Enhancing the social protection and inclusion system for children in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Joint Programme of the Governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina and UNICEF - An Evaluation

Paro Chaujar and Zehra Kacapor-Dzihic

DECEMBER 12, 2012
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<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BAM</td>
<td>Bosnian Convertible Mark</td>
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<td>BD</td>
<td>Brcko District</td>
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<td>BiH</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
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<td>CDS</td>
<td>Country Development Strategy</td>
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<td>CAP</td>
<td>Communication and Advocacy Plan</td>
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<td>CB</td>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organization</td>
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<td>CSW</td>
<td>Centre for Social Work</td>
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<td>DEG</td>
<td>Democratic Economic Governance</td>
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<td>DEP</td>
<td>Directorate of Economic Planning</td>
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<td>DEU</td>
<td>Delegation of European Union</td>
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<td>DFID</td>
<td>UK Government Department for International Development</td>
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<td>DoA</td>
<td>Description of Action</td>
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<td>DPA</td>
<td>Dayton Peace Agreement</td>
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<td>DS</td>
<td>Development Strategy</td>
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<td>ECD</td>
<td>Early Childhood Development</td>
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<td>EPPU</td>
<td>Economic and Policy Planning Unit</td>
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<td>ESPROSS</td>
<td>European System of integrated Social Protection Statistics</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>FBH</td>
<td>Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>HDI</td>
<td>Human Development Index</td>
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<td>HDR</td>
<td>Human Development Report</td>
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<td>HRBAP</td>
<td>Human Rights Based Approach to Programming</td>
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<td>IBHI</td>
<td>The Initiative for Better and Humane Inclusion</td>
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<td>IEC</td>
<td>Integrated Early Childhood Development</td>
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<td>IPA</td>
<td>Instrument of Pre-Accession Assistance</td>
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<td>JE</td>
<td>Joint Evaluation</td>
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<td>LF</td>
<td>Logical Framework</td>
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<td>Labour Force Survey</td>
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<td>MAP</td>
<td>Municipal Action Plan</td>
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<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<td>MIPD</td>
<td>Multi-Indicative Planning Document</td>
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<td>Mid-Term Review</td>
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<td>Ministry of Health</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>OSCE</td>
<td>Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe</td>
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<td>PAR</td>
<td>Participatory Action Research</td>
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<td>PEF</td>
<td>Protective Environment Framework</td>
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<td>RS</td>
<td>Republika Srpska</td>
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<td>SCAP</td>
<td>Safer Community Action Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>SFP</td>
<td>Special Focus Project</td>
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<td>SIS</td>
<td>Social Inclusion Strategy</td>
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<td>SitAn</td>
<td>Situational Analysis</td>
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<td>SMART</td>
<td>Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound (indicators)</td>
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<td>SPIS</td>
<td>Enhancement of Social Protection and Inclusion Systems for children (in BiH)</td>
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Executive Summary

This joint evaluation of the programme for Strengthening Social Protection and Inclusion System(s) for Children in Bosnia and Herzegovina was commissioned by the UNICEF Country Office in BiH and the Government of BiH. The programme period covered by this Joint Evaluation is December 2008-June 2012.

There are two broad objectives of the evaluation as per the Terms of Reference:

1) To assess, analyse and evaluate:
   a) *The elements* which form the social protection and inclusion systems (advantages and disadvantages of the current systems) and
   b) *The services* offered through the social protection and inclusion systems (social welfare, education, and health), such as the resources and interventions which are needed to better link these three key social sectors.

2) To assess the *effectiveness and contribution of the SPIS programme* in achieving its objectives in strengthening the social protection and inclusion systems in Bosnia and Herzegovina, primarily focusing on *identifying better strategic entry points* for the SPIS programme to penetrate the SPI systems in BiH (which specific services to address; aspect and target of the intervention), through discussions with key stakeholders.

Lack of baseline data and lack of monitoring indicators pertaining outcomes and impacts have affected the assessment of impacts and progress made under this programme. The evaluation relied on monitoring data against set indicators provided by UNICEF and on information provided by various stakeholders interviewed as part of the field mission. The evaluation has extensively reviewed existing annual reports, minutes of meetings of the management board of the programme, donor reports and reports submitted by NGO partners.

The field mission for the evaluation was conducted during June 2012 and included meetings with various government counterparts and field visits to municipalities (local governments and service providers).

The evaluation framework is guided by the UNEG criteria and the evaluation of SPIS programme is organised along these criteria: Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, Inclusiveness and Sustainability. The revised logframe for the SPIS programme and its monitoring indicators have been used to measure progress against plans. However, since the revised framework is relatively new to the programme and the programme is currently in its stage of no-cost extension where all activities have not yet been completed, final monitoring data was not available. Latest figures from Annual Report from 2011 and figures provided by UNICEF have been used.

**Relevance**

SPIS programme by virtue of its focus on ‘inclusion’ is relevant to the context in which half of the BiH population suffers from at least one form of exclusion, such as lack of access to
health, education, services or participation in society. The aim of SPIS programme to strengthen social protection and inclusion systems is relevant to the context of weaknesses in the current systems to comprehensively respond to exclusion. It not only matches existing government priorities in the area of social protection and inclusion but also is helping governments refine their frameworks for the same

SPIS is largely relevant to the capacity needs of institutions responsible for provision of social protection and social inclusion to children, including and specifically, at the level of local governments and local service providers

SPIS programme is placed within the context of the BiH government’s international treaty obligations pertaining social inclusion and social protection, requirements towards the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, and the EU accession process.

**Effectiveness**

Gaps in existing systems for inclusion and social protection have been identified, discussed and addressed to varying extents within SPIS programme. Evidence has been generated through various studies to inform the entities and BD for implementation of their respective strategies related to social inclusion and development.

Capacities and functioning of coordination bodies have been strengthened through trainings and establishment of mechanisms, with varying results. Although foundations have been laid, in terms of operationalization there are gaps. While at the level of local coordination bodies, emerging evidence indicates effective functioning, at the level of entity and state coordination bodies, functioning has not been as effective.

A good governance model for multi-sectoral collaboration on social protection and inclusion has been demonstrated in 10 pilot communities: including an established and working mechanism for coordination and referral and innovative services.

In all 10 pilot municipalities, local bodies for management and coordination of municipal models have been established and have produced results in terms of improved allocations and increased coverage

In the 10 pilot municipalities increased information has been made available to children and their families, on services available for them. For the wider community, increased information has been made available on child rights, inclusion and social protection.

**Efficiency**

SPIS has faced several challenges to its efficient implementation: a poorly conceptualized initial results framework that had to be revised twice within the first two years; bulky administrative structure that was a result of complex administrative and political structure of the country and; delays in development of contract agreements and subsequent

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disbursements from donors, in particular with the EU.

**Impact**

There are significant gains in the area of strengthening policy frameworks for social protection and inclusion and shift in approach towards needs and rights based framework in social service provision at the local levels. Beneficiary surveys confirm that those who were previously not receiving specialised services and who were in need of those services, were now receiving those services. The local mechanism of multi-sectoral collaborative actions has been replicated in at least 2 other instances: in the UNICEF programme on prevention of juvenile offenses and in the joint UN programme on improving access to water.

**Inclusiveness**

SPIS rates high on its focus on inclusiveness. At the outset, one criterion for the selection of locations where SPIS was implemented included their level of development. The majority of the municipalities where the programme was implemented are ‘poorer’ in comparison to other municipalities, with a larger proportion of vulnerable populations.

At the policy levels SPIS has facilitated improvements in existing legislative and policy frameworks to make them more inclusive.

At the local level, local governments are trained in using tools for better identification of vulnerable children (Situation Analysis), for rights based planning for inclusion and for evidence based budgeting to promote inclusion. There is evidence of increased allocation for social protection and inclusion for children in the municipal budgets in 60 per cent of the pilot municipalities; new and innovative services have been initiated in some municipalities (ex. IECD centres); children’s participation in the local planning processes have been increased. Increased access to services for those who were previously deprived of these services indicates the programme has contributed to reducing inequities in some ways.

**Sustainability**

SPIS has been remarkable in terms of the extent of ownership demonstrated by government counterparts at various levels and the extent of participation in the programme. The mood for improving social protection and inclusion for children is widespread. The mechanisms for cooperation and collaboration among multiple social sectors at the local levels, developed under SPIS, are an important strategy employed to ensure sustainability. The adoption of Municipal Management Boards as Municipal Councils for the Promotion of Social Protection and Inclusion of Children is an important indicator of how SPIS could be sustained after the current programme ends. Also, important changes in the policy and legal frameworks, including introduction of new policies for the expansion of IECD services, are important indicators of sustainability of results emerging from SPIS.

However, just as the social protection sector is facing crisis in terms of its sustainability, so
will interventions for promoting social protection and inclusion of children. Even as mechanisms and policies have been improved for better outcomes for children, unless there is political commitment backed by financial allocations (for instance, for the expansion of trainings required for developing the SPIS Model and for budget reallocations for specific inputs that were provided under SPIS financing), results generated by SPIS are at risk of becoming unsustainable.

Conclusions

Based on feedback received from respondents, existing literature (studies, assessments and monitoring reports), this evaluation concludes that SPIS has contributed significantly to the cause of promoting an integrated approach to social protection and inclusion for children. Through intensive capacity building of state institutions at local levels and setting up of mechanisms for institutionalizing multi-sectoral collaboration, a good governance model has been demonstrated and replicated within the time frame of the programme. The programme, in order to move from a model approach in selected municipalities now needs to be expanded to all municipalities in the country, albeit through a programme and more efficient approach.

SPIS has certainly emerged as innovative and successful in demonstrating good governance at the local level, characterized by institutionalized mechanisms for multi-sectoral cooperation and piloting of joint action plans.

Under the SPIS programme close cooperation between health, education, and social protection sectors has been strengthened, particularly at the local level. The evidence for this are the Protocols adopted in municipalities for referral and inter-sectoral cooperation as well as the establishment Municipal Management Boards which were later elevated to the status of “Commission for the Social Protection and Inclusion of Children”. This body comprises representatives of different public institutions- schools, health centres, CSW, police, etc. The transition to the Commission implies that this body is now recognised as a permanent executive body at the municipal level.

One of the most critical shortcoming of the project has been its insufficient engagement with broader social protection sector reforms in the country, in particular the ongoing debates and discussions on improving the social assistance/ benefits segment of social protection. Given that children tend to be a voice-less constituency in large policy discourses, SPIS partners, including governments, UNICEF and donors need to represent the voice of children in these discourses to ensure that in the reforms, children, in particular the rights of vulnerable children are protected.

Lessons learned

Some of the lessons learned from the SPIS experience so far are:

a) Despite political differences and different policy/legal frameworks:
   • It is possible to operationalize a uniform method for multi-sectoral cooperation at the level of local governance, across the country; and
• Entities work with each other and exchange experiences and good practices towards goals related to children’s rights, to a large extent.

b) Creating and facilitating multi-entity forums for the highest level decision making on programmes is possible and effective
c) Efficiency is a challenge in multi-sectoral and multi entity collaboration at policy level
d) Even though there is a history of disparate frameworks across entities, through collaboration nurtured as part of this programme, the new services that are initiated have higher likelihood of being standardised.
e) Including all levels of governance is critical for success of programmes that require horizontal and vertical linkages
f) There is need to address all sectors (education, health, welfare) equally and address all forms of vulnerabilities (disability, nationality, poverty, etc.)
g) Strengthening systems needs a programme approach, spread over a reasonable period of time and aiming for impacts at the level of final beneficiaries

The ‘SPIS model’ demonstrates good practice models and has demonstrated its application to other sectors within the context of BiH (in joint UN programme DEG as well as in UNICEF supported programme for prevention of juvenile offending). It is certainly a model that can be replicated in different countries and contexts, particularly where multiple layers of governance are involved.

SPIS is not only relevant to the current social policy frameworks in the country but has served to inform and guide emerging frameworks on protection and inclusion.

**Recommendations**

**Immediate priority: for improving programming**

a) Urgently ensure that the roles played by external consultants placed in the various Ministries are included in job descriptions of regular staff so that the focus on SPIS continues after consultants leave.
b) Institutionalise children’s participation in the local development processes
c) Improve coordination and information sharing between the government at all levels and various resource agencies such as NGOs and consulting firms, so they may synergise efforts as well.
d) There is need to make municipal budget allocations more efficient.
e) The focus so far has been on inclusion of children with disability, both in terms of innovative services (IECD) as well as in terms of special focus projects. SPIS model for identification of priorities needs to be made more sensitive and proactive on these other, albeit more politically sensitive factors. Also gender based exclusions need to be better examined and progress in inclusion needs more explicit monitoring along gender as much as other excluding factors.
f) Any revised framework developed for furthering the progress made so far should be designed for impacts at the level of the final beneficiaries (and not just outcomes) and it should have a programme approach:
• Improved policy frameworks and services should translate into better results at the level of final beneficiaries. The programme framework should be impact oriented.
• Results should be monitored and evaluated after actions/services have been completed and followed up until their lead to ultimate goals. For this there is need to develop baseline and conduct end line surveys.

Medium term: for phasing out in current municipalities and expansion to others

g) For the 21 municipalities that have participated in SPIS over its three phases, there should be a plan for phase out and not for completely letting go. At least until the completing of all action plans, monitoring of the results thereof, review and planning for the next cycle of action plans.

h) Joint, collaborative mechanism for ensuring inclusive services for children should be expanded to all Municipalities. Modalities such as peer-to-peer sharing and the associations of municipalities could be explored as one of the forums for sharing the good practice.

i) Alternatives should be explored in the medium and long term for institutionalising the training programmes through a more efficient arrangement. In the short term, the services of NGOs and private firms may be necessary.

Recommendation for all donor partners (UNICEF, EUD) and government

Immediate priority

j) Given the current economic crisis and in light of withdrawal of various bilateral donors, it is recommended that UNICEF and the EUD continue to support the government in the phasing out as well as expansion of SPIS.

k) Donors, UNICEF and the Governments of BiH must review the cost of the programme (human resource and financial) to see how best these costs can be reduced and benefits maximized (for instance through institutionalizing trainings).

Medium term: for policy advocacy and synergy with other initiatives

l) UNICEF and government partners of SPIS as well as the EUD should more actively represent voice of children in the current discourses around social protection reforms in the country, in particular the ones related to revision of social assistance programmes. In this context strategic partnerships with the World Bank and the OSCE should be explored.

m) Learning from SPIS as well as voices of children, communities and local bodies should be harnessed to influence overall reforms in the social protection sector in the country. Evidence from local levels must be more strategically used to influence policy reforms for better targeting and improved entitlements.

n) All relevant social sectors should be included in policy advocacy efforts, including Ministries at the Cantonal level

o) The definition and conceptual framework for Social Protection should be reviewed in the context of existing definitions in international frameworks, especially since SPIS needs to engage with other actors on common goals related to promoting social
protection.

**Long term: impact assessment**

*p) A comprehensive assessment of impacts on children should be conducted for the entire programme, including for impacts of trainings, action plans, new services and improved policy frameworks.*
1. **Introduction**

**Background**

The Programme for Enhancing Social Protection and Inclusion Systems for children in Bosnia and Herzegovina (SPIS) is a joint programme of the Government of BiH and UNICEF, financially supported by the European Commission Delegation as part of IPA agreement with the BiH Government, DfID and the Government of Norway. The programme has been increasingly funded more by the EUD than other donors. At the time of this evaluation the EUD is the only donor to the SPIS programme.

This evaluation is jointly commissioned by the Government of BiH and UNICEF to assess outcomes and impacts of the entire SPIS programme at the end of its third/most current phase. The evaluation is also expected to review and assess the framework of social protection and inclusion systems in the country.

**Purpose of the Joint Evaluation**

There are two broad objectives of the evaluation as per the Terms of Reference:

1) To assess, analyse and evaluate:

   a) *The elements* which form the social protection and inclusion systems (advantages and disadvantages of the current systems) and

   b) *The services* offered through the social protection and inclusion systems (social welfare, education, and health), such as the resources and interventions which are needed to better link these three key social sectors.

2) To assess the *effectiveness and contribution of the SPIS programme* in achieving its objectives in strengthening the social protection and inclusion systems in Bosnia and Herzegovina, primarily focusing on *identifying better strategic entry points* for the SPIS programme to penetrate the SPI systems in BiH (which specific services to address; aspect and target of the intervention), through discussions with key stakeholders.

The evaluation is expected to focus on the Integrated Approach to Social Protection and Inclusion systems and how the SPIS programme contributed to overall progress in the sector of social protection and inclusion in the country.

As such there are two parts to this report. The first part is a brief description and assessment of the various components of the ‘systems’ for social protection and inclusion in the country based on existing documents. And the second, larger part presents findings related to effectiveness and contribution of the SPIS programme that has experimented with an integrated approach to social protection and inclusion.
Scope and methodology of the Joint Evaluation

Two sets of terms of reference were used for designing this evaluation:

- **Joint Evaluation Of Integrated Approach To Social Protection And Inclusion Systems And Contribution Of The SPIS Programme Unicef Bosnia And Herzegovina. Terms Of Reference & Work Plan (Draft As Of 9 April 2012).** This document discusses proposed methodology (UNEG criterion) and scope of evaluation (2009 onwards) as well as provides a set of questions to be answered in the evaluation, under each UNEG criterion.

- **UNICEF BIH: Terms Of Reference For International Consultant / Team Leader For Mid-Term Review (MTR) Country Programme Of Cooperation 2010-2014, UNICEF And Bosnia And Herzegovina & Joint Evaluation Of Social Protection And Inclusion (SPI) In Bosnia And Herzegovina.** This document provides terms and conditions for the consultants and overview of the purpose of evaluation.

As per the first document listed above, “Joint Evaluation will cover SPIS Programme phases I and II, and will cover the following implementation period: January 2009 – up to date”. The ToRs did not specify implementation period to be covered and so the period suggested in the former document has been adhered to.

In the initial stage of the conceptualisation of this evaluation, two methodologies were identified:

- Desk review and based on desk review, development of an analytical report that identifies lessons learned, adjustments, and recommendations of the SPIS programme
- Consultations with stakeholders, partners and beneficiaries, which will be used along with desk review to develop a final report

By the time the evaluation took off, the terms of reference had been modified and instead of two sets of reports: an analytical and a final, a comprehensive, single report format was agreed upon, with table of contents and main questions to be answered listed.

**Sample**

A sample of municipalities to be visited for consultations with government and non-government partners was agreed upon in consultation with UNICEF. The sample was selected purposively to represent both entities equally and to include municipalities, which UNICEF country office considered as having responded well to the programme and those that has been somewhat weak. An equal number of municipalities from pilot and expansion phase were identified. Two control municipalities (to construct a counterfactual) were also selected, one each from the two entities where SPIS had not been implemented.

Given the limited time available for the field mission it was agreed by evaluators and UNICEF to focus on interviewing all key ministries at the national and entity levels and
holding discussions with Municipal Management Boards/ municipalities. A meeting with NGO partners was organised in the RS and FBiH.

No beneficiaries were interviewed as part of this evaluation, primarily due to time constraints. Instead, a beneficiary survey conducted as part of SPIS was used to look at beneficiary feedback for the purpose of this evaluation. A list of respondents interviewed as part of the field mission is attached as Annex 1.

The JE Work Plan document also stated that “UNICEF and partners are jointly planning to go for a ‘lighter’ evaluation, as the current complex political environment is not conducive to an overly complex Joint Evaluation”.

**Evaluation framework**

It was agreed that for the assessment of social protection and social inclusion systems in the country, we would rely on existing assessments mostly produced as part of the SPIS programmes as well as on interviews with stakeholders. No fresh data (end lines) was expected as part of this evaluation for either the social protection and inclusion systems in general or for the SPIS programme. For the assessment of SPIS programme, quantitative data already collected, annually as part of the M&E framework of the programme would serve as end-line and qualitative data would be collected from existing reports and through interviews with stakeholders.

The evaluation was conducted along the UNEG criterion and the results framework of programme SPIS was used to assess its effectiveness and impact. However, it should be noted that the results framework for the SPIS programme evolved and changed at least three times since its inception, the final version being used since 2010-2011. Assessment against expected results has been presented in this report, using the final version as the results framework (Annex VII) and data provided by annual reports for 2010 and 2011.

This joint evaluation is therefore based on both desk review and interviews with key stakeholders. Desk review of existing literature includes: assessment reports, monitoring reports and researches and studies carried out during the programme period.

Existing monitoring reports made available by UNICEF, namely Annual Report 2010 and 2011 were extensively used in determining progress against plans and in identifying key challenges. Key findings from monitoring missions of donors have been included where relevant.

**Data collection and confidentiality**

All statistical data used in this report, for instance for situation analysis, have been referenced to source which includes official government documents as well as data produced by international organisations such as the World Bank, UN agencies and OSCE. Data pertaining progress made as part of the SPIS programme (achievements against plans) have been taken from Annual Reports prepared by UNICEF for the year 2010 and 2011. Wherever available, gender disaggregated data has been provided. All data has been
All respondents to interviews and consultations for this evaluation were informed in advance by UNICEF and their consent to participate was obtained by UNICEF. Confidentiality has been maintained by not identifying respondents except where they wanted to be specifically identified with a certain comments (FMoH, for instance). Feedback shared by UNICEF country team has also remained confidential and comments/feedback are not directly attributed to any staff member.

Respondents were assured that this was an independent evaluation and that they should be free to share their feedback without fear and with the aim of helping improve the programme.

Evaluators clarified to the respondents, especially in non-SPIS municipalities that the field mission does not in any way indicate that the governments/donors would be expanding to those municipalities.

**Process of the SPI Joint Evaluation**

The Joint Evaluation on Social Protection and Inclusion (SPI) has been initiated, developed and undertaken as a joint endeavour of the BiH governments and UNICEF BiH. Throughout this process, UNICEF drafted Terms of Reference (ToR) of the JE SPI in close consultation with relevant government partners. Joint TOR were developed for the Mid-Term Review and the JE SPI, and discussed with the State and entity governments at the SPI third phase inception workshops. During these meetings, feedback was solicited from the relevant ministries of Social policy/welfare, Health, and Education. The TOR was also discussed with the government of the Republika Srpska, in Teslic on 23/24February, 2012 and in Sarajevo with the Federation of BiH government on 27/28 February, 2012. The government comments were taken into consideration and the TOR was amended accordingly. In addition, the TOR was shared with the State level Ministry of Civil Affairs representatives in April 2012.

In June 2012, UNICEF organized a joint government-UNICEF consultation workshop where the whole programme was presented and discussed, including the Social protection and inclusion sector. Useful feedback and comments on SPI were received, which are reflected in the Report. In addition, the external consultants met with a number of government representatives at all levels to follow up and discuss specific issues. Their comments and suggestions are also analysed and reflected in this Report.

Once the draft SPI Joint Evaluation Report was prepared, the key findings were presented during a workshop in October 2012, with representatives from Social policy/welfare, Education and Health ministries, and institutions from the State and Entity level, as well as Brcko District. The full draft report was shared with the governments at the Entity and State level, and their comments are being included in this report (currently waiting for all comments).

**Constraints and limitations**
Some constraints and limitations of this evaluation were anticipated during the preparation stages of the evaluation and some emerged during the course of the evaluation. Some significant constraints and limitations faced are listed below:

- One main constraint in this evaluation was related to timing and sequencing of the field mission. It was originally envisaged that desk review would precede field mission, however due to delays in contracting process, there was little time for desk review before field mission began. Most part of the desk review was done after completing field mission. The logical progression of evaluation methodology was compromised in some ways as a result of this.
- The second constraint comes from the nature of questions identified in the JE WP and the lack of existing evidence base to answer those questions. For instance, questions related to whether inequalities have been reduced as a result of the SPIS programme were impossible to answer simply because data on inequality was not collected either prior to or during the course of the programme. Macro data available from existing literature or feedback from stakeholders have been used to make any extrapolations on questions such as these. The evaluation itself could not have undertaken a survey to measure inequalities in all 21 municipalities with SPIS is being implemented.
- Another constraint comes from the sheer volume of documents produced as part of SPIS, which have not been systematically assessed for their usefulness and which have been repetitive. Identification of the final version of the results framework was a challenge as well since various versions were stored under various documents (annual reports, stand by documents, reports to donors). There were small inconsistencies in the different versions of the ‘final’ framework provided under different documents.
- Not being able to interview or obtain direct feedback from communities and beneficiaries is perhaps the most significant constraint of this evaluation, in terms of assessing actual changing in lives of children. Also, given that the results framework itself is focused on changes at the level of duty bearers and existing monitoring records only monitor outputs, and given that there was no baseline available, there was little scope for assessing impacts on children or goals such as inequality. The evaluators however used the existing beneficiary survey to make up for the lack of direct feedback from beneficiaries.
- The Cantonal Ministries were not included in the list of respondents for this interview and this in part is explained by the lack of their active participation in the programme itself. This has also been a leaning of this evaluation and is described elsewhere in detail.

Some other specific constraints and challenges faced during this evaluation are:

1. As will be described later in this report, the results framework of the SPIS programme changed over 3 times since its inception and at neither stages of revision was any baseline data collected/ available. The most recent framework and its indicators were only finalised in 2011, and by the time of this evaluation, only one year had passed since the new indicators were put in place. This one-year period has been an intense period of conducting activities and by the time of this
evaluation, data related to outputs (numbers of training conducted) could be available and not on impact of those trainings - all for up to the year 2011. Also, whatever monitoring data has been collected by end of project could not be compared to baseline to indicate extent of progress.

2. Lack of comprehensive monitoring framework for the programme. The M&E framework of the SPIS programme identifies results at the level of outputs (how many persons attended training programmes, completion of report and its adoption by authorities, number of action plans drafted and approved by authorities, number of centres established). Data so available therefore is at the level of outputs only. Empirical evidence on outcomes and impacts were not available and could not be used in the evaluation. Instead, feedback from stakeholders and UNICEF were used to discuss outcomes and impacts as well as some studies such as the ‘beneficiaries survey’ conducted under SPIS programme were used to guide assessment of impact. This evaluation could not provide empirical evidence for impacts.

3. Lack of consistent baseline data. Whatever monitoring data has been collected by end of project could not be compared to baseline to indicate extent of progress.

4. In many cases where specific data was provided by UNICEF and its partners, such as data on increased allocation of the municipal budgets towards social protection and inclusion of children, no comprehensive assessment document was shared with evaluators. The partner NGO responsible for such monitoring provided this data during interviews and this was also repeated in some UNICEF reports and interviews with UNICEF staff. Monitoring at the level of changes in lives of children (impact level) was not part of the original plan and during the course of the interview evaluators were informed that a set of indicators to monitor at the impact level had just been developed and in the remaining phase of the SPIS programme such data would be collected. This report therefore is not able to provide empirical evidence related to impacts.

5. Another related constraint is that since the programme has focused primarily on systemic response, with only few indicators look at direct benefits to children, and given that there is no baseline to compare emerging results with, it has been difficult to assess improvements or changes in the lives of children. UNICEF has recently introduced a set of indicators for monitoring results at the level of end beneficiaries and in a few years such results can be documented and reported on.

6. Wherever existing monitoring data provided disaggregation based on gender, age, ethnicity, these have been used. However, given the lack of baselines, it was not possible to concur the progress made in terms of indicators such as equity. We do have results that indicate an almost equal number of boys and girls have benefitted from the services provided under SPIS. But gender equity as such was not an explicit object of SPIS and during interviews UNICEF staff shared that the programme did not have an explicit agenda for closing gender gaps (“the programme is for all children, regardless of their gender or ethnicity”).
2. Description of the systems and programmes for social protection and inclusion

The term ‘systems’ rather than the singular ‘system’ is preferred by the governments to reflect that there is no single system (within a single governance structure) that is responsible for social protection and social inclusion in BiH. There are two separate entities (FBiH and RS) and there is an autonomously governed area BD, all three have their own laws, policies and programmes on social protection and pertaining inclusion.

Given the fragmented nature of governance in the country, competencies for policies are divided not only across horizontal thematic boundaries (education, welfare, health), but also vertically across the state (national), entity, cantonal (in the case of FBiH), and municipal level (the least powers for policy). Given the Constitutional arrangement, there is very little that can be imposed at the national level, thereby allowing for entities and BD to develop their own policies and laws. This has more often than not implied that there is no harmonization or standardization in policies and provisions for the citizens. The following section describes the ‘frameworks’ that provide for social protection and social inclusion in BiH.

2.1. Frameworks for Social Protection in BiH

BiH has a long history of social security and social welfare programmes (since 1959), both of which are part of social protection. The former are essentially insurance and non-insurance based schemes and benefits while the latter is a series of services primarily provided by Social Welfare Centres such as administration of social benefits programmes, psychosocial support to beneficiaries, providing referrals, and so on, as well as, other care institutions/agencies such as for rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and day care centres.

A significant part of the competencies pertaining child protection fall within the purview of existing social protection framework, specifically under the Ministries of Social Welfare or equivalents (there are different Ministries with similar competencies in different entities and BD and in the Cantons) and the Centres for Social Welfare. The latter are responsible for the protection of children without parental care and families and children at risk of separation; for referral and first level interventions in cases of domestic violence. Benefits and care services for these children are provided/administered through these centres.

The current set of social protection programmes (see Diagram 1 below) is a mix of older programmes from the pre-war era and new initiatives that have been under taken in the post war era. Universal social security is an example of the former, entirely insurance based, social security including health insurance, pension, unemployment benefits, maternity benefits, disability allowance and child allowance. Following the war, in the 1990s, non-insurance based cash transfers were extended to those affected by the war - veterans and invalids and surviving families, refugees, IDPs, civilian victims of war (see Table 1).
In addition to these schemes, social protection services have been provided by a network of centres for social welfare and specialized institutes for providing care services for children without parental care, persons with disabilities and so on.

**Table 1: Insurance and Non-Insurance based social security schemes in BiH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Insurance based schemes (financed by contributions from employers and employees)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health Insurance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-insurance based cash transfers/social assistance (financed by budgets of governments at different tiers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>War veterans and invalids and surviving families, refugees, civilian victims of war</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There isn’t a singular ‘conceptual framework’ on social protection per se in the country. As per the Constitution of BiH, the competencies pertaining social protection rests with Entities, while the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees at the state level have the coordination role and the responsibility of reporting on human rights treaties and obligations to international community. And in the case of FBiH, Cantons also have the competencies for defining scope of social protection/social welfare. There are different legislations and policies, providing for different entitlements and defining beneficiaries differently at each level of policy making. In total there are 13 different
Ministries at different levels of governments\(^2\). There are at least 13 different policy/legal documents defining the scope of social protection in Bosnia and Herzegovina. While the language used in legal and policy documents is usually ‘social welfare’ and ‘social security’, the ones specifically using the term ‘social protection’ is only in the case of RS and that too is a recent development (see Table 2). A detail list of all policies and legislations pertaining social protection and inclusion in BiH has been produced by UNICEF\(^3\) (see Annex III).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of government</th>
<th>Definition of social protection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Entity level-RS)</td>
<td>The Law on Social Welfare of Republika Srpska(^4), Article 2, defines social welfare as an “organized activity aimed at curbing and removing causes and consequences of social need in all forms of life and work through the provision of support to citizens and their families, when they find themselves in such circumstances.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Entity level-RS)</td>
<td>The new Law on Social Protection in RS, Article 2, defines social protection as social activity of the public interests, whose goal is to provide assistance and empowerment to individuals and families for an independent and productive life in the society, as well as for the prevention and elimination of social exclusion(^5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Entity level-FBiH)</td>
<td>The Law on Basic Social Welfare, the Welfare of Civil War Victims and the Welfare of Families with Children(^6) defines welfare in terms of material and other allocations for the family to help in raising, upbringing and providing for the child. Welfare of families with children is aimed at creating equal conditions for proper and healthy development for each child, to nurture, raise, bring up and protect children, to enable access and exercise of rights and financial and other allocations for children without one/ both parents &amp; children with psycho-physical needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Canton level-FBiH)</td>
<td>The Canton of Central Bosnia, FBiH, in its law on social protection(^7) defines social protection as organized social activity focused on protection of individual and family or group of people who are in social need in the Canton. Social need is defined as permanent or temporary condition of an individual or family caused by war events, natural disasters, general economic crisis, psycho-physical condition of an individual or other causes which cannot be removed without assistance of another person or social community. Social work, is defined as psychosocial pedagogic activity focused professionally on improving quality of life in general.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are therefore, several different laws at different levels that define what constitutes social protection and social welfare and that the emerging trend is to use the term social protection instead of social welfare, which is increasingly understood as narrower than social protection. This is exemplified in the case of FBiH where the existing Law on Basic Social Welfare, the Welfare of Civil War Victims and the Welfare of Families with Children is...

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\(^2\) 10 at cantonal level in FBiH, 1 at entity level in FBiH, 1 at entity level in RS and 1 at the level of District Brcko

\(^3\) Zehra Kačapor Džihić. 2010. Institutional Analysis of the Social Protection and Inclusion System for children and families with children in Bosnia and Herzegovina. UNICEF BiH.

\(^4\) Official Gazette of the Republic of Srpska, no. 33/08

\(^5\) Article 2 of the The Law on Social Protection, Official Gazzette of Republika Srpska OG 5/93., 15/96, 110/03

\(^6\) Official Gazette of the Federation BiH, no. 36/99

\(^7\) The Law On Social Protection, Protection Of Civil War Victims And Protection Of Family With Children, Central Bosnia Canton, FBiH (2002).

**Framework for child protection**

There is no comprehensive normative framework for child protection in BiH. Policies and legislations pertaining to various aspects of child protection are dispersed under the competencies of various Ministries within the entities (and canton level in FBiH) and BD. Part of child protection is covered under the Ministries, policies and laws pertaining to social welfare and have been described above: social welfare of family and children, protection of family and children. Services and benefits pertaining child protection are provided through a network of Centres for Social Welfare, along with other institutions such as those providing day care or rehabilitation services.

The legal and policy framework for Juvenile Justice is part of the competencies of the Ministries of Justice, Ministries of Interior (in RS only) and ministries of social protection centres for social welfare have important roles in implementation of alternative measures, prevention of juvenile offending and providing post release support (reintegration into family and community). Some Centres for Social Welfare also have specialized units for dealing with juvenile offenders and juveniles at risk. They serve as interface with courts and residential care facilities, often placing children in such facilities, following up and provide referrals.⁸

Framework for Juvenile Justice is provided in the National Strategy against Juvenile Offending (2006–2010) and a Juvenile Justice Coordination Body (2009). The National Action Plan for Children in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2002–2010) also contains a section on juvenile justice. A law on juvenile justice based on international standards was adopted by Republika Srpska in February 2010 and came into force in January 2011⁹. A similar legislation was adopted in BD (in November 2011) while draft law is under consideration in the Federation, but has not yet been adopted. The main institutions involved in policy and administration related to juvenile justice include the police, judiciary, prisons and residential facilities (day care centres/ correctional centres) and centres for social welfare.

In terms of refugee and internally displaced persons, temporary agreement on fulfilment of needs and rights of the children of returnees (March 2002) and the Framework Laws on education, provide for the inclusion of refugee and displaced children in the education system in the country.

### 2.2. Frameworks for Social Inclusion in BiH

The term “social inclusion” is a relatively new entrant in the policy frameworks in the country, primarily emerging as a part of the European integration process whereby social

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⁹ The Law on Protection and Treatment of Children and Minors in Criminal Proceedings
inclusion is placed highly on the European agenda. The first comprehensive study on social exclusion was conducted in 2006 by UNDP, indicating that nearly 50 per cent of the population of the country was excluded in various ways\textsuperscript{10}. In this section inclusion in the areas of education and health will be focused on since they are most relevant to the subject of children’s rights.

Social Inclusion Strategy

In terms of policies and legislations specifically addressing inclusion, the most important would be the Social Inclusion Strategy (2009)\textsuperscript{11}, SIS. The Federation of BiH (FBiH) and Brcko District (BD) adopted their respective Development Strategies and Social Inclusion Strategies, together with corresponding Implementation Action Plans, while Republika Srpska (RS) commenced activities towards developing a Development Strategy of Republika Srpska. The fact that Republika Srpska opted for creating its own strategy is one of the reasons why the SIS has not been adopted as a ‘national’ policy yet.

According to the (draft) Social Inclusion Strategy (2009) social inclusion is defined as\textsuperscript{12}:

The SIS document identifies and describes vulnerable target groups such as women and girls, internally displaced persons and refugees, national minorities (ex. Roma), persons with disabilities and among them women and children as further excluded, pensioners, youth (not participating in education and employment), and children (who lack access to basic services and protection).

An important aspect of the SIS document is that it describes the link between social protection and social inclusion, whereby social protection is seen to contribute to social inclusion. Social protection in terms of social support provided to individuals enables individuals to participate in or partake of essential services and protection and goods, and thereby contributes to social inclusion.

The SIS lays down priorities and corresponding measures to be taken to improve inclusion in 6 areas: employment; families with children; education; health; pension; persons with disabilities.

Some of the measures listed for improving access are improved and efficient resource planning, specific measures to improve access to basic services (to education, health, for

\textsuperscript{10}UNDP. 2007. National Human Development Report (NHDR) Social Inclusion in Bosnia and Herzegovina. (”The composite social exclusion index suggested that in 2006 around 50 percent of the population was excluded in terms of access to at least one form of health, education, services or participation in society”)


\textsuperscript{12}Ibid.
example), improving linkage between education and labour market. Since this strategy has only recently (2011) been adopted by the FBIH and Brcko District, there are no reports of its implementation as of this joint evaluation.

**Inclusion in Education**

The overall framework for inclusion in education can be found in the Constitution of BiH which guarantees right to education for *all*. The reforms in the education sector initiated since 2002, played an important role in giving policy directions for improving access and quality of education in general and several of the policies, strategies and laws developed and adopted during this period have specifically identified social inclusion as a priority. See Annex IV for brief overview of policy frameworks for *inclusive* education in BiH. See also Annex III for list of all laws and policies pertaining education in BiH.

**Inclusion in Health Care**

The language of ‘inclusive health’ is not as common in BiH as inclusive education has become. A universal health insurance is provided all employed adults and their children (see above in Table 1). Law on Health Insurance have been adopted in both entities and in BD. Amendments to the existing law in FBIH and Law on Health Insurance in RS along with two rulebooks, both provide for compulsory health insurance for children under 15 for RS and under 18 for FBIH (or under 26 if they are still studying) and for persons over 65 years of age if they are not already covered. This includes children whose parents are not employed and children without parental care. See Annex V for brief overview of policy frameworks for inclusive health care. See also Annex III for list of all laws and policies pertaining health care in BiH.

2.2.1. **Impact of existing social protection and inclusion systems on vulnerable populations**

As part of the implementation of SPIS, government partners have defined the following categories as vulnerable children in the country: children with special needs, children living in rural areas, children without parental care, children victims of violence, trafficking, abuse and exploitation, children from families with more than two children, children in dysfunctional families, juvenile offenders, children with poor upbringing, returnee children and children with no access to health care.

Assessments conducted as part of the SPIS programme, Situation Analysis, Functional Review and Institutional review of social protection and inclusion systems in Bosnia and Herzegovina suggest that there is *no systematic approach* towards protection and inclusion of a child who is vulnerable. The irony of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is that there is a plethora of laws and policies, there are many systems for addressing protection and inclusion, but there is no systematic approach nor comprehensive response, and services in each sector (education, health, welfare) are provided with limited links between each area.

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13 Based on existing assessments conducted both as part of SPIS programme, as well as from external resources.
- Systems for social protection and inclusion in BiH are marked by fragmented legal and financial frameworks such that children living under different administrative set-ups (different entities, and Brcko District, and in Federation BiH different Cantons) receive unequal services and benefits.

- Fragmentation of the financial framework, financing system and the complexity of the governmental structure contribute to the uneven funding and services provided to children and to the institutions dealing with children throughout the country.

- Social welfare and child protection system is not financed adequately across Bosnia and Herzegovina, and there is a need to improve records on groups of population that are the beneficiaries of these outlays.

- At the local levels, there is little or no communication and cooperation with regards to services rendered to children among schools, social service centres and health clinics and other services (except in the case of SPIS municipalities)

- Centres for Social Welfare are understaffed, underfunded and lacking physical, human and other resources to be able to perform all of the duties and responsibilities rendered to them. They do not act as coordinating bodies for inter-sectoral cooperation in the local communities. Despite various measures, they are still viewed as centres where cash allowances are administered.

- Attempts to reform laws are also fragmented and reformed laws are unlikely to have an impact unless they are backed by comprehensive budgets, implementation plans and are harmonized and integrated with reforms in other sectors.

The following looks at existing evidence on how far the current systems are reaching the vulnerable (children):

**Systems for social protection**

Existing social protection framework and provisions in BiH, in terms of social security in particular, have been extensively criticized by the international community on the grounds that it is fiscally unsustainable, inefficient and that distribution of benefits is skewed and unequal. According to a World Bank report, several factors make the current social benefits accounting for 4 percent of the GDP, fiscally unsustainable: the fact that BiH is facing a credit squeeze, fall in demand for exports, drop in the size of remittances and reduction in bilateral aid assistance (the latter has also affected funding of SPIS programme). The fiscal unsustainability of current social transfers is also evident from the decrease in child allowance and maternity benefits by 30 percent in RS since early 2011.

According to a World Bank report, benefits are skewed with war veteran-related benefits accounting for 75 percent of total spending on non-insurance social protection cash transfers in RS and 66 percent in FBiH. Also, a higher share of overall expenditure on these benefits is going to the richer population. The poorest receive only 18 per cent of

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15 OSCE. 2012. The Right to Social Protection in Bosnia and Herzegovina Concerns on Adequacy and Equality. OSCE Mission to BiH.

overall non-insurance social protection cash transfers-a smaller proportion than their share of the total population of the country.

Fragmentation of competencies led to a proliferation of different policies and legislations spread across various Ministries at various levels. In terms of social benefits this fragmentation has led to different amounts being transferred to persons with similar needs but living under different administrative units. One argument by the World Bank is that poor targeting of benefits has led to thin spread of benefits to large population without discriminating in the basis of need. At present, the World Bank is partnering with the Governments on overall reforms in the area of social benefits/assistance/security\textsuperscript{17}\textsuperscript{18}\textsuperscript{19}.

Until SPIS programme, there was little coordination across Ministries within Entities and between entities or service providers at the level of local governments. Needs of vulnerable communities and children have not been comprehensively addressed\textsuperscript{20}.

**Systems for inclusive education**

As is evident from the overview provided earlier, there is a plethora of laws and policies that provide for social inclusion as an objective under education. There are however various challenges in the implementation of these laws, policies and action plans. One of the challenges pertains to lack of harmonization in specific provisions and interventions across different levels- a constraint faced in the case of all policies in the country given its fragmented set up. The other is in terms of inadequate budget allocations (also affected in part due to fragmented financial framework).

The primary education statistics for the country\textsuperscript{21} reveal that although net-rate of children in primary education in BiH is 97.2, the enrolment rate for the secondary education is much lower at 76.2 per cent, and even lower is the rate of students who complete secondary education in the allotted time (54%). 80% of Roma children in Bosnia and Herzegovina do not attend primary school and rural children and returnee children are often segregated from the education system\textsuperscript{22}. Preschool education is not entirely free (only 150 hours are free) and it’s still accessible only to children in urban areas and whose parents are employed. The rate of school attendance in preschool education in rural areas is 2.4 per cent, while in urban areas the rate is 14.3 per cent.

Exclusionary practices in education continue in many parts of the country where

\textsuperscript{17} World Bank. 2011. Social Safety Nets in the Western Balkans: Design, Implementation, and Performance. Human Development Sector Unit South East Europe Country Unit Europe and Central Asia Region.

\textsuperscript{18} OSCE. 2012. The Right to Social Protection in Bosnia and Herzegovina Concerns on Adequacy and Equality. OSCE Mission to BiH.

\textsuperscript{19} World Bank. 2009. Social Assistance Transfers in Bosnia and Herzegovina Moving Toward a More Sustainable and Better-Targeted Safety Net: Policy Note. Human Development Sector Unit Europe and Central Asia

\textsuperscript{20} Zehra Kačapor Džihić. 2010. Institutional Analysis of the Social Protection and Inclusion System for children and families with children in Bosnia and Herzegovina. UNICEF BiH.

\textsuperscript{21} Innova 2011: Study of the situation of vulnerable groups of children and policy framework and strategies that support the services of social protection and inclusion of children in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Situation Analysis.

segregated schooling or mono-ethnic schooling is still practiced. Only one in every fourth ethnic minority student has exercised the right to the curriculum of choice. Lack of political will has been cited as a reason why segregation in schools has not as yet been effectively addressed\(^\text{23}\). One study concludes that rudimentary elements of the social inclusion paradigm is still largely reliant on the intuition and enthusiasm of individuals in the government or NGO sectors and inclusion in education is most widely understood in its narrowest sense as the inclusion of students with special intellectual, physical and sensory needs and that too mostly in regular primary schools. Important aspects relating to the inclusion of cultural diversity and inclusion in secondary education sector is skewed\(^\text{24}\).

**Systems for inclusive health care**

Despite legal provisions certain groups remain without health care insurance\(^\text{25}\): unregistered unemployed persons, employed persons whose companies are not contributing towards insurance, persons from the Roma communities partly because they do not have personal identification documents or partly because of high unemployment among them. Large numbers of children, remain uncovered due to lack of knowledge among parents and children on the rights they are entitled to under the scope of health care, and methods of exercising such rights.

Special protection measures for specific groups of people: pregnant women/ mothers/ babies, children/adolescents, elderly people, vulnerable groups, such as the homeless, drug addicts, unemployed, do exist in a certain measure, but more under social welfare schemes. Such measures have been found to be insufficient. There are no special health care measures for large part of population in social need that are left uncovered by the universal health care\(^\text{26}\).

According to one report, Law Amending the Law on Health Insurance of FBiH that provides for direct health protection of people over 65 and children from birth to 15 years of age is not implemented in all cantons because the cantons have not allocated budgets for that purpose\(^\text{27}\). However, as subsequent sections discuss, lack of funds is not the only reason why such social protection measures do not receive priority.

Among disabled persons, those disabled during the war have disproportionately higher share of benefits than other persons with disability.

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\(^{25}\) Initiative and Civil Action. 2010. Why are we not equal in rights to health protection? Analysis and recommendations. Publication financed by European Union and Open Society Fund BiH.

\(^{26}\) Ibid

\(^{27}\) Ibid.
2.2.2. What are the main constraints on supply in the area of social protection and inclusion?

In terms of supply – policies, laws and provisions, there is a plethora of supply measures. However, the main constraint is that these are not harmonised across the country and some underdeveloped communities with limited budgets continue to remain bereft of benefits. According to the World Bank and others (such as OSCE), the social benefits programme is not well targeted and overburdened, and it is not fiscally sustainable.

Several groups in need of assistance in fact, fall through the cracks. Benefits are “status-based” in some cases and not always “needs-based”, such as in the case of the war veterans. A person with disability (not related to armed conflict) with 100 per cent disability may receive a maximum of BAM 396 monthly while a disabled war veteran with the same level of disability may receive a maximum of BAM 1845 monthly28.

An example of how the benefit programmes is treating children unequally is: while widows of fallen soldier with two children enrolled in primary school receive comparatively similar benefits in both RS (BAM 475) and FBiH (BAM 483), widow of civilian with two children in primary school receives less than half of that in the case of RS (BAM 150) and less by 30 per cent in FBiH (BAM 338)29.

There is no minimum amount of child allowance applicable throughout the country. Eligibility requirements for child allowance and the amount of child allowance provided are different in the two entities and BD, and they vary among all ten cantons of the Federation of BiH depending on the financial capacity of each canton. In FBiH the financing of child care benefits and institutions that deal with children is mostly provided through cantonal budgets, although some services such as schooling and healthcare are funded through a combination of cantonal, municipal and Federation contributions. In both, RS and FBiH, municipalities provide for ‘extended benefits’ from their own budgets, covering various types of financial assistance, such as scholarships, etc.30

In FBiH big discrepancies exist between cantons that have more financial resources and those that have less (rich Canton vs. poor Canton and rich municipality vs. poor municipality) as well as those that have regulated their rights and benefits under the entity law on Social Protection and those that have not. According to one assessment, in Cantons that have regulated benefits, child allowance ranges from BAM 10 to 33 monthly, while in the RS, it is between BAM 45 to 10031.

The economic situation of the Municipality is not the most important factor, which influences the situation of children. There are some poor but highly child sensitive

28 OSCE. 2012. The Right to Social Protection in Bosnia and Herzegovina Concerns on Adequacy and Equality. OSCE Mission to BiH.
29 Ibid.
30 Some of the examples of extended rights at municipal levels include: scholarships for all regular high education students, secondary students and children without parental care; support for transportation for primary and secondary students, one-off cash benefits for third, fourth and any further child in the family; support for procurement of textbooks and didactic material for primary school students and funds for different local NGOs and associations which deal with SPI
31 OSCE. 2012. The Right to Social Protection in Bosnia and Herzegovina Concerns on Adequacy and Equality. OSCE Mission to BiH.
Municipality (e.g. Derventa), with 10 percent of budget allocated to social protection. In Republika Srpska, although allowances vary from those in FBiH and BD, newborn child assistance, child allowance and allowance for developmental needs of children are provided through the RS Child Protection Fund equally across the RS. Preschool education for children, children with developmental difficulties and children under extended inpatient treatment and the rights to educational programs for school readiness are equally applied throughout the entire entity and are financed from the RS budget.

In the area of social inclusion specifically, as mentioned above, the most needed often fall through the cracks in social benefits programme. In education, there is more focus on children with special needs than on other forms of exclusion that are politically sensitive. During interviews with centres for social welfare (as part of this evaluation), the centre representatives shared that they were not aware of how many eligible persons were not receiving their services and benefits. CSW do not have an outreach, information and communication component such that only those beneficiaries who arrive at their doorstep receive services while those who do not, tend to remain without benefits and services. This was evident in the beneficiary survey conducted under SPIS where several beneficiaries shared that they were not aware that they could specific services (such as support from CSW to access rehabilitation services for children with disability).

Social protection and inclusion in the country is characterised by diverse policy and legal frameworks, unequal benefits and services, weak targeting mechanisms and incomprehensive and lack of integrated approach to the vulnerable.

While BiH received extensive donor aid in the period immediately after the war, over the last five years, international aid to BiH has drastically reduced. Bilateral aid has been replaced by the EU assistance within the efforts for accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina into the EU. The EU assistance at this stage is focusing mainly on institution building, which is where SPIS comes in. SPIS previously had 3 international donors, including 2 bilateral aid agencies that have since withdrawn support from BiH.

2.2.3. What are the main constraints on the demand side of social protection and inclusion?

During the course of various studies undertaken as part of the SPIS programme (such as the beneficiary survey), it was revealed that marginalised and excluded communities (such as Roma, families in rural areas with children with disability, etc.) are not always informed and aware about their rights and entitlements. Even when they are informed, they do not know how to access them. Often these groups live geographically further away from the centres of governance and specifically CSW that are the primary agency for contacting and disbursing benefits. There is no mechanism so far for informing the communities about rights and benefits and therefore, communities that are physically further off or have limited information are not aware of and demanding for their rights.

Even when communities are aware of their rights, often the costs of traveling to access services and entitlements are prohibitive for poor and excluded communities.
Another important factor affecting poor demand for social protection and inclusion is the fact that marginalised and excluded communities lack agency and very few civil society organisations are working with these communities to empower them and make them count. This is particularly important for children who do not have the opportunities to provide inputs and feedback on their needs. This important gap has been addressed under SPIS through the Participatory Action Research (PAR) methodology, which provided children with opportunities to participate in local development processes. Also, the recently concluded DEG programme of the joint UN agencies, created space for communities to participate with local governments in finding solutions for lack of access to water. Apart from these two initiatives, there are none that are working with communities to generate demand for improved social protection and inclusion services and efficient use of existing budgetary allocations.

2.3. Conceptualization of Social Protection with the SPIS programme

Through several consultative meetings, UNICEF and Government of BiH, as part of their joint programme for enhancing social protection and inclusion systems for children in Bosnia and Herzegovina (SPIS), have agreed on defining social protection and inclusion as follows:

- To marginalized and socially vulnerable groups it allows the access to primary social protection;
- It particularly protects the vulnerable groups and victims of multiple exclusion, which emerges as a combination of violence, abuse, exploitation, risk behavior and poverty;
- It presupposes an integrated approach to child protection that monitors the basic elements of policy development and activity planning. An integrated approach in this project means that all important parts of the system are linked: from data gathering to strategy planning, from legislative development to expert training, from strategy harmonization with the budget to monitoring and evaluation. This also presupposes cooperation between different sectors within the social protection system, such as the education, health, social welfare, financing, justice, interior affairs, employment, etc., which ensures link between different social services for children at the level of policies, planning and implementation;
- It presupposes the establishment of referent mechanisms between different social services and institutions that develop policies and coordinate the work of social services;
- It is presupposed that social protection and inclusion system is planned at the policy level, but that it truly happens at the local level, with participation of social protection institutions (such as health institutions, schools, centers for social work, etc.), decision makers, civil sector, families/guardians, and children themselves.

The term social protection (“društvena zaštita”) is introduced, to make a clear distinction between this term and the term social welfare (“socijalna zaštita”) which has traditionally been used in Bosnia and Herzegovina to describe the competencies and the mandate of the Ministries for Social Welfare and appertain to the services provided by the Centres for Social Welfare.
This definition (and the way it is understood and communicated by stakeholders) implies that basic services are *part of* social protection and child protection. The term often used, when loosely translated into English implies ‘societal protection’, that is everything that a society does to protect children. In this definition, education and health services are *for the protection* of children or contribute to the protection of children.

The SPIS programme has therefore expanded the understanding and framework for social protection as far as children are concerned, to go beyond the traditional social security and welfare to encompass *all social inputs* for protecting the child, including health, education, social welfare and protection services.

With the introduction of the SPIS programme, the definition of social protection as applicable to children has been sought to change. The concept and framework of social protection for children has been expanded to include all policies, strategies and services that would aim:

- To protect children from being left out of essential services such as education and health care;
- To protect children from abuse, violence, neglect and exploitation;
- To create an environment that reduces risks and vulnerabilities of children.

The principle of inclusion - that no child should be left behind- is central to the conceptual framework of SPIS programme. A requirement of this framework is that policies, strategies and services (education, health, social welfare, protection) must be based on an understanding of how and which children are left behind and must be geared to respond to ensure that these children are not left behind.

Social Protection and Inclusion Systems, a new conceptual framework introduced under programme SPIS has evolved to refer to a set of policies, mechanisms and services that promote the inclusive protection of children from poverty, neglect, abuse, violence, exploitation and deprivation of access to basic services.

Inclusive protection implies that the policies, mechanisms and services are designed such that *all* children benefit from it and that special steps are taken to include those children that are or are at risk of exclusion.

An important feature of SPIS programme is the emphasis on integrated delivery of services to reduce wastage of resources and ensure comprehensive access (health, education, welfare, psychosocial support, disability support, etc.)

### 2.4. Description of the programme for enhancing social protection and social inclusion systems in BiH

The Programme for Enhancing the Social Protection and Inclusion Systems for Children in Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereinafter: the SPIS Programme) is a joint programme of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina and UNICEF Country Office in BiH. Since its inception in 2008, it has been funded by the European Union, the Government of the United Kingdom – Department for International Development (DfID), the Government of
Norway and UNICEF.

First implemented since January 2009 \(^{32}\) over the course of four years, it has been implemented in partnership with the governments at all levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 21 locations, from both Entities: FBiH and RS, as well as in Brcko District \(^{33}\).

The programme has been implemented in three phases, mostly related to donor funding cycles. In the first two phases the programme was implemented in the ‘pilot’ 10 municipalities in FBiH and RS, while in the third and current phase it is being implemented in additional 11 locations in FBiH, RS and Brcko District (see Annex VI for list of municipalities where SPIS models have been/are being implemented). The donors involved in the programme have also changed with the phases:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Donors</th>
<th>Models implemented in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1</td>
<td>Jan 2009 – March 2010</td>
<td>EU (IPA 2008), DfID and Govt. of Norway and UNICEF</td>
<td>Pilot 10 municipalities in RS and FBiH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>Jan 2010 – June 2011</td>
<td>EU (IPA 2008), DfID and Govt. of Norway and UNICEF</td>
<td>Continued in pilot 10 municipalities in RS and FBiH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>Nov 2011 – Nov 2012</td>
<td>EU (IPA 2010) and UNICEF</td>
<td>Additional 10 municipalities in RS, FBiH and Brcko District</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{32}\) Although the agreement with the donors was signed by end of 2008, the programme was officially implemented from January 2009. As per SPIS 1\(^{st}\) Annual Report 1\(^{st}\) January 2009 – 31\(^{st}\) March 2010

\(^{33}\) At the beginning of the programme, in 2009-2010, pilot municipal models were not planned for Brcko District. Only establishment of working groups was planned. In the subsequent phases of the programme, one municipal model was also established in BD.
2.4.1. Results and monitoring framework

The initial objectives and results framework of the programme were revised thrice. In the first result framework, the programme aimed for establishing a fiscally sustainable social protection system for vulnerable children. By the second year of the programme implementation, in 2010, the aims and objectives were revised to reflect more realistic goals given the progress made in the first year and lessons learnt in terms of potential for achieving results given the complex and fragmented structure of governance in the country.

Revisions in the results framework were in part influenced by regular feedback from donors. The Monitoring report by the EC monitoring mission in 2009 stated that the “OVIs (objectively verifiable indicators) do not satisfy ‘SMART’ criteria being more relevant at the operational level than on the level of the LF (Logical Framework)".34 In the subsequent monitoring report (2010) as well, the same was noted: “The Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVI) at the PP and Results level are not fully appropriate. They lack consistency and an indicative timeframe for their completion (not time-bound). Therefore it is difficult to measure and report on the achievement of project outputs and objectives”35.

A 2010 annual report by another donor, DFID also noted similar challenges with existing results framework stating that: SPIS project is overly ambitious.... in the logical framework for the project there is a clear disconnect between the Goal (“Fiscally sustainable and effective social protection and inclusion system serving children and families in BiH”) and the Purpose (“Integrated social protection and inclusion strategy designed, piloted and replicated by national and sub-national government institutions”) statements and the results and strategies to achieve the Outputs”36.

Subsequently, the results framework was revised with the help of external consultants and the new LF matrix has since been referred to as the final results framework (March 2010-June 2011, see Annex VII) and the same has been in effect ever since. The final revised results framework is described below:37 38:

Project purpose:

- Strengthening social protection and inclusion for children through improvement of existing public policy frameworks
- Enhancing the management and coordination structures of social protection and inclusion for children at all governance levels.

34 From EC Monitoring Report: MR-120929.01, 05/06/2009
35 From EC Monitoring Report MR-129364.01. 22/02/2010
37 From revised logical framework and from EUD report 2011. However, Annual Report 2010-2011 uses slightly different language: To enhance the social welfare system at all levels of government, by strengthening the policy framework and the capacities of service providers in the area of social protection and inclusion of children, in particular with a view to enable them to apply a needs-based and rights-based approach
The objectives and corresponding outputs have been developed as follows:

**Overall objective:** To improve the social protection system at all levels of governance through strengthening the SPIS policy framework and the capacities of social service providers, in particular to apply a needs-based and human rights approach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To identify and propose priorities for implementation of the Social Inclusion Strategy of FBiH and BD, and of the RS Development Strategy, from the perspective of social inclusion and protection of children,</td>
<td>Gaps in the current systems of social protection and inclusion of children are identified and proposal for priorities in the implementation of the SIS for FBiH and BD and DS in RS prepared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To strengthen the capacities and functioning of coordination bodies, which are responsible for implementation of the social protection and inclusion programmes for children, at all levels,</td>
<td>The capacities and functioning of BiH, RS and FBiH management boards, as well as SPI of children entity working groups' and BiH Expert Team are enhanced to secure institutional sustainability of the SPI of children programme in the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To update and improve municipal referral mechanisms, social services and institutional mechanisms for coordination that are indispensable for development and implementation of municipal models of social protection and inclusion of children in 10 target municipalities,</td>
<td>Institutional mechanisms for coordination, referrals, and social services necessary for the development and implementation of the SPI of the children local package in 10 target municipalities are identified, defined and delivered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. To strengthen the capacities of local municipal bodies in the areas of management and coordination of implementation of municipal models of social protection and inclusions of children, as well as the capacities of service providers in 10 target municipalities,</td>
<td>Capacities of the local bodies to manage and coordinate implementation of SPI of the children local packages as well as the service providers to deliver SPI of the children services in all 10 target municipalities are improved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. To increase the visibility of the SPIS programme and raise awareness on social protection and inclusion of children.</td>
<td>Visibility and promotion activities concerning the SPI of children are implemented.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See also Annex VII for complete LFA Matrix, which also lists inputs, resources, lists indicators, means of verification and assumptions. As is evident from the LF, the results framework is conceptualised only at the level of outputs and not outcomes or impacts in terms of actual changes in the lives of beneficiaries. Outputs are in the area of duty bearer’s strategies, capacities and mechanisms. All risks and assumptions are linked to political will, commitment as well as commitment and interest of stakeholders such as Ministries at different levels and entities, governance structures and working groups at various levels/entities, service providers and communities.

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39 From revised logical framework and from EUD report 2011. However, Annual Report 2010-2011 uses slightly different language: To enhance the social welfare system at all levels of government, by strengthening the policy framework and the capacities of service providers in the area of social protection and inclusion of children, in particular with a view to enable them to apply a needs-based and rights-based approach.
The results framework described above was used to develop a monitoring framework for the SPIS programme in late 2011, early 2012. No report has been filed as yet using that framework however, the NGO IBHI has been submitted progress reports annually, broadly proving data pertaining completion of activities (trainings, development of action plans, provision of technical assistance) in each of the municipalities. Consolidated data from various reports has been used by UNICEF in its Annual Reports on SPIS which have been used in this evaluation to track progress against planned outputs (see section on “effectiveness”).

2.4.2. Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries of SPIS programme are vulnerable children and children facing exclusion. In the revised agreement with the EU, SPIS aimed to reach out to 5,000 children and parents (through increased access to social protection and inclusion services). The main target groups of the programme were duty bearers - policy makers and professionals involved in the social protection system (as defined under this programme), as well as right holders - vulnerable children and their families.

2.4.2. Activities and strategies

As the results framework indicates, SPIS was planned to intervene at two levels: policy and service delivery.

Policy level (state, entity and cantonal levels)

At the level of policy making, activities centred around researches, developing/amending policy and legal frameworks, establishing mechanisms for inter-sectoral cooperation and building capacities.

Several researches were undertaken for understanding the situation of children, current systems for social protection and inclusion, understanding beneficiary perspectives and so on. In terms of policy development/amendment, several activities were undertaken for advocacy around Social Inclusion Strategy 2009 (draft) and for the promulgation of new policies, most prominent being the framework policies on IECD.

In terms of establishing mechanisms, the BiH Management Board (MB) was established as the programme management body comprising the Minister of Civil Affairs of BiH (chair of the MB), the Minister for Human Rights and Refugees of BiH, Director of the Directorate for Economic Planning of BiH, Minister of Health and Social Protection of the RS, Minister of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Head of the Department for Health and Other Services of Brcko District. This MB served as a strategic forum entrusted with all decision-making related to the programme.

In addition, four Working Groups in each entity and one working group in Brcko District were established to look into the following areas: 1) Monitoring & Evaluation; 2) Capacity building; 3) Policy and legislation, and 4) Functional review. The latter two were merged into one in each Entity during the course of implementation in order to strengthen functional links between these important topics. However, as per feedback from UNICEF,
this modality of working groups did not turn out to be the most productive strategies and was abandoned in 2010.

In the area of capacity development, various Ministries were trained in HRBAP methodology, evidence based fiscal planning for children, etc.

**At the level of service delivery (municipality level)**

At the level of local governments (municipalities), activities focused on supporting municipalities to monitor and map child rights, facilitate community and children’s participation, establishing mechanism for multi-sectoral collaboration, developing capacities of service providers, supporting municipalities in developing action plans for SPI of children and raising awareness.

In the area of monitoring and mapping children’s rights, Situation Analysis were conducted at each municipality as a first step for identifying vulnerable and excluded children. These were desk based assessments applying HRBAP methodology on existing data from different service providers: schools, health centres, centres for social welfare, police, etc. In addition, local CSOs conducted monitoring of child rights in the municipalities and specific data was collected for monitoring primary school enrolments and retention and under various special focus projects (explained later) implemented by municipalities under SPIS.

In each municipality, children’s participation was enlisted by training children, including vulnerable and excluded children, in PAR methodology to conduct an assessment, identify priority needs and develop local action plans to address these needs. The plans so developed were shared with local governments, public and private sector service providers for support in implementation. Adults from among various service providers (school teachers) were trained on facilitating children’s participation.

In each municipality a system for multi-sectoral collaboration and referral was established. Representatives from all sectors engaged in providing services to children at the local level were brought together under a body called the Municipal Management Board for Social Protection and Inclusion of Children. Later these forums in 9 municipalities were given a legitimate status by being adopted as Commissions. In addition to this mechanism, protocols for cooperation (referral) were signed by service providers from across sectors (health, education, social welfare, police, etc) to collaborate in the area of social protection and inclusion.

Office bearers from all sectors engaged in providing services to children and members of the MMB were trained on various aspects related to improving social protection and inclusion. A list of trainings provided is attached as Annex VIII. In addition to these trainings, municipal government was trained in using evidence based fiscal planning tools for improved budget allocations towards social protection and inclusion of children, developing local level action plans for social protection and inclusion, collecting data under the Devinfo system and in effective communication skills.

Each municipality was supported in developing two-year action plans on social protection and inclusion of children, along the HRBAP framework. These action plans were budgeted
from the municipalities’ budgets and were officially adopted in all 10 pilot municipalities, and are currently being implemented. In the 11 new locations, at the time of this evaluation, training programmes had just begun and action plans are expected to develop towards the end of 2012.

In addition to developing two-year action plans, each pilot municipality was financially supported by SPIS budget for ‘special focus projects’ (SFP) based on needs and priorities identified by that municipality. There were two rounds of SFPs (See Annex X).

Under the SPIS programme municipalities were offered support for the establishment of integrated early childhood development (IECD) centres. Four out of the pilot 10 municipalities opted for this with specific objective of providing early detection and intervention services. The IECD Centers were piloted in Bileca, Kotor Varos, Laktasi and Novi Grad Sarajevo.

Finally, several activities were undertaken to raise general awareness around social protection and inclusion and to make communities aware of the SPIS programmes itself. Information on the programme was regularly shared through newsletter, via UNICEF official web page and through specifically designed interactive web page to promote social protection and inclusion of children. Specific activities were undertaken to mark ‘children’s week’ and other such significant days to raise awareness on children’s rights and social inclusion.

2.4.3. The SPIS Model

A model for multi-sectoral cooperation for furthering social protection and inclusion of children at the local level has been conceptualised under the SPIS programme as the SPIS Model. In the course of the implementation of the SPIS programme, in 2011, an attempt was made to conceptualise and document what the SPIS Model includes at the level of municipalities.

The SPIS Model supports the process that ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life and enjoy the standards of well-being considered normal in a local community in which they live. The SPIS Model strengthens system of social protection and inclusion of children through adequate policies and referral mechanisms; investment in good quality education, health, participation, social protection and successful management of social welfare services for children in BiH.

-The SPIS Municipal Implementation Model

40 www.zasvakodijete.ba
41 Enhancing the social protection and inclusion system for children in Bosnia and Herzegovina: The SPIS Municipal Implementation Model. UNICEF, European Union and all concerned Ministries. 2011 (undated, without name of author)
The model is grounded in the Human Rights Based Approach to Programming and comprising of interconnected policies and services, strengthened by capacity development and participation of children and communities.

Based on lessons learnt from the implementation of SPIS in the 10 pilot municipalities, 2 phases and several steps were identified for the implementation of the SPIS Model at the municipality level:

**Phase I**
1. Establishment of the Municipal Management Boards (Institutional set up for referral and collaboration)
2. Situation analysis (including role/pattern analysis and capacity gap analysis)
3. Policy design (which in effect implies design of local action plan)
4. Adoption of Municipal Action Plan

**Phase II**
5. Social mapping and child rights monitoring
6. Establishment of IECD centres
7. Responses for inclusive education
8. Direct and innovative services for providing child protection

It needs to be understood that this phase-wise conceptualisation is an attempt to conceptualise this model for communicating it to others and for replicating in other areas. The programme did not start out with a phase approach but as it evolved, it appeared that the process of setting up a SPIS model broadly falls under the above-mentioned two phases.

The human rights based approach and its underlying principles of participation of right holders and capacity building of duty bearers are at the core of the SPIS model. Both, the
participation of rights holders (through PAR methodology) and capacity building of duty bearers (through various trainings and technical support) area spread across the two phases. The sequencing of the steps involved show that the first step is establishment of a multi-sectoral body (MMB) that would facilitate an ‘integrated’ approach to social protection and inclusion for children in a community. After having set up this body, a situation and needs analysis is conducted in each municipality under leadership of MMB and mentoring by NGO partners. This provides evidence base for development of the Municipal Action Plan. Based on established evidence, the MMBs and social service providers (schools, CSW, health centres) identify a set of actions to be taken and assign responsibilities for the same. A typical Municipal Action Plan consists of a definition of vulnerable children for that particular municipality, and describes the roles of duty bearers on one the one hand, and the role of right holders on the other hand. A municipal action plan becomes a legitimate document once it is approved by the local government. At this stage, with approval, the Phase I concludes.

The Phase 2 is multidimensional and involves simultaneous investment in a number of sectors. Under the leadership of the MMBs and with technical support provided by UNICEF and civil society partners, the evidence base on children’s situation is strengthened through on-going social mapping. Monitoring of child rights is done independently, by partner civil society organisations. Improvement of social services is addressed through direct interventions (e.g. ECD, speech therapy and special education and so on). The MMB (multi-sectoral body), through established referrals and by providing scope for participation from all sectors as well as with the provision of enlisting beneficiary participation (through PAR), ensures integration of the various activities.

The human rights based approach to programming has been followed in SPIS in the sense that it was grounded in a situation analysis of rights holders (children) and its activities were geared towards building capacities of duty bearers to fulfil their obligations towards (excluded) children. Rights holders themselves: children and communities were made aware of their rights through various awareness raising activities and their participation in claiming rights was facilitated through the PAR methodology.

Various stakeholders in the SPIS Programme and their roles and responsibilities

The main stakeholders in the SPIS programme and their respective roles are described below:

The governments: The primary partners within the SPIS programme at the policy levels are the BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs, Entity and Cantonal ministries responsible for social protection, health and education. The partnership with the governments at these levels has been enlisted through various mechanisms such as working groups and management board. The partnership with the various Ministries at the Cantonal level however has been limited and this is discussed later in the evaluation report. The role of the SPIS Management Board has been to provide policy directions to the programme, to approve special focus projects and to review progress made in the programme. This is also the

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42 Discerned from various programme documents, including donor applications, donor reports and annual reports, as well as through interviews with governments, UNICEF and civil society partners.
Report on the Joint Evaluation of the SPIS Programme, 10 December, 2012
Paro Chaujar and Zehra Kacapor-Dzihic

Forum where lessons from SPIS programme are deliberated upon for development of newer policy initiatives, one example of which is the development of IECD policy frameworks as a result of deliberations and lessons learnt. The idea for expanding SPIS from original 10 pilot municipalities to additional 11 was also made at this forum.

The various thematic working groups comprising representatives from different Ministries across entities had the responsibility of overlooking specific aspects of the SPIS programme. For instance the capacity building needs at various levels were identified in this forum and the approval for various training programmes was done here as well.

At local level, the main programme partners are local authorities (Municipalities), whose main responsibility was to set up the SPIS model (including setting up protocols for cooperation between different sectors, conducting situation analysis, receiving training, developing systems for database/monitoring, developing action plans and monitoring progress). Their role in informing policy decisions at higher levels of governments has not been explored so far and this is also a finding and recommendation from this evaluation.

Local service providers: social service provider institutions such as schools, health centres and centres for social welfare are the other set of stakeholders and partners in the SPIS programme. They are represented in the MMB and are involved in the development of situation analysis, in monitoring and in developing and implementing activities relevant to their sector (for instance health centres were involved in all steps involved in setting up and running of the IECD centres and schools were involved in identification of children with special needs and assisting in referrals).

Civil society organisations: civil society organisations, mostly NGOs and consulting firms have served as the main technical support providers in the SPIS programme. They have been responsible for identifying training needs developing training programmes and conducting training programmes. They have supported and facilitated the MMBs in developing action plans and have monitored the implementation of planned activities. NGOs have led the participatory processes with the communities, by establishing PAR groups and facilitating PAR sessions in all municipalities. Generating community awareness on social protection and inclusion, informing communities about the SPIS programme, etc. have also been the main responsibilities of the NGO partners. A private consulting firm, Innova, has been responsible for training municipalities and Ministries in budgeting for children.

Private sector: support from and partnership with the private sector was identified predominantly in media/public campaigns on child rights (e.g. in cooperation with mobile telephone company M:Tel).

Donors: The SPIS programme has received financial support from the Delegation of the European Union to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Government of the United Kingdom – Department for International Development (DFID), the Government of Norway and UNICEF BiH. Of all donors, the EUD and UNICEF BiH have continued to support the programme in its current phase while the others have phased out their support as part of their overall withdrawal of bi-lateral support from BiH. The donors have been involved in technical
aspects of the programme and this is evident from reports shared by donors where they have raised important concerns relating to the results framework and supported technical assistance for improving/ revising the results framework.

3. Findings and Analysis

As per requirement of the Joint Evaluation Work Plan, SPIS programme is evaluated along the UNDG criterion for evaluation: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, inclusiveness and sustainability.

The programme is being implemented since January 2009. Through a series of funding agreements with different donors, the programme at the time of this evaluation is in the middle of its third phase, which is exclusively funded by the EUD (and UNICEF BiH).

The findings reported in this evaluation relate to achievements and progress made in the programme as of June 2012. However, due to delays in formalizing of agreement between the government and the EUD programme funding for SPIS arrived much later than planned and hence affecting the planned schedule. The documented results are referenced to report submitted by UNICEF to EUD in January 2012 and the 2012 Quarter 1 internal monitoring report of UNICEF BiH. Results for the remaining period are as yet to be documented.

3.1. Relevance

Relevance of SPIS programme to the country context, situation of children and existing programmes and policies has been assessed based on available data as well as interviews with key stakeholders.

• *SPIS programme by virtue of its focus on ‘inclusion’ is relevant to the high prevalence of social exclusion in the country*

Social exclusion has been identified as a significant problem for the country. Data collected as part of General Social Exclusion Index (HSEI) and Extreme Social Inclusion Index (ESEI) indicates that over half of the population faces one or more forms of exclusion and nearly 24 percent are at risk of poverty. Disaggregation of data shows that figures for exclusion and poverty are similar in rural and urban areas and in both entities. In BiH and its entities one out of seven households have three or more children, and these families are vulnerable. In addition lack of childcare services and support to women’s employment afflicts excluded populations. Only around 9 percent of children in BiH attend pre-school education. This is an especially worrying figure in terms of early childhood development. Although net enrolment rate of children in primary education is high at 97.2 (slightly more girls than boys), the enrolment rate for the secondary education is 76.2 percent (more boys than girls), and only 54 percent students complete secondary education in the allotted time. Preschool education is not free and it is still accessible only to children in urban areas, whose parents are employed.
Gender inequality has also been identified as significant in both Entities in BiH. Cumulative exclusions affect women more than men. Although enrolment rates at primary school level show slightly higher percentages for girls than boys and although more women than men graduate from colleges in BiH, Roma women are most excluded from education, both as members of a minority and because Roma women are traditionally not expected to attend school. Hence even as gender gaps in education are closing in in BiH, gender when coupled with other factors such as ethnic minority and/or disability, leads to more exclusion of women than men\textsuperscript{43}.

The most vulnerable groups identified from various assessments include the elderly, persons with disabilities, displaced persons, the Romany, families with two or more children, unemployed and low-skilled youth, and national minorities or constituent peoples living in minority situations\textsuperscript{44}. SPIS, with its focus on vulnerable children who fall under the various categories identified as part of social exclusion indices, is relevant to the context of exclusion in BiH. SPIS however did not have a focus on a particular factor causing exclusion such as gender, ethnicity or disability but in its implementation, there has been a bias towards addressing disability as a factor over other factors causing exclusion (see for instance the section discussing inclusion).

- **SPIS programme is relevant to the context of weaknesses in the current systems for responding to exclusion in the country**

As described in chapter 1, there are significant gaps in the frameworks for social protection, health and education in the country. Entitlements to social protection assistance in BiH are largely based on status rather than need, while underfinanced and understaffed Centres impede the delivery of assistance at the local levels for Social Welfare\textsuperscript{45}.

The education system is characterised by high levels of discrimination on ethnic grounds and low attendance rates, especially among children from rural areas, children from minority nationalities and children with disability. The practice of segregated schools is a major impediment to the development of a pluralist, inclusive society as envisaged in the Constitution of BiH.

The health system is fragmented and has inadequate financial resources: one fifth of the population is not covered by health insurance. Large numbers of children, remain uncovered due to lack of knowledge among parents and children on the rights they are entitled to under the scope of health care, and methods of exercising such rights. Many health clinics and health institutions do not have an active electronic database of patients. Many healthcare facilities are understaffed and specialised services such as for children with special needs are not available in all health centres. Specifically centres in smaller towns and in villages do not have all facilities and cost of transport to bigger health centres are often prohibitive for those families that are poor and live in rural and or remote areas. Social Welfare Centres sometimes provide for transportation costs to such families only when they approach the centres. Many families are unaware of this support service and

\textsuperscript{43} From UNDP (2007). National Human Development Report. Social Inclusion in Bosnia and Herzegovina

\textsuperscript{44} From Social Inclusion Strategy 2009 and UNCT Common Country Assessment 2008

\textsuperscript{45} UNCT Common Country Assessment 2008
end up without receiving specialised services.

By promoting the concept of inclusive education through child friendly schools; by providing facilities for early detection and intervention for children with disability; and by providing innovative services (SFP) to meet gaps in response to children with disability for instance, by providing for speech therapy, SPIS has demonstrated how current gaps in response to various vulnerabilities can be met.

While SPIS as a programme for strengthening systems for inclusion and protection is extremely relevant to the context of poor coordination and lack of effective mechanisms for cross sectoral referrals, it has not yet been fully relevant to the context of imbalance in entitlements and targeting of social protection assistance, addressing universalization of health insurance, addressing the practice of segregated schools, low capacities at the level of centres for social welfare, etc. In terms of vulnerabilities that have been focused on, children with disability stand out as a focus group for inclusion in education and health systems.

- **SPIS is helping governments refine their frameworks for SPI and at the local level is defining these priorities through action plans**

Provisions for social protection and inclusion are found in the Constitution of BiH and in the numerous laws and policies promulgated at the state, entity and cantonal levels as described in chapter 2. SPIS is in line with the results of the BiH Medium-Term Development Strategy (2002 -2007), the contents of the new draft Country Development Strategy for 2008-2013 and the draft Social Inclusion Strategy (SIS) as well as the National Plan of Action for Children, previous (2002-2010) and current (2011-2014).

Prior to SPIS programme, the country has had a long tradition of providing for social security and social assistance to its citizens: social protection for children and families, etc. In terms of exclusion, the focus has largely been in the area of those without employment (unemployment benefits) and persons with disabilities (including children with disability). The concept of social exclusion arising from ethnicity, poverty or dimensions other than disability is relatively newly expounded in the new social inclusion strategy.

The SPIS programme also has clear match with the priority areas for social inclusion, specifically with 4 of its 6 priority areas listed in the draft Social Inclusion Strategy: families with children; education; health; persons with disabilities.

At the local levels, SPIS is supporting local governments in prioritising social protection and inclusion through the development of two-year action plans for the same. Representatives of local governments and local service providers such as CSW visited as part of the field mission for this evaluation confirmed that developing two-year action plans was useful in focusing their activities towards social inclusion and protection. Municipalities where SPIS is not being implemented shared that they felt a need to do the same in their programmes as well.

- **SPIS is largely relevant to the capacity needs of institutions responsible for provision of**
By working with local governments and local service providers, providing them with specific trainings and on the job training in specific areas of relevance: HRBAP, evidence based fiscal planning for budgeting for children, etc., and by facilitating development of mechanisms for collaboration and referral, SPIS has addressed identified capacity needs in the country.

SPIS has also strengthened the overall policy framework for social inclusion and social protection by supporting the drafting of the Development Strategies and Social Inclusion Strategies at various levels; ECD policies, Law on Social protection in RS, and drafting process for Law on Social Protection and Law on Protection of Families with Children.

- **SPIS is relevant to the gaps and capacity needs at the level of local governments and local service providers**

The first encounter of citizens with administration and service provision happens at municipal level. Despite all the strategic documents created at the higher level of government, the final beneficiaries acquire services at their local municipalities and from their local-level institutions. However, the social protection and inclusion systems at municipal level have been rather fragmented and inter-sectoral communication or collaboration has been, at best, only ad-hoc.

There have been no institutionalized mechanisms for communication or norms for collaboration in place. The systems at municipal level are not based on sound evidence of needs and priorities for citizens. There are no common databases that would aid in decision-making and information sharing.

These factors create the context in which there has been no systematic approach to protection or inclusion of children who may be vulnerable on account any factors. There is little or no communication and cooperation with regards to services rendered to children at schools, via social welfare centres, health centres, etc.

SPIS has addressed this gap in the area of multi-sectoral approach to social protection and inclusion at the level of local governance by working with the government authorities, service providers and CSOs (of relevance to social protection and inclusion). These actors are: municipal authorities, Centres for Social Welfare, Police, health centres, schools, community representatives and local CSOs. The SPIS programme brought them together in a joint forum for social protection and inclusion and facilitated the development of official protocols for cooperation and referral.

Representatives of local governments and service providers confirmed that the trainings and technical support provided under SPIS have enabled them in better planning and outreach for vulnerable children. In municipalities where SPIS is not being implemented representatives voiced their concerns about limited capacities and shared that the various trainings provided to SPIS municipalities would be relevant to them as well.
• The SPIS programme is in full compliance with the UNDAF priorities and goals for Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2010-2014.

The UNDAF sets out priorities and results expected from the UN cooperation in BiH for the period 2010-2014 towards: i) Promotion of evidence-based policy making through supporting the national capacities for data collection and analysis, with particular emphasis on economic and social disadvantage, and the impact of political and economic reforms on social exclusion; ii) Support to policy integration across all governance levels, to ensure standardisation of protocols, guidelines and operating procedures at the State, Entity (and cantons where relevant) and municipal levels; iii) Support to policy integration across all sectors, to promote a multi-sectoral policy and service delivery approach, with a focus on the socially excluded groups; and, iv) Promotion of the participatory approach to policy development, to ensure active engagement of non-governmental stakeholders in policy planning, implementation and monitoring.

The UNDAF’s first and third outcomes directly relate to the agenda of Social Inclusion, which is the focus area of SPIS. Further, in terms of strategies, UNDAF highlights evidence based policy making, policy integration, and participation of various stakeholders, all of which are key strategies implemented under the SPIS programme. Multi-sectoral policy development (IECD for example) and multi-sectoral service delivery approach prioritised by UNDAF is in fact central to SPIS programme (SPIS Model).

• The SPIS programme supports government in meeting obligations of the European Partnership and Multi-indicative Planning Documents

The SPIS Programme provides support to the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina towards meeting the obligations of the European Partnership and international treaties. The Project also supports EC development and cooperation strategies related to the Paris Declaration, especially Target 6 "Strengthen capacity by avoiding parallel implementation structures".

The SPIS programme also complies with the Multi-indicative Planning Documents (MIPD) of the EU (developed for 2009-2011, 2010-2012, 2011-2013) which confirm the readiness of the EU to support Bosnia and Herzegovina to fulfill its obligations towards returnees, minorities and vulnerable groups, including children. The MIPD documents repeatedly recognise the need to support minorities and vulnerable groups (in particular Roma, children and the disabled); policies promoting the social and economic inclusion of minorities and vulnerable groups are adopted and there is visible progress on their implementation".46

• SPIS is collaborating with other actors involved in social protection and inclusion but needs to become more strategic in partnerships

SPIS is the only programme of its kind, working at both policy and implementation level

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focusing on improving social protection and inclusion systems for children in the country. However, there are two other organisations that emerge as significant actors working on social protection and inclusion sector in the country: the World Bank and the OSCE.

The World Bank is the leading international agency, after the EUD, working on reforms in social protection sector in BiH. Its current portfolio includes: critical analysis of the policies and programmes for disabled persons in the country (draft not yet available for public sharing); improving targeting for social assistance transfers (study done in 2009); regional assessment of social protection in the Balkans and; review of Public Expenditure in BiH. While collaborations with the World Bank have been undertaken under SPIS, especially in the area of revision of social protection legislation in FBiH, there is scope for greater collaboration, in particular in the reforms related to targeting.

In the case of Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), there seem to be many similarities in the scope of work with SPIS, especially in terms of building capacities of service providers. OSCE is also engaged in evidence-based advocacy for strengthening social protection in the country. Through its extensive network of offices based in different parts of the country and a heavy human resource, OSCE seems to have the capacity for far greater outreach than SPIS has and there is scope for collaboration between SPIS and OSCE for expanding good practices from SPIS.

### 3.2. Effectiveness

Effectiveness of SPIS has been measured in terms of achievement of expected results and against specific set of questions provided in the ToRs for this evaluation. The assessment is based on monitoring data for SPIS programme provided by the UNICEF.

**Objective 1:** To identify and propose priorities for implementation of the Social Inclusion Strategy of FBiH and BD, and of the RS Development Strategy, from the perspective of social inclusion and protection of children

**Achievement:** Gaps have been identified, discussed and addressed to varying extents within SPIS programme. Priorities identified yet to be proposed in comprehensive proposal to entities and BD for implementation of SIS and DS.

**Output 1:** Gaps in the current systems of social protection and inclusion of children are identified and proposal for priorities in the implementation of the SIS for FBiH and BD and DS in RS prepared.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of the compatibility between SIS and SPIS for FBiH and BD and RS DS and SPIS approved by the Management Boards at state and entity level;</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study of the functions in the Social Protection and Inclusion System for Children</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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47 OSCE. 2012. The Right to Social Protection in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Concerns on Adequacy and Equality. OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina
(at entity level) in BiH is approved by the Management Boards at state and entity level;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study of the situation of vulnerable groups of children and policy framework and strategies that support the services of social protection and inclusion of children in BiH is approved by the Management Boards at state and entity level;</th>
<th>Yes.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Report on the perceptions and attitudes among service providers and beneficiaries of services is approved by the Management Boards at state and entity levels;</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations on priorities in the implementation of the SIS for FBiH and BD, and the Development Strategy for RS from the perspective of the SPI of children are approved by Management Boards at state and entity level.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A number of studies and assessments were conducted under this programme objective, to feed into priorities for social inclusion and protection at the level of the entities and in BD. Examples of select studies are provided below:

- The Review of Functions within the Social Protection and Inclusion System for Children in BiH, 2010 (at entity levels). This review found that while legal and policy frameworks are robust, intersectoral cooperation is not institutionalized and the fragmented nature of governance makes the system inefficient and translates into unequal provisions of services and entitlements. The review concluded that the SPI had achieved good results at the local levels and given the complex administrative setup in the country, the aim of SPI (original results framework) were too ambitious and should be revised to be made more realistic.

- Situation Analysis of Vulnerable Children, Policy Framework and Legislation and Strategies Underlying Social Services and Inclusion of Children in BiH (2009-2010). Main findings of this situation analysis were that:

> "Despite the legal apparatus there exists no inclusive intersectoral system for information flow, database, and monitoring (between CSW and schools for instance); there is not enough cooperation between civil society organizations and government agencies and institutions dealing with the problems of children with special needs and their parents; there is lack of alternative models of care for children with disabilities; the CSW do not currently have the capabilities to take on all of the roles appropriated to them."

- Studies of Perceptions, Attitudes and Demands of Beneficiaries and of Perceptions, Attitudes and Practices of Service Providers. According to this independent study (2011) more than 85 percent beneficiaries said that SPIS met urgent needs of the community as a whole and the assistance reached beneficiaries who needed it the most. It also confirmed that the services under SPIS reached those who would otherwise not have been able to access these services (mostly because these services were not previously available –IECD or speech therapy).

In the first year of its implementation as well (2009-2010) several studies were carried out under SPIS, including a set of 2 studies on gaps and capacity needs in the areas of statistics on children and a draft action plan for capacity development. A study on child poverty was

48 From EUD Report 2012
also undertaken that highlighted: children under 5 are most at-risk-of-poverty; poor children are exposed to a multiple deprivations; only 26 percent children have access to child allowance are from poor families; the amount of child allowance is insufficient; and if social transfers for children and families were discontinued, up to 20 children who are currently not poor would move to the group of children living below the poverty line.

These studies were shared with relevant stakeholders (Ministries at State and Entity levels) through the SPIS Management Board meetings and are reported to have influenced decision-making. For example: the 7th meeting of the SPIS Management Board (Feb 2011), the Review of Functions within the Social Protection and Inclusion System for Children in BiH, was presented to the Board along with new directions for SPIS programme. Both the review report and proposed directions were adopted by the Board.

From the list of studies that have been conducted and minutes of meetings of the SPIS Management Board, it can be said that identification of gaps in the system have been carried out, discussed and relevant actions have been made part of SPIS programme or have been strengthened in SPIS programme (for example, strengthening of vertical and horizontal linkages for multi-sectoral cooperation). However, there also seems to have been a large number of studies undertaken with similar objectives and resulting in similar findings. There seems to be a lot of repetition in all studies. On the other hand, many of the findings consistently been brought up across these studies and also from previous studies on social protection sector, specifically in terms of social transfers and targeting, have not been taken up within SPIS or in focused advocacy with the governments.

Of course, SPIS should be credited for making evidence on these issues available to policy makers (who participate in the SPIS Management Boards) but unless these are made part of SPIS scope of work, such strong evidence is at risk of losing steam.

In terms of complete achievement of the expected result, although different studies have been carried out and evidence and recommendations for priorities have been listed, discussed and considered within the SPIS programme (to varying extents) they are yet to be systematically proposed to the two entities and BD for the implementation of the SIS and DS strategies, respectively.

**Objective 2: To strengthen the capacities and functioning of coordination bodies, which are responsible for implementation of the social protection and inclusion programmes for children, at all levels**

**Achievement:** Capacities and functioning of coordination bodies have been strengthened through trainings and establishment of mechanisms, with varying results. Although foundations have been laid, in terms of operationalization there are gaps. While at the level of local coordination bodies, emerging evidence indicates effective functioning, at the level of entity and state coordination bodies, functioning has not been as effective.

**Output 2:** The capacities and functioning of BiH, RS and FBiH management boards, as well as SPI of
In the area of improving statistics related to child rights, various software have been

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operational activity plan developed and adopted by the BiH Management Board;</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entity working groups’ operational activity plans are developed and adopted by RS and FBiH Management Boards;</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert team operational activity plan developed and adopted by the BiH Management Board;</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of delivered training modules related to evidence based budgeting;</td>
<td>4 Training modules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of members of coordination bodies who attended trainings related to evidence based budgeting;</td>
<td>210 members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of members of coordination bodies which participated at UOE and ESSPROS trainings;</td>
<td>90 members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of members of coordination bodies who attended trainings related to the introduction of DevInfo software in the statistical system;</td>
<td>20 members (2 per SPIS municipality)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of members of coordination bodies who attended trainings related to the monitoring, evaluation, collection and analysis of data;</td>
<td>90 members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Strengthening capacities at different levels has been a major focus of the SPIS programme as can be seen from the list of trainings that have been developed and provided to relevant bodies. The trainings have included transfer of knowledge as well as skills. Stakeholders have been trained on concepts and contents of rights framework in terms of children’s rights per se, and in terms of using human rights based approach to planning. (See Annex VIII for list of trainings).

In addition to trainings on specific subjects, capacities have been enhanced by demonstration of and handholding support during formation of coordination mechanisms at all levels: the SPIS management boards at the level of entities and its action plan; the various thematic working groups in each entity and BD and the BiH expert team at the state level and their action plans. Each of these bodies has been supported in developing their constitution and their action plans thereby providing them solid foundations for the basis of their work. Combined with specific trainings, SPIS has been successful in ‘setting up’ multi-sectoral structures that can take forward the work related to social protection and inclusion of children at various levels.

In terms of impacts of these capacity-strengthening initiatives, a comprehensive picture has not emerged as yet. There is evidence of increased allocations of municipal budgets towards social protection and inclusion of children, for instance but not similar evidence (as yet) from entity level ministries. Also, even as different working groups have been formed with clear mandates and roles, and with training in specific areas, by their own admission, they have not been consistent in accomplishing tasks set out before them- meetings have been irregular and or indecisive (see SPIS Management Board Minutes). Despite support from the programmes, working groups did not emerge as workable strategies and had to be given up.

In the area of improving statistics related to child rights, various software have been
developed and a series of trainings on various databases have been provided at various levels: DevInfo, ESSPROS, UEO. As a result of these trainings, pilot DevInfo survey results have been now published by the BiH Statistics Agency. The municipalities have also been trained on this software. According to an evaluation of the use of DevInfo database across the systems, however, there is little commitment at various levels to use the DevInfo database on a regular basis and little understanding of how the data can be used for programme planning.

It may be therefore concluded that the capacities of the various management boards, working committees and the expert team have been enhanced through knowledge and skills training and through setting up of mandates and mechanisms for their work/cooperation. While at the local levels, there is greater evidence of impact of these improved capacities, at the entity and state level, such evidence is not yet emerged.

There hasn't been a systematic assessment of the impact of training programmes in terms of the value they have added to improving policies and services.

Capacity development is one and an important aspect of ensuring sustainability. However, political will and ownership of the process, at all levels is critical for ensuring that improved capacities translate into real impacts in the lives of beneficiaries.

Objective 3: To update and improve municipal referral mechanisms, social services and institutional mechanisms for coordination that are indispensable for development and implementation of municipal models of social protection and inclusion of children in 10 target municipalities

Achievement: A good governance model for multi-sectoral collaboration on social protection and inclusion has been demonstrated in 10 pilot communities: including an established and working mechanism for coordination and referral and innovative services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of completed analyses of available and required social services at municipal level;</td>
<td>1 Study per municipality (10 in total)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of completed analysis of available and required referral mechanisms in 10 target municipalities;</td>
<td>1 Study per municipality (10 in total)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of completed analysis of available and required institutional mechanisms for coordination of the implementation of the integral</td>
<td>1 Study per municipality (10 in total)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This result area emerges as the star achievement of the SPIS programme. Four clear outputs emerge:

1) An effective institutional mechanism been developed at the local levels and institutionalised (Municipal Management Boards were conferred status of Commissions), the strategy has been applied in other programme on improving local governance on other issues as well (MDG-F programme on improving access to water).

2) Each municipality developed two-year action plans for promoting social protection and inclusion of children (in 10 pilot municipalities);

3) IECD centres were piloted as innovative services for integrated approach to early childhood development, not only reached out to children in select municipalities but were also taken up by other municipalities outside of SPIS (financed by private sector).

4) Special focus project financed as part of the SPIS programme provided an opportunity for local governments and service providers to undertake two specific joint action projects (implemented in all 10 pilot municipalities, yet to be implemented in additional 11).

Municipal model for social protection and inclusion of children included the development of Municipal Management Boards comprising representatives from the local governments (municipality), and representatives from various service providers: schools, centres for social welfare, health centres, police, and CSO sector. The MMBs have clear mandates and protocols of cooperation with different service providers outline different roles and responsibilities of all representatives. Representatives of the MMBs have jointly conducted situation analysis, developed action plans and special focus projects and are jointly implementing and monitoring them.

Through working directly with local government bodies and service providers: the municipalities and schools, health centres, police and centres for social welfare, local associations of parents, other local CBOs and NGOs and by providing mechanism for coordinating through MMB and various protocols of cooperation, SPIS has successfully piloted a good governance model for social protection and inclusion for children. The same model is currently being applied to additional 11 municipalities and a similar model was applied under a different joint UN project. It has not only demonstrated itself as a workable model but also a replicable one.
An important component of municipal model is the Action Plan (two-year) that were developed by each municipality, highlighting through the HRBA plan what areas they prioritise and how they would address gaps and meet priorities. These action plans were developed during the period 2010-2011, for the period 2011-2012 and are at various stages of implementation at the time of this joint evaluation (in the pilot 10 municipalities).

Although results of SPIS programme are mostly related to outcomes at the level of policies, processes and mechanisms, some results are available in terms of direct benefits to children though special focus projects and IECD centres.

A look at the spectrum of Special Focus Projects (see Annex X) supported under the programme indicates that municipalities have chosen specific category of vulnerable children: gifted children, children with special needs/disabilities/development challenges, children without parental care and children, children at risk of juvenile offending and families from marginalised groups. The selection of vulnerability focuses on children with disabilities and, although it is not entirely clear why this is so, discussions as part of this evaluation revealed that perhaps disability is the easiest understood form of exclusion and is fairly apolitical (as opposed to say issues of ethnic segregation in schools, domestic violence, bullying, etc.).

Data from the inclusive Integrated Early Childhood Development centres modelled in 4 municipalities have reached out to 1359 children by the end of 2011, of whom 25 per cent were detected as being under risk of developmental delays or disabilities.

The experiment of SPIS indicates that even in contexts of highly fragmented administrative set ups, where getting policy consensus is challenging, working directly at the level of local governments, where services are eventually delivered to beneficiaries, can lead to improved and more effective service delivery. Further, the successful modelling of innovative services such as the IECD through direct work with local governments has fed upwards in the line of governance to influence policy development for the same. A bottom up approach in developing policies based on strong evidence of effectiveness of the approach has been seen in the SPIS programme.

Objective 4: To strengthen the capacities of local municipal bodies in the areas of management and coordination of implementation of municipal models of social protection and inclusions of children, as well as the capacities of service providers in 10 target municipalities.

Achievement: In all 10 pilot municipalities, local bodies for management and coordination of municipal models have been established, trained and have produced results in terms of improved allocations and increased coverage.

Output 4: Capacities of the local bodies to manage and coordinate implementation of social protection.

49 At the time of this evaluation special focus projects in the 11 new municipalities had not yet been approved by UNICEF/SPIS management board. This evaluation limits its review to the initial 10 municipalities.
and inclusion of the children local packages as well as the service providers to deliver social protection and inclusion of the children services in all 10 target municipalities are improved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capacity and needs assessment of the Centres for social work to coordinate the implementation of the SPIS local package is completed and approved;</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of civil servants who attended to the project development, design and M&amp;E trainings;</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of civil servants who attended the trainings on development of referral mechanisms;</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of civil servants who attended the trainings on combating violence against children and domestic violence;</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of delivered trainings in birth registration for representatives of registry offices, CSWs and police from 10 target municipalities;</td>
<td>2 training cycles with 40 participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of delivered trainings on the introduction of child-friendly schools model in primary schools of 10 pilot municipalities;</td>
<td>2 training cycles for 376 teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TA on inclusive teaching in 10 target municipalities’ primary schools provided;</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TA on referral system for children with special needs in 10 target municipalities provided;</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of the established ECD Centres in 10 target municipalities;</td>
<td>4 IECD Centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies in support of implementation of SPIS local packages delivered;</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of children who have received proper services within the municipal referral model;</td>
<td>1681 children (882M/799F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of parents who received adequate support through municipal referral system;</td>
<td>1401 parents (396M/1005F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of professionals involved in the implementation of the municipal referral model;</td>
<td>316 professionals (93M/223F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of services provided on a monthly basis in 4 ECD centres;</td>
<td>21,671 services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of children and # of parents in each IECD centre who benefit from ECD services;</td>
<td>1,446; 698 children; 748 parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of teachers/management of the schools, # of public service providers and # of Pedagogical institutes who have increased their knowledge in the implementation of the inclusive education system;</td>
<td>200 teachers; 30 public service providers; 20 pedagogical institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of children and # of adults who directly participated as PAR groups in the planning and implementation of the municipal referral model;</td>
<td>200 children and 100 adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of children who indirectly benefited of the activities of PAR groups in 10 municipalities;</td>
<td>5,000 children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is no single body for coordination of social protection and inclusion of children at the local levels (just as there is no single body at the entity or state level). At the municipal level, SPIS initiated the development of such body in 10 pilot municipalities and provided it with necessary knowledge and skills for implementing an integrated and collaborative approach to social protection and inclusion. This body, called the Municipal Management Board, comprising representatives from local governments and local service providers, backed with protocols for cooperation among them, serves as the mechanism for local level management and referral. Through advocacy with the local governments, these bodies were later conferred the title of Commissions, making them legitimate administrative bodies within the municipal governance structure.

In addition to trainings on the subject of rights and social protection and inclusion that were provided to this local level body, specialised trainings in skills and knowledge have
been imparted to specialized service providers, for instance, schools have been provided with training and materials on inclusive education for children with special needs and IEC centres have been provided with training on integrated approach to IEC and centres for social welfare have been trained on monitoring, evaluation, collection and analysis of data, project development, design, development of referral mechanisms, combating violence against children and domestic violence, birth registration and so on. See Annex VIII for list of subjects on which training was provided at the local levels (to municipalities and various service providers) under the SPIS programme.

Although there is no systematic mechanism for monitoring impacts of training within the SPIS framework, there is sufficient anecdotal evidence from service providers at the local levels that the trainings have been useful in their work.

- Representatives of MMB that were interviewed as part of this joint evaluation shared that until SPIS programme, they had never had any training that helped them understand how budgets can be planned based on evidence.

- The beneficiary survey conducted during the third year of SPIS implementation (2011) indicated high outreach to most needy populations, thereby suggesting that the strengthened capacities have indeed translated into better outreach.

One concern that emerges from discussions during this evaluation is that a large number of trainings have been imparted to similar sets of persons/bodies in a relatively short period of time (12 trainings in less than a year). While it is difficult to comment on the impact of these trainings (since no comprehensive assessment has been undertaken as yet and perhaps its too early to see the results), it is not unlikely that impact of trainings has been negatively affected by the plethora of trainings given in a short period. This is something that needs to be explored (as part of impact assessments described later) as well as built into for future programmes that require intensive trainings.

In terms of translation of improved capacities into impacts for children, improved capacities for evidence based fiscal planning has led to an increase in budget allocations for children by about 10-40 per cent in 6 out of 10 municipalities. Over 200 teachers from schools in the 10 municipalities have increased knowledge on inclusive education and 10 schools now have received technical assistance (through expert NGOs) in providing inclusive teaching in their schools (new methods of teaching, child centred teaching). Some centres for social welfare were provided with support for improving their infrastructure.

As part of improving capacities at local levels, SPIS also improved capacities at local levels to include children in local governance on matters concerning social protection and inclusion. Children’s participation was included as part of action plans developed by each municipality and each MMB made decisions for the formation of children’s groups for the same. This was done through the implementation of a participatory action research methodology (PAR). Groups of children and young people, including those that are vulnerable, have been facilitated in collectively assessing the situation of children at the community level. These assessments were shared with the local bodies (MMB) and are feeding into Municipal Action Plans. Adult facilitators of children’s participation were drawn from among service providers, mainly schools, provided training on facilitating
children’s participation and along with partner NGOs, they conducted PAR sessions with children. Each PAR programme cycle lasted a year, included phases of situation analysis, development of action plans, presentation of plans to wider community for enlisting support (including finances), and implementation of the programme plan. In the implementation of one such programme plan, in two municipalities, young persons with disability were assigned the task of overseeing the development of new services, thereby demonstrating inclusion in programme management.

It can be said that at the local level, SPIS has developed abilities for facilitating children’s participation in local governance (on matters concerning them) and a pool of adult facilitators has been developed. It remains to be seen however, to what extent children’s participation is institutionalized in local governance on social protection and inclusion of children.

An additional concern regarding promotion of multi-sectoral collaboration is that while SPIS has contributed significantly to facilitating multi-sectoral collaboration among government bodies at the local levels, the programme activities, particularly those implemented by separate NGOs have been rather isolated and further efforts could have been made to enhance communication and coordination of these activities. To some extent, this approach influenced the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the Programme.

Objective 5: To increase the visibility of the SPIS programme and raise awareness on social protection and inclusion of children.

Achievement: In the 10 pilot municipalities increased information has been made available to children and their families, on services available for them. For the wider community, increased information has been made available on child rights, inclusion and social protection.

| Output 5: Visibility and promotion activities concerning the SPI of children are implemented. |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| **Indicators** | **Achievements** |
| # of SPI service providers who received the e-newsletter | E-newsletter is on the website |
| # of children who visited the web page www.zasvakodijete.ba | 5,000 visits |
| # of children who left his/her message on the wall of the children wishes; | 1,000 children |
| # of children who attended celebration of the international children day; | 100 children |
| # of children who participated at the Kids Festival | 40,000 of children per year |
| # of workshops on designing and implementing the activities related to the visibility of the SPIS; | 12 workshops |
| # of the public/media presentations of the SPIS programme; | 10 presentations |
| # of visibility events organized | 7 visibility events |

Activities under this result area were structured around two priorities: (1) promotion of the social protection and inclusion of children and (2) information about activities, objectives
and results children within the SPIS programme. Several activities were undertaken to facilitate children’s participation in the promotion of their rights through the Wall of Children’s Wishes and the Kids Festival. These forums served to advocate for the rights of children as well as to discuss and bring to light root causes of ethnic division and social exclusion of children. Over 40,000 children participated in the Festival each year.

Capacity building on communication for journalists, members of the municipal management boards as well as children reached out to over 230 participants during SPIS I and II, while workshops on intercultural dialogue and peace building reached out to 265 children. These events focussed on raising awareness and knowledge of the participants on social inclusion and social protection.

3.2. Efficiency

Efficiency of SPIS has been a subject of concern for several government representatives who were interviewed as part of this joint evaluation. While all are in agreement that this programme has resulted in demonstrating successful model for multi-sectoral cooperation, there is concern that the programme has been cost intensive - owing to intensive training inputs involving range of sub contracted service providers (NGOs and private firms).

SPIS has been financed under three IPA cycles of the EU, IPA 2007, 2008 and 2010. Government of Norway has financed the programme for the period 2008-2009 and the DfID has financed it from 2008-2011. Broadly, the period from 2008-2010 was called Phase I and 2010-2011 was called Phase II and 2011-2012 is the current Phase III. While Phase I and II focused on the pilot 10 municipalities, Phase III expanded the programme to additional 11 municipalities.

EU has been the overall single largest donor to this programme, financing nearly 50 per cent of the total budget for Phase I and Phase II and nearly 85 percent of the total budget for Phase III, the remaining being financed by UNICEF. Over its entire course, the SPIS programme has had a budget of US$ 8,729,285.55 ($8.7 million). Although the programme agreements (with EU) start December 2008, the programme was officially implemented since January 2009.

<table>
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<th>Table 4: Budgets for SPIS 2008-2012</th>
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<td>Period</td>
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A look at the total budget and expenditure of SPIS indicates that a significant proportion of the budget, 26 percent, has been spent on NGOs sub contracted under SPIS for conducting training programmes, facilitating and supporting municipalities in developing situation analysis, two year action plans, facilitating PAR groups, conducting training for municipalities and for various service providers (training and TA). Overall almost 36 per cent of the budget has been spent on subcontracts (training, technical assistance, studies). About 7 per cent has been spent on direct services/ support to children through special focus projects and IECD centres. Going forward, in terms of expansion of the model, the cost of trainings and technical assistance would have bearing.

SPIS programme is a training intensive programme. As can be seen from Annex VIII, a significant amount of budget has been spent on trainings (via NGOs and Innova consulting firm, as well as several special focus projects had focus on training). Going forward, in terms of expanding the SPIS programme to more/all municipalities in the country, the costs of training will have maximum bearing for whoever would finance it.

Heavy management structure

In terms of management of the entire process, the programme has been heavily burdened with its management structure and the various mechanisms developed for enhancing multi-sectoral and state level coordination. The management structure reflected all the complexities that come with the fragmented nature of administration and governance in the country. Coordinating with so many different ministries at so many different levels, to come together at a specific time and venue and to work together (given political differences) was a time and effort-consuming task. The 4 working groups (at each entity) established for the purpose of the programme were first consolidated into 3 working groups and then discontinued in the later phases of the programme, leaving only the state level SPIS Management Board which continues to meet to review and direct the programme while this evaluation is on-going.

The complex management structure played a role in affecting the schedule of plans. A large part of delays in the programme are attributable to the complex decision making in the context of fragmented set up in the country.

Large number of external consultants

In terms of human resources, a large number of external consultants (8) have been placed with the various relevant Ministries to provide support in carrying on their roles in the SPIS programme. These were provided at the specific request of the various Ministries for

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<tr>
<td>Budget (USD)</td>
<td>6,614,315.55</td>
<td>2,114,970</td>
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<tr>
<td>Municipalities covered</td>
<td>10 pilot (5 RS+ 5 FBiH) Lakaši, Novi Grad, Bileća, Višegrad, Kotor Varioš, Novi Grad Sarajevo, Livno, Novi Travnik, Sanski Most, Stolac</td>
<td>11 new (5 RS+ 5 FBiH+ 1 BD) Mrkonjić Grad, Prnjavor, Čelinac, Gacko, Derventa, Tešanj, Kupres, Gornji Vakuf/Uskoplje, Velika Kladuša, Posušje</td>
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carrying out specific roles related to SPIS programme. These independent consultants are not trained in social protection and inclusion but learnt about the programme on the job. Their role included promoting SPIS within the Ministries where they are placed. The amount of budget spent on these consultants during the course of SPIS programme is $333,863. While it was hoped that the Ministries would eventually hire some of these consultants, and 3 out of 8 have been absorbed on the payrolls of the respective Ministries, for the remaining 5 the situation is unclear. For already over-burdened administrative set up, the introduction of external consultants within Ministries may have made sense for the time period of the programme but in terms of sustainability prospects was an inefficient move.

The EC Monitoring Mission questioned the value-add of these external consultants already earlier on in 2010, stating that the work of these external consultants was rather passive and limited to administrative and logistical matters. The report urged UNICEF to enhance the role of these external consultants to contribute more actively to the cost-effective implementation of project activities and efficient achievement of the objectives. The report suggested that these external consultants need to serve as link between the working groups and expert team, synthesizing outcomes of working group consultations for the expert team to allow the latter to function more efficiently at the policy level[51].

During the interviews conducted with Ministries and these external consultants, it was found that their role indeed was more administrative than technical. This is not to imply that the consultants were not found useful by the Ministries, quite the contrary. However, even as their role was expected to help institutionalize the integrated approach to social protection and inclusion within Ministries, they remain the ‘external support’ used by Ministries to ‘deal with the SPIS programme’. See more on this later under sustainability.

Also, from sustainability point of view, specifically institutional memory, hiring external consultants has been short sighted. Even though staff in the Ministries are also subject to turnover, there is greater likelihood of official roles/ positions continuing with similar mandates than external consultants being retained.

*Large number of contracted NGOs*

About 7-9 NGOs have been contracted during different phases and have been given specific roles and tasks to perform, mostly related to training, technical assistance, conducting studies and monitoring and evaluation. In addition consulting firms/ individual consultants have been hired for the various studies, assessments and for training related to statistics. Both kinds of subcontracting have happened: to serve as extended arms (for UNICEF and governments) and to serve as experts/resources.

A large part of the results gained in SPIS can be attributed to the training and technical assistance provided by the NGOs (and consulting firms). As explained above, capacity strengthening inputs of SPIS have been recognized as valuable across board. In fact basic training of social protection, inclusion principles, principles of rights based approach,

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[51] See EC Monitoring report 2010
evidence based planning are crucial for shifting the current planning and implementation from ad hoc basis to more evidenced focused and thereby resulting in efficient use of resources for those who need it most.

The expenditure incurred for NGOs therefore seems justified given the results it has yielded. Having said this, governments and UNICEF are now adjusting strategies for the expansion of SPIS. It is critical that data collection, training, monitoring and evaluation for social protection and inclusion are institutionalized within mainstream systems. Although the use of NGOs for these critical roles has made the programme more effective and efficient during its course it may not be the most efficient way forward.

Was SPIS implemented in the most efficient manner?

There isn’t an entirely straightforward answer to this question. The programme has faced several challenges to its efficiency, many of them beyond the control of the programme:

The first challenge came from the over-ambitious and non-SMART results framework that the programme started with. Reflections within the first year lead to revision of the results framework to make it more realistic and compliant with SMART indicators. This led to delays in the programme schedule. A lot of effort was spent on this revision process, including hiring of several consultants.

The second set of challenge affecting efficiency came from the political and administrative complexities in the country, which were listed as a risk factor in the results framework anyway. These complexities led to the development of a bulky administrative structure and several working groups, the organising and operationalizing of all of which were time and effort consuming. Decisions on major aspects of the programme (lists of trainings programmes, approval of assessments and including findings in programme, etc.) were delayed often as a result of delays in scheduling and meetings of these various groups. Over time, this has been streamlined but it has during the course of the programme affected its efficiency.

The third set of challenges for programme has come from the delays in financial disbursements. This is most evident during the course of this evaluation, where financial disbursements for implementation of the programme in the additional 11 municipalities had been delayed. This delay in turn was a result of complexities in the contracting agreement between the government and the EU. Without finances, UNICEF was unable to contract NGOs to carry out their tasks, training, which were the first step in the entire process. As a result, while the programme is technically supposed to end in November 2012, it will not be able to complete all its planned activities, leave aside show results, by then. There are discussions of a no-cost extension (which has been previously granted as well for similar reasons) of six months.

3.3. Impact

The SPIS results framework does not indicate the impact level indicators that it seeks to achieve. The indicators are listed at the level of outcomes and mostly outcomes at the level
of processes and not their impact on the lives of final beneficiaries. A look at the framework shows that only 8 out of 45 indicators are directly related to children beneficiaries (how many children receive benefit x), the rest of the indicators are all outputs in terms of how many persons are trained, how many studies are conducted and approved by relevant authorities, how many action plans are developed, and participation in events.

This lacuna is consistent with the fact that SPIS has been implemented as a project and not a programme, even though various documents (conceptual frameworks) identify it as a programme and not a project.

For the purpose of connectivity with the existing results framework, however, ‘impacts’ will be assessed in terms of overall objectives and purpose as listed in the revised results framework.

**Achievement:** There are significant gains in the area of strengthening policy frameworks for social protection and inclusion and shift in approach towards needs and rights based framework in social service provision at the local levels.

Systems for social protection and inclusion for children in Bosnia comprise sets of different thematic policies and laws, set at different levels and defining sets of thematic services given in different manner throughout the country. Improvement of these systems entails improvements in all policies, laws and services, to make them all needs and rights based.

**Where does SPIS stand in the fourth year of its implementation?**

Certainly things have changed and dramatically so at the grassroots level. There is unanimous agreement among stakeholders – government and non-government alike, that SPIS has been successful in operationalizing a multi-sectoral mechanism for providing social protection and inclusion services to children at the local level. Beneficiary surveys confirm that those who were previously not receiving specialised services and who were in need of those services, were now receiving those services (ex: IECD and speech therapy).

The systems for providing services at the grassroots have improved in terms of better reaching those who ‘need’ the services. At the level of local institutions- local governments and local service providers, maximum changes are observed. Introduction of the innovative model for integrating systems of social protection and inclusion at local level has been the most significant contribution of SPIS. This model has been based on human rights based approach (HRBAp) and involves partnership between local government and local institutions (social service providers).

Municipalities have developed capacities to collect comprehensive data on the situation of (vulnerable) children and are trained in using sophisticated data management tools (DevInfo). Local government office bearers and local service providers are more aware of ‘rights’ and are using it in developing their action plans. Action Plans are developed using the HRBAP methodology and focusing on the needs of the most vulnerable. As a result of this focus, at the local level, in all 10 pilot municipalities, children with disabilities emerged as a priority vulnerable group. Specific services were developed/ strengthened or referrals
improved to meet their needs: IECD centres models for early detection and intervention, speech therapy referrals organised for children with speech disabilities, school teachers were trained on methodologies for inclusion of special needs children in regular classroom settings. As a result of this model for integrated services and referrals, existing monitoring reports from UNICEF suggest that through about 1681 children have benefitted from the referral mechanism and overall integrated services have been provided to 1,359 children and to 750 children with special needs (see Table 5 in the next section).

 Capacities, knowledge and skills, have improved at the municipality levels and one evidence is the increased budget allocation for children in the municipality budgets.

 The local mechanism of multi-sectoral collaborative actions has been replicated in at least 2 other instances: in the UNICEF programme on prevention of juvenile offenses and in the joint UN programme on improving access to water. These are important indicators of the success of the mechanism piloted under SPIS

 At the higher levels of governments, impacts are not as drastic but are nonetheless significant. For the first time, different thematic Ministries from different entities and BD, sat together to discuss, develop, monitor and learn from a common programme. This is a fundamental shift in the way policies have been developed, implemented or monitored in the country. All stakeholders acknowledge the value of this approach. These are important process outcomes that can have far reaching impacts over time. RS MoE has opted for learning evidence based fiscal planning, MoH at both entities decided, as a result of success of IECD centres, to develop policy frameworks for expanding IECD through their entities. Not all relevant policies and laws have changed, not all Ministries at all levels are equally improving. But there is a move.

 One of the most significant changes in the policy framework, that has potential for harmonising and for institutionalising joint mechanisms is the proposal to convert the existing SPIS Management Board into Council of Ministers for Social Protection and Inclusion. This way, even when the SPIS programme ends and with it the Management Board for SPIS ceases to exist, a formalised institutional mechanism with the status of ‘Council’ would have been established with the mandate to promote social protection and inclusion. This could be a first step in the process of harmonisation and the development of a coherent system (rather than the current criss-cross of multiple systems following disparate policies and norms).

 To conclude, it can be said that SPIS is a programme well begun and with potential for impacting changes comprehensively throughout the various systems.

 3.4. Inclusiveness

 Inclusion may be understood as the ultimate goal of the SPIS programme and as such all interventions should result in improved inclusion of children in the country. At the policy levels SPIS has facilitated improvements in existing legislative and policy frameworks to make them more inclusive. At the local level, local governments are trained in using tools for better identification of vulnerable children (Situation Analysis), for rights based planning
for inclusion and for evidence based budgeting to promote inclusion.

While expression of interest, commitment and leadership demonstrated by municipalities was an important indicator in the selection of municipalities where SPIS would be implemented, specific socio-economic criteria were also applied to select most appropriate municipalities:

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|}
\hline
\text{Indicator} & \text{Results} \\
\hline
1. \# \text{ of children with } \text{special needs who benefit from integrated services in all 10 municipalities;} & 750 \text{ children, 250 parents} \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

those with larger number of disadvantaged families, those with higher number of Roma families, displaced persons or refugees, municipalities affected by violence, municipalities with significant cases of families affected by negative behaviours, such as drug abuse. Majority of the municipalities selected for the pilot and for expansion are municipalities classified as under developed and those that have larger proportions of populations that are classified as poor\(^{52}\). By design, therefore, SPIS programme is offered to groups of the populations that are vulnerable. Within this, there has been focus on children with disabilities, Roma children and children in rural/ far off areas.

In terms of actual results at the level of children, there are few indicators available. The existing indicators only list children with special needs as a specific category of vulnerable children (and not rural or Roma or poor)\(^{53}\):

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\(^{52}\) From: Unicef. 2011. Strengthening Child-Sensitive integrated Social Protection and Inclusion System at Municipal Level - Lessons Learnt from Bosnia and Herzegovina: The SPIS Municipal Implementation Model; UNICEF Sarajevo. Although FBiH does not classify municipalities by level of development, the 5 municipalities selected for pilot SPIS are less developed. RS follows classification based on level of development and of 5 RS municipalities where SPIS was piloted, 3 are classified as medium developed (Bileća, Višegrad, Novi Grad); 1 is underdeveloped (Kotor Varoš) and 1 is developed (Laktasi)

As per monitoring data made available by UNICEF (above), girls and boys both seem to have received direct benefits from the SPIS programme: there are slightly higher number of boys receiving services through referrals and far more parents receiving referral support for their girls than boys.

### What are the results of the SPIS Programme - intended and unintended, positive and negative - including the social and economic effects on vulnerable girls and boys?

There is no comprehensive baseline or end line data to assess socio-economic effects of SPIS on vulnerable girls and boys. Socio-economic effects on vulnerable girls and boys are perhaps emerging as this programme is being evaluated. Social benefits in terms of new services such as IECD that provides a basic service that was hitherto not provided in the country and in terms of improved services in terms of improved identification and improved referrals can be said to have accrued to children in the country, as a result of the SPIS programme.

- **Increased allocation of existing budgets towards vulnerable children**

One measurable result of the SPIS programme is in terms of increased allocation for vulnerable children within local government budgets. According to the NGO partner responsible for monitoring implementation of the SPIS programme, there has been a 10-40 per cent increase in budget allocation for vulnerable children in majority (60 %) of the SPIS I municipalities.

- **New innovative services for inclusion- results for children with disabilities, children in rural areas and Roma children**

From available data on number of children who accessed new/referred services introduced/facilitated under SPIS (IECD/speech therapy respectively), it can be said that SPIS has positive social effects in the lives of these beneficiaries who would otherwise have
not received such services. From available data based on indicators listed in the results framework as well as interviews with service providers and municipalities, children with disabilities emerge as the single largest direct beneficiary group from among children with vulnerabilities. As per available data (see Table 5 above), 750 children with special needs from 10 pilot municipalities have received services under SPIS facilitated integrated services model.

For children with speech disorders, receiving speech therapy will have long term effects on their ability to benefit from regular schooling, improve learning outcomes and indeed improve their overall sense of wellbeing. For young children whose disabilities have been identified and addressed at an early age through IECD centres and who are currently receiving specialised early education and referral services for their disability, there will be far reaching impacts for the rest of their lives-in terms of general health and wellbeing and in terms of their formal schooling as well.

The inclusive Integrated Early Childhood Development centres modelled in order to reach particularly vulnerable children, specifically children with disability set in motion the development of national and entity levels policies for the promotion of IECD services in the country. In the 4 IECD centres set up in Phase I and Phase II, more than 1,300 children were enrolled and benefited from integrated ECD services. Of these 25 per cent were detected as being at risk of development delay or disability (as part of early detection services) and provided with inclusive early education at the IECD centres in addition to relevant referrals (such as to rehabilitation centres, CSWs, etc.).

The models themselves have varying rates of success in terms of institutionalisation within existing structures. 75 per cent of the IECD centres have become independent of SPIS funding they were registered as non-governmental organisations now sustaining on funding from local governments as well as international donor organisations.

While IECD centres were intended for all children and not just children with disability, the most pronounced results (acknowledged by local governments and service providers) have been in the area of early detection and intervention for disability.

Early detection services were offered to all children enrolled, those identified as presenting with different types of disabilities were successfully linked with services for testing and therapy/rehabilitation. The IECD centres were successful in demonstrating how disability can be detected at an early age and how early intervention for childhood disability is effective in improving chances for primary education and general well-being of children with disability. Since data on children with disability who are out of school is not available for BiH, it would be difficult to measure the impact of this initiative in improving school enrolment and retention for children with disabilities. Nonetheless, the initiative is successful in terms of providing a never-before provided basic service for young children in the country.

Although not captured in the results framework, another focus of model IECD centres was children based in rural areas and Roma children (often based in rural areas) who found it difficult to access basic services that are usually provided at urban centres and that entail
transportation cost for children and opportunity cost for parents who need to accompany children on long travels. Satellite centres were established to improve access to IEC services for children who are otherwise unable to access these services. In addition to satellite services a number of children in rural areas and number of Roma children in particular, received IEC services through home visiting activities and outreach services. It remains to be seen how these IEC services translate into improved enrolment and retention of these children in primary schools. Regular monitoring of data related to IEC, preschool and primary school enrolment and retention should be geared towards identifying how IEC services have translated into results.

√ Increased voice of children in matters concerning their lives- including vulnerable children

This may be counted as one of the ‘process’ outcomes of SPIS programme whereby a methodology for including children in the process of situation analysis and planning for children at the local levels has been demonstrated. The Participatory Action Research methodology employed in all select SPIS municipalities, that coached and facilitated children, including vulnerable children such as children from poor families and children with disabilities, in partnership with local schools, emerges as one of the successful processes piloted under SPIS. For the first time local governments were introduced to the idea of children as legitimate partners in local development. Children who participated in PAR groups, not only conducted situation analysis but were also supported in prioritising needs, developing action plans and presenting them to wider community for funding (municipality, private providers, etc.). Most of the action plans proposed and implemented by children included improvements in the school infrastructure or for outdoor leisure and sports activities. Another venue for children to participate and share their opinions was the Wall of Wishes.

According to available data, about 200 children, (20 per municipality), including vulnerable children, participated in the PAR process. The PAR process and the Wall of Wishes have been the first opportunity to majority of children, especially those in small and underdeveloped communities to participate and articulate their views and needs, but also to be involved in providing solutions to the community needs.

All children trained as part of PAR, including children with special needs, have been able to voice their concerns and been made part of the problem analysis and solution. Not only does this have an impact on their self-worth, it also prepares them with skills for problem analysis and solving.

The number of direct beneficiaries (children who received specific innovative and or improved services as a result of SPIS intervention) varies from one location to another (as a small or larger proportion of the total number of vulnerable children in each select municipality). However, the model demonstrates how all children could be reached with more efficient reallocation of existing resources and better coordination and collaboration. While governments have shown interest and commitment towards the latter through consistent participation in joint mechanisms set up at each level (SPIS Management Board, MMB), reallocation of resources has been slower and is still victim of low prioritisation. It is
now up to the governments of BiH to expand the good governance model of SPIS to all parts of the country to be able to reach all children effectively and efficiently.

In terms of economic effects on children, there is no evidence of this so far. Under the third phase, SPIS is now addressing economic aspects of social protection in relation to social benefits, for example. This is indeed an area that must be addressed to comprehensively improve social protection for children (given that there is strong evidence of increasing poverty, disproportionate benefit schemes and decreasing impact of existing cash transfers).

SPIS has disaggregated data on gender for some of its components (such as for SFPs, capacity building), and through discussions and interviews it appears that as many boys and girls are beneficiaries of the services introduced as part of SPIS.

To what extent have results of the SPIS contributed to decreased inequities among children (the better off vs. the vulnerable).

Again, as above, there is no data to measure decrease in inequities (no baseline or end line data). Having said that, equity impacts are generally evident over longer periods of time, with sustained, comprehensive efforts. Going forward, this should be an area of focus for SPIS, to develop baseline and end line to measure impacts of its interventions. From available data, it can however be said that vulnerable children are now accessing and or provided with services they did not have access to before (refer beneficiary survey) and new services that have been introduced have certainly improved access for general category of children but also vulnerable children since their focus is on children with special needs and children in rural areas (where satellite IECD centres have been set up). These are important grounds for reducing inequities.

3.5. Sustainability

SPIS has been remarkable in terms of the extent of ownership demonstrated by government counterparts at various levels and the extent of participation in the programme. The mood for improving social protection and inclusion for children is widespread. The mechanisms for cooperation and collaboration among multiple social sectors at the local levels, developed under SPIS, are an important strategy employed to ensure sustainability.

The adoption of Municipal Management Boards as Municipal Councils for the Promotion of Social Protection and Inclusion of Children, is an important indicator of how SPIS could be sustained after the current programme ends. Also, important changes in the policy and legal frameworks, including introduction of new policies for the expansion of IECD services, are important indicators of sustainability of results emerging from SPIS.
Are government policies, programmes and services in the SPI systems sustainable? How can they be made more sustainable?

The question of sustainability of governments policies, programmes and services in the area of social protection and inclusion must be understood in: i) the overall context of the fiscal situation of the country, and in particular in the context of public expenditure and ii) in the context of lack of multisectoral collaborations.

(i) Bulk of public expenditure in the country is concentrated on wages, pensions and social transfers. Even though social transfers account for significant proportion of government funding, they are ineffective in reaching the poor and vulnerable since they are not needs based. In the sectors of health, while significant proportion of spending is on health insurance, those that are most in need of health insurance are not covered. A high proportion of households are paying up to 40 per cent of the spending on health care from their own pockets. In education, the expenditure is skewed in favour of teacher salaries while learning outcomes lag behind and investment and enrolment is abysmal at preschool levels.

The current fiscal framework for each of the sectors is characterised by high albeit skewed and inefficient expenditure causing an ironical situation of poor outcomes for rights holders.

Given this context of highly inefficient and thereby unsustainable fiscal frameworks for social protection, health and education in the country, the perspectives for sustainability of ‘inclusion’ and social protection for children appear dim.

This inefficiency, to a large extent is attributed to the fragmented nature of governance that has led to duplication and parallelism in public institutions. For any one social sector, there are at least 13 different government machineries involved, most of them in the FBiH which follows decentralised form of governance with competencies and powers dispersed vertically as well as horizontally.

Unless this bulk of government machineries is made more manageable and efficient, unless there is standardisation of policies and unless there is more multi-sectoral convergence (to reduce wastage) there is little likelihood of sustainability of the sectors of social protection, health and education.

Within this context it would be important to also review the placement of consultants under various ministries at the state and entity level for the purposes of the SPIS programme. An already over staffed administration requested additional human resource under SPIS for implementing its part in the SPIS programme.

The whole idea of a multi-sectoral programme is to leverage existing resources to become more efficient and therefore involving external consultants appears to be contradictory to

this idea of efficiency. While both partners appreciate the value of these consultants, governments and UNICEF (as additional helping hands), from a strategic point of view, this strategy is neither sustainable nor reasonable. At the end of SPIS financing, most of these consultants will leave and with them the knowledge base and skills for this multi-sectoral programme. A better alternative would have been for governments to appoint existing officers as focal persons for SPIS, so that it was part of institution and institutional memory.

(ii) Apart from fiscal arrangements that impact on sustainability, systemic arrangements and mechanisms for programme development and implementation also impact on sustainability of initiatives. The social protection and inclusion systems in BiH are fragmented vertically and horizontally. Different levels of competencies lead to duplication and wastage of human and financial resources.

This is where the SPIS experience adds value to the emerging framework in BiH. By promoting multi-sectoral and cross-government co-operation (through management committees, boards, working groups at different levels) SPIS promotes synergising. At the local levels it has been able to demonstrate results in terms of improved outreach and access for a number of entitlements (not all). By institutionalising the mechanisms for cooperation, SPIS has provided for sustainability of the mechanisms. However, in the absence of fiscal sustainability, these mechanisms are not likely to survive beyond a certain hand-holding period.

Will SPIS interventions and impacts on worst-off groups likely to continue after support is withdrawn? Will inequities increase, decrease or remain stable after withdrawal of support?

As explained above, in the context of current socio-economic and political challenges that Bosnia and Herzegovina faces, it is likely that sustainability of interventions will be compromised.

This said, there is a high degree of commitment and interest expressed at the local levels of government and service providers as well as by various representatives of governments at different levels. There is also a full understanding of the limitations posed by the current set up.

In terms of capacities to identify worse off and develop specific actions to address those at the local levels (provide referral to rehabilitation services for children with disability for instance), these capacities at local levels would survive so long as the trained representatives remain in the system. With turnover in office bearers (retirements, etc.) new set of service providers and duty bearers will need similar training. As yet trainings for capacities pertaining SPIS have not been institutionalised as part of training for local governments or service providers, although this is currently being investigated. For the medium and long term, there is need for institutionalising principles, transfer of knowledge and skills related to social protection and inclusion within the systems. For the short term, there is more likelihood for focus on worst off groups to continue insofar as commitment, enthusiasm and funding is assured.
In the case of IECD services, given the success with which it has been mainstreamed within the health sector and the success with which its costs have been taken over by municipalities, there is some evidence to believe that these services will have a higher chance of sustaining and continuing focus on vulnerable groups, provided the governments do indeed allocate for the same. For municipalities that have not taken over financing of IECD centres or those municipalities where IECD centres are financed by external donors, there is danger of the centres not sustaining in the long run.

In the case of services that were financed by SPIS: special focus projects, training on inclusion by NGOs; there is less likelihood of focus remaining in the absence of financial allocations. Will local municipalities be able to hire specialised agencies (NGOs) to provide training to its teachers on inclusion? If yes, the focus would remain.

**Do national/entity and local institutions support SPIS programmes and are their visions consistent with SPIS?**

The SPIS programme is recognised and considered as a joint programme of the government and UNICEF by all levels of governments and as such receives good support from institutions at all levels. There is a high sense of ownership of SPIS among governments at various levels. The SPIS Management Board comprising representatives of the state and entity level governments have helped create this sense of ownership.

There is also a sense of achievement among all stakeholders as far as the implementation of SPIS is concerned.

Several avenues have been created for the participation of different counterparts at different levels in the policy and decision making frameworks under SPIS. Given that there are very few, if any, forums, which bring together different sectors for a common cause and even fewer that bring together representatives from both entities on a common platform, SPIS stands out in its value addition to the creation of joint forums.

Maximum ownership is demonstrated at the local levels among local bodies (MMB) and with local service providers who have received intensive inputs and support during the course of the SPIS programme. Its value addition to the entire area of social protection and inclusion of children in the municipalities is significant in the eyes of the stakeholders at the local levels. So much so that other municipalities who have not been part of SPIS have expressed interest in being part of SPIS.

In terms of shared vision and actions, there is a general agreement among counterparts at all levels that a specific focus on social protection and inclusion should be towards children and that it needs to be multi sectoral. At the level of RS, the relevant Ministry is already in the process of identifying how best it can mainstream SPIS elements for all its municipalities. There is no comparable initiative at the FBiH, also perhaps because of its decentralised nature.

**Do institutions show technical capacity and leadership commitment to sustain and extend**
Technical capacities at various levels have been improved to varying extents. For example, training on evidence based fiscal planning has been intensively provided at the local government levels, with initial results showing encouraging impacts. However, the actual application of budgeting tools have not been opted for by Ministries at the Cantonal, Entity and state levels, except by the MoE in RS. There is need to ensure that new skills for strengthening programming for social protection and inclusion (such as fiscal planning) are expanded throughout the systems for better impact and sustainability. So in terms of technical capacities, there is need for expansion and for institutionalisation (as discussed in points above).

As far as leadership commitment is concerned, there is overwhelming response in favour of expanding the SPIS model but not at its current costs. Almost all counterparts at entity levels considered the costs of implementing the SPIS model as prohibitive. Ministries and local governments are not in a position to finance/ contract training programmes and facilitation by NGOs and private consulting firms.

So, yes, technical capacities are emerging but would require expansion and handholding to ensure they continue to be practiced. There is leadership commitment for expanding SPIS to other municipalities and for continuing the work in current municipalities provided the funds can be earmarked for the same.

In terms of operating capacities, both financial and human resources, there are some gaps. Capacities to reallocate finances are not strengthened at all levels and human resources for the programme have varying levels of capacities. At the local levels, the capacities have been strengthened to a large extent but at the entity level, in the Ministries, most work related to SPIS has been managed by externally provided consultants (as discussed above).

SPIS direct and intensive support to the 10 pilot municipalities has been withdrawn since early 2012 when the programme moved towards new 11 municipalities. There is information that the MMBs in some SPIS locations (now Commissions) are not meeting as regularly as they used to during the time of intensive interactions under SPIS. It is also not certain whether those municipalities will evaluate the implementation of the 2-year action plans that are coming to an end for most of the 10 pilot municipalities and whether all municipalities will develop another round of action plans (although there is indication that some are developing plans for 2013/2014).

Duration of SPIS and will partners continue activities without SPIS financial and technical support

SPIS as it has developed since December 2008 has its genesis in previous programmes that were focusing on social protection and inclusion since 2004 but had not been conceptualised the way it is now. For the purpose of this evaluation, duration of SPIS will refer to the period since when the term SPIS came into being, end of December 2008.

In terms of actual time it has taken to work at the municipality levels for the pilot 10 municipalities, it can be said that 2 years were invested. SPIS interventions for pilot municipalities began sometime in 2009 and ended mid 2011, although NGOs are still on
contract for monitoring. Training programmes and other interventions - communication campaigns, situation analysis, development of protocols, development of action plans, monitoring by NGOs was spread over a period of at least 2 years.

However for the additional 11 locations, all inputs were planned to be completed within the last year of SPIS funding (even though it took over 2 years for similar inputs for the initial 10 pilot municipalities) and even that period has been reduced due to delays in financial disbursements. NGO partners responsible for providing these inputs, trainings, situation analysis, facilitating development of action plans are being hurried to deliver within a very short time period.

Also, given that SPIS is promoting a ‘programme’ approach to social protection and inclusion while being funded in a typical ‘project’ manner imposes certain restrictions on it, the least of it being schedule. Financial disbursements have determined whether activities have been implemented on time or not.

For a complex programme such as SPIS, which aims for results in a multiplicity of sectors, a project approach, with results to be achieved within a short period of 12-18 months is unrealistic. Even within the revised results framework, achieving results at the level of beneficiaries is unrealistic within less than 2 years.

SPIS needs to be implemented with a programme approach, clearly outlining a phase of withdrawal, after results have been measured. At this point, SPIS has withdrawn from the first 10 municipalities with limited monitoring role of NGOs and limited technical assistance (by IBHI) and without assessing results (no end line survey for instance) and without an idea of how many children remain outside of the system and how much more needs to be done. SPIS has essentially supported the establishing and kick-starting a mechanism and demonstrating some model projects by building municipalities’ capacities and resources to carry on with the model. There should be a substantial ‘exit phase’, where institutionalisation of processes and inputs at the policy level, measuring of results, assessing gaps and planning for those gaps should have been undertaken.

The revised action plan for SPIS (DoA SPIS Revised) mentions that there is not a phase out strategy designed in the ‘project’ but the exit strategy is somewhat built in by the fact that “activities are implemented in sustainable manner, meaning that the competent authorities take over the ownership of a sustainable and effective social safety net”. This assumption of the project has not turned out entirely correct. True, activities were undertaken with full participation and ownership of authorities at various levels, however, the changed paradigm has required external inputs in terms of trainings and facilitation, which have been funded by SPIS. For the SPIS model to be replicated, certain trainings will need to be expanded to all municipalities. There is currently no government(s) mechanism/institute where these trainings can be institutionalised. Also, comprehensive reforms in all sectors remain.

Especially given the complex nature of governance and the role that policy frameworks play in determining outcomes at local levels, and given the complex set of objectives of an
integrated approach to social protection and inclusion, a programme approach was necessary.

In terms of the likelihood of partners continuing the work without the technical and financial support of SPIS, different scenarios could emerge. Technical support in the case of SPIS programme has been largely delivered through NGOs and consulting firms. They have surely strengthened their capacities in delivering technical assistance required for SPIS and would be available for extending these services provided the municipalities as them and are able to pay them (through own resources or other donors). The referral mechanism in itself is something that is likely to stay on and be used given that its benefits have been demonstrated but in the absence of accountability mechanisms (what is their compulsion to follow this?) rigour of implementation may vary depending on individual capacities, leadership and resources at different municipalities.

*Networks and network institutions and their capacities to carry on roles developed under SPIS?*

The main activities (roles) that have been undertaken as part of the SPIS programme include: capacity building, facilitation of establishment of mechanisms for multi-sectoral cooperation at all levels, facilitation of children and community’s participation and technical assistance to schools for inclusive education. Local and national NGOs as well as private consulting firms who have been contracted for specific tasks have performed all these roles.

An important concern at this point for SPIS is indeed who will take on these roles once the funding for SPIS ends and the ‘project’ ends. For sure the current pool of NGOs and private consulting firms have strengthened their own capacities in carrying out the tasks contracted to them and will remain available as a pool of resources for governments to engage. The primary question about this would be the financing of these organisations.

So, in a sense a network of private institutions (NGOs and consulting firms) have been involved and have strengthened their expertise on-the-job and would be available for providing continued services so long as they can be paid for the same. There are no official or ‘mainstream’ networks or institutions that have been prepared for carrying on with these roles.

*Improving governance of SPIS to increase likelihood of sustainability*

For reaching impacts in a comprehensive manner and for sustaining them, the governance of SPIS needs to include all Ministries responsible for decision-making, not only in the area of health, education and social (and child) protection at the Entity levels but also at the level of Cantons and include Ministry of Finance for advocacy related to improved allocations. MoH from FBiH has expressed its discontent in not being involved in the SPIS Management Boards despite being proactive and committed to mainstreaming IECD services.
Also, the role of Municipalities in the governance of SPIS has not been explored. Given that municipalities are the backbone of the programme and largest achievements have been accomplished at this level of government, there is lack of substantial evidence of municipalities participating (equally) in the planning of the social protection and inclusion sectors in general and in the SPIS programme in particular.

Finally, although communities and children have been made partners in situation analysis and for developing local action plans, they have not been made partners in the processes of policy making. Especially given the sensitive nature of policy reforms in the area of social transfers, wider community inputs could have fed into policy debates.

**Will the SPIS model be more widely replicated or adapted? Is it likely to be scaled up?**

In some ways the SPIS model is already being replicated, as has been seen in the joint UN programme for DEG (to improve access to water). The model of developing collaborative local body and signing protocols of cooperation for identification of vulnerable families and for improving municipal allocations for improved access, have been successfully replicated from SPIS into DEG. Also the PAR methodology has been expanded to adults in enlisting community participation in the DEG. There is also evidence of interest among other non-SPIS municipalities for participating in it (through field visits). Ministries in both Entities have expressed their interest and the need for the expansion of SPIS model.

However, as described in various sections above, replication and scaling up requires a different methodology, which is less cost intensive and will require investments from the government. At this point there is, for instance, no government body (or bodies) have been identified for taking on the role of providing training on the range of topics that have been provided under SPIS. These trainings need to be institutionalised within the system for them to be expanded. In RS, interviews with representatives of the government revealed that they are looking at involving the Social Inclusion Foundation, an NGO, in the process. It will however need to be funded.

At the various government levels, other than the above, there is no clear idea as yet as to how the SPIS approach can be mainstreamed and expanded. UNICEF and Government partners are discussing strategies in this regard.

At one of the meetings organised with stakeholders as part of this evaluation mission, there was a suggestion that the federation of municipalities could be used as a forum for exchanging good practice information and the referral mechanism. This has not as yet been explored within the SPIS governing bodies.

To conclude, there is interest on part of different levels of governments for expansion of SPIS however at the moment a clear strategy for the same has not been developed. Again, all the more reason, an explicit phase out period should have been built into the ‘programme’.
4. Conclusions

SPIS programme set out to improve the social protection systems at all levels of governance through improved policy framework and capacities of service providers. In the roughly three years since its implementation, monitoring data collected by UNICEF and interviews conducted as part of this evaluation indicate that significant strides have been made in the area of improving policy framework and strengthening capacities.

A key challenge in evaluating the programme for its impact stems from the lack of baseline as well as from a weak monitoring framework where objectives are measured against outputs rather than outcomes and impacts. As a result, there is information (monitoring data) on the number of studies conducted, number of training programmes attended by number of service providers and number of children who received referral services, but there has been little monitoring of the impact of these in terms of changes in lives of vulnerable children, reduction in inequity, increase in access, and so on. UNICEF has recently introduced a set of indicators that look into outcomes and impacts, including on equity and it is hoped that monitoring against those indicators will provide more insight into the impact created by the programme.

Having said that, as per existing monitoring data and interviews with different stakeholders, the following emerge as the main achievements and challenges of the programme:

Achievements

The biggest achievements and strengths of the programme have been in the area of successful modelling of an integrated approach to social protection and inclusion at the level of local governance. Through various inputs - such as facilitating local governments to set up a multi-sectoral body (MMB), training various sector representatives and service providers on HRBAp, facilitating situation analysis and development of two-year action plans for social protection and inclusion of children – the programme has demonstrated a model for how different social sectors can collaborate to address a common objective (improved social protection and inclusion). The value of this model/mechanism has been appreciated by both the municipalities where SPIS has been implemented as well as by municipalities where it has not been implemented. The replication of this model in other programmes such as the MDG-F financed programme for increasing access to water is in itself an indication of its value.

In terms of implications of this model, the only indicators available are anecdotal in nature (for instance through the beneficiary survey) or through interviews conducted with stakeholders as part of this joint evaluation.

Although the service providers and local governments state that as a result of this model they have been better able to reach out to vulnerable groups, there is no empirical data to indicate that there is an increase in access to services for vulnerable groups. Qualitative surveys have obtained feedback from select beneficiaries indicating that the access provided via SPIS programme was new and indeed very much required by them. These
surveys also indicate that according to beneficiaries, those in most need of such services (referral) received services under the SPIS programme. Again, there is no empirical data to ascertain this fact due to lack of baseline in the first place and due to gaps in the monitoring framework as described above.

What is of value certainly is that service providers realize that they did not previously have a system for identifying vulnerable children and of connecting them to the various services that require cross-sectoral cooperation. They say that now they have a system for doing so (including for instance situation analysis and referrals). They have learnt a new way of collecting information and monitoring (for instance school enrolment monitoring and conducting participatory research with communities). Of course they still depend on NGO partners for technical support in these areas but the importance and value of these new methods are universally acknowledged (in the sample).

Another important achievement of the programme is indicated from emerging evidence on increased allocation of local government budgets towards social protection and inclusion related activities. NGO partners have compared previous budget allocations with new budgets allocated after trainings under SPIS were completed and budgets that accompanied the two-year action plans. Comparisons show that in 6 of 10 SPIS pilot municipalities have shown an increased allocation of budget towards children. This is significant not only in that more resources are being directed towards children but also because in the context of BiH’s financial crisis, it demonstrates that improved outreach does not always imply increased resources but better resource allocation. The lesson in better budgeting is therefore a significant achievement of SPIS programme. The programme should now consider building this in as an indicator for regular monitoring.

**Challenges and shortcomings**

One of the most critical shortcoming of the project has been its insufficient engagement with broader social protection sector reforms in the country, in particular the ongoing debates and discussions on improving the social assistance/ benefits segment of social protection. This is a critical area for BiH currently, given that reforms of social assistance programmes is considered an absolute necessity given its fiscal unsustainability. There are discussions for introducing a targeting system for ensuring that most vulnerable and ‘needy’ receive benefits and that there is consistency across different levels of governments. SPIS programme needs to harness its lessons learnt and its closeness with beneficiaries to inform these debates to ensure that children, in particular, vulnerable children are adequately addressed in these reforms.

Another shortcoming of the programme relates to its design and planning stages, including the results framework, which needed to be revised several times, and the monitoring framework, which still needs further work. Weak monitoring indicators at the level of final beneficiaries and lack of baseline, has meant that progress and change at the level of beneficiaries cannot be measured- equity, increased access, and reduced vulnerabilities.

Yet another set of challenges for the programme comes from the complex political and administrative set up in the country whereby policy advocacy becomes even more
challenging. Objective 1 of the programme pertains broader policy changes that require consensus on part of different stakeholders at different entities and this remains unaccomplished. Similarly, while the programme aims to address this challenge by various mechanisms such as working groups and multi stakeholder/multi entity management body, facilitating consensus and maintaining consistency in the functioning of these bodies has been tough. As a result some working groups had to be closed or merged and the ‘expert team’ had to be dissolved.

A final challenge for SPIS is related to its financial and human resource cost. The programme has been expensive and its replication at current rate seems implausible. The heavy management structure and dependence on NGOs are costs that are not sustainable and there is a need to look into how these costs can be reduced for the continuation of the programme.

This evaluation concludes that SPIS has contributed significantly to the cause of promoting an integrated approach to social protection and inclusion for children. Through intensive capacity building of state institutions at local levels and setting up of mechanisms for institutionalizing multi-sectoral collaboration, a good governance model has been demonstrated and replicated within the time frame of the programme. The programme, in order to move from a model approach in selected municipalities now needs to be expanded to all municipalities in the country, albeit through a programme and more efficient approach. The financial and institutional support from UNICEF and EUD would be important for the expansion (short term) and for the institutionalization of inputs such that the new approaches, practices and models may be embedded in government policy and practice.
5. Lessons learned

Lessons learned about cross-sectoral cooperation in the context of parallel sets ups

Cross-sectoral cooperation on children’s rights is a challenge globally, given the fact that children’s rights involve multiple sectors whose competencies are set with a multitude of Ministries. Typically Ministries of health, education, social welfare, justice and so on are involved in various aspects of children’s rights. Horizontal linkages and cooperation are required in promoting children’s rights in any such context.

Further, in many countries organised federally, and with the democratic decentralisation and devolution processes, these competencies are shared at different levels of governance (national, state/provincial and districts, for instance). Vertical linkages are required in such contexts for the promotion of children’s rights.

Promoting any such vertical and horizontal linkages, especially concerning children’s rights which are usually not priority, is fraught with complexities arising from political will, administrative and financial capacities, strengths of joint mechanisms established, accountability structures and individual enthusiasm and commitment.

In the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the usual complexities involved in multi-sectoral cooperation are magnified due to the peculiar nature of governance and politics in the country. There is no single and standardised ‘system’ of health care, education or social protection. There are various systems, various standards and various different services and benefits provided to citizens of one country depending on which administrative unit they reside in.

Under the SPIS programme close cooperation between health, education, and social protection sectors has been strengthened, particularly at local level. The evidence for this are the Protocols adopted in municipalities for inter-sectoral as well as the establishment Municipal Management Boards which were later elevated to the status of “Commission for the Social Protection and Inclusion of Children”. This body comprises representatives of different public institutions- schools, health centres, CSW, police, etc. The transition to a commission implies that this body is now recognised as a permanent executive body at the municipal level.

The SPIS programme throws important lessons that have been learnt in promoting multi-sectoral cooperation in a complex context such as BiH:

a) Despite political differences and different policy/legal frameworks, it is possible to operationalize a uniform method for multi-sectoral cooperation at the level of local governance, across the country.

There is nothing in the policy frameworks that prevents different sectors at the fundamental unit of governance to cooperate and work together. Even though the different entities and BD have different provisions for children with special needs for instance, at the level of municipalities, it is possible to establish and implement a multi-
sectoral body that looks at the child holistically and plans for provision of services for that child in an integrated manner.

b) Despite political differences and different policy/legal frameworks, entities are willing to work together on common goals related to children’s rights, to a large extent.

Children as a subject and UNICEF as an external partner organisation, both serve as neutral grounds for cooperation among entities that have otherwise different political perspectives.

c) Creating and facilitating multi-sectoral forums involving all administrative units for the highest level decision making on programmes is possible and effective

By creating multi-sectoral forum such as the SPIS Management Board, SPIS provided opportunity for cooperation at the highest levels between both entities, ensuring that the same programme is implemented across the country.

d) Efficiency suffers as collateral damage in multi-sectoral and multi entity collaboration at policy level

Promoting multi-sectoral multi-entity collaboration at the policy level, especially in terms of generating consensus is time consuming. Often these have implied delays in decision-making and implementation thereof. This needs to be well built into programmes promoting such collaboration.

e) Through collaboration nurtured as part of this programme, the new services that are initiated have higher likelihood of being standardised.

One of the biggest successes of SPIS programme at the policy level is that there is now a policy framework on IECD at state level and at the level of FBiH and the one at RS is being developed. The development of IECD policy frameworks is closely linked to the development and implementation of the SPIS programme. IECD services were piloted under SPIS and simultaneous work on developing policy frameworks was strengthened. The existing multi-sectoral, multi entity body (SPIS Management Board) served as the platform that facilitated this harmonisation. Each entity did develop its own policy, yet it all came from the same example and same set of ideas discussed at a multi-sectoral, multi-entity platform.

f) Including all levels of governance is critical for success of programmes that require horizontal and vertical linkages

SPIS has been successful in facilitating horizontal linkages at the municipality level. There has also been some success, albeit less than municipality level, in facilitating horizontal linkages at the entity and across entity levels. However, in terms of vertical linkages, opportunities have been lost. Specifically in the case of the FBiH, Cantons have not been involved in the SPIS Management Boards), which has not only led to disappointment on their part but has also affected efficiency of the programme. However, they have been included into the four entity working groups (policy and legislation; capacity building;
functional review; M&E) which were established in the first two phases of the programme. Cantons hold significant competencies in the areas of health, education and social protection, both in terms of policy frameworks as well as budget allocations. While they have been involved in different consultations, not involving them in established management mechanisms has been a lost opportunity, particularly in terms of establishing SPIS as a ‘joint’ programme. Similarly, as discussed earlier, not involving FMoH in the SPIS Management Board has been perceived by them as an attempt to marginalise them in the SPIS programme.

Another lost opportunity has been not involving municipalities in higher-level governance and policy level bodies such as management board. Municipalities are the closest to beneficiaries and have both a better information base as well as legitimate representation of the needs. Especially given the fact that the programme focus was on strengthening mechanisms at the grassroots, it is strange that the basic unit of governance was not involved in decision-making forums. However, representatives of the Municipal Management Boards have been the members of the entity working groups in both entities.

For the future, it is critical to involve all levels of governance not only to ensure top down standardisation but also to have a bottom up feedback and representation.

**g) There is need to address all sectors equally and address all forms of vulnerabilities**

In the four years of its implementation, an overview of activities and results shows a bias towards inclusion of special needs children in the education system and their referral to social protection (benefits) and health sector (rehabilitation). There has been some focus on rural and Roma children by way of satellite IECD centres. In terms of health system as a whole, only IECD services or services for children with special needs have been addressed. At the policy level, while policies on social inclusion have been engaged with, the policies on social protection, specifically in the area of social benefits has not been engaged with.

**h) Strengthening systems needs a programme approach**

The social protection and inclusion systems in BiH involve a complex web of different systems (policies, laws, mechanisms, services) often existing without much interface with each other. In this context changing the systems to be harmonised, to be collaborative and to work with a results and rights based framework requires time and requires impacts to be assessed at the level of final beneficiaries for it to be meaningful. All these need a programme approach spread over a reasonable period of time. The programme can be comprised of various projects, such as capacity building, development and implementation of local plans, and so on, with specified time bound activities.

Results frameworks for such initiatives also need to take on a programme approach: implying a phased approach from the design stage, with broad overall goals that are aimed for beyond the outputs and outcomes that will be visible in 12 – 36 months. Also, strengthening systems by itself cannot be a goal or outcome, it is at best an output, a means to an end. This needs to be reflected in the results framework. Accordingly, financial support for such initiatives needs to be long-term programme oriented and not just
outcome based project funding.

i) A pilot programme, which has heavy human resource and financial costs, is unlikely to be expanded/replicated without external donor funding, especially in the context of financial crisis in BiH.

Nearly all government representatives when asked about the cost efficiency of SPIS found SPIS to be an ‘expensive’ endeavour, one that they feared would not continue without external financial support.

*What best practices can be transferred to other programmes or countries?*

In terms of good practices that emerge from the SPIS experience and that can be transferred to other programmes and countries, the local level model for multi-sectoral cooperation stands out. This mechanism (also called the SPIS Model) has already successfully been applied under another programme in the country—the joint UN programme on DEG for improving access to water. Establishment of multi-sectoral form (Municipal Management Board), building its capacities on integrated, human rights based approach, facilitating protocols of cooperation, outlining roles and responsibilities in the referral set up and the upgrading of this body into an officially / legally recognised form (e.g. Commission or other coordination body) which gives it powers and legitimate voice, is the ‘best’ practice demonstrated by SPIS and already successfully expanded in another sector.

The SPIS Model is certainly a model of good governance that can be shared with and applied to other sectors and in other countries.

*SPIS’s contribution to progress towards the Social Inclusion Strategy (and equivalent RS strategy)*

SPIS shares goals for at least 4 of the 6 priority areas of the Social Inclusion Strategies: families with children, education, health and persons with disabilities.

The Social Inclusion Strategies identify children, children with disability, ethnic minorities as categories of vulnerable persons and SPIS has been explicitly focusing on these groups. An important strategy outlined in the various social inclusion strategies is that of integrated services and multi-sectoral collaboration which has been successfully demonstrated under SPIS.

The SPIS programme is not only in line with the various inclusion strategies but is providing evidence of how these strategies can be implemented effectively (collaboration/referral) and demonstrating how integrated services can be provided, for example through IECD services.

All government representatives interviewed for this evaluation shared that they found SPIS to be in line with their own priorities and the only programme of its kind in the country. The fact that there is interest in expanding SPIS to all other municipalities indicates how SPIS is perceived to be promoting government priorities as well.
The extent to which SPIS programme mechanisms is helping influence the country’s social policy framework?

SPIS contribution to influencing social policy framework in the country has been demonstrated and appreciated by government and non-government partners alike. The multi-sectoral, multi-entity mechanism (SPIS Management Board) played a significant role in the development of not only a new policy for the country but also one that is harmonised- the IECD policy frameworks.

In addition, the various studies and assessments of the institutional frameworks and gaps have informed this joint body of the problems caused by existing fragmented frameworks and led to discussions for harmonising. Numerous processes are currently on-going in order to address the policy gaps: harmonisation of laws with the UNCRC, better organisation of legal framework for social protection in FBiH and so on.

There is of course a lot that remains to be done. The SPIS management board needs to get more involved in the debates around social protection reforms and inform them to ensure best interests of children are taken care of.
6. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this evaluation, including feedback from government and non-government partners, the following recommendations, organised by priority (immediate, medium term and long term) are being made to donors, UNICEF and governments of BiH:

**Recommendations for UNICEF and Government of BiH**

**Immediate priority: for improving programming**

3) Urgently ensure that the roles played by external consultants placed in the various Ministries are included in job descriptions of regular staff so that the focus on SPIS continues after consultants leave.

4) Institutionalise children’s participation in the local development processes

5) Improve coordination and information sharing between the government at all levels and various resource agencies such as NGOs and consulting firms, so they may synergise efforts as well.

6) There is need to make municipal budget allocations more efficient.

7) The focus so far has been on inclusion of children with disability, both in terms of innovative services (IECD) as well as in terms of special focus projects. While disability is a major factor for exclusion, poverty and exclusion on the grounds of nationality are also prevalent. SPIS model for identification of priorities needs to be made more sensitive and proactive on these other, albeit more politically sensitive factors. Also gender based exclusions need to be better examined and progress in inclusion needs more explicit monitoring along gender as much as other excluding factors.

8) Any revised framework developed for furthering the progress made so far should be designed for impacts at the level of the final beneficiaries (and not just outcomes) and it should have a programme approach:

   • Improved policy frameworks and services should translate into better results at the level of final beneficiaries. The programme framework should be impact oriented.
   • Results should be monitored and evaluated after actions/services have been completed and followed up until their lead to ultimate goals. For this there is need to develop baseline and conduct end line surveys. For example, regular monitoring of data related to IECD, preschool and primary school enrolment and retention should be geared towards identifying how IECD services have translated into results in terms of changes in the lives of children and not simply in terms of them accessing these services alone (are vulnerable children who participated in IECD showing better results in learning outcomes at primary schools than those who did not)

**Medium term: for phasing out in current municipalities and expansion to others**

9) For the 21 municipalities that have participated in SPIS over its three phases, there should be a plan for phase out and not for completely letting go. At least until the completing of all action plans, monitoring of the results thereof, review and
planning for the next cycle of action plans.

10) Joint, collaborative mechanism for ensuring inclusive services for children should be expanded to all Municipalities. Non-SPIS Municipalities are aware of the SPIS and appreciate its value and express interest in learning about the same. It is a mechanism that is relevant for good governance and should be promoted as such. Various modalities could be used, including peer-to-peer sharing and the associations of municipalities in both entities and BD could be explored as one of the forums for sharing the good practice.

11) Trainings are crucial for the expansion of the model. So far NGOs and consulting firms have served well as resource agencies to provide various trainings to government agencies at all levels including service providers. Going forward, alternatives should be explored in the medium and long term for institutionalising the training programmes through a more efficient arrangement. In the short term, the services of NGOs and private firms may be necessary.

**Recommendation for all donor partners (UNICEF, EUD) and government**

**Immediate priority**

12) Given the current economic crisis and its impact on the budgets available with the governments, as well as in light of withdrawal of various bilateral donors, it is recommended that UNICEF and the EUD continue to support the government in the phasing out as well as expansion of SPIS.
13) Donors, UNICEF and the Governments of BiH must review the cost of the programme (human resource and financial) to see how best these costs can be reduced and benefits maximized (for instance through institutionalizing trainings).

**Medium term: for policy advocacy and synergy with other initiatives**

14) UNICEF and government partners of SPIS as well as the EUD should more actively represent voice of children in the current discourses around social protection reforms in the country, in particular the ones related to revision of social assistance programmes. In this context strategic partnerships with the World Bank and the OSCE should be explored.
15) Learnings from SPIS as well as voices of children, communities and local bodies should be harnessed to influence overall reforms in the social protection sector in the country. Evidence from local levels must be more strategically used to influence policy reforms for better targeting and improved entitlements.
16) All relevant social sectors should be included in policy advocacy efforts, including Ministries at the Cantonal level.
17) The definition and conceptual framework for Social Protection should be reviewed in the context of existing definitions in international frameworks, especially since SPIS needs to engage with other actors on common goals related to promoting social protection. In particular, there is need to revise the approach whereby every social service (health and education) is clubbed under social protection. These are basic social services and social protection strategies maybe needed to make them inclusive and more accessible but these are not ‘social protection’.
**Long term: impact assessment**

18) A comprehensive assessment of impacts on children should be conducted for the entire programme, including for impacts of trainings, action plans, new services and improved policy frameworks. These assessments should be conducted after the period for implementation of all action plans in the municipalities (for SPIS I and II this would be 2013 and for SPIS III it would be 2015). The assessment should be able to map the extent of inclusion for all categories of vulnerabilities, in all three core social sectors.