Knowledge for Action
Emerging experiences in Social and Economic Policy that support equitable outcomes for children

Selected Innovations and Lessons Learned from UNICEF programmes
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Volume 3

FOREWORD

It is commonly understood that progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), both in aggregate and for the most vulnerable populations, will be at risk if the right policies are not in place. As the agreed deadline to achieve the MDGs in 2015 nears, the organization continues to scale up programmes that target inequities suffered by the world’s most disadvantaged children and women. UNICEF’s social and economic policy work is a critical driver for this agenda given its focus on strengthening national policy formulation and implementation, reducing child poverty and disparities, advocating for equitable budgetary allocations and channeling resources where they are most needed through social protection – in support of social sector outcomes.

Scaling up this work will benefit from improved knowledge sharing around child-focused social and economic policy. To this end, UNICEF is increasingly focusing on documenting and sharing country experiences. Some of this recent work includes two volumes of the compendium on child-focused social and economic policy released in 2011 and available at www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/index_60993.html.

As follow up, this publication features ten additional innovations and lessons learned from UNICEF initiatives. These case studies are illustrative of UNICEF’s and its partners’ experience in bringing and solidifying upstream work as a core strategy to reach the most marginalized children and families.

The cases highlighted in this publication are highly diverse examples - from child friendly municipal planning in Morocco to collaboration with IMF in Congo; Marginal Budgeting for Bottlenecks (MBB) analysis in Benin; partnering with ADB in East Asia and the Pacific; removing barriers for vulnerable families to access cash transfers in Kyrgyz Republic; shaping public policies to promote literacy in Brazil, among others. Despite their diversity, a common thread across them is their contribution to addressing barriers and bottlenecks to children’s access to essential services. The critical determinants for assessing bottlenecks or barriers to equitable outcomes for children have been grouped into a) the enabling environment, b) supply, c) demand, and d) quality of services/interventions for children. Assessing the bottlenecks or barriers along these determinants is central to UNICEF’s focus on strengthening national monitoring frameworks for equitable results.

Documentation of key lessons and experiences facilitates their further application and is valuable for organizational learning. It is important to recognize that lessons gained through cooperation in one country or context is not necessarily transferable to the circumstances of another. We hope that this compilation will be useful in two ways: first, to provide a sense of the range of UNICEF’s both mainstreamed and experimental work on social policy across regions that support the equity agenda; and second, to provide concrete examples of child-focused social and economic policy work that can inform and improve similar initiatives elsewhere.

Each of these pieces is a summary and more detailed information is available from the UNICEF Regional and Country Offices which provided the original material. If you are interested in learning more about a particular topic or featured case, or would like to make comments, please contact us through socialpolicy@unicef.org.

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Policy and Strategy
United Nations Children’s Fund
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DEFINITIONS

• Innovations are summaries of programmatic or operational innovations that have or are being implemented under UNICEF’s mandate. These innovations may be pilot projects or new approaches to a standard programming model that can demonstrate initial results.

• Lessons Learned are more detailed reflections on a particular programme or operation and extraction of lessons learned through its implementation. These lessons may be positive (successes) or negative (failures). Lessons learned have undergone a wider review than innovations and have often been implemented over a longer time frame.
UNICEF’S SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY WORK IS KEY TO EQUITY

In recent times, UNICEF has renewed its focus on equity so that all children have an opportunity to survive, develop, and reach their full potential. Equity has been, and remains, a central tenet to UNICEF’s work around social and economic policy, particularly in the context of accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This involves promotion of rights-based and participatory policymaking processes; advocacy for child-sensitive laws, budgets, national development plans, and inclusive social and economic policies. For instance, UNICEF’s Child Poverty and Disparities studies take a close look at patterns, incidence, and drivers of inequities in each society. It specifically analyzes social, economic, political, and systemic determinants of inequity such as gender discrimination, ethnic, minority and religious discrimination, discrimination due to disability status, structural poverty, geographic isolation, cultural and social norms, and weak governance. This analysis forms the basis of equity programming by ensuring that the most binding constraints to development are addressed and adapted interventions are put in place for universal coverage with basic social services.

Inequities in child outcomes often result from public policies that do not address the needs of the most deprived populations. UNICEF increasingly influences macroeconomic policies; engages with International Financial Institutions (IFIs) on country assistance strategies and programmes; helps Governments shape their National Development Plans or Poverty Reduction Strategies and brings evidence to formulate sectoral strategies, action plans and monitoring frameworks. It further informs state, provincial, and municipal development plans and programmes, to ensure that they stay focused on pro-equity and pro-poor targets. More recently, in response to the food, fuel and financial crisis, UNICEF’s work focused on building the capacities of key national institutions on strengthening policies that prioritize not only the reduction of structural poverty, but also of crisis-related vulnerabilities and setting up national and community mechanisms for mitigation and response.

UNICEF advocates for equitable budgetary allocations and adequate social expenditures to achieve the MDGs. It works with government partners, UN agencies, IFIs, civil society, and other stakeholders to ensure that social development financing is sufficient to achieve the MDGs and channeled adequately and effectively, particularly to policies and programmatic interventions that benefit the most deprived groups. It helps identify options for increasing fiscal space for financing commensurate with sector needs. This is particularly important in the current context of post-crisis fiscal adjustment. UNICEF increasingly engages with key cross-cutting reform processes that determine to a large extent the success of sector-related work, such as in Public Financial Management, civil service management, decentralization, social protection and employment, new financing mechanisms including through climate change financing facilities among others.

The focus is also on integrating policy work across UNICEF’s sectoral programmes such as health, education, nutrition, water and sanitation and protection. These sector-specific areas require adequate legislation, policies,
Budgets, and implementation arrangements to ensure progressively increased coverage for the most deprived children. Finally, UNICEF’s attention to social protection complements sectoral interventions and helps to achieve greater equity by channeling resources to the most deprived areas and population groups.

**MONITORING EQUITABLE OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN**

Delivering strong outcomes for those children and women who need them most requires a deliberate focus on ‘management for results’. This thinking has led to the genesis of a more refined monitoring framework for UNICEF to apply in its work with the Government and partners. It entails monitoring and reporting on few specific areas (such as child survival, protection and development), that are linked to the MDGs and UNICEF’s medium-term strategic plan (MTSP).

This monitoring framework is based on the notion that certain bottlenecks and barriers prevent children and women from benefitting from essential interventions and services. Factors such as the unavailability of schools or human resources disrupt the supply of services, while cost considerations or social attitudes can stifle demand. These barriers to universal coverage may be rooted in social norms, delivery systems, capacity constraints, public policies or budgets, or other factors. So long as these bottlenecks exist, programmatic interventions will fail to reach those in need. Removing the bottlenecks is therefore an important first step towards universal coverage.

UNICEF has developed ten critical determinants (summarized in the table below), to guide the analysis of barriers and bottlenecks in the provision and use of essential interventions and services for children and women. These ten determinants have been categorized into: a) the enabling environment, b) supply, c) demand, and d) quality of services/interventions for children.

**UNICEF’S SOCIAL POLICY WORK GUIDES THE EQUITY MONITORING FRAMEWORK**

The country cases captured in this compendium are framed around these ten determinants to show how UNICEF’s wide ranging macro and micro level social policy work helps to remove barriers and bottlenecks to equitable outcomes for children. While the cases are

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**Table: Ten Critical Determinants for assessing Bottlenecks and Barriers to Equitable Outcomes for Children**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Determinants of Bottlenecks and Barriers</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enabling Environment</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Social Norms</td>
<td>Widely followed social rules of behaviour</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Legislation/Policy</td>
<td>Adequacy of laws and policies</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Budget/expenditure</td>
<td>Allocation &amp; disbursement of required resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Management/Coordination</td>
<td>Roles and Accountability/ Coordination/ Partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Supply</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Availability of essential commodities/inputs</td>
<td>Essential commodities/ inputs required to deliver a service or adopt a practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Access to adequately staffed services, facilities and information</td>
<td>Physical access (services, facilities/information)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Demand</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Financial access</td>
<td>Direct and indirect costs for services/ practices</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Social and cultural practices and beliefs</td>
<td>Individual/ community beliefs, awareness, behaviors, practices, attitudes</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Continuity of use</td>
<td>Completion/ continuity in service, practice</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Quality</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Quality</td>
<td>Adherence to required quality standards (national or international norms)</td>
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*Guidance on Conducting a Situation Analysis of Children’s and Women’s Rights: Taking a rights-based, equity-focused approach to Situation Analysis, UNICEF New York, Division of Policy and Practice, December 2011*
categorized around specific determinants (as mentioned below), each case also illustrates interaction of several determinants to create sustainable impact for children. The cases also reveal lessons learned and emerging innovative practices in the field of social policy that can be further scaled up or replicated.

Overall the cases suggest certain common factors for success. First, the availability of robust data and analyses in social areas, along with corresponding policy advice, is central to building UNICEF's authority as the expert on child-focused social policy. The cases demonstrate that significant gains can be achieved by positioning UNICEF as a leading knowledge organization. Second, taking the lead in critical policy forums provides UNICEF visibility and credibility as a strong actor in the social policy sector. Third, finding strategic entry points, by engaging with the IMF, World Bank and regional financial institutions such as the ADB, help UNICEF gain direct access to the Ministry of Finance. Very often it provides UNICEF entry points into a constrained policy-making environment and increases its capacity to negotiate on policy recommendations. Finally, the experiences demonstrate that by seizing critical opportunities, even with minimal resources, policy debates can be influenced in favour of children.

<table>
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<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Bangladesh</strong>: Cash transfers mitigate harmful practices by encouraging family care solutions for vulnerable children</td>
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<td>2. <strong>United Republic of Tanzania</strong>: Advocating for a comprehensive children's code to reduce violence against children and strengthen social protection systems</td>
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COUNTRY EXPERIENCES
INNOVATION – SOCIAL NORMS

BANGLADESH
Cash transfers mitigate harmful practices by encouraging family care solutions for vulnerable children

ABSTRACT
Nearly half of the children in Bangladesh live below the national poverty line and the country’s susceptibility for natural disasters leaves them at even greater risk. As a response, UNICEF is strengthening national child protection systems in Bangladesh along with supporting change in social norms towards children. This coordinated approach focuses on wide-ranging prevention and response activities as well as creating positive attitudes, beliefs and values towards children’s rights. In 2008, to address concerns regarding the welfare of orphan and vulnerable children (OVCs) in the wake of Cyclone Sidr, UNICEF in partnership with the Ministry of Social Welfare (MSW) launched a conditional cash transfer project for OVCs. The pilot project supports the Government to reform the current system (centred on institutional care) and place a new emphasis on family and community-based solutions and proactive social work. The project further uses cash transfers as an instrument to modify household behaviour around social norms concerning children and childhood.

By providing economic resilience and regular case management to foster families and OVCs, the pilot has successfully demonstrated the effectiveness of cash transfers to eliminate child labour and reduce incidences of early marriage in the project area. About 96 per cent of the households have graduated out of extreme poverty within an average of 24 months of cash transfer support, as the project helped them to acquire productive assets. The innovation involved matching the cash transfer amount to the cost per month per child in an institution, thereby demonstrating the affordability and cost effectiveness of the scheme. The evidence generated by the pilot has supported advocacy around de-institutionalization in Bangladesh. These efforts are visible in the National Child Policy 2010 followed by a new Children Act (yet to be enacted) which endorses family support services and social protection for OVCs. The pilot has been further replicated in urban slums and in other disaster prone areas. These projects continue to provide evidence supporting the benefits of increased social protection to OVCs and their families. It further demonstrates that by extending practical, cost-effective incentives, it is possible to modify social norms concerning children in an incremental way.

ISSUE
Child deprivation and vulnerability is a serious concern in Bangladesh. Forty per cent of Bangladeshi households are poor; over one quarter is extremely poor. Poverty has a profound impact on the lives of the country’s 61 million children. Twenty-six million children live below the national poverty line, typically deprived of four out of seven of the following basic services: water, sanitation, nutrition, education, health, information and shelter. Social norms and economic realities mean that child labour and early marriage are widely accepted and common in Bangladesh. Many families rely on the income generated by their children for survival, so child labour is often highly valued. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), there are nearly 8 million working children, aged 5-17 years, in Bangladesh. When children are forced to work, they are often denied their rights to education, leisure and play. They are also made further vulnerable to trafficking, abuse, violence and exploitation. Despite the adoption of the Act on minimum age of marriage, around three fourths of the girls are married before they reach their

1 Child Poverty and Disparities in Bangladesh, 2008
2 Child Labour in Bangladesh, UNICEF (www.unicef.org/bangladesh/Child_labour.pdf)
18th birthday; and more than 55 per cent become mothers before they are 19. Early marriage limits girls’ opportunities for social interaction and self-assertion, it curtails personal freedom, denies psychosocial and emotional well-being, reproductive health and educational opportunity. Moreover, while education is free and compulsory up to grade eight in Bangladesh, it is estimated that more than one million children have never been to school.

Bangladesh is also a disaster-prone country with natural disasters occurring almost every year. These events often result in many deaths and in displacement of millions of people. In such circumstances, weakened familial and societal structures can cause a breakdown in traditional caring arrangements, leaving children more vulnerable to abuse, neglect, and exploitation, including separation from their family, migration, and trafficking. Although child rights frameworks and child development literature make it clear that institutional care is rarely the most desirable response and should generally be used as a stop-gap rather than a permanent measure, the prevailing approaches by government, civil society, and voluntary organizations to protecting OVCs in Bangladesh have focused heavily on the provision of institutional care. Programmes aimed at preventing children from being separated from their families, such as direct family support services, are very limited and alternative family-based care programmes are generally lacking. Thus, OVCs face a threat of institutionalization. Institutional care is also expensive, concentrating available funds for the care of orphans and other at-risk children in small clusters.

However, the risk of orphans and other vulnerable children slipping through the safety net of extended family care cannot be underestimated. Such children can find themselves in situations that greatly increase their vulnerability to violence, abuse, and exploitation. The risk is high as, without any ad-

STRAATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Amidst this backdrop, in 2008, UNICEF and MSW developed a pilot conditional cash transfer scheme (known as Amader Shishu) for children made vulnerable by Cyclone Sidr. The purpose of the project was to strengthen family-based care by providing economic resilience to foster families and thereby develop an alternative approach to institutional care for OVCs. Using cash transfers as a catalyst, the project also sought to incite change in social norms concerning child labour and early marriage. To this end, the project focused on strengthening the capacity of social welfare and established case management, follow-up and referral systems. The initiative was designed in line with the conceptual framework of transformative social protection. The project has been designed using an action research model that ensures synergies between the project objectives and evidence-based advocacy. The Department of Social Services (DSS) together with UNICEF developed implementation guidelines in consultation with other ministries, which, following consultations and revisions, were approved by an inter-ministerial committee in 2009.

Cash transfers were provided to nearly 2100 OVCs in the seven sub-districts affected by the Cyclone. Each child received a monthly support of about 20 USD (1,500 BDT) for an average of two years on the provision that the child must regularly attend school; have access to other basic services (health care in particular); and must not be subjected to early marriage or be engaged in child labour. The amount of the cash transfer (as determined by MSW) is equivalent to the monthly cost per child placed in a government run institution or orphanage. This deliberate price-matching provides evidence that the programme is affordable and cost effective.

The implementation guidelines are the guiding document for union social workers (USWs) [the government-affiliated

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5 MICS (2006) and SOWC (2008)
6 Child Labour in Bangladesh, UNICEF (www.unicef.org/bangladesh/Child_labor.pdf)
7 Transformative social protection refers to policies that tackle power imbalances in society that may directly or indirectly encourage, create and sustain vulnerabilities. (Devereaux and Sabates-Wheeler, 2004)
8 Action research process is by nature cyclical with each cycle involving four steps: planning, action, observation and reflection. The action and implementation plan is built on an identified problem and hypothesis on how the problem can be solved. During implementation, documentation tools facilitate a) on-going data collection and interpretation; b) use of information to make changes and c) study of these changes. The data collected is used to verify if the hypothesis were accurate. Depending on the result, action, plan and the hypothesis are adjusted.
social workers based in communities] and upazilla social services officers (USSOs). USWs and USSOs are the driving force behind this project. Following the official approval of these guidelines within the DSS and MSW, a cell was formed to oversee the implementation of the pilot. The project targets children under 18, who have lost a mother/ father or both parents. It also targets children who are involved in hazardous and exploitative work; children separated from their family; children who have dropped out of school; children with a disability and indigenous children. To be eligible, the child’s extended family must have an annual income less than USD 495 (BDT 36,000). The primary selection is done by women locally elected officials. Upon verification by visiting families, the approved list is displayed to the community members for a week to raise any objections, if any, regarding the selection of beneficiaries.

To develop institutional capacity, UNICEF provided technical assistance and resources to the DSS to develop on-the-job social work training. This training has been imparted to people in close contact with vulnerable children such as DSS social workers, police and teachers. A two-tier theoretical and practical training course has been developed, piloted, evaluated and replicated. In particular, attention is given to implementation of case management and regular follow-up visits for children. The caregivers of orphan children receiving cash transfers are also involved in the case management processes. Participatory tools such as community mapping are being used, along with parent gatherings to educate caregivers about child development and child rights issues. These efforts also serve to change social norms towards children and childhood.

Creating positive social norms for children’s rights: The Amader Shishu social protection initiative is part of UNICEF’s broader efforts to create a protective environment for children in Bangladesh. To achieve this UNICEF is working to establish a national child protection system and is supporting, in parallel, change in social norms in favour of child rights and protection. UNICEF’s social norm project seeks to create demand for children’s rights and as a result encourages abandonment of harmful practices such as child labour and early marriage. The idea is to incite positive social change for all children rather than to develop awareness raising campaigns for each child protection issue separately.

In 2010, a comprehensive child protection communication strategy, integrating advocacy, behaviour change and social change has been developed and implemented by UNICEF. The three critical dimensions of this strategy that encourage social change include a) provision of knowledge and information to adolescents, parents and community influencers on issues related to early marriage, child labour, birth registra-

9 In 2011, this training was also provided to social workers from the Government and NGOs involved in urban cash transfers, transformation of institutions and other services provision part of the minimum package of services

10 To strengthen child protection, a minimum package of services has been designed and implemented in selected areas in Bangladesh. It is based on the continuum of care where the best interests of the child are considered before opting for provision of family support or placement in an institution. The continuum steps include prevention, early identification, assessment and registration, referral and service purchasing; provision; case review; and reunification and closure. Cash transfers have been included as a tool in the minimum package of services that support prevention; provision by providing family support service and reunification and closure.

11 A person having a daily calorie intake of less than 2,122 kilocalories is considered absolute poor while one with an intake of less than 1,805 kilocalories is considered extremely poor.
acquiring productive assets. Within an average of 24 months of cash transfer support, 96 per cent of the households had moved out of extreme poverty.

Further, within the project, there have been no cases of child labour in 5-14 year old children. With regards to early marriage, five cases (0.25 per cent) out of nearly 2100 children were reported. In addition, all school going children were enrolled in school. This shows that the concerns over misappropriation of funds can be effectively addressed with continuous case management and correct design of incentives. For households that have moved out of extreme poverty, the provision of cash transfer has been discontinued while case management is on-going with monthly visits conducted by USWs. Non-monetary support such as referral to services in particular health care and free medical treatment continues.

While capacity development of government social workers was time consuming, it was effective in transforming them into key actors in promoting child sensitive social protection. Community mobilization from the selection process of OVCs resulted in wide and diverse participation and ownership from communities and high level officials including Members of Parliament.

Monitoring and documentation through action research has made available results and lessons learned which have been formulated into persuasive arguments to advocate with the Government to forward child-sensitive social protection. As a result of this advocacy, the National Child Policy 2010 in Bangladesh followed by a new Children Act (yet to be enacted) takes in account that residential care may not always be in the best interest of the child. The Policy has further endorsed family support services and social protection for OVCs. The Policy also redefines the age of children to 0-18 years (previously it was 14 years). In addition, the MSW has agreed to initiate the transformation of institutions with the introduction of case management, gatekeeping and minimum standards for development. To this effect, pilot projects were being undertaken in six institutions in 2011.

With regards to the social norms project, a Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices and Expectations (KAPE) Study on child labour in Bangladesh was undertaken in 2010. This study will serve as a baseline to determine the impact of communication for social change and behaviour change communication work on child labour. An endline study is expected to be undertaken in 2013.

**INNOVATION**

This experience successfully demonstrates that cash transfers can be an effective tool to encourage family and community-based care solutions for vulnerable children and can assist in de-institutionalization. While the Government provided 20 USD (1,500 BDT) per month per child to an institution, the innovation involved developing an alternative at the same cost that will prevent family and community separation while ensuring children’s protection against child labour and early marriage and access to education. Further, the cash transfer amount also served as ‘promotive’ social protection (i.e. it enhanced assets, human capital and income earning capacities). Families have been able to use some of the received amount to invest in income generation activities, resulting in sustained increase of their monthly revenue and finally graduation out of poverty.

This experience further demonstrates the effectiveness of institutional strengthening as a strategy to advocate for alternatives to institutions and enhancement of family support services. Government social workers, if properly trained, can be essential vehicles to promote child-sensitive social protection, through their involvement in communication for development activities and referral to services through case management implementation. The engagement of local government officials and community members using a bottom-up approach in various stages of implementation, in particular, in the selection of OVCs and follow up, promoted decentralization. The bottom-up approach was further innovative as it did not use the prevailing top–down and centralized way of Government’s functioning with its heavy reliance on civil society and NGOs with regards to service delivery.

These elements are considered as an innovation in a country where institutional care is the prevailing approach for OVCs and where government social workers do not use child centred or proactive approaches.

**POTENTIAL APPLICATION**

Plans are underway for scaling up the pilot project in other rural disaster prone areas around the coastal belt of Bangladesh. This includes areas still affected by Cyclone Aila in 2009. In 2011, the Amader Shishu project was also replicated in urban slums in Dhaka city. According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) conducted by UNICEF and the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistic in 2009, urban slums are reported to have the highest rates of school drop outs (both in primary and secondary schools) and the highest prevalence of child labour. Therefore, the Amader Shishu project was modified for implementation in urban slums targeting OVCs, in particular working children. The cash transfers are being used as a preventative mechanism to improve the socio-economic resilience, reduce vulnerabilities and empower families to take better care of their children. This would reduce the risk of children being exposed to child labour, violence and abuse. In order to replicate the project, the targeting criteria focused more on child protection issues and referral to
services in urban areas. For example, school registration is now a main criterion for payment of the first installment of the cash transfer.

**NEXT STEPS**
To ensure smooth scaling up, the implementation guidelines (a requirement for all government programmes), developed for the *Amader Shishu* project are under revision to serve as a common framework for all child sensitive social protection initiatives. The revision of guidelines would support expansion of the scope and geographical coverage of cash transfers to other disaster prone areas and urban slums. By creating credible bottom-up evidence, the expansion of the cash transfers will support the adoption of a new social protection scheme in addition to institutional based care as proposed in the National Child Policy.

The guidelines will encompass revision in strategies and modalities, reflecting on the challenges and constraints faced during the pilot project. A major proposed revision is on the government cash transfer modality as it was found to be too time consuming. Following UNICEF’s cash disbursement to MSW, it takes an average of two months for checks to be issued under the caregiver’s name. Thus, recommendations are incorporated in the revisions to expedite this process. At the same time, UNICEF has been working with Grameen mobile phone company for their support to facilitate cash transfers to beneficiaries’ bank accounts using mobile phone technologies. This process should be initiated in 2012 and will further facilitate the scaling up of the project.

In addition, a policy paper ‘*What is in the Child’s Best Interest: Growing up within a Family Environment or in an Institution?*’ will be released in 2012 to support policy advocacy efforts around de-institutionalization.

**RELATED LINKS**

Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices and Expectations (KAPE)
ABSTRACT
While Tanzania has made significant progress towards achieving global and national targets in health and education, large inequities have left nearly half of all Tanzanian children severely deprived. A lack of comprehensive legal protection for children further aggravated the situation. Since 2007, sustained engagement in generating evidence through research, advocacy, capacity development and systems strengthening has provided UNICEF a strong platform for influencing policy and legal reforms. In 2009, this resulted in the adoption of the Law of the Child Act, a landmark legislation which provides a legal framework to protect the rights of Tanzanian children in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). In 2011, the Children’s Act in Zanzibar, a complementary legislation, was adopted. These laws set the foundation for the establishment of a child protection system in Tanzania.

To translate the provision of the laws, UNICEF is supporting the elaboration of rules and regulations around the two legislations. A pilot has been modeled at the district level that builds capacity of multi-sectoral teams to respond to child protection issues. Further, in the absence of an overarching social protection policy, UNICEF secured a place in the discussions on the design of a national social safety net programme, supported by the World Bank and DFID (Department for International Development, UK). UNICEF’s engagement has been instrumental in ensuring that the new social safety net programme has a strong focus on pregnant women and children in poor families. Building on this work, UNICEF is tracking government expenditures on child protection, costing the roll-out of a national child protection system and will further support the development of a National Social Protection Policy for Zanzibar. This experience from Tanzania is particularly relevant as it highlights the value of investing in an enabling policy and legal environment that reinforces programme interventions on the ground.

ISSUE
Despite being among the first countries in the world to ratify the CRC in 1991, 20 years later Tanzania still lacked an overarching piece of national legislation to enact the international treaty. An array of often contradictory legal norms to legislate on children’s rights were in place, which taken as a whole did not afford adequate protection to Tanzanian children. The situation was further compounded by the coexistence of customary and common law. Moreover, since Tanzania has resulted from of a union between the former Tanganyika and Zanzibar, it has maintained a separate Parliament in each of its two parts, and each has over time developed its own corpus of legislation.

Along with the lack of a strong child-centered legislative framework, there was a growing realization that in spite of Tanzania’s decades-long commitment to progressive and egalitarian policies, large disparities still persisted in the country – along socioeconomic lines, rural and urban residence, and across regions and districts. For instance, the rate of skilled attendance at delivery among women in the poorest quintile is 33 per cent, compared with 90 per cent for women from the richest quintile;¹ half of all rural residents were found to eat only two meals per day, compared with 10 per cent in Dar es Salaam.² Overall more than three million children in Tanzania fall below the food poverty line.³ Tanzanian children clearly face vastly different opportunities depending on the family into which they were born.

¹ Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey 2010
² Household Budget Survey 2007
³ Ibid
STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Addressing the two critical issues in Tanzania – lack of comprehensive legal protection and large inequities affecting great number of children – called for a multi-tiered approach focused on (a) generating evidence to inform decision makers; (b) promoting advocacy for legal reform and policy change; and (c) strengthening capacities and systems to respond to the needs of the most deprived and vulnerable children through well-selected programme interventions on the ground.

Generating Evidence: In 2007, UNICEF set out to implement an ambitious research and advocacy agenda aimed at highlighting the main challenges in addressing children’s rights in Tanzania. UNICEF collaborated with REPOA (Research on Poverty Alleviation), a national think tank, to publish a paper on Children and Vulnerability in Tanzania, which presented a stark picture of where progress was most needed. In 2008, work began on the preparation of two major reports including Childhood Poverty: Disparities and Deprivations in Child Well-Being that was developed in partnership with REPOA, the National Bureau of Statistics and New York University. In addition, a report on Violence against Children in Tanzania was developed together with the Muhimbili University and CDC Atlanta (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention).

Following the rich evidence from the studies, UNICEF convened a National Steering Committee in 2009 led by the Ministry of Finance to oversee the preparation of a comprehensive situation analysis in the country. In 2011, this led to the publication of Children and Women in Tanzania (Volume 1: Mainland, Volume 2: Zanzibar). And in 2011, UNICEF launched a comprehensive report on Adolescence in Tanzania.

Promoting Legal Reform: While data and evidence to support advocacy were being generated and shared, UNICEF’s senior leadership engaged with the key ministers and Members of Parliament, who then advocated for the passing of a comprehensive law in line with the provisions of the CRC. The Government initially intended to amend a host of laws pertaining to children’s rights rather than passing a new law. However UNICEF managed to impress the importance of having a consolidated piece of legislation that would codify all the rights applying to Tanzanian children in a single piece of legislation. Reaching out to the Commission of Human Rights and engaging the technical support of former members of Committee on the Rights of the Child proved critical in the run-up to the Parliamentary debate around this issue. In 2009, the Government finally decided to adopt one comprehensive bill that would supersede all existing laws and bring the national codes in line with internationally recognized standards. The Law of the Child Act 2009 lays the foundation for the establishment of a child protection system in mainland Tanzania. After further advocacy, this Law was followed by the passing of the Children’s Act in Zanzibar in 2011.

Strengthening systems and integrating programme interventions: However, translating the provisions of the laws into protective measures for children on the ground has posed a number of challenges. The Law of the Child Act gives the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) the mandate and responsibility for implementing the Law. As it happens, DSW – a small and understaffed department of the Ministry of Health – has not been able to deploy social workers in over a third of the mainland districts and does not have its own budget vote within the local government authority structures. There is minimal coordination between social welfare officers, health personnel, the police and court officials at the local level, which only compounds the problem. Since evidence reveals widespread violence against children in Tanzania along with lack of coherent social protection measures, it became clear that addressing the twin challenge of children’s social and economic vulnerabilities called for an investment in strengthening systems that could, over time, provide a comprehensive range of services and transfers in an integrated manner.

In response, UNICEF is providing substantial technical assistance to the drafting of rules and regulations that will spell out the standards, procedures, roles and functions required for implementing the two Children’s Acts. Gender and Children’s Desks have been set up in selected police stations, and capacities are being strengthened among social and health workers, court officials and police officers to better handle, refer and seek redress to cases of child abuse. About half of the 400 police stations now have officers trained in gender-based violence and child protection.

A pilot child protection system is being modeled in four districts through the establishment of multi-sectoral teams involving staff from social welfare, health, justice, the police and civil society organizations. These officials have been trained in core skills and knowledge related to child protection and
are well aware of how their respective roles and responsibilities are key to providing a holistic response as part of a broad child protection system.

Further, in the absence of an overarching social protection policy UNICEF has secured a place in the discussions on the design of a national social safety net programme, supported by the World Bank and DFID. The programme, slated for implementation from 2012 to 2022, will give cash transfers and wage income to poor households with pregnant women and children in return for investments in nutrition, health and education of their members. The programme will also involve able bodied adults in the households to participate in public works aimed at creating productive assets in the community.

**PROGRESS AND RESULTS**

By highlighting fragmented services and interventions for the most vulnerable children, the multiple deprivations they face and the several child protection gaps (such as the lack of a legislative framework and poor programmatic response), the child poverty study along with other analytical work were instrumental in Tanzania passing two comprehensive pieces of legislation within a span of two years (between 2009 and 2011). The Law of the Child Act responds to the studies’ recommendations by establishing a solid foundation for preventing and responding to child abuse and exploitation and clearly delineating roles and responsibilities. The Government is currently in the process of adopting rules and regulations that will help operationalize the two laws. The establishment of multi-sectoral district teams as part of the pilot programme is further strengthening the national child protection system.

To simultaneously address economic vulnerabilities, UNICEF – the designated lead development partner in the national policy dialogue on social protection – has been instrumental in ensuring that the new safety net programme has a strong focus on families with pregnant women and children. Further, UNICEF has successfully advocated for the inclusion of a basic, non-conditional transfer within the social safety net programme that will benefit all eligible households regardless of their size or the existence of social services in the proximity of their residence. The programme is expected to give about 250,000 severely deprived families a platform to overcome the extreme vulnerabilities to which they are exposed.

UNICEF is also working to promote closer alignment and convergence between this programme and the National Costed Plan of Action for the Most Vulnerable Children. The latter has already reached out to nearly 800,000 children during its first phase of implementation (2007–2010).

With UNICEF as a convener, a Task Force has been set up to explore concrete modalities for strengthening operational linkages between the two programmes. These programmes would serve as the core pillars of a national, comprehensive social protection and social welfare system that addresses both the developmental and protection rights of the country’s most vulnerable children. To promote better coordination with other public policies, UNICEF is also seeking to ensure that households benefiting from the safety net transfers will be exempted from paying user charges or fees to access public services or insurance schemes, such as for health care.

Two factors stand out as having contributed critically to these achievements. First, UNICEF is a trusted partner, and has been able to build on the goodwill nurtured over the course of many years of working with the Government and other partners in a mutually respectful manner. Second, it produced credible and compelling evidence to propel action in favour of Tanzania’s children, along with a national commitment of the country’s authorities.

**LESSONS LEARNED**

Sustained changes in children’s lives require bold action, guided by a long-term vision. Projects alone cannot achieve this. It requires simultaneous work on:

- building the evidence base for effective advocacy;
- changing the legal norms to secure adequate protection and promotion of children’s rights;
- strengthening capacities and building systems that can respond to their most pressing needs; and
- keeping a foot on the ground to demonstrate how services and interventions can be integrated into a coherent whole to achieve maximum impact, such as by providing cash income to enable poor families to access critical services and in parallel expanding the provision and improving the quality of such services.

Seen in this light, the concern is not whether UNICEF should be involved in upstream or downstream work. Advancing equity for children requires that it does both in a manner that they feed into and reinforce one another. If it is to be effective, evidence must provide a guide to action. Actions on the ground will not go too far unless backed by an enabling legal and policy environment. And the latter needs to be translated into concrete results through the establishment of systems and services that can address children’s rights comprehensively. One of the key lessons of Tanzania’s experience is that progress does not come rapidly; it requires mobilizing the entire Country Programme on multiple tracks, behind clearly defined goals.

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4 www.pacttz.org/pdfs/Tanz_NCPA_web.pdf

5 Upstream interventions typically focus on broad policies and development strategies for a large set of a country’s population. Downstream measures, by contrast, tend to target communities, specific groups or individuals through programme interventions on the ground.
POTENTIAL APPLICATION

Getting traction on social protection still eludes many countries. UNICEF itself is working to strengthen linkages of social protection with other more established social sectors. It is equally challenging to forge complementarity between social protection and child protection.

In replicating this experience and gaining long term results, it will be necessary to synergize research, advocacy, policy support and piloting. Scaling up the child protection model will require strategic partnerships with key actors such as the DSW and PMO-RALG (Prime Minister’s Office Regional Administration and Local Government) to ensure their leadership of the process. Inclusion of the child protection model in the Government’s Health Sector Strategic Plan can provide a promising entry point. Scaling up the model will require its strong articulation in the legally binding child protection regulations under development, with clear accountabilities across the sectors. Sustainable results for Tanzania’s children can be further enhanced by strengthening the linkages between the child protection measures and the existing programmes seeking to address households’ economic vulnerability.

NEXT STEPS

UNICEF’s strategy for the next few years has several prongs. To support policy analysis and advocacy, four situation analyses are currently under way and due for release in 2012. These include children with disabilities; children with albinism; adolescents and young people living with HIV and AIDS; and children growing up in Tanzania’s rapidly expanding cities. Work is also under way on tracking government expenditures on child protection and costing the national roll-out of a national child protection system. This will complement the completion and enforcement of the rules and regulations for implementing the Children’s Acts passed on mainland and Zanzibar, and investments in capacity and system strengthening targeting key government departments at central and district level.

Additionally, UNICEF will support the drafting of a National Social Protection Policy for Zanzibar, and the implementation of the social safety programme to enable extremely poor households to improve their consumption and invest in their children. UNICEF will continue to work with a range of government ministries to help them implement the commitments they made to prepare a comprehensive plan for the prevention and response to children victims of abuse and violence. By documenting lessons learned from the establishment of district child protection teams, UNICEF expects to build evidence that will inform the implementation of a national system complementing and strengthening the safety net transfer programme for poor families.

RELATED LINKS

Children and Vulnerability in Tanzania

Childhood Poverty in Tanzania: Deprivations and Disparities in Child Well-Being
https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=ZGVmYXVsdGRvbWFpbnxnbG9iYWxzdHVkeTd8Z3g6NTQ2MmU2Y2ZmNjRlMzMwNQ

Violence against Children in Tanzania
www.unicef.org/media/files/VIOLENCE_AGAINST_CHILDREN_IN_TANZANIA_REPORT.pdf
ISSUE

The global economic crisis and the continued rise in food prices from 2006 to 2009 have threatened food and nutritional security of many households both in urban and rural areas in West and Central Africa. Children, pregnant women and nursing mothers are particularly affected. According to UNICEF’s study on the impact of high food prices on child poverty in Mali in 2009, the combined effect of these crises has resulted in an increase of food poverty by 10 per cent, a near nine per cent rise in malnutrition and a one per cent fall in school attendance. The recent global economic crisis has shown that a large segment of the population would fall further into poverty if the Government does not bring innovations in aid and social actions, including through the development of social safety nets targeted at the poorest segments.

In response to the widespread poverty in Mali, the Government of Mali developed the National Social Protection Policy in 2002 followed by its first National Action Plan for the Extension of Social Protection (2005-2009). By 2009, the national social protection sector comprised of three main components: (a) a contributory National Social Security System covering only 10 per cent of the population (such as workers in the formal sector); (b) a contributory, voluntary and not-for-profit community-based micro-insurance scheme, Mutuelles de Santé, covering nearly three per cent of the population (including informal workers and a big proportion of public servants who are not covered by any other health insurance scheme); and c) some experimental and/or adhoc social safety nets programmes, developed by donors and international NGOs (such as around crisis or emergency response).

MALI

Scaling up social protection to improve nutrition, health and education outcomes for children

ABSTRACT

The global economic crisis and a sharp increase in food prices in recent years indicate serious consequences for the poorest children and families in Mali. Since 2002, the social protection sector has taken important strides in Mali but has fallen short of providing critical social protection for nearly half of its population entrenched in poverty. As a response, UNICEF together with the Government in 2009 drew up critical evidence for pro-equity policy reform in the social protection sector by undertaking studies on child poverty, social protection of children, cash transfers and high food prices in Mali. The organization of a high profile national forum on child poverty and social protection further advanced UNICEF’s advocacy efforts. The forum established a broad consensus on the importance of social protection for children and led to the elaboration of a new five-year National Action Plan for the Extension of Social Protection (2011-2015). The action plan includes a critical focus on cash transfers and social safety nets for the poorest, an area which was not explicitly covered by the previous action plan.

The action plan is expected to decrease child poverty by 20 per cent and extreme poverty by 12 per cent from 2006 to 2015. Seventy five per cent of the total funding of the action plan will be directed towards eliminating inequities by financing social safety nets and in particular cash transfers. The adoption of the action plan has already triggered support for social protection from donors including the World Bank, EU and SIDA (the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency). By speaking in one voice with other partners such as the World Bank, UNICEF was able to convince the Government to invest in mechanisms that cover the poorest populations to promote political stability and economic growth. In the next phase, UNICEF will focus on strengthening institutional capacity and resources for social protection. Advocacy will be undertaken with the relevant authorities to significantly increase funding from the state budget towards the new action plan.
In 2009, in order to expand health coverage, two new social protection instruments were adopted by the Government specifically for public servants and the most vulnerable. This includes a contributory health insurance scheme, Assurance Maladie Obligatoire (AMO) and the Régime d’Assistance Médicale (RAMED). While these instruments were adopted in 2009, they are still not operational due to many issues, such as workers’ resistance to contribute to the AMO and the lack of resources to implement the RAMED. In all, these programmes together cover less than 15 per cent of the entire population of Mali. Further, with 43 per cent of its population under the poverty line in 2010, and 45 per cent of its national budget funded by external donors, the fiscal space available for social protection in Mali is limited. In addition, the Ministry of Social Development, Solidarity and the Elderly (MSD), the agency responsible for strengthening social protection lacks political clout and technical capacity.

**STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION**

Amidst this backdrop, in 2009, UNICEF conducted four joint studies with the MSD, focusing on (a) child poverty and disparities; (b) social protection of children; (c) income and cash transfers; and (d) the impact of high food prices in Mali. These studies helped to improve knowledge of development actors in Mali at all levels, by presenting the poverty and vulnerability situation and quantitative data from existing social protection programmes (such as Mutuelles de Santé and several pilot cash transfer schemes such as Bourse Maman).

The studies also outlined strengths and weaknesses of the existing social protection programmes in Mali. For instance, the study on impact of high food prices in Mali concludes that social protection instruments such as cash transfers and school feeding schemes for targeted children will have the highest impact on reduction of vulnerabilities, instead of the current government policy of consumption subsidy. The current policy is very costly; has low impact on child poverty and is biased toward urban consumers. Using these studies, the idea was to build consensus around its recommendations and help the authorities design and implement concrete programmes by providing policy options to tackle the effects of the economic crisis.

Building on the results of the study, a national forum on child poverty and social protection was jointly organized by the MSD and UNICEF in 2009. The idea was to develop recommendations and establish an action plan for a social protection system adapted to the needs of the poorest, particularly the children. The forum was co-chaired by the Prime Minister of Mali and UNICEF. It mobilized about 250 policy makers from different levels such as representatives from various government departments – health, education, economy and finance, development, statistics, as well as representatives from Malian districts and regional assemblies), in addition to development partners (ILO, EU Delegation, the Swedish and the Spanish Embassies and the civil society). Apart from its high profile participation (including Ministers of Economy and Finance, Social Development, Health, and Promotion of Women and Children), the forum established a broad consensus on the need to strengthen social protection mechanisms in Mali as a way to reduce poverty and vulnerability, particularly among children. The final declaration adopted by the forum included a number of recommendations, including the development of a new five-year National Action Plan for the Extension of Social Protection; strengthening health insurance programmes (through AMO, RAMED and Mutuelles de Santé); and the launch of a national cash transfers programme for poor families with children.

Following the forum, UNICEF was invited to join the inter-sectoral working group set up by the Government to prepare the new national action plan. UNICEF liaised closely with the World Bank in this process, as the Bank was undertaking a diagnostic study on social safety nets in Mali which built upon the social protection studies already undertaken by UNICEF in 2009. In parallel, it was important to ensure that all external partners worked together under the leadership of the relevant government departments towards the new action plan. Several bilateral and multi-lateral partners (UNICEF, World Bank, ILO, Swedish...
Cooperation and the Netherlands) took part in this working group which provided direction to the strategic areas in the action plan. The process of elaborating the new plan was financed entirely by UNICEF.

PROGRESS AND RESULTS
The new action plan was adopted by the Government in August 2011, for the period 2011-2015. It draws its substance from existing sectoral plans; the results of the four UNICEF-Government of Mali studies; recommendations of the national forum; the Medium Term Expenditure Framework of the Health and Social Development programme (PRODESS II); recommendations from the annual review of the PRSP (Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper), as well as the findings of the World Bank study on social safety nets. The new action plan involves four agreed strategic interventions:

1) Extension of the formal contributory approach (such as the former social security system, AMO and RAMED);
2) Development of a non-contributory approach for the poor (such as social safety nets and cash transfers);
3) Development of micro-insurance institutions (such as Mutuelles de Santé); and
4) Reinforcement of the institutional capacity on social protection.

The new action plan seeks to strengthen several existing measures (such as AMO and RAMED) while introducing new social protection mechanisms such as social safety nets and cash transfers. Until now, these interventions were covered in an adhoc manner, without any legal framework. Furthermore, under the action plan, in order to build institutional capacity on social protection, the Government has decided to create a new committee that will supervise and monitor all decisions and actions regarding social protection (including capacity building), under the direct supervision of the Prime Minister. This committee will comprise of all major stakeholders in social protection (such as the Ministries, NGOs, donors and UN agencies).

The new action plan is expected to:

1) Improve social transfers to poor people by implementing a national cash transfer programme and cash for work programme. An efficient private cash transfer system will also be developed.
2) Improve capacity of poor households to increase their income by increasing coverage of micro-finance institutions; promoting income generating activities for communities; and increasing production capacity of rural households.
3) Improve food and nutritional security for poor people by improving distribution of food to the poor; providing adequate support to malnourished under-five children; and increasing the availability of cereal banks.
4) Improve access of poor people to basic social services (health, education, and housing) by increasing the availability and efficiency of school canteens; providing free access to education and certain health services; and by providing assistance to poor students among others.

The new action plan is expected to decrease child poverty from 45 per cent to 25 per cent and overall extreme poverty (people living on USD 1.25 a day or less) from 16 per cent to four per cent from 2006 to 2015. The action plan is expected to cost about USD 180 million. Seventy five per cent of these funds will be directed towards eliminating inequities by strengthening social safety nets and cash transfers. The funding sources include the State and local authorities (providing 50 per cent of the total); social security institutions through membership fees; the mutuelles, associations; and donors (such as the World Bank, UNICEF and the EU). This will boost Government’s contribution to social protection to about 5 per cent of the GDP, as compared to a mere 1 per cent currently.

Although a recent development, the adoption of the new action plan has already triggered support for social protection for the poorest in Mali and many initiatives, particularly from donors, have been strengthened. The World Bank has committed to fund a social transfer programme that will cover the cash transfer and cash for work programme. While the scope and target of the programme is still being discussed, the World Bank has already committed around USD 30 million for it. UNICEF is fully involved in the preparation of this programme with the World Bank. Discussions are ongoing with SIDA in Mali around a complementary programme of cash transfers for orphan and vulnerable children. The EU is also exploring the possibility of financing a cash transfer programme for food security in the northern part of the country, particularly in the context of the food crisis in the Sahel region. The Government itself is now taking measures to support social protection more ambitiously. The new PRSP recently adopted by the Government in December 2011, includes for the first time a specific focus on social protection.

6 PRODESS (Programme de Développement Sanitaire et Social) is the national five-year health and social development programme. PRODESS II was implemented until the end of 2011.
7 UNICEF, as all donors, is fully involved in the annual reviews of the PRSP to monitor annually the progress in its implementation. The review also results in recommendations to the Government on how to improve the implementation and guides the annual national budget preparation.
8 With regard to private cash transfers, the action plan details two agendas: a) to undertake a study on the impact of workers remittances on local development; and b) development of a mechanism to reduce the cost of private cash transfers.
9 The World Bank programme on cash transfer is intended to be implemented nationwide. All interested donors have been invited to join the initiative. UNICEF is considering supporting certain areas of the programme, particularly those concerning child protection.
LESSONS LEARNED
Very often, social protection may not be placed high on the national policy agenda and could be of secondary importance in relation to other national priorities. Until recently, in Mali, social protection was considered to be a charity, with no particular effect on growth and development. Moreover, during the elaboration of the new action plan, it was a challenge to convince the Government of the value of an equity-based approach and focusing on the most vulnerable. There was a tendency for the Government to focus only on social security within the formal sector, instead of cash transfers and social safety nets for the vulnerable. However, by speaking in one voice together with other partners such as the World Bank, UNICEF was able to convince the Government to invest in mechanisms that cover the poorest populations. This was evident when the Government provisioned 75 per cent of the action plan’s budget for cash transfers and other social safety nets programmes. A critical strategy here was to use evidence and other advocacy tools such as training and information sharing, to prove that social protection, particularly cash transfers, can have an immense impact on the entire economy, in terms of poverty reduction, political stability and economic growth.

Further, as a result of UNICEF’s leadership in the organization of the forum and the elaboration of the new action plan, UNICEF is now regarded as the lead institution in social protection among donors in Mali. This has led to UNICEF being able to develop closer collaboration with the World Bank on social protection. The Government, particularly the MSD is counting on UNICEF to support it in the development of the Social Protection Agenda in Mali.

POTENTIAL APPLICATION
In replicating this experience to another country context, it is critical to ensure that the action plan is supported by sufficient resources. The first action plan (2005-2009) received minimal funds however the new action plan (2011-2015) is backed by a resource mobilization strategy. Further, it is necessary to develop an institutional mechanism that strengthens social protection. With the creation of a national committee under the supervision of the Prime Minister’s Office, it is likely that social protection will be high in the agenda of the Malian Government in the coming years.

NEXT STEPS
In the next phase, UNICEF will focus on strengthening institutional capacity and resources for social protection. Advocacy will be undertaken with the relevant authorities to significantly increase funding from the state budget towards the new action plan. During 2011-2015, feasibility studies will be undertaken to assess strategies undertaken to increase fiscal revenue for financing social safety nets, both at the national and community level.

UNICEF will continue its effort to support the Government in enhancing social protection in national policy debates. Actions would be directed towards NGOs and the Parliamentarians, in order to broaden the support for social protection. In 2012, it is expected that the new national social protection committee will be made operational and the national programme on cash transfers will be finalized. Discussions are also underway, under the supervision of UNICEF, for the creation of a donor thematic group on social protection.

RELATED LINKS
Observatory of Sustainable Human Development and the Fight against Poverty in Mali www.odhd-mali.org/publications1.html


The Impact of the Increase in Food Prices on Child Poverty and the Policy Response in Mali www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/index_56791.html

Child Poverty and Disparities Study in Mali https://sites.google.com/site/malichildpovertystudy/


Income transfers and poverty reduction in Mali www.unicef.org/wcaro/wcaro_mali_Transferts_de_revenus_et_pauvrete_FR_s.pdf
LESSONS LEARNED – POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

BRAZIL
Shaping public policies to promote literacy among impoverished children

ABSTRACT
While Brazil has made significant progress in improving child wellbeing in recent years, millions of children in the semi-arid region of Brazil have been left behind. For instance, despite attending school, many poverty stricken children in the semi-arid states are unable to read, write and comprehend text appropriate to their age. As a response, UNICEF undertook an assessment to diagnose the level of children’s literacy in the states of Ceará and Piauí in 2004. This led to the development of the *Literacy at the Right Age* programme by UNICEF, the Legislative Assembly and Government of Ceará in 49 municipalities to ensure literacy of children in the initial three years of elementary school. The programme helps municipal professionals develop monitoring systems in schools to ensure adequate teaching hours, planned classes, continuous training of teachers and individual assessment and analysis of each child’s literacy levels. Building on lessons learned from the Ceará experience, UNICEF rolled-out the *Palavra de Criança* (Word of Children) initiative in 25 municipalities of the state of Piauí in 2008. This initiative was designed as a second phase of the *Literacy at the Right Age* programme.

These efforts resulted in the State of Ceará adopting the *Literacy at the Right Age* programme as a public policy in 2007. This led to a drop in illiteracy by 56 per cent among eight-year-olds in Ceará from 2006 to 2009. In 2011, the State of Piauí adopted *Palavra de Criança* as a public policy, with a budgetary allocation of nearly USD 906,000 (R$ 1.6 million). This will support the expansion of the initiative to include 150 of the 226 municipalities in the State benefiting nearly 130,000 children. Further, the Federal Brazilian government has announced that a national literacy programme for children on the lines of UNICEF’s literacy initiatives in the semi-arid region will be implemented in 2013. The focus now is on scaling up the *Palavra de Criança* initiative in all parts of the semi-arid region, linked to the implementation of the national public policy on literacy. In the context of decentralization in the education sector in Brazil, this experience is particularly relevant as it highlights the interaction between upstream and downstream evidence based policy work to bring about equitable learning outcomes among the most vulnerable children in the country.

ISSUE
Despite a firm commitment by the Brazilian government to end poverty, the gap between rich and poor is steep and disparities between the provinces are large. Out of 13 million children that live in Brazil’s impoverished states in the semi-arid region, about 8 million live in poverty.¹ According to IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics), in 2009 about 24 per cent of ten year olds in the semi-arid region who were completing their fifth year of primary school were unable to read, write or understand simple text appropriate to their age. This figure was almost double the national average of about 13 per cent. The situation is especially tense in the seven northeastern states of the semi-arid region, where 23 per cent of the children are illiterate. The states where the challenges are greatest include Piauí and Maranhão where illiteracy among children below eight years of age is nearly 36 per cent and 29 per cent respectively.

STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION
In 2004, an assessment was undertaken to determine the level of literacy among children in the semi-arid state of Ceará. The assessment provided information on the

¹ Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios (National Household Sample Survey) 2009
status of reading, writing and comprehension skills of children, and thus helped municipalities to identify the children, teachers and schools that were most in need of educational support. The assessment was processed through a specially designed free software that enabled data collection related to 150,000 students in 205 municipalities. Following the assessment, the Literacy at the Right Age pilot programme was developed and coordinated by UNICEF, the Legislative Assembly and state government of Ceará, with a purpose to ensure children’s literacy in the initial three years of elementary school. The programme involved developing capacity of municipal professionals to set up an efficient monitoring system in the schools. This system monitored the provision of limited number of teaching hours and classes (at least 200 days and 800 hours); planning of all classes; continuous training of teachers in literacy teaching; individual assessments and analyzes of each child’s literacy levels (among other strategies).

In 2007, following two years of implementation, the programme committee undertook an internal evaluation of the 49 municipalities. The evaluation highlighted the need to ensure sustainability of the programme by promoting long-lasting municipal ownership without the support of the state government. By using educational materials and assessment processes and methodologies available at the national level by the Ministry of Education, the evaluation revealed it was possible to reduce the costs of the programme at the municipal level. To further ensure sustainable results, it was recommended to strengthen the involvement of families and train teachers in literacy teaching.

Building on the lessons learned from the Literacy at the Right Age programme,2 in 2008 UNICEF rolled out the Palavra de Criança (Word of Children) initiative in 25 municipalities in the state of Piauí and in Sobral, a municipality in Ceará. This initiative was designed as a second phase of the Literacy at the Right Age programme. Key elements of the previous programme were improved upon which made this initiative more sustainable and appropriate to the needs of the municipalities. For instance, the new initiative strengthened engagement of families, supported continuous capacity development of teachers and improved coordination at the municipal level. Furthermore, municipalities are now specifically responsible for raising awareness among families and children on achieving literacy.

The Palavra de Criança programme is developed through five structural activities:

• Monitoring municipal management on children’s literacy: Each municipality implements its own programme

   • Training of literacy teachers and pedagogic coordinators: Each municipality prepares its teachers to track children's learning throughout their first three years of primary school. Municipalities focus on continuous capacity development of teachers through bi-weekly meetings over the course of nine months in order to support them in the development of routines and proper use of didactic materials for teaching and learning.

• Evaluation of the literacy level of children enrolled in the first three grades of elementary school: Each school diagnoses the level of literacy of all children in each class. The children's performance is evaluated on a daily basis by teachers including through the official national assessment (Provinha Brasil)3 as well as through programme-specific assessments. The performance of each child is tracked and managed individually, and the pace of each child is accompanied throughout the school year. Evaluation results are used to define teaching routines and are also compared to verify learning difficulties that are not overcome by the children.

• Promotion of family participation in the learning process of children: Each school promotes the integration of families in the learning processes of their children. Families are guided by the schools on the importance of monitoring their children's education.

• Certification of children’s literacy: Every child is recognized and certified for their level of learning. Children, teachers and schools thus receive a certificate in

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2 The lessons learned from the programme in Ceará will be published in 2012.

3 The Provinha Brasil is a national assessment, used to assess the level of reading in the second year of elementary school, where children are on an average seven years old. In addition, reading, writing and comprehension skills are accessed in the third year of elementary school through the Palavra de Criança programme.
which the reading and writing skills of each child are registered. The main function of the certificate is to ensure that families have the right to know the criteria by which children are evaluated.

In addition to the programme work, UNICEF undertakes advocacy to support the adoption of public policies and corresponding budgets around literacy and education. In general, the work begins with a process of agreement about goals for learning and management, with the support of the Legislative Assemblies. The main advocacy strategy has been to mobilize municipal departments of education by presenting the positive results of Prova Brasil, the country's first census-level assessment of student learning that assesses proficiency in the Portuguese language at the end of the fifth year of elementary school. The municipalities are further mobilized through UNICEF Seal initiative4 that awards municipalities in the semi-arid region with the Seal of Approved Municipality, if it meets certain goals related to increasing the quality of life for children. UNICEF also raises funds to support and develop capacity of municipalities, NGOs and academic research groups at the local level.

PROGRESS AND RESULTS
The Federal Brazilian government has announced that a national literacy programme for children on the lines of UNICEF’s literacy initiatives in the semi-arid region will be implemented in 2013. In 2007, the Literacy in the Right Age programme was adopted as a state public policy in Ceará to include all 184 municipalities of the state. The programme structure has also been extended around proficiency in mathematics. This has led to a drop in illiteracy by 56 per cent among eight year olds in Ceará from 2006 to 2009. The regional disparity between the State and the national average dropped from nearly 28 to 6 percentage points.

In 2011, the State of Piauí adopted Palavra de Criança as a public policy with a budgetary allocation of nearly USD 906,000 (R$ 1.6 million). This will support the expansion of the initiative to include 150 of the 226 municipalities in the State benefiting nearly 130,000 children. In Piauí, the state public policy was adopted as a result of a partnership between UNICEF and the state government around the expansion of the Palavra de Criança initiative to all municipalities participating in the UNICEF Seal initiative.

About 10,000 children in 437 schools in the municipalities of Sobral in Ceará and the municipality of Teresina in Piauí participate each year in UNICEF’s evaluation. Data from 2009 shows that in Sobral, 96 per cent of the children were certified in reading and 95 per cent in writing; while in Teresina, nearly 90 per cent of the children demonstrated adequate reading skills and about 74 per cent had adequate writing skills.

LESSONS LEARNED
The lessons learned from Ceará and Piauí have strategic relevance for shaping programmes that remove inequities around children’s learning outcomes in the most vulnerable regions of the country. The main challenge of the programme has been to mobilize schools and teachers around the concept of age-appropriate literacy. The fact that vulnerable children remain illiterate throughout primary school was to a great extent socially and culturally accepted by families, teachers and school managers. A key approach to overcome this bottleneck was to build a consensus around the age when children should be expected to be literate (which was agreed to be eight years, when most children are at the end of the third year of primary school).

The importance of family participation in children’s literacy programmes has proven to have twofold benefits. Parental involvement has led children to believe that their progress in learning is important for the school and their families. This has proven essential for the achievement of results. On the other hand, parental involvement in children’s learning process has unexpectedly stimulated parents, especially those who were illiterate, to return to school and learn. The increasing level of education among parents will have evident impact on children’s overall development and the realization and fulfillment of children’s rights.

Further, this experience highlights a critical lesson on recognizing the multidimensionality of children’s literacy needs in order to design well targeted programmes, as demonstrated by in-depth equity-based analysis of literacy initiatives. As evident from this initiative, the interaction of upstream and downstream evidence based policy work can be highly efficient and lead to sustainable results, especially when combined with mobilization strategies that promote (a) coordination between different levels of government; (b) community and family participation; and (c) municipal ownership. This seems to be especially relevant in the context of decentralization of educational services at the subnational level in Brazil. By connecting various levels of administration, management and accountabilities, the Palavra de Criança programme has been able to navigate the decentralized education system in the country. Developing results-based partnerships with clear roles and responsibilities, mechanisms for monitoring, and a communication component that allows for visibility of all

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4 UNICEF has awarded 146 municipalities in Brazil’s semi-arid region with the Seal of Approved Municipality, recognizing their achievements in improving the lives of children and adolescents. A total of 1,179 municipalities participated in the project, affecting more than 10 million children.
groups, have also been critical for UNICEF’s effective working relationships with diverse actors in a decentralized environment.

POTENTIAL APPLICATION
The administration of public education is managed and executed at all levels of government (federal, state and municipal) with different responsibilities and accountabilities ascribed to each level. Being a part of elementary school, literacy education comes under the purview of the municipality. However, it is critical that the state governments also acknowledge their accountability for promoting child-friendly elementary schools and are willing to provide the necessary technical and financial support to the municipalities, if required. Hence, to successfully replicate this approach in other states, it will be critical to collaborate and create synergy between state and municipal governments in the area of education with a specific focus on municipal empowerment and ownership.

NEXT STEPS
In close articulation with the public policy on literacy, UNICEF will scale up the *Palavra de Criança* initiative, by consolidating and expanding the programme among the 11 states in the semi-arid region. To this end, UNICEF will seek commitment from all the state governors to prioritize children’s literacy initiatives by expanding the funds available for education programmes. The organization is also advocating for state governments’ commitment around capacity development of municipalities and teachers in literacy teaching. UNICEF is also striving for the establishment of a special team in municipalities to coordinate early childhood education and literacy of children. The organization will also support the review of terms of reference and remuneration of teachers, in addition to the development of technical criteria for selecting school managers. UNICEF will further strengthen the diagnostic evaluation of the literacy level of children enrolled in second year of public education through *Provinha Brasil*.
ABSTRACT

In recent years, Benin has made significant progress in improving children's health and nutrition status. However, efforts are required to remove the last few barriers that inhibit the achievement of health related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015. To this end, UNICEF advocated with the Ministry of Health to adopt Marginal Budgeting for Bottlenecks (MBB) analysis in order effectively plan, cost and budget health interventions to reduce child mortality. To push for its adoption, UNICEF strengthened the capacity of key Government staff on the use of the tool and its comparative benefits. In 2010, the Ministry of Health adopted the MBB analysis to develop a Health Triennial Development Plan (HTDP) 2010–2012 which simulated three investment scenarios to reduce child mortality. Currently, six health districts covering 15 deprived municipalities are using the MBB analysis to detail their development plans. This is expected to benefit more than 300,000 under five marginalized children in these municipalities.

However, the actual budgetary allocations to the Ministry of Health have not been in line with the resources projected by MBB analysis. Low budget implementation rate by the ministry and limited financial resources due to the global economic crisis are some of the reasons for this discrepancy. The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Finance use different tools to develop their Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), and consequently arrive at divergent budgetary projections. Hence it is critical for UNICEF to strategically engage other line ministries such as the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Development to adopt MBB analysis as well. In the coming years, UNICEF will focus on scaling up the use of MBB analysis as a planning tool in all the municipalities; introduce MBB analysis in the education sector; and work closely with the National Institute of Statistics to produce disaggregated data at the local level.

ISSUE

Like many other developing countries, Benin has been mobilizing efforts for the attainment of MDGs in 2015. Many reports have been consistent in identifying Benin among the few African countries that can make significant progress towards achievement of several MDGs especially those related to health, such as MDG 4 (child mortality), MDG 5 (maternal mortality) and MDG 6 (HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases). Results of Demographic Health Survey (DHS) 2006 have exhibited a significant reduction in under five mortality rate from 160 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2001 to 125 per 1,000 in 2006. During the same period, infant mortality dropped from 89 deaths for every 1,000 live births to 67 per 1,000. Given these recent successes, there has been a growing need to further develop instruments, tools and methods that overcome the remaining bottlenecks in the attainment of these goals.

STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

In response, UNICEF suggested that the Government adopt MBB analysis as a useful and powerful tool for better resource mobilization in the health sector. By estimating the marginal/incremental resources required for overcoming bottlenecks in the health sector, and relating these resources to the country’s macro-economic framework, the tool would particularly help in achievement of MDG 4 on child mortality.

Further, the MBB analysis helps in formulating medium-term national or provincial expenditure plans and poverty reduction strategies that explicitly link expenditure to health and nutrition MDGs. By facilitating a process of budgeting for government health expenditures, it provides a basis for policy dialogue and planning. One of the strengths of the tool is that it helps simulate the potential
Marginal Budgeting for Bottlenecks (MBB) analysis

The MBB is an analytical costing and budgeting tool developed by UNICEF, the World Bank and WHO to respond to the request of low-income countries to plan, cost and budget marginal allocations to health services and assess their potential impact on health coverage, MDGs related health outcomes and health outcomes for the poor. The tool mainly addresses the following questions:

- Which high impact interventions can be integrated into existing service delivery arrangements to accelerate progress towards the health and nutrition MDGs?
- What are the major health systems hurdles or bottlenecks hampering the delivery of health services, and what is the potential for their improvement?
- What would be the potential cost of alternative options to alleviate the identified health systems hurdles or bottlenecks?
- How many additional financial resources are needed for the expected results?
- What could be achieved in terms of health outcomes by removing the bottlenecks?
- What amount of financing could be mobilized under various fiscal scenarios and how should additional funding be allocated?

impact as well as cost and budget implications of alternative health service delivery strategies using different integrated production functions (community/family based, population/outreach based, or clinic based).¹

As a first step, UNICEF presented the tool to the Government and sensitized key stakeholders (including the Government and local UNICEF staff) on its usefulness in the budget planning process. Since March 2007, UNICEF either solely or in partnership with the World Bank, has been conducting a series of trainings on MBB analysis for key Government staff (Ministries of Health, and Ministries of Development and Finance) in charge of budget preparation and elaboration. The idea was to develop capacities of a wide range of actors technically influential in the planning process and capable of moving forward the MBB analysis agenda in the country. In 2007, the first MBB analysis for Benin was designed and subsequently reviewed during various technical gatherings (trainings, technical dialogue, specific reviews and workshops) among the Government and donors.

By 2009, UNICEF had trained 33 national government² and UNICEF staff to have an in-depth understanding and value for MBB analysis and its use. Mobilizing the Ministry of Health on MBB analysis (and subsequently the need to effectively use resources for children’s improved health) led to the Government committing itself to become a member of the International Health Partnership and Related Initiatives (IHP+)³. The IHP+ brings together donor countries and other development partners around a single country-led national health strategy. This was a critical milestone in being able to make MBB analysis a key part of the budget planning process in the Ministry of Health. With the Government’s commitment to join IHP+, there was a requirement for tools and instruments that could scientifically and convincingly shed light on the budgetary resources for the attainment of MDG 4. These provisions were successfully covered by the MBB analysis as it could help to determine budget gaps or additional resources needed to address the bottlenecks in the achievement of MDGs. Further, UNICEF also received support from its main partners (such as UNFPA, WHO, World Bank, European Union, USAID) to intervene in the health sector, which finally led to the Ministry of Health adopting MBB analysis as its main planning tool.

PROGRESS AND RESULTS

Developing national health budgets and plans: Using the MBB analysis, the Ministry of Health has developed the Health Triennial Development Plan (HTDP) 2010–2012 from the ten-year Health National Development Plan (HNDP) 2009–2018. The HTDP is the operationalization framework of the HNDP. It presents three policy scenarios for the attainment of MDG 4 including (a) a minimal scenario where no additional actions are required by the Government; (b) an intermediate scenario which requires important investments to make significant progress towards MDGs; and (c) a maximum scenario requiring the maximum investment as well, to reach MDG targets as planned for 2015. These scenarios were simulated using MBB analysis. These policies would cost respectively USD 596, 664 or 719 (in millions) and will benefit 1.6 million children under five.

¹ http://www.who.int/pmnch/topics/economics/ctoolssenegalconsultation.pdf
² 28 staff from the Ministry of Health, one each from the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Development and three UNICEF staff were trained.
³ For more information on IHP+ go to http://www.internationalhealthpartnership.net/en/home
The maximum scenario was used to elaborate the MTEF 2010-2012 of the Ministry of Health. However, the health sector did not receive appropriate budget allocation as planned for 2010-2012, partly due to budgetary restrictions resulting from the global economic crisis.

This table shows that every year, the Ministry of Health receives much less budget than expected. Either in absolute or relative terms, the funding gap has been expanding. In total, the sector has received nearly USD 437 million over the period 2010-2012, representing only 61 per cent of the expected budget.

**Developing local health budgets and plans:** Furthermore, UNICEF supports six health districts representing 15 municipalities (among 34 districts and 77 municipalities countrywide) to use MBB analysis at the sub-national level. These municipalities are the most marginalized in Benin in terms of poverty, health and social infrastructure. Two districts, ZOBOZA and SAO, have developed their HTDP while the other four districts are currently in the process of elaborating it. Together these local health budget plans would benefit more than 300,000 children under five (representing 19 per cent of the total number of under five children in the country). While the budget for these plans has not been secured yet, commitment from many international donors, mayors (in the current context of decentralization) and the growing interest of the Government, indicate that the budget will be mobilized.

The challenge now is to scale up the use of the tool to all districts and municipalities. The latter with their autonomous budget and through their Development Plans (PDC) represent a framework to operationalize the national development policies. The adoption of MBB analysis by municipalities in the planning process of PDC is expected to lead to higher budgetary allocation for children. However, a particular constraint in the utilization of MBB analysis in the municipalities will be the availability of statistics as the current national statistical information system provides data at the central and divisional level only. To overcome this constraint UNICEF is providing technical and financial support to the National Institute of Statistics to produce disaggregated data (at the level of municipalities) through national surveys and qualitative studies.

### LESSONS LEARNED

A factor that explains the discrepancy between the budget allocation of the Ministry of Health and the expected resources is the use of different tools for the development of the MTEF. The Ministry of Health is using the MBB analysis to develop its MTEF at the national and local level while the Ministry of Finance which is charged with resource allocation utilizes different set of tools and instruments to develop the national MTEF. Hence the two entities produce different figures. This situation complicates discussions between the two entities during the budget elaboration process. Moreover, low budget implementation rates by the Ministry of Health have further led to reduction in health budgets. For instance, only 61 per cent of the total budget of the Ministry of Health was utilized in 2011. In addition, partners were also inclined to use different tools for MDG analysis. For example, UNDP had been in favour of using the MDGs costing tool.

In this context, the scenarios presented in the Health MTEF as prepared by the Ministry using MBB analysis would not be easily financed as expected. Having technicians who have mastered the MBB tools is of course a necessary condition for the use of MBB analysis but it is not sufficient in order to increase impact on children’s health. At the same time, it is necessary to develop capacities of decision-makers and a critical number of staff in line ministries (such as Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Development) that are influential in budget allocation.

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4 The six health districts and their corresponding municipalities are as follows: (i) PAK (Pobe, Adjia-OUéré, Ketou), (ii) MK (Malanville, Karimama), (iii) ZOBOZA (Zogbodomey, Bobicong, Zakpota), (iv) SAO (Save, Ouesse), (v) PND (Parakou, N’dal), (vi) TCM (Tangieta, Ccby, Maten).

5 [www.who.int/entity/pmnch/topics/economics/costingtoolsbrochure.pdf](http://www.who.int/entity/pmnch/topics/economics/costingtoolsbrochure.pdf)
POTENTIAL APPLICATION

UNICEF is now focusing on scaling up the use of MBB analysis as a planning approach in PDCs. In the context of ongoing decentralization in Benin which is leading to increased responsibilities of municipalities, UNICEF is building alliances and partnerships to support the replication of the approach to all 34 health districts. This implies additional trainings of municipal council members on MBB analysis and its usefulness in municipal budget planning process especially in the field of health. In 2013, UNICEF will introduce MBB analysis in the education sector. Having additional sectors using the tool in their budget planning process can induce a ripple effect that can convince the Ministry of Finance for its use as well. With regards to West and Central Africa, the MBB analysis has also been used to prepare MTEF in Mali and Mauritania. It is currently being used in the education sector in Ghana. Some initial efforts in Nigeria are also underway.

NEXT STEPS

Along with partners, UNICEF will support trainings for the Ministry of Finance, municipalities and other health district staff in order to increase the level of technical awareness on MBB analysis. UNICEF is also mobilizing the Government for its commitment in the use of the results of MBB analysis and to allocate budget for children accordingly. The Government, with support from UNICEF, has recently finalized a situation analysis that could be revisited at a later stage with MBB analysis to adequately identify resources needed for the realization of child’s rights in Benin. UNICEF will also continue its efforts to support the National Institute of Statistics to produce disaggregated data at the local levels.

RELATED LINKS


UNICEF (2010), Narrowing the Gaps to Meet the Goals

IHP (2011) Documentation des résultats de la mise en œuvre des principes de l’efficacité de l’aide dans le secteur de la santé, Etude de cas du Bénin
ECUADOR
Child-friendly budgeting framework shapes national and local public policies in favour of vulnerable children

ABSTRACT
In order to stimulate social investments in favour of children, UNICEF has supported a multi-stakeholder child-friendly budgeting initiative since 1999, which brought about a significant increase in social spending in subsequent years. This initiative has led to the development of a regular framework for linking children’s issues with social and economic policy decision-making in Ecuador, aimed at reducing inequities and universalizing social services. Building on this experience, UNICEF has been innovating in three complementary ways by a) mainstreaming migration, employment and youth in public policies; 2) supporting the National Congress to monitor national budget implementation and social spending; and 3) advocating for child protection programmes and policies and child friendly budgets at the provincial and municipal levels.

These efforts have resulted in a substantial increase in social spending, from 2.9 per cent of GDP in 2000 to more than 10 per cent of GDP in 2011. During 2000-2006 this translated to a 400 per cent increase in public health spending. In 2011, Ecuador further secured a public budget of USD 33 million for child protection policies. This budget was a mere USD 4 million in 2010. Correspondingly, UNICEF has mobilized 11 provincial governments to adopt public policies on child protection at the subnational level. The organization has also been instrumental in bringing children to the centre of the migration debate in Ecuador and highlighting the relevance of framing human mobility policies instead migrant policies alone. This shift would benefit not only Ecuadorian migrants and their families but also immigrants to Ecuador, in the wake of increased refugees in the country. This experience reaffirms the need to complement an increase in social spending by strengthening of monitoring capacities, both at national and local levels in order to maximize the quality of spending on children.

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LES S S S S S S S I E A U D R O

INPUT

Although a middle income country, large disparities are historically entrenched in Ecuador where every third Ecuadorian lives in poverty due to inequality in resource distribution.1 Poverty is higher in rural areas, where two out of three poor people live.2 Poverty among indigenous peoples is also much higher than the non-indigenous population. Indigenous peoples have alarming levels of malnutrition and child mortality and are much less educated than the non-indigenous population. For instance, nearly 51 per cent of indigenous children under five continue to be stunted compared to nearly 26 per cent of children under five nationally.3

Besides, after the worst economic and social crisis experienced by Ecuador in 1999, rising unemployment and the deteriorating quality of life in the country led to large scale international migration. According to the Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion, migration affects nearly 300,000 children and adolescents in the country.4 Moreover, due to crises being faced by destination countries such as Spain, Ecuadorian migrants have been returning home in recent years. This presents new challenges around their reintegration and rehabilitation in their home communities.

1 Sistema Integrado de Indicadores Sociales del Ecuador 2010, (Consolidated System for Social Indicators of Ecuador - SIISSE)
3 SIISSE, based on the Survey of Living Conditions, 2006
STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

As a response, in coordination with ministries, civil society organizations and political parties, UNICEF undertook assessment of public budgets to protect children’s rights, following Ecuador’s economic crisis in 1999. As part of this effort, structural budget problems such as low budgetary allocations for the social sector and lack of social spending on children’s issues were identified. In its advocacy, UNICEF emphasized protecting and enhancing social spending and also pushed for an emergency social plan focusing on nutrition, health, education and livelihoods. In 2002, the Observatory for the Rights of Children and Adolescents (ODNA) and the Observatory of Fiscal Policy were formed to develop capacity on children’s rights. The Observatory of Fiscal Policy kept a vigilant eye on fiscal accounts, supported public debates on fiscal matters and lobbied for budget transparency.

Building on this work, UNICEF has further strengthened its child-friendly budgeting strategy in the last few years by,
(a) mainstreaming migration, employment and youth in public policies;
(b) undertaking wider public budget monitoring through the National Congress; and
(c) advocating for child protection programmes and policies and child friendly budgets at the provincial and municipal levels.

Children and migration: Since 2009, UNICEF took the lead among other agencies (ILO, International Organization for Migration (IOM), UNFPA and UNDP) in supporting Ecuador’s public policies related to youth, employment and migration. Through advocacy and partnerships, this major MDG-Fund supported initiative is contributing to strengthening institutional capacities both at the national and provincial level. The strategy includes three components, a) advocacy and capacity development for strengthening public institutions and policies in youth, employment and migration; b) advocacy for legal framework on migration and capacity development of youth; and c) capacity development and partnerships for youth employment programmes and their implementation.

This agenda is implemented through a partnership between SENAMI (National Secretariat for Migrants), MIES (Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion), MRL (Ministry of Labour), MCDS (Ministry for Social Development and Coordination), municipalities, local youth organizations, local finance institutions and UN agencies. Through advocacy and capacity development, UNICEF is strengthening SENAMI’s leadership around addressing children’s issues, promoting public policies in migration, and coordinating and facilitating the implementation of the Joint Programme.

A key UNICEF contribution to this process has been around knowledge development. When the joint programme began its implementation in 2007, the analysis around children’s rights and migration was very scarce. To fill this knowledge gap, together with SENAMI and ODNA, studies on children’s rights and migration have been produced and disseminated. This was instrumental in bringing children to the centre of migration debate in Ecuador. Using this evidence, UNICEF advocated for the inclusion of human-rights based approach and children’s rights issues into public policies on migration. Further, UNICEF called for an increased focus on human mobility policies instead of migrant policies. This means there should be a focus not only on the situation of Ecuadorian migrants abroad and their families left behind, but also on the rights of immigrants coming and living in Ecuador (such as Colombian and Peruvian citizens). To this end, UNICEF developed the Manual of Procedures for the Protection of Children and Adolescents in Situations of Human Mobility. This manual builds capacity on protocols around family reunification, access to health and education for migrant children among other areas.

Monitoring of the national budget: In 2010, UNICEF advocated and contributed to the establishment of a Congress Office for the Monitoring of the National Budget. The Congress Office serves to strengthen the national social budget by undertaking spending analysis and monitoring. UNICEF has since been building technical capacities to support decisions of Congressmen around national budget allocations and spending in the social sectors, and to make such issues transparent to the civil society.

The political will of the National Congress and its President to strengthen the Congress’s capacities to analyze the national budget and in parallel, the immediate availability of UNICEF’s expertise and support to accompany the process, have been critical factors leading to the establishment of the office. To this end, UNICEF coordinated with other agencies (IDB [Inter-American Development Bank], UNDP, EU) to organize an international seminar in 2010 around experiences in developing congress offices for budget analysis (such as in Dominican Republic and Chile). Since the inception of the office, UNICEF continues to provide technical support in areas such as pedagogical analysis of the national budget with a special focus on education, health and child protection budgets. These analyzes have been presented and disseminated among the Congressmen and their advisers. UNICEF also widely shares analysis of SENAMI’s social programmes and spending for Ecuadorian migrants returning to their country.

In addition, over the years, the analysis of national social budget and spending has been complemented with more in-depth thematic and local studies, on areas such as youth and employment issues, disaggregated analysis of social spending at the provincial level, and comparative study on investment in Spanish education versus indigenous peoples education.

5 See for instance, “Childhood and Forced Migration” (www.unicef.org/ecuador/policy_rights_22592.htm); Childhood and Migration in Cañar Municipality (www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/Childhood_and_Migration_in_Canar.pdf)
6 Ecuador has the biggest refugee population in Latin America, mainly comprised of people fleeing from the internal armed conflict in Colombia. As of December 2010, the Ecuadorian Government had recognized nearly 55,000 refugees in Ecuador.
Child-friendly public policies for vulnerable children:
UNICEF in partnership with ODNA and the National Child and Adolescent Council (CNNA) have developed specific studies and instruments to identify disparities and to improve targeting of vulnerable populations at the local level. This includes elaboration of project proposals at provincial and municipal levels that target children in need of special protection (such as those at risk of abuse, exploitation and deprivation of family environment). A critical opportunity here is the new legal framework for local governments that obliges each province and municipality to dedicate 10 per cent of their financial resources (a total of more than USD 200 million in 2011) to groups deserving special attention including children. By submitting project proposals that target vulnerable children, in the light of this opportunity, CNNA and UNICEF have been advocating with provincial authorities around framing comprehensive child rights policies. To this end, both institutions have been instrumental in establishing child rights as the main issue in the agenda of national meetings of the provinces’ Deputy Prefects (provincial leaders).

Together with ODNA, UNICEF has also developed a series of indicators for children's rights, disaggregated at provincial and municipal levels. The IDN (index of children’s rights) combines specific child rights indicators according to three age groups (for instance, for children aged 0 to 5 years, the IDN combines the analysis of three dimensions: the right to live, to grow in a healthy manner, and the right to emotional and intellectual development; similar analysis applies to children aged 6 to 11 years, and 12 to 17 years). For purposes of analysis, planning and evaluation of programmes, the index is used by technical teams from various ministries, local authorities, institutions working for children, including CNNA, and the media.

PROGRESS AND RESULTS
The child-friendly budgeting process has contributed to a large reversal in fiscal trends in the country. The social spending in Ecuador has increased from 2.9 per cent of GDP in 2000 to more than 10 per cent of GDP in 2011. During 2000-2006 there was also a 400 per cent increase in public health spending. This has led to one million children receiving meals at school and five million women receiving free maternal care. For the first time, a national budget allocation for vaccinations was secured. In 2006, there was 85 per cent coverage of routine immunization in Ecuador.

The Congress Office for the Monitoring of the National Budget has recently committed to sustain its work in the coming years by including it in the Congress’s annual budget. Congressmen’s capacities to analyze and monitor national budgets and social spending have been strengthened, leading to better informed decisions on social spending issues. For instance, the approved National Budget for 2012 includes an allocation of USD 33 million for child protection policies, which was a mere USD 4 million in 2010. This is expected to benefit at least 100,000 children. In collaboration with the Child and Family Institute, UNICEF provided technical expertise to outline this investment initiative.

By advocating for political will and through its technical support to the CNNA, UNICEF has been successful in making the provincial level an active part of the National Decentralized System of Integral Protection of Children and Adolescents’ Rights. This framework was initially implemented at the municipal level but by bringing the provincial level on board, CNNA and UNICEF has strengthened the linkages between the subnational and national level to better coordinate child rights policies in the municipalities. Further, CNNA and UNICEF’s engagement was critical in supporting the Deputy Prefects to enact a ‘Collective Agreement for Guaranteeing the Rights of Children and Adolescents’ in 2011. This has led to the adoption of child rights laws in 11 provinces. These laws provide special measures to protect children and adolescents from violence, abuse and exploitation. The remaining 13 provinces are elaborating similar laws which are expected to be adopted in the coming months. Further, the project proposals developed by CNNA and UNICEF have resulted in 14 provinces including specific child rights results in their Territorial Development Plan for 2012.

In addition, UNICEF’s engagement in the on-going MDG Fund Joint-Programme in Youth, Employment and Migration has led to (a) key knowledge generation on children’s rights and migration; (b) mainstreaming of children and family rights in the new organizational structure of the SENAMI, for instance through the creation of a new Under Secretariat on Migrants Rights Promotion in 2011; (c) shifting the focus from migrants to human mobility in public policies on migration. As a result of UNICEF’s efforts, the Government has adopted the handbook, Human Mobility and Children’s Rights, which outlines institutional procedures to address the claims of girls and boys affected by migration. This handbook was developed based on the voices of children and adolescents, published in the participatory study My Opinions Matter.

LESSONS LEARNED
Strengthening child-focused budgets and public policies in a middle income country such as Ecuador is particularly relevant as the country has historically invested poorly on children. UNICEF’s approach to social policy in Ecuador promotes equity by articulating efforts at both national and local levels, to increase social spending for the most vulnerable children. Creating an enabling environment by bringing

7 UNICEF actively participated in three such meetings held in Portoviejo, Cuenca and Nueva Loja in 2011.
8 For more information see www.odna.org.ec/provincia.html http://www.odna.org.ec/canton.html
9 The public health spending increased from USD 103 million in 2000 to USD 525 million in 2006. (Source: Social Investment Bulletins (Boletines Cómo va la inversión social), Ministry of Finance and UNICEF)
10 www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/Policy_Matters_Mag_Vol_1_e_version.pdf
12 Adolescents’ Rights, Gender and Migration; Challenges for Policy Makers, Rosalía Cortés, UNICEF 2011
all relevant actors together, facilitating their consensus on key priorities while supporting the analysis of disaggregated data, has further supported the reduction of inequities in Ecuador.

Over the years as the social spending by the Government increased, UNICEF simultaneously invested in monitoring capacities of key agencies at the national and local levels. This has helped to maximize the quality of spending on children. In addition, strengthening information systems, data production, analysis and its wide dissemination, together with the Government and civil society actors has proved to be critical to this success.

Although considerable improvements have been achieved in the last decade, several challenges remain such as the level of social spending in Ecuador (currently 10 per cent of GDP) compared to other Latin American countries that average 17 per cent of GDP.13 The design and implementation of comprehensive migration and human mobility policies also pose a challenge in terms of effective coordination and consensus building among a wide range of state and civil society partners, both at national and local levels. To overcome this impediment, gaps in access of quality health, social protection and education services by children (those left behind by migrant parents and also children that have migrated to Ecuador) must be identified.

**POTENTIAL APPLICATION**

This experience demonstrates a successful case of how public policies can be advanced by establishing key partnerships with politically and administratively powerful organizations and by building institutional capacities. To replicate this work, it is necessary to cross fertilize knowledge and lessons from this experience across countries and regions. To this end, Ecuador office benefitted from lessons learned in Argentina around social spending and monitoring and Colombia’s experience around child rights advocacy and programming at the local level.

**NEXT STEPS**

Advocacy will continue with the National Congress to contribute to the sustainability of the Congress Office for the Monitoring of the National Budget. UNICEF will also strengthen strategic partnerships with interested donors such as IDB, Spanish and EU Cooperation and with the civil society for monitoring of the national budget. In 2012-2013, UNICEF will monitor and evaluate the inclusion of children’s rights and special needs in Local Development Plans. This will shape CNNA and UNICEF’s strategy around promoting public policies for vulnerable children at the sub-national level.

The organization will continue to strengthen the articulation between national policies and local programmes in youth employment and migration. It will provide increased sup-

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13 Panorama Social de América Latina 2011 (ECLAC)
ABSTRACT
In many developing countries, public providers continue to provide insufficient basic services (such as primary education, healthcare, and clean water supply and sanitation) due to lack of funding and capacities. In this scenario, non-state providers (NSPs) such as NGOs, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and both formal and informal private enterprises have assumed a critical role in providing access to key services to the poorest households. Recognizing the need to broaden knowledge and understanding of NSPs and the role they can play, UNICEF’s East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) held a joint workshop in 2010. The workshop set the stage for UNICEF’s more elaborate engagement with the ADB on engaging NSPs, and developing Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) in the delivery of basic services. UNICEF and ADB’s collaboration was formalized in 2010 through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that ensures joint technical assistance, programmes and projects in selected sectors and countries in Asia and the Pacific. This has further strengthened UNICEF’s substantive engagement with the ADB at the country level, particularly in the education sector. Regular dialogue with the ADB eventually created space for UNICEF’s involvement in other areas of ADB’s work such as in social protection and climate change. In many countries, UNICEF and ADB now have better alignment in terms of providing policy advice to Governments. This partnership has allowed UNICEF and the ADB, the opportunity to strengthen credibility in traditional sectors and in new fields (such as finance). In the coming years, at the regional and country level, cooperation among the two agencies will be strengthened in areas of statistical analyses, MDG monitoring, expanding child-friendly investments and strengthening social protection.

ISSUE
Effective provision of basic services, such as primary education, healthcare, and clean water supply and sanitation is fundamental to the socio-economic development of any country, vital to its poverty eradication efforts, and essential to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Yet, public providers are rarely able to provide sufficient public services to meet demand. Households - and often those that are the most poor - are increasingly using for-profit, non-profit, formal and informal entities for accessing key services. The role of NSPs in delivering key services will likely grow in light of government funding and capacity constraints. Rather than ignore this reality, governments and development partners have an opportunity to leverage the various capacities of NSPs to contribute to broader development goals, and develop corresponding policy options that maximize NSP’s comparative advantage particularly at the community level.

NSPs involvement in the delivery of social services can improve efficiencies, expand service coverage, mobilize financial resources to supplement inadequate national budgets, and free up public resources to redirect them to other pressing needs. However, the process for contracting with NSPs is not without problems. Though NSPs deliver key services across Asia and the Pacific, their involvement is often informal and falls beyond the purview of government regulation, potentially leaving communities vulnerable to poor quality services, inconsistent supply, and high consumption prices.

When the role of the state changes from that of a direct provider to an enabler and regulator, it retains the responsibility of ensuring that services are affordable, non-discriminatory, and accessible to all. This implies a more systematic analysis of the broader governance context within which contracting and sub-contracting takes place, with special focus on accountability frameworks that address
multiple relationships within the service delivery chain: between poor people and providers, between poor people and the state, and between the state and providers. Partnerships for better service delivery are important to both ADB and UNICEF. ADB’s Strategy 2020\(^1\) includes PPPs as an important tool for leveraging resources, enhancing public administration reform, and advancing poverty reduction goals. UNICEF works to ensure that policies and processes for delivering services – whether by the public or private sector – are in the best interest of children, that services are of sufficient quality to support their well-being, and that coverage is sufficient to ensure achievement of MDGs. While UNICEF has long collaborated with NSPs in the implementation of programmes, upstream involvement at the policy level on this issue, especially with the private sector, is a new area of engagement for the organization.

**STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION**

In 2008, UNICEF EAPRO together with the Government of Mongolia and other UN agencies, held a workshop on PPPs for service delivery. The workshop brought together the Government, civil society, international financial institutions, the private sector and the ADB and culminated in the Government developing draft legislations on PPPs. A State Policy on PPPs was approved in October 2009 and officially launched in 2010. Broadly, the law regulates principles and forms of PPPs, as well as establishes rights, obligations and responsibilities of involved parties. This workshop also served as a catalyst to UNICEF’s more extensive engagement with ADB on NSPs which resulted in a regional workshop on NSPs in 2010 as well as ongoing country level engagement with ADB on the issue.

**Regional workshop on the role of NSPs in service delivery:** Recognizing the need to broaden knowledge and understanding of NSPs and the role they can play, UNICEF’s EAPRO and the ADB held a joint workshop in April 2010 focusing on the role of NSPs in delivering basic services for children. The purpose was to enhance the knowledge, capacity and expertise of practitioners working in health, education, water and sanitation sectors as well as of key government officials (such as ministries of health, education, finance) to support processes for engaging NSPs, and developing PPPs in the delivery of basic services. Supporting this capacity development and advocacy effort, regional sectoral studies and knowledge products were developed such as on the (a) effectiveness and impacts of NSP delivery; (b) challenges and opportunities pertaining to service delivery by NSPs; (c) factors for success in NSP delivery; (d) quality and capacity development; (e) regulation and policy environment; (f) sustainability and financing; and (g) accountability frameworks.

After the workshop, ADB and UNICEF met to discuss next steps for country and sector specific activities. Experts in education, health, HIV and AIDS, nutrition and water and sanitation from both agencies followed with bilateral discussions.

UNICEF’s regular dialogue with ADB on NSPs also created space for UNICEF’s involvement in other areas of ADB’s work. Some examples include UNICEF’s contribution to ADB’s regional workshop on social protection in Asia Pacific in 2010; joint development of a paper on children and climate change; providing substantive input to the ADB, ESCAP (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific), UNDP Asia-Pacific Regional MDG report 2011; participating and engaging in ADB’s Sanitation Dialogues Conference and Consultations on Social Pensions in 2011. These opportunities provided UNICEF a critical platform to strengthen child sensitive provisions in ADB’s work.

Cooperation has since expanded to other areas of mutual interest under the framework of a joint ADB-UNICEF Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which was signed in 2010. The MoU provides a framework for the two development organizations to engage in joint technical assistance, projects, and programme work in selected countries and sectors in the region. It promotes research and analysis; development of knowledge products on issues linked to their common activities; and policy dialogue and consultation on strategies and programmes targeted at children and women.

In addition, substantive engagement with the ADB is currently underway at the country level as well.\(^2\) For instance,

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1 The Long-Term Strategic Framework of the Asian Development Bank 2008-2020 is the paramount ADB-wide strategic framework to guide all its operations to 2020. It reaffirms both ADB’s vision of an Asia and Pacific free of poverty and its mission to help developing member countries improve the living conditions and quality of life of their people.

2 Countries identified as priority areas for cooperation include Armenia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Georgia, Indonesia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Timor Leste, Uzbekistan, and Viet Nam.
UNICEF Cambodia supported ADB in the development of its country partnership strategy. UNICEF Pacific collaborated with the UN and ADB on the Human Face of the Global Economic Crisis Conference. UNICEF has also been involved in reviewing ADB’s social safety net study (Phase 1 and Phase 2). UNICEF and ADB also actively participate in education sector-wide programme designs and implementation in Bangladesh, Nepal and Cambodia. Both the agencies also contribute technical support to multiple government agencies towards strengthening social protection policies.

**PROGRESS AND RESULTS**

**Enhanced engagement with NSPs:** The regional NSP workshop proved to be an effective model for bringing together diverse groups of people to explore ways in which partnerships with NSPs may serve as a complementary approach to enhance access to basic social services with equity. It provided a platform for identifying specific sectoral issues for further analysis. The workshop also highlighted the critical need to mobilize communities and to ensure that NSPs are better equipped to work with communities to deliver affordable, equitable and more culturally appropriate services.

The Deputy Minister of Health of Maldives, expressed interest in ADB’s support in developing PPP projects in financing the delivery of basic services in her country. This was followed up by ADB and by UNICEF Regional Office in South Asia. As a result a Private Sector Participation Committee has been developed within the Office of the President to advice on private sector policy and implementation. The Government of Maldives is also planning to establish a PPP agency to carry out sourcing and implementation of PPP initiatives.

**PPPs in the education sector:** Many countries in the region have expressed interest in strengthening NSPs and PPPs in education with the help of ADB and UNICEF. The most immediate demand for such assistance is expected to come from stakeholders in the Philippines, Vietnam and Cambodia. In 2012, Philippines will organize a national level workshop with focus on policy environment for NSPs and PPPs for provision of education services. In 2011, to further support PPPs in the education sector, ADB and UNICEF have developed a paper, Non-State Providers and Public-Private Partnerships for the Poor. The paper examines PPPs in the education sector across Asia and the Pacific and provides a solid basis and reference point for policy and technical dialogue at country level with Ministries of Education and other stakeholders on NSPs and PPPs in education.

Overall impact: As a result of this strengthened partnership, UNICEF has been able to develop a closer working relationship with ADB’s technical experts. Across the region, UNICEF and ADB are individually engaged in various governmental working groups or technical bodies. The MoU provides a pretext for stronger collaboration around common goals, and in many cases, better alignment in terms of providing policy advice to Governments. For instance, over the past two years, ADB has supported the Government of Lao PDR towards developing a new five year secondary education project. UNICEF provides support to the Ministry of Education to implement child-friendly holistic approaches to schools (Schools of Quality) at the primary and secondary level. The MoU has resulted in ADB consulting with UNICEF to ensure a harmonized approach of support for secondary education in Lao PDR. ADB, UNICEF and the Department of Secondary Education have agreed to continue dialogue to ensure harmonization throughout the duration of ADB’s support to the government. Similarly in Nepal, UNICEF’s social policy experts and ADB’s social protection specialists regularly coordinate social protection inputs provided to the government. This cooperation has included multiple workshops and trainings and an ADB supported study tour to Thailand. By sharing knowledge, competencies, and resources, the partnership has created a space to build mutual trust, reciprocity, and diversity in thinking within and between the two agencies.

**INNOVATION**

UNICEF and ADB envision PPPs as an entry point to improve equitable access to quality services for all people. Building on their respective strengths, the ADB and UNICEF can promote better understanding of NSPs and the potential for PPPs to leverage resources toward achieving MDGs. Knowledge generation, policy advocacy and developing capacity and partnerships for PPPs are areas in which ADB and UNICEF can collectively contribute to ensure that services provided fit broader cost, quality and equity needs.

UNICEF and ADB collaboration provides a framework for using each agency’s comparative strengths to build partnerships, leverage resources, and influence policy and investment decisions towards specific development objectives that positively impact the lives of children in the region. It allows UNICEF to build and strengthen technical cooperation with ADB, governments and other development partners in areas where UNICEF does not traditionally engage (such as finance).

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UNICEF’s cooperation with the ADB in the area of NSPs provided a model for ongoing cooperation between the two organizations, drawing on the distinct comparative advantages and important complementarities of ADB and UNICEF towards improving the wellbeing of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in Asia. A critical factor that propelled this initiative includes the support and buy-in of senior leadership within ADB (at the level of the Vice President) and UNICEF (at the level of the Regional Director), which helped to elevate the importance of the initiative both within ADB and UNICEF, and with Government.

Partnership requires a level of engagement that when placed in the context of day-to-day responsibilities, can add to already heavy workloads. It is important that senior management prioritizes collaboration where there is clear added value. For momentum to be sustained, various sectors in the two agencies must see tangible benefits, and be encouraged to incorporate joint activities, including opportunities for review and evaluation, as part of work plan processes.

While the education sector in both agencies has moved forward by developing a joint paper on PPPs in education, cooperation on PPPs has been less advanced in the other sectors. The slow progress in moving the initiative forward is partly due to differences in the way UNICEF and ADB function at the country and regional level. While ADB is largely centralized with decisions and programme work guided by senior management and technical staff based in the Philippines, UNICEF is highly decentralized, with Country Offices leading technical and programmatic work. Developing working modalities and mechanisms that appreciate these differences has been a challenge. The MoU addresses these challenges to some degree as it requires regular meetings at the senior management level to review and map out areas for potential cooperation.

Discussions are underway between ADB and UNICEF on conducting national studies to analyze non-state sector engagement in health, nutrition, HIV and AIDS, education, water and sanitation, using a child-rights lens. The country studies will include comprehensive needs and gap analysis. UNICEF and ADB are also discussing the possibility of undertaking joint assessments of country readiness for undertaking PPPs in education, using the Philippines and possibly Lao PDR as potential pilot countries. National stakeholder workshops are envisaged for 2012 and 2013 to identify opportunities for developing and piloting framework for engaging, monitoring and evaluating non-state engagement in various sectors, based on rights-based criteria. The aim is to have working models of sustainable and transparent mechanisms for engagement.

Work at the country level will continue to be strengthened. For example, the Ministries of Education and Finance, have expressed interest in learning more about PPPs and their application to the social sectors. Senior ADB and UNICEF representatives in Cambodia are following up with the Government on knowledge development and training on PPPs. The Philippines, Vietnam and Lao PDR are also discussing the possibility of advancing work in this area. There are also opportunities to expand cooperation to other areas of work. At the regional and country level cooperation will be strengthened in areas of statistical analyses, MDG monitoring, expanding child-friendly investments and strengthening social protection. Further support could be targeted towards systems building, piloting alternative delivery modalities and strengthening the knowledge base around conditional cash transfers. There may also be opportunities for UNICEF to add value to the quality and effectiveness of ADB’s loan development and approval process by reviewing proposals using a child rights lens.


Memorandum of Understanding between ADB and UNICEF, 2010 http://www.unicef.org/media/media_56191.html
**ABSTRACT**

Recent debt relief and rapidly increasing oil revenues have created a new socio-economic context in the Republic of Congo, which is conducive to the establishment of a policy framework for social development and poverty reduction. UNICEF and IMF’s concerns are that the additional fiscal space must be directed to providing substantial funding for priority high-impact social sector programmes. To this end, UNICEF in partnership with the IMF, World Bank and other actors have provided necessary technical inputs for successful advocacy and subsequent support for increased government spending in the social sectors. Specifically, UNICEF collaborated with the IMF on elaborating the Medium Term Expenditure Frameworks (MTEFs) and annual budgets prepared by the Ministries, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) and the preparation of a Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS) for the health sector. UNICEF also participates in IMF’s briefing missions on budget support to the Government, as well as in discussions with the IMF and the President’s Office on improving social expenditure (health, education, social affairs) and monitoring and evaluation.

By advocating for the removal of barriers to health spending, this collaboration has resulted in a 66 per cent increase in the national health budget for 2012, with an additional allocation of USD 92,000 for routine vaccines and USD 240,000 for a measles campaign. UNICEF’s partnership with the IMF has been critical in increasing its direct access to the Ministry of Finance and influencing the budgetary process. This relationship also provides UNICEF additional strength when negotiating policy recommendations and has placed UNICEF firmly as a credible partner on national policies and budgeting. In the next phase, UNICEF will provide inputs to IMF’s social policy priorities action plan. The three institutions will also work together to influence the finalization of the PRSP II and the implementation of the PETS.

**ISSUE**

The Republic of Congo is a low middle income country largely dependent on oil revenues. In common with similar countries in the West and Central Africa region, the relatively high per capita GDP (USD 3000 approximately) is far above the incomes of many. About 51 per cent of the population lives in poverty with the Gini coefficient at 0.43. The disparities between the rural population (especially the disadvantaged people) and the richer urban population are stark. Although the Government has surplus oil revenues, national expenditures have been constrained in an attempt to avoid excessive and unsustainable commitments. Infrastructure and service delivery remains poor, and the constraints to human development and economic growth remain substantial.

Having reached the HIPC (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries) completion point in early 2010 and having qualified for approximately USD 1.9 billion of debt relief, the Government of Congo has a marked opportunity to redirect revenues from debt repayment to human development. Until now infrastructure development was the key government priority however there is now an increasing awareness to diversify the economy and to strengthen the social sectors (health, education, social protection).

Given this context, there has been a shift in UNICEF’s engagement in the Republic of Congo. From being an implementing partner alone, UNICEF has moved towards providing high quality technical advice to the social sectors
with an emphasis on budgeting for children. This includes advocacy and collaboration around national budget and expenditure. In this regard, partnership with the IMF and World Bank offers a unique opportunity to engage in discussions with the government from both a macro and micro point of view.

STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

UNICEF’s ongoing work on social and economic policies in the Republic of Congo

In March 2010, UNICEF developed an analytical report on social policy and financing in the new economic context in Congo. This led to collaboration with Oxford Policy Management (OPM) to provide high quality assistance and advice to the Government around policy development, planning and increased budgets for the social sectors. From September 2010 to December 2011, UNICEF through OPM has been supporting the Government in the following areas:

- **Development of MTEFs in the social sectors by developing capacities of various ministries**: In 2011, UNICEF assisted the ministries of health, primary education, social affairs, and women affairs in their MTEF development. Training was provided on defining clear SMART objectives and performance indicators. While some progress was made on this, long-term support would be required to create stronger linkages between the MTEFs and the PRSP.

- **Development of PETS in the health sector**: In February 2011, with the technical assistance of OPM, UNICEF assessed the feasibility and relevance of conducting PETS in the health sector.

- **Support to the Ministry of Social Affairs, Humanitarian Action and Solidarity (MASAHS) to develop a National Social Action Policy**: Support has been provided to MASAHS since March 2011 to prepare a National Social Action Policy, which is seen as a crucial step in providing the Ministry with an overall framework to guide its action over the next few years (2012-2016), feeding into the MTEF and the PRSP. To this end, UNICEF developed a diagnostic study around the existing situation of social action and a strategy paper for the National Social Action Policy. The policy was adopted in December 2011.

- **Assistance in the development of the PRSP (2012-2016)**: Technical support has been provided to social sector ministries to develop a poverty reduction strategy with a specific focus on children. In particular, the MASAHS benefited from a specific support to determine sector priorities to be included in the PRSP which are (a) strengthening the delivery of welfare services for vulnerable social groups; (b) implementing cash transfer programmes and other measures to reduce vulnerability (such as income-generating activities); and (c) strengthening the legal and institutional framework, capacities and resources of the social welfare system.

Upon the Government’s request, UNICEF has provided inputs into the draft PRSP II around the social sectors, including social protection, education, health and water and sanitation. UNICEF’s support has particularly led to the recognition of social protection as a development priority in the PRSP. UNICEF is also advocating on the integration of an equity-focused situation analysis in the document.

- **Costing exercises in the health sector**: Costing analysis of high impact interventions on maternal, newborn and child health using the Marginal Budgeting for Bottleneck (MBB) tool has provided evidence to promote a free package of essential interventions for child survival. In 2011, UNICEF also undertook a study on the overall cost of free schooling; however, additional work is required to determine the cost per school, district and department.

4 The MBB is an analytical costing and budgeting tool developed by UNICEF, the World Bank and WHO to respond to the request of low-income countries to plan, cost and budget marginal allocations to health services and assess their potential impact on health coverage, MDGs related health outcomes and health outcomes for the poor. For more information on the use of this tool in West and Central Africa, see related case in this compendium ‘Benin: Marginal Budgeting for Bottlenecks analysis leads to improved health budgets and plans in favour of vulnerable children’, page 26.
Partnership with the IMF
Building upon its ongoing work in social and economic policies, and as part of UNICEF’s global initiative *Recovery for All*, the organization developed a dialogue with the IMF at the local level. This resulted in valuable synergy between the IMF mission on the definition of pro-poor expenditure and UNICEF’s agenda in the Republic of Congo. More specifically, UNICEF and IMF collaborated on the development of the MTEFs and annual budgets prepared by the ministries; the PRSP and the preparation of PETS for the health sector. Collaboration with the IMF also provided UNICEF the opportunity to participate in strategic forums where it could strongly advocate for increased budgets for children. For instance, UNICEF participates in all IMF’s debriefing missions on budget support to the Government, as well as in discussions with the Parliament and the President’s Office on improving budgets, social expenditure (health, education, social affairs) and monitoring and evaluation. In particular, the IMF has supported UNICEF and WHO in gaining access to the Ministry of Finance, which has enabled the organization to successfully advocate for the removal of barriers to health spending for vaccination programmes.

Partnership with the World Bank
The cooperation with the World Bank has also been strengthened in this context. The World Bank is UNICEF’s key partner in the health and education sector. It is also heavily involved in supporting procurement reform and other components of the government’s *Action Plan for the Improvement of Management of Public Investments*, as well as the reforms in Public Financial Management. Close coordination with the Bank has been necessary to support UNICEF’s engagement in improving the quality of public expenditure in the social sectors. Discussions with the World Bank Resident Representative indicate that there are opportunities for UNICEF and the World Bank to work together in areas such as the PETS in the health or education sectors, and in the implementation of the national social protection strategy in 2012.

**PROGRESS AND RESULTS**
UNICEF’s ongoing efforts around budgets for children, propelled by its collaboration with the IMF, contributed to massive 66 per cent increase in the Ministry of Health budget for 2012. Specifically, the Government has released an additional USD 92,000 for routine vaccines and USD 240,000 for a measles campaign. The Ministry of Energy and Water have also received an increased budget for 2012, and have agreed to expand the national budget for water and sanitation activities. The execution of these budget lines will be co-managed by the ministries and UNICEF. A key factor here has been the extensive trainings of the ministries of education, health and social affairs around the MTEF that helped to strategically position children as a priority in social budgets.

The PETS report has been shared with the Ministry of Health who is deliberating on the implementation of the survey. A decision in this potentially sensitive area is under discussion between the UNICEF Representative and the Minister of Health. Since the budget for the Ministry of Health in 2012 has been increased considerably, PETS would considerably help in ensuring that funds arrive where they are needed. The World Bank is supporting the idea and willing to finance it.

**LESSONS LEARNED**
Given the new economic context in Congo, UNICEF’s focus is on improving the use of internal resources for the benefit of the population instead of using donor funds for national projects and programmes. This is being made possible by speaking in a common advocacy voice with the IMF and World Bank around key policy issues. UNICEF’s partnership with the Bretton Woods institutions is critical to increasing its direct access to the Ministry of Finance and influencing the budgetary process. This partnership has helped UNICEF secure a seat among few agencies in the elaboration of the national budget.

In this context, UNICEF’s strategic engagement in social and economic policy has placed the organization firmly as a credible partner on national policies and budgeting. While there has been a shift in UNICEF’s role in the country, work on the ground will continue to be important for shaping pro-equity policies at the national level. As an example, UNICEF’s work with disadvantaged groups (such as street children, children dropping out of school, female headed households and indigenous groups) supported the preparation of the National Social Action Policy that will further assist the MASAHS to produce a quality MTEF and increased annual budget for 2013. Upstream work will therefore continue to be steeped in evidence and experience gained from the field.

**POTENTIAL APPLICATION**
During UNICEF’s Mid Term Review it was agreed that the social policies approach will be utilized as an umbrella for the entire country programme. Therefore scaling up this experience will require all staff to understand, and have the necessary knowledge to translate efforts on the ground into policies and budgets for children.

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5 *Recovery for All* is UNICEF’s coordinated strategy of policy advocacy and partnerships for children in response to the global financial crisis and economic slowdown. For more information refer to *Recovery for All: A Call for Collaborative Action* ([www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/Recovery_for_All_5_August_2010_for_e-distribution_FINAL(1).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/Recovery_for_All_5_August_2010_for_e-distribution_FINAL(1).pdf))
**NEXT STEPS**

It will be crucial to maintain the momentum around the recently adopted National Social Action Policy (2012-2016) and assist the MASAHS to move towards effective implementation of the policy. The immediate steps will include supporting (a) a detailed operational plan for the next 3-5 years; (b) a law on the national social action system; and (c) social protection training for key staff of the Ministry. Longer-term support for operational planning, capacity development and implementation of the commitments in the policy (such as introduction of cash transfers) will be discussed jointly with the World Bank together with the Ministry.

Moving forward, the country office will provide inputs to IMF’s social policy priorities action plan. The partnership with the IMF and World Bank will be strengthened to influence the finalization of the PRSP II, with a special focus on the social protection component. The three institutions are also working together on the implementation of the PETS. UNICEF will reinforce its support for the MTEF and budget preparation for 2013. It will also focus on strengthening budgets at the subnational level to ensure that the funds adequately reach the intended communities.
LESSONS LEARNED – DEMAND AND SUPPLY INTERVENTIONS

KYRGYZ REPUBLIC
Expanding cash transfers to support basic needs of impoverished children

ABSTRACT
Child poverty has been high and on the rise in the Kyrgyz Republic. While nearly 902,000 Kyrgyz children (41 per cent) were living in poverty in 2010, the only national programme specifically targeting poor children, the monthly cash transfer scheme had limited impact on poverty reduction due to inadequate design, coverage and the size of the cash transfer. In response, UNICEF undertook an analysis of the effectiveness of the cash transfer programme to reduce child poverty and proposed certain changes to its design. This sparked the beginning of a policy dialogue and reform process around the cash transfer programme. In 2008, a UNICEF-EU pilot tested new selection criteria and access procedures to improve coverage and size of the benefit. For sustainability of the reforms, UNICEF advocated for the key features of the pilot to be endorsed in a new legal code. This led to the adoption of the Law on State Social Benefits in 2009. After one year of implementation of the law, an additional 20,000 vulnerable children received cash transfers nationwide. To ensure that the improvements in the social protection sector benefitted the most vulnerable children, another complementary project was developed in 2011 to address bottlenecks in access to services at the local level in the most deprived regions.

In parallel, institutional reforms were undertaken to strengthen the position of Ministry of Labour and Social Protection to support social protection and child protection services in the long-term. In 2011, the Ministry with support from UNICEF, EU and the World Bank, developed its first National Strategy on Social Protection Development (2012-2014), with an explicit focus on vulnerable children. In the next phase, UNICEF will continue to monitor the impact of the cash transfers and support capacity development of the Ministry to have an explicit equity focus in the roll-out of national social protection strategy. By integrating demand and supply interventions at the sub-national level with an enabling legal and policy environment, this experience draws attention to a comprehensive approach of ensuring and sustaining equitable outcomes for children.

ISSUE
During 2005–2010, the Kyrgyz Republic experienced several high-impact internal shocks such as political upheaval and associated negative economic growth. Despite these shocks, the authorities managed to maintain a relatively stable macroeconomic environment. However, domestic turmoil in 2010 adversely affected the economy’s performance and further eroded the purchasing power of households. In 2010, poverty rose to nearly 34 per cent pushing an estimated 128,000 people in poverty. Children are over-represented in poverty statistics with almost 41 per cent of children living in poverty in 2010. Additionally, about 14 per cent of children under-five were suffering from chronic poor nutrition and stunting.

Since 1990, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection initiated several social assistance schemes. However most of such policies and programmes were not child-centered and had had limited results in reducing poverty. The state benefits introduced during this period were of two kinds: a Social Monthly Benefit for disadvantaged individuals including children with disabilities and orphans; and a means-tested Monthly Benefit scheme that provides cash transfer (of an average of USD 3 per child per month in 2008) to eligible poor families with children. The benefit level of both the schemes is very low. The Monthly Benefit amounts to only seven per cent of the total household consumption and 0.5 per cent of GDP. Moreover, among the eligible households, coverage with cash transfers is limited. The Monthly Benefit is provided to children under the age of 16 years in low income families, including a child birth grant and a benefit for children less than 18 months of age.

1 Kyrgyz Integrated Household Survey (KIHS) 2010
2 Global Study on Child Poverty and Disparities, National Report Kyrgyzstan, UNICEF, Institute of Strategic Analysis and Evaluation under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2009
3 The Monthly Benefit is provided to children under the age of 16 years in low income families, including a child birth grant and a benefit for children less than 18 months of age.
only 18 per cent. This points to a large exclusion error (i.e. many households that meet the eligibility criteria do not receive the transfers).

Since 2007-2008, much of the debate around cash transfers in the Kyrgyz Republic has focused on targeting efficiency: i.e. how many of the current beneficiaries belong to the poorest groups of the income distribution? Far less attention has been given to how many poor households receive the benefits to which they are entitled, or whether cash transfers are effective in reducing child poverty.5

STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

Evidence-driven policy advice and advocacy: In 2008, UNICEF undertook an analysis of the effectiveness of the cash transfer programmes to reduce child poverty and proposed certain changes to their design. The findings from the report were presented and explained to policymakers, the national parliament and expert community to generate political buy-in, resulting in the opening up of policy dialogue and beginning of the reform process. To provide coherent and unified policy advice to the Kyrgyz Government, UNICEF developed the policy recommendations in coordination with the World Bank. This partnership led to the development of an analysis on social safety nets in the Kyrgyz Republic in 2009. On the basis of the analysis, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, with technical assistance from UNICEF and EU implemented a pilot in seven districts in 2008-2009.

The EU-supported Sector Policy Support Programme (SPSP) on Social Protection provided specific assistance in designing the pilot project. UNICEF supported in developing the project guidance, implementing the pilot and training the social protection staff. The organization also developed the capacity of the Ministry to plan, coordinate and monitor the pilot. The project tested new selection criteria and procedures aimed at improving coverage and size of the Monthly Benefit which would reduce extreme child poverty. The results of the pilot and the simulation of the social and financial impact of the proposed changes enriched the policy dialogue around reforming the national social protection system. This evidence and analysis guided and shaped the process towards a new Law on State Social Benefits.

Advocacy for adoption of the Law on State Social Benefits (2009): Within its broader advocacy strategy to reduce child poverty in the country, UNICEF developed a specific advocacy plan to scale up the pilot through the adoption of the Law on State Social Benefits. A mapping of the decision-making process helped to identify key advocacy targets. These included the Members of Parliament, the Parliamentarian Committee on Social Policy, NGO partners such as the Association on Child Rights Promotion and external social policy experts. UNICEF assisted the Ministry and NGOs in developing policy briefs, key messages and facilitated several multi-stakeholders roundtable and bilateral meetings in 2009-2010. These efforts led to the Parliament adopting the Law on State Social Benefits in 2009, and as a result set the foundation for sustaining and scaling up the reforms in the social protection sector initiated by UNICEF and its partners.

Capacity development to implement the new law: With UNICEF’s support, regulations and implementation guidelines have been developed to enforce the new law. Based on the regulations, a training package was elaborated and a group of trainers was formed. The trainers group consists of representatives of the Ministry and social protection departments at the local level engaged in the pilot. In 2010, more than 300 social protection managers and professionals of the southern provinces were trained and coached on the new procedures. GIZ (German International Cooperation) provided financial support to conduct the trainings in the Northern provinces.

Institutional Reforms: Towards the end of 2009, as a result of a Government re-structuring, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection was down-graded to the level of an agency with no authority on policy formulation and decisions, legal initiatives and reforms. This development triggered a new advocacy initiative aimed at institutional reforms in the social protection and child protection domain. In 2010, UNICEF, EU and GIZ joined efforts with four political parties with a majority seat in the newly elected Parliament, to undertake high-level advocacy on streamlining social protection and child protection institutions. Key NGO alliances and networks were engaged in these advocacy campaigns. UNICEF has been instrumental in planning, coordinating and supporting all actors with evidence-driven arguments.

Identifying bottlenecks in implementation of the cash transfer programme: To ensure that the reforms in the social protection sector reached the most marginalized families, another project was designed in 2011 in an attempt to promote equitable access to quality healthcare, preschool, social services and cash transfers for the most poor children and mothers. The equity project was rolled out in 18 deprived villages in Batken district that are at risk of not achieving health-related MDGs and lack communication and transportation infrastructure. The project took a multi-sectoral approach, and was designed collaboratively by UNICEF’s
health, nutrition, social protection and Early Childhood Development (ECD) teams. It involved several sectoral situation assessments to identify supply and demand side bottlenecks to access guaranteed essential services and social cash transfers. For instance, three in-depth assessments were undertaken to determine access to quality emergency medical services and their use and access to medicines. Awareness of mothers and family members of risk signs during pregnancy and child disease, as well as awareness about cash transfer programmes was also measured.

**PROGRESS AND RESULTS**

The Law on State Social Benefits endorsed the key features of the UNICEF-EU pilot project and was adopted in late 2009. The design changes in the Monthly Benefit scheme as tested in the pilot have led to the following:

**Improvement in the coverage of cash transfers:** The pilot has led to the acceptance of new criteria aimed at reducing the exclusion of eligible households from the programme and increasing the coverage of the Monthly Benefit scheme. As a result, a larger number of eligible households now receive cash transfers. To this effect the following parameters were adopted:

a) **Increase of age limit:** Children in low income families now receive a flat rate monthly cash transfer of USD 8 per month until the children reach 3 years of age. Prior to the adoption of the Law, the Monthly Benefit scheme targeted children less than 18 months of age depending on the income of the household;

b) **Birth Registration:** Prior to the reform, children without a birth certificate were not eligible for the cash transfers. Now children without a birth certificate are allowed to be enrolled in the cash transfer scheme for three months. During this period social workers assist families to arrange birth certificates;

c) **Improved calculation of income:** Under the new law if a family has a plot of land but cannot cultivate it and therefore does not earn an income from it, then the potential income from the land cannot be included in the calculations for eligibility. This simple change allows eligible poor families to receive a higher amount of cash transfer.

**Improvement in access procedures:** In order to improve access procedures for the cash transfers, the UNICEF-EU pilot introduced two new measures, which are as follows:

a) **A new format for the cash transfer application form** was developed which lowers the administrative burden.

Initially the calculation of eligibility was done manually; now a computer software has been developed to support this function;

b) **Social Commissions** have been established at the local level to function as self-governance bodies and support the identification of eligible families. Such bodies comprise of local authorities, representatives of community-based organizations, community members and households.

According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the pilot has resulted in decreasing the exclusion error\(^6\) with respect to poor families. After one year of implementation of the Law on State Social Benefits nearly 20,000 additional children were receiving cash transfers nationwide in October 2011. In particular, nearly 3,100 families with no birth certificates for children and nearly 4,700 families who cannot cultivate their land have been granted benefits. The amount of the cash transfer has also increased from USD 4 (171 Kyrgyz Som) in 2009 and to USD 7 (310 Kyrgyz Som) in 2011.

**Institutional Reforms:** As a result of UNICEF’s advocacy, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection was restored at the end of 2010 with additional responsibilities and functions to strengthen child protection and child care services. In 2011, the re-established Ministry with support from UNICEF, EU and the World Bank has for the first time elaborated a National Strategy on Social Protection Development (2012-2014). The Strategy prioritizes four groups of citizens for public support: (1) vulnerable and poor children and their families; (2) persons with disabilities including children; (3) elderly; and (4) and other groups with increased social risks (such as homeless persons, people leaving residential care institutions or prisons, internal migrants without residence or registration among others). With regards to poor families with children, the Strategy aims to improve access to cash transfers and to increase the cash transfer level to at least 50 per cent of the extreme poverty line (monetary equivalent of the food basket providing 2100 Kcal/day). The strategy also calls for development of social services alternatives to residential care institutions, such as community-based and family type day care centers for children with disabilities, or family support day care centers, and encompasses measures for their delivery. The Strategy is linked with the Ministry’s Mid Term Budgetary Framework (MTBF) 2012-2014.

In addition, following UNICEF’s initiative, a Social Protection Thematic Group within the Development Partners Coordination Council (DPCC) was established in October

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\(^6\) Percentage decrease in exclusion error based on the Kyrgyz Integrated Household Survey (KIHS) was not measured due to delay of more than a year in processing data by the National Statistical Committee.
2011. The Group seeks to improve information sharing, coordination, and advocacy efforts of the development partners on social protection issues. The group is currently chaired by UNICEF.

**Integrating demand and supply interventions at the sub-national level:** The bottleneck analysis in the equity project uncovered several supply and demand side barriers to equitable distribution of essential services and cash benefits. For instance, institutional barriers included corruption, poor redress mechanisms comprising complaint procedures and also discriminatory attitudes of some service providers. Assessments also revealed that families had limited knowledge about their social entitlements or where to get assistance if their rights are violated, and are unclear about procedures to access poverty-targeted cash transfers, free medicines and health services.

The assessment findings relevant to all sectors were discussed at a roundtable meeting with Batken provincial, district and local authorities in July 2011. The barriers identified during the assessments informed and shaped the action plan of the equity project in Batken and the content of information and communication activities. The Head of the Batken district state administration endorsed the plan and took it under his coordination and oversight.

To address the identified bottlenecks in access to social benefits, activities involved distributing leaflets to all households to provide rural families information regarding their social entitlements. The leaflets explain enrolment procedures and provide contacts to channel complaints and/or make inquiries for more information. Hundreds of posters are on display in local authority offices, social protections departments, post offices, local markets, schools and rural health points detailing social entitlements. Local social protection administrators and social workers have received tailored on-the-job coaching on the new eligibility criteria and access procedures of cash transfers. The consultations were provided by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and were facilitated by UNICEF. Information on how to access cash transfers, along with awareness raising messages on healthy pregnancy and children’s diseases have been broadcast through the local radio station. The intervention has also mobilized other actors already engaged at the community level, such as community-based organizations, village health committees and local radio outlets, in the dissemination of information on cash transfers. These communication for development activities will contribute to improving local accountability of social protection services in the administration of cash transfers.

A year after the intervention started, rural families with young children are expected to have a better understanding of the purpose of the social benefits and how to access them. Although evaluations of the progress are ongoing, anecdotal evidence gathered from participants in the interactive radio programmes at the local Batken Radio ‘Salam’ seems to confirm the positive impacts of these efforts. Overall, the intervention in Batken province covered nearly 23,500 people representing nearly 5,450 families and more than 9,000 children.

**LESSONS LEARNED**

This experience demonstrates the interaction of multiple determinants to overcome bottlenecks and barriers for equitable outcomes for children. By integrating demand and supply interventions at the local level with an enabling policy and legal environment, UNICEF has helped paved the way towards lasting impact on vulnerable children in the country.

This experience further highlights the value of evidence-based advocacy to produce concrete improvements for children on the ground. UNICEF-led analysis and policy advocacy was successful in challenging what had been the dominant approach to reform in the social protection sector in the Kyrgyz Republic. Traditionally, reforms within the social protection sector had been limited to improving the targeting formulas in order to reduce the number of existing beneficiaries deemed not eligible. In practice, such reforms had resulted in an overall reduction in the number of beneficiaries. This was in stark contrast with the national statistics that showed increase in monetary poverty among households with children. As a result of UNICEF’s efforts, the focus and priority of reforms shifted to expanding the coverage to eligible households with children who were not receiving the benefits. This would help to maximize the poverty reduction effectiveness of the cash transfers. Bringing development partners onboard such as the World Bank and the EU gave further strength to UNICEF and helped to create conditions for the adoption of the policy reforms by the Government.
This experience sheds further light on the complementarities offered by the partnership with the EU on social protection reforms. In the Kyrgyz Republic, the EU and UNICEF mutually consult each other on a regular basis on strategies and programmes. After the UNICEF-EU programme on cash benefits was piloted, the EU’s Direct Budget Support to the country was based on the conditionality that the Government codifies the reform into a law. This was instrumental in institutionalizing the pilot as a national policy. This experience therefore shows the long term impact of leveraging EU budget support and related conditionalities for child rights in the country.

The most recent initiative to address bottlenecks in access to benefits at the local level in the most deprived regions of the country brings forward another important lesson: the need for social protection systems to proactively reach out to the most vulnerable households with children, to inform them about their entitlements and to help them overcome the little but insurmountable barriers they face, such as the lack of civil documentation, low awareness or distrust of public services. This is yet another shift in the approach to protecting the most vulnerable children that UNICEF is helping to generate in the Kyrgyz Republic – and elsewhere.

**POTENTIAL APPLICATION**

UNICEF will expand the equity approach for reaching the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children and families in the country. A number of factors are likely to facilitate the process of replication and scaling up the equity approach at the national level. First, it is vital to ensure that policy and decision makers at the central and local level understand the notion of equity and endorse it; this will be done through extensive advocacy. Second, an equity perspective will be built into relevant national strategies. For instance, reaching the most deprived with social support is the essence of the National Strategy on Social Protection Development 2012-2014. Third, to achieve and sustain equitable approaches to social protection and other social sector reform, accountability of service providers and local authorities will need to be built and strengthened. To this end, UNICEF will forge new partnerships and will expand its existing alliances with stakeholders.

This experience, with its strategy of evidence generation, advocacy, partnership, piloting and scaling up, has therefore a great potential for broader application in other countries and contexts. In particular, the specific design of the initial cash transfer pilot programme, the national strategy on social protection as well as the communication and information material used in the equity pilot could be used by UNICEF offices, Governments and development partners engaged in similar efforts elsewhere.

**NEXT STEPS**

UNICEF will continue to monitor the scale-up and impact of the cash transfer programme. To remove barriers in accessing cash transfers, the organization will support the Government to establish a clear and transparent appeal process which will help ensure that complaints about selection and/or exclusion of beneficiaries are resolved fairly and efficiently.

With an increased focus on equity in UNICEF’s country programme (2012-2016), a range of approaches will be used to meet the inequity challenges facing the country’s children and young people. Emphasis will be placed on addressing geographical disparities and those among municipalities. At the national level, the organization will ensure that legislation and government resources are allocated equitably to address key concerns. Supporting the production of disaggregated data, and developing strong alliances to assist and empower the most disadvantaged children and young people will also be crucial. UNICEF will also continue to support institutional reforms in the social protection sector, with tailored capacity development efforts to strengthen an equity perspective within Government programmes.

**RELATED LINKS**

Protecting vulnerable families in Central Asia: Poverty, vulnerability and the impact of the economic crisis

Effectiveness of Benefits to Families and Children in the Kyrgyz Republic

Assessment of State Benefits to Disabled Citizens and Poor Families in the Kyrgyz Republic: Observations and a Way Forward
ABSTRACT
Morocco is a middle income country with huge disparities between rural and urban areas, largely resulting from inadequate focus on local needs and development. The municipalities, the closest administrative layer to vulnerable populations, are at the forefront of promoting social services however they lack sufficient capacity and guidance. In response, the Government with UNICEF’s support launched a package of reforms in 2004 to develop an approach for child-focused local situation analysis and planning. Participation of communities in all stages - situation analysis, identification of bottlenecks and prioritization of interventions and implementation – lies at the heart of these reforms. Using this approach, a pilot project was launched to build capacities of five municipalities to develop Municipal Development Plans with a strong focus on children and women’s rights. Building on the success of the Municipal Development Plans, the Children and Youth Friendly Municipalities (CAEJ) initiative was launched in five additional pilot sites, based on UNICEF’s Child Friendly Cities initiative. The CAEJ consolidates and sustains the gains made by child-focused local situation analysis and planning approach by strengthening child and adolescent participation in the municipal planning process.

The Municipal Development Plan provides for the first time, a genuine needs assessment of the population at the local level as well as a better approach for identification of bottlenecks in implementation of reforms and services launched at the national level. In 2009, the child-focused local situation analysis and planning approach was enshrined in the Communal Charter, the law regulating the powers and duties of municipalities. This has prompted the Ministry of Interior to scale up the project with UNICEF’s support from 5 to 106 municipalities in 2010-2011, benefitting more than 300,000 children. An additional 400 municipalities supported by other national and international agencies have also adopted this approach. In the next phase, UNICEF will focus on consolidating and institutionalizing the gains made in this work, strengthening child participation and child protection components, aligning sectoral strategies and analyzing budgets of the Municipal Development Plans.

ISSUE
Despite decades of economic growth and multiple social and political reforms, major disparities among rural and urban areas still exist in Morocco. As an example, illiteracy in urban areas is 34 per cent while it is 67 per cent in rural areas; preschool enrolment in urban areas stands at 65 per cent but it is under 36 per cent in rural areas; the poverty rate is 4.7 per cent in urban areas but 14.2 per cent in rural areas. The causes for such disparity are multiple, but a recognized bottleneck is the inadequate understanding and development of the local situation, needs and capacity.

While new development policies, strategies and regulation are formulated at the national level, local government structures are responsible for implementing and operationalizing them. In Morocco, though the municipal level is charged with promoting social services, they often lack sufficient capacity. In order to strengthen local governance, the Government of Morocco adopted the Communal Charter, a new legal framework in 2003. The Communal Charter provides Morocco’s 1500 municipalities a set of responsibilities for economic and social development. However, municipalities lack the tools and capacity to identify development challenges and bottlenecks, and as a result appropriate programmatic responses to improve the situation of children and women.

1 Country Common Assessment
STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

As a response, UNICEF developed and tested an approach for child-focused local situation analysis and planning in 2004. The idea was to strengthen the capacity of municipalities to prepare development plans, incorporate the principles and standards of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and implement appropriate programmatic responses, in partnership with all development actors (the Government, private sector and local associations).

From 2004 to 2007, UNICEF and the Government supported a pilot project involving five municipalities to undertake local participatory analysis and planning. The purpose was to develop Municipal Development Plans for the Child (PCD) with a strong focus on children and women’s rights. This pilot project involved municipalities and provinces at the local level and the General Directorate for Local Authorities (DGCL) under the Ministry of Interior at the national level. DGCL’s involvement was critical in ensuring eventual replication and institutionalization of the approach.

The pilot project was implemented in three stages, which are as follows:

1) Collection and analysis of data on the situation of children and women, using the Municipal Information System (SIC). By collecting a set of demographic and socioeconomic data with a particular focus on children and women, the SIC tool was specifically designed to support municipal planning and local decision-making. Upon data entry, the SIC generates a municipal monograph with a detailed situation analysis based on quantitative data. By analyzing the monograph, the community can identify issues and challenges particularly affecting children and women’s development in a particular municipality. The SIC also includes a social dashboard which produces a set of 60 indicators to measure progress and assist community decision-making in the next planning process.

2) Identification of priority development challenges in the municipality, based on the situation analysis. The pilot municipalities identified challenges related to social services (such as water, health, education) and basic amenities (such as roads and electricity). Participatory qualitative analysis through focus group discussions and structured interviews with children, women and local authorities provided additional insights on barriers in accessing social services. The barriers include absence of services such as preschools, poor quality of existing services and social norms that prevented access to services.

3) Designing relevant programmatic responses following a participatory process. The pilot involved communities and various development actors at the municipal level (such as local authorities, health and education social services, para-statal organizations, local associations and cooperatives) to determine programmatic responses to the identified development challenges and bottlenecks. Some of the programmatic responses include for example, Dar Al Oumouma (free hosting houses for pregnant women before delivery), community-based pre-schooling, protection cells in schools to prevent violence against children. UNICEF also developed additional tools to facilitate child-focused local situation analysis and planning such as ‘A Guide for Municipal Participatory Planning’ and training modules for local authorities to develop the PCDs. In 2010, these tools were further refined. For instance, training modules were developed on integrating the human rights of children and women and strengthening gender focus in the PCD; a new version of SIC was developed that included indicators on violence against women; and a reference guide for the establishment of a commission on fairness and equal opportunities was formed. A critical mass of local trainers, mostly municipal civil servants was created which enabled a sustainable peer-to-peer approach.

In parallel, UNICEF launched the Children and Youth Friendly Municipalities (CAEJ) initiative in five additional pilot sites in 2010-2011. The CAEJ is the Moroccan adaptation of UNICEF’s Child Friendly Cities initiative. The CAEJ strengthened, consolidated and sustained the gains made by child-focused local situation analysis and planning process. It builds upon the PCD development process by putting children, youth and women, especially the most vulnerable at the center of municipal policies and development plans; involving them in the plan development as well as in its implementation. The CAEJ has a particular focus on strengthening child and adolescent participation in the municipal planning process. Under the support of the National Observatory for Children’s rights, this

2 The Dar Al Oumouma project addresses bottlenecks related to service delivery and social norms as rural medical units do not offer accommodation to pregnant women. Moreover, social norms discourage pregnant rural women to deliver under medical supervision.
3 The Government provides only limited preschool education in some select areas in Morocco. In urban areas, preschool service is ensured by the private sector while in rural areas, a preschool service doesn’t exist. The programme has designed a solution which involves building partnerships among the community, municipality and NGOs to create preschools units. Each partner contributes to the project, for instance, the municipality provides the building, the NGO appoints a teacher and the community contributes school fees.
4 Protection cells in schools provide trainings to teachers, peer-to-peer support and child rights messages.
5 For more information on the Child Friendly City initiative go to http://www.childfriendlycities.org/
initiative also involves the DGCL, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, UNICEF Innocenti Research Center and National Committee of UNICEF France.\(^6\)

**PROGRESS AND RESULTS**

Following the encouraging results of the pilot, in 2009, the child-focused local situation analysis and planning approach has been enshrined in the *Communal Charter*, the law regulating the powers and duties of municipalities. This has prompted local authorities to prepare participatory and gender sensitive development plans based on the pilot design. In 2010-2011, the Ministry of Interior reached out to UNICEF to directly support 106 municipalities in the Eastern Region to develop PCDs and implement projects for children and women based on the pilot design and tools. To this effect, an agreement for 2010-2014 was signed between UNICEF, the DGCL and Development Agency of the Oriental. Both the government partners contribute up to 70 per cent of the funds. A total funding of USD 2.3 million is being managed by UNICEF. Currently, 300,000 children in these municipalities are benefiting from this project.

This approach has also been adopted by other state development agencies (such as the Agence de Développement Social), UN agencies (UN Women, UNFPA and UNDP), donors (Japanese and American government) and other municipalities. An additional, 400 municipalities supported by various agencies are following this approach. The programmatic responses such as the Dar Al Oumouma have been scaled up to about 40 municipalities. Capacity development, though training, selection of a local pool of peer support and on-the-job-support to civil servants, political staff and representatives of the local population has been provided to 100 municipalities.

The pilot has been successful as it demonstrated a model of child-focused programmatic responses at the local level that complemented State services. In the design of the programmatic responses, the pilot brought together all social development projects - previously scattered among various ministries (water, electricity, rural development) – into one cohesive plan for local development. It also provided for the first time, a genuine picture of the needs of the population at the local level as well as a better approach for identification of bottlenecks in implementation of reforms and services launched at the national level. By incorporating a participatory approach, it brings in the voices of vulnerable population (such as children and women) into local development plans. Further, it provided the Government with a concrete model for potential decentralization, at a time when this issue had become an important political priority.

Since the local development plans are more coherent and of better quality, the municipalities are now able to attract international and national grants (such as through the National Human Development Initiative (INDH)). By involving the communities in the elaboration of the PCDs, this process has also strengthened accountability of local governance to the public.

Further, the addition of legal provisions to the *Communal Charter* in 2009 based on the pilot, have led to the establishment of the *Gender and Equal Opportunities* advisory commission to the Municipal Council. The commission composed of representatives from the civil society and selected resource persons, review the municipal plans to ensure that they integrate the needs and priorities of women, children and people with special needs. In addition, the Government at the national level has adopted the tools for planning (such as the CIS, the Guide for Municipal Planning and the training modules to develop the PCD) developed jointly by the Government and UNICEF.

In addition, the Government adopted the Law on the Organization of Local Government Finance in 2009. Following this law, municipalities are obligated to develop multi-year budgets based on the priorities identified in the PCD. This law thus offers a framework for developing municipal budgets sensitive to children's rights. These factors have further supported the institutionalization of child-focused local situation analysis and participatory planning.

The complementary CAEJ project has further led to the development of several innovative features such as the (a) establishment of five youth councils in the pilot municipalities;\(^7\) (b) the creation of local structures for coordination and convergence among various social interventions; (c) strengthening focus on children and adolescents in the situation analysis following the *Child Friendly Cities* approach; and (d) creating dedicated structures for children within the administration and council (such as women and children committees).

*LESSONS LEARNED*

The Moroccan experience highlights the value of UNICEF engaging at the sub-national level to ensure the rights of children and women. Since the implementation of nationally issued policies takes place in the field, it is critical that the lowest governance layer (which is the municipalities in the case of Morocco) is supported to create an enabling environment. Further, in order to ensure replication of

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\(^{6}\) The National Committee of UNICEF France supported UNICEF Morocco to implement the CAEJ initiative by organizing a learning mission of a Moroccan team (including UNICEF and the Government) to several French child friendly cities, and by supporting the adaptation of the Child Friendly City framework to the Moroccan context.

\(^{7}\) More than 5000 children participated in the elections of the youth council. About 120 youth are members of the youth council.
the decentralization approach, the Government must be brought on board from the inception of the pilot. Reluc-
tance at the central level, for instance related to the loss of their traditional authority, can be overcome by dem-
onstrating that decentralized planning is complementary and does not duplicate the work at the national level. It is necessary to make the case that sectoral budgets can pro-
vide better impact when coordinated or supplemented with other community initiatives. Given the global economic re-
cession and reduced fiscal revenues, decentralization can be seen as an efficient way for the Government to forward its development commitments.

With lingering political tensions in the region following the 2011 Arab Spring, where higher demands are being placed on the Government and local administrations, a local planning process guarantees more transparency and accountability, facilitates evaluation and develops democratic approaches through debates and formation of new structures (such as the Commission for Gender and Opportunities and local youth councils). Further, child-focused local analysis and planning, based on the development of local knowledge, particularly through the SIC, can systematically help to identify vulnerable populations, and therefore is a reliable solution to operationalize UNICEF’s renewed focus on equity.

This experience further demonstrates that developing capacities of municipalities using a peer-to-peer approach can enable them to become community development ac-
tors capable of acting on women and children’s issues in an incremental way. The PCD approach is further relevant as it brings together various partners (such as the admin-
istration, the private sector, NGOs) in different sectors together to work towards cohesive local development.

**POTENTIAL APPLICATION**

In July 2011, Morocco adopted a new constitution that recognizes children and youth’s right to participation in national development. This directly supports replication of the child-focused local analysis and planning approach. Further, in 2011, UNICEF and UNDP signed an agree-
ment to connect child-focused local analysis and planning projects with UNDP’s governance and local development programme (Art Gold), providing further impetus to scaling up of this approach. In parallel, the Safe and Friendly Cities for all⁸ initiative (developed by UNICEF, UN-HABITAT and UN Women) will be piloted in Marrakech starting 2012.⁹ This pilot will create linkages with the Child Friendly City and the CAEJ initiative.

The child-focused local analysis and planning approach can be further replicated in other country contexts and can be used to promote (a) inter-sectoral linkages; (b) facilitate advocacy for a better evaluation of public policies; (c) ra-
tionalize social policy budgets; and (d) children and youth participation in their direct environment.

**NEXT STEPS**

In 2012, UNICEF will focus on adapting the participatory planning approach in the 16 regions (the current highest administrative division of Morocco). UNICEF will also focus on consolidation and institutionalization of the CAEJ. This would involve (a) strengthening child participation and protection components in the PCD by intensifying data collection; (b) aligning sectoral strategies (such as health, education and water) with the PCD to ensure a coordi-
nated approach (such as using schools to give health messages, sending health teams to ECD centers, having health services involved in detection of violence against children among others). Presently, while the sectors are coordinated through the PCDs, their planning is based on centrally-determined priorities; (c) developing a process to create and analyze municipal budgets sensitive to children’s rights; and (d) developing and institutionalizing a mechanism to officially certify and recognize child friendly municipalities under the CEAJ initiative.

**RELATED LINKS**

The Communal Charter (2003) (French)
www.ondh.ma/Pdf_doc%5CCharte_communale_fr.pdf

UNICEF’s Morocco’s Local Development Programme (French)
www.unicef.org/morocco/french/4_developpement_local.pdf

Child Friendly Cities Initiative
www.childfriendlycities.org/

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⁹ This initiative is also being piloted in an additional seven cities including Greater Beirut, Dushanbe, Metro Manila, Nairobi, Rio de Janeiro, San Jose and Tegucigalpa