Evaluation of UNICEF Child Protection Programme in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
2010-2015
Acknowledgements

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Author: Roxana Irimia (international consultant)

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The views expressed in the report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policies and views of UNICEF. The publication is not edited in accordance with the UNICEF standards.
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<tr>
<td>AJP</td>
<td>Academy of Judges and Prosecutors</td>
<td>CP</td>
<td>Child protection</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRPD</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</td>
<td>CSW</td>
<td>Centre for Social Work</td>
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<td>CwD</td>
<td>Children with disabilities</td>
<td>ER</td>
<td>Evaluation Report</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
<td>HRBA</td>
<td>Human rights-based approach</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICF</td>
<td>International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health</td>
<td>IJDDV</td>
<td>Inspectors for Juvenile Delinquency and Domestic Violence</td>
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<tr>
<td>IR</td>
<td>Inception Report</td>
<td>ISA</td>
<td>Institute for Social Activities</td>
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<td>ISA</td>
<td>Institute for Social Activities</td>
<td>J4C</td>
<td>Justice for children</td>
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<td>JJ</td>
<td>Juvenile justice</td>
<td>MICS</td>
<td>Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MKD</td>
<td>Macedonian denars</td>
<td>MoES</td>
<td>Ministry of Education and Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>MoI</td>
<td>Ministry of Interior</td>
<td>MoJ</td>
<td>Ministry of Justice</td>
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<tr>
<td>MoLSP</td>
<td>Ministry of Labour and Social Policies</td>
<td>NCPCD</td>
<td>National Council for Prevention of Child Delinquency</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organisation</td>
<td>OECD/DAC</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Public prosecutor</td>
<td>PPO</td>
<td>Public Prosecutors Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>Social protection</td>
<td>ToR</td>
<td>Terms of Reference</td>
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<tr>
<td>ToT</td>
<td>Training of trainers</td>
<td>UNICEF CO</td>
<td>UNICEF Country Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF RO</td>
<td>UNICEF Regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe and Community of Independent States</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>USD</td>
<td>United States Dollar</td>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y.o.</td>
<td>years old</td>
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Executive Summary

Background

The object of the evaluation was the UNICEF supported child protection programme 2010-2015. This programme had two main components. One component was related to Justice for Children and also included issues affecting children victims of violence. The activities under this component addressed three main areas of systemic change: policy and legislation, capacity building and prevention. The second component focused on the reform of the social protection sector targeting, in particular, Centers for Social Work. This was addressed by introducing of standards of work, an in-service training programme, licensing of social work and establishment of a data base.

UNICEF supported the reform at both central and local levels, provided policy advice and technical assistance to key legislative reforms, assisted in demonstrating how the provision of family support services can be translated in practice, provided capacity development for improving quality of service and exchange of experience with other countries to move forward the reform agenda.

Objective, scope and methodology


This evaluation covered the two key programme components, justice for children and social protection sector. The purpose was to:

- Assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and to the extent possible impact of UNICEF’s programme interventions;
- Identify and document lessons learned and the contribution of UNICEF to these systems or impact changes; and
- Provide recommendations to guide the child protection programme for the next programme cycle.

This was a formative evaluation undertaken at the end of the UNICEF supported programme for 2010-2015, signed with the Government, and covered this programming period. The knowledge generated by the evaluation will be used by the Government and UNICEF to inform the planning and implementation of the new country programme 2016-2020.

UNICEF will ensure dissemination of evaluation findings and recommendations to the following stakeholders:

- Ministry of Labour and Social Policies (MoLSP), as a main partner and the responsible ministry for social protection to inform future planning, budgeting, guidance and support, inspection, monitoring and evaluation of the reform;
- Institute for Social Activities (ISA), the responsible institution for data collection, setting standards, monitoring and supervision of Centers for Social Work (CSWs) activities and in-service training;
- Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and Ministry of Interior (MoI), as main partners for justice for children reform and their responsibilities for planning, budgeting, guidance and support, inspection, monitoring and evaluation of the reform.
As requested by the ToR, the evaluation focused on the UNICEF supported programme signed with the Government for 2010-2015 and looked at the period from January 2010 to June 2015. The geographical coverage included both national and local levels.

The evaluation framework was based on OECD-DAC evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

The evaluation used both secondary (resulted from desk review) and primary data (resulted from field data collection). The mix of data collection methods used for gathering field data and views from the stakeholders included the following: 1/ quantitative survey among CSW staff, police officers, justice officials; 2/ interviews with representatives of MoLSP, MoJ, MoI, ISA, the National Council for Prevention of Child Delinquency, the National Coordination Body on Prevention of Abuse and Neglect, national training institutes for judges, prosecutors, police staff, CSW staff, justice for children professionals, NGOs, academia representatives, UNICEF CO staff, other partners/funders in the country; 3/ interviews with parents and children adolescents.

**Main findings**

As decided in the inception phase of the evaluation at the request of UNICEF CO, the performance in the implementation of the CP programme 2010-2015 was assessed by the evaluator based on the findings presented in relation to the evaluation questions (Annex 9).

**Relevance**

UNICEF CP programme has been embedded in the political, social and economic context of the country. UNICEF CP programme has shown flexibility and ensured a balance between planned interventions and adjustments to the changes in the political agendas. From the beginning of the evaluation period UNICEF has moved alongside and substantially contributed to the Government’s strategies and agendas for both J4C and SP components.

UNICEF aligned its programming with Government’s priorities and as a result UNICEF has been able to strengthen its programming in J4C and SP by its close links to national objectives. However, the frequent changes of government/ministers have been challenging, and UNICEF has invested significant time of its staff to respond to these changes and to establish strong relationships with new decision makers and different perspectives.

**Efficiency**

The UNICEF investment in the country, no matter the programme, follows the same pattern that can be found in the other countries in the region, i.e. having significant results with rather limited resources. Over the reference period UNICEF has demonstrated a good capacity to identify alternative modes for resource allocation and to make the best use of the available resources in the interest of the final beneficiaries. The quality of UNICEF management of activities related to both programme components is highly appreciated by donor and partners.

**Effectiveness**

Programme-related priorities were defined in the *Country Programme Action Plan 2010-2015* under the component *System Strengthening for Child Rights*; they were subscribed to area of interventions "Prevention and Protection from Child Abuse, Violence and Exploitation" and aimed to contribute to UNDAF outcome 1.2., specifically the outputs that were targeted to "improve the national social care and protection policies and governance to provide quality services for vulnerable groups" and "establish systems and capacities for juvenile justice". Overall, the programme was successful in
achieving the planned results. However, demonstrating the progress in terms of quality seems to be more of a challenge compared with showing results in terms of quantity. There are difficulties in the diffusion of results from central to local level and in ensuring a good coordination among the stakeholders, both at central and local level. Tracing outputs in community proves to be challenging for both J4C and SP components.

**Impact**

The CP programme with its two components had an influence on children’s well-being, however each component with a different type, magnitude and mechanism of influence (as previously explained in the previous section on effectiveness). As a common element, both components aimed at achieving better results for children not so much in terms of improving their material living conditions but by enabling the environment for better care and protection of children (i.e. the legislative reform and strengthening institutional capacities), as well as by piloting the diversification and improvement of services for children. Nonetheless, tracing the direct influence of the programme on changes in children’s well-being has been challenging for reasons of difficulties in establishing a direct causal relation between the interventions within the respective component and the final beneficiaries (for SP component), and for reasons of limited sustainability and monitoring of the cases (for J4C component).

In spite of the changes in the system, the lack of data collection and disaggregation (particularly by ethnicity and age) on justice for children remains a systemic bottleneck. Data on critical indicators such as reoffending by juveniles or offending by young children under the minimum age of criminal responsibility are scarce. The shortage of data limits the design and implementation of evidence-based policies and makes it difficult to measure the effects of interventions and the impact of the reform, especially for the most vulnerable. The data in relation to the most vulnerable children (Roma children, children with disabilities and poor children) remains particularly limited.

**Sustainability**

The Government’s commitment and contribution to the success and stability of the changes in both J4C and SP domains is crucial. It has been widely documented during the evaluation process that stability in positions as public employees and the allocation of funds are the two major challenges for the sustainability of the reforms. In practice, the political commitment is not matched by the financial commitment and by continuity on the job of the professionals from management positions. The sustainability of the CP programme is influenced by similar issues that have influenced the implementation the overall implementation of all interventions, such as postponement in implementation of activities due to elections and change of ministers; difficulties in identification and maintaining of premises for provision of services and a high turnover of staff in public institutions.

In terms of UNICEF’s transformed engagement in the CP programme in the country, there is an unanimous recognition on behalf of all stakeholders that UNICEF made a strategic contribution to the systemic changes in the domain of child protection. UNICEF has been most actively involved in two core roles that might be considered as cross-cutting all the interventions in both programme components: policy advice and technical assistance, and leveraging resources. UNICEF has been particularly focused on providing policy advice and technical assistance to the government for both ensuring J4C and for improving SP measures targeting children and families. In spite of the predominance of resource allocation to this core role in the previous programming period, in the new programme UNICEF will have to continue to fulfil this core role to advocate for stabilizing the legal reforms achieved so far and for increasing law enforcement and the practical use of the existing standards and procedures. However, it should be noted that this core role requires not only financial
resources but also a considerable investment of UNICEF staff’s time, which is expected to be maintained in case it is decided that this core role will be exercised in the new programme.

Another core role in which UNICEF has been successfully engaged was focused on modelling/piloting. This has allowed UNICEF’s partners to test pilot initiatives and innovative interventions which will eventually be replicated or scaled-up at national level. Nevertheless, given the high importance of this role in the previous programming period and the time needed for the models to become stable, UNICEF may consider reducing investing in it in the coming years.

UNICEF has been also active in facilitating national dialogue to align the child protection system with international standards. This has been done predominantly with interventions in the J4C domain. For that reason UNICEF may continue to invest more in this core role, but in relation to social protection interventions addressing equity gaps for the most vulnerable groups of children (e.g. Roma, CwD, child victims of abuse and neglect).

Monitoring and evaluation interventions have been equally important for both components of the programme. Along with the policy advice and technical assistance, this core role was focused on increasing the capacity of the key stakeholders to design evidence-based policies. It has widened the knowledge on the situation of different vulnerable groups, but because it has not yet reached a critical mass in terms of sustainable effects among the key institutions in charge of data collection and monitoring, UNICEF may have to continue to invest in order to support further improvements.

The core role of UNICEF as being a voice for children and adolescents was less a priority in the programming period being evaluated compared to the more technical aspects of reform. In the current programme this core role should gain in importance especially in relation to the social protection component and for the most vulnerable groups of children (e.g. Roma, CwD, children victims of abuse and neglect). A stronger partnership with NGO sector and media may increase the child rights focus and the effectiveness of advocacy interventions.

Conclusions

In the J4C and SP reforms the process of reducing equity gaps has started but is far from being completed. Due to the bottlenecks in outreaching final beneficiaries, the Programme had a modest impact on many vulnerable children such as children victims of abuse and neglect, children of minority groups, children with disabilities were left behind. A weakness of the programme was the low level of participation of the beneficiaries. Beneficiaries’ participation in service development is not a well-established practice.

The Government’s EU oriented political course, the ownership towards the J4C and SP reforms and consistency of commitment are important factors having a positive influence on the progress of the reforms. However, the lack of preventive services, the limited community-based services and the tendency of turning beneficiaries in passive receivers of financial benefits are reasons for concerns for the future of reforms. The identification of causes of vulnerability and not just addressing the consequences will ensure the success of the reforms. Constant efforts to empower vulnerable families will ensure well-being of children. The key for sustainability or the next step of the reforms is considered to be the development of family focused services, not just cash transfers.

New data collection systems have been developed with the aim of improving the capacity of the public authorities to analyse J4C and SP data, as well as to facilitate strategic and operational activities in the domain. Despite the progress made within the reforms, evidence-based policy making in the country is
just emerging. **There is a gap between the data produced and the actual use of child protection statistics, the last being especially reported as still inaccurate.**

One of the strongest pillars of the reforms is social work development. UNICEF’s contribution has been very relevant in supporting the social work profession development. In this important phase of development of this profession the state bureaucratic system compromises core values of it – promoting social inclusion and structural changes through social advocacy. **Instead of struggling for the development of preventative measures social workers remain an instrument of reactive policy witnessing the threat to the success and sustainability of the reforms.** Due to the office-type oriented referral social workers are not conducting outreach activities and there are invisible children left out. Social work performance assurance system was developed only recently, however the system does yet started to show results in terms of improvements of the quality of services.

In the evaluation reference period there have been many positive changes in increasing J4C and SP systems’ capacity to respond to the needs of the beneficiaries, but predominantly at the level of enabling a functional environment of the systems (at legislative and institutional levels) and much less at the level of services supply. **New laws and procedures address the problems of the most vulnerable, however the new legal framework does automatically generate changes in service provision.** Efforts for changes in these determinant areas for the success of the reforms need to be simultaneous; otherwise only making a legislative and institutional reform becomes less relevant when ultimately aiming the best interests of children. In addition, **the systems still have bottlenecks in terms of service coordination and professionals’ qualification**, which is of utmost importance for prevention and early identification of vulnerable children.

Overall, the inter-sectorial approach is promoted within the reforms. One of the major challenges of inter-sectorial policy making, programming and budgeting with focus on results and impact at the level of beneficiaries remains the capacity of the existing administrative settings. Coordination among line ministries at policy and program levels is insufficient and they continue to work in silos. Multi-stakeholder policy making remains far from practice.

Cost efficiency of the new services development or organization has not been seriously considered and documented. **Little progress has been made in terms of allocating financial resources towards the interventions piloted in the programme.**

**UNICEF’s strategic contribution to the child care reform is recognized by all stakeholders.** The main contribution is considered to be in providing technical assistance for key decision makers, promotion and development of new services in J4C and in intersectoral cooperation for CwD, support to social work professional development. UNICEF’s technical assistance and policy advice effort was often combined with modelling/piloting of new services and approaches (e.g. mentoring of children in conflict the law, child friendly rooms, multi-disciplinary response for children victims of violence, abuse and exploitation etc.) in spite of very limited resources and sometimes resistant professional norms. UNICEF has supported the Government in getting access to international resources in relation with EU and bilateral donors for achieving better results for vulnerable children.

The evaluation has shown that UNICEF is increasingly committed to and actually implementing a more cross-sectoral approach. Promoting the development of a mind-set that goes beyond the compartmentalisation of interventions into traditional 'sectors' was and remains of utmost importance. In addition, creating a body of knowledge and transmitting competences on cross-sectoral working,
through emphasising its importance within a systemic approach added value to UNICEF’s strategic influence in the country.

UNICEF has consistently applied and adopted a rights-based approach to the J4C and SP reforms by facilitating gradually a movement towards a more rights-based approach. UNICEF’s influence has clearly built up over time, based on mutual trust and respect between UNICEF and key stakeholders in the country. UNICEF remains in the position as an important facilitator of the dialogue between Government and other actors, which was emphasised by several stakeholders outside the Government, as well as by the Government. However, the voice of vulnerable children and of their families over the reforms process has been only marginally supported and UNICEF will have to look to a closer connection between the progress of the reforms and the development of anti-discriminatory policies and practices (in terms of gender, ethnicity, disability etc.).

Recommendations

Continuation of child protection reform

1. More emphasis on prevention: The Government should develop more family support services in the country, in terms of variety and geographical coverage and adopt measures aiming to ensure that social work practice is reoriented on outreach service based on professional workers. In addition, the system of case management should be implemented in order to develop adequate and sustainable packages of services to produce optimal outcomes for children. MoLSP should reduce bureaucracy in the SP system which currently discourages vulnerable families’ access to services. CSWs should work more on identification of children at risk. More early identification measures are needed based on a better inter-sectoral cooperation both at central and at grassroots level (schools, health institutions, CSWs, municipalities, MoI, NGOs etc.). ISA should develop a monitoring system of services by reviewing the current monitoring tool and by connecting it with LIRIKUS.

2. More focus on the reduction of equity gaps: All stakeholders working in the J4C and SP should avoid ‘creaming’ of cases (i.e. approaching those case more easy to work with and to report progress about) in the pilot projects and in general. The most vulnerable groups of children should be the priority in terms of resources allocation.

3. Inter-sectoral coordination among the authorities: The decision makers should develop a vision of what CP should be in the country and based on this overarching desiderate to develop a more coherent system. The fragmentation in ministries and lack cooperation among should be reduced by bringing people together to work on well-structured programmes (e.g. the project on CwD could be an example of good practice) supported by strong political commitment. The dissemination of the reforms at local level should be increased. In case of UNICEF this may decrease efficiency of support on short-term, but yield important return of investment in ton long-term.

4. Strengthen the capacity of social workers and of the staff working in the SP system: MoLSP should reduce staff turnover by motivating them to remain in the system and by reducing employment based on political criteria. Clearer system of reward based on functional workloads need to be introduced together with careful workload management and the development of a range of incentives for specialized social work interventions. ISA should advocate with MoLSP for recognition of staff burnout and for human resources measures to reduce it. MoLSP should employ more qualified staff (social workers and other related professionals – psychologists, psychiatrists, paediatricians etc.) in both J4C and SP systems. ISA should provide training and re-training of the CSW staff for using LIRIKUS. ISA should assess more in-depth the case load and identify practical measures for a realistic enforcement in practice of the standard workload.
5. **Improve the management of CSW:** MoLSP and ISA should increase the capacity of the managers of the CSWs, including by measuring the efficiency of the CSWs in order to increase the accountability of the CSWs’ managers. In addition, the system of services’ quality assessment should become fully implemented and operational.

6. **More focus on law enforcement:** There is a need on behalf of the public authorities to strengthen the stability of the legal framework. When legislative changes are needed, there should be more time allocated to consultations with a wider variety of stakeholders at different levels (including with people who will implement the law, i.e. practitioners). UNICEF should advocate for ex-ante impact assessments of future laws.

**UNICEF’s strategic contribution**

1. **Increase ownership in the Government:** In the SP domain UNICEF may want to identify new “champions” and also work more with those already known. In the J4C domain UNICEF may work more with the “champions” already known by ensuring them more visibility. Also, UNICEF should liaise more and with higher persistence with the actors who are making the country’s agenda (especially EU Delegation).

2. **Move from pilot projects to systemic interventions:** UNICEF should strengthen and consolidate the progress which has been made so far (e.g. mentoring program, CFRs, capacity building to ISA and CSWs etc.). This may be done by organising more follow-up of the existing/previous pilot projects (by using a variety of methods e.g. organizing visits of high level officials common with representatives of donors and national officials, or by carrying out ad hoc or thematic evaluations).

3. **More empowerment of the beneficiaries:** UNICEF should encourage professional formal networking (e.g. by establishment of professional associations, peer reviews or exchange of experience events), as well as informal networking (e.g. by online fora) among professionals in both SP and J4C. Also, should consider working more with NGOs and support creation of coalitions and associations of parents and children.

4. **Developing evidence-based approach in policy planning in the country:** UNICEF may want to consider promoting advocacy work based quality data. In the J4C system may advocate for increasing accuracy in data collection in order to have strong evidence for policy planning. In addition, should increase awareness for the demand of quality data among the decision makers (Parliament, Supreme Court and Government).

5. **More work with media:** UNICEF should strengthen the relationship with media outlets (journalists, editors) and increase the use of social media. In order to ensure that the messages will reach and mobilize a wider public, UNICEF may consider promoting local projects that have demonstrated results.
1. Introduction


As presented in the Terms of Reference (Annex 1), this evaluation covered the two key programme components, justice for children and social protection sector. The purpose was to:

- Assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and to the extent possible impact of UNICEF’s programme interventions;
- Identify and document lessons learned and the contribution of UNICEF to these systems or impact changes; and
- Provide recommendations to guide the child protection programme for the next programme cycle.

This was a formative evaluation undertaken at the end of the UNICEF supported programme for 2010-2015, signed with the Government, and covered this programming period. The knowledge generated by the evaluation will be used by the Government and UNICEF to inform the planning and implementation of the new country programme 2016-2020.

UNICEF will ensure dissemination of evaluation findings and recommendations to the following stakeholders:

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- Institute for Social Activities (ISA), the responsible institution for data collection, setting standards, monitoring and supervision of Centers for Social Work (CSWs) activities and in-service training;
- Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and Ministry of Interior (MoI), as main partners for justice for children reform and their responsibilities for planning, budgeting, guidance and support, inspection, monitoring and evaluation of the reform.
2. Background and context

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (henceforth the country) has a total population of 2.064
million\(^1\) comprising of ethnic Macedonians (64 per cent) and ethnic Albanians (25 per cent), and other
ethnic communities. Almost one third of the population are children.

The country is an upper middle income country and a European Union (EU) candidate since 2005. The
country has enjoyed stable economic growth during the past few years. GDP growth forecast is 3.5 per
cent for 2015 and 3.8 per cent for 2016\(^2\). GDP per capita has doubled since the country achieved
independence in 1991, reaching (in current USD) 4,838 USD in 2013\(^3\) and representing 35 per cent of
the EU average. Inequalities continue to persist with the Gini coefficient high by regional standards at
0.37 (2013)\(^4\).

Unemployment remains above 28 per cent, with higher percentages among young population (over
half of the people aged 15 to 24 are jobless - 54 per cent for men, 49 per cent for women)\(^5\). About a
quarter of the population (24.2 per cent) live at risk of poverty\(^6\). Children are severely affected by
poverty - 31 per cent being at risk of poverty\(^7\). A 2010 report indicates that while 20 per cent of ethnic
Macedonians are poor, the proportion is 35 per cent for Albanians and 65 per cent for Roma\(^8\).

Under the influence of the EU accession process, justice and home affairs are subject to significant
reform and rank highly on the Government’s political agenda. Reforms in the area of justice for
children were seen as part of this process\(^9\) that generally aim at improving the legislation that governs
the rights of the child, but, also establish a monitoring system over the implementation of that
legislation and strengthen the institutional and human capacities to protect the rights of the child.

Similarly, reform in the social protection sector is picking up speed after years of inertia. Following an
increase in the number of cases on violence and pressure by the media, certain child protection issues
(i.e. combating and preventing domestic violence and child sexual abuse) have been raised high on the
Government agenda. However, most of the interventions to date have been fragmented and not part of
a broader system reform.

At national level there is no integrated policy on protection of children. There are several sectoral
policies aiming at improving protection from violence, abuse and neglect, prevent juvenile
delinquency and improving the child care system.

2.1. Progress in Justice for Children

Prior to the evaluation reference period (i.e. 2010-2015) there were few developments in the domain of
juvenile justice which paved the way for the reform that has followed in the next years. Thus, the Law
on Juvenile Justice was adopted in July 2007 and came into force on June 30, 2009. In line with
international standards and with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Law included
principles of protection of juveniles and their rights; promoted reintegration in the society and

\(^1\) Data from 2002 Census (this is the most recent Census that has been conducted in the country).
\(^3\) World Bank, World Development Indicators (2013)
\(^4\) http://www.stat.gov.mk/pdf/2015/4.1.15.34.pdf
\(^6\) http://www.stat.gov.mk/pdf/2015/4.1.15.34.pdf
\(^7\) Ibid.
\(^8\) Bartlett W et al People Centred Analyses Report; Quality of Social Services, SEEU/UNDP Skopje 2010
principles of restorative justice to ensure that juveniles are dealt with in a manner appropriate to their well-being and proportionate both to their circumstances and offence. In parallel, a secondary legislative framework was developed and adopted. After the Law on Juvenile Justice was adopted in 2007, two Action Plans were adopted for the implementation of the Law on Juvenile Justice, one for 2008–2009 and the second covering the period 2009–2012.

In November 2008, the Government adopted an Action Plan for prevention and treatment of sexual abuse of children and paedophilia covering the period from 2009 to 2012. In addition, a Protocol on cooperation among the competent institutions in addressing cases of sexual abuse of children and paedophilia was also agreed.


The National Action Plan on Children’s Rights (2006–2015) contains a component on prevention, called “Development of a Comprehensive Approach to the Protection of Children with Upbringing-Social Problems and Behaviour Problems.” It envisages 10 activities to be carried out by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MoLSP), the Ministry of the Interior (MoI), the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and the Ministry of Local Self-Government. The reduction of offences by juveniles is expressly recognized as an aim and indicator of the implementation of the Action Plan. Strategic considerations include strengthening the capacity of the relevant institutions, developing standards and procedures for interdepartmental cooperation at national and local levels and collaboration with NGOs.

In 2010, with UNICEF support, the MoJ made a comparative analysis of national legislation and the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

The National Coordination Body for Protection of Children against Abuse and Neglect was established in June 2012 and gathers representatives of the relevant line ministries and institutions in the country, representatives of citizens' associations and representatives of the offices of the World Health Organizational and UNICEF in the country. The 2013-2015 National Action Plan for Prevention of Abuse and Neglect of Children was adopted in December 2012.

In 2013 (Official Gazette of RM, No. 148/29 October 2013) a new Law addressing a child-friendly justice system was adopted. The new Law is called Justice for Children Law and is in force from December 2013. It targets children in conflict with the law, children victims and children witnesses of crime. It also has provisions that regulate access to free legal aid, and introduces measures for protection of children victims and witnesses. This Law regulates the measures for protection of child victims of acts envisaged by law as criminal offenses and child witnesses, as well as measures for prevention of child delinquency. The objectives of this Law are to prioritise the best interests of the child and protection of children from crime, violence and any form of threat to their freedoms, rights and proper development; protection of children who have committed acts envisaged by law as crimes and misdemeanours and protection of children from recidivism; children's social integration, education and rehabilitation; children’s assistance and protection in proceedings before courts and other authorities, as well as protection of their freedoms and rights guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international agreements on the status of children, ratified in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia.
A mentoring programme was first introduced in CSW Skopje in 2011 as a pilot project within the Justice for Children Project that was funded by European Union and co-funded by UNICEF. The programme paired up students with children who came in contact with the law and needed help to make a new start in life.

In terms of the institutional architecture, the judicial system is multi-tiered and comprised of 27 Primary courts, 4 Appellate courts, an Administrative Court, a Higher Administrative Court and the Supreme Court. The total number of judges in the country is 640. Out of the 27 Primary Courts, 12 are Primary Courts with extended jurisdiction including Councils for children. They employ 42 judges who work on justice for children, including cases where children are at risk or in conflict with law. The Appellate Courts employ 12 judges and the Supreme Court has 5 judges for children.

The Public Prosecutor Office is an independent body, organized in a multi-tiered manner as the Public Prosecutor’s Office of the Republic of Macedonia, 4 Higher Public Prosecutor Offices (for the territorial jurisdiction of the Appellate Courts), Primary Prosecution Office for prosecuting organized crime and corruption, and 22 Primary Prosecution Offices (for the territorial jurisdiction of the Primary Courts). The Primary Prosecution Offices which cover the territorial jurisdiction of the Primary Courts with extended jurisdiction form specialized units for juvenile delinquency. The total number of Prosecutors in the country is 270.

The Academy for Judges and Prosecutors, established in 2006, is responsible for basic and continuous training of judges and prosecutors, development of an electronic data collection system, improvement of legislation and governance structure, mandatory specialization for all judges and prosecutors including those who work with children in contact with the law.

The Ministry of Interior (MoI) in compliance with its competencies prescribed by the law is obliged to conduct police affairs and keep the public order and safety through implementation of laws. Within the MoI and its organizational bodies (Bureau for Public Security) 51 Police officers functioning as Inspectors for Juvenile Delinquency and Domestic Violence work with children victims, children at risk, and children in conflict with the law. Only Skopje has a specialized unit for Juvenile Delinquency which employs a total of 20 staff. In some police stations respectively the foreign offices for crime issues there are no inspectors for juvenile delinquency and domestic violence. When matters of juvenile delinquency and domestic violence emerge, the Inspectors for general crime deal with those cases. Also in the organizational structure of Sectors for Internal Affairs there are a total of 42 inspectors for prevention who deal with prevention activities and programs meant to decrease and combat violence against children and juvenile delinquency. Over recent years, in the MoI an organizational unit called Police Training Center was established. This Centre provides basic training for police officers, but also specialized trainings for operative police officers at all levels, including those who work with children.

The justice for children reform in the past decade has resulted in some progress in the life of children. In the period 2008-2012, the total number of reported children who committed a crime decreased by 58 per cent. Although the Roma population counts for approximately 3 per cent of the total population, Roma children formed 20 per cent of the total number of convicted children in 2008 and 26 per cent in 2013. The proportion of children spending more than the legal limit of 60 days in pre-trail detention dropped from 50 per cent in 2007 to 9 per cent in 2012. While in 2009, 20 per cent of the cases took more than one year to solve, this figure dropped to 2 per cent in 2013. Although it is mandatory by law

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a child to be legally represented when brought into a police station, in 2013 only 27 per cent had a lawyer.\textsuperscript{11}

Violence against children remains common. At the beginning of the evaluation reference period\textsuperscript{12} almost 70 per cent of children aged 2-14 (71% for boys and 67% for girls) had been subject to some form of psychological or physical violence by adults living in the household. Nearly 5 per cent of all children have been subjected to severe physical punishment. In Roma settlements, the figure rose to 82 per cent and 17 per cent respectively. While the country adopted a number of laws and policies to protect children’s rights, there is no integrated and coordinated approach to preventing and responding to violence against children, through systematic and unified data collection and monitoring. Skilled and specialized professionals are scarce with limited technical capacities to provide adequate support, protection and care to child victims. There is stigma associated with reporting of violence and families are reluctant to seek help. Disciplining a child by using intimidation, punishment and corporal punishment is considered normal and acceptable across all ethnic groups. However, the number of reported cases of child abuse has increased in the recent year which could be an indication of increased awareness and breaking the culture of silence\textsuperscript{13}.

Roma have been a target of discrimination, stereotyping, forced assimilation, and violence. Many Roma women and girls still suffer from both racial and gender discrimination. Child marriage among Roma girls remains a common practice, 22 per cent of girls aged 15 to 19 years are married, while the national average is 4 per cent.

2.2. Progress in child protection in the context of the overall social protection sector

The National Action Plan on Children’s Rights (2012-2015) highlights the importance of strengthening capacities of birth parents to raise their children the need for improvements in the system of child care and enhancement of the system for protection of children victims of violence.

The National Programme for the Development of Social Protection (2011-2021) calls for the development of social prevention as an organized, continuous and coordinated action at the local level, increasing the quality of service delivery and creating conditions to reduce institutional care by developing alternative forms of care, introducing case management, introducing a system for continuous professional development, and development of a system of licensing and standardization.

One of the key goals of the MoLSP Strategic Plan (2015-2017) is to implement policies to improve the system of social protection, more specifically to create and implement policies to protect children, especially from abuse, neglect and violence.

Although notable progress was made in adopting strategic documents and changing the legislation, when it comes to implementation the progress is still limited. The implementation is weak without sufficient budget allocations.

In terms of institutional developments in the social protection sector these are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MoLSP). The Institute for Social Activities (ISA), under the MoLSP, is responsible for monitoring social services, setting standards and providing training to professionals in the social protection sector. ISA is also in charge of collecting data and carrying out analysis of the social protection sector to advise the MoLSP on policy development and planning.

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\textsuperscript{11} National Council for Prevention of Child Delinquency (2013): \textit{Annual Report}

\textsuperscript{12} MICS 2011

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
The 30 Centres for Social Work (CSW) are the core of the child protection system and have two key roles: 1/ provision of social services and 2/ administration of social benefits. The CSWs have a key role in the identification of and support to the children at risk of being abandoned, in providing support to vulnerable families in taking care of their children, and promoting parental care and family reintegration. In addition, CSWs decide on the transfer of a child to alternative care or in being given for adoption and act in these circumstances as legal guardians.

As for the CSWs’ institutional capacity, although the total number of employees increased from 739 in 2006 to 1057 in 2013, 78 per cent out of 318 newly employed are administrative or other non-professional staff\textsuperscript{14}. In addition, the main occupation of professional staff is administration of the social assistance benefits, a heavy bureaucratic process of collecting and processing documents.

The CSWs were often considered as using outdated methods of work, with insufficient number of qualified employees to cover the needs of the population and doing limited outreach work\textsuperscript{15}. In order to address these issues the MoLSP, with the support of the World Bank, initiated a process of re-structuring all CSWs aiming to have specialized staff and to allow more time for outreach work. These efforts were preceded by a detailed assessment of the system, introduction of electronic data system for provision of social services (LIRIKUS) and administration of social benefits, introduction of in-service curricula for continuous professional development and new standards for provision of services.

The most visible progress on the life of children when it comes to child protection reform has been in terms of child care. The number of children living in institutions dropped from 611 in 2010 to 559 in 2015, of which the proportion of children under three was making up 15% in 2010 and 14% in 2015\textsuperscript{16}. Children with disabilities represent 64% (in 2010) of the total, respectively 66% (in 2015)\textsuperscript{17}. The number of children in foster families increased from 225 in 2010 to 314 in 2015, representing 28% (in 2010) of all children living in formal care, respectively 27% (in 2015)\textsuperscript{18}. Community-based services, including for children with disabilities, have been established, but remain insufficient. Key obstacles include lack of programs to support families in preventing child abandonment and appropriate monitoring of placements of children in alternative care. Stigma towards children with disabilities remains widespread.

\textsuperscript{14} UNICEF CO Skopje (2015)
\textsuperscript{15} Peter Evans (2011): Situation and Gap Analysis. Revision and Development of Comprehensive Social Work Standards for Centers of Social Work
\textsuperscript{16} Data from LIRIKUS (as of February 2016)
\textsuperscript{17} According to the Macedonian legislation, persons with disabilities are considered children until 26 years old, which is the reason for the high percentage.
\textsuperscript{18} Data from LIRIKUS (as of February 2016).
3. Object of the evaluation

The object of the evaluation was the UNICEF supported child protection programme 2010-2015. This programme had two main components. One component was related to Justice for Children and also included issues affecting children victims of violence. The activities under this component addressed three main areas of systemic change: policy and legislation, capacity building and prevention. The second component focused on the reform of the social protection sector targeting, in particular, Centers for Social Work. This was addressed by introducing of standards of work, an in-service training programme, licensing of social work and establishment of a data base.

UNICEF supported the reform at both central and local levels, provided policy advice and technical assistance to key legislative reforms, assisted in demonstrating how the provision of family support services can be translated in practice, capacity development for improving quality of service and exchange of experience with other countries to move forward the reform agenda.

Justice for children

Prior to 2009 there was no specific law that would regulate the treatment and procedures of children in conflict with the law. The juvenile proceedings and criminal sanctions were regulated by specific provisions in the general Law for Criminal Procedure and the general Criminal Code. This was considered as one of the key bottlenecks in an enabling environment for children’s wellbeing and rights. In order to address the legal gap and create a basis for developing a child-friendly justice system, a new Law on Juvenile Justice was introduced in 2009. This Law, developed with UNICEF technical assistance, for the first time regulated all aspects of juvenile justice, including prevention of juvenile delinquency. However, the Law did not have sufficient provisions to address the needs of children victims and witnesses of crime. Other bottlenecks at the level of legislation and policy were the absence of secondary legislation targeting child victims and the absence of a national strategy for the prevention of juvenile delinquency.

Two years after the implementation of the Law on Juvenile Justice, a Legal Gap Analysis was conducted in 2011 with UNICEF support and provided the basis for the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to amend the Law. The new Law is called Justice for Children Law (2013) and targets children in conflict with the law, children victims and children witnesses of crime. It also has provisions that regulate access to free legal aid, introduces measures for protection of children victims and witnesses.

The National Council for Juvenile Delinquency is an autonomous and independent body conducting the works as prescribed by the Justice for Children Law. The Council has the following competencies: to draft a National Strategy for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency, to propose changes in the law aiming at protecting the rights of children and preventing the juvenile delinquency, to promote initiatives for raising awareness of the general public about children rights. In addition, the Council is organizing debates on healthy family and parenting, protection of children from substance abuse, alcoholism and other addictions, and other topics that impact on prevention of juvenile delinquency, as well as it initiates researches and studies in the domain of juvenile delinquency.

UNICEF advocacy efforts led also to the incorporation of the above mentioned set of indicators in the courts’ electronic data-collection system. All judges and administrative staff of the courts for juveniles were trained on how to use the data-collection system. With the introduction of the new indicators, the courts have now the capacity to generate data on child victims, alternative measures and mediation.
In the period 2009-2011, UNICEF also supported strengthening the JJ normative framework by developing a referral protocol for treatment of children in contact with the law, guidelines for treatment of children in police procedure, standards for police detention rooms for children and programme for treatment of children in correctional facilities.

In 2010, an international expert in collaboration with a local institution, was contracted by UNICEF to conduct a comprehensive situation analysis of sexual abuse on children. The report was produced and distributed to all relevant institutions and to NGOs in order to provide information for planning of future activities. Based on the recommendations collected from these stakeholders, a process of legal and policy change was initiated.

In 2013 UNICEF supported the revision/development of secondary legislation on violence and abuse of children, the revision of protocols for the treatment of cases of abuse on children, the development of standard guidelines for the forensic examination and reporting on child sexual abuse. An assessment of legislation pertaining to violence against children was conducted by international and local consultants. The report which was drafted was reviewed by the National Council for Prevention and Protection from Child Abuse and Neglect. Some of the recommendations indicated by the consultants were endorsed by the Council. Procedures were developed for judges, prosecutors and police officers pertaining to work with children victims and/or witnesses of violence.

The supply component of the system was hindered by limited access and availability of adequately staffed services and lack of systems to improve the quality of services. The following bottlenecks were identified by UNICEF in terms of access and quality of services: the ad hoc training of CSW staff lacking a structure and curriculum; the lack of standards and quality of services provided by the CSW; and the absence of standard Justice for Children (J4C) training curricula and specialized professionals. UNICEF has supported the development of a unified and standardized curricula for training in the domain of justice for children, fostered a multi-disciplinary approach (i.e. the Manual and Handbook for Justice for Children and the Mediation Manual), facilitated the endorsement of a standard training curricula by some of the national training institutes and the incorporation of this training into their training curricula, thereby ensuring the institutionalization and sustainability of the capacity-building programme. As a result, trainings were delivered to all professional groups working with children in contact with the law.

The issue of limited services to prevent recidivism, as well as the limited preventive and protective services available to children and families at risk of violence, were identified as major bottlenecks. In 2011, the MoLSP introduced a mentoring programme in the CSW in Skopje to support children in conflict with the law, resulting in zero recidivism among the children who were supported within one year. In 2011, the first counselling centre for children and families at risk was opened in Skopje with UNICEF support. In 2012, UNICEF initiated the establishment of multi-agency teams (MAT) to deal with children victims of violence. In 2013, an assessment of the multi-agency work was conducted and a model was developed and validated in practice. The guidelines for the MAT work and training of line staff of police, CSW, schools, health services, judges, public prosecutors and NGOs were completed. In 2014, training was delivered to MATs in 12 out of 84 municipalities. The challenge ahead for the Government and municipalities is to expand the MAT work and institutionalize the monitoring of their work.

Also, UNICEF supported the establishment of a Center for Street Children in Bitola, by refurbishing, equipping and adapting the premises identified by the MoLSP. In addition, a local NGO was engaged by UNICEF to provide support to the newly established Centre. The NGO provided educational and
recreational services, conducted community out-reach activities for street children and provided on-the-job training for centre’s staff.

The Program 19 “Establishing a service for Mentoring of children in conflict with the law” was implemented in two cycles. The first was in 2010 in Skopje. In the second cycle the program was expanded to two additional cities (Kumanovo and Veles). The Institute for Social Work and Social Policy of the Faculty of Philosophy (University of Sts Cyril and Methodius) was contracted to develop and implement the Mentoring Program. The initial step was the assessment of the capacities of the CSW in Skopje. The Institute developed the Mentoring Program and corresponding training manuals and handbooks. The CSW staff and mentors were trained and mentoring activities were delivered. UNICEF provided support to the Institute to develop the program and training tools, deliver training and implement the program.

In 2010, in cooperation with the MoLSP, UNICEF developed standards for the establishment of child friendly investigating rooms (CFR). Based on several criteria, UNICEF and MoLSP decided to establish child friendly investigating rooms in the Centers for Social Work in Skopje and Kumanovo. UNICEF supported the refurbishment, equipping and adaptation of the premises. Between 2011 and 2014, UNICEF supported the establishment of five more CFRs in the police stations in Kocani, Bitola, Gevgelija and Gostivar, and in the Center for Social Work in Kavadarc. The CFRs, as a protected space for interviewing children, are mentioned in the justice for children law.

In 2011-2012 UNICEF supported the establishment of 11 Local Councils on Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency20 and development of local action awareness raising activities, training for the local councils’ members21 and development of local action plans on prevention of juvenile delinquency. A local NGO was contracted to develop tools for preparation of action plans for the local authorities to plan, budget, monitor, and provide preventive services for children in conflict or in contact with the law, and to provide training to the local authorities.

In 2014-2015, a national consultant was contracted by UNICEF to conduct mapping of institutions and civil society organizations active in the domain of combating violence against children, information on their capacity in terms of human and financial resources, and mapping of availability and type of services to children victims of violence, abuse and neglect. The report was reviewed and endorsed by the National Council for Prevention and Protection from Child Abuse and Neglect.

Social protection sector

An Assessment of the Child Protection System commissioned by UNICEF in 2007 showed that the social protection sector reform was focused only on expanding the mandate of the CSWs and on introduction of new responsibilities for CSW staff. For example, introduction of alternative measures to detention for children in conflict with the law, and special protection measures for victims of trafficking were new tasks to be implemented by the CSW. However, the following bottlenecks remained: the reform did not include recruitment of additional CSW professional staff (such as social workers and pedagogues) and CSWs were undertaking very limited outreach work. Also, the reform did not include case management with improved approaches in delivery of social services and did not tackle continuous education for CSW staff. The high turnover rate among CSWs’ staff, weak

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19 This was a set of activities part of two donor funded projects. They were piloted and meant to be taken over by the Government and continued as a nationally funded programme. For that reason it was called ‘programme’ in spite of not being a programme per se.

20 These Local Councils were established in the following locations: Kavadarci, Bitola, Prilep, Kumanovo, Ohrid, Strumica, Negotino, Rosoman, Kratovo, Ship and Kisela Voda-Skopje.

21 The training was focused on the following topics: planning and budgeting, and in the field of prevention of juvenile delinquency.
management and limited functioning accountability mechanisms were also issues affecting the CSWs’ service delivery. In addition, at the beginning of the evaluation reference period the CSW data collection system did not provide accurate information on the situation of children leaving many invisible to the system.

In order to achieve the full realization of the right of the child to a family, the following actions were necessary: 1/ changes in the legislation and policy to set the ground for reform; 2/ improving knowledge and skills of CSW staff through continuous professional development; 3/ improve CSW practices and quality of services through introduction and implementation of new CSW standards and procedures; and 4/ ensure availability of accurate data in order to better plan and target services.

Two main factors influenced the reform:

1/ Political commitment - a decision had been taken at central level to re-organize CSW work with focus on separating the administration of financial allowances and professional work. This is currently addressed with the support of the World Bank.

2/ ISA’s capacity, knowledge, tools and commitment to perform its mandate - this is being addressed with UNICEF supported programme interventions in the last 5 years.

UNICEF’s contribution to the changes at the systemic level consisted of the followings:

• The Family Law was amended to make the adoption process more effective and transparent. UNICEF partnership and advocacy with the Parliament resulted in a legal amendment introducing a programme for the assessment of children and parents in the adoption procedure.

• UNICEF supported capacity development of ISA, by pairing them with international experts in the development of a standardized national curriculum with 14 modules for the continuous education of CSW staff. To date all CSW staff are trained by ISA.

• New CSW service delivery standards and procedures were developed and endorsed. These standards, together with the new curriculum, will form the basis for the issuance or extension of a CSW staff license.

• An electronic CSW data collection system is operational at national level and was used for planning the revision of CSW standards and procedures. This was mainly achieved through exchange of knowledge with Serbia and UK, technical assistance and capacity development.
4. Evaluation purpose, objectives and scope

4.1. Rationale

This assignment was a formative evaluation directed towards collecting evidence-based learning from the implementation of the programme in the domains of justice for children and social protection that ended in 2015, and to inform the planning and implementation of the next country programme. The assignment covered both the systemic changes and UNICEF’s contribution to these changes in the above mentioned two domains and had a rights-based orientation, an equity focus, and gender perspective. The programme had a strong component focusing on capacity building and improving the quality of services. Therefore, the evaluation paid particular attention to this component.

The evaluation was undertaken at the end of the UNICEF supported programme for 2010-2015, signed with the Government, and covered this programming period. The knowledge generated by the evaluation will be used by the Government and UNICEF to inform the planning and implementation of the new country programme 2016-2020.

UNICEF will ensure dissemination of evaluation findings and recommendations to the following partners:

- MoLSP, as a main partner and the responsible ministry for social protection to inform future planning, budgeting, guidance and support, inspection, monitoring and evaluation of the reform;
- ISA, the responsible institution for data collection, setting standards, monitoring and supervision of CSW work, in-service training. ISA will use the evaluation results to learn about approaches – what works, what doesn’t work and how can ISA support to CSW staff be further improved to ensure best support for young children and inclusion of the most marginalized groups;
- MoJ and MoI, as main partners for justice for children reform and their responsibilities for planning, budgeting, guidance and support, inspection, monitoring and evaluation of the reform.

4.2. Objectives

The evaluation of the child protection programme included the two key programme components, justice for children and social protection sector. The purpose was to:

- Assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and to the extent possible impact of UNICEF’s programme interventions;
- Identify and document lessons learned and the contribution of UNICEF to these systems or impact changes; and
- Provide recommendations to guide the child protection programme for the next programme cycle.
4.3. **Scope**

As requested by the ToR, the evaluation focused on the UNICEF supported programme signed with the Government for 2010-2015 and looked at the period from January 2010 to June 2015. The geographical coverage included both national and local levels.

UNICEF’s child protection programme in the country had two components: justice for children and social protection sector reform. The activities in justice for children addressed the reform in three areas: policy and legislation, capacity building and prevention. The social protection sector activities targeted CSWs through introduction of standards of work, in-service training programme, licensing of social work and establishment of a data base. The evaluation covered all the above mentioned aspects of the two programme components.

The Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA), equity and gender perspective and mainstreaming were assessed for both programme components.
5. Evaluation framework

According to the ToR, the evaluation assessed UNICEF’s programme and its contribution to achieving results for children in terms of their relevance to the child rights and equity agenda, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability (as defined by OECD/DAC). In relation to the previously mentioned evaluation criteria, the ToR proposed 26 evaluation questions. In the inception period, the evaluation questions were discussed in detail by the evaluation team with UNICEF CO staff and were revised in order to increase their strategic focus, to eliminate overlaps and to increase the coherence of the evaluation reporting. The number of evaluation questions was reduced to 20. All the changes made in the evaluation framework are presented in this section and also reflected in the Evaluation Matrix (Annex 2) which presents the evaluation criteria, questions, sub-criteria, indicators and descriptors in relation with the data collection methods and tools, as well as data sources.

5.1. Relevance

1. Has UNICEF’s programme (SP and J4C) been aligned to Government’s and partners’ priorities/policies/reform agendas?

This question aimed to assess a/ whether UNICEF’s programme was in line with national strategies and took these into account and b/ whether UNICEF’s programme (SP and J4C) was complementary and did not overlap with partners’ strategies.

2. Has UNICEF’s programme (SP and J4C) been aligned with the CRC principles (non-discrimination, best interests of the child, the right to life, participation), gender mainstreaming and Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) to programming?

This question referred to whether UNICEF’s programme (SP and J4C) incorporated the international standards and principles (CRC, HRBA, gender mainstreaming and others existing in the two programming domains) and took these into account both in planning and implementation.

3. To what extent are the by-laws, policies and other documents that regulate 1/ justice for children and 2/ social protection sector, developed with UNICEF support, relevant for the reform?

This question required an assessment as to what extent the changes in the laws and policies in J4C and SP sectors responded to the needs for reform in the domains of justice for children and child protection.

4. How relevant and gender sensitive are the capacity building activities for professionals 1/ for CSW staff to deliver quality services to children in-line with the new training curricula and 2/ to provide services to children in the justice system in line with the new justice for children law?

This question referred to the degree of satisfaction of CSW staff with the appropriateness of the capacity building activities provided by UNICEF interventions to increase their knowledge and skills in order to deliver quality services to children in-line with the new training curricula and to provide services to children in the justice system in line with the new justice for children law. Also, the question required an assessment of the proportion of men attending the capacity building activities out of the total male staff compared with the proportion of women attending the capacity building activities out of the total female staff. The focus here was on a comparative approach by collecting qualitative evidence at the level of estimation, not on the actual measurement which was not feasible within the resources allocated for this evaluation.
5. To what extent are the data collecting and monitoring activities developed with UNICEF support relevant for the country context 1/ justice for children and 2/ social protection sectors and are gender sensitive?

This question focused on assessing whether UNICEF’s support for the development of national data collection and monitoring capacity was designed and implemented in line with the needs of 1/ justice for children and 2/ social protection sectors.

With the exception of some minor editing changes, the evaluation question on relevance remained the same as in the ToR.

5.2. Efficiency

1. Have UNICEF’s resources invested in 1/ justice for children reform and 2/ in social protection sector reform been used in the most efficient manner?

This evaluation question required an assessment of the amount of resources allocated by UNICEF for 1/ justice for children reform and 2/ social protection sector reform. This question raises major concerns in terms of evaluable. Ideally, an accurate answer to such a question should have been provided based on the existence of an ex-ante evaluation (including a cost-benefit analysis) which was not available. Comparisons with data from other countries were not of interest as national contexts are different. The discussion with UNICEF CO over the inception phase revealed an awareness of the lack of data. However, it has been decided to keep this evaluation question in order to document a recommendation on how to address this lack of ex-ante data.

2. Would there have been a more cost-effective way to achieve the expected results?

This question aimed to assess the availability of more cost-efficient alternative modes for the programme’s resource allocation. The question looked at to what extent the allocated budget corresponded to the reasonable market prices for training (per person) and if the costs for consultants were reasonably comparable to the market prices.

3. Has the programme been successful in leveraging governments’ political will and financial resources to address child rights and equity issues in terms of 1/ justice for children and 2/ social protection sector reform?

This question focused on assessing if the Government’s resources contribution in the programme was made strategically and if this has been an effect of the programme. However, in practical terms this question was very much connected with the first question on the sustainability of the programme with the difference that here the focus was more on what has been UNICEF’s role in facilitating Government’s engagement in ensuring sustainability, rather than on the effect itself.

4. How well has the implementation of activities been managed? What management and monitoring tools have been used and what tools could have been used?

This evaluation question addressed the strengths and weaknesses of the process of implementation of activities, the factors that have threatened the process of implementation and the opportunities which have helped the implementation.
5. Did the Child Protection programme ensure coordination with other similar programme interventions to encourage synergies and avoid overlap?

This question was considered as overlapping with the first question on relevance and for that reason it was agreed to drop it.

5.3. Effectiveness

The evaluation questions from the ToR under this criterion were revised and substantially re-organized. Thus, the evaluation questions 2, 3, 4 and 5 on effectiveness in the ToR were included as sub-questions of question 1. The reason was the overlap in terms of coverage between question 1 on the one hand, and questions 2, 3, 4 and 5 on the other. This question has been turned into a strategically focused evaluation question addressing the reform/system changes with legislative, institutional and individual professional contributions. Also, it allowed for better organising the analysis per UNICEF’s determinant areas of intervention.

1. Have the planned results been achieved (quantitative and qualitative)?

- To what extent the programme on 1/ justice for children and 2/ social protection sector contributed to creating or improving the regulatory framework needed for reform of the system?

- To what extent the programme contributed to strengthening monitoring and reporting capacities in 1/ justice for children and 2/ social protection sector?

- How successful was the programme in establishing and developing the national level mechanism for continuous professional development of 1/ justice for children and 2/ CSW staff?

- To what extent the programme contributed to building the capacities of the 1/ justice for children professionals and 2/ CSW staff to provide services to children?

This evaluation question aimed to capture changes in the regulatory framework and in monitoring and reporting capacities, as well as the changes at the level of the national mechanism for continuous professional development and in the capacities of the 1/ justice for children professionals and 2/ CSW staff to provide services to children.

2. How successful was the programme in improving the practice and quality of services provided to children in contact with the law?

This evaluation question, in the ToR presented as an impact question, required an assessment of the systemic changes in terms of quality of services provided to children in contact with the law. This was focused on the outcome level changes, rather than on the impact of the programme on children, and for that reason it has been moved under ‘effectiveness’. The question was addressed in a case box for reasons of bringing upfront the findings on this topic which was among the priorities in the programme implementation.

3. How successful was the programme in improving the practice and quality of services provided by the CSW staff?

Also presented as an impact question in the ToR, this question aimed to capture the systemic (outcome level) changes in terms of quality of services provided by the CSW staff. The question was also
addressed in a case box for reasons of drawing attention to the findings on this topic which was of high interest in the programme implementation.

4. Has the programme provided any additional (not directly planned) significant contribution or outcome in 1/ justice for children and 2/ social protection sector?

This evaluation question broadened the assessment of the programme’s effects and referred to the unexpected changes that might have occurred as a result of the programme implementation.

5. To what extent have the programme components and interventions been planned and generated changes in parallel or in a sequenced manner in order to produce durable changes in the lives of children?

This evaluation question focused on the analysis on the relative ‘weight’/contribution of each programme approach/component and intervention, as well as on the coherence and synergetic effect of the programme interventions’ contributions.

6. How effective has the UNICEF supported model for mentoring children in conflict with the law been, and what are the options or possibilities for expanding and scaling up?

This question which has covered a particular intervention within the broader programme referred to learnings from piloting the model for mentoring children in conflict with the law. From the inception phase resulted that the findings on this pilot were of high interest for many programme stakeholders, which is why they were presented in case box as well.

7. What strategies/core roles of UNICEF have been most efficient in influencing improvements in 1/ justice for children and 2/ social protection sector reform?

This question has been revised and re-numbered as question 5 above. The reasons for revision were the following:
- to avoid confusion between assessing the effects of the programme at the output level, which, according to UNICEF’s ToC, are related to UNICEF’s core roles and indicate UNICEF’s efficiency, and the assessment at the outcome level, which according to UNICEF’s ToC, are related to systemic changes (determinant areas of change) and refer to the effectiveness; and
- to avoid confusion by using the wording “strategies”. The desk review undertaken for the inception phase did not suggest that UNICEF had several strategies in CP in the country, but one, combining JJ with SP, with certain interventions for each of the two components. The two components with their subsequent interventions had different aims, so any comparison (‘which one has been the most effective’) is not advisable. Instead, the evaluation team suggested to look at the interventions’ correlation and synergetic effect, and to assess to what extent they have been planned and generated changes in parallel or in a sequenced manner in order to produce durable changes in the lives of children.

8. How effective has UNICEF supported model for mentoring children in conflict with the law been, and what are the options or possibilities for expanding and scaling?

This question has been kept the same, but re-numbered as question 6 above.
9. To what extent the achieved results in 1/ justice for children and 2/ social protection sector reform were successful in reducing gender-based differences?

This question was covered by the current questions 1 and 2 under ‘impact’.

**5.4. Impact**

1. *How successful was the programme in improving the practice and quality of services provided to children in contact with the law?*

This question has been moved under ‘effectiveness’ and was re-numbered as question 2.

2. *How successful was the programme in improving the practice and quality of services provided by the CSW staff?*

This question has been moved under ‘effectiveness’ and was re-numbered as question 3.

1. To what extent have reform in 1/ justice for children and 2/ social protection sector led to children enjoying better their rights/life?

This question has been proposed by the evaluation team and refers to the perceived status of well-being by the beneficiaries resulting from receiving services (justice for children and social protection).

2. What has been the impact of the reform in 1/ justice for children and 2/ social protection sector on specific groups (if disaggregated data is available)?

This question was also proposed by the evaluation team and refers to the access of beneficiaries to new services (justice for children and social protection sector), as well as to the priority in the access to services given to the most vulnerable groups of children.

**5.5. Sustainability**

1. To what extent the Government involved in project implementation has the capacity to sustain the child protection system components established with UNICEF support and to what extent the Government has financial resources to continue the reform?

This question focused the analysis on the factors enabling the Government to ensure continuity of the child protection system components established with UNICEF support and on the risk factors that might impede on the Government’s capacity to sustain the child protection system components established with UNICEF support.

2. *What specific recommendations could be given that would contribute to the sustainability of the overall programme and more specifically gender related programme interventions?*

This question overlaps with the questions 1 and 3. The gender aspects will be included in the findings under questions 1 and 3.

2. What would be the transformed engagement of UNICEF in part of exercising its Core Roles in the future?

This question involved an assessment of UNICEF’s priorities for future programming.
3. Did the programme promote ownership over different programme activities? Did the relevant partners own the results of the programme?

This evaluation question required an assessment of the ownership facilitated by the programme and of the ownership assumed by the relevant partners.

5. Did the programme contributed to improvement in allocation and use of resources in the 1/ justice for children and 2/ social protection sector?

This question was considered as addressing UNICEF’s leveraging core role and for that reason was better accommodated under ‘efficiency’. In terms of sustainability criteria, also it was recommended to be replaced by the following question: ‘To what extent the Government has financial resources to continue the reform?’ and was merged with first question under this criterion.

As decided in the inception phase of the evaluation at the request of UNICEF CO, the performance in the implementation of the CP programme 2010-2015 was assessed by the evaluator based on the findings presented in relation to the above mentioned evaluation questions (Annex 9).
6. **Methodology**

The evaluation followed internationally agreed evaluation criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. Stakeholders participated in the evaluation through discussions, consultations, provision of comments on draft documents and some of them will be responsible for follow-up of the recommendations. In gathering data and views from stakeholders, the evaluation team considered a cross-section of stakeholders with potentially diverse views in order to ensure that the evaluation findings are as impartial and representative as possible. The evaluation was based on a mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches, and utilised a participatory methodology to establish triangulation of information through a variety of means. The evaluation was based on analysis of secondary data and on primary data collection.

The evaluator was an intervention of a rights based organization, therefore the evaluation mainstreamed gender and human rights considerations throughout. Whenever possible, disaggregation of data by gender and age was made.

6.1. **Desk review**

The desk review included data and information sources (listed below) from official state institutions or UNICEF produced reports therefore they are considered reliable and of sufficient quality:

- UNICEF programme documents such as country programme documents, country programme action plans, project proposals, logframes etc.;
- UNICEF annual reports and progress reports to their donors;
- Recent independent assessments/studies on the two programme topics;
- National Strategies and Laws concerning the two programme topics.

The complete list of documents reviewed is available in the Annex 3.

As of 2011, the National Council for Prevention of Child Delinquency issues annual reports on the implementation of the Justice for Children Law, which include data on children at risk and in conflict with law. The CSWs operate an electronic data system LIRIKUS for all services provided to children. The data presented in this report are taken from LIRIKUS data base through the Institute of Social Activity (ISA). All CSWs in the country (30) are entering data into LIRIKUS, while processing is done centralized by ISA. The reference period for the LIRIKUS data used in the report is 2011 to 2015 (30 September).

For the J4C component, both these sources were used for collecting secondary data and in addition data from the State Statistical Office were used.

6.2. **Primary data collection**

The methodological approach to the primary data collection combined quantitative and qualitative methods in order to ensure triangulation of information from a cross-section of programme stakeholders: MoLSP, MoJ, MoI, ISA, the National Council for Prevention of Child Delinquency, the National Coordination Body on Prevention of Abuse and Neglect, national training institutes for judges, prosecutors, police staff, CSW staff, justice for children professionals, municipalities, NGOs,

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22 Object of evaluation
academic experts, and UNICEF CO staff. The proposed mix of data collection methods used for gathering data and views from the stakeholders included the following (see also Table 1):

- **Quantitative survey** among CSW staff, police officers, justice officials;
- **Interviews** with representatives of MoLSP, MoJ, MoI, ISA, the National Council for Prevention of Child Delinquency, the National Coordination Body on Prevention of Abuse and Neglect, national training institutes for judges, prosecutors, police staff, CSW staff, justice for children professionals, NGOs, academia representatives, UNICEF CO staff, other partners/funders in the country.
- **Interviews** with parents and children adolescents.

### Table 1 - Primary data collection design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target groups</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Data collection instruments</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Representatives of MoLSP, MoJ, MoI, ISA, NCPJD, the National Coordination Body on Prevention of Abuse and Neglect, national training institutes for judges, prosecutors, police staff, CSW staff, justice for children professionals, NGOs, academia representatives, UNICEF CO staff, other partners/funders in the country</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Interview guide</td>
<td>30 interviews</td>
<td>29 interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents and children</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Interview guide</td>
<td>20 interviews</td>
<td>20 interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSW staff, police officers, justice officials</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>330 respondents</td>
<td>294 respondents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Quantitative survey**

A survey was conducted using a mixed mode (computer assisted telephone – 88%, and face-to-face – 12%) on a target sample of professionals comprising CSW staff, police officers, judges and prosecutors (Table 2). Information about gender disaggregation, age groups and professional experience of the respondents are available in the Annex 6.

### Table 2 - Final sample size and distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target group</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSW staff</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police officers</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges and prosecutors</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The unit considered for eligibility and implementation differed across target groups i.e. almost all CSW staff have been involved in some CP related programmes, whereas in other professional target groups there has been limited involvement in CP programmes out of total population i.e. among justice
Evaluation of UNICEF Child Protection Programme
in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2010-2015
- Evaluation Report -

officials it was estimated that there are 59 judges who work on justice for children (in Primary, Appellate and Supreme Courts all together), whereas in Ministry of Interior and its Bureau for Public Security there are 51 police officers in the position of IJDDV. However, it is estimated that a substantially larger number of justice and police officials work on cases which involve children. Among prosecutors there is no indication on how many of them have been related to CP programme(s), and the total number of prosecutors in the country is 270.

**Sampling frame and response rate**

The sampling frame was developed using contacts provided by UNICEF CO. The contact list included information on eligible respondents from professional target groups such as: name, city, telephone, email address.

In total, UNICEF CO provided 283 contacts from CSWs, 65 contacts of judges, 73 contacts of police officers and 38 contacts from public prosecutors who have been participating in UNICEF Child Protection Program.

From the list of contacts of CSWs staff, 250 contacts were randomly selected in the sampling frame (200 contacts in the main sample and 50 contacts as replacements to account for possible refusals). Because of the low number of provided contacts in the other three groups compared to planned sample profile and extent, all provided contacts were used i.e. without any sampling. On the total sample, the achieved response rate was 71%. The table below shows response rates per each professional group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional group</th>
<th>Contacted</th>
<th>Completed</th>
<th>Response rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Police officers</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSW</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosecutors</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Questionnaire design**

The questionnaire was developed by the evaluation team based on the desk review of relevant programme documents and on the data need informed by the Evaluation Framework. The development of the questionnaire focused on ensuring complementarity with other data collected through other methods, as well as the triangulation of findings. The structure of the questionnaire reflected the structure of the sample, comprising sections common to all three groups of respondents, but also with sections specific to each group (Annex 4).

Before launching the survey, the questionnaire was pre-tested on 3 to 5 respondents to ensure that all questions, items and closed answers were understood correctly and to correct any errors in wording that might have affected the accuracy and the validity of the responses.

**Qualitative survey**

**Interviews with stakeholders**

In order to capture the views of the evaluation stakeholders in relation to various evaluation questions, 30 interviews were conducted with the following categories of stakeholders: representatives of
MoLSP, MoJ, MoI, ISA, the National Council for Prevention of Child Delinquency, the National Coordination Body on Prevention of Abuse and Neglect, national training institutes for judges, prosecutors, police staff, CSW staff, justice for children professionals, NGOs, academia representatives, UNICEF CO staff, other partners/funders in the country.

The selection of respondents was made based on the contact list provided by UNICEF. As foreseen in the inception phase, the number of potential respondents in the contact list was close to the number proposed to be covered by the evaluation (i.e. 30 persons), however availability for the interview and knowledge of the interventions in the reference period was considered as a selection criteria.

Most of these interviews were carried by the international consultant during a full 5-day in-country mission (the mission Agenda in Annex 5) and via skype.

*Interviews with children and parents*

In order to capture the views of the end beneficiaries of UNICEF’s CP Programme interventions 20 interviews were conducted with children (10) and parents (10) participating in this programme or who benefited from the services provided in the programme. Out of each group of 10 (children and parents), 5 were selected among those who were covered by the J4C component of the programme (more specifically, by the intervention which aimed at establishing a service for mentoring children in conflict with the law). The other 5 were selected among the social protection/child care interventions final beneficiaries. The selection of eligible respondents was done by UNICEF’s partners (ISA for fostering families and CSW Skopje for mentoring program). All contacts responded positively to the request to participate in the interview.

The interviews were based on standard guides presented in the Annex 4.

6.3. **A human rights based approach**

As requested by the ToR, the issues related to the Human Rights-Based Approach to Programming, Results-Based Management and Gender Equality was addressed across the evaluation questions and developed as specific points as per United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Guidance on Integrating human-rights and gender equality in evaluation. The evaluation complied with UNICEF’s commitment to gender mainstreaming as expressed in the Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Girls.

6.4. **Observance of norms, standards and ethical considerations**

The design of the methodology considered UNEG Norms and Standards. The methodology combined qualitative and quantitative approaches, and involved a variety of stakeholders in order to reflect different perspectives and to ensure triangulation of information. As defined in the ToR, the evaluation mainstreamed gender and human rights considerations throughout.

The evaluation team included two national consultants and national professionals who undertook field data collection which ensured that national/local knowledge and information was adequately taken into account in evaluation.

Ethical considerations were taken into account in the evaluation process since this included collecting data directly from stakeholders. As it is stipulated in UNEG Norms and Standards, the evaluators were sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs and act with integrity and honesty in their relationships with...
all stakeholders ensured that their contacts with individuals were characterized by respect and protected the anonymity and confidentiality of individual information source.

In order to increase accuracy and reliability of the findings the international consultant provided ad hoc presentations of preliminary results of the evaluation activities (e.g. on the draft sections of the Inception Report, on the in-country mission agenda, of the in-country mission activities, of the findings etc.) to UNICEF CO staff. These activities were meant to encourage feedback and participation in the evaluation, as well as they ensured that information provided by participants during the evaluation process was duly captured with balanced perspectives and fair representation of different points of view.

The members of the evaluation team were acquainted with the ethics guiding their activity within the evaluation. Also, the process of identifying stakeholders from different institutional level followed a standard procedure in order to ensure an informed consent to participate in the evaluation (letter of introduction presenting the evaluation process, protection of privacy and information confidentiality, followed by a verbal communication regarding the interview details). Participation in the evaluation was voluntary and opinions were presented in the report in an anonymous manner.

Children and parents were approached through UNICEF’s partners who work directly with them (mostly CSWs, or others, as appropriate). UNICEF’s partners contacted the potential respondents and asked for their consent to be contacted by the national consultant. The service providers communicated the contact details of those children and parents willing to participate to national consultant who took over and communicated directly with them, explaining their role in evaluation, the interview conditions and modalities to use their opinions. Before starting the interview, the national consultant explained again the purpose of the interview and evaluation, how will their opinion be processed ensuring the confidentiality and asked for the confirmation of their consent\(^\text{24}\). Also, the child was informed that he/she can withdraw anytime during the interview without any obligation to explain their reasons.

6.5. Limitations

In terms of the evaluation’s expected equity focus, there was a lack of disaggregation of J4C data per ethnicity. This has reduced the possibility for the evaluation to assess to what extent the programme has reached the certain groups of children targeted by J4C interventions.

Among the evaluation key informants there were a few respondents (e.g. representatives of the central administration and justice for children professionals) who were reluctant to openly discuss with the evaluation team the problems encountered in their activities which has reduced the reliability of the respective data.

The questions related to impact on children presented in the ToR limit the evaluation of the impact mostly to changes at the systemic level. The changes in the lives of individual children subjects of this evaluation were only based on qualitative data because baseline data on the situation of children was not available; therefore no comparison with the current situation was possible.

\(^{24}\) The national consultant ensured written consent from the parents and/or guardians.
7. Findings

7.1. Relevance

7.1.1. Alignment of UNICEF programme to Government and partners’ priorities

UNICEF CP programme has been embedded in the political, social and economic context of the country. UNICEF CP programme has shown flexibility and ensured a balance between planned interventions and adjustments to the changes in the political agendas. From the beginning of the evaluation period UNICEF has moved alongside and substantially contributed to the Government’s strategies and agendas for both J4C and SP components.

UNICEF aligned its programming with Government’s priorities and as a result UNICEF has been able to strengthen its programming in J4C and SP by its close links to national objectives. However, the frequent changes of government/ministers have been challenging, and UNICEF has invested significant time of its staff to respond to these changes and to establish strong relationships with new decision makers and different perspectives.

The Country Programme Document (CPD) 2010-2015 aimed to achieve its goal (i.e. to address child poverty, disparities and social exclusion) through two programme components: 1/ System Strengthening for Child Rights, and 2/ Child Rights Monitoring and Social Policy. The Programme was designed to be based on the synergy among three strategies: system strengthening, capacity building and good governance across the sectors. These strategies were further reflected in the CP programme (both in J4C and SP components, with certain particularities) and subscribed to the key development priorities outlined in the National Development Plan 2008-2013.

UNICEF considered that the realization of the rights of children and the reduction of equity gaps is best achieved through changes in systems as well as by the empowerment of children to claim their rights. UNICEF contributed to such changes on a local and national level and provided its support to system reforms within the area of J4C by being closely connected with the specific goals of the National Strategy for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (2010-2020). The Strategy was designed based on the four fundamental principles under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This strategy was adopted in order to ensure that all children in contact with the law or at risk are treated equal. It guarantees the principle of non-discrimination and promotes equality and, of primary importance, the best interests of the child.

UNICEF CP programme 2010-2015 was also in line with The National Action Plan on Children’s Rights (2006-2015). This document includes a component on prevention, called "Development of a comprehensive approach to the protection of children with upbringing-social problems and behaviour problems" and envisages 10 activities to be carried out by the relevant line ministries. Among these there are mentioned "creation of a network of community-based ‘day-care centres’ for the protection of children at risk, training in the identification of children at risk and support for parents who neglect their children". The reduction of offending by juveniles is expressly recognized as an aim and indicator of the implementation of the Action Plan. Strategic considerations include strengthening the capacity of the relevant institutions, developing standards and procedures for interdepartmental cooperation at

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25 Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Local Self-Government
national and local levels and collaboration with NGOs.\textsuperscript{26} All these elements were addressed by UNICEF’s CP programme (mostly in the J4C component).

UNICEF CP interventions addressed the priorities of the \textit{National Strategy for Protection against Domestic Violence} (both for 2008-2012 and 2012-2015). To mention the most recent one, this strategy was focused on most vulnerable categories of victims, especially children who are facing multiple vulnerabilities, aimed to broaden the network of counselling centers for psychosocial treatment of children and the network of counselling centers for parents and children. The Strategy envisioned availability of services in shelters for victims of domestic violence administrated by the CSWs in Skopje, Bitola, Kocani and Sveti Nikole\textsuperscript{27}. UNICEF’s J4C component of the programme included a multi-layer intervention which responded to the above mentioned priorities through "support for development of standardized protection services for the victims of domestic violence including development of the Counselling Centre Programme, training on counselling services and supervision of parental rights in processing of domestic violence cases"\textsuperscript{28}. Without addressing explicitly the children victims of abuse and violence, few of the interventions in the SP component were also very relevant for the implementation of the Strategy. Thus, through the development of the data base system of the CSWs, the development and adoption of ISA in-service training, as well as through the revision of existing standards, development and adoption of new standards and procedures on provision of social work services to children UNICEF had a relevant contribution to the implementation of the Strategy.

It is widely documented\textsuperscript{29} and recognized among the relevant stakeholders that the J4C component of UNICEF’s CP programme was triggered by the need for a comprehensive reform of the justice for children sector which was identified by the Government as a priority in the \textit{National Programme for Adoption of the Acquis Communautaire}. "Modernization of the criminal justice system, promotion of outside court agreements and simplified procedures, and enhancement of cooperation between police and law enforcement officials were among the objectives of the National Strategy for Reform of the Criminal Legislature (2007). All these objectives were considered in line with the \textit{EU guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child}, particularly in relation to the efforts of countries to fulfil their legal obligations and commitment for the promotion and protection of children’s rights".\textsuperscript{30} UNICEF has responded to this strategic priority by providing the Government with technical assistance in the design and implementation of EU funded interventions which addressed the J4C reform. The field evidence\textsuperscript{31} proves that this cooperation is unanimously considered by all the stakeholders as highly relevant as it addressed country's strategic needs in a systemic manner.

In spite of the strategic coverage of EU-funded interventions in the domain of J4C, the progress achieved needed consolidation in order to reach a critical mass from which the Government to have better prospects to take over the actions, which was the reason for the continuation of UNICEF’s assistance with support from the \textit{Dutch Embassy}. This package of interventions\textsuperscript{32} addressed the Government’s need to upgrade its legal system and to bring its legislation in line with international standards, to enhance institutional and human capacities to work with children and to establish a

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{26} UNICEF (2010): Assessment of Juvenile Justice Reform Achievements in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
  \item \textsuperscript{27} UNICEF (2015): Mapping of Institutions and Civil Society Organisations which Provide Services to Children Victims of Violence and Abuse
  \item \textsuperscript{28} UNICEF (2015): Child Protection Logical Framework 2010-2015
  \item \textsuperscript{29} UNICEF reports, European Commission Country Progress Report (2010-2012)
  \item \textsuperscript{30} IPA Application From "Justice for Children" (2010)
  \item \textsuperscript{31} Interviews during country mission (September 2015)
  \item \textsuperscript{32} I.e. the project called "Towards a child-friendly justice system"
\end{itemize}
system to monitor the implementation of the J4C Law. Also, the project was in line with Dutch Embassy’s priorities of the Human Rights portfolio.

One of the key areas in the National Programme for Development of Social Protection 2011-2021 states a need to develop a sound curriculum for professionals working in the area of social protection as follows: "Planning of continued professional education on the basis of a scientific analysis of the real training needs of the professional staff, as a systematic and well-planned organized activity". This need was addressed by UNICEF in the SP component of the programme through the development and adoption of ISA in-service training, as well as through the revision of existing standards, development and adoption of new standards and procedures on provision of social work services to children. Also, the National Programme defines several priorities which were addressed in UNICEF’s interventions, such as: the development of social prevention, continuous and coordinated action at the local level, increasing the quality of service delivery and creating conditions to reduce institutional care, introducing case management, introducing a system for continuous professional development, and development of a system of licensing and standardization.

The social inclusion of CwD was addressed by several strategic documents mainly the National Strategy for Equal Rights of people with Disabilities 2010-2018, the National Strategy for Deinstitutionalisation in the system of social protection in the Republic of Macedonia for 2007, the National Health Strategy to 2020, and the National Programme for the Development of Education in the Republic of Macedonia 2005-2015. The official approach for a person to be acknowledged as being "disabled" is the process of categorisation. Therefore, the definition of disability underlying the Macedonian legislation and national action plans was considered by the Government of an utmost importance. For that reason, and given UNICEF’s focus on the most vulnerable children (including CwD), an in-depth analysis of the process of categorisation supported by UNICEF was of high relevance. Also with relevance to the above mentioned strategies, UNICEF has supported a process of national consultation in order to increase the understanding on cross-sectoral response to the needs of CwD and to propose a model for inclusion of this target group.

7.1.2. Alignment of UNICEF programme with international standards and principles

The principles outlining UNICEF’s CP programme for the reference period are to be found in the CPD 2010-2015. It is stated that the country programme was designed to ensure consistency with "principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and international standards."

The J4C component was focused on providing support to the Government and other stakeholders to integrate domestic and international juvenile justice standards in legislation and policies, and to facilitate their implementation. Due to the very nature of the interventions, their subject matter and overall aim were in line with international norms and standards on human rights in the area of juvenile justice. The objective was to develop a child justice system in line with the CRC and other international and European human rights instruments (such as ECHR), Beijing Rules, Tokyo Rules, Havana Rules, The Body of Principles for the Protection of all Persons under any Form of Detention or Imprisonment (1988).

The J4C interventions were designed to support the Government in the establishment of a child justice system founded on the principles of non-punitve and restorative justice that has the best interests of

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34 Interviews during country mission (September 2015)
the child as the primary consideration, as well as in conformity with relevant international and European standards and good practices.

In terms of the international principles and standards which guided the SP interventions, the cross-sectoral model of services for inclusion of children with disabilities was drafted in the frame of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO)\textsuperscript{36}. This tool operationalises principles and approaches to human rights in relation to disability included in a definition to be found in the \textit{Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities} (CRPD): "Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others."\textsuperscript{37}

The CRPD the CRC are mentioned among the main drivers for the development of the curriculum for social protection professionals in the country\textsuperscript{38}. However, the \textit{principle of participation of the children} was not included in the stage of planning of the interventions (both J4C and SP), only in some aspects of the implementation (such as in the mentoring project), and as a principle in the Juvenile Justice Law and in the new Law on Justice for Children. It should be noted that in case of the SP interventions, these did not have children as final beneficiaries, which may explain why participation of children was not considered more widely.

From a gender perspective, overall the CP programme does not appear to have given special consideration to gender mainstreaming, except by stating in the Country Programme Action Plan 2010-2015 that the programme will contribute to the realization of the commitments set out in the MDGs to achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empower women.

7.1.3. Alignment of the changes in the policies and legislation to the objectives of the reform

The changes in the legislation, policies (i.e. strategies) and other normative documents (e.g. protocols, guidelines, standards and procedures) supported by the UNICEF’s programme in both J4C and SP domains responded to the needs for reform in the country, thus indicating a high relevance of this support. As presented in the previous section, the changes that were made were in line with international standards and principles on children’s rights. Therefore, the analysis of the relevance of these changes may be extended to the degree to which the changes were relevant to the needs of the children. In that sense, the majority of the respondents to the survey carried out for this evaluation agreed that the changes in the legislation in the area of the child protection in the period 2010-2015 made substantial progress in the children rights. About 70\% of professionals agreed that these changes have properly addressed the rights of children (both of those in conflict with the law and in contact with the law), and that the introduced measures are adequate for the needs of those children\textsuperscript{39}.

The J4C component of the programme provided technical assistance to the NCPJD to develop and finalize the \textit{National Strategy on Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency}. This strategy provides measures to ensure that all children in contact with the law or at risk are treated equally, guarantees the principle of non-discrimination and promote equality, "Of primary importance is the best interest of the child; The right to life, survival and development must be considered in order to develop effective policies and programs to prevent juvenile delinquency and the child's right to free expression of

\textsuperscript{36} UNICEF (2015): \textit{Assessment of Capacity of Services Provided by Health, Education and Social Sectors for Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia}

\textsuperscript{37} Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 1, \url{http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=261}

\textsuperscript{38} UNICEF (2011): \textit{Knowledge into practice: Developing an in-service learning and development curriculum for social protection professionals in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia — Training needs analysis}

\textsuperscript{39} Figures a1_1, a1_2 and a1_3 in the Survey Report (Annex 6)
opinion in all matters affecting the child". In addition to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Strategy is based on the equally important key documents: General Comment No. 10: Children's Rights in Juvenile Justice Committee on the Rights of the Child, the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency known as Riyadh Guidelines to the Juvenile Justice.

As part of assistance to the child justice system reform UNICEF had an important contribution to the alignment of the legislation to the CRC and European human rights principles. The Juvenile Justice Law, which was in force at the beginning of the reference period, was amended and renamed the **Law on Justice for Children**. UNICEF had a major contribution both in terms of the results and in terms of the implementation of this reform. The process of change was solidly built on two analytical tools: the **Assessment of Juvenile Justice Reform Achievements** and the **Legal Gap Analysis for the Improvement of the Justice for Children Normative Framework**. The recommendations of these documents were highly appreciated by the stakeholders. The Ministry of Justice working group that was in charge of revising Juvenile Justice Law appreciated the quality of the reports: "we found feasible solutions incorporating recommendations for implementation in practice". Based on the findings and recommendations in the reports the working group proposed draft amendments to the Juvenile Justice Law. Following the recommendations of the Gap Analysis the new Law on Justice for Children guaranteed 1/ the right to contact with the family at least once a week, 2/ the right to private and confidential communication as necessary, 3/ the right to medical assistance and care; and 4/ the right to follow info through the media.

A major shortcoming in the juvenile justice legislation that was both documented by UNICEF in the preparatory phase of the Justice for Children Project and pointed out by the two analytical documents previously mentioned referred to the juvenile justice normative framework that was lacking comprehensiveness in terms of the inconsistencies in the secondary legislation (i.e. by-laws, standards, norms, guidelines, protocols). UNICEF response to this need consisted of the development of a referral protocol for children in contact with the law and of the guidelines for treatment of children in police station and standards for treatment of children in detention. These additional normative instruments have improved the capacity of the national justice system to better address the needs of the children in conflict with the law, as well as the needs of the children at risk and in contact with the law.

The **Law on prevention, deterrence and protection against domestic violence** that came into force at the end of the evaluation reference period (i.e. in 2015) introduces the concept of multisectoral professional team composed from representatives of the competent CSW, police, a health institution, education, judge and relevant NGOs. The law also defines the roles of relevant bodies and institutions such as MoLSP, MoI, MoES, MoJ, local authorities and all the institutions working in social protection, internal affairs, health, employment and education. Their mode of cooperation was detailed in a separate Protocol and adopted by the Government in 2015. The UNICEF’s support was very relevant for this step forward in the legislation for protection of children victims of violence due to the piloting of multi-disciplinary response services for children exposed to violence, abuse and neglect.
exploitation, 2/ to the support for development of standardized protection services for the victims of
domestic violence and 3/ to the technical assistance for the revision/development of secondary
legislation on violence and abuse of children.

The amendments related to the adoption process in the revised Family Law were introduced with
technical assistance of UNICEF. The support was relevant from the perspective of the development
the Rulebook, organizing the public debates and drafting the amendments to the law47.

The new model for assessing CwD that was developed with the UNICEF’s support was the basis for
the Rulebook on assessment of CwD. The relevance of this document is demonstrated by the fact that
the Law on Social Protection is currently being changed to create legal basis for the new assessment
model.

7.1.4. Adequacy of the capacity building activities to the needs of CSWs’ staff
The Juvenile justice law foresees mandatory training for all professionals dealing with children in
conflict with the law. The requirement is a minimum of four to ten days training per year for all
professionals working with children and young people within the justice system. Prior to the action,
the level of specialization of the Macedonian system was largely insufficient. The specialization of
staff working in the child justice system is however a key international requirement, and is critical in
measuring the reform of the child justice system.

The interventions from the UNICEF J4C programme contributed to the specialization of the personnel
by ensuring that the following elements are in place:

i) unified and standard child justice training curricula, i.e. the Manual and Handbook for Justice for
Children, and the Mediation Manual, fostering a multi-disciplinary approach;

ii) the standard training curricula endorsed by the national training institutes and incorporated into
their training curricula, ensuring institutionalization and sustainability of these training programmes in
future;

iii) capacity for specialized training delivery strengthened through a pool of experts trained and
certified as Master Trainers on justice for children at basic and advanced levels to support future
training delivery;

iv) training institutions have the tools available for monitoring of training achievements.

In the absence of monitoring data concerning these capacity building activities, the assessment made
based only on the survey data collected for this evaluation48 indicated the following:

- more than 62 % of the CSW’s staff participated in the training related to implementation of the
Juvenile Justice/J4C Law in the reference period;

- almost half of the respondents (46 %) attended 3-4 trainings, about a quarter of them attended 1-2
trainings and the other almost a quarter attended over 5 trainings;

- a very large majority of the respondents (93 %) consider the training appropriate;

- a very large majority of the respondents (98 %) are applying the knowledge from the training;

- a very large majority of the respondents are either very satisfied (63 %) or satisfied (24 %) with the
training provided;

47 Interviews during country mission (September 2015)
48 Survey Report (Annex 6)
- a large majority of the respondents (85%) would recommend the training to their colleagues;

- a large majority of the respondents (76%) consider the quality of trainings related to J4C was better compared with other trainings provided on different topics.

All the above evidence demonstrates a high relevance of the J4C capacity building activities (i.e. trainings) to the practice of the CSWs’ staff. Assessing the actual capacity of the CSWs’ staff to deliver quality services to children in line with the new training curricula was not possible for this evaluation and seems to be more an internal matter of the system to monitor the quality of the services of its staff. In the system, ISA is in charge of undertaking this type of assessments.

In terms of gender sensitiveness of the capacity building activities, it should be noted that most of the workers in the CSWs are women. Therefore, the number of women who attended the trainings was higher than the number of men. According to the field evidence collected for evaluation⁴⁹, gender was never an indicator for selecting the participants to the training.

7.1.5. Adequacy of UNICEF’s support for the development of national data collection and monitoring capacity

UNICEF support for the development of national data collection and monitoring capacity was designed and implemented in line with the need for development of the reforms in both J4C and SP domains.

In the area of J4C the data collection and monitoring activities developed with UNICEF support are to a large extent relevant for the country context. Before the programme, a juvenile justice monitoring system was not in place and data was not generated based on indicators relevant for children in the justice system. There was a lack of data and information sharing among key institutions responsible for children in conflict with the law and children victims. Designing indicators was needed to facilitate the data collection and analysis and provide for an image of the realities of children in contact and in conflict with the law. Subsequently, this was foreseen as building evidence-based and child-specific future policies and programming of the Government.⁵⁰

Ministry of Interior (MoI), Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MoLSP), Public Prosecutors Office (PPO), Courts, State Statistics Office (SSO) and the Department for Execution of Sanctions (DSE) and their departments, and National Council for Prevention of Child Delinquency (NCPCD) were and remain relevant for gathering data on justice for children as state institutions responsible for implementation of the Juvenile Justice Law/J4C. In the past, these institutions were collecting some data on juveniles and children. However, most of the state institutions had difficulties in data collection for reasons of lacking modern systems of data collection and lacking capacity to generate statistical reports. Also, the data collection used to be completed through the law-prescribed registers that were kept manually. Based on these data and reports not all the cases targeting children were registered and also some of them were registered twice based on the different systems and indicators of the different institutions that were collecting the data.

Beginning with 2009, one of the key institutions responsible for data collection is the NCPJD. Among other tasks, the NCPJD is responsible for preparing regular progress reports on the implementation of the J4C Law. These reports are submitted to the Government and the Parliament, and they provide the basis for the formulation of Government’s future course of actions. However, in the absence of an unified data collection system with common indicators adopted and endorsed by all the relevant

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⁴⁹ Interviews during country mission (September 2015)
⁵⁰ UNICEF (2014): Created Change in the area of Justice for Children
institutions, the effective monitoring and reporting by the NCPJD was impossible and often there were situations of double-reporting, under-reporting, and in short, inaccurate data. Therefore, establishment of a unified system to provide reliable and regular data on the progress in the implementation of the Juvenile Justice/J4C Law became a key priority. It was necessary to establish a system of indicators that can be used by all institutions in order to provide accurate numbers about children in conflict and children in contact with the law.

UNICEF supported the Government in establishing a unified J4C data collection system in accordance with the international standards. This system enables monitoring of the situation of both children in conflict with the law and for, the first time, for the children victims and witnesses. An indicator framework was designed, which was validated by practitioners and adopted officially by the NCPJD. Gender aspects were not addressed in the first planning and the design of the indicators. They were considered during the implementation of UNICEF’s support for the development of the indicators and, consequently, in the most recent two annual reports of the NCPJD gender disaggregated data are available\textsuperscript{51}. The indicators were included in the national data collection system, and the capacity of the relevant professionals and institutions was built in order to apply the monitoring system.

In the design of the indicators several aspects were taken into account such as the legal formulation of children vs. juveniles, the legal responsibility of each group before the law, the various sanctions that are mentioned in the law.

In terms of maintaining the relevance of the indicators over the evaluation reference period, it should be noted a process of developing the indicators and amending them. This process was on-going and based on the need for change generated by changes in the legislation.

In courts, the indicators developed with UNICEF support are incorporated in the electronic ACCMIS system and currently used for the benefit of adult cases as well.

For the CSW’s, UNICEF supported the establishment of LIRIKUS, a data base of children who are beneficiaries of the social welfare system. UNICEF started the support to MoLSP and ISA for the development of a comprehensive information system for CSWs since 2006. The continuation of this support over the reference evaluation period proves its high relevance.

Also of high relevance is the fact that the two systems of data collection (the one for J4C and LIRIKUS) are interconnected in the sense that the CSWs are providing data for the J4C system on "children and juveniles victims of criminal deeds" and on "the right of the child/juvenile to a social worker"\textsuperscript{52}. Also, LIRIKUS is reporting on the number of juvenile offenders, street children, children victims of sexual abuse, children victims of domestic violence, children with problematic behaviour and children at risk sent to CSW/receiving measures for help and protection. In relation to all these target groups CSWs are introducing data in LIRIKUS on the types of services provided and on the total services provided. This makes the data base a valuable resource for policy design and planning that still remains to be used more at its potential.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{52} Secondary data on J4C from the annual reports of NCPJD (Annex 6)
7.2. Efficiency

7.2.1. Cost-efficiency of UNICEF investment

The UNICEF investment in the country, no matter the programme, follows the same pattern that can be found in the other countries in the region, i.e. having significant results with rather limited resources. In general, fundraising was and remains a precondition for implementation of the planned activities, including in the J4C and SP domains. This donor-driven approach introduces certain pre-conditions not only in matching the priorities, but also in matching the financial management rules; what might be cost-efficient for a donor might not be for another (e.g. investing in direct services to the final beneficiaries vs. investing in human resources for a rigorous project management). Furthermore, a reasonably sound methodological cost-efficiency analysis would have needed a baseline built on an ex-ante analysis of the costs and some benchmarks (e.g. what is the cost in the country of a systemic intervention comparable to the ones in the CP programme, what is the cost of a similar J4C project in another country with a national context comparable to the one in the country etc.). In addition, even within the CP programme, the availability of financial-related data was different. If the J4C component was mostly funded project-based and an overview of the financial management was available, for the SP component this information was not available.

It should be noted that cost-efficiency may be not just about the financial resources, but also about human resources and the time invested by the staff. For example, in the reference period for the J4C component UNICEF leveraged 842,500 EUR from donors (EU-IPA and Dutch Embassy) and contributed with 300,238 EUR (a contribution of an average of 26 % of the total projects’ budget) to the donors’ amount. Taking into account that leveraging resources from donors involves time investment on behalf of the staff and the fact that the programme human resources costs (both J4C and SP) represent about the same percentage from the total programme cost it can be assessed that UNICEF has been efficient in keeping a balance between programme human resources costs and the leveraged funds.

Compared with an average of 36% of human resources costs from the total CP programme cost in some countries in the region in UNICEF in the country, as indicated above, the CP human resources costs are lower which may demonstrate a fair level of efficiency.

In terms of efficiency in engaging donors’ funds, UNICEF had almost 100% rate of disbursement which indicates a high level of efficiency and capacity to use resources in accordance with the planned grant application.

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54 According to the Final Report to the Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands - July 19, 2012 — July 19, 2014, for the project "Towards a Child-Friendly Justice System" the Dutch Embassy funding consisted of 142,500 EUR while UNICEF contribution was 195,048 EUR. For the EU-IPA funded project “Implementation of Juvenile Justice Reform” with an EU budget of 700,000 EUR UNICEF contributed with 105,235 EUR.
55 I.e. 1,330,600 EUR for J4C interventions + 528,800 EUR + 644,900 EUR programme staff costs = 2,504,300 EUR CP programme costs between 2010 — 2015 (data source: UNICEF CP Programme Logframe)
56 I.e. Including human resources that contributed directly and indirectly to the programme
7.2.2. Alternative modes for resource allocation

UNICEF is engaging financial resources based on clearly established internal regulations and by carefully observing donors’ requirements. The allocation of funds is done for example for consultancy services by using a **competitive approach** which includes publishing RFPs and ToRs and selecting the best offers taking into account both the technical merit and the price. For fees’ levels of the individual consultants engaged there is an internal range of fees that is applied in relation to the level of experience and education of the candidate. For travelling costs there are standards established by UN DSA and by the rule of using flights at economy class etc. All these are pre-conditions for ensuring the selection of the best mode of resource allocation.

Achieving the expected results sometimes requires changing certain activities by replacing the ones that have become irrelevant to the beneficiaries with other activities that have occurred in the course of project implementation as addressing better the changing needs of the project stakeholders. **Changing the activities** is always done in consultation with key stakeholders and, in case of donor-funded projects, with the approval of the donor. In case of **budget savings**, funds are reallocated for new activities identified in accordance with the needs of the beneficiaries and also, with donors’ approval.

For example, during the implementation of IPA-funded project "Implementation of Juvenile Justice Reform" two rounds of budget changes were reported\(^{58}\). The first change in the budget refers to a transfer of 30,000 EUR from the budget heading ‘Training’ to the budget heading ‘Contracts’. The purpose of this transfer was to provide technical assistance to address the gaps that had been identified in the normative framework, some of which included the need to harmonize the Juvenile Justice Law with all other legislation primarily the Criminal Code, the Criminal Procedural Code and the Law on Execution of Sanctions\(^{59}\).

The second change in the budget was due to savings in the several budget lines. UNICEF requested a revision of the budget and an amendment to the contract. The budget reallocations were requested for the following budget lines: partial re-allocation of budget heading ‘Contracts’; partial re-allocation of budget heading ‘Travel’; partial changes to budget heading ‘Transport’; partial changes in the budget heading ‘Supplies and Commodities’; re-allocation of budget heading ‘Equipment’; and partial changes in the budget heading ‘Miscellaneous’. Following European Commission’s request for additional information and clarification on the rationale for reallocation request, most of the re-allocations were approved, and the contract was amended in quite a long time frame (eight months) from the initiation of the procedure.\(^{60}\)

In the implementation of the project “Towards a child-friendly justice system”\(^{61}\) several changes were made in the course of the project. First reallocation of funds was related to the activity ‘Enhance technical capacity of CSW staff’, funds were allocated to cover costs for workshop venue and travel costs for the participants. UNICEF proposed to use the allocated funds to reach higher number of CSW staff and to decrease the costs for transport and venue for workshops. In this way the total amount allocated for workshops remained the same, however the number of workshops increased.

Another change was made in relation to the source of funding for the project staff (which was UNICEF staff). At the time of the submission of the funding proposal half of the salary of the two staff members (project officer and project assistant) was planned to be financed from donors’ funds. But as

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\(^{58}\) UNICEF (2012): *IPA Final Report - Implementation of the Juvenile Justice Reform*

\(^{59}\) Ibid.

\(^{60}\) Ibid.

of January 2013, the funding source was changed to UNICEF core resources. As a result, the funds were re-located to the mentoring activities.

During the second year of implementation of the project, UNICEF has made savings of funds in a total amount of 19,991 EUR. UNICEF proposed to use the funds for implementation of specialized training of multi-agency teams and police officers on child interview skills targeting children in conflict and children in contact with the law. All the requests for approval of these changes were approved by the donor.

All these demonstrate that over the period of reference for the evaluation UNICEF proved a good capacity to identify alternative modes for resource allocation and to make the best use of the available resources in the interest of the projects’ final beneficiaries.

### 7.2.3. Government investment in the programme

This is perhaps the least substantiated element of the programme. The success of the programme in leveraging Government’s political will and financial resources is closely related with the key element in the relevance of the programme and it is an indicator for the sustainability of the programme. In spite of having the relevance of the programme originated in Government’s priorities, the programme trigger was donor (i.e. EU) driven. The shift from Government’s commitment for a technical contribution to a set of interventions that were externally funded towards a robust financial commitment for the continuation of those interventions has not been made. It was reported that still "no link exists between data analysis, policy drafting and budget allocation in the field of Justice for Children".

In spite of having primary and secondary legislation aligned with international standards and in place, implementation remains a challenge. Much progress remains to be done for consolidating institutional changes. But the most often reported is the insufficiency of material and human resources that should be provided by the state in order to achieve a real and lasting change. Without budgetary support children cannot have access to the adequate services (CFR, free legal aid, mediation, mentoring, cross-sectoral services for CwD, multi-disciplinary services for children victims of abuse and neglect). Furthermore, the lack of financial support for continuous training of professionals is still a challenge for the stability of the progress in both J4C and SP systems.

In some instances, the allocation for the continuation of services may not even be considered a financial matter; it is perceived rather a matter of "Lacking awareness and interest on behalf of the decision makers regarding the benefits of the project". This is the case of the mentoring project. The maximum necessary budget to implement a mentoring programme lasting 12 months, in one city, targeting 20 children, is 1,192,400 MKD (around 19,450 euro). This budget covers the mentoring costs; the costs of the mentor; the coordinators fee; educative materials for the children; the trainings for mentors and supervisors.66

However, there are some modest elements of progress which should be acknowledged. Thus, within different ministries, the government invested by creating positions on juvenile delinquency or specifically addressing the topic of J4C. Furthermore, the MoJ allocated in 2013 and 2014 an amount

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62 Interviews during country mission (September 2015)
63 UNICEF (2014): Created change in the area of Justice for Children
65 Interviews during country mission (September 2015)
66 UNICEF (2014): Report on the Project 'Mentoring Children In Conflict with the Law'
of 500 000 MKD (approx. 8,000 EUR) for the Victim Compensation Programme. The initial idea was one of a self-standing fund in which 2% of all fines would be allocated to this programme. Currently, this programme is funded by MoJ.

The activities of the NCPJD are funded from the budget of the MoJ. Formally, from 2012, the NCPJD has available a budget for implementation of its activities. In 2014 the NCPJD designed and implemented a project aiming at Programe for supporting families using multimedia education to healthy lifestyles. The project was implemented in partnership with United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and was financially supported by funds of the NCPJD in the amount of 192,000 MKD (approx. 3,100 EUR) from the budget of the MoJ.

7.2.4. Quality of the implementation and management of the activities

The established partnerships with the Government, academia, and non-government sector ensured efficient implementation of the interventions both in the J4C and SP domains. The action was coordinated and conducted in close cooperation with all the line ministries. For the J4C the main stakeholders were the following: MoJ, MoLSP, MoI, Academy for Training of Judges and Prosecutors, ISA, CSWs, Macedonian Bar Association, the Association of Local Self-government ZELS, Faculty for Public Safety, representatives from the judiciary and PPO, academia and the donors involved in the sector. For the SP the stakeholders with whom UNICEF cooperated in the reference period were the following: MoLSP, ISA, CSWs, NGOs, academia, parents of CwD.

For the IPA project ‘Implementation of Juvenile Justice Reform’ a project Steering Committee, chaired by a high ranking representative of the Ministry of Justice, was set up to supervise the overall implementation of the project and to endorse the eventual changes to be introduced. The Steering Committee was composed of representatives of all stakeholders involved in the implementation of the project (see above). Through quarterly meetings, the Steering Committee performed the following functions: endorsing the inception report; quarterly updates and making recommendations as appropriate to the EU which approved these reports; assessing the project progress and monitoring the overall implementation process as agreed in the contract and in the action; discussing any critical points or bottlenecks for further project implementation and proposing remedial actions to tackle problems. As part of its terms of reference, the Steering Committee also ensured close cooperation and transparency between the institutions targeted by the action.

For both J4C and SP interventions UNICEF core management was responsible for oversight of the activities, endorsing corrective actions as needed, negotiation and follow-up at the most senior levels of the Government and regular review of the progress in implementation. UNICEF staff members were responsible to ensure systematic monitoring, information collection and analysis of progress and achievement of the planned results. Under the supervision of the Deputy Representative, the Child Protection section in the UNICEF Country Office was responsible for management, coordination, monitoring and reporting of activities, in close consultation with the national partners. The section is composed of a National Officer and a National Programme Assistant. It should be noted that for the first years of the reference period having only one CP staff member has been challenging in terms of ensuring both coverage of all the daily tasks and monitoring more in-depth the progress. The Monitoring and Evaluation Officer provided technical support for the development of the monitoring mechanism of the juvenile justice law and for the development of LIRIKUS, as well as monitoring the impact of the interventions’ activities. The Finance Assistant was responsible for the financial.

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management and monitoring of the activities under the supervision of the Operations Manager. Monitoring activities included: regular field visits, meetings with counterparts and implementing NGOs, attending the training workshops and other project activities, and annual reviews with key stakeholders. The quality of UNICEF management of activities related to both programme components is highly appreciated by donor and partners.\textsuperscript{69}

Monitoring and evaluation of the training activities were developed in consultation with the national training institutions (Academy of Judges and Prosecutors and ISA) to ensure these institutions have the tools and skills to monitor and report on the quality of trainings conducted. These tools are incorporated as part of their standard training modules and will be mandatory for any future activities they will conduct.

More specific for the J4C interventions, the evaluation of communication activities included: pre-testing of all communication materials through focus groups, evaluation of the impact of the video and print material on different target audiences through focus groups, questionnaires, and opinion polls. The pre-testing was conducted prior to production of any communication material.

7.3. Effectiveness

7.3.1. Outcome attainment

CP programme-related priorities were defined in \textit{Country Programme Action Plan 2010-2015} under the component \textit{System Strengthening for Child Rights}; they were subscribed to area of interventions "Prevention and Protection from Child Abuse, Violence and exploitation" and aimed to contribute to UNDAF outcome 1.2., specifically the outputs that were targeted to "improve the national social care and protection policies and governance to provide quality services for vulnerable groups" and "establish systems and capacities for juvenile justice". Overall, the programme was successful in achieving the planned results. However, demonstrating the progress in terms of quality seems to be more of a challenge compared with showing results in terms of quantity. In addition, there are difficulties in the diffusion of results from central to local level and in ensuring a good coordination among the stakeholders, both at central and local level. Also, tracing outputs in community proves to be challenging for both J4C and SP components.

\textit{Changes in the regulatory framework}

The \textit{J4C} component of the programme contributed to strengthening the child justice system through addressing the gaps in the legislative framework and helped ensure compliance with major international legal conventions. The key achievements are the amendment of the JJ Law which was based on a gap analysis (also carried on within the programme) that ensured its alignment with international standards, as well as the development of the country’s first referral protocol for children in contact with the law. The guidelines for treatment of children in police station and the standards for treatment of children in detention were developed, reviewed by MoI, MoJ and the Agency for Execution of sanctions, and adopted. The comprehensive legal framework on J4C is currently including child victims and child witnesses.

\textsuperscript{69} Interviews during country mission (September 2015)
The programme also contributed to the development of the first National Strategy on the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency in 2010. The strategy was subsequently endorsed by the NCPJD and is being implemented nationally.

The secondary legislation on protection of children victims of violence was improved. A multi-agency protocol was developed and a draft standard for forensic examination of child victim was produced based on an in-depth assessment of the secondary legislation.

**Figure 1 – Implementation of protocols/standards/guidelines/procedures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overview of the results achieved by the J4C component of the programme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- (More) specialized professionals work on J4C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Change in mindset and language used, as well as from retribution to prevention and rehabilitation and from JJ to J4C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Professionals report greater awareness, sensitivity and confidence in their work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Comprehensive legal framework on J4C is in place, including child victims and child witnesses and obligatory training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Improved data collection and monitoring through a set of indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Data collection a yearly basis performed by all institutions and published in a report by the NCPJD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The indicators are incorporated in the court registration system ACCMIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Trained mediators; possibility of community work as a sanction (no programmes yet available)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In 11 municipalities, child victims, witnesses and perpetrators can be interviewed in a CFR, by trained staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The JJ law was amended and now includes the possibility of mediation in child criminal cases and free legal assistance for children during the police interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The NCPJD presents a yearly report to the Parliament, which is debated upon and spurs policy change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- While 11 local prevention councils were envisioned, currently 17 councils are in place, with differing results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 64 children were successfully mentored, as none re-offended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- J4C topics are incorporated in the curricula of the Institute for Social Policy and Social Work and Faculty for Public Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- J4C is included in the service training curricula of judges, prosecutor’s, police and social workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In-service training tools were developed and are used for continuous professional development of judges, prosecutors, police, correctional officers, mediators and social workers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Implementation of protocols/standards/guidelines/procedures

The existence of the legislation and procedures does not automatically translate into implementation and practical changes. For this reason the extent to which the changes in the legislation, protocols and standards are actually applied in practice would indeed represent an evidence on the effectiveness of normative changes. The respondents to the survey indicated the ‘Referral protocol for treatment of children in contact with the law’ as the most implemented (fully — 59% and partially — 30%) in their institution (Figure 1). Also, the ‘Guidelines related to violence against children’ and the ‘Protocol for referral and reporting cases of child sexual abuse’ are fully (57%) or partially implemented (29%). The least implemented in practice seem to be CFR for interview/investigation, participation of the lawyer in proceedings before the CSW and the procedure for free legal aid.

The amendments related to the adoption process in the family Law were also the result of the technical assistance provided through the SP component of the programme.

Another result of the SP interventions refers to the new CSWs’ service delivery standards and procedures. Standards and procedures were developed and finalized based on a situation and gap analysis. The implementation of the new standards and procedures started at the end of the evaluation period. The data from the survey carried out for this evaluation indicated a very high degree (99.5%) of familiarity of the CSWs’ staff with the new standards and procedures and 90.5% of the respondents said the new standards and procedures are implemented in their institution.
**Changes in monitoring and reporting**

The planned outcomes to improve national capacities on statistics, monitoring and evaluation of children’s rights in both J4C and SP systems were achieved, but the link between the data collected and the planning and budgeting both on national and local level is still weak. In the **J4C** system UNICEF provided technical assistance for the collection of disaggregated data based on a set of child-related indicators, built the capacity of the NCPJD in monitoring and reporting child's rights violations, and supported different stakeholders at central and local levels (i.e. 11 targeted municipalities) to use the data on children for action planning.

For the first time a comprehensive monitoring system for J4C was established based on a set of indicators endorsed by the relevant ministries and currently used. The indicators are incorporated in the court registration system ACCMIS. Data collection on a yearly basis is performed by all institutions and published in a report issued by the NCPJD. Still, there is still a need for amending these data in order to provide more accurate numbers about children in conflict and in contact with the law, due to differences among the data provided by different institutions.

Beginning with 2011 the NCPJD is drafting its annual report based on the indicators framework and continued to monitor the situation of children in the justice system using this standard set of indicators. In 2012 the Parliament recommended to State Statistical Office to include this set of indicators in its regular reports.

Prevention of juvenile delinquency was supported through establishment of 11 local prevention councils, while the number continues to grow. At the end of evaluation reference period 17 local councils set up by municipalities were using the tools developed by the programme, i.e. tools for preparation of action plans that help local authorities to plan, budget, monitor, and provide preventive services to the children in conflict or in contact with the law. However, the functionality of these local councils differs, depending on their leadership, the members’ relation with the Municipality and the availability of funding.

In the **SP** domain UNICEF provided significant financial and technical support to ISA in order to develop and implement the data base system called LIRIKUS. It has been a long process, implemented in several stages which included a situation analysis, a study visit to Slovenia, development and testing of the forms for the data base, development of a test—software and field testing, revision of the forms for the data base based on the field testing, development and installation of a software, on-the-job trainings for initial data collection, advocacy to make data collection mandatory in electronic version and development and adoption of a Rulebook for mandatory data collection. The process was correlated with 1/ the development of standards and procedures for service delivery, including the one on case management, 2/ the development and implementation of in-service training curricula; and 3/ introduction and implementation of licensing process for CSW service providers. Currently, the information system is operational and data collection is mandatory. The data from the survey carried out for this evaluation indicated that 83.5% of the respondents among CSWs’ staff are familiar with LIRIKUS data base. In terms of usage, 69.5% of the respondents reported daily usage (Figure 2).
Nevertheless, the data collection and reliable reporting remains challenging, an explanation may be found in the reasons behind the modest level of satisfaction of the CSWs’ staff with LIRIKUS usage as only 21% of the respondents are satisfied, respectively 7% very satisfied, with LIRIKUS (Figure 3).

The reasons behind the respondents’ modest level of satisfaction with LIRIKUS refer to outdated classification of services and lack of alignment with the new laws, gap in services’ enlisting, need of upgrade with additional modules, lack of possibility for distinction between active and passive cases, and unstable internet connection.

Changes in the national mechanism for continuous training

The J4C component contributed to enhancing the human resource capacity in the J4C system. This was achieved through development of the national training programmes and tools, such as the Manual and Handbook for Justice for Children, their incorporation in the national training institutions’ portfolio and through piloting training of professionals (judges, prosecutors, lawyers, CSW staff, mediators and correctional officers) on child justice, alternatives to imprisonment, and restorative justice.
Figure 3 – Satisfaction with LIRIKUS

![Satisfaction Chart]

b12a. Overall, how satisfied are you of using the LIRIKUS database?  
b13. What are the issues you are facing when using LIRIKUS database?

**Unit:** %; **Base:** LIRIKUS Users (n=146)  
**Unit:** %; **Base:** LIRIKUS users who had mentioned facing issues (n=87)

J4C topics are incorporated in the curricula of the Institute for Social Policy and Social Work and Faculty for Public Safety and are also included in the service training curricula of judges, prosecutor’s, police and social workers. In-service training tools were developed and are used for continuous professional development of judges, prosecutors, police, correctional officers, mediators and social workers.

The programme has also provided the relevant institutions with tools to train their staff and enhance their knowledge, skills, and competencies to effectively apply and monitor first the Juvenile Justice Law and then the Law on Justice for Children. The lack of dedicated funds from the state budget to continuous training of professionals and maintaining this activity dependent on external funding decreases its' effectiveness and sustainability.

The process of development of programmes and training materials for in-service training delivered by ISA was initiated in 2010 with a training impact evaluation. In 2011, the development of the in-service training modules was initiated based on a training needs assessment targeting ISA, CSWs and child care institutions. As a result, an in-service training curriculum consisting of 15 modules was developed. ToT for ISA staff was conducted in order to increase ISA's capacity to rollout trainings.

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70 The Agency for Training of Judges and Prosecutors, ISA, Police Training Center, Macedonian Bar Association and Chambers of Mediators
In addition, following the changes in the Family Law and introduction of a new procedure for adoption of children was developed and a training programme dedicated to this topic was delivered. All ISA and CSW staff that work on adoption were trained based on this new training programme.

**Changes in the capacities of the justice for children professionals and CSW staff to provide services to children**

The J4C legislation foresees mandatory training for all professionals dealing with children in conflict with the law. The requirement is a minimum of four to ten days of training per year for all professionals working with children and young people within the criminal justice system. Prior to the reference period, the level of specialization of professionals in JJ system was largely insufficient.

Training tools, a Training of Trainers (ToT) Handbook and Training Manual on J4C were developed and in total 158 professionals were trained through cascading trainings. The training tools were used for the basic and advanced ToTs of 43 trainers and for the multi-disciplinary trainings of 115 police, judiciary, and public prosecutor’s office, professional workers of CSW, mediators and lawyers trained on working with children in conflict and in contact with the law. In January 2012, an advanced ToT was held. A total of 13 representatives from the MoI, CSWs, Chambers of Mediators, Macedonian Bar Association and NGO sector completed the advanced ToT based on the J4C Manual and Handbook.

The data from the survey carried out for this evaluation indicated that more than 2/3 of respondents participated in some training related to the implementation of the J4C law in the period 2010-2015. This percentage is significantly higher among police officers of the crime police, who almost all (98%) participated in such training. Average, respondents participated in 3 trainings, with uniformed police officers (if we refer on them) having significantly less trainings (average 2 trainings). The appropriateness of the trainings is evaluated as very high especially by the CSW staff and police, whereas significantly lower percentage of judges/prosecutors agreed on this statement. Almost all respondents stated that they apply the knowledge received through the training. The level of satisfaction with the training is very high (average score of 4.5 on a 5 point scale) with almost all participants recommending such training to their colleagues. J4C training is considered by 74% of the respondents as better than other trainings provided on different topics. Especially police officers and CSW staff are evaluating these trainings as better than others.

In the reference period the SP component of UNICEF’s CP programme was a constant support for ISA in the process of making changes that are aimed to raise the standard of work of the institute and the CSWs. According to the Law on Social Protection ISA has the mandate to provide continuous education of professionals working in the domain of SP. The trainings are mandatory and are used for issuance and renewal of licenses for CSWs staff. The ISA has developed a system for monitoring and evaluation which is the basis for periodic revision of the training curriculum. Also, ISA’s staff is undertaking regular field monitoring, interviews with professionals from the CSWs and individual case evaluation, thus assessing the capacity of staff and adjusting the training modules to the needs. This process ensures that licensing makes a difference to the quality and accountability of the licensed services provided.

Within the SP component, almost all interviewed professional staff participated in a training (98%). The average participation of each CSW professional was at 3.5 trainings (Figure 4).

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71 UNICEF(2015): Mapping of Institutions and Civil Society Organizations which Provide Services to the Children Victims of Violence and Abuse
72 Ibid.
The majority CSW staff (69%) who participated in the survey considered (i.e. agree and strongly agree) that overall, their knowledge and skills have been improved due to the trainings. Also, about the same majority acknowledged the following professional development benefits: acquired tools and skills to protect and promote the rights of children in conflict with law, acquired tools and skills to protect and promote the rights of children in contact with the law (victims and witnesses), better cooperation between professionals from different sectors (CSW staff, police, prosecutors, judges), improved child interview skills, feel more confident in working with children in conflict with the law, feel more confident in working with children in contact with the law (victims and witnesses), have better understanding of who are children at risk.
7.3.2. Systemic changes for improving quality of services

Quality of services provided by the CSWs’ staff

The programme included two types of interventions which were aimed to improve quality of the services provided by the CSWs’ staff by increasing the ISA’s capacity to provide training to the

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<th>Dynamic of the quality of services provided by the CSWs’ staff</th>
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<td>Between 2013 and 2014 ISA conducted monitoring visits in 13 CSWs (representing 40% out of the total number of CSWs). The purpose of the visits was to check if the trainees are implementing the newly acquired knowledge and skills in practice. This was done through case file review and interview with the trainees. It was concluded that seven CSWs apply the new skills and knowledge, two CSWs are doing it partially and four CSWs are not applying it.</td>
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<td>The current situation as captured by the survey carried out for this evaluation seems to be much better, as reflected by the opinions of the CSWs’ professionals who participated in the survey: 98% of the CSW staff said they apply the knowledge acquired from the training. However, this finding has to be treated with cautious, as this may be just an overoptimistic estimation, similar to the one about the implementation of the new standards and procedures - as mentioned above, 90.5% of the CSW staff said these are fully implemented. Qualitative data from the field contradicts the opinions in the survey and the most often mentioned example is represented by the standard procedure of case management. This was reported by different stakeholders, both from the local and central levels, as not being applied for the reason of shortage of staff in the CSWs. The overburden of the CSW staff was reported constantly over the reference period as a hindering factor for the engagement of the staff in service provision. Therefore, it can be inferred that quality of services remains at the level of desiderate, still far from the current practice.</td>
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7.3.3. Unexpected results

The evidence collected for this evaluation does not bring much about unexpected changes (positive or negative) or about unintended effects of the programme. The positive effects of the programme were pursued and reported as planned outcomes of the interventions, while the unintended effects are considered as remaining challenges or bottlenecks. However, it should be noted that at the level of perceptions, the participants in the survey carried out for this evaluation74 perceive better protection of children, increased awareness of the children’s rights and decreased number of children in conflict with the law as additional significant contributions provided by the programme (changes in the regulatory framework, capacity building, standardized data collection system). These perceptions are either contradictory with the existing data75 or unexpected in terms of the awareness and knowledge.

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74 Survey Report (Annex 6)
75 In fact, according to the data from the annual reports of the NCPJD, the numbers of children in conflict with the law are higher in 2013 and 2014 compared with 2012. This is perhaps due to an increasing capacity of data collection at the level of
of the professionals in the J4C system about the overall aim of the programme and ultimately, of the J4C reform. ‘A decreased number of children in conflict with the law’ and ‘better protection of the children’ are meant to be major outcomes of the programme, and not just additional, even significant, contributions of the programme. Nonetheless, the very subjective nature of these data should be taken into account when interpreting it, in the sense that the answers might reflect a situation perceived as desirable by the respondents, rather than a factual one.

With reference to changes in the process of categorization of CwD, it is reported\(^76\) that "because categorisation is traditionally linked to decisions on placement, children not wanted or creating difficulties in regular schools for a variety of reasons are sent to be categorised. There is a danger of wrongly identifying children from minority background whose development may be delayed for other reasons than impairment. This could add to their stigmatisation. Lastly, many parents feel that given the current practice of categorisation it is not a procedure they feel comfortable to submit to - neither for themselves nor for their children. Categorisation is perceived as labelling that often is more discriminating than it is benefitting, therefore parents avoid categorisation."

Also, in relation to the provision of coordinated services for CwD\(^77\), because of the centralized nature of governance in the system the problems are simply directed to policy level, addressed through new legislation and rulebooks, and \textit{a more bureaucratic process of problem-solving instead of the development of local solutions}. 

\begin{quote}
\textbf{Quality of services provided to children in contact with the law}

A protocol for referral of children in contact with the law was developed within the frame of the J4C component of the programme under the auspices of the ISA. This protocol was indicated by the respondents in survey carried for this evaluation as the most implemented measure in the J4C system (Figure 1). No evidence was available about the consequences of the implementation or the contribution of this protocol to changes in quality of the services provided to the children in contact with the law. It should be first made clear what are these services, what is their availability and coverage, and how functional the referral mechanism is.

However, it should be mentioned that practitioners from all institutions working with children in contact with law participated at workshops organized in order to provide inputs for the finalization of the draft protocol, which was done by ISA. The protocol provides guidance to police officers, social workers, teachers, health professionals, and other professionals on how to work with a child in contact with the law, and to whom the child should be referred. The protocol describes the procedures for cooperation and coordination among different authorities. Thus, it can be assessed that from the normative point of view there are good premises for the improvement of the quality of services to the children in contact in the law, but the bottlenecks in its’ implementation, in monitoring of the services and in allocating financial resources for the services which were piloted in the J4C component of the programme have a negative influence on service supply and, consequently, on their quality.
\end{quote}

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76 Judith Hollenweger (2012): \textit{Analysis of the current process of categorisation}

77 Judith Hollenweger and Andrea Martinuzzi (2015): \textit{Assessment of Capacity of Services Provided by Health, Education and Social Sectors for Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia}
\end{footnotesize}
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7.3.4. Correlation of changes

It is widely documented in the region that "International support mostly project-based introduced reporting requirements which generated pressure for showing tangible immediate results often at the expense of demonstrating long term impact on the lives of the children and their families". The CP programme in the country, especially the J4C component, makes no exception from this pattern. In that sense, the SP component had less of this pressure and even though it was less predominant in terms of funding, range and coverage of activities on the long term will perhaps prove higher stability and fewer risks for being contested.

As already documented in the previous sections of evaluation report, the J4C component generated many systemic changes, however few of them on the lives of the children (see section on impact). The development of the restorative legislation, the Juvenile Justice Law that was revised and turned into the Law on justice for children with all the positive changes previously presented, the new services that were piloted, training of professionals in the J4C system, the institutional development support (e.g. for consolidating the NCPJD), the development of national data collection and monitoring capacity etc. all these systemic changes were undertaken almost in parallel generating sometimes difficulties of coordination.

From the perspective of UNICEF’s regional ToC (Annex 8) an assessment of the changes generated by CP programme in sequential terms reveals that at the level of enabling environment for a stable reform UNICEF contributed to changes of legislation and policies (more applied to J4C component), to a certain extent to improving management and coordination, and to a lesser extent to changes of social and professional norms. An important element that was lacking in the reference programming cycle is called “Budget/Expenditure” and refers to ensuring resources for the stability of the reforms. This is the element that was constantly brought into discussion by most of the stakeholders as missing in order for the reforms to be considered effective, sustainable and with impact on the lives of children.

The inter-sectoral coordination was targeted for interventions in both J4C and SP components of the programme. Still, this is one of the determinant areas of intervention were the evidence indicates that the progress remains modest. The respondents to the survey indicated that correlation among changes produced in various areas of the system (social protection, justice, education, health) has been taking place only to a little or to some extent (Figure 5).

As for the two other determinant areas of interventions that were addressed by UNICEF in the reference programming period, they were focused on developing the J4C and SP systems’ capacity to 1/ ensure the supply of services at a 2/ quality level. The bottleneck that was pointed out by the stakeholders is again generated by the lack of financial resources. All the services that have been piloted and the emerging increase of professionals’ capacity cannot be sustained in the absence of budgets allocated for their functioning.

Given the limited resources, UNICEF had to set priorities, therefore in just a programming cycle not all the systemic changes that might have been needed could addressed. In that sense, the lack of support for generating demand for services was not covered by the programme. However, the need

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79 Interviews during country mission (September 2015)
80 Interviews during country mission (September 2015)
81 Interviews during country mission (September 2015), UNICEF reports
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid.
remains, especially in a society still lacking progress in empowering its citizens and in the context of donors’ attention moving to other priorities. The reform was so far donor driven, but this is not a lasting trigger for the sustainability, which leaves only the bottom-up approach as the main drive for the continuation.

**Figure 5 – Correlation among changes produced in various areas of the system (social protection, justice, education, health)**

![Graph showing correlation among changes in various areas]

7.3.5. The model for mentoring children in conflict with the law

The Institute for Social Work and Social Policy from the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of St. Cyril and Methodius in Skopje supported by UNICEF and in collaboration with the MoLSP implemented a mentoring set of actions for children in conflict with the law in three CSWs (Skopje, Veles and Kumanovo).

The core idea of the mentoring programme was to develop alternative models of support for children with their active participation in achieving their best interests. This is considered a **cost-effective preventive measure because by organizing the spare time of children the risk of coming in conflict with the law is minimized**.

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84 For reasons of consistency with the terminology use throughout the CP programme documents it will be further called “programme”.
The mentoring programme was first introduced in 2010 in the CSW in Skopje as a pilot intervention within the Project ‘Implementation of the Juvenile Justice Reform’. The programme was further expanded in 2013 including Centers for Social Work (CSW) from Veles and Kumanovo and involved more mentors. The mentoring programme contributed to building capacities and developing the restorative practices in the Macedonian justice system for children. The programme addressed the needs of the CSWs professional staff. With the support of the mentors, the programme increased the capacity of the CSWs’ staff in working with children.

The achievements of the programme were presented in a report which was aimed "to document the development and the implementation of a mentoring programme for children in conflict with the law in the country". According to the above mentioned report sixty four children were included in the programme. None of children committed an offense during and after the programme. None of them quit the programme, and most of them ask for the possibility of continuation of their mentoring relationship even after the programme has ended.

It has been reported that the parents had a crucial role in the mentoring programme and that they also experienced positive effects from the programme. The continuous work had an impact on the ongoing life of the child and family. The aim of the CSW meetings with parents was to improve the family life and communication. In order to prepare for their task, mentors attended a series of training workshops, as well as a final training meant to help them to terminate the mentoring relationship.

The programme proved that adequate matching of children and mentors is the formula for a successful mentoring programme. Several criteria for a good mentoring relationship were assessed such as: specific preferences; matching by gender, ethnic background, personality, joint interests and geographical location. Several matching were done opposite to the gender and ethnic criteria, and proved to be successful. During the programme it was also concluded that the educational background of the mentor is also very important for the specific needs of the child. UNICEF provided support to the Institute to develop the programme and training tools, deliver training and implement the programme.

Thirty-nine students (12 male and 27 female) were selected to become mentors to work with 64 children. The programme achieved results both with mentors and children. "Mentors indicated that they become more determined, patient, tolerant, dedicated and ambitious; that they have themselves gained more confidence, and they have learned how to adapt to difficult situations and solve problems. Children learned self-control, how to be punctual and respect others, gained independence, self-confidence and their school performance improved."

The children are describing the relationship with their mentors as close and positive, emphasizing positive characteristics about their mentors. Most frequent positive attributes regarding their mentors are directed to their positive approach, devotement and high motivation of the mentors. The

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86 The gender disaggregation for children beneficiaries was available only for the beneficiaries of the project ‘Towards a Child—Friendly Justice System’, i.e. 44 children out of which 34 boys and 10 girls.
87 Ibid.
88 Ibid.
relationship between children and mentors is typically described as “positive and good”, in the presence of mentors children felt safe, respected and that somebody cares for them and their needs.\textsuperscript{90}

Although the mentoring programme demonstrated its success, it was not continued by the MoLSP in 2014 and 2015. However, the Government during its 110 session, held on 06.10.2015 reviewed and adopted the "Information on the comparative analysis on justice for children with proposed measures for improvement of the protection of the child’s rights", and one of the conclusions was that the MoLSP is instructed to conduct an analysis for the introducing mentoring as one of the measures for assistance and protection of children at risk and children in conflict with the law, which should be submitted to the Government in 60 days.\textsuperscript{91} This official commitment remains to be further documented.

\textsuperscript{90} Interviews with children/parents (Annex 6)
\textsuperscript{91} Government information on the comparative analysis on justice for children, with proposed measures for improvement of the protection of the child’s rights 06.10.2015
7.4. Impact

7.4.1. Changes in children’s well-being

The CP programme with its two components had an influence on children’s well-being, however each component with a different type, magnitude and mechanism of influence (as previously explained in the previous section on effectiveness). As a common element, both components aimed at achieving better results for children not so much in terms of improving their material living conditions but by enabling the environment for better care and protection of children (i.e. the legislative reform and strengthening institutional capacities), as well as by piloting the diversification and improvement of services for children. Nonetheless, as already pointed out in the section on limitations of the evaluation, tracing the direct influence of the programme on changes in children’s well-being has been challenging for reasons of difficulties in establishing a direct causal relation between the interventions within the respective component and the final beneficiaries (for SP component), and for reasons of limited sustainability and monitoring of the cases (for J4C component).

The mentoring programme had direct positive effects on children. According to the Final Report of this programme none of the children had committed an offence during and after the programme, children gained independence and self-confidence, the school performance of the children improved greatly and they learned about the importance of personal development, and also they started to use the resources they have been pointed towards. In addition, family relations improved, as almost all the beneficiaries come from dysfunctional families.

“Before the program, my son was expressing lower motivation to socialize and became a bit withdrawn. When the program started he was socializing more often and starting to behave more like before the problematic event” – mother

“To have somebody to talk to about personal things is very good, I feel that my mentor is a close person to me and I appreciate the advice that she gave me and the possibility to talk about different subjects” – boy, 18 y.o.

“We had some money and we could do things that are very fun to do, all meetings were very interesting and we did many different and interesting things together” – boy, 15 y.o.

The finances provided within the programme enable the children to spend some quality time with their mentors visiting cafes, fast food restaurant, shopping, zoo, which otherwise would be difficult to have with their limited family budget. Another important benefit noticed by the parents refers to the financial literacy that the children gained.

“We visited the zoo, fast food restaurants, we went to the swimming pool...” – boy, 13 y. o.

“My son started to plan the budget he has, to take responsibility for his financial situation and became very organised which resulted with him saving some money to buy clothes for himself” – mother

Parents and children consider their opinions mattered and were taken into consideration. The parents were informed and asked about their opinion during the program; the children were active participants in the process of planning and realisation of their individual plan. Still, the majority of both children

92 Aleksandra Ivanovska (2014): Mentoring Children in Conflict with the Law
93 Interviews with children and parents (2015)
and parents stated that it would be better if sometimes during the program more people were involved in the meetings, to maximise the effect of the socialisation. However, in terms of beneficiaries’ empowerment, both parents and children express humble behaviour and do not ask for any further support from the state/service.

“It was great but maybe it would be better if all children and all mentors meet from time to time, to get to know each other and socialize” – mother

“My mentor became my friend and It would be good to have more friends like her” – boy, 15 y. o.

“Maybe it will be good to have more mentors in the program, or other persons to be included. In my case there was no need for that but I personally think that would be more interesting with more people” – boy, 18 y. o.

In spite of not having children as direct beneficiaries, the programme on street children which established a Centre for this target group in the municipality of Bitola had an influence on the lives of children who benefited from the services of this Centre. According to the monitoring reports of this programme children who attended the activities at the Centre (most of them illiterate) improved their educational status. However, due to stigmatizing and discriminatory attitudes of some of the staff against these children (most of them belonging to the Roma minority), the hygiene in the Center’s facilities was left almost entirely in children’s responsibility in spite of having staff employed for this task.

The programme focused on establishment of child friendly investigative rooms was planned to have important effects on the children in contact or in conflict with the law. The evidence collected for this evaluation proves that for reasons of lacking sustainability of the programme these effects are delayed. Even in the locations where a CFR is available, this protective space is not used for the benefit of the target group as it was originally intended. The data from the Annual Report (2014) of the National Council for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (NCPJD) shows that only 1% of the children and juveniles in conflict with the law were interviewed in a CFR. In addition, in spite of the progress reported between 2007 and 2011, in recent years the number of juveniles in police pre-trial detention has remained stable, thus not much progress on the impact can be reported.

As previously explained the J4C legislation guarantees the right of the child to a lawyer and establishes the pre-conditions for access to free legal aid. However, only in 5 CSWs the right to a lawyer was used by 29 children (13% girls and 87% boys). This indicates that a very small number of children exercised their right to a lawyer at the CSW. Out of the 29 children who enjoyed the right to a lawyer, only 4 children met the legal requirements to be entitled to free legal aid, all of them in the CSW Kicevo (for children over 14 y. o.). As shown in Figure 6, the situation of children at risk has improved in the sense that both the number of children/juveniles receiving measures for help and protection, and the number of children at risk referred to the CSWs has almost doubled from 2012 to 2014. Also, in 2014 out of the total 2062 registered children at risk in CSWs, some 1593 children

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94 Monthly Reports on the Work with Street Children in Bitola (2011)
96 According to the NCPJD 2014 data there were 1,512 children and juveniles in conflict with the law only 15 were investigated in CFRs.
97 According to UNICEF’s report Leave No Child Behind - Building Equity for Children Country Report: A Situation Analysis of Girls and Boys in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (2013), the proportion of children spending more than the legal limit of 90 days in pre-trial detention has dropped from 50% in 2007 to 18% in 2011.
98 From 20 in 2012 to 19 in 2014 (NCPJD data)
99 CSWs from Debar, Probistip, Kocani, Strumica and Kicevo
100 Annual Report pf NCPJD (2014)
(84\% \text{ boys and} 16\% \text{ girls}) \text{ have had measures to help and protect applied, constituting 77\% of children at risk}^{101}.

**Figure 6 - Children at risk sent to CSW/receiving measures for help and protection**

It is acknowledged by many stakeholders that in spite of the major advancements that have been made by including child victims and witnesses in the law, in practice, child victims and witnesses remain vulnerable because they are not recognized as such by the authorities. It is reported that numbers of child witnesses are not available. It remains unknown how many child witnesses were identified in the past years, how many of them are currently interviewed in a CFR, how often they are interviewed and whether video conferencing or other audio materials were used^{102}. For that reason together with the modest enforcement of the provisions giving the children the right to legal assistance (including free legal aid), the impact of the J4C interventions on the wellbeing of these children remains at a low level.

The SP interventions of the overall CP programme did not include activities having children as direct beneficiaries, therefore inferring the impact of these interventions on the wellbeing of children was more difficult. However, these interventions were focused on increasing the capacity of the CSWs which are in direct contact with children and families. The existing evidence^{103} indicates that children and families have no power to directly influence or shape the ISA Standards and Guidelines^{104} and their use in the CSWs. However, they do have the power to make themselves subject to them.

In terms of the living conditions and how the social services impacted on the wellbeing of children in care services (particularly in foster care), the evaluation has collected evidence that demonstrates that the situation has improved. The living conditions of the foster families could be described as “usual

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101 Data from annual reports of NCPJD.
102 UNICEF (2014): *Created Change in the Area of Justice for Children*
104 As per the above cited source, The Guidelines adopted by the MoLSP regulate the following child protection areas: “adoption, foster families, juvenile justice, street children, domestic violence, marriage and family”. In addition there are Guidelines that regulate areas of activity that cover both adults and children, such as “work with socially excluded persons”. The Standard and Guidelines adopted amount 27 documents.
family conditions in the country”. The field observation did not report anything unusual regarding the living conditions or in the interactions between family members. Taking into consideration that children are living with the families for a relatively long time the on-site observation indicates that children seem to feel “at home” in these environments. There are families having difficulties because of the perceived small apartment/house and not having separate rooms for each of the family members.

“The 3 of them are sleeping in the same room so maybe they need a separate room” – Foster parent

“This apartment is too small for us, he is a big boy now and he needs more space” – Foster parent

As regards the services, the frequency of counselling is considered low and some children stress the need for more support in that regard, but they are reluctant to ask for it. When asked about additional services that they would need, counselling and talking with professionals is the only need they express.

“Yes, I would like to talk with them from time to time and get some advice, for my own good”- boy, 16 y. o.

“I don’t feel so comfortable to call the people from the social services, they are very open, kind and everything but I feel like I’m bothering them, and they have a lot of work to do” - boy, 16 y. o.

In the context of the above mentioned limitations, an overall assessment of the impact of the SP component on the wellbeing of children may indicate a modest level. The legal and institutional changes in the domain need more time and more consistent efforts for sustainability in order to produce more visible effects on the lives of the children.

7.4.2. Systemic changes to specific groups

In spite of the changes in the system, the lack of data collection and disaggregation (particularly by ethnicity and age) on justice for children remains a systemic bottleneck. Data on critical indicators such as reoffending by juveniles or offending by young children under the minimum age of criminal responsibility are scarce. Data are often not disaggregated and not published regularly. The non-existence of centralized systems means that data collected by various ministries and departments still remain fragmented, the exception being the data collected for the NCPJD where the effort of correlating these data begins to show some results in the most recent annual reports. The shortage of data limits the design and implementation of evidence-based policies and makes it difficult to measure the effects of interventions and the impact of the reform, especially for the most vulnerable.

The data in relation to the most vulnerable children (Roma children, children with disabilities and poor children) remains particularly limited. However, with the limited evidence available, the situation of Roma children indicate that they are the most deprived and socially excluded group. Also, this group is the most at risk and disproportionately represented group among children victims of abuse. Roma children account for only about 3 per cent of the total child population; nonetheless the share of recorded Roma child victims of sexual abuse was about 23 per cent. In spite of this disproportionate representation of Roma children in the overall vulnerable group of children victims of sexual abuse, this issue was not a priority in public policy or interventions in the domain.

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105 Only at close to the end of evaluation reference period data on perpetrators of criminal offences up to 14 y.o. were made available by the State Statistical Office in the Report Social Welfare for Children, Juveniles and Adults, 2014-2015
106 Annual reports of NCPJD 2013 and 2014
108 Ibid.
This is in the general context of the difficulties related to the fact that sexual abuse and domestic violence are very often hidden phenomena. UNICEF has flagged the lack of mechanisms to self-report abuse\textsuperscript{109} and the relatively low rate of reporting from schools and clinics. The LIRIKUS 2015 data (Figures 7 and 8) indicate an increase in the number of cases reported by CSWs both for \textit{children victims of sexual abuse} and \textit{children victims of domestic violence} which has been estimated as being the result of increasing public and professional awareness and possibly to increased willingness among children to speak out about the abuse\textsuperscript{110}, as well as the result of improved capacity of CSWs to record and report on the cases. The fact that invisible cases ‘entered into the light’ and began to be reported does not make this group less vulnerable. On the contrary, it may be estimated that this is “only the tip of the iceberg”\textsuperscript{111} because CSWs receive the majority of reports on child sexual abuse and violence, while educational and health institutions are still ineffective in identification of such cases\textsuperscript{112}. It should be also noted that within this vulnerable group there is not only an ethnicity gap, but also an age and gender gap. Most victims of sexual assault are aged 10-13 and girls are far more likely to be victims of sexual abuse than boys\textsuperscript{113}. So far there is little evidence that the interventions have addressed these gaps, but, rather have focused on the overall target group.

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{111} European Commission Country Progress Report (2012)
\textsuperscript{112} Interviews carried out during the country mission (September 2015)
More recently, in spite of the growing availability of gender disaggregated data about children in conflict with the law, the fact that boys are more vulnerable than girls$^{114}$ seems not to have become a priority for policy making and public interventions. The assistance provided for the establishment and increasing capacity of the NCPJD is beginning to show results in terms of producing gender disaggregated evidence related to this vulnerable group of children$^{115}$, the remaining challenge is to generate effective response to address the gender gap, including from the perspective of prevention interventions.

$^{114}$ According to NCPJD 2014 data out of the 1512 children and juveniles in conflict with the law 1300 (86%) are boys and 212 (14%) are girls.

$^{115}$ Relatively stable in terms of the total number of juvenile offenders, as shown both by the data from NCPJD and from LIRIKUS.
In the reference period UNICEF assisted the MoLSP to undertake the reform of the categorization system of **children with disabilities (CwD)** to shift from a medical to a social model of classification. As shown in the Figure 9 the number of children with disabilities registered by the CSWs has been increasing in the past four years from 2865 in 2011 to 3979 (as of 30 September 2015). In this period of time ISA has reported a constant increase of portfolio of services provided (from 69 in 2012 to 96 in 2015). However, an overview of the services by type provided to children with disabilities (Figure 10) indicates a constant increase only of financial assistance (special child allowance). A recent UNICEF study\(^\text{116}\) shows that the categorisation process remains an isolated practice delegated from the social sector to the health sector without much linkage (if any) to service provision. The financial benefits should encourage parents to buy services, but this is not actually happening in practice, especially in case of families living in poverty, which is de facto perpetuation of the child’s exclusion. In addition, the evidence collected for this evaluation\(^\text{117}\) further proves the limited impact of this reform on the grounds of lacking financial resources to provide motivating payment of the members of the assessment committees. Furthermore, the current status of the reform of the categorization system indicates that financial regulations in the social sector seem to favour institutionalized care for young children over care provided in natural or foster families\(^\text{118}\).

Figure 10 – Services by type for children with disabilities

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\(^{116}\) Judith Hollenweger and Andrea Martinuzzi (2015): *Assessment of Capacity of Services Provided by Health, Education and Social Sectors for Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*

\(^{117}\) Interviews carried out during the country mission (September 2015)

\(^{118}\) Judith Hollenweger and Andrea Martinuzzi (2015): *Assessment of Capacity of Services Provided by Health, Education and Social Sectors for Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*
7.5. Sustainability

7.5.1. Perspectives for the continuity of the reform

The Government’s commitment and contribution to the success and stability of the changes in both J4C and SP domains is crucial. It has been widely documented during the evaluation process that stability in positions as public employees and the allocation of funds are the two major challenges for the sustainability of the reforms. In practice, the political commitment is not matched by the financial commitment and by continuity on the job of the professionals from management positions.

A drawback in budgeting on a central level and in general, is that institutions that have the obligation to support children in contact and conflict with the law do not receive the necessary financial support to carry out their tasks efficiently. More specifically, institutions in the system (predominantly CSWs) lack necessary financial and material support from the Government. They are understaffed and lack some of most basic tools for their work.\(^{119}\)

The gap between the legal provisions and their enforcement poses serious limitations in terms of the sustainability of the J4C reform. The lack of resources or unwillingness to allocate sufficient resources remains a significant obstacle to implementing the J4C Law. For example, limited resources have a negative impact on conditions in correctional facilities for juveniles. Courts do not have psychologists and social workers, as required by J4C Law.

The carrying out of the first Action Plan for Implementation of the Law on Juvenile Justice was unsatisfactory, due in large part to lack of funding for certain activities and programmes\(^{120}\). These experiences suggest that political commitment to full implementation of the laws, strategies and policies that have been adopted is insufficient, at higher levels of Government.

Agreements with the Government to provide facilities as in the case of the Counselling Centre for the Perpetrators or the case of the Domestic Violence Counselling Centre for Children and Families should have contributed to the sustainability of this service. But now the Counselling Centre for Children and Families is closed in the absence of a contract between the MoLSP and the school and the municipality in which the premises of the center were located. There is no evidence that other efforts were made to mobilize resources and support the long-term sustainability of this intervention.

The sustainability of the CP programme is influenced by similar issues that have influenced the overall implementation of all interventions, such as postponement in implementation of activities due to elections and change of ministers; difficulties in identification and maintaining of premises for provision of services and a high turnover of staff in public institutions. If the capacity of the CSW staff has increased through the trainings provided by the ISA, at the same time the capacity of institutions has decreased enormously, making the work more difficult.

While rights-based legislative and policy frameworks are in place to address inequality, they do not translate easily into practical action and their impact at times seems superficial. There needs to be a further in-depth analysis of Government spending that identifies areas of potential savings where money could be transferred to child-related budgets, as well as funds within current child-related budgets that could be better used.

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\(^{119}\) UNICEF (2014): *Created change in the area of Justice for Children*

\(^{120}\) Interviews during country mission (September 2015)
There are also bottlenecks across all sectors at the interface between centrally-defined legislation, policy and strategic frameworks and local service-delivery mechanisms and management systems. This is where most rights violations occur and the results of underlying barriers and bottlenecks become most apparent. In some service areas, operational and allocation decisions remain at the central level, although responsibility for resourcing has been devolved. Key informants also identified weak capacity and high turnover of staff as factors with a negative influence on the sustainability as the result of an accepted culture of political patronage and politicisation of public institutions’ management structures.

At the level of professionals’ perception, most of the participants in the survey agreed that there is high correlation between changes in the child protection system in justice and social protection areas and the measures taken in the sense that the stability of these measures and of the allocation of resources sustain the reform process. Four out of five respondents consider that the Government has capacity to continue the reforms in child protection (Figure 11), and 3 out of 4 respondents consider that the Government has the financial resources to do it (Figure 12).
7.5.2. UNICEF’s transformed engagement in relation to the child protection programme in the country

There is an unanimous recognition on behalf of all stakeholders\textsuperscript{121} that UNICEF made a strategic contribution to the systemic changes in the domain of child protection. UNICEF has been most actively involved in two core roles that might be considered as cross-cutting all the interventions in both programme components: policy advice and technical assistance, and leveraging resources. As it was presented in section on effectiveness, UNICEF has been particularly focused on providing policy advice and technical assistance to the government for both ensuring J4C and for improving SP measures targeting children and families. In spite of the predominance of resource allocation to this core role in the previous programming period, in the new programme UNICEF will have to continue to fulfil this core role to advocate for stabilizing the legal reforms achieved so far and for increasing law enforcement and the practical use of the existing standards and procedures. It should be noted that this core role requires not only financial resources but also a considerable investment of UNICEF staff’s time, which is expected to be maintained in case it is decided that this core role will be exercised in the new programme. Leveraging resources is not as much a role in itself as it serves fulfilment of all the other roles UNICEF is assuming in the country. Nevertheless, this core role exceeds ensuring resources for UNICEF activities, but most important refers to leveraging financial, human and knowledge type of resources for undertaking systemic changes. UNICEF will have to continue to be strategically engaged in dialogue with the Government, NGOs and the EU Delegation in order to influence the allocation of the funding from the EU to the projects addressing the best interests of children.

Figure 12 – Government’s financial resources to continue the CO reforms

- And to what extent do you think the Government has the financial resources to continue the reform? 
  \textit{Unit: \%}, \textit{mean}. Base: N=294 Total; CSW staff (n=209); Police (n=49); Prosecutors/Judges (n=45)

\textsuperscript{121} Interviews carried out during the country mission (September 2015)
As can be observed in Table 4 another core role in which UNICEF has been successfully engaged was focused on **modelling/piloting**. This has allowed UNICEF’s partners to test pilot initiatives and innovative interventions which will eventually be replicated or scaled-up at national level. The measure of success for this core role is given by partners’ capacity to ensure sustainability of these pilots, which in the case of the most recent interventions may be premature to assess. Nevertheless, given the high importance of this role in the previous programming period and the time needed for the models to become stable, UNICEF may consider reducing investing in it in the coming years.

**Table 4 – UNICEF Core roles addressed in CP programme in the period 2010-2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Core roles addressed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Justice for children programme component</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Technical support to NCPCD in development and finalization of national strategy on prevention of juvenile delinquency</td>
<td>- Policy advice and technical assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Facilitating national dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Strengthening the JJ normative framework by development of referral protocol for treatment of children in contact with the law, guidelines for treatment of children in police procedure, standards for police detention rooms for children and programme for treatment of children in correctional facilities</td>
<td>- Policy advice and technical assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Facilitating national dialogue</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Voice for children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Revision/development of secondary legislation on violence and abuse of children; Revision of the protocols for the treatment of the cases of abuse of children; Develop standard guidelines for the forensic examination and reporting on child sexual abuse</td>
<td>- Policy advice and technical assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Facilitating national dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Situation analysis of child sexual abuse</td>
<td>- Policy advice and technical assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Facilitating national dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mapping of institutions and CSOs which provide services to children victims of violence and abuse</td>
<td>- Policy advice and technical assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Facilitating national dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Establishment of justice for children M&amp;E system and capacity building of the National Council for prevention of child delinquency to monitor the situation of children in contact with the law; Support the process of revising Official Criminal Statistics system</td>
<td>- Monitoring and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Policy advice and technical assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Facilitating national dialogue</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Documenting CP good practices in the area of justice for children, and more specifically for mentoring of children in conflict with the law</td>
<td>- Policy advice and technical assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Modelling/piloting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Support the establishment of Local Councils on prevention and development of local action plans on prevention of juvenile delinquency including awareness raising activities, training for the local councils members in planning and budgeting, and in the field of prevention of juvenile delinquency; development of local action plans on prevention of juvenile delinquency</td>
<td>- Policy advice and technical assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Facilitating national dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Revision of the existing justice for children training curricula, a training manual for implementation of the Juvenile Justice Law developed, justice for children professionals are trained based on the new manual, and the instrument for monitoring training achievements developed; purchase of computers for basic courts; Training programme on skills how to interview children</td>
<td>- Policy advice and technical assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Modelling/piloting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Training of CSW staff and NGO based on the programme on street children; Centre for children in the streets established in the Municipality of Bitola and operational</td>
<td>- Policy advice and technical assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Modelling/piloting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Support development of standardized protection services for the victims of domestic violence including development of the Counselling Centre Programme, training on counselling services and supervision of parental rights in processing of domestic violence cases</td>
<td>- Policy advice and technical assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Modelling/piloting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. Establishment of child friendly investigative rooms within CSW and police stations - Policy advice and technical assistance - Modelling/piloting

13. Develop multi-disciplinary response services for children exposed to violence, abuse and exploitation - Policy advice and technical assistance - Modelling/piloting

14. Establish a service for Mentoring of children in conflict with the law - Policy advice and technical assistance - Modelling/piloting

The Core Role focused on ‘Leveraging resources from the private and private sectors’ is considered as cross-cutting to all the above mentioned interventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social protection programme component</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Review and revision of the process of assessment of children with disabilities</td>
<td>- Policy advice and technical assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Revision of the legislation pertaining to adoption of children and development of two programmes</td>
<td>- Policy advice and technical assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Development of a Data Base system for the CSWs</td>
<td>- Monitoring and evaluation - Policy advice and technical assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Assessment of Capacity of Services provided by Health, Education and Social Sectors for Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in the country</td>
<td>- Policy advice and technical assistance - Facilitating national dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Revision of the existing CSW standards, development and adoption of new standards and procedures on provision of social work services to children</td>
<td>- Policy advice and technical assistance - Modelling/piloting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Development and adoption of ISA in-service training curriculum, training for ISA and CSW staff based on the new curriculum, and support the licensing process and training of professionals from social services in new standards and procedures for adoption of children</td>
<td>- Policy advice and technical assistance - Modelling/piloting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Core Role focused on ‘Leveraging resources from the private and private sectors’ is considered as cross-cutting to all the above mentioned interventions

UNICEF Country Office has been active in **facilitating national dialogue** to align the child protection system with international standards. This has been done predominantly with interventions in the J4C domain. For that reason UNICEF may continue to invest more in this core role, but in relation to social protection interventions addressing equity gaps for the most vulnerable groups of children (e.g. Roma, CwD, child victims of abuse and neglect).

**Monitoring and evaluation** interventions have been equally important for both components of the programme. Along with the policy advice and technical assistance, this core role was focused on increasing the capacity of the key stakeholders to design evidence-based policies. It has widened the knowledge on the situation of different vulnerable groups, but because it has not yet reached a critical mass in terms of sustainable effects among the key institutions in charge of data collection and monitoring, UNICEF may have to continue to invest in order to support further improvements. If perhaps not directly, UNICEF will still have to look for the sustainability of the progress achieved especially in relation to the national data collection capacity in the domain of justice for children. As for the social protection component, the main challenge is represented by developing a multi-stakeholder approach in data collection in order to ensure cross-sectoral (social, education, health) coordination of services towards increasing their effectiveness and efficiency.
The core role of UNICEF as being a *voice for children and adolescents* was less a priority in the programming period being evaluated compared to the more technical aspects of reform. This core role was present in relation to the justice for children component by implementing an activity called ‘One minute junior videos’ which aimed at empowering children in conflict with the law to express themselves. In the current programme this core role should gain in importance especially in relation to the social protection component and for the most vulnerable groups of children (e.g. Roma, CwD, children victims of abuse and neglect). A stronger partnership with NGO sector and media may increase the child rights focus and the effectiveness of advocacy interventions.

*Enabling knowledge exchange* has been the least considered to be used in the previous programming period and there is little evidence that it may become a priority for the current programme. The facilitation function of this role seems to continue to be better served by other two core roles (facilitation of national dialogue and policy advice and technical assistance). However, UNICEF may encourage participation of key stakeholders in high-level conferences and relevant professional events in order to support the development of their professional capacity and international exposure as a motivational trigger for more stable cooperation.

### 7.5.3. Consolidation of the programme

The ownership of the *Government* has been a key factor in the progress of the programme, as well as in ensuring its continuation and consolidation. This has been developed over the entire programme life cycle by using a participatory approach and by setting up multi-disciplinary groups for the development of the normative framework (policies, laws, by-laws). Similarly, field practitioners were engaged in this process through public debates, workshops and meetings to ensure that their experience and practice is reflected in the policy and legal documents. Involvement of government partners in the selection process of international and national experts or procurement of goods also proved to be a good practice. The partners were involved from the initial stage of drafting the terms of reference to contracting the consultants or the company. For example when selecting a consultant, a selection panel comprised of UNICEF staff and government representatives is established, and the decision is made jointly. This again has continued to government ownership of the process and their full cooperation.

Strategically, the Government is committed to continue the reforms started in the CP programme as it is demonstrated by one of the priorities in *MoLSP’s Strategic Plan (2015-2017)* which is stating the implementation of policies aimed to improve the system of social protection, more specifically to create and implement policies to protect children, especially from abuse, neglect and violence.

Recent evidence that the Government is taking over the ownership of the progress achieved in the J4C component of the CP programme is represented by the Report of the 110 session of the Government, held on 06.10.2015, addressed to the MoLSP, MoI, MoJ, MoES and NCPJD. This Report includes “Information on the comparative analysis on justice for children, with proposed measures for improvement of the protection of the child’s rights”. The Government reviewed and adopted this analysis and issued the following conclusions:

1. MoLSP is instructed to conduct analysis for introduction of mentoring, as one of the measures for assistance and protection of children at risk and children in conflict with the law, which should be submitted to the Government in 60 days.

2. MoI is instructed to prepare information on the situation on the use of child friendly spaces for conducting interviews with the children, based on the Justice for Children (J4C) Law, which should be submitted to the Government in 60 days.
3. MoJ is instructed to prepare information with proposed measures and activities for improvement of the implementation of the mediation and alternative measures as per the J4C Law, which should be submitted to the Government in 60 days.

4. MoES is instructed to prepare information on the implementation of the J4C Law by the professional teams within the primary and secondary schools, which should be submitted to the Government in 60 days.

5. The NCPJD is instructed to prepare information on the situation of establishment of local councils for prevention of child delinquency, with proposed measures and activities for improvement, which should be submitted to the Government in 60 days.¹²²

However, it should be noted that solid pre-conditions of sustainability and ownership require more follow-up in practice from the central level (including the line ministries and the central body mentioned above) to the grassroots level. In case of J4C this involves the commitment of the judicial system, public prosecutors, sectors for internal affairs in the police, lawyers, CSW staff, education and health care staff, academia and NGOs towards the continuation of the activities that have been started in the J4C interventions.

The evidence collected for this evaluation¹²³ indicates different levels of capacity and involvement of all the above mentioned entities in taking over and continuation of the J4C activities. On a continuum of capacity and involvement for ensuring continuation and ownership of the J4C activities at the highest level one may find the NCPJD while at the lowest level there might be found the Bar Association. The annual reports of NCPJD stand for the commitment of their members to ensure and improve the implementation of the activities, while the lack interest of the Bar Association for organizing any activities on preparing the lawyers to work with children (in spite of being invited to all activities by the AJP) make it impossible to infer any evidence of ownership.

Furthermore, it should be noted that ownership is predominantly a matter of people and not of institutions. Where the person in charge has the knowledge and determination to continue the activities, the ownership is visible and has solid ground, as is it the case at the level of NCPJD and ISA (for the domain of J4C).

“The Municipal Council for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency from Kavadarci is functional because of the good leadership.” – Judiciary professional

This places the important process of continuation of programmes to the level of individual subjectivity instead of being placed at the level of institutional strategic approach and good governance. In this context, it is reported that ownership of results achieved through the implementation of donor funded projects is still problematic¹²⁴ and has not yet become part of institutional culture and practice in most public institutions.

The sustainability among judiciary and public prosecutors has been only emerging with the professional development sessions provided by AJP. Still there is little evidence on the actual involvement of the judges and prosecutors who were trained on working with children victims and witness of violence in this type of cases, while the trainings for professionals working with juvenile

¹²² Government Information on the comparative analysis on justice for children, with proposed measures for improvement of the protection of the child’s rights 06.10.2015
¹²³ Interviews carried out during the country mission (September 2015)
offenders are more sustainable. The fact that the J4C legislation stipulates mandatory training for all professionals dealing with children in conflict with the law\textsuperscript{125} sets a more solid ground for sustainability of the trainings (and training materials) that have been initiated within the J4C programme component. However, in the process of enforcement of the J4C procedures, the judiciary professionals are confronted with two major challenges: 1/ the lack of equipment\textsuperscript{126} and 2/ limited cooperation with CSW staff (social workers, psychologists, pedagogues) due to the CSWs’ shortage of staff\textsuperscript{127}. In addition, there are stakeholders considering that “judges and prosecutors were less visible and active in the J4C reform and the future projects need to ensure better participation of this professional group.”\textsuperscript{128}

In terms of the practice, it should be noted that field evidence\textsuperscript{129} indicates a lack of cooperation between IJDDVs and judges and prosecutors specialized on juveniles. For example, there are cases of IJDDVs not even being aware of the existence of judges and prosecutors specialized in juveniles within the jurisdiction area covered. In addition, the fact that an IJDDV cannot get higher in rank (and consequently a higher salary) is highly de-motivating for this category of professionals and is rather forcing them to look for better positions in the system. Together with the lack of resources (for equipment, medical examination of victims etc.), of coordination in allocation of cases and of availability of continuous training, all these elements decrease substantially the ownership and determination of the police staff to continue their involvement in J4C activities.

Inter-sectoral cooperation is part of UNICEF’s holistic approach that the organisation is promoting across their programmes (CP programme included). Thus, the contribution of the \textit{health system} and education is important in ensuring continuity and consolidation of Programme’s achievements. In relation to J4C, the health care system is still confronted with several difficulties which may impede on the future of progress in the domain, such as:

- lack of a coherent system for training of medical practitioners on treating children victims;

- limited access to health care for children victims determined by the requirement of parental/guardian consent and/or by the lack of financial resources for medical examination;

- lack of trained forensic medical experts who can examine children victims of violence and testify before courts;

- lack of capacity or reluctance of doctors to report cases of violence against children\textsuperscript{130}.

The \textit{education system} is planned to contribute to successful implementation of J4C reform. However, the education system is confronted with two major challenges that decrease its contribution to sustainability, as follows:

- The lack of legal requirement in the principal laws on elementary and secondary education to report violence. This requirement is stipulated in strategic documents and protocols, but practice has shown that schools rarely identify and report violence against children which occurred outside school settings.

\textsuperscript{125} The requirement is of minimum four to ten days training per year for all professionals working with children and young people within the criminal justice system.

\textsuperscript{126} Video recording equipment is needed in order to replace direct hearing; according to the J4C Law, children can be interviewed one time or twice in exceptional cases.

\textsuperscript{127} Interviews carried out during the country mission (September 2015)

\textsuperscript{128} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{129} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{130} UNICEF (2015): \textit{Mapping of Institutions and Civil Society Organisations which Provide Services to Children Victims of Violence and Abuse}
The multiplicity of strategic and implementing documents creates for incoherence in the work of educators in terms of protection and prevention form violence in schools.\(^\text{131}\)

Through its mandate of studying social phenomena and problems, and promote social activities (including quality) \textit{ISA} has a major role in ensuring sustainability of the CP reform (both in the domains of SP and J4C). All ISA’s four major functions\(^\text{132}\) ensure a solid basis for continuation and development of the achievements of CP programme. The mandatory trainings provided by ISA are the pre-condition for issuance and renewal of licenses for CSW professionals. The trainings’ monitoring and evaluation system ensures regular revision of the curriculum. In addition, the regular field monitoring and interviews with the CSWs professionals from the CSWs allows for development of training modules based on the needs. ISA is administering the data base LIRIKUS\(^\text{133}\), where all cases of children in need of protection are recorded. The data from LIRIKUS serve both the policy design and planning of the MoLSP and the NCPJD annual reporting, which explains the important role this data base has in the future of CP interventions.

As already presented in previous sections, the \textit{CSWs} are the most important operational element in the architecture of the social protection system. All relevant policy instruments give the CSWs mandate to initiate, actively participate (coordinate) and monitor procedures concerning children. Also, CSWs are active before the courts in cases where children are involved.\(^\text{134}\) Due to these functions CSWs should contribute substantially to the ownership and future functioning of the CP system in the country. In practice, the evidence collected for this evaluation\(^\text{135}\) indicated that CSWs are confronted with many difficulties which decrease their capacity to ensure solid sustainability of the system, such as shortage of staff and overburden of the existing ones especially with bureaucratic responsibilities, duplication of efforts and lack of coordination between coordinative bodies, confusing protocols, difficulties in inter-institutional cooperation (especially with judiciary – i.e. judges and prosecutors – education and health), and even bottlenecks in intra-institutional cooperation.

The \textit{NGOs} have an important contribution to increasing ownership and consolidation of the reforms. However, their limited cooperation with the Government especially due to the reluctance of the later, distorted public perception and/or low public visibility, limited resources and capacity reduces their actual contribution to the sustainability of the reforms, in general, and this applies to the overall CP programme too. Nonetheless, their role remains and in spite of the above mentioned challenges is expected to increase especially with the contribution of the international donors community and media, as well as by their own effort of increasing their effectiveness and credibility.

The \textit{media} has been proven in the region as an influential player in triggering child protection reforms.\(^\text{136}\) With all political and economic difficulties, media remains an important stakeholder in promoting child rights and changes in child protection, as well as of the “wider social and community dialogue on the value of children and child rights in society”\(^\text{137}\).

\(^{131}\) Ibid.
\(^{132}\) Training of the professionals in the social sector, setting the standards of the work, monitoring social services and policy advice to MoLSP
\(^{133}\) During the interviews it was established that the LIRIKUS is not user friendly and the recording of cases is time-consuming. The tool is currently being updated.
\(^{134}\) UNICEF (2015): Mapping of Institutions and Civil Society Organisations which Provide Services to Children Victims of Violence and Abuse
\(^{135}\) Interviews carried out during the country mission (September 2015) and UNICEF reports
8. Conclusions

In the J4C and SP reforms the process of reducing equity gaps has started but is far from being completed. Due to the bottlenecks in outreaching final beneficiaries, the Programme had a modest impact on many vulnerable children such as children victims of abuse and neglect, children of minority groups, children with disabilities were left behind. A weakness of the programme was the low level of participation of the beneficiaries. Beneficiaries’ participation in service development is not a well-established practice.

The Government’s EU oriented political course, the ownership towards the J4C and SP reforms and consistency of commitment are important factors having a positive influence on the progress of the reforms. However, the lack of preventive services, the limited community-based services and the tendency of turning beneficiaries in passive receivers of financial benefits are reasons for concerns for the future of reforms. The identification of causes of vulnerability and not just addressing the consequences will ensure the success of the reforms. Constant efforts to empower vulnerable families will ensure well-being of children. The key for sustainability or the next step of the reforms is considered to be the development of family focused services, not just cash transfers.

New data collection systems have been developed with the aim of improving the capacity of the public authorities to analyse J4C and SP data, as well as to facilitate strategic and operational activities in the domain. Despite the progress made within the reforms, evidence-based policy making in the country is just emerging. There is a gap between the data produced and the actual use of child protection statistics, the last being especially reported as still inaccurate.

One of the strongest pillars of the reforms is social work development. UNICEF’s contribution has been very relevant in supporting the social work profession development. In this important phase of development of this profession the state bureaucratic system compromises core values of it – promoting social inclusion and structural changes through social advocacy. Instead of struggling for the development of preventative measures social workers remain an instrument of reactive policy witnessing the threat to the success and sustainability of the reforms. Due to the office-type oriented referral social workers are not conducting outreach activities and there are invisible children left out. Social work performance assurance system was developed only recently, however the system does yet started to show results in terms of improvements of the quality of services.

In the evaluation reference period there have been many positive changes in increasing J4C and SP systems’ capacity to respond to the needs of the beneficiaries, but predominantly at the level of enabling a functional environment of the systems (at legislative and institutional levels) and much less at the level of services supply. New laws and procedures address the problems of the most vulnerable, however the new legal framework does automatically generate changes in service provision. Efforts for changes in these determinant areas for the success of the reforms need to be simultaneous; otherwise only making a legislative and institutional reform becomes less relevant when ultimately aiming the best interests of children. In addition, the systems still have bottlenecks in terms of service coordination and professionals’ qualification, which is of utmost importance for prevention and early identification of vulnerable children.
Overall, the inter-sectorial approach is promoted within the reforms. One of the major challenges of inter-sectorial policy making, programming and budgeting with focus on results and impact at the level of beneficiaries remains the capacity of the existing administrative settings. Coordination among line ministries at policy and program levels is insufficient and they continue to work in silos. Multi-stakeholder policy making remains far from practice.

Cost efficiency of the new services development or organization has not been seriously considered and documented. *Little progress has been made in terms of allocating financial resources towards the interventions piloted in the programme.*

**UNICEF’s strategic contribution to the child care reform is recognized by all stakeholders.** The main contribution is considered to be in providing technical assistance for key decision makers, promotion and development of new services in J4C and in intersectoral cooperation for CwD, support to social work professional development. UNICEF’s technical assistance and policy advice effort was often combined with modelling/piloting of new services and approaches (e.g. mentoring of children in conflict the law, CRFs, multi-disciplinary response for children victims of violence, abuse and exploitation etc.) in spite of very limited resources and sometimes resistant professional norms. UNICEF has supported the Government in getting access to international resources in relation with EU and bilateral donors for achieving better results for vulnerable children.

The evaluation has shown that UNICEF is increasingly committed to and actually implementing a more cross-sectoral approach. Promoting the development of a mind-set that goes beyond the compartmentalisation of interventions into traditional 'sectors' was and remains of utmost importance. In addition, creating a body of knowledge and transmitting competences on cross-sectoral working, through emphasising its importance within a systemic approach added value to UNICEF’s strategic influence in the country.

UNICEF has consistently applied and adopted a rights-based approach to the J4C and SP reforms by facilitating gradually a movement towards a more rights-based approach. UNICEF’s influence has clearly built up over time, based on mutual trust and respect between UNICEF and key stakeholders in the country. UNICEF remains in the position as an important facilitator of the dialogue between Government and other actors, which was emphasised by several stakeholders outside the Government, as well as by the Government. However, the voice of vulnerable children and of their families over the reforms process has been only marginally supported and UNICEF will have to look to a closer connection between the progress of the reforms and the development of anti-discriminatory policies and practices (in terms of gender, ethnicity, disability etc.).
9. Lessons learned

System changes

The J4C and SP reforms are administered under the central Government limiting local responsibility though local response on child related problems will be more rapid and effective. Decentralization is currently seen as more challenging than delayed responses for the local problems. However, the response would be faster and better adjusted to the needs if would come from the local administration.

The importance of the development of family strengthening component of the reform is not yet recognized among decision makers. Though the evidence informed practice suggests reorientation of the reform to this direction. On the short term the current child oriented policy seems to be effective, but it does not impact the lives of children for the longer term. Without measures aimed to increase outreach of the beneficiaries and empower families the impact of J4C and SP policies remains very limited for children.

Mobilization of the decision makers appeared to be more challenging than originally thought. Despite the fact that donor-funded projects were oriented to support the transfer of know-how, it still appeared ineffective for the beneficiaries. Also, it is important to identity particular responsible authority within the Government in order to ensure clear coordination of the reforms, otherwise the progress and the process of reforms is endangered.

Reorientation of the reform policy

The piloting of new services within the reporting period is considered to have been effective. However, preventive function of some services seems to be difficult to understand/accepted and to be used as such.

Legislative changes did not automatically reflect in changes of practices and improvements in service provision. Better targeted public awareness campaigns may have a contribution to the progress of the reform.

Better implementation of the M&E systems

The evaluation encountered challenges in terms of balancing data between two programme components (J4C and SP) of the reporting period. The effort and resources invested in monitoring data collection was more visible for the donor-funded projects (J4C component), while the progress in the SP domain is less documented. In the implementation of any evaluation the process of data collection has to be carefully considered in order to keep the balance between the credibility of the result and the resources (human resources, time and money) available.
10. Recommendations

The recommendations are based on the findings and conclusions of the evaluation and they are in line with the consultation with the stakeholders interviewed during the field phase concerning the priorities of the child protection reform in the country that should be addressed in the coming years. The early draft recommendations were validated by UNICEF together with the partners during the annual review meeting in December 2015, where a discussion was held on the completed activities and on the planned activities for the future. The final recommendation in the final evaluation report reflect these multiple perspectives and the interest for future implementation.

The recommendations are grouped in two sets of measures that it is advisable to be taken in order to continue the child protection reform in the country and in order to increase UNICEF’s strategic contribution to this reform.

Continuation of child protection reform

1. More emphasis on prevention: The Government should develop more family support services in the country, in terms of variety and geographical coverage and adopt measures aiming to ensure that social work practice is reoriented on outreach service based on professional workers of CSW. In addition, the system of case management should be implemented in order to develop adequate and sustainable packages of services to produce optimal outcomes for children. MoLSP should reduce bureaucracy in the SP system which currently discourages vulnerable families’ access to services. CSWs should work more on identification of children at risk. More early identification measures are needed based on a better inter-sectoral cooperation both at central and at grassroots level (schools, health institutions, CSWs, municipalities, NGOs etc.). ISA should develop a monitoring system of services by reviewing the current monitoring tool and by connecting it with LIRIKUS.

2. More focus on the reduction of equity gaps: All stakeholders working in the J4C and SP should avoid ‘creaming’ of cases (i.e. approaching those case more easy to work with and to report progress about) in the pilot projects and in general. The most vulnerable groups of children should be the priority in terms of resources allocation.

3. Inter-sectoral coordination among the authorities: The decision makers should develop a vision of what CP should be in the country and based on this overarching desiderate to develop a more coherent system. The fragmentation in ministries and lack cooperation among should be reduced by bringing people together to work on well-structured programmes (e.g. the project on CwD could be an example of good practice) supported by strong political commitment. The dissemination of the reforms at local level should be increased. In case of UNICEF this may decrease efficiency of support on short-term, but yield important return of investment in the country on long-term.

4. Strengthen the capacity of social workers and of the staff working in the SP system: MoLSP should reduce staff turnover by motivating them to remain in the system and by reducing employment based on political criteria. Clearer system of reward based on functional workloads need to be introduced together with careful workload management and the development of a range of incentives for specialized social work interventions. ISA should advocate with MoLSP for recognition of staff burnout and for human resources measures to reduce it. MoLSP should employ more qualified staff (social workers and other related professionals – psychologists, psychiatrists, paediatricians etc.) in both J4C and SP systems. ISA should provide training and re-training of the CSW staff for using
LIRIKUS. ISA should assess more in-depth the case load and identify practical measures for a realistic enforcement in practice of the standard workload.

5. Improve the management of CSW: MoLSP and ISA should increase the capacity of the managers of the CSWs, including by measuring the efficiency of the CSWs in order to increase the accountability of the CSWs’ managers. In addition, the system of services’ quality assessment should become fully implemented and operational.

6. More focus on law enforcement: There is a need on behalf of the public authorities to strengthen the stability of the legal framework. When legislative changes are needed, there should be more time allocated to consultations with a wider variety of stakeholders at different levels (including with people who will implement the law, i.e. practitioners). UNICEF should advocate for ex-ante impact assessments of future laws.

UNICEF's strategic contribution

1. Increase ownership in the Government: In the SP domain UNICEF may want to identify new “champions” and also work more with those already known. In the J4C domain UNICEF may work more with the “champions” already known by ensuring them more visibility. Also, UNICEF should liaise more and with higher persistence with the actors who are making the country’s agenda (especially EU Delegation).

2. Move from pilot projects to systemic interventions: UNICEF should strengthen and consolidate the progress which has been made so far (e.g. mentoring program, CFRs, capacity building to ISA and CSWs etc.). This may be done by organising more follow-up of the existing/previous pilot projects (by using a variety of methods e.g. organizing visits of high level officials common with representatives of donors and national officials, or by carrying out ad hoc or thematic evaluations).

3. More empowerment of the beneficiaries: UNICEF should encourage professional formal networking (e.g. by establishment of professional associations, peer reviews or exchange of experience events), as well as informal networking (e.g. by online fora) among professionals in both SP and J4C. Also, should consider working more with NGOs and support creation of coalitions and associations of parents and children.

4. Developing evidence-based approach in policy planning in the country: UNICEF may want to consider promoting advocacy work based quality data. In the J4C system may advocate for increasing accuracy in data collection in order to have strong evidence for policy planning. In addition, should increase awareness for the demand of quality data among the decision makers (Parliament, Supreme Court and Government).

5. More work with media: UNICEF should strengthen the relationship with media outlets (journalists, editors) and increase the use of social media. In order to ensure that the messages will reach and mobilize a wider public, UNICEF may consider promoting local projects that have demonstrated results.
11. List of annexes (annexes are provided as separate document)

Annex 1 – Terms of Reference
Annex 2 – UNICEF core roles
Annex 3 – Evaluation Matrix
Annex 4 – List of documents
Annex 5 – Data collection tools
Annex 6 – Agenda in-country mission
Annex 7 – Data collection deliverables
Annex 8 – List of interviewees for the evaluation
Annex 9 – UNICEF’s generic theory of change
Annex 10 – Overall assessment of the CP programme 2010-2015