

**Project Component 2: Improving the quality of education to increase enrolment and retention**

• **Adopting cascade training model** – The cascade model will be effective in reaching out to more teachers per school. Resource persons can train teachers/head teachers at the block or district level and these teachers can in turn pass on the knowledge to other teachers in their school or even build a cadre of trained teachers to serve as master trainers at the block or district level. Teachers can be selected from each school on a rotational basis so that all of them get an opportunity to interact with other school teachers during the training.

• **Refresher CFS training** - Refresher on CFS trainings should be institutionalised for teachers so that their capacities are built progressively to effectively implement the CFS strategies and approaches, and also to bring about lasting behaviour change in their attitude towards child-friendly methods. The refresher training content must also be updated to incorporate new best practices in child-friendly teaching.

• **SMC training** - SMCs must be trained to utilise existing funds and grants available to schools more
effectively. They must be taught to appreciate the ethos of child-friendly teaching that does not require a large expense and can be implemented through simple and effective low-cost methods.

- **MIS to track progress of schools** - It will be an enormous task to track the progress of all schools and a recommendation was made for the creation of a MIS system. It could be developed by preparing an accreditation system for assessment (ranked elements with the first 10 being non-negotiable) based on the CFS self-assessment checklist.

- **STP training for teachers** - Teachers should be trained to effectively provide the STP package to OOSC. Since they find it difficult to teach the STP package, both before and after the school day, it can instead be taught within school hours. This will ensure that the child is not fatigued as well. Periodic *gram sabhas* can be held to sensitise the community and involve them in linking OOSC with schools.

- **Strengthening linkage between SMCs and PRIs** - Significant handholding will have to be provided to SMC members, especially parents. A programme-level education officer (EO) suggested that a nominal fee can be paid to them as incentive to attend the meetings. It is important to develop rapport between the teachers and the parents, and brainstorming sessions can be included in the SMC work plan. These sessions should be democratic with all members having equal say and right to present their views. The brainstorming sessions can act as an energiser for the SMC members and the most popular ideas can be taken forward with the agreement of teachers and parents.

- **Joint monitoring by ICDS and MSCERT** - Convergence between the ICDS and MSCERT should be sustained. The handbooks developed for AWWs should be updated and revised every 2-3 years. An annual stock-taking exercise should be conducted of AWCS implementing the ECE programme and the lessons learnt from this exercise should be incorporated into the revision.

- **Training for AWWs** - AWWs should be provided with regular handholding and support so that their confidence increases and their capacities are built. The ToT model of training (with ICDS supervisors training the AWWs) should be institutionalised, since it strengthens the ability of supervisors to monitor the ECE service delivery by AWWs.

- **Setting up of Government KGBV cell** - Some administrative issues have emerged in NGO-run KGBVs. The running of KGBVs needs to be closely monitored by the Government. A cadre of KGBV personnel can be set up with surplus teaching staff available in Maharashtra. These teachers can be trained to become district-level RPs and one or two cadres can be assigned to a district depending on the number of KGBVs in that district. UNICEF has offered to work with QUEST and MPSP towards this end. A KGBV monitoring cell should also be set up within the Government at the district and State levels. KGBV reviews, annual reports and complaints should be addressed to the district-level cell, which can either address it at their level or send it upwards to the State cell. The State-level cell should perform analysis of the performance of all 43 KGBVs in the State and present annual reports that should be sent to the Principal Secretary, DoE.

### Project Component 3: Raising awareness and empowering families and communities so that they take collective action against child labour

- **Multi-pronged communication campaign** – Employing a basket of communication activities including mid-media and outdoor media will be effective in sustained information dissemination about child protection rather than a single activity since messages get reinforced with better recall through multiple communication channels. Since rural audiences have lower literacy levels, theatre and visual mediums such as posters, stickers and hoardings will be more effective.

- **Sustaining events at the community level** - Raising awareness should be made focus in the VCPC's
roles and responsibilities so that this task is conducted on an ongoing basis. Community-level events like the VHND (Village Health and Nutrition Day) and Immunisation Day, should be capitalised on to deliver messages about child protection. Using multiple channels of communication has proven to be effective during the Project and hence a VCPC booklet can be developed with recommendations for planning advocacy events with an activity calendar. Hoardings can also be put up in the village with the number of OOSC and CL cases in the village that can be updated every month so that the community is able to see the progress/decline in the situation of child protection.

- **Handholding of AGGs** - AGGs require special handholding since they comprise girls who form a highly vulnerable group in the community. The Deepshikha Prerika needs refresher training and mentoring so that she can guide and lead the AGGs and enable adolescent girls to raise their voice for child protection and education, and develop their own life skills.

- **Continued support by NGOs** - CBOs such as VCPCs, AGGs, and village volunteers should be continued to be supported by NGOs and the Government, as these are relatively nascent structures in addressing issues of child protection including child labour/OOSC and child marriage. This will also ensure that the momentum gained under the Project in collectively addressing such issues is maintained and further consolidated beyond the Project period.

- **Bolstering effectiveness of CBOs and PRIs** - CBOs and PRIs are effective bodies for addressing issues related to child labour/OOSC and should continue to engage with the community to promote education and address cases of child labour and child marriage.

- **Engaging with community leaders** – Often, community leaders themselves have misconceptions about child labour and child marriage. Since they influence the community, it is important to educate them through IPC and also through official means. The roles and responsibilities of the Sarpanch can be expanded to include advocacy and monitoring against child abuse including child labour and child marriage. This will ensure that child protection in a village does not depend on/is hindered by the personal views of community leaders.

- **Harnessing energy of youth volunteers** - Youth volunteers can play a vital role as drivers of change. They form the link between the community, children, school and Government mechanisms. This link needs to be recognised by all stakeholders and nurtured by the Government.

### Project Component 4: Enhanced Access to Social Protection Schemes for Vulnerable Families

- **Holistic approach** - Towards a more holistic approach to providing social protection for children, there is a need to strengthen information dissemination on quality education systems so that families who receive the benefits of social protection have avenues to provide education for their children. This reinforces the model of the Project and establishes that all four interventions of the Project need to be carried forward for optimum gains in all four outcomes.

- **Increasing BSY compensation** - UNICEF and NGO partners should advocate for increase in financial support to families under BSY scheme. Presently, compensation received under the BSY is not sufficient to adequately support families and there have been Policy-level views that it should be increased to INR 1200. State-level meetings have been held to discuss this proposed increase.

- **State-level mapping of schemes** - Mapping of social protection schemes should be carried out at the State-level. Findings should be shared with NGOs and CBOs/PRIs to carry out information dissemination activities with community members along with a drive to register eligible families. The district-level database at Wardha can be replicated in all districts. Schemes listed in each district should reflect the demographic and economic situation of respective districts; for example, tribal schemes should be comprehensively enlisted in districts with large tribal populations. The State-level database should be a compendium of all district-level schemes.
• **Provision of information booklet on schemes** - The Government should provide a booklet about schemes at the GP level and also monitor registration for the schemes. The *gram sewak* should review the process. It will be effective if the *gram panchayat* takes the lead in this and disseminates information properly.

• **Registration by community leaders** - Information about social protection schemes can be disseminated during community events and beneficiaries can be registered under the leadership of the *Sarpanch* and *gram sewak*. This will impart an official nature to the proceedings and families will not feel as if NGOs are registering people selectively. NGOs need to be partnered with so that paperwork for beneficiaries can be filed in the appropriate manner.

• **Regular surveys** - The Maharashtra DWCD has undertaken a survey of children who fall in the category of CNCP. This is a positive outcome and the survey can be conducted on a yearly basis or once every two years. A recommendation has also been made by the Deputy Commissioner for an analysis of available data as that will help in increasing access to social protection schemes.

• **Maintenance of NGO linkages** - Links between CBOs and NGOs / grassroots organisations and between CBOs and the Government administration at block and district levels, should be maintained to continue working on issues related to social protection of vulnerable families.