The Convention on the Rights of the Child gives the family a central role in bringing up children. It also gives the State and society an obligation to support the family in its child rearing duties so that children can survive, develop and thrive in a protective and caring environment.

In this middle income country most of UNICEF’s work in partnership with the Government, legislators, policy makers and development actors is about improving the policy and normative frameworks to support families, particularly the most vulnerable, to meet their responsibilities towards children and adolescents.

Since Uzbekistan has declared 2012 as ‘Year of the Strong Family’, we would like to bring into focus in the first issue of this year, some aspects of our work for and with families to enable them to fulfill their roles as ‘duty-bearers’.

Our lead story on the equity initiative in Karakalpakstan tells you about a unique partnership among local health authorities, service providers and families to keep children healthy and protected, despite the harsh living conditions in the Aral Sea basin. You will also see how a countrywide equity-focused mapping will be used to target disparities in 2012 and 2013.

An important study brings to light some challenges in the availability and relevance of data needed to analyse the situation of children and families, plan strategies for improvement and measure their outcome. These gaps can seriously impede efforts to reach out to the most in need with supportive policies and essential services.

A Child Rights Monitoring Manual, which we introduce in this issue, is part of a process to ensure proper monitoring of child rights at all levels and support the family to fulfill them.

A story on hygiene promotion for school children with a high prevalence of helmenthiasis will take you to the Fergana valley, where a UNICEF-WHO study revealed gaps in children’s access to safe water and hygiene practices. UNICEF is now bringing together all stakeholders to launch a deworming and hand washing campaign among schools and families.

Other stories highlight UNICEF’s support to rebuilding schools in the Sokh enclave after the earthquake last summer, the formation of a multi-sector working group on justice for children and a study tour to Finland giving first-hand experience of how collective response can help reverse the HIV trend.

We hope that you will find this issue useful and provide us feedback for improvement.

Jean-Michel Delmotte
Representative
**Equity Mapping**

To inform its current work in order to address inequities, UNICEF Uzbekistan has done a mapping of regional disparities with regard to the MDGs. It is based on data from international and national sources against 14 related indicators.

The ‘traffic light principle’ used for the mapping helps to see at a glance regions that are lagging behind in comparison to the best performers. Apart from the Aral Sea basin, Surkhandarya and Kashkadarya regions too are in the red for critical indicators such as income poverty, multi-dimensional poverty, women’s participation in decision-making, infant mortality, access to water sources etc.

In an overall middle income country context the ‘red light mapping’ has revealed pockets of disparity which need to be targeted in the current Multi Year Plan 2012-2013 with cross-sector interventions such as the one in the Aral Sea region (pg. 1).

**Quality Data: A Challenge**

How do we assess whether policies and programmes are delivering the results they are intended to? How do we measure successes and gaps in improving the lives of children and their families?

Monitoring and evaluation systems are powerful tools that help policy makers track progress, identify barriers and take informed decisions. Data and statistics are therefore critical for measuring results of our strategies at various levels and for demonstrating impact.

In Uzbekistan, a number of interventions to improve data collection and use were supported by UNICEF and other UN agencies. However, challenges in this area persist. This was also noted by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in its recommendations to Uzbekistan’s periodic report in 2006: “Disaggregated data on persons under the age of 18 years relating to the rights contained in the Convention were not systematically collected and used effectively to assess progress and design policies to implement the Convention.” The Committee went on to recommend that a mechanism be established with technical assistance from international organisations and UNICEF to collect and analyse disaggregated data on children and vulnerable groups.

Recently UNICEF did a comprehensive analysis of the situation of data and statistics on women and children in the country to increase understanding of disparities and underlying causes. It focuses mainly on child wellbeing related aspects but remains relevant to the great majority of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

Data on child wellbeing from various publicly available international and national sources were analysed in terms of accessibility, compliance with international standards, comparability and congruence between sources.

**Conceptual Framework**

![Conceptual Framework](image-url)
Each dimension is measured by indicators, which can be classified according to the following types:
- child status (measuring the situation of children in relation to the specific dimension);
- access to services (measuring availability and ease of access);
- quality of services (measuring compliance with accepted standards);
- family and community (measuring both environmental and behavioral aspects); and
- policy and legal frameworks (measuring comprehensiveness of and compliance to legal and policy frameworks).

The indicators included in this model are in line with 60% of country-relevant MDG indicators.

Some of the key findings relate to:
- the non-availability of data in different dimensions of child and family wellbeing;
- the lack of congruence between different data sources, and
- the limited availability and ease of access.

The analysis further revealed that even when data is available, it is often not accompanied by its correspondent metadata. The majority of such cases relate to national sources. When such information is missing, the possibility of meaningful interpretation and comparison becomes limited and can lead to inaccurate conclusions and decisions.

Disaggregation by such categories as gender, geographical location, age, among others – is one more specification of great importance for effective analysis, policy and programme decisions. A preliminary analysis seems to confirm the limited availability of disaggregated data, especially in relation to age and administrative regions. However, further study of the context and methodologies is needed to understand and analyse gaps and their implications.

Collection, analysis and correlation of data are crucial for informed and evidence-based decisions on development issues. UNICEF will continue to work with all international and national partners to promote generation of and access to reliable data of high quality to improve the lives of disadvantaged children and their families.

### Fixing Earthquake-damaged Schools

Creating an environment where learning is fun and where children feel safe is the essence of UNICEF’s ‘child-friendly’ approach to schooling. This concept has guided activities in the earthquake-affected town of Sokh.

Sokh is one of four Uzbek enclaves located within Kyrgyzstan territory in the Ferghana Valley where Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan meet, and which came into existence in 1991 following territorial disputes of the post-Soviet period.

At the Uzbek government request, UNICEF provided $280,000 for reconstruction of eight kindergartens and eight schools damaged during the earthquake that hit the area in July 2011. By now reconstruction work benefitting 4,500 children has been completed at all the project sites.

Due to difficult mountainous terrain and complicated political geography it takes four checks on the heavily guarded Uzbek-Kyrgyz border to access Sokh from Uzbekistan. The border is often closed, posing significant challenges for UNICEF-supported construction materials to reach the Sokh enclave.

"UNICEF’s contribution allowed for keeping schools and kindergartens available for children and creating an environment conducive to learning,” — said UNICEF Representative Mr. Jean-Michel Delmotte. “In cooperation with Ferghana province administration, we were able to ensure that children stay in schools they are used to going to with their friends. We are also glad that the reconstruction work was implemented by local contractors and workers who then contributed to maintaining community and social services in this isolated area,” he added.

For additional information please visit: http://www.unicef.org/health/uzbekistan_60378.html
HIV Study Tour to Finland

Representatives from the Multisectoral Expert Council (MEC) on HIV, TB and Malaria under the Cabinet of Ministers, Ministry of Health, the National AIDS Centre, Women’s Committee, Mahalla Foundation and UNICEF took part in a study tour to Finland to learn about that country’s experience in effective multi-sector response to HIV/AIDS and in establishing community-based system for provision of treatment and support for HIV positive population.

Finland is one of the countries that have an effective HIV response programmes especially in the area of PMTCT and prevention among most-at-risk adolescents. According to official sources, only 1 case of Mother to Child HIV transmission was recorded in 2010 in the country with a population of 5.5 million people.

“It was interesting to get acquainted with the strategies for reducing mother-to-child transmission and HIV prevention among most at risk populations including young people,” commented Ms Guzal Akramova, Manager of MEC which reports to the Cabinet of Ministers. “For our diverse group of delegates it was especially useful to see how government and civil society put their efforts together in shaping up an effective response to a joint threat that HIV poses.”

A debriefing meeting with study tour participants was held in UNICEF where they explored follow-up actions such as working with Mahalla committees (at the community level) to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. Some participants have already developed their own plans to adapt / apply some of the successful HIV prevention, treatment and care measures to the context of Uzbekistan.

At the debriefing meeting, the Roving Ambassador of Finland to Central Asia, Ms Tunla Yrijola highlighted the importance of such study tours. “The visit of Uzbek delegation to Finland provided an excellent opportunity for both sides to exchange experiences and technical expertise. It has surely been a learning experience for both sides”.

For further information visit: http://www.unicef.org/aids/index.html
http://www.aidsinukhsikov.uz/site/index.php

Wash Hands, Stay Healthy

Fulfilling every child’s right to safe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) remains a major challenge for communities, policymakers and school administrators. A recent analysis of the water sanitation situation conducted in Uzbekistan showed that while 80% of schools are registered as having a centralized water source, less than half actually have a regular water supply. The analysis also indicated that while approximately 80% school children have the basic knowledge about appropriate hygiene behaviours, only 20% practise them. Barriers to good hygiene practices include poor infrastructure, lack of information materials, gaps in hygiene education programmes and social constraints.

“Inadequate access to safe water and sanitation facilities, coupled with poor hygiene practices lead to many health-related consequences,” says Dr Bakhodir Bahimov, UNICEF Nutrition Officer. “A UNICEF-WHO survey in 2011 indicated that 32% children aged 6 to 11 years in the Ferghana Valley, have intestinal worms. Research has shown that poor hygiene results in diminished opportunities for children in many areas, including education. Without WASH sustainable development is impossible”, he asserts.

Prevalence of helminthiasis among children in the 6 – 11 age group in the Ferghana Valley led the Ministry of Health to conduct a deworming campaign for 900,000 school children in that age group with the support of the Ministry of Public Education and UNICEF in November last year. It was accompanied by a large hygiene promotion drive in schools, families and health facilities.

Currently, UNICEF is working with all stakeholders to formulate a country-wide WASH strategy. In addition to providing assistance for improving access to safe water supply, particularly in the remote and disadvantaged areas, the strategy focuses on a ‘Hygiene Championship Initiative’ led by children as agents of behaviour change in their schools, families and communities.

For further information visit: http://www.unicef.org/wash/index.html
http://www.who.int/elena/titles/bbc/deworming/en/

New Tool for Child Rights Monitoring

In accordance with UNICEF’s global mandate, the Country Office is stepping up its assistance to improve child rights monitoring systems in the country in order to measure progress on the implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child. A Manual for this purpose was developed by the National Human Rights Centre with UNICEF’s technical support, is part of this ongoing work.

Uzbekistan is one of the first signatories to the Convention; yet monitoring the implementation of child rights remains a challenge due to the insufficient normative framework, need for a holistic approach, and gaps in institutional capacity. The manual, published in Uzbek and Russian, attempts to address some of these gaps. It is a practical tool for national specialists and experts who are currently involved in observing to what extent children are able to realise their rights in health, education, nutrition and social protection sectors. The publication addresses both theory and practice by introducing monitoring concepts, principles and methodologies and outlining key steps in collecting, analyzing and reporting data.

It also gives an overview of domestic laws that relate to the Convention and the current state of implementation of child rights in the above mentioned areas. Check lists and questionnaires are also annexed to facilitate this critical work.

For further information please visit: http://www.unicef.org/rightsite/index.html
http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/