THEMATIC EVALUATION OF UNICEF CONTRIBUTION TO
CHILD CARE SYSTEM REFORM IN KAZAKHSTAN,
KYRGYZSTAN, TAJIKISTAN, TURKMENISTAN AND
UZBEKISTAN
Final report part I: Synthesis
Acknowledgements

The evaluation team warmly acknowledges the contribution of the UNICEF country offices in the five countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) in providing very valuable technical insights for the study as well as in assisting the organisation of the interviews. The team expresses its thanks also to the UNICEF regional office in Geneva for their guidance during the planning and implementation of the evaluation.

Parents and children, social work professionals, numerous government and local authority stakeholders and development partners gave their time generously and expressed interest in engaging with the evaluation and this is also warmly appreciated. All interviewees provided pertinent information which aided the team’s understanding of UNICEF’s contribution to child care reform in the region. Interviewees are listed in Annex B.

A note on the evaluation team (including UNICEF contact)

This evaluation was carried out by Oxford Policy Management (OPM), a UK-based consultancy firm, in partnership with CASE-Kyrgyzstan, a research organisation in Bishkek. The team consisted of Gordon Peters (team leader and senior expert in social services); Anne Thomson (senior expert in evaluation); Clare O’Brien (project coordinator and consultant in social services); Roman Mogilevsky (Kyrgyz team leader); Aziz Atamanov (CASE researcher); Irina Lukashova (CASE researcher); and Irina Makenbaeva (CASE researcher).

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Executive summary

This two-volume report is an evaluation of UNICEF’s contribution to child care reform in the five central Asian countries—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan—between October 2003 and July 2007. Most of these activities have been carried out under the project ‘Every child has a right to grow up in a family environment’ funded by the Human Security Trust Fund (HSTF). The evaluation has three objectives: (i) A review of the child care system reform projects undertaken by UNICEF; (ii) a summary of progress made so far in child care reform in each country, and the provision of advice on where best UNICEF should direct its resources in order to contribute most effectively to the reform process; and (iii) the identification of ‘lessons learned’ for UNICEF and others.

The evaluation was carried out between August 2007 and January 2008, with primary data collection taking place on a 7–10 day visit to each country between September and November 2007. In each country the team collected and analysed secondary data and also carried out primary fieldwork. The fieldwork consisted of interviews (mostly 20–30 per country, except in Turkmenistan), an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT), focus groups and direct observation of sites. Respondents include central and local government officials, development partners, non-governmental organisations (NGOs)—including both UNICEF partners and others active in the area of child protection—and staff of pilot and non-pilot institutions, as well as parents or guardians of beneficiaries, and the children themselves.

Meeting the objectives of the evaluation requires first an assessment of the status of child care in each country, and second, an understanding of the way in which a policy cycle shapes the outcomes that are achieved and their impact on the beneficiary. The study develops a diagnostic framework which can be used as a tool for identifying more precisely the components of a comprehensive policy, and understanding where policy can be improved to better realise child rights. This is shown in section 3. In summary, the policy cycle is represented as a four-stage process of problem identification, policy development, policy implementation, and monitoring and review. This cycle, which is relevant to all policy issues, acts on the specific context of child care policy, which in turn is seen in central Asia to have four components, namely family support services, family substitute services, residential care facilities and overarching governance structures. This divides the whole sphere of child care policy into 16 segments (for example, the development of policy on family support services), using which it is possible to articulate more precisely where UNICEF has intervened and where it is most effective.

Section 4 applies this framework to the set of activities planned by UNICEF at the start of the HSTF project. The analysis reveals that activities under the project are very heavily skewed towards policy implementation, with inputs also in the area of policy development; however, identification of the policy problem is limited, and monitoring and review is absent. Country offices have at times amended the nature of their interventions to respond to external factors or to reflect country priorities.

The summative evaluation of UNICEF’s interventions under the HSTF, in section 5, reviews UNICEF’s progress in the different components of policy reform, taking into account the five OECD-DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability, as well as UNICEF’s two additional criteria of attention to rights-based approaches and results-based management.

Activities are generally found to be relevant in the light of the governments’ commitment to the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and their stated positive attitudes to deinstitutionalisation. However, interventions are not always complete: for example,
implementation activities are sometimes undertaken without the necessary advocacy for policy
development that will ensure their long-term sustainability. Conversely, relevant policy
development activities may be undertaken but without following through to ensure that they are
implemented. There has been a greater emphasis on family support services than on family
substitute services.

While child care reform is relevant to the government’s own policies in all countries, there is more
practical evidence of this support in Tajikistan than in other countries; in Turkmenistan the window
of opportunity for discussion may now be beginning to open, while the remaining three countries
are in an intermediate stage.

The HSTF programme is consistent with, and therefore relevant to, the operationalisation of
UNICEF’s global programme in child care reform, and works to support some of the
recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in countries where reports exist;
but, again, it has not been comprehensive in addressing all priority directions of those reports.
Attempts to improve public awareness and achieve better coordination of child care policy have
been evident, but support to an understanding of the budgetary requirements and implications of
the policy reform, and to monitoring and evaluation, has been largely absent though these are
important areas to address.

The situation regarding the relevance of UNICEF’s intervention to other partners is split between
those where there are few other partners (Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) and those where it has
greater opportunity to engage with development partners and NGOs. In Kazakhstan UNICEF could
potentially come to an arrangement of closer complementary activities with NGOs who have
expertise in policy implementation, which would free up UNICEF to focus on policy development.
In the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan the main consideration is the EU, with its programme of
budget support in the social sector. Thus far it has had greater success in the former than the
latter.

Effectiveness was considered in relation to the four components of child care policy listed above.
In terms of reducing the reliance on residential care, UNICEF appears to have had best success in
Tajikistan (though a shortage of reliable data in all countries makes it hard to be certain). In
Kazakhstan the number of children in institutions has remained steady while in the Kyrgyz
Republic they have increased. Figures are not available in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Factors
that have contributed to successful deinstitutionalisation are the attention to the whole policy cycle
(including monitoring of children who leave residential care); the availability and awareness of
alternative services; public support for deinstitutionalisation; the presence of champions of the
reform; and a favourable external environment.

The development of family substitute services is found to be limited, and to have a correspondingly
limited effect. Part of the difficulty has been a peculiar sequencing of interventions in foster care by
which policy implementation was carried out before there was agreement that the policy should be
developed or was even workable. It is of concern that in Kazakhstan some children are being
removed from foster care and placed back into institutions since this is the opposite direction to the
intended policy. Interventions in adoption have not been widespread.

Family support services have been effective to some extent in all five countries. Tajikistan has
some innovative examples such as the diversion projects that work with young offenders, and
reformed consultation and education services for children with disabilities. In the Kyrgyz Republic,
Tajikistan and Uzbekistan there has been success in developing social work as a university-level
subject and as a profession; success is also seen in Kazakhstan, where social work was already
better established.
In all countries except Turkmenistan UNICEF has achieved some important results in supporting the reform of legal and administrative frameworks for child care reform, particularly in drafting regulations and piloting local government structures.

In evaluating the efficiency of the HSTF project the team came to the conclusion that resources could not have been distributed strategically in a manner that might be expected to achieve the best results, since the distribution of the $2.1 million budget for the HSTF project among the five countries appears to have been determined loosely on the basis of their relative population size rather than on the prospects for successful reform or any analysis of the financial capacity of the governments. Country offices had some effect in re-targeting the funds they received to activities that were more of a priority for their own situation. Funding for advocacy was not sufficient to implement the planned activities. Activities were very heavily skewed towards policy implementation but it is not clear that this was always justified given that it is an area in which other actors are also able to contribute.

With regard to impact, it is known that UNICEF has succeeded in avoiding the institutionalisation of some children as a result of its activities in child care system reform since 2003. Exact figures are difficult to establish, but there is anecdotal evidence of these positive instances. In the absence of an effective monitoring system in any country it is difficult to quantify this impact. An important finding is that merely counting the number of children who have been released from institutions does not necessarily reveal accurately whether the impact of the project is successful: an assessment of the real impact of the reform should reflect on the improved well-being of the child. Deinstitutionalisation alone is not sufficient as a goal, since a focus on a quantitative reduction in the number of children in residential institutions risks overlooking the potential negative impact on some children if they are returned to their family environment; and a focus on the number returned to their families may overlook an increased number who have entered the institutions from elsewhere.

There is some indication in the HSTF proposal that the project was intended to be pro-poor, which would suggest that UNICEF might, if desired, choose to support the targeting of its own pilot projects at the poorest section of the population. Discussions with respondents indicate that UNICEF’s interventions have not been strongly pro-poor although they have undoubtedly reached many poor families.

Sustainability was measured from three points of view: financial sustainability, the development of institutional structures and progress in changing public attitudes. In some instances UNICEF has begun to address the issue of financial sustainability at the highest level, as in Kazakhstan where it has advocated changes in the budget process in the interests of children. In the Kyrgyz Republic UNICEF has successfully used the leverage of the EU’s budget support programme to strengthen the financial future of its project activities by working with the EU to achieve the inclusion of the planned nationwide rollout of Family and Child Support Departments (FCSDs) into the matrix of conditionality for budget support. However, the financial sustainability of UNICEF’s initiatives is not yet fully assured. A frequent response by local and national government counterparts to the evaluation team about this issue was that since child care was important, ‘money would be found from somewhere’ to continue the activities as necessary. This optimism overlooks the genuinely resource-constrained environment within which most services are provided, especially in countries other than Kazakhstan.

Governments in all countries have made progress in developing the administrative structures and legislation necessary to improve the opportunities for children to live in a family. A particular contribution by UNICEF to strengthening the institutional framework in the long run has been the support to university social work courses mentioned above. The evaluation team considers this to be a positive and far-sighted initiative since the expectation is that graduates of the courses will
eventually fill positions in central and local government and as active social workers, where they will be advocates for and use the techniques promoted by UNICEF to support the right of the child to live in a family. However, the benefits may take several years to achieve their full impact, and there is a risk that trained social workers may not remain in the profession.

In all five countries there is evidence of a shift in attitudes of some representatives in key positions at central and local government levels and among professionals in favour of family-based rather than residential care. But there remain mixed attitudes among professionals towards deinstitutionalisation and the establishment of community-based services, not so much because of considerations about the welfare of the child—although that sometimes remains an issue—but rather because of the implication of the closure of institutions for the allocation of resources to ministries and the availability of jobs in remote areas. Among the general public some changes in attitude towards child care are apparent in areas where UNICEF is carrying out pilot activities, such as in the FCSD in Issyk-Ata, Kyrgyz Republic and the Parents Education Centre in Tajikistan. UNICEF should now consider how to spread this message further to areas where it does not directly intervene, and to areas where it has not so far achieved significant attitude change.

According to a rights-based approach one would expect to find that UNICEF first identifies the rights of rights-holders and the obligations of duty-bearers and assesses their capacity to fulfil them. It should then support the fulfillment of these rights and obligations throughout the programme cycle by designing and implementing strategies to build these capacities, and monitoring and evaluating outcomes on the basis of human rights principles including the right of children to participate in decision-making. The design of the HSTF programme is certainly intended to promote a rights-based approach as it is in line with the CRC. In implementation, too, UNICEF has fairly consistently provided services which enable duty-bearers—such as parents and governments—to improve their ability to support children in a family-based environment. However, the issues of gender, language and ethnicity, which were absent from the project design, have also not been widely highlighted during implementation. In monitoring and review UNICEF has enabled children to participate in some reviews of child care policy.

If an effective system of results-based management is in place one would expect to find both that UNICEF measures its own activities using a clear and comprehensive system of monitoring and makes adjustments to planning decisions on the basis of the results, and also that it supports the government in improving the availability and quality of its data. The lack of attention to this essential aspect of programming is a recurrent theme of the evaluation. Within UNICEF's own project the concept of managing on the basis of results has not been widely taken up. The objectives of the HSTF project do not conflict with UNICEF's national and international strategies but it is not clear to the evaluation team whether or how the broader results frameworks have been used during the design and implementation of the project, nor how it was intended that they should be used. The HSTF proposal's own brief set of indicators also have no targets and are ambiguous in definition. In any case, data are not available that would assist UNICEF in making an informed evaluation of the results it has achieved.

The use of results-based management processes is underdeveloped at local and national level as it is within UNICEF. Three obstacles are identified: the lack of openness to the discussion of results in some countries; the tendency to base government budgets on previous inputs rather than on results, which reduces the incentive to identify the policy outcomes; and a lack of capacity in monitoring and evaluation.

The report draws out some lessons learned in section 7. Many of these recognise the value of taking a holistic rather than narrow view of child care reform, by addressing all stages of the policy cycle, engaging with as wide a range of stakeholders as possible, and considering the broader socioeconomic context within which child care policy is situated. They also highlight the importance
of ensuring the feasibility of policies by taking into account financial and human resource implications at the planning stage. Examples of best practice from each country are provided in section 8 and include examples of fruitful partnerships, constructive analysis and effective pilot projects.

The report concludes in section 9 with recommendations on where UNICEF may usefully apply its future activity. It is recommended that the organisation identifies its comparative advantage in each country, taking into account the actions and strengths of governments and other development partners as well as its own, and focuses its attention on these areas while ensuring that there are no gaps in the cycle of governments' child care reform policies (such as policies that are developed without a full analysis and understanding of the nature of the problem, or that are implemented but not monitored). Moreover it is recommended that UNICEF continues to pay attention to advocacy activities among the general public as well as among staff of residential institutions and policy-makers. UNICEF should be clear about what it is advocating (e.g. by making it explicit what type of institutions it wishes to reform, since, for example, some are boarding schools that provide education to children who live in remote areas, and the boundary between these and other types of residential facilities is not always distinct). It should be careful also to ensure that the purpose of the messages it conveys is understood so that advice is not misapplied, with detrimental effects on the well-being of the child (e.g. ensuring that a well intentioned but misapplied deinstitutionalisation policy does not result in children being reintegrated into their families and finding themselves at increased risk).

These issues are discussed further in synthesised form, in relation to all five countries together, in this first volume of the report. The second volume contains findings specific to each country in turn.
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<tr>
<td>CEE/CIS</td>
<td>Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States</td>
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<td>CPAP</td>
<td>Country Programme Action Plan</td>
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<td>CRC</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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<td>CRD</td>
<td>Child Rights Department</td>
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<td>DAC</td>
<td>Development Assistance Committee</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>FCSD</td>
<td>Family and Child Support Department</td>
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<td>FCSU</td>
<td>Family and Children Support Units</td>
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<td>HSTF</td>
<td>Human Security Trust Fund</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labor Organisation</td>
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<td>MICS</td>
<td>Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey</td>
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<td>MPC</td>
<td>medical-psychological commission</td>
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<td>MPPC</td>
<td>Medico-Psychological-Pedagogical commission</td>
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<td>NCCR</td>
<td>National Commission on Child Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>non-governmental organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<td>OPM</td>
<td>Oxford Policy Management</td>
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<td>PMPC</td>
<td>Psychological-medico-pedagogical Consultation</td>
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<td>PromSys</td>
<td>Programme Management System</td>
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<td>PRSP</td>
<td>Poverty reduction strategy paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>RCSAC</td>
<td>Republican Centre for Social Adaptation of Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIDA</td>
<td>Swedish International Development Agency</td>
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<td>SWOT</td>
<td>strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children's Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDAF</td>
<td>United Nations Development Assistance Framework</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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PART I: SYNTHESIS REPORT

1 Background to the evaluation

1.1 Scope

UNICEF’s regional office for Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS) has contracted Oxford Policy Management (OPM) to conduct an independent evaluation of the contribution UNICEF has made to child care reform in five Central Asian countries—Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan—between October 2003 and July 2007.

Child care reform—supporting the right of children to grow up in a family environment with community-based support where required, and advocating a reduced reliance on residential care—is one component of UNICEF’s activities in child protection, a broad area which also includes juvenile justice, and the prevention of child abuse and trafficking. Child protection interventions are a core part of UNICEF’s activities and form one of the five focus areas of both its current and previous strategic plan worldwide.

Almost all of the child care reform activities in this period have been carried out under the project ‘Every child has a right to grow up in a family environment’ funded by the Human Security Trust Fund (HSTF), for which the proposal was submitted in October 2003 and which formally came to an end in July 2007. The activities under that project are the central focus of attention, as agreed in the terms of reference. The only other major source of external funding has been the provision of $670,000 by SIDA for the project ‘Promoting the deinstitutionalisation process in the Republic of Tajikistan’ which took place in Tajikistan from 2004–06. Activities from that source are also included in the evaluation although the SIDA project has already undergone its own separate evaluation so full details are not reproduced in this report. Some activities funded by UNICEF from its own resources are also evaluated where appropriate. A lighter evaluation was conducted in Turkmenistan than the other four countries, reflecting UNICEF’s less extensive engagement there.

1.2 Purpose

According to the terms of reference the evaluation serves three purposes:

• to fulfil accountability towards the donors, beneficiaries and other stakeholders by providing information on how funds have been spent and to what extent objectives have been met;
• to increase learning on how best to support future child care reform. This includes the provision of advice on where best UNICEF should direct its resources in order to contribute most effectively to the reform process; and
• to inform a regional strategy on child protection in the different countries.

The end of the HSTF project is one of the factors that has determined the timing of this evaluation, the other being the mid-term review of many of the country offices.

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1.3 Objectives

The evaluation has three objectives:

‘1: Provide the current UNICEF-donor and the beneficiary of the support (Governments of the different countries) with an evaluation of impact, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the different activities in the project “Every Child has the Right to Grow up in a Family Environment”. Human rights and results based management.

2: Assessed against the progress made so far in the reform of child care system (the set up and changes in the system), and the social-, economic and political context of the country, provide UNICEF country offices with feedback on [the areas of reform so far, significant achievements and areas requiring further development].

3: Inform global and regional strategies based on the experience in the five countries.’ (UNICEF terms of reference, section 5).

Meeting these objectives requires first an assessment of the status of child care in each country, and second, an understanding of the way in which a policy cycle shapes the outcomes that are achieved and their impact on the beneficiary. The study develops a diagnostic framework which can be used as a tool for identifying more precisely the components of a comprehensive policy, and understanding where policy can be improved to better realise child rights. In this way, the rights-based approach is applied in a manner that can help to identify and overcome the obstacles in service delivery that lead to ineffective or inefficient spending, whilst recognising the political environment and the overall resource constraints. The cyclical nature of the diagnostic framework acknowledges that engaging in policy cycles is an iterative process: policy debates evolve over time, new issues emerge and others become less important, and new policy entry points therefore arise. For this reason the tools developed here are seen as part of a process of engagement that will continue to be relevant to understanding child care policy over the long term, not only for UNICEF but also for other development partners and for country governments.

The team recognises the consensual nature of UNICEF’s partnership with national governments to achieve improved child protection and development; however, while this is taken into account, it is also important that the evaluation retains its independence and offers a fair consideration of progress in responding to the three main objectives.

1.4 Outline of this report

This summary report consists of two parts. The first part (sections 1–9) is the synthesis which brings together findings from all five countries, outlining trends and providing cross-country comparisons where appropriate. It is intended to be relevant across the region and more generally as a framework for engaging in child care reform. The second part provides further detailed findings and recommendations for each of the individual countries in turn, and is contained in a separate volume.
2 Methodology

2.1 Approach to the evaluation

The team conducted the evaluation with reference to seven criteria as agreed in the terms of reference (see Annex D). These are the five core principles for evaluation of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC), i.e. an analysis of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the work carried out; plus the two additional UNICEF criteria of adherence to rights-based approaches and results-based management.

The evaluation comprised three stages: the inception, the fieldwork and the reporting phase. During the inception phase the team conducted a detailed desk review of available secondary data, developed a set of questionnaires for evaluating performance during the site visits and liaised with the country offices to set up a programme for the fieldwork. The team met and consulted with staff of the UNICEF regional office to obtain feedback and refine the understanding of the requirements.

In the fieldwork phase the team conducted a series of visits, one for each of the five countries, to evaluate UNICEF’s performance. Qualitative research methods were used to obtain primary data from project beneficiaries and other stakeholders. At the same time further secondary data was collected and analysed as necessary. A description of the secondary and primary data sources, collection methods and any limitations is provided in the next subsection. At the end of each visit the team reported back its initial thoughts and findings to the UNICEF country office to allow the opportunity for discussion and clarification from both parties. A preliminary report was then drafted and submitted to each country office for comments.

In the reporting phase the consultants reviewed the results and comments and synthesised the findings. This report is the outcome of that process.

2.2 Data sources

2.2.1 Secondary data

The secondary data that was collected and analysed at the inception and fieldwork stages included government materials (legislation, strategies and action plans); information from UNICEF and other donors (project proposals and workplans, budgets, reviews, consultancy reports, situation analyses, monitoring plans, training materials); and statistics from state statistical agencies, ministries of finance (in few countries), the Innocenti Research Centre and other sources where relevant for individual countries such as the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) for Uzbekistan. Analysis of these data served three purposes:

- understanding of the baseline (the situation in October 2003, before the start of the HSTF project) and the current situation regarding child care reform in each country. This includes an indication of the government's priorities in the area of social protection, and the extent of the government's support for deinstitutionalisation and the development of community-based services;
• understanding and evaluating UNICEF’s planned and actual response to that country context; and
• showing the availability and quality of data, which itself constitutes a finding in that it indicates the degree to which evidence can be (and is) used for planning and monitoring.

The quantity and reliability of statistical data collated by government sources were very variable, and in none of the five countries could the figures be relied upon with full confidence in their accuracy. Data held by state statistical committees were generally more readily available than those of other sources; records were only occasionally obtained from individual local government bodies or facilities, and even then only for the most recent set of figures rather than a time series. It proved extremely difficult to obtain details from ministries of finance or line ministries on government expenditure on residential and family-based care: only in the Kyrgyz Republic were full figures supplied for budgeted and actual spend on residential care for the evaluation period. No country collected information on expenditure across the entire child care sector including private institutions. Data on children at risk were more often absent. Analytical reports from UNICEF and other sources were very valuable in assessing the situation from available data despite the gaps. There was a tendency, including at UNICEF country offices, for information to be increasingly hard to obtain if it was more than about two years old, which made it difficult to identify a baseline.

2.2.2 Primary data

Primary data collection took place in all five countries of the region in September–November 2007. These consisted of an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT), key informant interviews, focus groups, and observation of pilot sites (see details in subsections below). The primary data were important for providing a qualitative assessment of UNICEF’s activities as well as clarifying and checking secondary sources and quantitative statements.

SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis, undertaken at the UNICEF country offices with child protection staff and some other officers, provided the team with an overview of all components of the evaluation from the perspective of the organisation itself, and gave UNICEF staff the opportunity to reflect on the progress of their programme since 2003. The responses were validated and explored more deeply in subsequent interviews with other stakeholders.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were held with central and local government officials, development partners, non-governmental organisations (NGOs)—including both UNICEF partners and others active in the area of child protection—and staff of pilot and non-pilot institutions. Access was granted to most of the main actors in child care reform with few exemptions. In Turkmenistan it was impossible to meet central government officials because no permission had been received from this country’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It appeared to be impossible to meet representatives of ministries of finance except in the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan, while this ministry in Kazakhstan provided data on budget expenditures on child care. In Uzbekistan site visits were accompanied by officials, but this was sometimes useful as it allowed the team to talk directly to

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2 Operating in an environment with limited information flows and availability is a challenge not only for the evaluation team but also for the implementers of the UNICEF project; this is a theme that recurs throughout this report (see e.g. sections 5.1.3 and 5.7).

3 In Tajikistan the SWOT was conducted at the end of the visit rather than the beginning.

4 See annexes.
and learn from key officials in central or local government. The number of interviews was 20–30 in all countries but Turkmenistan, where 12 interviews were held.

A set of core questions was developed in advance of the interviews that were common to all countries with variations dependent on the type of respondent (one set for UNICEF's implementing partners, another for local government administration, another for central government line ministries etc.). These enable cross-country comparison. Actual questions asked were variants on these core themes.

Many meetings took place on UNICEF premises in each country, although the UNICEF country team was usually absent from the interviews; this is considered beneficial in that it permitted respondents to feel that they could talk more objectively than might have been the case in the presence of UNICEF staff. For meetings and site visits held outside UNICEF's premises the situation was different in different countries. In Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic UNICEF offices assisted in appointing meetings, but were never present on them, while in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and, partially, in Tajikistan the evaluation team members were usually accompanied either by UNICEF officers, or by their local partners. It is possible that this constrained interviewees in expressing their position on discussed issues. The presence of UNICEF staff and their colleagues on these meetings was explained by restrictive government procedures (in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) or by logistical reasons owing to the simultaneous presence of another consultancy mission (in Tajikistan).

**Focus groups**

Typically three focus groups—two with children aged below 12 and 12+ and one with adults—were held in every country. The number of participants per group varied from five to 10, and the team requested a mix of males and females in the group.

In the focus groups for children, in all countries except Uzbekistan the participants were residents or beneficiaries of pilot institutions; in Uzbekistan there was no visit to a pilot institution, so a single focus group with children was held with members of Uzbekistan Children's Parliament. Focus groups for children were conducted in line with UNICEF's guidance for the inclusion of children in research, monitoring and evaluation: for example, children were informed of the purpose of the research and were free to express their views or not to participate\(^5\). Regarding focus groups with adults, in the Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan participants were biological or foster parents of children affected by UNICEF activities. In Kazakhstan and Tajikistan focus groups with adults were replaced by a series of informal interviews with foster parents or parents of children with disabilities, because it appeared to be logistically difficult to gather all interviewees in one place simultaneously. It is recognised that there is a risk of bias from discussions with focus groups since participants were not randomly selected, but often were chosen by the director or other staff member of the facility.

The team prepared in advance a broad outline of the areas of discussion and explained to the group that participation was voluntary and confidential. Particular attention was paid to the circumstances of children in these groups. During the discussion the interviewers responded flexibly to the direction of conversation taken up by the participants.

**Observation of sites**

Team members were shown around the premises of residential care facilities, shelters, day centres or family support centres, and training or learning establishments, by the directors of the facilities. This permitted the team to observe the conditions and the activities that were taking

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5 For the full protocol see UNICEF Evaluation Office (2002).
place, have informal conversations with staff, children, parents and adult users of support services, and in the case of professional development to discuss staff and student progress and concerns. This contributed to the team’s understanding of the effectiveness and impact of the work and the sustainability of the arrangements, and enabled an assessment of the promotion of child rights. The team was given access to all areas of the sites visited.

2.3 Geographical coverage

The fieldwork was conducted in capital cities and main towns and other sites where some pilot projects are located. The amount of time available for fieldwork was tightly constrained at seven to 10 days per country, so it was not possible to visit every pilot area supported by UNICEF. The selection of pilot sites to visit was made in consultation with the UNICEF country offices; the evaluation team also visited nearby non-pilot facilities for comparative purposes where possible. Some remote pilot sites in Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic were contacted by telephone; in Uzbekistan it was not possible to arrange visits to the remoter Karakalpakstan nor to the Fergana.

Table 2.1 Locations contacted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Locations contacted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>Almaty, Astana, Shymkent, Ust-Kamenogorsk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyz Republic</td>
<td>Batken, Bishkek, Issyk-Ata, Jalalabad, Moskovsky raion, Orlovka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>Dushanbe, Gafurov, Isfara, Khudjand, Kurgan-Tube</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>Abadan, Ashgabat, Mary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>Angren, Bukhara, Samarkand, Tashkent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: OPM. Note: Full details of locations visited and interviews held are provided in Annex B.

The team is aware of the political and cultural differences between the countries in the region as well as the commonalities and has strived to be sensitive to these during the evaluation.
3 Understanding the child care reform process

3.1 Components of the process

The development, implementation and reform of child care policy, as with any policy, can be seen as a continuous cycle (Figure 3.1). The cycle begins with the identification and articulation of the problem to be resolved, which leads to the development of policies to address it. The policy is implemented, and the results are monitored and reviewed, feeding into a new understanding of the nature of the problem, revisions to the policy and/or improvements in policy implementation. External factors may act at any stage to speed up or delay the process, to change the nature of the problem or to divert attention and resources in and out of the system.

Figure 3.1 Elements of the policy cycle

Source: OPM. Note: This simplified diagram shows the policy cycle as one continuous loop though there may be other feedback mechanisms, e.g. monitoring and review may lead directly to revisions in policy development or implementation.

In the case of child care in central Asia the policy that is being addressed in this cycle is the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which all five countries are signatories, and which aims to put the best interests of the individual child at the centre of child care policy issues. In particular, a core goal (and the focus of the HSTF project) is to enable every child to fulfil his or her right to live in a family environment wherever possible.

The principle of the policy is a three-stage response to the care of a child in need of support. The first response, in order of priority, is to try to explore ways of keeping the child in his or her own family with a set of support services that enable the child's physical, emotional and social needs to be met. These family support services might include home visits from a qualified social worker, attendance at day care services, or financial assistance to the family. If it is not appropriate for the child to be maintained in the family environment in this way the second stage is to identify an alternative family for the child. These family substitute services include guardianship, adoption and temporary foster placement. Only if all these options are exhausted or found to be unsuitable should a child be placed as a last resort in the third stage of care, full-time temporary or permanent.
residential care. All of these stages are fluid and it is expected that children may use different services at different times, depending on their need, but always with the preferred service determined by the prioritisation just outlined.

The whole child care system is supported by a set of governance structures (shown by the dotted circle) which ensure that the policy can be upheld. These may be both national and local government bodies, including statutory services such as guardianship authorities and Commissions for Minors.

The types of support offered to children in central Asia prior to the policy reform, and the planned result of the changes, is represented in 0. The solid circles represent the total number of children being served by the child care system. The innermost ring shows the first stage of support, family support services. The second ring denotes the next alternative, family substitute services. The outermost solid ring denotes residential care services.

Figure 3.2  The status and direction of child care policy

Source: OPM.

The left-hand diagram indicates the situation regarding child care prior to any reform. All countries inherited at independence a system that relied largely on residential care services, far from a family-based environment as a solution to child care issues. Family substitute services, mainly in the form of guardianship but also adoption, though not short-term fostering, were also available. Family support services, on the other hand, were almost non-existent.

The right-hand diagram indicates how the system is intended to change as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is implemented. The aim is to alter the proportion of children being served by different services to bring them closer to the goal of a family-type environment. According to these principles the proportion of children being served by family support services should greatly
increase; family substitute services are also available as an alternative; while residential care absorbs only the tiny proportion of children whose cases cannot be resolved by other means.

At the same time that the proportion of the different types of service can change it is important to remember that the size of the whole circle—i.e. the number of children requiring services—may also increase. So an expansion in the proportion of children receiving, say, family support, and a corresponding reduction in the proportion in residential care, does not automatically mean that the total number of children in residential care has been reduced if in fact the total number of children requiring support is increasing at the same time. The size of the whole circle may increase for many reasons including deteriorating economic circumstances and increased poverty, greater migration flows causing parents to work away from their children, or an improved identification of children in need. Conversely, the size of the whole circle may decrease if economic conditions improve, there is a shift in public attitudes so that people cease to see institutions as the best option for their child, or cultural traditions encourage care and support within the child's own family. The goal is to ensure that the child care system is sufficient so that all children requiring care receive the support they need.

### 3.2 The policy cycle in child care reform

Combining an understanding of the different elements of the policy cycle with the specific components of the child care system results in Figure 3.3: a policy process that revolves around putting the best interests of the child at the centre of decision-making. The role of government, with the support of its partners, is to carry out a policy process that leads to improved outcomes for the child by putting in place the systems that will enable children to live in a family-based environment wherever possible.

**Figure 3.3  The policy cycle in child care reform**
Without attending to all four components of the policy cycle there is a risk that the overall goal will not be achieved. The cycle is relevant for all the types of child care service.

**Problem identification.** Whilst the principal purpose of the whole system is defined—to enable the child to live in a family—it is nonetheless important to begin with a clear identification of the problems to be addressed. These include the number of children needing support, the nature of their needs, the number currently served, the resources currently available (which may include infrastructure and human resources as well as financial resources), and the structures in place that maintain the *status quo*. Problems can occur at all levels and might include, for example, the resistance of families to social work intervention at home under family support services; the shortage of willing adoptive or foster parents for family substitute services; the quality of care in residential services; or a lack of attention to child care issues in governance structures.

**Policy development.** Having identified the problem, the next step is to develop a policy to address it. This may include defining a child care strategy, engaging in policy debates, and getting consensus among all relevant stakeholders, to the extent possible, on the way to proceed. The policy development process elaborates the nature of the services to be provided, the means by which the proportion of family support and family substitute services will be increased and residential care will be decreased, and the responsibilities of national and local government and others in overseeing its implementation.

**Policy implementation.** At the implementation stage the policy is set in place. For a policy to be implemented it is necessary not only to have passed the legislation but also to ensure that the administrative structures are present to support the system, the funding mechanism is assured, human resources are sufficient in both quantity and quality (e.g. social workers are recruited and trained) and all interested parties remain involved. Pilot projects can be a way of carrying out policy implementation on a small scale prior to larger rollout of the policy.

**Monitoring and review.** A crucial part of the process is to understand the extent to which reforms have been implemented, and the effect of the activities that have taken place: what works well and what is less successful, and the reasons for the obstacles. This enables adjustments to take place to improve the overall system at the next stage of planning. Without monitoring there is no way to understand whether resources have been used in the most appropriate manner to achieve the central purpose.

### 3.3 The status of the reform in central Asia

#### 3.3.1 Background

The five countries of Central Asia were all previously republics of the former Soviet Union and all gained independence simultaneously in 1991. They therefore share the same heritage in terms of the general level of social and economic development and the system of governance. They are also close culturally because of the ethnic roots that are common for the majority of the region's population and also because of their common Soviet experience. However, the development path since independence has been quite different for all five countries, with the result that their social and economic situations are now divergent.

In terms of economic development all these countries but Kazakhstan are classified by the World Bank as belonging to the low-income category; Kazakhstan belongs to the lower-middle-income category. In recent years all five countries have experienced fairly fast economic growth, which has contributed somewhat to the improvement of living standards in the population and allowed all
governments to increase public expenditure. The government budget situation is considerably better in resource-rich countries (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), than in relatively resource-poor Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan. Despite the recent economic growth, poverty is an acute problem throughout the region (in Kazakhstan—to a lesser, but still significant extent), especially in rural areas and small towns. The abundance of the workforce and lack of attractive employment opportunities at home drive many citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to migrate to neighbouring countries, mainly Russia and Kazakhstan, in search of jobs. This has numerous economic and social implications for the general development of these countries and, importantly, for migrants’ families and children. In the context of the diagrams outlined above, improvements in economic wellbeing can reduce the size of the circle of children requiring support, and at the same time increase the amount of resources potentially available to address the issue; the remittances sent home by migrant families, too, can improve wellbeing and reduce dependence on the child care system, though this is counteracted by the risk that the absence of the worker increases the number of children requiring alternative care.

Strictly vertical decision-making and implementation structures are characteristic for all countries of the region. Elements of decentralisation are weak or absent in these countries, so any policy change is possible only if it is supported on the top policy level, until proposed decentralisation policies are achieved.

The population of these countries varies from 5.2 million in the Kyrgyz Republic and Turkmenistan to 26 million in Uzbekistan. In all countries the share of children in the population—and therefore the total number who may need support—is relatively high, ranging from about one-third in Kazakhstan to 45% in Tajikistan.

3.3.2 Progress in the policy cycle

The importance of child care as a public policy problem is acknowledged by all five governments and reflected in the fact that they are signatories to the UN CRC. Specification of the exact scale and nature of the problem is impeded by an absence of reliable data. Policy development on the wider issues of social protection and poverty reduction is on the political agenda everywhere: special chapters on social protection are present in poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) and similar long- and/or mid-term strategic policy documents in all five countries. Specific child care issues are addressed in these countries’ government programmes to varying extents. In Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan there are special government programmes devoted to the problems of child care; the other two countries do not have specific programmes, although in Tajikistan child protection issues are explicitly addressed in the PRSP 2007–09. The political significance of child care issues is highlighted by the particular attention paid to this policy area by presidents or the presidents’ family members in all five countries.

Despite the generally positive attitude to the child protection agenda at the top policy level, at the implementation stage the practical actions of the governments do not always conform to the problem’s priority level indicated in the government documents. While budget expenditures on child care have increased in all countries due to the general growth of government revenues, according to available data, in no country did the share of child care expenditures in total public expenditures increase during the period 2003-2007. Moreover, the increased public resources went almost exclusively to support institutional care, which is the most problematic and least effective form of child care. Alternative forms of child care have received some government funding only in the region’s richest country, Kazakhstan, and minor funding in the Kyrgyz Republic.

The systematic monitoring and review of progress is extremely limited in all five countries. Reporting on activities and outcomes is often mechanistic, with the report being an end in itself
rather than an analytical tool that can affect policy. There is little understanding that 'monitoring' is an essential component of the policy cycle—a feedback mechanism where findings are used to make improvements—rather than a synonym for inspection of facilities. Management and budgeting in government tends to be based on inputs (e.g. a percentage increase on the previous year's budget) rather than outputs (the achievement of a successful outcome in a particular area) which provides little incentive to improve the quality and comprehensiveness of analysis.

3.3.3 Types of child care services

The governance structure for child care in all five countries has been inherited from the Soviet Union and is therefore very similar in each of them. The state system is split between several agencies (typically ministries of education, health and social protection) supervising different types of residential institutions with almost no coordination between them. The development of community-based family support services, foster care and other alternative forms of family substitute child care service is a responsibility of local authorities, which do not usually have the resources to undertake serious efforts in this direction. Recently, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan have introduced national government bodies to coordinate child care or child rights policies, accompanied by specialised local government bodies which are sometimes additional too, or a substitute for, traditional statutory services such as the guardianship authority and Commission for Minors\(^6\). These new bodies are intended to improve interagency coordination and achieve the shift from residential to family-focused services. The full results of these actions are yet to be seen.

Residential institutions remain the main element of the current child care system. No reliable data on the number of children in institutions exist, but one estimate suggests that roughly 30,000 children who are deprived of parental care or who have disabilities are now in different types of institutions in the region. If the number of children who reside in institutions even though they are classified as having parental care is also included, the total increases by several tens of thousands. Moreover, no estimate takes account of the number of children in residential care in the private sector, outside the responsibility of the state\(^7\). The rate of institutionalisation of children is a particular problem in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan, where the number of children in institutions is very high by international standards. In Turkmenistan the overall number of children in residential care is uncertain but seems to be lower. Conditions for children in institutions have generally improved in recent years, while malnutrition and abuse are still reported to take place occasionally, and lack of family care and proper socialisation of children remain urgent issues requiring corrective actions.

Reforms in the sector towards deinstitutionalisation and the development of family-friendly forms of child care have been rather slow and inconsistent, but in the last years the governments in all countries but Turkmenistan—influenced by UNICEF and some other stakeholders—have made some important steps towards the development of modern policy approaches in child care (see detailed discussion of the reforms in section 5 of the report). The process of deinstitutionalisation has been swiftest in Tajikistan.

Family substitute services consist largely of guardianship and trusteeship services, generally overseen by the guardianship authority at the local level. Guardians are often members of the child's extended family. It is thought likely that many more children are being looked after

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\(^6\) Uzbekistan has also introduced a specialised government centre, which is, however, more an analytical than a coordinating body.

\(^7\) The exception is Kazakhstan, which has recently begun to address this gap. Its first set of figures, for the number of children in care in 2007, includes those in private institutions.
informally by guardians (such as grandparents) than are known by the state. This has implications for the development of any policy to provide financial support to guardians since there is a possibility that the total number of potential recipients is larger than currently estimated. Foster care has been introduced on a systematic basis in Kazakhstan only, where the government has allocated significant resources for that, although practical implementation of foster care in that country is still imperfect. In the Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan foster care still remains a pilot activity, and it is completely absent in Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. Adoption remains an option, and some efforts have been made in recent years to reduce the rate of children being adopted by people overseas in line with the 1993 Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption; however, respondents in this evaluation confirmed the widespread belief that prospective adoptive parents have a strong preference to adopt babies or very young children, and that this service is less available to older children. In all countries adopted children do not have the automatic right to know their parental background.

Community-based family support services are developed in all five countries as pilots only, usually with the support of UNICEF and other donors. These include day-care services for children with disabilities and young offenders. The social work profession is being strengthened, except in Turkmenistan: tertiary-level training in social work is available in Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan and is being developed in Tajikistan. All countries have different forms of family-oriented government benefits. Some of them are universal (i.e. all families with small children are eligible), while others are targeted on needy groups of the population. The design of almost all these benefits schemes is far from being perfect, and resources allocated for the subsidies by the governments are not large in absolute terms. The combination of insufficient targeting and relatively small amounts of benefits usually cannot prevent vulnerable families from poverty and thus the benefits in their current form are not yet a failsafe mechanism to prevent the institutionalisation of children on the grounds of poverty.

The general status of child care can be summarised as comprising two main policy issues:

1. the need to strengthen the governance structures, resolving the fragmentation of child care between different government agencies and the lack of coordination between them; and
2. the domination of residential institutions as a main form of child care with rudimentary development of sustained forms of alternative family-based care.

One possible source of both problems may be the unwillingness of governments in general to touch the politically difficult problems of resource redistribution, in this case from one agency to another and from traditional institutions to new ones offering community-based and other alternative services. Stakeholders who have vested interests in preserving the current structure of child care system—mainly the leadership of residential institutions, and officials in government agencies to which these institutions are subordinated—have effectively blocked reform attempts in all countries unless deinstitutionalisation has been directly imposed by the president (as in Tajikistan and Turkmenistan). In addition, the attitude of the general public towards residential institutions is often still positive; there is not yet widespread understanding that the key incentive for deinstitutionalisation is the provision of a family-based environment for children to grow up and develop in. This public attitude is also a stumbling block for the implementation of reform.

So, among the key tasks for child care reforms in the immediate future can be seen to be the strengthening and maintenance of interest in child care issues at the top policy level above the usual generally positive attitude, which opens the path to policy development; the further development of a reformed system of child care in a way that addresses the objections of the reform opponents and enables their concerns to be neutralised (or, better, converting them into reform proponents) and builds public support for deinstitutionalisation; the practical development of alternative services; and an improved understanding of the status of reforms undertaken to date.
4 Description of the HSTF project

4.1 UNICEF's objectives

UNICEF's support to child care reform in central Asia was conceived, in line with the goals of the UN CRC, to promote better care for children and to further the fulfilment of their rights to grow up in a family where possible and to develop in a secure social and physical environment. The vision for the three-year, $2.1 million HSTF project encapsulates this in its title, 'Every child has a right to grow up in a family environment'. Its components were designed to help to contribute to the shift in child care policy that is envisaged in 0 above, i.e. to ensure that children are cared for by their parents and grow up in a family environment to the maximum extent possible, that better care is provided to children where there are no parents looking after them, and that institutionalisation is used as a last resort. Specific objectives included to,

'raise public and professional awareness of rights and needs of children accommodated in institutions [...], reverse the trend of institutionalisation in favour of alternative care [and] create a cadre of social workers who will be providing different types of assistance to families and children at the community level' (UNICEF 2003, p.8).

As a long-term objective improved care for children is intended to contribute to broader goals of social wellbeing and stability in the region.

4.2 Planned activities

The project was designed to encompass five sets of activity in each country:

1. analysis and assessments of the child care system and concept for piloting community based social and family work;
2. advocacy, sensitisation and mobilisation of stakeholders;
3. capacity building of professionals;
4. pilots to model service delivery; and
5. promotion and piloting of foster care.

These activities can be mapped against the full picture of child care policy (Figure 4.1 below). They fit into the picture as follows:

- activity no. 1, situation analysis and assessment, is intended to some extent to support the identification of the availability of family-based services, and also to identify the decision-makers and resources that can be used to develop policy. It is also intended to begin to design the policy for piloting family-based services and establish the governance structures (child protection task force) necessary to deliver it;
- activity no. 2, advocacy, is intended to encourage policy development for family-based services;
- activity no. 3, capacity-building, is focused on improving the capacity of practitioners in social work to be able to assess individual needs and respond to them, including through the provision of training at university level;
• **activity no. 4**, pilots for service delivery, is concentrated on models of family support and family substitute services; and

• **activity no. 5**, piloting of foster care, focuses on policy development and implementation for this specific family substitute service.

**Figure 4.1** Alignment of HSTF proposal with policy issues

Looking at the diagram above it is immediately apparent that the focus of the different components of the project is on policy development and implementation; there is some support to problem identification, but none at all to support policy monitoring and review. In terms of the types of activity supported, the focus is on the family-type alternatives, and to a small extent the development of the governance structures to support them; no support is made explicit to improve conditions for those remaining in residential care.

Comparing the project activities with the planned budget the focus becomes even starker: policy implementation activities (the bottom quarter of the circle) consume some two-thirds of the entire planned budget, even allowing for the fact that a proportion of the foster care budget may be spent at policy development level (Table 4.1). Given that some 17% of the budget is devoted to general monitoring and administration of the project, this leaves just 12% for assessment and advocacy activities, and nothing at all to support the government in the wider monitoring of the reform.
Table 4.1 Activities by share of overall project budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Share of budget (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Assessment</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Advocacy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Capacity-building</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Piloting services</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Foster care</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project monitoring and administration</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The fact that UNICEF's interventions under HSTF are designed to be very heavily skewed towards implementation is not necessarily a negative observation, provided that governments or other actors are supporting the other elements of the policy cycle, and that the implementation stage is considered by UNICEF and others to be the area in which its resources are best used. Analysis later in this report discusses the extent to which this is true for the different countries.

4.3 Actual activities, and reasons for divergence

The project design outlined above was considered by UNICEF's country offices to be very rigid. In practice, they introduced flexibility into the scope to find a better harmony with their overall goals or to adapt to changing circumstances. For instance, where foster care was not undertaken resources were shifted to building capacity of social work professionals (Turkmenistan) and to training government officials, improving family support services and increasing public awareness (Tajikistan). The project has taken place against a background of considerable change in external conditions, particularly with the change of political leadership in Turkmenistan and the fall and replacement of the political regime in the Kyrgyz Republic which considerably interrupted project work and decision-making by government partners. In this last country, in particular, the repeated turnover of key decision-makers has resulted in the need to provide increased support to new systems of governance in order to enable policy development to continue. At the same time there has been consideration within UNICEF of an internal shift during this period towards increased support to policy development and an intention to consolidate a reputation as a knowledge base—improving technical assistance in the areas of problem identification and review—and away from its more traditional focus of supporting the proliferation of pilot sites.

The HSTF project has not operated in isolation. Project funds were blended into UNICEF's overall programme of child welfare, which gave greater flexibility in the use of resources albeit at the expense of accurate reporting on expenditure to its individual donors. This has meant that the identification and evaluation of outputs specific to HSTF has been less precise than might otherwise have been expected. The release of HSTF funds was delayed until the second part of 2004 so much of the activity has been concentrated into 2005–07.

4.4 A note on related projects

In the period before HSTF funds were released UNICEF used other funding to build its credibility with partners and to carry out preparatory work in problem identification and policy development: this included raising awareness of the CRC and international standards, conducting advocacy for
professional development and family support, and assist the drafting of legislation. This contributed to the achievement of subsequent outputs under the HSTF.

Other funding was also committed at the same time as the HSTF project was being carried out. By far the largest other single intervention is the SIDA-funded $670,000, two-and-a-half year project on 'Promoting the deinstitutionalisation process in the Republic of Tajikistan' which took place from 2004–06 and which has been the main driver of the deinstitutionalisation programme in Tajikistan. This has largely the same goals as the HSTF, with an additional focus on providing family support by means of microcredit opportunities. Other child care reform projects that have been carried out under UNICEF's own resources have tended to be smaller, such as the project on 'Integrated community-based services for children and families' in the Kyrgyz Republic.

In some instances UNICEF has blended its child care reform activities with other areas of work, such as in Tajikistan where it has close links with the juvenile justice reform programme, delivering projects such as the diversion schemes for young offenders. In Uzbekistan the entry point into child care reform has been the programmes in health and nutrition and early years education, which has helped maintain the relevance of UNICEF's agenda for the government (see section 5.1.2).

4.5 Role of UNICEF and other stakeholders

In designing the HSTF project UNICEF intended to develop a role for itself as facilitator of the establishment of a coalition of different actors such as policy-makers, professionals and beneficiaries. Its main counterparts include government agencies and staff of child care facilities, national and international civil society organisations (see the individual country reports in part II for full details).

Implementation of project activities was generally carried out by UNICEF country office staff. However, in each country UNICEF contracted national or international partners to support its implementation. In Kazakhstan UNICEF contracted several local NGOs during the implementation of its projects, such as the Centre for Social Adaptation of Children which implements a project on the prevention of institutionalisation of children living in a difficult family environment, and the League of Creative Women which contributes to training at summer schools for social workers. In the Kyrgyz Republic the local NGO 'My Family' was contracted to provide training and technical support to the Family and Child Support Departments (FCSDs) in Batken and Moskovsky raions. In Tajikistan ORA International carried out training in social work methods, and Stockholm University oversaw the masters course in social work, while the Children's Legal Centre supports the crossover areas between child protection and juvenile justice such as the diversion projects for first-time young offenders; and UNICEF partnered with Mercy Corps and the National Association of Business Women to manage the microcredit component of the SIDA deinstitutionalisation project. In Turkmenistan, family support services are developed in close collaboration with existing government-funded centres for the additional education of children. In Uzbekistan UNICEF closely collaborated with the Republican Centre for Social Adaptation of Children (RCSAC) as a partner in analytical work and reform promotion.
5 Evaluation of UNICEF activities since 2003

5.1 Relevance

UNICEF is committed both to working to support the implementation of the CRC and also to working alongside, rather than in confrontation with, the government. To this end it needs to strike a balance between influencing the development of government policy with reference to UNICEF’s global programme, and making its own activities relevant to the government’s stated priorities. This has become even more important since the adoption of the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness in 2005. An assessment of relevance must address both components. The evaluation team considered four questions which respond to these concerns:

1. What is the relevance of UNICEF’s child care reform programme in view of the situation regarding child care in each country from 2003 onwards? This considers to what extent the lack of a family environment is a problem in the five countries, what alternatives were already available, and whether there is a demand for reform. It looks at how UNICEF has responded to this reality and whether activities are focused on the most pressing problems.

2. What is the nature of the government’s commitment to reform? This looks at evidence of the government’s interest in child care reform issues (including any changes following political developments), and examines whether UNICEF’s interventions have been timely, flexible, directed at the right people and in line with the government’s strategies, action plans and policy statements.

3. What is the relevance of the programme to UNICEF’s global agenda and to the promotion of the rights of the child, including the concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child?

4. How is the programme related to the interventions of other development partners? Are the objectives aligned or in competition with the objectives of others? Has UNICEF coordinated with other actors and attempted to exert leverage on other investments?

5.1.1 The situation regarding child care since 2003

The first thing to understand is the scale of the problem. All countries inherited at independence a network of residential institutions which, during the Soviet period, had been the state’s primary support for children with disabilities or those without parental care, and which also cared for children whose parents were unable to look after them. Since then, as noted in section 3.3.1 above, differing cultural attitudes and social and economic trends have resulted in wide variations in the rate of institutionalisation of children.

In four out of five countries—Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan—the proportion of children in state-run residential care was reported by respondents to have been high at the start of the HSTF project. Kazakhstan is viewed as being particularly prone to admitting its children to residential institutions: the most recently available data suggest that as many as one in every 56 children under the age of 18 were in some form of residential care in 2003. In

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8 The extent to which UNICEF’s own principles and those of the government are aligned has an impact on how much UNICEF’s role is one of advocacy.

9 UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre (2007). The report gives a figure of 1,799 children in residential care per 100,000 population aged 0–17, including children in general boarding schools who are not necessarily deprived of parental care.
Turkmenistan, on the other hand, the proportion of children in residential care was reported to be very low, and only a fraction of the rate found in any other country of the CEE / CIS. However, data in all countries are extremely unreliable, as was recognised in the HSTF proposal. UNICEF justified its intervention on the basis that, 'according to some estimates there are approximately 200,000 children in residential care throughout Central Asia'; yet the evaluation team was unable to identify any figures that corroborate this assertion, while UNICEF's own data published at the time of the proposal suggested that the figure was in the region of only 31,000. This implies that UNICEF could not have been in a position to respond to a specific and quantifiable need for deinstitutionalisation in central Asia, and certainly could not have tailored the HSTF proposal to reflect the varying needs arising from the different degree of institutionalisation in the five countries, since the real extent of the problem was unknown.

This does not mean, though, that UNICEF's intervention was irrelevant, as all the countries are signatories to the CRC and have committed to reducing the number of children in residential care and increasing the availability of family-based alternatives. One considerable reason to intervene is the need to promote awareness that the existing child care arrangements were not fully aligned with these commitments and that there was therefore a problem that required a policy solution. Throughout the region the attitude to reform has been ambivalent, and remains so. Residential institutions are favoured by many employees of the institutions themselves, who often work in remote locations with limited alternative employment opportunities (all countries), and by members of the public who have so-called 'traditional' attitudes towards support for vulnerable children (e.g. in Tajikistan, where some families are reluctant to include disabled children in regular family life for fear that knowledge of their disability will affect the marriage prospects of their siblings) or who consider that the state is better able to provide for the material needs of the child than an individual family can. But support for deinstitutionalisation is also found in all countries, among many policymakers and professionals at national and local government level as well as in NGOs and among some members of the public.

A second reason to intervene is to support the delivery of the alternative services. In 2003 all countries recognised family substitute services in the form of guardianship or trusteeship: in the Kyrgyz Republic the number of children being looked after by guardians was reported to exceed the number living in residential care. But foster care everywhere was almost completely absent, and the social work profession and other services required to provide family support services were still embryonic. UNICEF's intervention was therefore timely in that all countries displayed evidence, to varying extents, of a shift in attitudes that allowed policy discussions in favour of family-based care, but none had undergone complete transformation and there was therefore room for technical assistance in this field.

As for the relevance of the types of activity carried out, the five planned sets of activities have been implemented to different extents in each country. To summarise their alignment with the policy cycle:

- **Problem identification.** It was noted in section 4.3 above that UNICEF has expressed an interest in becoming seen by government and development partners as a repository of knowledge. One would therefore expect to find that the implementation of the HSTF project has seen an emphasis on research and the dissemination of materials, for which some of the project budget was assigned. Certainly, some analytical activities have taken place in every country and have been generally well received where known. However, it is surprising that UNICEF has not taken full advantage of the opportunity either to conduct research on the

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nature of the problem it is trying to address, or to disseminate more widely the information it produces which would promote awareness of the agenda of child rights. The report that was most widely known and talked about by respondents in terms of its innovation and impact was the report on child abuse in institutions in the Kyrgyz Republic. The evaluation team recognises that the political situation in other countries might not be receptive yet to the content of such a report, but useful lessons could be learned from considering how this report has been publicised and disseminated. Other reports in the Kyrgyz Republic were less widely known and respondents—including government, NGOs and development partners—said they did not receive many reports. In Tajikistan relatively little analytical work has taken place, though a database on children with disabilities is now under development. In Turkmenistan more analysis would have been very relevant since statistics on child care are scarce and the government is not seen to have the intention or capacity to implement these activities itself; however, it is understood that UNICEF's lack of attention to this area may have been an appropriate response to the political context. In Uzbekistan UNICEF is supporting the production of analytical work through the government-supported agency, the RCSAC, which is an effective way of ensuring that outputs are credible with the government and are relevant for policy-making.

• **Policy development.** Advocacy activities, which are an essential precursor to policy development, formed only a small part (2%) of the project budget. Yet advocacy is crucial not only to influence government policy at the highest level to support the implementation of the CRC, but also to assist policymakers in clarifying and articulating their policies and encouraging widespread acceptance and adoption of those policies. Without advocacy the effectiveness of spending on capacity-building and pilot sites is reduced because sustained demand is not generated. It is unfortunate that funds for advocacy were so limited\(^\text{12}\). In the Kyrgyz Republic the country office compensated for this by finding funds from other sources for this purpose.

• **Policy implementation.** The focus on capacity-building, which comprised over 40% of the overall budget for the HSTF project, is an appropriate response to a long-term objective of improving the ability of professionals to provide support directly to families in difficulty, and to broadening access to family substitute services. The considerable investment in training and communicating best practice from an international context, and the promotion of social work, has been one of the most significant and visible components of the HSTF that has resulted in a change of mindset and practices.

Setting up pilot sites is relevant for trialling and demonstrating the feasibility of proposed alternative care arrangements, gaining experience of the practicalities of implementation in particular countries and increasing awareness of child care issues among the general population. It is also beneficial for maintaining good relations with local and national government. The need for UNICEF to set up pilot sites is least pressing in Kazakhstan, where some NGOs are already operating at the community-level, and where the commitment of resources to small community projects gives UNICEF less leverage than might be the case in a more resource-constrained environment. For this reason it is reasonable that pilot activity there has been present but relatively limited.

In the Kyrgyz Republic the development of the Family and Child Support Department (FCSD) in Issyk-Ata raion has demonstrated the potential of pilot sites for improving public awareness of services and establishing alternative methods of care; those in Batken and Moskovsky raions are more recent and are worth pursuing to gain experience in encouraging the transformation of services in a locality that contains residential institutions and that is not so well resourced or amenable to change. The team concludes that it is important to have this range so that a single pilot is not endlessly paraded as the ideal model, a criticism which was

\(^{12}\) See also discussion in section 5.3 below.
raised by one local government department there. However, the experience of Tajikistan suggests that equally it is inappropriate to have too many pilots that reduce the need for governments to absorb procedures into their own systems.

In Tajikistan the number of pilot areas has been particularly high; while UNICEF has demonstrated many successful practices in these nine sites, and deinstitutionalisation has been correspondingly more extensive than in any other country, it is important to remember that UNICEF is not a substitute for government, and that it cannot continue to support these services in the long term. It is appropriate that UNICEF did not repeat its pilot in 15 districts as was planned at one stage. The next step is to move on to identifying how the services can be incorporated into government policy and budgets if they are to be sustained.

In all countries except Turkmenistan UNICEF’s technical assistance has promoted the development of a mix of services including both family substitute services and family support services. In Turkmenistan the focus has been on family support services, including social work training and the establishment of family support centres, rather than family substitute services; the case put forward by UNICEF is that vulnerable families receive financial assistance from the state and there is a tradition of extended family support, so family substitute services such as foster care are less of a priority. In the other countries a limited number of interventions have taken place to support foster care, such as the training of foster parents in Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan, and the printing and distribution of materials. In Tajikistan very little work has been undertaken in this area. In all countries there has been only occasional support, if any, from UNICEF for reform of the adoption system, and UNICEF is not heavily engaged in supporting the Ministries of Health which regulate the infant homes from which many children are adopted.

5.1.2 The government’s commitment to reform

The fact that the five countries are signatories to the CRC indicates a formal commitment to reform of the child care system. The pace of change differs widely.

Tajikistan has proceeded fastest with deinstitutionalisation. The catalyst here was the publication in 2000 of the Concluding Observations of the United Nations (UN) Committee of the Rights of the Child, which contained numerous recommendations for improving the implementation of the CRC, and the subsequent national conference on child protection in 2001 which led to the establishment of an interministerial body for child protection, now the National Commission on Child Rights (NCCR). The UNICEF office has both benefited from, and contributed to, this commitment to reform. Two key areas of success for UNICEF here in supporting deinstitutionalisation, which have ensured that the organisation’s agenda remains relevant to the government’s priorities and that it retains an influential voice at national and local level, are the concentration of efforts on the development of structures at the highest level of government (the NCCR is in the President’s Office); and the provision of widespread training to personnel in residential institutions and those working in child care in other capacities which is important for the long-term improvement of the social work profession.

In the Kyrgyz Republic the publication of the Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in the same year had some impact, with the adoption by the government of a national plan of action, the ‘New Generation’ initiative, but that document is no longer widely used owing to a lack of financial support and the limited participation of stakeholders in its development. Moreover the political instability following the ‘Tulip Revolution’ of March 2005 has resulted in

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13 See e.g. UNICEF (2005b).
frequent reorganisations of administrative structures and personnel. The newly established Department for Child Protection within the State Agency for Physical Culture, Sport and Youth is in a rather weak position to exert influence over the larger ministries which control the residential institutions and their budgets. Although the state of political flux is outside UNICEF's control, the team recommends that UNICEF can and should play a strong advocacy and capacity-building role at government level, actively assisting the Department for Child Protection to develop its credibility. In this it may be able to learn from the experience of the Tajik country office. The high turnover of public sector officials suggests that these narrowly targeted activities should also be accompanied by a much broader advocacy campaign to encourage favourable attitudes towards family-based care among all individuals and not just a few who may subsequently be replaced. This will ensure that the relevance of UNICEF's interventions is maintained. The adoption of the Children's Code in 2006 offers a good platform for promoting such a campaign.

In Kazakhstan child care reform is somewhat peripheral to the government's focus of attention and is not mentioned specifically in either the intermediate or long-term strategic development plans. But this does not mean that activities in this area are irrelevant. In 2006 Kazakhstan established a coordinating body—the Committee on Child Rights Protection (CCRP) which sits within the Ministry of Education and Science rather than above or below the ministry level (as in Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic respectively)—and it has developed a government-wide programme, 'Children of Kazakhstan', to refocus child care activities on alternative forms of care. UNICEF should aim to build on the opportunities presented by these developments. A lesson learned from the Kyrgyz Republic experience which may be a useful reminder for the Kazakhstan office is that the adoption of a programme (in the Kyrgyz case, the Children's Code) is not sufficient to ensure the implementation of reforms; there is a need for sustained advocacy and support to the development of any necessary secondary legislation and identification of funding so that the strategy document is not rendered irrelevant.

In Uzbekistan the government has willingly agreed to seek expert support from UNICEF and wishes to match international standards in child protection. However, its reluctance to discuss or admit negative factors means that UNICEF has had to adapt to the government's priorities and seek acceptable ways of demonstrating the benefits of the reform agenda. UNICEF has succeeded in maintaining the relevance of its project by expressing a strong identification with addressing health and nutrition needs and with early years education and development. This has helped create an opening for the child care agenda, starting from physical protection and support and moving towards overall wellbeing and the realisation of rights. Providing support via education programmes also has the advantage of interaction with ministries of education who tend to maintain the largest role and budgets in overall child care; previously UNICEF has given more attention to the roles of ministries of labour and social protection, as in Uzbekistan and the Kyrgyz Republic.

The issue of deinstitutionalisation is much less prominent in Turkmenistan than the other countries, for some of the reasons outlined in the subsection above, and the window of opportunity to engage with the government on such topics as policy reform, overcoming fragmentation of the child care sector and the development of services with disabilities is not yet fully open. From this perspective it is appropriate that UNICEF has directed its assistance mainly at building the capacity of professionals working in related fields. The Turkmen office may be able to look at the experience of the Uzbek office in finding an entry point into discussions on child care reform if the political environment becomes more favourable.

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15 The 'Children of Kazakhstan' programme has just been approved, in December 2007.
5.1.3 UNICEF’s global programme and the promotion of the rights of the child

UNICEF’s global strategy in child care reform aims to support the implementation of the CRC, and it can achieve this by assisting governments to carry out the recommendations of the Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. All countries in the region apart from Turkmenistan received a set of recommendations shortly before the start of the HSTF project, between 2000 and 2003, so the project would have been well placed to respond to the reports and address the most urgent problems identified. Four recommendations stand out as being common to all the reports and essential for improving the implementation of the CRC in relation to child care reform. These are: increased public awareness and participation (which affects problem identification and policy development and implementation), improved coordination (i.e. support to the development of governance structures), consideration of the adequate distribution of resources (a policy implementation issue), and the strengthening of monitoring and evaluation systems (for policy monitoring and review). The first two of these have been addressed to varying degrees by UNICEF but the second two have received little or no attention. The evaluation team recommends that UNICEF considers how to contribute more fully to the government’s policy reform in these areas in order to make a real and lasting change in the way the system operates.

- **Public awareness.** Lack of public awareness of child care issues is highlighted in the HSTF proposal as a barrier to reform, and there have been steps towards improving this on a small scale in most countries (though this has been difficult to address in Turkmenistan, where there have been few chances to influence the attitudes of the general public). In Tajikistan, for example, there have been discussions with rural community leaders, and leaflets have been distributed. Indirectly, the support for non-residential facilities in pilot sites in all countries offers a way for UNICEF to encourage more positive attitudes among the public. (See discussion on the need for public awareness in order to improve sustainability, in section 5.5 below.)

- **Coordination.** It was noted above that Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan have all established national coordinating bodies for child rights and child protection, with the NCCR in Tajikistan being the longest established and the body with which UNICEF has developed the closest relations. UNICEF has had some input into the emergence of these coordinating bodies, though not always with the degree of effectiveness desired: it might be considered an advocacy failure, for instance, that in the Kyrgyz Republic the organisation was unable to persuade the authorities of the importance of locating the department in a sufficiently high position in the administrative structure (see discussion in section 5.2 below).

- **Financial resources.** The HSTF proposal contains no mention of encouraging the reform of central government budget allocations in favour of community-based non-residential care and the development of social work; and very few interventions were carried out in this area during the project’s implementation. UNICEF Kazakhstan has been advocating for changes in the budget process in the interests of children and held a conference on the subject in 2007, while the country offices in Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic state that they have been carrying out some analysis of the relative costs of residential and non-residential care since the end of the period under evaluation. There is no evidence of these discussions in Uzbekistan or Turkmenistan. Without a thorough understanding of the costs and securing of sources of funding for strategies and legislation such as Tajikistan’s National Plan of Action for the Interests of the Child 2003–10 and the Kyrgyz Republic’s Children’s Code, the support to the development of those strategies is likely to have limited impact.

- **Monitoring and evaluation.** The lack of support for monitoring activities is disappointing. While UNICEF has had some involvement with the national statistical offices in each country through the TransMONEE project, which gathers data in a number of social sectors including child care, this has not been accompanied by a drive to improved the accuracy of statistics or to support the use of data by ministries in policy-making. It is difficult for UNICEF to ensure that
its interventions remain relevant to the country situation when it is not possible to identify changes in that situation. This is discussed further in section 5.7 below.

5.1.4 Involvement of other partners

The scope for coordinating UNICEF’s activities with those of other development partners can be categorised in two groups. On one side, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have seen few other actors engaged in child care reform during the period under evaluation. In visual terms it can be imagined that the circle defining interventions in child care policy, as shown in the earlier chapters, is almost empty of any other players. In Uzbekistan some recent political events resulted in other partners such as Save the Children UK reducing their interventions considerably, and UNICEF can be considered successful for maintaining its own presence in the country. It is concluded from the experience of these countries that this relative isolation can have positive as well as negative consequences. The drawback is that there are fewer possibilities to increase impact by exerting leverage over additional funds from other partners; yet it means that UNICEF has a vitally influential role in helping the government to shape its agenda and implement the CRC. In those circumstances UNICEF has the potential to provide essential technical support to any stage of the policy cycle and to any component of the child care system, with the agreement of the government.

On the other side, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan have had greater—though still relatively limited—opportunity to coordinate activities with other partners. In Kazakhstan the most active are international NGOs such as the Soros Foundation, the Eurasia Foundation and SOS Kinderdorf. Some of these are operating at the community level, including implementing family-based alternatives to large-scale residential care; all of them have reasonably good relations with the government. Since these opportunities for policy implementation exist there is less need for UNICEF also to act in that area (indeed, UNICEF has carried out fewer pilot activities in Kazakhstan than elsewhere). Here the evaluation team concludes that the development partners could benefit from a natural division of labour in which UNICEF moves up to an earlier stage in the policy cycle and takes a lead in supporting policy development while NGOs take on some of the implementation of related pilot projects. While all parties seem to recognise the advantages of such an approach it seems that this collaboration is not yet optimal.

Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic have budget support programmes in the social sector funded by the EU. In the Kyrgyz Republic UNICEF’s coordination with the EU has been both timely and relevant at the policy development stage since it has enabled the incorporation of child care reform criteria into the matrix of conditionalities for budget support, which has a much greater financial leverage over the government than UNICEF is able to achieve alone. In Tajikistan UNICEF has been less closely involved with the EU and it is recommended that UNICEF forges closer links with this key donor. The introduction of the EU’s budget support programme is obliging the Ministry of Finance in Tajikistan to consider the inclusion of alternative services such as day-care centres into the government budget. UNICEF must seize this opportunity for real change at the level of policy development and implementation by working with the EU to learn from their experiences and to find a way of institutionalising the funding requirements for the piloted services in the state budget. Achieving a successful outcome may require UNICEF to bring in high-level expertise in public finance.

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16 The EU is now establishing social sector support.
17 The country office in Uzbekistan, for instance, recognised both the positive and negative aspects of its isolated position (see SWOT analysis in Volume II, Annex A.5).
In all five countries it is notable that no development partner or NGO is taking a strong lead in the stages of the policy cycle relating to problem identification and monitoring and review. It is apparent that this gap in UNICEF’s own support to child care policy reform is not being filled by other partners. Once again this highlights an area where UNICEF could provide a valuable complement to the contributions of other partners, or where it could work with others to identify the best partner to carry out support in this area.

5.2 Effectiveness

Effectiveness was evaluated by examining the extent to which UNICEF’s activities have achieved desirable outcomes, and planned outputs were met, in the four components of the system: deinstitutionalisation (i.e. the move away from residential care); family substitute services; family support services; and governance structures.

A difficulty in assessing effectiveness of the HSTF project has been the absence of quantifiable and measurable objectives in the proposal (see also section 5.7 below), and the absence of quantitative data to indicate what has been achieved. There is a mention in the proposal of a ‘hope’ to reduce the number of children in residential care by 20% by the end of the project, though the baseline and the definition of what counts as an institution is not specified, nor is it clear whether this is to be achieved in pilot institutions only or across the whole region. In any case the team was not able to verify from any data sources that this objective has been achieved, by any definition.

5.2.1 Deinstitutionalisation

Deinstitutionalisation is the policy that aims to reduce both the proportion and the overall number of children in need who are served by residential care services (the move from the left-hand to the right-hand diagram in 0 above). However, a reduction in the number of children receiving residential care does not automatically mean that they are being supported instead by family substitute and family support services. Some of the dynamics of deinstitutionalisation are represented in Figure 5.1 below.

The government's deinstitutionalisation programme in Tajikistan is widely considered to have been effective: estimates vary hugely but there is a general consensus that more than 1,000 children have been reintegrated into families since 2003 and several hundred more have avoided institutionalisation. UNICEF is acknowledged to have made a substantial contribution to this success: much of the reduction in institutionalisation has been achieved in the raions with which UNICEF has worked, and particularly in its pilot institutions in those areas. Some of the children are known now to be receiving family-based care and making use of support services such as the UNICEF-supported day facilities with extended hours at the reformed institution in Kurgan-tube. However, not every child that has left permanent residential care has found his or her way further towards the centre of the diagram below: it was reported by one respondent, and fears were expressed by others, that some children have been lost to the system altogether. This happens when institutions are obliged to cease providing residential facilities but social work support is not available to help those children once they have returned to their home environment. The impact of this is likely to be negative to the child (see section 5.4 below). One factor that constrains the evaluation team's full assessment of the effectiveness of the deinstitutionalisation programme in Tajikistan is the absence of reliable data on the total number of children in all types of residential care, public and private, both as a baseline from 2003 and at the present time.
Figure 5.1 Dynamics of deinstitutionalisation

Source: OPM. Note: (1) The dark arrows indicate positive directions of movement out of residential care. The aim of deinstitutionalisation is to move children from residential care into family substitute or, better still, family support services. Also, some children graduate successfully from the child care system altogether when they become adults (the different issue of how they are subsequently supported is not dealt with here). (2) The striped arrows show undesirable directions of movement with regard to residential care. If children move out of family support or family substitute services into residential institutions this runs counter to the principles of maintaining the child in a family-based environment wherever possible. If children move out of residential care and cease to receive any services at all (though they still need them) they are lost from the system and this is also negative. It is recognised that sometimes a move in this direction may be in the best interests of a child for the short term.

In Kazakhstan figures for the number of children in institutions started off from a higher base than in any other country; but they provide no indication of overall effective progress in deinstitutionalisation. This was corroborated during interviews with stakeholders. This does not mean that the flow of children into and out of residential care has been static. On the contrary, it is known that while some children have moved from residential care to family substitute services in the form of foster care, others—even the same children—have moved in the opposite direction, from foster care back into residential institutions. Again, this dynamic is considered to have a negative impact on children's wellbeing. UNICEF's interventions are not seen to have a strongly effective influence on the outcome.

In the Kyrgyz Republic the numbers of children entering residential care are thought to be increasing rather than declining: progress is proceeding in the opposite direction to that intended, so UNICEF's activities in deinstitutionalisation cannot be seen to be effective here. The UNICEF office has been developing pilot family-based services in some areas which have absorbed some of the children previously in residential care, and has been strengthening gatekeeping procedures in those regions—effectively in Issyk-Ata, less so as yet in Batken and Moskovsky raions—which should have reduced the flow of children into institutions. But if these activities are having their desired effect, yet numbers are still increasing, there must be a counteracting tendency elsewhere.
in the system which is adding children into residential care faster than UNICEF is helping to take them out. The evaluation team identifies two areas for consideration here. One is that the Kyrgyz office (and indeed the government) is not fully aware of the size of the problem it is dealing with, since the concept of what counts as an 'institution' is ill-defined and the proliferation of private institutions is consciously left unchecked by UNICEF. The second is that external factors including the significant problem of migration in the Kyrgyz Republic is continually acting to expand the total circle of children that require support. For UNICEF to be truly effective in supporting the government to achieve deinstitutionalisation it must understand the dynamics of change in these external factors and must consider the implications for the amount and type of services that need to be provided.

In Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan reliable figures were not available, but it is known that in Uzbekistan some children have been rehabilitated from institutions, and that there is a planned approach to assessing some children currently looked after in residential care. UNICEF can therefore be considered to have had some positive effect in encouraging a shift from residential to non-residential services though its overall effectiveness is hard to quantify. In Turkmenistan deinstitutionalisation has not been a core part of UNICEF’s programme.

Learning from this assessment of the differing situations in these countries, and in different pilot areas within them, the evaluation team highlights five factors that have contributed to successful deinstitutionalisation:

- **attention to the whole policy cycle.** A distinguishing feature of the more effective parts of the deinstitutionalisation programme in Tajikistan is the attention to the whole policy cycle. Not only has the government declared its support for the development of the policy, and UNICEF has carried out advocacy at the highest level of authority to help sustain this, but there has been a strong implementation phase with considerable development of both alternative family-based services and the governance structures (Child Rights Departments (CRDs)) to support them. Moreover, and with the help of other organisations such as ORA International, trained social workers have been able to carry out some of the essential monitoring functions following rehabilitation of the child to ensure that the family-based environment does not put the child at risk.

- **availability and awareness of alternative services.** Children cannot move out of the residential care 'ring' closer to the family-based services in the centre of the circle if these alternative services do not exist or are underused. Moreover, UNICEF research elsewhere in the CEE/CIS region has indicated that the rate of institutionalisation is higher for children who live close to residential institutions. This suggests that residential institutions are relied on where they are widely known and are seen to be the only (or the most convenient) option, and not necessarily because they are in the best interests of the child. This is illustrated in the Kyrgyz Republic, where UNICEF’s support for the deinstitutionalisation programme has proven more effective in Issyk-Ata raion, which has no institutions, than in Batken raion, which has two. The policy development that permits these alternative services to be created already exists in many countries. The issues for UNICEF are therefore to encourage and support implementation of these policies—in particular, identifying and addressing the aspects of the policy implementation process that are acting as an obstacle, such as the lack of financial

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18 Although UNICEF Tajikistan has been successful in this last point in some places, monitoring has not been carried out everywhere. In places where systematic monitoring by a trained social worker is known not taken place the evaluation team cannot vouch for the effectiveness of the intervention. This applies, for example, to UNICEF’s support to deinstitutionalisation at the Temporary Isolation Centre in Dushanbe where children are returned to their families but the centre is unable to follow the result.

19 Finding from UNICEF’s EU TACIS-funded project in Moldova.
resources or the duplication of governance structures—and to continue its efforts to encourage attitudinal change so that successful deinstitutionalisation does not only take place in areas where UNICEF intervenes directly and where it happens to be convenient.

- **Public support for deinstitutionalisation.** The vested interests of employees in maintaining institutions to guarantee local jobs has already been mentioned above (p.20). A positive response to the need to find alternative employment is given in Kurgan-Tube, Tajikistan, where the CRD (supported by UNICEF) was able to be effective in turning its residential institution into a regular day school with after-hours facilities for children partly because it was located in an urban area where the CRD was able to find alternative teaching posts for the existing staff fairly easily. It is recommended that UNICEF explores further the options for alternative employment among staff of institutions in its pilot regions, including the feasibility of re-training as part of a new system of foster carers, social workers; and that it encourages local governments and other relevant development partners, such as the UNDP or ILO where present, to consider the implications of trends in the labour market for the institutionalisation of children.

- **Champions for change.** UNICEF’s interventions have shown an increased likelihood of success in localities where UNICEF has been able to identify and work with local champions for change. These people have helped in policy development and policy implementation, and also in helping to improve public support for family-based care. For example, in Turkmenistan the director of the family support centre in Abadan is one such person who has effectively supplemented the regular activities of her institution with others funded by UNICEF resources and is now supporting the establishment of a similar centre in Mary and other places. In the Kyrgyz Republic the support of the akim in Issyk-Ata was instrumental in setting up the FCSD which has resulted in the establishment of an effective gatekeeping service, while the strong support of the director of the residential institution in Orlovka was essential for ensuring the transformation of the institution to a respite centre with regular reviews of the children’s placement (i.e. a move from a residential care service to a family support service). While individual champions are an important catalyst for improved effectiveness at a particular place and time, though, it should be remembered that if interventions are to be sustainable in the long run they should be established in a wider institutional framework, supported by the appropriate legislation and funding, and not reliant on a single person who may be replaced or move. **UNICEF should continue to identify champions of change and work with them to gain momentum in child care reform whilst continuing with its own processes of advocacy and capacity-building to support policy development and implementation.**

- **Favourable external environment.** It was noted in section 3.1 above that what happens to the whole circle of the child care system can be affected by external factors; one of these is the economic situation. In this regard, it is evident that the pilot schemes, which have often been effective to some degree within their own area, have tended to be located in areas which are not the very poorest parts of the country. Taking the example of Tajikistan, the transformation of institutions has been effected in Soghd oblast but no pilots have yet been undertaken to support reform in the poorest region, Gorno-Badakhshan, so the effectiveness of a similar policy there is less certain. Similarly in Kazakhstan activities have been focused mainly on Astana, Almaty and towns in South and East Kazakhstan oblasts rather than on rural areas where there is a greater concentration of disadvantaged families. In the Kyrgyz Republic Issyk-Ata is reported to be in a more favourable economic environment than Batken. Again, there is a natural dilemma here between setting up pilot projects in areas where they have the greatest chance of being successful, and using pilot projects to understand how successes can be obtained even in areas which are remote or disadvantaged and which have few resources to commit to alternative services.
5.2.2 Family substitute services

Family substitute services have received less attention from UNICEF than family support services (discussed next). The guardianship system is already well established in the region and UNICEF has not aimed to have any direct effect here. UNICEF's main interventions relating to guardianship have been at the level of supporting the development and reform of the governance structure, the guardianship authority, as it has intended to do in Tajikistan, for example (see section 5.2.4), rather than carrying out activities directly with guardians or advocating reform such as changes in funding mechanisms.

The development of foster care was an ambitious and central component of the HSTF proposal. The intended objectives include the elaboration of standards, the identification of and provision of training to trainers who can subsequently train professionals in the selection and monitoring of foster carers, and the piloting of foster care services. It was not explained in the proposal how it was intended to raise awareness and acceptance of the potential of foster care services, advocate for their development among government or assess the budgetary implications.

The effectiveness of UNICEF's interventions in foster care has suffered somewhat from their peculiar sequencing within the policy cycle.20

- In all countries there is a total absence of attention to foster care at the problem identification stage. It is not clear to the evaluation team that any assessment was made as to why foster care was not already an established part of the child care system anywhere other than Kazakhstan. So there was limited understanding of the willingness of people to become foster parents, the factors that might hold people back, the cost of providing foster care services and so on. This has limited UNICEF's ability to articulate a clear vision and strategy for foster care to the country governments with which it works.

- As for policy development, in Kazakhstan this was already developed; in the Kyrgyz Republic UNICEF was effective in supporting the Ministry of Education in developing foster care regulations, but it has not yet been able to accompany this with sufficient advocacy at the right level to enable the draft regulations to be approved. In Uzbekistan there has been a better sequencing of activities, with a greater focus on advocacy to the government, which has resulted in the practice being legitimised by a recent government decree. However, in Uzbekistan, as in Kazakhstan, there remains a lack of certainty about the distinction between the purposes of and policy responses to guardianship and foster care which has not been addressed by UNICEF.

- Most of UNICEF's interventions in foster care took place at the policy implementation stage, even in the absence of an approved policy. Some training in foster care was carried out in Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic. But in Kazakhstan some two-thirds of the people trained in foster care were reported not to have become foster parents; and in Shymkent, where UNICEF has a pilot, foster parents are rotated in and out of the system so those who have received training do not have the opportunity to build on their experience to improve their provision of care. In the Kyrgyz Republic a small number of foster carers were trained in Issyk-Ata raion but the scheme wound down once UNICEF stopped providing financial support as there was no backing from the national or local budget, and no legislative framework to cater for it.

- The only country with a foster care system that is sufficiently advanced to allow for monitoring and review is Kazakhstan. UNICEF was aware of the difficulties in implementation mentioned

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20 See Figure 4.1 for the location of UNICEF's foster care activities within the overall picture of child care.
above, in relation to the rotation of foster parents, but has not yet been able to achieve success in getting this on the public agenda as a policy problem for attention and revision.

In Tajikistan and Turkmenistan no training or development of foster care services has been carried out. In Tajikistan, attention to the identification of the problem might have helped UNICEF at an early stage to recognise that the country circumstances were not yet ready for fostering and might have been able to identify activities to address them. In Tajikistan it was suggested that the reasons for the absence of foster carers are both cultural and economic: people are resistant to taking in what they view as ‘problem’ children, and families cannot afford to take on an additional child.

It is recommended that UNICEF reviews its sequencing of foster care activities, focusing on the assessment of the nature and scale of the problem and its potential to be resolved; the promotion of attitudinal change and the development of the institutional framework as a priority rather than providing training to potential carers when there is insufficient progress in policy development (though it is recognised that some training may help this change process).

It is notable that, across the region, UNICEF has devoted almost no attention to the reform of adoption procedures during the evaluation period. This is surprising given that intervention in this key area of child care would have been timely for three reasons. First, there remain significant concerns about child rights in the adoption process, such as the protection in all countries of the right to keep adoption secret. Second, these concerns have already been voiced in the public arena, e.g. through the Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (in Kazakhstan, for instance, issues regarding adoption were raised in both 2003 and 2007). Third, some countries in the region have not only expressed willingness to act on the subject of adoption but also are already in the policy development stage and have been setting strategies and reforms in place, e.g. the draft law on intercountry adoption in Kazakhstan and the National Plan of Action for the Interests of the Child in Tajikistan. UNICEF should consider whether and how to engage in adoption issues, particularly in Kazakhstan where the development of the law is being considered. Another entry point into supporting the reform of adoption procedures may be closer communication with the Ministries of Health, which have responsibility for the infant homes from which many children are adopted.

5.2.3 Family support services

In Kazakhstan the establishment of pilot family support centres in South and East Kazakhstan has achieved a partly desirable effect so far. Crisis centres have been reoriented by UNICEF to serve not only children in families but also those deprived of parental care. However, it is disappointing that the pilot centre in Shymkent has already ceased functioning and is no longer providing the support services for which it was set up. The main direction of HSTF project activities in Kazakhstan has been capacity-building, including the provision of training courses and dissemination of materials, and this has been effective in that planned outputs (the number of social workers trained or number of documents printed) have mostly been achieved. Moreover, the interviewed participants of training events mostly expressed satisfaction with the course and appreciated its quality. But the outcome of these capacity-building efforts (i.e. what has been achieved by the professionals as a result of their training) is difficult to measure. UNICEF could consider how to measure outcomes of training in future project design (e.g. by planning to follow up the progress of some training course participants).

In the Kyrgyz Republic some aspects of UNICEF’s piloting work have proven effective, particularly in Issyk-Ata raion which, as mentioned above, has been aided by the absence of local residential institutions and the support of the akim. Family support from social workers has helped to reduce
the number of children entering residential care in that raion. As for UNICEF’s support to pilot institutions, satisfaction amongst the institution staff is high. Training and advocacy activities, including workshops and study visits, are particularly well regarded. UNICEF’s analytical reports are generally better valued by these local partners than by national and international partners, perhaps because there is limited access to alternative information. UNICEF’s support to social work training at Bishkek Humanitarian University is very warmly received by staff there and is an effective way of strengthening the long-term development of the social work system which is necessary for the continued development of family support services.

In Tajikistan UNICEF has been most effective in its provision of three types of service which may act as models for other countries in the region:

- The diversion projects for first-time young offenders which provide daytime activities alongside social work support to their families. The two diversion projects in Dushanbe, in particular, have succeeded in almost eliminating reoffending; success is ascribed to the close support for parents and the expert individual attention of psychologists, art therapists and others. Again, the monitoring and review of the progress of children is also a key factor.

- The Psychological-medico-pedagogical Consultations (PMPCs) assess children with disabilities and refer them to suitable services. Although the proportion of children who are recommended for institutional care remains high—some 40% of those assessed between July and September 2007 in the PMPC in Dushanbe, for instance—this is a substantial improvement on previous rates. The effectiveness is enhanced by the availability of expert specialists in the consultation service (though it not certain that the public authorities will afford to keep these specialists in post in the long run—see p.37 below).

- The Parents Education Centre for children with disabilities is sought after by parents of children both with and without disabilities and is well regarded in the local community.

One effort at supporting families which has not proved effective in Tajikistan is the provision of microcredit facilities to families at risk of committing their children to institutional care. This was an innovative method of attempting to implement a family support service that does not rely exclusively on the availability of trained social workers. It is important that UNICEF recognised early on the very limited effect of these interventions on improving child welfare and acknowledged that the families not only were unwilling to take on loans that they felt they might be unable to repay, but also often had motivations other than purely economic ones for committing their children to residential care which were not resolved by the microcredit and training programme.

In Turkmenistan UNICEF has been effective in establishing family support centres on the basis of existing educational institutions. The centres are at an early stage of development and it is difficult to separate UNICEF’s contribution from the activities that were already taking place in these institutions, but it is apparent that orphans and other vulnerable children have access to these highly demanded services alongside children from regular families. Some staff in the centres have been trained in social work techniques, and respondents were generally satisfied with the training provided.

In Uzbekistan UNICEF has had some success in redirecting the focus of the government from residential to family-based care by moving more strongly into the support of professional development of both a new cadre of providers who will graduate as social workers, and the strengthening of the knowledge base of existing officials and social protection staff through in-service training and short course introductions to child care principles and practice. There is little

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21 Much has already been written about this component and full findings will not be repeated here. See, for instance, the Children's Legal Centre (2006).
evidence yet of institutional staff themselves being retrained, although at least one residential home has been able to help facilitate rehabilitation of some children.

5.2.4 Governance structures

In all countries except Turkmenistan UNICEF has achieved some important results in supporting the reform of legal and administrative frameworks for child care reform, particularly in drafting regulations and piloting local government structures. A key finding is that many relevant regulations in several countries have been drafted but not approved; it is important that UNICEF supports advocacy activities to ensure that the work it has begun is followed through and not made redundant. Without the agreement of national or local government funding or the provision of sufficient human resource capacity to implement the policies they risk being rendered ineffective.

This is evident, for instance, in Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic. In Kazakhstan UNICEF has been generally effective in producing planned outputs (documents and events) to contribute to the development of policies, administrative structures and legislation such as draft strategies and regulations, and support to the drafting of the 'Children of Kazakhstan' policy document; the latter document was approved several months after the end of the HSTF project, so further support to its implementation will be timely. In the Kyrgyz Republic the adoption of the Children's Code with UNICEF support is justifiably viewed as a positive step, but as a standalone document it can have no impact. It is vital that UNICEF now supports the elimination of inconsistencies between the Children's Code and other legislation; the development and approval of secondary regulations; and the integration of funding requirements into government budget allocations in order to make it an effective document. Similarly, regulations on gatekeeping have been written but not approved.

In Tajikistan the draft regulations on CRDs should, if agreed, represent a step towards achieving the spread of such departments to non-pilot raions. In some places CRDs have begun to work effectively in supporting families at home to reduce institutionalisation, but the wider possibility of achieving progress through these departments is yet to be seen. One CRD was unclear how its functions were expected to differ from those carried out already by the Commission for Minors and the guardianship authority and even hastened to reassure the evaluation team that the eventual merger would have absolutely no effect on the personnel to be employed, the duties they would fulfil and the budget that would be provided to them.

In Uzbekistan support to legislative reform has taken time to show results but the government now has a programme for the introduction of laws including on social protection, children's rights, and financial support for young families. The most important achievement is the development and submission to Parliament on the Law on the Guarantees of the Rights of the Child.

5.3 Efficiency

The distribution of the $2.1 million budget for the HSTF project among the five countries appears to have been determined loosely on the basis of their relative population size rather than on the prospects for successful reform or any analysis of the financial capacity of the governments. The amount allocated to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, at around $444,000 each, is some 20% higher than the amount allocated to the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

This division of funds is surprising considering how greatly the countries differ. Kazakhstan stands apart in that it is a lower-middle-income economy with a much larger resource base, so the financial leverage of UNICEF and other development partners is correspondingly smaller than in other countries. In Turkmenistan, certainly at the beginning of the project, the political environment
was not amenable to open discussions of reform and UNICEF recognised that it was unable to carry out the same range of activities as in the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan but the funding remained the same. Whilst it is, of course, important that UNICEF maintained a dialogue with the Turkmen government on child care reform, and carried out training of professionals where possible (and the country office did so as best it could), it is not certain that the investments made were fully justifiable given the known constraints. In four out of the five countries the HSTF funding constituted the main part of UNICEF’s resources to support deinstitutionalisation, but in Tajikistan UNICEF simultaneously carried out a SIDA-funded project, at $670,000, which tripled its available expenditure on child care reform, and this was not taken into account in dividing the HSTF funding. The evaluation team concludes that resources were not distributed strategically in a manner that might be expected to achieve the best results.

Moreover, within each country the allocation of resources to different subcomponents was arbitrary and the same for all five countries and took no further consideration of individual circumstances. A mere 2% of the budget was allocated to advocacy which could have been used to encourage policy development, while eight times as much was devoted to pilot projects in all countries even though Tajikistan, for example, had numerous pilot sites while Kazakhstan had very few (and the centre it did have, in Shymkent, was already closed by the time of the evaluation and therefore no longer generating regular benefits). The planned budget for advocacy activities was used up rapidly or overspent in all countries; in the Kyrgyz Republic it was considered that this had resulted in reduced effectiveness of the project since the country team would have preferred to carry out advocacy on a much larger scale to encourage behaviour change among the wider public.

This arbitrary distribution is unlikely to have resulted in the most efficient use of resources since it did not take into account any peculiarities of the environment. Situation assessments have been insufficient so it is hard for UNICEF to quantify the progress that it has helped to achieve. Funding for advocacy was not sufficient to implement the planned activities. Activities were very heavily skewed towards policy implementation but it is not clear that this was always justified: certainly, it is an area in which other actors are also able to contribute. In one country it was observed by one NGO that UNICEF had taken over implementation of an activity it had started and that UNICEF subsequently changed the nature of that support, with negative consequences in the view of that NGO. The lack of funds for monitoring and review is a major gap.

The lack of expenditure on UNICEF’s own project monitoring and evaluation, too, is a major cause of concern. By the end of 2006 less than 20% of the total planned budget in that area had been spent, and in the Kyrgyz Republic and Turkmenistan this figure dropped to 2%. This reflects the inattention to monitoring and evaluation noted throughout this report. The team recommends that UNICEF probes further the causes of the considerable shortfall of expenditure. Possible reasons may range from a lack of technical capacity or interest in monitoring on the part of UNICEF or the government, to a lack of activities to monitor or misreporting of M&E activities under a different budget line.

In some cases UNICEF has spent its resources in a complementary manner to the investments of other development partners. An example of this is seen in Issyk-Ata raion in the Kyrgyz Republic, where the FCSD considered that UNICEF’s role of supporting policy development and advocating for government reform was an appropriate complement to the work of Save the Children Denmark, which offered good practical support at the local level to individual children and families. This arrangement arose by chance. It is recommended that UNICEF incorporates the coordination of its activities with other partners into its regular planning process.

Occasionally it was reported that UNICEF funds have crowded out other potential funding streams. In Tajikistan, for example, both the national government and a local CRD stated that they did not need to invest in some aspects of child protection, including salaries, because UNICEF was
supporting it instead. It is vital that where UNICEF incurs expenditure that might be expected to be absorbed by the public budget in the long run, it develops an ‘exit strategy’ and supports the government in identifying its own means of funding (see also discussion of sustainability in section 5.5 below).

The project recovered well from the contractual delays which led to the late disbursement of the initial project funds. Although only 2% of the budget was spent in 2004, a further 32% was spent in 2005 and 39% in 2006, and the country offices report that remaining funds have been disbursed by the end of the project in 2007. Feedback from project beneficiaries indicates that the community centres, institutions and local administration departments supported by UNICEF were mostly satisfied with the timing of disbursement of resources.

The amount and type of human resources provided by UNICEF to achieve its objectives is another component of an assessment of project efficiency. It is natural that if UNICEF is in a process of moving away from the implementation of pilot projects and towards other aspects of the policy cycle there will need to be an accompanying shift in the skills of the personnel who deliver the results. In some country offices this shift is already being seen to take place, e.g. through an increase in the number of staff or the development of stronger monitoring and evaluation capacities. The human resource inputs used by the HSTF project have not always been to the maximum advantage: a lack of technical confidence in intervening to support the development of the budget process or the decentralisation process in favour of outcomes that improve the achievement of project goals are some examples where effectiveness has been impeded by a lack of the right technical capacity. Nonetheless it is recognised that this may be a transition period for UNICEF and that, as it looks to develop its credibility in these other areas, it will hope to obtain the relevant technical capacity to achieve positive results.

5.4 Impact

It is known that UNICEF has succeeded in avoiding the institutionalisation of some children as a result of its activities in child care system reform since 2003. Exact figures are difficult to establish, but there is anecdotal evidence of these positive instances. So far the positive impact in all countries is mainly found in the pilot regions and facilities where UNICEF has intervened; there has not yet been a knock-on effect in geographical areas or facilities outside the reach of UNICEF. For example, UNICEF has not engaged with ministries of health to reduce the flow of children into infant homes—although this is crucial for reducing both the rate and the duration of institutionalisation—and correspondingly there is no evidence of a positive change in the flow of children into those institutions. By many measures, out of the five countries the impact of UNICEF’s interventions has been most impressive in Tajikistan: the government there expresses a strong commitment to reform, several hundred children have been returned from long-term residential care to their families, and several hundred more have been prevented from entering residential care at all.

UNICEF should consider how to ensure that its objectives can generate their own momentum, so that other organisations are contributing towards the same positive impact even when UNICEF is not present. This would reduce the risk of private individuals and others opening new facilities and expanding the numbers of children in residential care, for example, while UNICEF’s attention is devoted to reducing them in a single ministry. A solution might be an increased focus on advocacy and public awareness campaigns, making use of UNICEF’s comparative advantage in high-profile communication activities which is recognised by other partners.

Where the evaluation team visited other state-run or local government facilities that were not supported by UNICEF it was not apparent that staff were convinced of the arguments in favour of
deinstitutionalisation. One such facility in Tajikistan had been obliged to return some children to their families because it came under the authority of a UNICEF-supported CRD but did not receive help in implementing the policy and could not follow up their rehabilitation. These children are ‘lost from the system’ (see Figure 5.1 above). The staff of that facility considered that the impact on the child of this hasty rehabilitation without support risked being worse than if he or she remained in residential care.

This last point signals an important lesson for UNICEF that is worth repeating: an assessment of the real impact of the reform should reflect on the improved well-being of the child. Deinstitutionalisation alone is not sufficient as a goal, since a focus on a quantitative reduction in the number of children in residential institutions risks overlooking the potential negative impact on some children if they are returned to their family environment; and a focus on the number returned to their families may overlook an increased number who have entered the institutions from elsewhere.

There is some indication in the HSTF proposal that the project was intended to be pro-poor, which would suggest that UNICEF might, if desired, choose to support the targeting of its own pilot projects at the poorest section of the population. Anecdotal evidence suggests that UNICEF’s interventions have not been strongly pro-poor although they have undoubtedly reached many poor families. In the Kyrgyz Republic many beneficiaries of the facility at Belovodsk are parents seeking regular care for their children while they are at work. In Tajikistan the Parents Education Centre is increasingly attracting non-poor families to its facilities, while the internat in Kurgan-Tube which previously served vulnerable children is now a fee-paying school. In Turkmenistan children from non-poor families have access to the family support centres as well as orphans and other vulnerable children. Meanwhile many of the poorest people in remote and often rural areas are not yet receiving the same level of support as is found in urban areas. However, in Kazakhstan the link between poverty and institutionalisation of children is not as strong as in some other countries of Central Asia: children may be placed in residential care because there is less of a perception that this is detrimental to the child’s well-being, not because the family is too poor to look after the child and has no alternative. The issues of resolving poverty and resolving institutionalisation are therefore not entirely linked, which may explain why the project does not seem to have been implemented there in a way which has a great impact on the poor.

UNICEF might usefully consider how to develop closer links with partners who have a comparative advantage in economic development to explore opportunities for incorporating a consideration of child welfare into their project planning. Coordination with organisations on cash benefits and labour market policy may reduce the number of families who look for residential care for their children because of employment and poverty problems.

### 5.5 Sustainability

The team evaluated UNICEF’s progress in addressing three issues which are prerequisites for the HSTF project to become fully sustainable and fully embedded in government structures. Without any one of these components there is an increased risk that a single event such as a change in political leadership, the departure of a member of staff or a shift in UNICEF’s priorities will result in the cessation of or a decline in reform:

1. **Financing mechanisms and funding sources** (an essential part of policy implementation). Sources of future funding, especially for recurrent costs such as salaries, should be identified and agreed. This may require attention to the reallocation of funding between central and local government levels, or between different ministries.
2. **Institutional structures and mechanisms**, including legislation and the establishment or strengthening of implementing agencies.

3. **Attitudes.** There should be evidence of demand for the reforms, not only among policymakers but also among the general public.

**Financing**

In some instances UNICEF has begun to address the issue of financial sustainability at the highest level, as in Kazakhstan where it has advocated changes in the budget process in the interests of children. In the Kyrgyz Republic UNICEF has successfully used the leverage of the EU's budget support programme to strengthen the financial future of its project activities by working with the EU to achieve the inclusion of the planned nationwide rollout of FCSDs into the matrix of conditionality for budget support. In Uzbekistan the RCSAC, which coordinates policies on behalf of children in need and those with disabilities, is already established under the state budget.

However, the financial sustainability of UNICEF's initiatives is not yet fully assured. A frequent response by local and national government counterparts to the evaluation team about this issue was that since child care was important, 'money would be found from somewhere' to continue the activities as necessary. This optimism overlooks the genuinely resource-constrained environment within which most services are provided, especially in countries other than Kazakhstan. UNICEF could use its position as both a recognised source of knowledge and a well regarded voice in policy discussions to improve understanding of financial concerns. For example, an economic case could be presented for why family-based social services should be provided in preference to residential care. The comparative review of unit costs that is now being undertaken by the Kyrgyz and Tajik country offices should prove a good contribution in this regard. It is important that UNICEF begins to interact with Ministries of Finance where possible, or certainly to provide visible support to other development partners—especially the World Bank and the EU—who have already developed a credible relationship with such ministries and can exercise more influence. The opportunity to do so is particularly timely in Tajikistan where the introduction of the EU's budget support programme for the social protection sector is obliging the ministry to consider the inclusion of alternative services such as day-care centres into the government budget.

When pilot community-based services and centres are set up there is a natural dilemma with regard to financing. One option is to pay staff a salary supplement for a period in order to attract the best candidates, so that the pilots can be as effective as possible in developing models of best practice; the alternative option is to pay a regular wage that can more easily be sustained by the public budget, but with the risk that exceptional candidates may not be drawn to the position. The effect of the former option is observed in the Kyrgyz Republic, where the Issyk-Ata FCSD feels it cannot demand the same very high standards and commitment of its social workers on a regular salary in comparison with when they received a supplement. In Tajikistan it was feared that the experts of the PMPC in Dushanbe, who diagnose and treat problems related to disabled children at local level, might leave after the period of salary supplements expires, although it was noted that staff do have a strong personal commitment to their work.

**Institutional structures**

Governments in all countries have made progress in developing the administrative structures and legislation necessary to improve the opportunities for children to live in a family. This is essential for integrating the best practice from UNICEF’s pilot activities into government policy: during the evaluation some respondents cited the lack of legal authority as the reason for not developing
alternative services. The reforms at the centre of government described in section 5.1.2 above can contribute to the long-term sustainability of the project efforts.

A particular contribution by UNICEF to strengthening the institutional framework in the long run has been the support to university social work courses, as demonstrated at Bishkek Humanitarian University in the Kyrgyz Republic and the masters programme in social work in Tajikistan (soon to be followed by the establishment of a degree course in social work at the National State University there). The evaluation team considers this to be a positive and far-sighted initiative since the expectation is that graduates of the courses will eventually fill positions in central and local government and as active social workers, where they will be advocate for and use the techniques promoted by UNICEF to support the right of the child to live in a family. There are two notes of caution, though. First, it is not guaranteed that graduates of the programme will remain in the profession, especially if the salaries in the social work sector remain low; it is therefore recommended that UNICEF supports governments in exploring possibilities for committing students to working in social work for a set period after graduation. Second, it will be many years before the effects of these programmes will be widely visible at policy level, so in the meantime UNICEF should continue to provide immediate short-term training opportunities for existing professionals.

Attitudes

In all five countries there is evidence of a shift in attitudes of some representatives in key positions at central and local government levels and among professionals in favour of family-based rather than residential care. The achievement of the institutional changes described above is indicative of this. Even in Turkmenistan, where there were few opportunities to influence stakeholders, participants of training courses revealed a positive attitude towards the need for deinstitutionalisation and the development of alternative forms of child care.

As was noted in section 5.1 above, though, there remain mixed attitudes among professionals towards deinstitutionalisation and the establishment of community-based services, not so much because of considerations about the welfare of the child—although that sometimes remains an issue—but rather because of the implication of the closure of institutions for the allocation of resources to ministries and the availability of jobs in remote areas. UNICEF should direct its advocacy and capacity-building efforts at the staff of institutions, who compose the majority of personnel employed in the sector. This might include retraining so that staff can become actively involved in the introduction of alternative care.

Among the general public some changes in attitude towards child care are apparent in areas where UNICEF is carrying out pilot activities, such as in the FCSD in Issyk-Ata, Kyrgyz Republic and the Parents Education Centre in Tajikistan. UNICEF should now consider how to spread this message further to areas where it does not directly intervene, and to areas where it has not so far achieved significant attitude change such as Kazakhstan. The organisation's information campaigns are widely respected: in Tajikistan, for instance, it is considered by partners to be a leader in the effective dissemination of information to the public including through leaflets and brochures. It should capitalise on these advantages and consider how best to improve public awareness of child care issues in all countries, especially in rural areas where written documents and radio or television campaigns may not reach the broadest audience. One possibility may be to encourage further discussion with rural community leaders, as was done in Tajikistan when information was being collected for the database on disabled children.
5.6 Rights-based approaches

According to a rights-based approach one would expect to find that UNICEF first identifies the rights of rights-holders and the obligations of duty-bearers and assesses their capacity to fulfil them. It should then support the fulfilment of these rights and obligations throughout the programme cycle by designing and implementing strategies to build these capacities, and monitoring and evaluating outcomes on the basis of human rights principles including the right of children to participate in decision-making.

5.6.1 Identification and programme design

It is evident that the design of UNICEF’s programme of activity is intended to further the realisation of human rights: the objectives of the HSTF project are compatible with, and founded on, the CRC, and especially its recognition of the need for children to grow up in a family environment where possible. Every country office carried out assessments of the situation of children and their families around the time of the start of the project to varying degrees, either independently or through the UN Common Country Assessment process, or in collaboration with government agencies. However, no explicit consideration is given to gender, language or ethnicity in the design of the HSTF programme.

It was noted in section 5.1.3 above that some of the recommendations of human rights bodies—especially the Committee on the Rights of the Child—are reflected in the programme design, such as some attention to improved coordination and public awareness, but the evaluation team considers that the programming was not informed directly and systematically by the recommendations of those bodies since two of the major areas of recommendation (i.e. financing and monitoring and evaluation) have not been thoroughly addressed. It is likely that the overlap between the recommendations of the human rights bodies and the HSTF programme arises because both are well informed by the CRC, rather than because one has informed the other.

5.6.2 Implementation

One of the main duty-bearers, for a child, is his or her own family. Many of UNICEF’s activities under the HSTF have helped families to look after their own children: a few examples include support to families in Belovodsk children’s home, Kyrgyz Republic; the diversion projects, PMPCs and Parents Education Centre in Tajikistan; and the Women’s Resource Centres and the Sunday School in Angren in Uzbekistan. The attempt to provide microcredit facilities to families in Tajikistan also represents such an initiative although it was not fully effective. Another set of duty-bearers are the public authorities: as the discussion throughout this report shows, UNICEF has assisted these organisations at national and local government level, as well as in local communities such as the mahallas in Uzbekistan, to develop their capacity to fulfil their obligations.

Attention has been paid in project implementation to the rights of some specific groups, such as in Tajikistan where there has been an effort to identify and provide support to children with disabilities through the establishment of a database in pilot regions, and a focus on the need for support to families of young offenders.

UNICEF is recognised by its partners, to varying degrees, as having contributed to the awareness of child rights among government counterparts and social work professionals. In some UNICEF-supported facilities in the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan children, too, were able to articulate their rights; in Turkmenistan, in contrast, this awareness was rather limited. But while governments recognise their responsibility for observation of child rights there still remain opportunities for
UNICEF to support them in paying attention to them in practice. Of particular concern in
Kazakhstan is the removal of children from foster care and their reinstitutionalisation in Shymkent;
while in Turkmenistan, orphans are assigned to residential institutions on the basis of their family of
origin which contradicts the principle of action in the best interests of the child. **UNICEF should
continue to use its influence as a leader in child rights issues to advocate for reform of these
anomalous practices.**

The issues of gender, language and ethnicity, which were absent from the project design, have
also not been widely highlighted during implementation. Two exceptions are the occasional
publication of leaflets in local languages as well as Russian on topics such as looking after children
with disabilities (the evaluation team observed this in Tajikistan, for instance); and, in the Kyrgyz
Republic, the provision of a room in the respite centre in Orlovka which shows some of the Kyrgyz
cultural heritage22. However, it is apparent that there is a need for a gender-differentiated approach
to child care. The team found many instances where the number of males in residential facilities far
exceeds the number of females: this tendency was recognised by respondents in Kazakhstan and
was also directly observed by the team in facilities supported by UNICEF in the Kyrgyz Republic
and Tajikistan. Since females are less likely to be found in full-time or temporary residential care,
and therefore are perhaps more likely to remain at home in vulnerable conditions, **UNICEF should
consider how best to reach these children through family support.**

### 5.6.3 Monitoring and evaluation

Some evidence was found that children’s views are taken into consideration during review of
progress under the HSTF project. Again, in Orlovka (Kyrgyz Republic), children participate with
their families in discussions about their welfare. In Uzbekistan disabled children have been given
direct access to policy makers by UNICEF to make their views known, and the UNICEF-supported
Children’s Parliament offers young people a forum to submit ideas on subjects related to their
rights and well-being.

### 5.7 Results-based management

If an effective system of results-based management is in place one would expect to find both that
UNICEF measures its own activities using a clear and comprehensive system of monitoring and
makes adjustments to planning decisions on the basis of the results, and also that it supports the
government in improving the availability and quality of its data. The lack of attention to this
essential aspect of programming has been a recurrent theme of the evaluation so far.

#### 5.7.1 Results-based management in UNICEF

UNICEF outlines its goals and commitments at a number of levels including at a global level in its
medium-term strategic plan; at country level, both in partnership with other UN agencies in the UN
Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), and in agreement with the government in its
Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP); at a programme level in its annual work plans; and at
project level in project proposals. Child protection is a theme that is common to these documents in
almost all countries. The plans contain a number of interconnected targets and indicators, in
results frameworks and matrices, which are intended to monitor progress towards the achievement
of enhanced child rights and the improvement of policies for child care.

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22 It was not apparent during the evaluation team's brief visit how the room is used other than for display.
The objectives of the HSTF project do not conflict with UNICEF’s national and international strategies but it is not clear to the evaluation team whether or how the broader results frameworks have been used during the design and implementation of the project, nor how it was intended that they should be used. Many of the country targets are ambiguous or difficult to measure. To take one example among many as an illustration: indicator 3.1.1 in the Kyrgyz CPAP results matrix is 'number and type of benefits and services for children and families in place at provincial level', but it is unknown how services will be counted, whether 'more' is necessarily better, and how the 'type' of service can be ranked as an indicator of progress. It is therefore unsurprising that little or no use is made of these targets and indicators.

The HSTF proposal’s own brief set of indicators also have no targets and are ambiguous in definition: it is not clear which are the forms of residential care that are being monitored. The evaluation team did not find evidence that a logframe for the project was ever produced. Regular reports for the HSTF project tend to concentrate more on output indicators—the number of people trained, the number of meetings held etc.—than on the overall impact of those activities.

5.7.2 UNICEF’s support to government in developing results-based management

The use of results-based management processes is underdeveloped at local and national level as it is within UNICEF. This is the process by which policies that are implemented are monitored and reviewed, and the results fed into the next round of problem identification and decision-making. The evaluation team identifies three major obstacles in the region:

- openness to discussion of results. In Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan the government is not yet ready for a full discussion of gaps and areas for improvement in the execution and monitoring of its activities. However, some recent positive moves since the change of leadership in Turkmenistan a year ago indicate that a window of opportunity may now be opening for organisations including UNICEF in that country. In Kazakhstan the process is already underway and the government’s CCRP has begun to publish quantitative data on the number of children in institutions, although not yet qualitative data e.g. on standards in institutions;

- input-based budgeting. Government budgets tend to be based on inputs rather than outputs: funds are generally allocated to activities on a basis that largely reflects the amount of funding provided the previous year, and does not take into account where that expenditure has achieved the best results. This means that reporting on results risks being a mechanical exercise, an end in itself, rather than an analytical tool that can affect policy; and

- capacity to manage the monitoring and evaluation process. Technical expertise in understanding the scope of monitoring and evaluation is found to be at a relatively early stage of development. In Tajikistan, for example, ‘monitoring’ is widely seen as a synonym for inspection of facilities rather than an essential component of the policy cycle. In Uzbekistan UNICEF’s support to the RCSAC is beginning to have an influence on the creation of an evidence-based approach to intervention with children at risk or in need, and may support the emergence of a more reliable knowledge base.

It is for these reasons, perhaps, that there is little incentive to improve the quality and comprehensiveness of data collection and analysis. While UNICEF is not in a position unilaterally to resolve the first two obstacles it should be ready to take advantage of opportunities as they arise, assisting the dissemination of results where possible and highlighting examples where interventions have been cost-effective. But the third obstacle could be addressed by UNICEF if the organisation capitalises on its credibility as a training provider and draws on its existing wider expertise, such as in its support to the multiple indicator cluster survey (MICS).
Even if governments have the willingness and resources to manage reform on the basis of results it is essential that both they and UNICEF pay attention also to the quality of the data provided. Data on institutional care and other key statistics are published by ministries and national statistical agencies, including via UNICEF’s TransMONEE project associated with the Innocenti Research Centre, but UNICEF’s support to improve the quality of data collection and analysis is limited. In the Kyrgyz Republic UNICEF liaises with the national statistical committee to obtain data on child care but is not involved in checking and advising on quality. In Tajikistan monitoring and evaluation activities, and the subsequent identification of policy problems, have hitherto been limited but the development of the database on children with disabilities that is now being undertaken is a step forward and very welcomed.

There is a large opportunity here for UNICEF to support the further development of systems for data collection and analysis, and encourage the use of evidence in developing policy at national and subnational level. This aligns well with UNICEF’s intention to deepen its expertise as a knowledge base. To achieve this result the UNICEF regional office might usefully start by developing training in monitoring and evaluation for its own country office staff.
6 Conclusions

The conclusions here summarise briefly some of the key findings outlined in the earlier sections of this report with reference to the region as a whole; conclusions relating to individual countries are detailed in the relevant country chapter in part II of the report. Section 6.1 refers to the broader situation regarding progress in child care reform in the region, while section 6.2 offers conclusions on UNICEF’s contribution to that progress.

6.1 The status of child care reform

All country governments have made advances in child care reform during the period under evaluation, both by using their own experiences and by drawing on the expertise of UNICEF and many other national and international organisations.

The pace of change varies between countries on account of differing political, economic and social circumstances. Political changes and reorganisations of government structures have resulted in the reorientation of responsibilities for child care reform activities towards different actors, which can inevitably bring about some delays in the development and implementation of policy, but at the same time they may offer positive opportunities for the creation and strengthening of new partnerships.

The features that may encourage the entry of children into residential care, such as poverty and high external migration, are still prevalent in many countries. The traditional system of residential care is maintained in part also by some favourable public opinion, and the interests of staff in residential institutions who are not certain of alternative employment opportunities. However, although it is difficult to assess the progress in the changing attitude of the society and the state officials towards the new concepts of deinstitutionalisation, there is certainly some evidence that at least there is awareness about these concepts among the key stakeholders (even if they are not yet fully understood and accepted).

The development of alternative community services is a challenge in the face of the wider concerns about how to achieve the transfer of resources from national to local government budgets and how to develop services that are in line with governments’ decentralisation policies, where they exist. In at least one country it appears that the number of children entering institutions is increasing rather than decreasing. But the real scale of the problem of institutionalisation, the unmet demand for alternative services and the supply of prospective substitute families and public and private facilities is unknown in all countries. The identification of these issues has now started to be addressed by some governments.

Reform is very much still in progress. In many countries the attention of the government to policy development has proven fruitful and has resulted in the approval of policy documents or primary legislation on child care reform. Secondary legislation and regulations, of course, follow on from the primary legislation and are therefore naturally less far advanced, but are often under discussion. Many relevant regulations in several countries have been drafted though not always approved. There remain some concerns about the extent to which the necessary conditions for achieving the successful approval of secondary regulations were always considered earlier in the policy process, especially with regard to ascertaining that funding would be made available to implement the reforms, and to the need to change public opinion as mentioned above.

There is evidence in some areas that governments are beginning to develop alternative services in line with the principles of the CRC, and also to develop administrative structures that support the
promotion of these services. For now the traditional guardianship authorities and Commissions for Minors remain in place, sometimes alongside the newer bodies that have been developed with the aid of UNICEF and other donors.

The regular monitoring of policy implementation by governments is not firmly established, partly because the demand for monitoring is not yet strong. There is a good possibility of further developing monitoring capacity in research organisations and national statistical agencies, provided that this is accompanied by a move to use the results of monitoring processes to feed into policy development and revision.

6.2 UNICEF’s contribution to child care reform

In all five countries UNICEF has been able to contribute to reform and to demonstrate some successful practices during the operation of the HSTF project, even though conditions have varied hugely from one country to another. Given the fact that most of the activities of the HSTF project have been concentrated in the years 2005–07 it is inevitable that the outcomes of pilot projects have had a short time to be realised. The full effect of the interventions are therefore not always known. Reviewing the selected combination of activities through the lens of the diagnostic framework, the evaluation team identifies where UNICEF’s activities under the HSTF project have been concentrated and what the outcomes and impact of these activities have been. This leads to the following conclusions.

With regard to the policy cycle, some work in problem identification has been undertaken. In all countries policy development and implementation have received most attention, with varying results. A striking finding is the complete absence of attention to the leftmost quarter, monitoring and review, an area which is also not addressed extensively by other development partners and which therefore counts as a major gap in support to the achievement of a family-based environment for children.

- **Problem identification.** UNICEF has carried out some analytical studies that support the identification of policy problems in child care reform. Some of UNICEF’s work in this area is relevant but not yet widely known, and its effectiveness could be enhanced by being more actively and systematically distributed to interested parties both inside and outside government. In other cases, such as in understanding financing and in issues surrounding foster care, UNICEF’s research (or support to research by national statistical agencies) was less extensive during the HSTF project than might have been expected in order to promote evidence-based policy-making.

- **Policy development.** UNICEF’s skills in advocacy are seen by its partners as one such comparative advantage since the organisation has credibility in child care issues at an international level. Its expertise in raising public awareness, including through publicity campaigns, is also highlighted as an area in which it is perceived to be strong. Country offices agree that less attention was paid to this area than would have been desirable, and attribute this to the design of the project. Occasionally UNICEF’s advocacy efforts did not achieve their intended result; at other times, particularly in relation to the development of legislation, activities have been partially effective but work remains very much in progress before the full impact can be obtained; and sometimes advocacy has been very effective. It is concluded that it might be beneficial for UNICEF to place a greater emphasis on these activities than was the case under the HSTF project.

- **Policy implementation.** It was appropriate for UNICEF to address the urgent areas of action in policy implementation, i.e. capacity-building and piloting of services, and the evaluation team considers that they remain relevant for the future. In particular, the long-term perspective on
capacity development through support to social work training lays a good foundation for a gradual change in attitudes that is sustainable in the long run.

The pilot projects have often been found to be effective, well supported by their staff and influenced to some extent by rights-based approaches, and can have a positive impact on reducing the number of users of the services in full-time residential care. There is a need to consider how to ensure that successful practices generate their own momentum so that positive outcomes are achieved also in institutions and areas that are not directly supported by UNICEF.

UNICEF has generally launched its pilots in locations with a relatively favourable economic and financial environment, and where skilled specialists are available. In the short run this has contributed to successful work in the pilots which can be demonstrated to the government; however, their long-term replication in other regions with poorer conditions is a greater challenge. There is no single solution as to how this trade-off should be resolved, but it is an issue to take into consideration in the design of further pilot activities.

It is essential that piloting goes hand in hand with consistent support to policy development—especially through advocacy—to ensure that the political environment is amenable to adopting the lessons learned from the pilots and expanding successful initiatives and to incorporating their funding into public budgets where appropriate. This will improve sustainability.

- **Monitoring and review.** Monitoring activities, which would have been highly relevant, remain largely absent and this poses a risk to the success of other interventions. Where programme monitoring has been undertaken it has improved the effectiveness of interventions.

As far as the types of service are concerned, UNICEF has achieved some good results in promoting and piloting family support services. These have generally been relevant for government policy. Often, though not always, the services that have been created have been found to be effective. Family substitute services have been addressed to a rather lesser extent, despite the availability of a significant proportion of the HSTF budget for this purpose. However, some good progress has been made in advocating for legislation that permits these services to be developed. Issues regarding the nature and quality of residential care itself have not been a focus of the HSTF project, which may be a consequence of the project design; as was mentioned elsewhere in this report, the main financial and human resources of the child protection system in the region are concentrated in institutions and any wide-scale change will, of course, be significantly affected by the resources and conditions in them. UNICEF has looked at supporting governance structures, particularly in pilot regions at local level and the coordinating body at national level. But since UNICEF does not interact with the full range of ministries responsible for institutional care, nor does it have partnership arrangements with other organisations that support the ministries where it does not have a presence, it exposes itself to the risk that gains made in policy development and implementation with one partner will be offset by opposite trends among partners with whom it is not working. At local level UNICEF has supported the creation of many new structures, the impact of which will be more readily identifiable in the future when they have been longer established.
7 Lessons learned

The analysis above reveals some core lessons that are general across the region and are relevant not only to UNICEF but also to governments and other development partners.

- Even in environments which are less amenable to open policy discussion there are routes into effective engagement with partner governments that enable policy problems to be addressed.
- At the time of developing policy, even at the stage of primary legislation, it is important to consider and quantify the funding that is required to deliver the proposed policy in order to be sure that proposals are realistic.
- A favourable opinion of proposed reform, among the general public as well as among policy-makers and employees of social care services, is vital if reform is to be sustained and extended. Groundwork at individual institutions, with clear explanations of what the policy change is expected to achieve and what roles staff may play in the new environment, may provide a route towards better understanding and a more favourable attitude to change.
- The effectiveness of policies is improved when attention is paid to the whole policy cycle. The process may start from a clear analysis and identification of the problem, then move through the development of policies that are orientated towards being able to be realistically implemented, to implementation and, crucially, monitoring to identify what works and what does not, leading to amendments and improvements at any of the stages.
- Child care policy reform cannot take place separately from consideration of numerous cross-sectoral issues such as employment and public finance, and is also affected by the external political and economic environment.
- Deinstitutionalisation will not be successful unless alternatives to residential care are made available and are publicised. Residential institutions tend to be more relied upon where they are known and seen to be the only (or the most convenient) option.
- Interventions are more likely to succeed in areas where it is possible to identify and work with local ‘champions for change’. At the same time, though, these people cannot be relied upon alone. For interventions to be sustainable in the long run they should be established in an institutional framework with the appropriate legislation and funding, and not reliant on a single person who may be replaced or move.
8 Examples of best practice

- **Kazakhstan** has shown a good commitment to investing resources in its child care system, including through the introduction of government-funded foster care. This has been accompanied by the establishment of a fully-fledged administrative structure which significantly increases the chances for improvements in child care and the development of alternative services, providing existing imperfections are addressed. Kazakhstan has many NGOs that are fairly professional and have good relations with government. Some receive support from government funds.

- In the **Kyrgyz Republic** cooperation with other development partners, notably the EU, has had a positive impact in this country: the integration of UNICEF’s policies with the matrix of the EU’s budget support programme is a good model for cooperation elsewhere. The Issyk-Ata pilot FCSD is widely cited as a success story: it is already used as an example of ‘best practice’ by UNICEF in-country and can serve a similar purpose elsewhere. A note of caution should be expressed that part of its success has been that it operates in relatively favourable conditions which may not always be present in other places (a local champion in the form of the *akim* and the director of the FCSD, the absence of any institutions in the raion, relative prosperity compared with other regions of the country). This does not detract from the successful interventions by UNICEF which include the opportunistic engagement in complementary activities to those of other development partners. UNICEF’s report on child abuse in institutions in the Kyrgyz Republic can be seen as an example of best practice in that it tackles an issue which has not previously been widely discussed; it raises the possibility of getting abuse in institutions on the policy agenda; it has been widely distributed to relevant people in a reader-friendly format; and it has had a positive impact on the understanding of the issue amongst its readers.

- In **Tajikistan** the establishment of the NCCR in the President’s Office is a model for placing responsibility for child care reform issues at the highest level of government, which should facilitate interministerial coordination (though the effectiveness of the arrangement is yet to be determined). UNICEF’s support to PMPCs and the diversion projects in Tajikistan are a good example of best practice in taking a holistic view of the policy cycle, since they increase their effectiveness by including components to monitor the outcome of the programmes or the wellbeing of service users.

- **Turkmenistan** offers a good example of how family support centres can be developed as adjuncts to existing education facilities, which may improve the chance of these services being sustained upon completion of UNICEF’s financial support.

- In **Uzbekistan** the RCSAC, which is responsible for policy coordination and interventions on behalf of children in need and children with disabilities, represents one model for developing analytical and research capacity in the field and is considered a catalyst for change. UNICEF’s partnership with the organisation is a good example of how to gain political support in a difficult environment. For UNICEF this partnership is successful and useful not only because the centre is well endowed by resources from the state budget and is an influential player in the field (having direct access to the Cabinet of Ministers since it is headed by the president’s daughter), but also because it supports the development of government capacity rather than creating parallel structures. The UNICEF office in Uzbekistan is considered to have the most diverse network of good contacts with government agencies in the region.
9 Recommendations for UNICEF

The evaluation in section 5 and the conclusions in section 6 give rise to a set of recommendations to UNICEF on where it should focus its attention in child care system reform in the future, and how it could usefully operate in the field. Some of the key broadly applicable recommendations are summarised here. Recommendations for individual country offices are given in the appropriate section of part II and are reproduced in Annex A below for reference.

- Map out in more detail the areas of intervention in the policy cycle that are carried out by other partners in the countries in which UNICEF is operating to ensure that the organisation's activities do not overlap or crowd out others. Act in a collaborative and complementary manner, making the most efficient use of its comparative advantages. This should reduce gaps in policy areas, e.g. adoption, and in partnership arrangements e.g. collaboration with ministries of health.

- For the area of problem identification, target UNICEF’s support to governments towards promoting systematic (rather than ad hoc) analytical activities—which in some cases are already being developed—and continuing to improve domestic analytical capacity on child care problems, among both government and non-government domestic stakeholders.

- Consider how to address the lack of attention to monitoring and review of child care policy reform. Note that this does not automatically require UNICEF to carry out or lead the monitoring, but it could work with governments to identify the resources that are needed or liaise with other development partners to ensure that this gap is covered. UNICEF could also usefully review the processes for monitoring and evaluating its own projects.

- Consider how to improve UNICEF’s understanding of the financial and human resources and financial mechanisms that are required in order to achieve the child care reform objectives; and how to ensure that resource planning is an integral part of the policy development process so as to make a real and lasting change in the way the system operates. This will touch on major cross-sectoral issues such as decentralisation policy, employment opportunities and the budget process.

- Consider how to develop closer links with partners who have a comparative advantage in economic development to explore opportunities for incorporating a consideration of child welfare into project planning. Coordination with organisations on cash benefits and labour market policy may reduce the number of families who look for residential care for their children because of employment problems.

- Where UNICEF is unable to achieve its objectives, understand the obstacles that are preventing an activity from being successful. Then either review the decision to carry out that activity or work to resolve the obstacles. (An example of this is the difficulty of introducing foster care in many countries.)

- On the subject of foster care, an assessment of the nature and scale of the problem of introducing foster care and its potential to be resolved, as just mentioned, may lead to an improved sequencing of activities to address it. If the obstacles to foster care in central Asia are found to be cultural UNICEF could raise awareness among the public of why the temporary placement of a child in a substitute family may sometimes be needed; and if families face financial obstacles then advocacy to the government about resource distribution, accompanied by analysis of resources and technical assistance to the development of funding mechanisms (or the identification of other organisations who can carry out this work), might be effective. The promotion of attitudinal change and the development of the institutional framework may therefore prove to be the priority areas for foster care rather than providing training to potential carers when there is insufficient progress in policy development (though it is recognised that some training may help this change process).
• Be sure of UNICEF’s comparative advantages in each country, and capitalise on them. UNICEF is seen by partners to have strong skills in policy development and advocacy, and could therefore usefully increase its attention to advocacy and attitude change at the highest levels of government. A related area in which UNICEF is strong is raising public awareness. This includes the production of reader-friendly brochures and leaflets, the use of media campaigns and other events where it interacts with the public. It could consider how to incorporate more of these activities into its ongoing programme of work.

• Support governments in exploring possibilities for committing students to working in social work for a set period after graduation.

• Continue to use UNICEF’s influence as a leader in child rights issues to advocate for reform of practices that do not further best practice in child rights. Pay attention to gender-differentiated needs.

• Continue to identify champions of change and work with them to gain momentum in child care reform.

• Consider how best practice from pilot projects can be replicated in areas with very few resources. As part of this, review UNICEF’s policy of providing salary supplements and aim to identify instances where they have been successfully absorbed into state budgets, or where there has been a smooth transition from supported salaries back to regular payments, to understand whether and how the practice of paying supplements can be a part of a project that is sustainable in the long run.

• Be clear within UNICEF about what messages the organisation is trying to convey. For example, UNICEF wants to reduce institutionalisation of children. What counts as an institution? Are some residential institutions good, and some bad (e.g. boarding schools for children who live in remote areas and need to be resident or else they will not receive an education)?

• Make certain that UNICEF’s intended messages are fully understood by people external to UNICEF who hear them. There is a risk that policies are misapplied because they are not understood (such as the arbitrary restriction of residential places in an institution to people under a certain age, in order to achieve deinstitutionalisation).
Annex A  Recommendations for UNICEF in each country  
(reproduced from part II)

The individual country chapters in part II of this report contain a detailed evaluation of both the status of child care reform in each of the five countries, and UNICEF's contribution to that reform. The summary recommendations for UNICEF in each country are reproduced here for reference but the reader is directed to part II of the report for the full context, findings and conclusions.

A.1 Kazakhstan

- Governance structures. Reforms are driven by the national level but are mainly implemented at the level of oblasts, towns and raions. It is therefore beneficial for UNICEF to maintain dialogue with local authorities in order to understand obstacles to implementation, generating feedback that can help it to further improve its support to central-level structures. As part of this interaction it may wish to support the development of systematic training programmes to staff of local guardianship departments (which may be indirect, through training of trainers, or direct to relevant authorities).

- Residential care. UNICEF, in close collaboration with CCRP and local research community, should develop a feasible strategy of transformation of institutions into centres providing a broad range of services to children and families allowing for reintegration of children into biological or substitute families. The strategy should explicitly address the securing of working places for, and re-training of, institution staff, and issues of available government funding and responsibilities of different bodies for management of these funds.

UNICEF could intervene more in the area of deinstitutionalisation of, and services for, children with disabilities in order to ensure that their rights for development in family environment are equally addressed and to prevent concentration of increased government funding on institutional care.

- Family substitute services. UNICEF could usefully support the development of legislative and administrative proposals to enhance foster care activities and offer further necessary training in this area. Part of this could include a review of how foster care policy is being implemented, and consideration of how to approach the resolution of any shortcomings in collaboration with the government.

The introduction of government payments to guardians as well as to foster families is also under consideration, and UNICEF could support the production of reliable financial estimates in order to be sure whether this proposal is financially and administratively feasible.

- Family support services. It is necessary to carefully evaluate results achieved by UNICEF and other parties paying special attention to sustainability of alternative service providers.

- Problem identification. It is recommended that UNICEF continues to align its own efforts in situation analysis and assessment with government objectives in this area.

- Policy development. A significant contribution to child care reform in Kazakhstan might be for UNICEF to help achieve a shift in attitudes away from the positive approach to institutionalisation by means of public awareness-raising and advocacy campaigns.

- Policy implementation is an area in which other partners are already active and have expertise, so the need for UNICEF to intervene there is less urgent. UNICEF could and should play coordination role in the international support to child care system assuming policy development and advocacy role, while increasingly outsourcing activities on pilot testing of child care models to international and domestic NGOs. However, if implementation is
delegated to other actors it is, of course, essential that the different organisations collaborate to ensure that the activities that are implemented are in agreement with the policies that are being developed and advocated.

- **Monitoring and review.** In general, results-based management is rather limited in both UNICEF and in the government agencies, but a fledgling system of monitoring is in place. It would be useful to understand and share the Government of Kazakhstan's experience of developing a monitoring system that covers both public and private institutions, disaggregated by geographical location and by cause of institutionalisation. This may provide useful lessons for other countries in Central Asia. UNICEF should support the government in further developing this capacity, particularly assisting with the disaggregation of data by gender and age.

UNICEF should also consider how to support the collection and use of qualitative data, and the monitoring of outcomes and impact as well as quantitative inputs and outputs, in order to ensure effective and efficient use of resources. This includes the development of systems for measuring the effectiveness of capacity-building and training activities.

UNICEF's regional office for CEE/CIS should consider the possibility of running a series of training programmes and increasing the level and quality of reporting requirements for UNICEF country offices on the basis of contemporary M&E methodology.

### A.2 Kyrgyz Republic

- **Governance structures.** Scale up support to the national coordination body, the Department of Child Protection, to improve its ability to influence policy, including over other ministries; this includes supporting it in the development of regulations and funding to implement the Children's Code. The department considers that it could benefit from greater intervention from UNICEF than it currently receives. Where appropriate, act as a consolidating and coordinating organisation for the activities of other partners.

Work with the EU to assist the Ministry of Labour and Social Development in supporting the development of FCSDs across the country.

- **Residential care.** Identify the causes of the lack of progress in deinstitutionalisation, reviewing the whole policy cycle to assess what the gaps are at the stages of policy development, implementation and monitoring. Work with relevant government bodies and development partners to resolve them. This is likely to include evidence-based discussions with the government on the need to reallocate its budgetary resources, with more precise demonstration of the high costs of residential care, the cost of alternatives and the means of effecting transition to family support through reprofiling.

- **Family substitute services.** Understand the reasons why the foster care regulations have not been approved, and work to resolve the issues.

Take a higher profile role in adoption, seeking improved legislation and practice for national and international adoption.

- **Family support services.** Continue support to the university social work curriculum which is a sound contribution to long-term policy change and sustainability

- **Problem identification.** Information sharing has generally been of an ad hoc nature, good at times but lacking planning. UNICEF has already undertaken a number of relevant studies in the area of child care reform but partners often find out about the results only by chance or when they make a specific request. Where analysis is known about it is generally appreciated. If UNICEF is interested in pursuing a role as a focal point for knowledge it could achieve a positive impact by sharing more widely the results of its research and encouraging the relevant
partners to implement its findings and recommendations. With little extra investment it could therefore considerably improve the reach and impact of its research.

- **Policy development.** Capitalise on the widespread perception of UNICEF as the most effective partner in policy-making for child care reform. Improve collaboration with the highest levels of government, including the presidential administration, the prime minister's office and parliament, to achieve greater impact by means of support to long-lasting policy development. Continue advocacy and capacity-building activities in all line ministries with responsibilities for residential institutions, particularly the Ministry of Education. Pay attention to the ongoing admission of very young children to infant homes, working with the Ministry of Health to develop alternatives to residential care for children aged three and under.

Continue also awareness-raising activities on a wider scale, to change perceptions among the general public, to ensure that the understanding of alternative services is not confined to a limited number of professionals who may be replaced.

Consider how to link the child rights agenda into poverty reduction policies, particularly through the Ministry of Labour and Social Development and UNDP, and through the EU's technical assistance on cash benefits and social safety nets.

- **Monitoring and review.** There is an urgent need for improvements in the quality and quantity of data collection and analysis across government, and this is an area where UNICEF could have a useful input. UNICEF already has an entry point here with the TransMONEE project and the implementation of the multiple indicator cluster survey which mean it has a relationship with the National Statistical Committee.

UNICEF could start by reviewing the information in its own publications such as those of the Innocenti Research Centre to understand what is covered by the numbers it publishes, and their reliability and accuracy.

At the same time UNICEF should improve its ability to monitor the progress of its own projects, including tracking budgets against expenditure and understanding reasons for diversion from project plans.

### A.3 Tajikistan

- **Problem identification.** Complete and disseminate the analysis of relative costs of residential and non-residential care and support local authorities in understanding the distribution of their expenditure on different service types.

  Provide technical assistance to local authorities and facilities in investigating the possible introduction of user charges for those that can afford it.

- **Policy development.** Carry out a widespread public awareness campaign to improve understanding of the rights of children without parental care and those with disabilities, as well as to improve attitudes towards foster care.

  Support CRDs in placing an absolute priority on the individual needs of the child rather than on reaching quotas for deinstitutionalisation. This is likely to include also greater support for monitoring children at home after reintegration.

  Support local authorities in integrating the essential costs of care services, including salaries of social workers, into the budget to improve financial sustainability, and develop a plan for achieving this integration in future interventions where UNICEF is supporting recurrent costs. This is likely also to require extensive engagement with the Ministry of Finance and with other development partners.
UNICEF can usefully learn from its experiences of winning influence in some agencies in order to gain more traction where its influence is not yet as strong. If it wishes to improve its relationship with the Ministry of Finance as mentioned above it should: identify key people within the ministry with whom to establish a dialogue; provide evidence of the benefits of the strategies it advocates, based on an understanding of their benefit to the ministry; and improve its links with the partner with the greatest leverage, in this case the EU. It is understood that the country office is beginning to take some steps in this regard.

Establish closer relations with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health in order to achieve greater influence over these ministries which control the flow of children through internats and infant homes;

Forge closer links with development partners, including by inviting others to join UNICEF's planning processes and by offering support to others in theirs.

- **Policy implementation.** Continue support for university-level social work training to improve long-term outcomes, and training in social work techniques for staff in residential and non-residential facilities. Team up with other organisations such as the national Social Work Resource Centre and ORA to deliver the skills required to achieve the long-term goal of improving the supply of skilled social workers.

Encourage the identification of ways to ensure that university-trained social workers remain in the field of social work for a certain period after graduation;

Consult with facilities to ensure that any equipment provided is appropriate and sufficiently supported.

Identify specialists in key areas including public finance to support programme implementation.

- **Monitoring and review.** Play an active role in supporting national and local governments in improving data collection and analysis for improved policy-making.

Collate best-practice experience from pilot CRDs and disseminate to improve understanding in pilots and non-pilot raions. This includes learning arising from experience in consolidating the roles of the guardianship authority and Commission for Minors into the CRDs.

Enhance own contribution to monitoring processes by producing and disseminating analytical information where appropriate.

Track carefully UNICEF project expenditure against the budget and consider whether large variations are justifiable (they may be).

**A.4 Turkmenistan**

**Expanding the range of interventions in the country.** UNICEF has the opportunity to expand its interventions considerably and to address issues which have until now not been open for discussion. UNICEF should be prepared for this and have a clear strategy of reforms in the sector (work on that has already started). Experience of other countries of the region (especially of another resource-rich country, Kazakhstan) should be analyzed in order to provide the best possible advice to the government when it is ready to hear it.

**Capacity building.** Capacity building efforts need to become more systematic. This could be achieved, for example, through establishing of a resource centre, where training materials and publications on child care problems would become available for all interested parties.

**Development of family support services.** In order to increase the effectiveness of its interventions in the area of family support centres UNICEF might consider the introduction of completely new types of services, which could be easily traceable. It would be useful to start
providing consultations for parents; there seems to be a big demand for that service, while of course this is subject to availability of personnel capable to provide such consultations and to the permission of government for the operation of such a service.

**Results-based management.** Processes for government monitoring and review are largely closed to UNICEF but it can improve its own understanding of results-based management internally. Increased expertise in-house may then contribute eventually to a comparative advantage in enabling the government to develop this capacity. The regional office of UNICEF might consider the possibility of running a series of training programmes and increasing the level of reporting requirements for UNICEF country offices based on contemporary M&E methodology. UNICEF should also support the government in developing this capacity.

### A.5 Uzbekistan

The evaluation agrees in general with the statement in the 2006 Annual Report that UNICEF cannot address all the various needs of child protection in Uzbekistan for ‘changes in policies, systems and mindsets’ and therefore it should have a strategic focus on ‘selected issues which are also seen as a priority by the government and will have the highest impact on children’. With regard to the specific services being developed, the evaluation team notes and recommends the following:

- **Residential care.** Capitalise on the signs of the shift in attitude towards deinstitutionalisation, and seek transformation processes for institutions where there is some likely cooperation and rehabilitation support for children, within an agreed government framework.

- **Family substitute services.** Provide further support to develop a core knowledge base and training support for social workers, local officials and foster parents themselves in family substitute services. Support efforts to make adoption procedures more rigorous in law, and in keeping with both the future and the present rights of the child.

- **Family support services.** The process of establishing social work as a profession needs every encouragement and programme support to continue from UNICEF. As for the pilot projects, document their experiences carefully and monitor and analyse the results so that government can be presented with the means of scaling up across the country as it plans to do. Similarly, it would be beneficial to document the work of the resource centres supporting children and parents. UNICEF should then share with the government the results of this learning, including the potential savings to the economy and society through less reliance on institutional care and through the improved social contribution of children and their parents who would otherwise be marginalised.

  Cash benefits can be a valuable alternative type of family support service. UNICEF should consider whether it should influence other donors to provide technical assistance supporting targeted cash transfers to the most vulnerable, or the extent to which it can become directly involved in this itself.

As for specific recommendations regarding different aspects of the policy cycle, the team concludes as follows:

- **Policy development.** UNICEF should gather evidence of what works best in the national setting, increasing its own knowledge base on cost benefits of care between families, including substitute families, and institutional care (it is understood that this is planned for 2008). It can also be pro-active in finding evidence from other examples in the country, such as the Bukhara fostering and guardianship initiatives, to complement knowledge sharing where it has been directly involved.
Work needs to be done on the costs of residential care, on transitional mechanisms for developing functions such as outreach, open and respite care in residential institutions, and on the costs and timescales which would be involved in re-provision of at least part of current residential care funding to community and family type care. Both financial and human resource analysis and the costs of redeploying staff to preventive work could be undertaken, with expert input, and the creation of a piloting demonstration with either MLSP or the Ministry of Public Education. The demonstration of both more efficient and effective use of public resources should be made as a case to government. UNICEF and line ministries with which it partners should work more with the Ministry of Finance, particularly to achieve sustainability.

‘Change of mindset’ work is a vital route into deinstitutionalisation, and as such it is worth mounting a continuing national campaign with government partners on ‘all our children’.

- **Monitoring and review.** Contribute further support to the work of the State Statistics Committee and the RCSAC in collaboration with a senior government counterpart.
Annex B  Notes on fieldwork

B.1  Kazakhstan

Fieldwork was carried out in Astana, Almaty and Shymkent; the pilot site in Ust-Kamenogorsk (East Kazakhstan oblast) was contacted by telephone. Some 22 key informant interviews were conducted. In addition a series of informal individual interviews with current and former foster parents was held in Shymkent as a replacement for the focus group with adults. Focus groups with children were held in two orphanages in Shymkent. The first included nine children aged 12 to 15, some of whom had previously had a temporary placement with foster parents and who had subsequently been returned to non-family residential care; the second consisted of eight children aged 9–10. Team members were shown around the premises of orphanage no. 3 and Sairam orphanage in Shymkent.

Table B.1  Interviewees in Kazakhstan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Position</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Central government</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Raisa Petrovna Sher</td>
<td>Deputy Chairperson, CCRP, Ministry of Education and Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Dinara Kairbekovna Ramazanova</td>
<td>Head of department of rehabilitation of people with disabilities and social services development, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Zaida Tokashevna Nurabaeva</td>
<td>Ministry of Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Asia Kairgeldinovna Urazbaeva</td>
<td>Office of the Ombudsman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local government</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Galina Mikhailovna Samotokina</td>
<td>Deputy Director, Department of Education, City of Almaty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Gulnar Nigmatovna Alibaeva</td>
<td>Chief Specialist on Child Rights Protection, Department of Education, City of Astana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Zhanat Darkhanbaeva</td>
<td>Guardianship Department, Department of Education, Shymkent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development partners</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Zhanar Sagimbaeva</td>
<td>Development Centre Manager, UNDP office in Kazakhstan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NGOs</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Rinad Temirbekov</td>
<td>Executive Director, Eurasia Foundation of Central Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Ross Brown</td>
<td>Regional Development Manager for Kazakhstan, Eurasia Foundation of Central Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Ilyas Laikov</td>
<td>Project Associate, Eurasia Foundation of Central Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Zulfia Mukhamedbekovna Baisakova</td>
<td>Union of Crisis Centres of Kazakhstan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Asia Ukeevna Khairullina</td>
<td>Women’s League of Creative Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Gulnur Duisenovna Khakimjanova</td>
<td>Centr SATR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Elena Anatolievna Kolmogorova</td>
<td>Director, Centre of Social Adaptation of Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Batyrkhan Ibragimovich Jenaliiev</td>
<td>“SOS Kinderdorf” – Children Villages of Kazakhstan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Raikhan Amzeeva</td>
<td>Executive director of the Association of Psychologists</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B.2 Kyrgyz Republic

In the Kyrgyz Republic the field team visited Bishkek, Issyk-Ata raion, Moskovsky raion, and Orlovka. Respondents in Jalalabad were interviewed by telephone. In total 23 interviews were held with key informants of the following organisations.

Table B.2 Interviewees in the Kyrgyz Republic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Central government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
<td>Department for Child Protection, State Agency for Physical Culture, Sports and Youth Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Finance</td>
<td>Ministry of Labour and Social Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidential administration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local government</td>
<td>Family and Child Support Department, Issyk-Ata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family and Child Support Department, Moskovsky raion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City administration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development partners</td>
<td>EU budget support programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UNDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>EveryChild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'My Family'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Save the Children Denmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot centres, residential institutions and other partners</td>
<td>Belovodsky children's home, Moskovsky raion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Position
Bishkek State University
_Oduvanchik_ kindergarten, Jalalabad
Rehabilitation Centre for Street and Homeless Children, Bishkek
Temporary Respite Centre for Children, Orlovka
Voeno-Antonovsky _internat_

UNICEF
Programme officer, child protection
Former programme officer, child protection
Assistant programme officer, child protection
Country representative
Monitoring officer

B.3 Tajikistan

The team carried out fieldwork in Dushanbe and in Soghd and Khatlon oblasts. Two focus groups were held in Soghd oblast for children living in centres supported by UNICEF. An information group discussion was held with parents of children with disabilities using the Parents Education Centre in Dushanbe. Some 30 semi-structured interviews were held with key informants of the following organisations.

_Table B.3 Interviewees in Tajikistan_

Position

**Central government**
National Commission on Child Rights
Ministry of Labour and Social Protection
Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, Social Work Resource Centre
Ministry of Finance
State Statistical Agency
Strategic Research Centre

**Local government**
CRD, Dushanbe
CRD, Kurgan-Tube raion, Khatlon oblast
CRD, Gafurov, Soghd oblast
CRD, Isfara, Soghd oblast

**Development partners**
EU budget support programme
SIDA

**NGOs**
ORA International, Dushanbe
Childhood, Gafurov, Soghd oblast
Helping Hand, Khudjand, Soghd oblast
UMED, Isfara, Soghd oblast
Position

**Pilot centres, residential institutions and other partners**
- Diversion project, Sino, Dushanbe
- Diversion project, Firdavsi, Dushanbe
- Temporary Isolation Centre, Dushanbe
- Former internat, Kurgan-Tube, Khatlon Oblast
- Parents Education Centre, Dushanbe
- Parents Education Centre, Khudjand, Soghd Oblast
- PMPC, Dushanbe
- PMPC, Khudjand, Soghd Oblast
- Proposed PMPC, Kurgan-Tube, Khatlon Oblast
- Shkola-internat no. 4, Dushanbe

**UNICEF**
- Country representative
- Child protection officer
- Finance assistant
- Independent consultant

**B.4 Turkmenistan**

The field team visited Ashgabat, Abadan and Mary. Focus groups were held in Abadan and Mary. It was not possible to meet with people from the central government.

**Table B.4 Interviewees in Turkmenistan**

Position

**Local governments, pilot centres and other partners**
- Staff of the family support centre in Abadan
- Staff of the family support centre in Mary
- Expert paediatrician, one of the authors of the study on children in institutions
- Representative of the National Institute of the State Statistics and Information of Turkmenistan
- Representative of raion commission on minors in Ashgabat
- Representative of guardianship department in Mary
- Representative of baby home in Ashgabat
- Representative of the Palace of Childhood (orphanage in Ashgabat)

**NGOs**
- Union of Women
- National Children’s Fund

**UNICEF country office staff**
B.5 Uzbekistan

The field team collected primary data in Tashkent and the surrounding region, and in Samarkand and Bukhara. One focus group in the former pilot site for families with disabled children, Angren, was an informal dialogue with several mothers while their children were also in attendance; another was with members of the Uzbekistan Children’s Parliament, from Tashkent. An informal focus group was held with guardians and foster parents in Bukhara. Interviews were conducted with the respondents listed in Table B.5.

Table B.5 Interviewees in Uzbekistan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Central government</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms M. Akhunova</td>
<td>Ministry of Public Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Ahmetova</td>
<td>Ministry of Health—former chief pediatrician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Alisher Inokov</td>
<td>MLSP—Head of Analysis and Monitoring of the Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanobar Akhundjanova (and five members of team)</td>
<td>RCSAC—Head of department for the issues of children without parental care under Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. T. Umarov</td>
<td>Office of the Prosecutor General—Head of Juvenile Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local government</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahmuda Miseratova (and four members of team)</td>
<td>Chilunzor khokimiat, Tashkent—senior social worker. Team members drawn from a mahalla, the khokimat, disability specialist in school, and care manager in education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rano Irgashevna Rohimova (and five members of team)</td>
<td>Sobir-Rakhimov khokimiat, Tashkent—Khokim of district., Coordinator of social work team, FCSU. Team members drawn from children's home, specialist on mother and child, psychologist, and mahalla committee, and team representatives from other departments including a teacher, and policeman from Interior Ministry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Yunisov</td>
<td>Municipal authority (khokimiyat) in Angren—Khokim, and Deputy Khokim in charge of the Sunday School provision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Various representatives</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>District local authorities in Samarkand and Bukhara: representatives of Khokimiyat in Samarkand and city department of public education and guardianship department in Bukhara.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development partners</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Eshunov</td>
<td>UNDP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NGOs</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hans Bidersky</td>
<td>Director, World Vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulya Nigmajdeneva</td>
<td>Deputy and specialist, World Vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Kuzmina</td>
<td>Deputy Director, You Are Not Alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Smirnova</td>
<td>Director of Studies, You Are Not Alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms I. Yusupova</td>
<td>Children’s Fund of Uzbekistan—Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisation of foreign embassy contributors to child care and support for disabled children</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pilot centres, residential institutions and other partners</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and Children Support Units in Chilunzor and Sobir-Rakminov, Tashkent; and Samarkand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yunusov Alisher (and three others)</td>
<td>Head of Department, Tashkent Institute of Culture,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent</td>
<td>Position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marietta Karamyan and Marifat Ganiyeva</td>
<td>Department of social work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rano Ismailova</td>
<td>National University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adelya Shubina</td>
<td>freelance trainer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director and 3 staff, including 1 volunteer mother</td>
<td>Freelance trainer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Type children's home in Bukhara</td>
<td>Mehr va Tayanch Resource Centre for Women and Children in Tashkent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samarkand University department of social work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mehriobonlik No.3 in Tashkent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reza Hossaini</td>
<td>UNICEF Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andro Shilakadze</td>
<td>Deputy Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siyma Barkin</td>
<td>Programme Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guzal Kamalova,</td>
<td>Assistant Programme Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aziza Abdulayeva</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nargiza Umarova</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex C  Selected references


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1. Background

Evolution of the child care system reform in Central Asia

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan are facing problems concerning institutionalization of children who are without family care, i.e. children living in residential care institutions, street children and homeless children. This is a common phenomenon among the other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and other countries experiencing 'transition.'

The need for providing substitute care for children unable to live with their families is by no means a new phenomenon in countries of the former Soviet Union. In all five Central Asian republics, the system of services reflects the Soviet-era preference for institutional care, instead of preventive family support systems and community- and family based alternative services. Recourse to institutional placement was by far the most common response by the state for orphaned, abandoned, neglected children, as well as for children with disabilities, and the establishments concerned tended to cater to several hundred children each. The system was conceived in such a way as to validate the child’s absence from the family environment, rather than to facilitate, where possible, his or her return. Furthermore, institutionalized children were looked upon as potentially non-productive members of society, and the material and other conditions of their placement tended to reflect the lack of importance consequently accorded to them.

As a result of the lack of necessary care, many of the rights of these children are being violated. The same applies to children coming out of orphanages and those children who are brought up in broken families with a history of violence and substance abuse. The current situation in the Central Asian countries calls for immediate actions to reform current child protection and welfare services.

UNICEF support at a cross-road

UNICEF has been involved in the reform of child care systems (including de-institutionalization) in Central Asian republics for about 5 years, and in the entire CEE/CIS region, to different extent since the mid 1990s. In Central Asia, UNICEF’s support intensified in 2004 with the approval of funding for the 5-country project that this evaluation covers.

Over the years in the rest of CEE/CIS UNICEF’s involvement in the reform has intensified, and with its involvement in the reform, the organization has also accumulated knowledge on which approaches that have worked well, and approaches that have been less successful in furthering the reform. UNICEF regional office in Geneva, and country offices in the CEE/CIS have been working in synergy to document some of these “lessons learned”, and the regional office has been mainly responsible for disseminating the knowledge, and guide country offices to individuals, countries and good practices that would inform better the reform at country level. The uptake of lessons learned on “proven approaches“ countries have varied, for both internal and external reasons.

At the time for the evaluation, UNICEF’s support to child protection systems reform in Central Asia is at a cross road. Never before has the staff capacity been so high in country offices, while at the same time,
UNICEF country offices are receiving less and less of UNICEF’s own resources to support the work of Governments. The current 3-year project is coming to an end.

There is hence a need to focus more on the leveraging of resources of partners (EU, World Bank and Asian Development Bank), and of the Governments – especially those Governments that have significant own resources. There is also a need to focus the strategies and activities where UNICEF is involved and to take a step towards “technical excellence”, based on the accumulated knowledge of lessons learned to guide the reform in the coming years. In this context, the evaluation is both an impact evaluation that should be able to provide information to the donor of the 3-years project, and a formative evaluation that should provide elements to guide UNICEF’s interventions in the future and arguments to further fundraising to a second phase of the project.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the evaluation is threefold:

1. **To fulfill accountability** towards donor and the stakeholders/beneficiaries of the project in each country: to provide the current donor and stakeholders in the UNICEF with information on how well the budget has been utilized and objectives of the project have been fulfilled;
2. **To increase learning** in each country on how to best support the child care system reform in the future.
3. **To inform** the regional strategy on child protection on how to best support the child care system reform in different countries.

3. Scope

**Geographical focus:**

The evaluation will cover the five Central Asian countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan and will be both formative and assess impact of UNICEF interventions.

**Depth of the evaluation**

The evaluation should cover all UNICEF activities in support of the child care system reform (see details for each country). In all five countries the main part of the work in support of the child care system reform has been implemented through a project (“Every Child has the Right to Grow up in a Family Environment”) funded by the Human Security Trust Fund (HSTF) for a period of three years (Sept 2004-2007). This is the most intense period of UNICEF’s involvement in the reform. In addition, a few other activities/countries have been implemented with other budgetary means. The depth of the evaluation should be similar in four of the countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan), where the level of engagement of UNICEF in the child care reform has been similar.

In these four countries the range of activities to be covered by the evaluation are as follows:

**Kazakhstan**
- Assessments and analysis of the situation and the system (HSTF)
- Advocacy, sensitization and mobilization of professionals and key stakeholders involved in the reform (HSTF)
- Capacity building of professionals in the care system (HSTF)
- Pilots to model service delivery (community social work centers, and foster care service) (HSTF)
- Child Protection indicators related to child care (non-HSTF funded)
- Communication & advocacy (non-HSTF funded)

**Kyrgyzstan**
- Assessments and analysis of the situation and the system (HSTF)
• Advocacy, sensitization and mobilization of professionals and key stakeholders involved in the reform (HSTF)
• Capacity building of professionals in the care system (HSTF)
• Pilots to model service delivery (community social work centers, and foster care service) (HSTF)
• Additional activity to be complemented

Uzbekistan
• Assessments and analysis of the situation and the system (HSTF)
• Advocacy, sensitization and mobilization of professionals and key stakeholders involved in the reform (HSTF)
• Capacity building of professionals in the care system (HSTF)
• Pilots to model service delivery (community social work centers, and foster care service) (HSTF)
• Establishment of Women Resource Centres" (UNICEF's own regular resources)

Tajikistan
• Assessments and analysis of the situation and the system (HSTF)
• Advocacy, sensitization and mobilization of professionals and key stakeholders involved in the reform (HSTF)
• Capacity building of professionals in the care system (HSTF)
• Pilots to model service delivery (community social work centers, and foster care service) (HSTF)
• Promoting the Process of De-institutionalisation (SIDA-funded)

Turkmenistan
In Turkmenistan, the depth of the evaluation will be somewhat lighter, since the political situation provided limited opportunities for UNICEF to implement a full-fledged programme in support of the child care system reform. UNICEF support focused on:
• Capacity building: i.e. a package of various social care related nation-wide trainings for various groups of child care professionals; and
• Piloting family support services through establishing family support centers.

The evaluation team will respond to as many of the specific evaluation questions as is feasible also in Turkmenistan, but will focus on the following issues:
• How did the capacity building activities influence ability of child protection professionals to provide comprehensive package of services for children and families at risk?
• How did the project activities influence inter agency collaboration of various groups of child protection professionals?
• How did the project activities contribute to quality of services provided to children and families at risk?

Time period covered
The evaluation will cover UNICEF's support to child care system reform from 2003 to June 2007. The most intense period for the support has been September 2004 to June 2007 as this is the time period when UNICEF implemented the HSTF-project "Every Child has the Right to Grow up in a Family Environment”.

OECD/DAC criteria
In all five countries, OECD/DAC criteria should be used to:

1. Provide the current UNICEF-donor and the beneficiary of the support (Governments of the different countries) with an evaluation of impact, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability, human rights based approach and results based management principles used in the different activities implemented in support of the child care system reform (either through the project "Every Child has
the Right to Grow up in a Family Environment” or activities implemented by UNICEF but funded from other sources).

2. Provide UNICEF country offices with feedback on the relevance of their approach in the area of child care system reform, assessed against historic progress- and current status of the child care system reform and also against UNICEF’s emerging regional policy in this area, to in order to:
   o Reveal gaps in their approaches and recommend corrections in the strategy.
   o Reveal good practices in their approaches to be further enhanced in the strategy.

Lessons learned:

3. Inform global and regional strategies based on the experience in the five countries. In particular, it should identify:
   o To extract lessons learned, such as for example good practices, most effective interventions to support the child care system reform etc.
   o Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats, SWOT, of UNICEF’s involvement in child care system reform in Central Asia. This should in particular observe how UNICEF relates to other actors in the reform (such as the EU and World Bank).

4. Users of the evaluation are:
   - Current beneficiaries of UNICEF’s support: National and local government (Ministries of Education, Social Welfare, Health), civil society organizations and private service providers – the use is primarily to inform next steps in the reform
   - UNICEF (country- and regional offices, head quarters and UNICEF Executive Board) – the use is primarily to inform the design of second phase of support to the child care system reform
   - Current and potential UNICEF donors (in particular the Japanese Human Security Trust Fund) – the use is primarily to inform how well the funds provided to UNICEF have been utilized and what has been the impact
   - Current and potential partners in the reform of child care systems (e.g. project managers and country specialists in World Bank, EU and Asian Development Bank) – the use is primarily to inform UNICEF’s discussions on partnerships with these organizations in the activities relevant for child care system reform.

5. Specific evaluation questions

   **Purpose 1:** Provide the current UNICEF-donor and the beneficiary of the support (Governments of the different countries) with an evaluation of impact, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the different activities in the project “Every Child has the Right to Grow up in a Family Environment”. Human rights and results based management.

   1. UNICEF’s work in support of the child care system reform in the 5 countries used a mix of different strategies to influence the reform of the system. Activities and strategies ranged from an assessment/analysis of the current situation, advocacy and sensitization of professionals/experts in the care system, capacity building of professionals dealing with children and families at risk, piloting of community based social work centers, and promotion and piloting of foster care at community level. Considering the objectives of the project, and external factors which may play a role in determining the effect of these activities (such as the social/political events or related activities of other Government or Non-Governmental Organizations in the country), what changes in the system (impact) did UNICEF project contribute to that may directly or indirectly have contributed to?
      a. An eventual reduction in the number of children in all forms of residential care;
b. An eventual increase in the number of cases of children placed in institutions effectively reviewed by competent authorities;
c. An eventual increase in the number of children released to family environment;

2. More specifically, what changes (impact) did UNICEF activities contribute to directly or indirectly, that are visible in the number, type and/or quality of services provided to children and families at risk:
   d. Statutory services (usually not streamlined enough, or providing too many entry points to the child care system, are usually not doing individual case assessments as would be preferably)
   e. Family support services (usually not many- if any exist)
   f. Family substitute services (e.g. foster and guardianship care – usually are only new services and not provided in enough number, or monitored properly)
   g. De-institutionalization (from residential care institutions)
   h. Cash assistance (is usually not targeted enough, of important amount or distributed in effective manner)
   i. Prevention of separation (is usually not the priority of the care system, as it should be)
   j. Coordination and cooperation between different governmental ministries and agencies involved in child care.

3. What changes (impact & sustainability) in the regulatory mechanisms that determine how the child care system operates, did UNICEF activities directly or indirectly contribute to? Such regulatory mechanisms for example:
   k. Policies, strategies, plans that would guide the reform of the child care system (e.g. moving from residential care to family based care and support, poverty reduction, moratorium of new entries for residential care institutions)?
   l. Legislation, standards and/or intersectoral arrangements regulating the functioning of the child care system?
   m. Changes in government finances and budgets for the system (e.g. reallocation of budgets from residential care institutions, to new services, reallocation of budget between ministries, decentralization of funding for services, budgeting and/or funding for the transition costs of the reform etc.)?
   n. Processes and structures to operationalize and plan for the reform of the child care system?
   o. Improved gate-keeping functions at local and national levels (controlling the entry to the system entry to)?
   p. Decentralization of
   q. Personnel
   r. Representation and participation
   s. Good practices

4. To what extent were the different activities supported by the project relevant to contribute to the shifts in the child care system that were required at the time the project started? Indicators of relevance would be for example:
   a. If the selection of the activities supported in the project, were addressing the most urgent problems (e.g. as identified in concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, or statistics on children deprived of parental care etc.).
   b. If the implementation of activities were sufficiently flexible to use new opportunities resulting from changes in governmental priorities or similar.
   c. If the selection of certain activities, in particular pilot projects, were sufficiently based on and using the country reality (as compared to introducing blueprint approaches from other countries).
   d. If the selection and combination of the activities supported in the project were enough to make a real change in the way the system operates.
Country report: Uzbekistan

5. To what extent were the project and its activities managed in “results based management” principles and processes? Indicators of this would be for example:
   a. Availability of clear log frames, baselines and progress indicators to measure progress and success and to inform changes to the course of action on a regular basis?
   b. Attention in implementation to use a variety of M&E activities (e.g. situation analysis, establishment of baselines, strengthening and development of management information systems, ongoing field monitoring, evaluation of specific activities etc.) providing the project managed with evidence to prove that the desired effects were achieved.
   c. Since availability and quality of data is often a very basic problem of the care system itself, if attention was given to address this overall weaknesses in data collection, monitoring and supervision of the child care system so as to make sure that sufficient evidence was available for proper planning of the reform of the child care system (or components of it).

6. To what extent has the project and its activities been effective? Effectiveness is defined by for example:
   a. The ability to meet the planned outputs and outcomes as elaborated in the original project proposal (and if changes were made if these were justifiable)?
   b. The extent to which the effect of pilot projects has produced desirable outcomes for children and families (e.g. prevent separation, successful family re-unification etc.)?
   c. To what extent to which users (for example children in pilot projects) and beneficiaries (for example professionals who participated in training) were consulted in the process- and satisfied with the activities in the project?

7. To what extent have the activities implemented in the project become sustainable, or do they have a potential for sustainability? Indicators of sustainability- or potential for sustainability would be:
   a. If they had an impact on the systemic changes (see question 1-3)
   b. If any attempt has been made in the project to document good practices in e.g. service delivery and evaluate that the activity/project has had positive effect/impact on children.
   c. If any attempt has been made to provide a costing of pilot models to establish their potential sustainability within the Government budget if scaled up.
   d. With special attention to pilot projects/ modeling of service provision if they had a positive impact on beneficiaries (Piloting of community-based social/family work centers, and/or Piloting of foster care at the community level)

8. To what extent have the activities in the project been efficient? Indicators of efficiency would be:
   a. If the type of resources (financial / human resources) were adequate.
   b. If the amount of resources (financial and human) were sufficient to implement the strategy and planned activities.
   c. If the resources spent in the project were complementary to what other international actors were investing (in particular the once investing larger amounts of budget in sectors relevant for child welfare, care and protection, such as the World bank, EU, Asian Development Bank.)?
   d. If UNICEF was able to strategically use funds to activities having a leveraging effect on what other are doing?
e. If investments made in specific activities were justifiable considering the benefits?

9. To what extent did the design and implementation of the project and its activities take into account child rights? Indicators of this would be for example:
   a. Attention in project design and implementation to analysis of the rights of specific groups (e.g. children with disabilities, children born to HIV+ mothers, poor single mothers etc.)
   b. Attention given to gender issues (e.g. that the de-institutionalization process, child care system reform is empowering families, women, men, and children)
   c. Attention in project design to priorities for children without parental care as identified by the Committee on the Rights of the Child
   d. Attention given to empowering of disadvantaged children and families in the process of de-institutionalization and reform of child care system
   e. Attention given to language used by disadvantaged families, children etc.
   f. Attention given to special needs of children (child friendly services and professional behavior towards children etc.)
   g. Attention given to foster a reform of the child care system where children’s views are taken into account.

On all of the questions above, and in each country evaluated:

10. What are the major strengths in UNICEF’s activities, how were they used and appreciated by other actors in the process?

11. What are the major weaknesses or gaps in UNICEF activities and how did they come about? Have there been missed opportunities to contribute to system reform due to these weaknesses and gaps?

12. What were the constraints identified by UNICEF during the project which will limit their contribution to reform?

Purpose 2: Assessed against the progress made so far in the reform of child care system (the set up and changes in the system), and the social-, economic and political context of the country, provide UNICEF country offices with feedback on:

13. The status of the reform so far:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regulatory mechanisms for how the system functions / Services in the child care system that should that are in reform</th>
<th>Policies, strategies, plans</th>
<th>Legislation and standards</th>
<th>Fiscal and budgetary measures</th>
<th>Gatekeeping</th>
<th>Decentralization</th>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>Representation and participation</th>
<th>Good practices</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statutory services</td>
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<td>Family support services</td>
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<td>Family substitute services</td>
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<td>Deinstitutionalisation</td>
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<td>Cash assistance</td>
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<td>Prevention of separation</td>
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</table>

14. What are the most significant achievements of the child care reform to date?
   a. What makes them the most significant?
b. What evidence there is for these changes?
c. What were the “drivers” of the reform (things that have contributed to a shift or a push for the reform)?

15. What are the good examples of the child care reform?
   a. What makes them good examples?
   b. Which actors (from which level and from which sectors) were involved in the initiation and development of these examples?
   c. Which obstacles these practices faced (particularly re. 5 key issues)?
   d. How did they overcome them?

16. What is the potential that will help aid further reform efforts?

17. In each country, which are the areas where the reform has progressed well, and where the reform is lagging behind?

18. What would be required to address the areas where reform is lagging behind?
   a. How should these issues be addressed?
   b. By whom?
   c. For whom?

19. Considering the potential for accelerating the reform, considering what other partners are doing and what is considered UNICEF’s strengths and the best use of its resources, how could UNICEF best support the reform in the coming 3 years (which areas to get involved in)?

Purpose 3: Inform global and regional strategies based on the experience in the five countries. In particular, it should identify:

20. What have been the trends in performance (based on the OECD DAC criteria and responses to Qs 1-12) of UNICEF in Central Asia related to the enhancement- and reforms of child care systems? Trends should in particular take into consideration:
   a. The similarities and/or differences in the systems for child care in the 5 countries;
   b. The similarities and/or differences in opportunities (political, economic, social) in the 5 countries.

21. Which are the most important lessons? In particular:
   a. If there are any good practices in the pilot projects and/or the other activities supported in the project that can be identified, further disseminated and/or taken to scale.
   b. If there are any “best investments” that UNICEF that should take into account in design of similar projects in other parts of the region?
   c. Etc...

22. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats, SWOT, of UNICEF’s involvement in child care system reform in Central Asia. This should in particular observe how UNICEF relates to other actors in the reform (such as the EU and World Bank).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Internal Analysis</strong></th>
<th><strong>Weaknesses</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengths</strong></td>
<td>• What are the attributes of UNICEF as an organization which are harmful in achieving the objectives?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What are the attributes of UNICEF as an organization which are helpful in achieving the objectives?</td>
<td>• How can these weaknesses be overcome or be taken into account in the programme design from the very beginning? For example, which activities/strategies used by UNICEF seem to have had least impact and did not result in systematic changes?</td>
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<td>• How can these strengths be used? For example, which component of the CC activities seem to have been most effective in achieving impact on CC-reform?</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>External Analysis</strong></th>
<th><strong>Opportunities</strong></th>
<th><strong>Threats</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunities</strong></td>
<td>• Are methods/strategies being used which are suitable to UNICEF’s strengths, and which take advantage of opportunities? If not, why not? How can this be improved?</td>
<td>• What are external conditions which are harmful to achieving the objectives?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What are the external conditions which are helpful for achieving the objectives (political environment, national context, other partners’ involvement)?</td>
<td>• Which activities/strategies were the “best investments”?</td>
<td>• To what extent is UNICEF able to defend itself against these threats/challenges, and how can this be improved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To what extent are these opportunities being exploited by UNICEF, and how can this be improved?</td>
<td>• What is UNICEF’s potential to “lead” in this area?</td>
<td>• Where are there any particular external opportunities and internal strengths which are creating a unique opportunity for UNICEF to contribute to CC-reform? Have these been taken advantage of sufficiently?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Threats</strong></td>
<td>• How are UNICEF’s strengths being used to overcome threats/challenges? If not, why not? How can this be improved?</td>
<td>• Are strategies being used which avoid weaknesses which could be targeted by threats? If not, why not? How can this be improved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What external conditions are harmful to achieving the objectives?</td>
<td>• Where there any particular threats/challenges which are likely to be relevant to other countries/settings where UNICEF is working?</td>
<td>• Can these ‘lessons learned’ for a defensive strategy be relevant elsewhere?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To what extent is UNICEF able to defend itself against these threats/challenges, and how can this be improved?</td>
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</table>

6. Sources of information
- Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989;
- UNICEF online child protection resource package, in particular the part on child care system (http://ceecis.org/child_protection/)
7. Evaluation methods

While the evaluation team is expected to expand and make suggestions on possible methods in their proposal, some of the very general expectations on the evaluation would be that it uses both qualitative and quantitative methods. In general terms data collection methods would include:

- **Desk research:** A comprehensive analysis of available information including country situational analyses on child care related issues (such as national laws, policies, action plans etc.), country-specific work programmes, including project proposals, progress reports, log frames etc.

- **Field data collection:** The evaluation team will conduct site visits in all five countries. While recognizing that the particular nature of project activities in each country may differ, the team will employ a set of site visit protocols to capture the unique characteristics of each country programme as well as their commonalities, in order to help ensure comparability of data across countries and to extract elements of good practice and recommendations for the region as a whole. Field data collection methods would include for example:
  - **Interviews with key informants:** To ensure wide participation of country level participants and local audiences in the evaluation, the consultant will organize structured and/or semi-structured interviews with key informants, whenever feasible and in collaboration with the country project staff. Model to be chosen should be decided upon jointly by country project staff and evaluators depending on what is most suitable for the country setting.
  - **Questionnaires:** Some of the pilot projects would be best evaluated through the use of quantitative methods and application of structured questionnaires for the users of services and/or service providers.

8. Timeframe of Major Tasks

**Preparation phase**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Task</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 April</td>
<td>Call for proposals</td>
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<tr>
<td>26 April</td>
<td>Deadline for submission of proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 May</td>
<td>Official appointment of Evaluation team</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Inception phase**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Task</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 May</td>
<td>Deadline for submission of detailed research protocols</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25 May</td>
<td>1 day meeting in Geneva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 June</td>
<td>Deadline for desk review, preparations for field visits, finalization of research protocols</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Field phase**

February 2008
5 June – 1 October  Field visits in 5 countries (1 visit/country of approx. 7-10 days)
Uzbekistan: Preferably between 5 – 15 June or 9-20 July.
Kazakhstan: Preferably between 15 June – 15 July
Kyrgyzstan: Preferably between 1 – 15 July
Tajikistan: Preferably in the second half of September.

Reporting phase
1 October  Deadline for 1st draft of evaluation report
7 October  Deadline for comments on 1st draft evaluation report
1 November Deadline for 2nd draft evaluation report
12-16 November 1 day debriefing meeting and feedback on 2nd draft report
1 December  Deadline for submission of Final Evaluation Report

Specific work schedule is organized by the evaluation team in consultation with UNICEF country offices and other stakeholders of the evaluation. The evaluation team is responsible for submission of deliverables and final products by agreed deadlines.

9. Deliverables

1. Evaluation design/framework agreed upon with UNICEF (prior to field work)
2. Tools / questionnaires (prior to field work)
3. After each country mission: draft country report with preliminary findings and recommendations (deadline 1 week after each country visit – if two or several countries are visited in a row, the deadline can be extended until 10 days after the end of mission)
4. Draft Evaluation report according to an outline agreed with UNICEF (1 October)
5. Final Evaluation Report including UNICEF’s and stakeholders comments (report should comply with UNICEF Evaluation Report Standards attached below)
6. Executive summary in English of the report (approx. 5-10 pages)
7. List of documents consulted (UNICEF documents and other documents)
8. List of people interviewed, consulted

Deliverables should be guided by UNICEF guidelines and standards for Evaluations and for Evaluation reports attached below:

[Guidelines were attached to original TORs].

10. Profile of evaluation team

Evaluation teams that are composed of a mix of nationalities, ideally with local researchers/research companies from the Central Asian republics will be given priority. Competencies required to carry out the evaluation are a combination of expertise in the subject area and of evaluation methods as per below:

- Thorough understanding of child rights, child protection mechanisms and child care system design and its reform.
- Good knowledge of evaluation methodology design
- Ability to conduct interviews, focus group discussions and writing reports for publication.
- Experience in conducting desk reviews and field visits.
- Strong analytical and conceptual thinking;
- Good speaking and reading skills in English and Russian;
- Good speaking and writing skills in English
- Good knowledge of local contexts in the Central Asian republics.
- Good communication skills and ability to interact with senior government officials.
11. Functions and inputs from different stakeholders

To successfully achieve the expected results of the evaluation, it is essential that UNICEF Regional Office and selected Country offices play supportive role and in the implementation process of this evaluation. Concretely, this would mean:

**The UNICEF Regional Office:**
1. Prepares the TORs for the evaluation exercise.
2. Selects the proposal for the evaluation and approves the final composition of the evaluation team.
3. Liaison with evaluation team.
4. Key informants throughout the evaluation process.
5. Provides initial briefing to evaluators on the framework and expectations of the evaluation and on UNICEF programmes in support of child care system reforms.
6. Coordinates feedback on evaluation design and research tools and all reports and deliverables.
7. Facilitates contact with UNICEF country offices that are included in the evaluation exercise.
8. Facilitates access to complementary background documents to be included in the desk review.
9. Manages the contract, clears deliverables and ensures timely disbursement of funding as per agreed upon payment schedule.

**The UNICEF Country Offices in 5 Central Asian republics:**
1. Liaison with evaluation team;
2. Key informants throughout the evaluation process.
3. Provide comprehensive and comprehensible documentation of UNICEF’s investments (budgets), and interventions in the child care system reform.
4. Facilitate access to other key informants (counterparts) for the evaluation;
5. Facilitate consultations for the evaluation team, briefings and de-briefings for Governments in the concerned countries;
6. Facilitate access to all relevant documentation related to the activities, strategies and projects of UNICEF to be included in the scope of the evaluation;
7. Participate whenever relevant and possible in the meetings with government and other counterparts (be decided by the evaluation team);
8. Provides feedback on research framework and tools;
9. Provide updates, information, documentation - relevant for drafting country specific reports
10. Provide timely feedback on reports.

**Evaluation team**
1. Overall responsible for successful completion of evaluation (including all steps of development of evaluation framework and tools and methodology)
2. Selection, orientation and training of evaluation team members, data collection assistance (where applicable) and translators (where applicable)
3. Responsible for managing and carrying out all consultations, meetings and interviews with key informants
4. Prepares logistics, organize travel, financial and other arrangements that are related to the implementation of the evaluation (local translators, data processors, drivers, access to computer etc are included as part of the logistics to be organized by the evaluation team).
5. Timely submission of deliverables and invoices.