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**EVALUATION OF THE
CHILD PROTECTION PROGRAMME
IN ARMENIA**

- Final Report -

10.09.07

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List of Abbreviations

ADF	Armenian Democratic Forum
ARS	Armenian Relief Society
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BOH	Bridge of Hope
CEE/CIS	Countries of Eastern Europe/Commonwealth of Independent States
COAF	Children of Armenia Fund
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CPD	Country Programme Document
CPU	Child Protection Unit
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
EU	European Union
FAR	Fund for Armenian Relief
GoA	Government of Armenia
HRBAP	Human Rights Based Approach to Programming
LGCPSEF	Leonardo Gmyur Child Protection Social Fund
MOES	Ministry of Education and Sciences
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
MOLSI	Ministry of Labour and Social Issues
MORG	Ministry of Regional Governance
NCCP	National Commission for Child Protection
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPA	National Plan of Action for the Protection of the Rights of the Child 2004-2015
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper/Programme
ROA	Republic of Armenia
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development and Assistance Framework 2005 – 2009
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WV	World Vision

1. Executive Summary

The evaluation of the Armenian child protection programme and UNICEF's contributions to it takes place in preparation of the mid-term review of the 2005 - 2009 Programme of Cooperation between the Government of Armenia and UNICEF, in a complex context that is marked by considerable achievements and serious obstacles.

Armenia has made impressive progress with regard to child protection legislation in recent years. It established the National Committee for Child Protection and the Child Protection Units as part of regional administration, and issued the Children's Social Protection Reform Strategy. The juvenile justice system is working on a model to rehabilitate young offenders in their natural environment. The Ministry of Health has started to establish multi-professional child development centres within local policlinics. They identify children with disabilities and provide outpatient rehabilitation at the earliest possible time. The inclusive education project for children with disabilities encompasses by now five resource schools. These schools are going to serve as models and resource centres that will assist more schools in developing inclusive education programmes. The de-institutionalization initiative has led to the transformation of some boarding schools into part-time child care centres, and the evolving foster care system has enabled a number of children deprived of parental care to benefit from family substitute care. The adoption law strengthens legal control over the adoption process in order to avoid child trafficking. Several dedicated organizations and professionals have helped to develop community-based, comprehensive services for vulnerable children and their families in the regions. Their aim is to maximize prevention, early intervention and rehabilitation for children in their natural environment through empowering them and their families to achieve healthy living and development conditions. Governmental and NGO stakeholders have come together in Human Rights Based Approach to Programming working groups, analyzed the child protection system in one model region and jointly developed strategies, guidelines and standards for the improvement of the system as a whole.

Monitoring data show, however, at the same time that the number of children in boarding schools and orphanages has increased in recent years, due to persistent poverty that still affects one third of the population. The implementation of activities related to de-institutionalization and foster care have been slow and are marked by contradictions. Studies show that not all newborns receive birth certificates, that the majority of children with disabilities do not yet benefit from early intervention and inclusion projects, that verbal and physical violence are a wide-spread fact in both children's families and in their schools, and that children work secretly. Particularly children without parental care are at a risk of becoming victims of trafficking. In approximately half of the regions, child protection initiatives are still barely noticeable. The future of the others is still insecure because of limited material and human resources.

The evaluation concentrates on the key components and results of the child protection system reform. It uses the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Bronfenbrenner's ecological child development system perspective as technical frameworks, and the 2004 - 2015 National Plan of Action for the Protection of the Rights of the Child and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework as wider policy references. It pays special attention to the quality of policies, laws and their implementation, identifies weaknesses in the system components and gaps in their collaboration, and looks into the strengths and weaknesses of current material and human resources. UNICEF's contributions to the child protection system development are evaluated with regard to efficiency and effectiveness in light of the Country Programme Action Plan and Annual Work Plans, as well as with regard to its development partnerships. The report identifies also the child protection system areas where UNICEF should concentrate its resources in the future, and suggests areas that should be exited.

The assessment was conducted between July 10th and 30th through document analysis, interviews, field trips and evaluation meetings. The data base for the evaluation has few constraints. These concern the scarcity of project monitoring and evaluation reports, as well as lack of access to implementation guidelines. The scope and time format of the assessment did not leave space for detailed inquiry about implementation practices and case management strategies, nor for in-depth interviews with parents and children.

Many child protection models of good practices were found, that fulfil such criteria as accessibility and use by local community, inclusion, multi-professional comprehensive services, evidence-based practice, participation and empowerment of vulnerable children and their families, networking, advocacy and sustainability. On the whole, however, seven clusters of threats to the child protection system were identified:

- Insufficient economic support for both vulnerable families and for the child protection system as a whole;
- Several weaknesses in child protection policy development and long-term strategic planning, as well as underdeveloped integrated mechanisms of application, monitoring and evaluation;
- Lack of systematic data collection, documentation, exchange and dissemination on institutional, community, regional and national level regarding vulnerable children and their families, their economic, employment, social, education, health and developmental assets and risk factors
- Gaps in communication and cooperation between various stakeholders: policy makers, administrators and service providers; lack of inclusion of children and parents in child protection development initiatives
- Need for training and capacity building of Child Protection Units, local commissions and professionals in the field;
- Deficits in the development of a continuum of services because of lack of an integrated concept for child protection, shortages in material and human resources, as well as insufficient coordination;
- Continuous deficits in public awareness and understanding for vulnerable children.

The following interventions are suggested, among others, to remedy these shortcomings:

- Review and updating of Armenia's Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme and the National Plan of Action for the Protection of the Right of the Child in light of the findings of this assessment;
- State strategic long-term planning and budgeting for comprehensive child protection;
- Achieving a binding declaration of commitment of all stakeholders to give priority to community-based protection, prevention, early intervention and rehabilitation;
- Creation of a Best Practice Continuum of Services Model in selected regions through the collaborative effort of all stakeholders on the basis of the CRC, with adequate monitoring, documentation and evaluation strategies and tools. This model continuum of services should test and improve existing rules, regulations, guidelines, as well as standards for adequate child care and protection. The Government needs to be committed to transfer this model to the other regions.
- Establishment of a national Child Protection Communication and Resource Centre attached to the highest policy, technical or academic bodies in child protection. It should

be tasked with comprehensive data collection and dissemination, project documentation, research, transformation of field experience into training material, teaching and training, facilitation of national and international exchange, support to public awareness campaigns etc. It should be user-friendly and open to all sectors of Armenian society.

The assessment found that UNICEF has had major input and good impact on all child protection system development levels, and performed well within the goals of the Country Programme Action Plan and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. UNICEF internal monitoring and evaluation of child protection programme activities can be improved. Its technical expertise in awareness raising and training in child protection can be more systematically used in future programming to build up local knowledge and skills capacity. Closer cooperation with other international agencies can lead to greater effects and synergy of activities. Using its special expertise, UNICEF is advised to concentrate further on promoting the continuum of non-discriminatory, participatory, child-rights oriented, community-based child protection services, and to promote the establishment of a national child protection resource and communication centre. UNICEF should assist the Government of Armenia in long-term strategic planning for comprehensive child protection in collaboration with international agencies such as the World Bank.

2. Purpose

2.1. Evaluation of the national child protection programme

The first purpose of this evaluation is to assess the key components and results of the child protection system reform in Armenia between 2005 and 2007. This reform initiative goes back to 2000, when a first de-institutionalization initiative for children with disabilities and those deprived of parental care started. This set off a – still ongoing - process of developing strategies for the inclusion and rehabilitation of children at risk in their natural social environment and through alternative, community-based services. These efforts gained a new qualitative momentum in 2003 with the finalization of the Armenian National Plan of Action (NPA) 2004 – 2015 for the Protection of the Rights of the Child, and advanced further on in 2005 with the establishment of the National Commission for Child Protection (NCCP) and the Child Protection Units (CPUs) in all administrative districts (marzes) of Armenia including the capital Yerevan. Concomitantly, local service provision has changed qualitatively, and so have the work relationships between national, district and local decision makers, professionals and service providers. This part of the evaluation pays special attention to the scope, quality and implementation of policies and legislative instruments that have been governing the country's child protection system to date. It also describes the activities of the Government, UNICEF and their key partners in this field, and identifies policy, legislative, human and material resource gaps that hamper progress in achieving a comprehensive system of protection of the rights of vulnerable children.

2.2. Evaluation of UNICEF's contribution

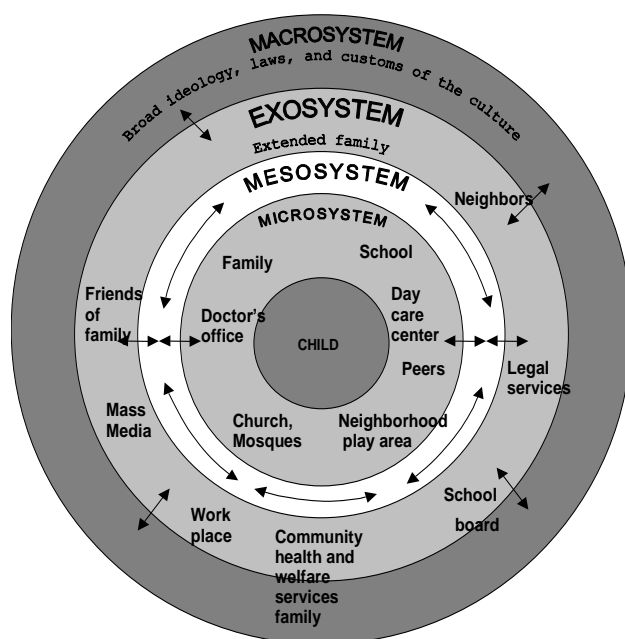
The second purpose of the evaluation is the assessment of UNICEF's contributions to the child protection system reform, and how the results of UNICEF's programming contribute to the goals of the NPA and those of the Country Programme Document (CPD) 2005. UNICEF's contributions are further on examined within the wider framework of the United Nations Development and Assistance Framework for Armenia (UNDAF). The effectiveness of UNICEF's input in development partnerships with international agencies such as EU and WB, other donor agencies and NGOs working in the field is also evaluated, and how these have influenced the actual results of the child protection system reform.

The evaluation concludes with recommendations for mid-term adaptations of the country's child protection programme within the current CPAP, as well as UNICEF's strategic positioning within this dynamic change process in order to maximize results.

3. Evaluation framework

The first measure for the evaluation of the child protection system reform was how this has contributed to fulfilling the provisions of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, by *securing and protecting the survival, development and participation rights of vulnerable children with disabilities, those deprived of parental care, subjected to violence, abuse and neglect, at risk of being trafficked, and working children.*

The basis for this evaluation was Uri BRONFENRENNER's ecological model of child development¹. This is widely used for the analysis of those social system components and interactions that have a powerful influence on children's development. Bronfenbrenner differentiates between four major system levels.



The *microsystem* includes the immediate environment in which the child lives, and its immediate relationships with family members and other caregivers, teachers, peers, etc. Current research considers *resilience building* as one of the most important goals of child raising², particularly under unfavourable living conditions. Stable positive relationships with caregivers who practise an authoritative style of upbringing, personal guidance and support, opportunities to solve problems, gain knowledge and develop useful skills, chances to develop personal talents, participation and cooperation contribute essentially to it. The *mesosystem* refers to the relationships among the various microsystems in which the child lives, such as home, school, neighbourhood, child care institutions etc. The *exosystem* includes settings that influence children's growth and development indirectly, like the economic resources of a society, health and education systems, parents' work environment, poverty and unemployment assistance etc. The *macrosystem* finally consists of the overarching ideology, values, policies, laws, regulations and customs of a particular culture and society as well as global influences that have mostly an indirect, but often powerful influence on children's development conditions. All system levels and factors have to interact harmoniously through shared knowledge and values and complementary practices, in order to achieve the best possible development conditions for as many children as possible.

Guiding questions for the evaluation were:

¹ Urie Bronfenbrenner: The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979

² DeV. Peters, R., Leadbeater, B., & McMahon, R.J. (Eds.): Resilience in Children, Families, and Communities. Linking Context to Practice and Policy. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2005.

- What are the scope and quality of the system components?
- What are the scope and quality of their interaction?
- In how far are knowledge, attitudes and practices of agents in the system based on a Human Rights Based Approach to Programming (HRBAP) and implementation?

The second measure was in how far and how efficiently the child protection system components have safeguarded and, if necessary, restored children's rights for survival, development and participation in their natural environment. This is a historically and culturally particularly sensitive issue, because the 'defectology' model of thinking of the former Soviet Union interpreted the effects of economic, social and psychological deprivation and neglect on the individual child and its caregivers mostly as personal deficits that excluded them from mainstream society. The evaluation looked at the *continuum of interventions and services that range from prevention and early detection over early intervention to rehabilitation throughout all years of childhood, including the transition into adulthood*. It is commonly acknowledged that prevention and early intervention are more effective than rehabilitation both with regard to material costs and the protection of human development. The evaluation looked also at the extent to which *vulnerable children and their parents are active participants* in the child protection system reform.

Other guiding questions for the evaluation were:

- How well is the continuum of services developed?
- How much does the child protection system reform gravitate towards prevention and early intervention in children's natural environment?
- How much do children and parents participate actively in the development of the child protection system?

The third measure was the *stability and development potential* of the child protection system with regards to long-term and binding official policies, material and human resources. Material resources include the financial and in-kind means that are provided and accessible to the child protection system, while human resources concern the number, intellectual and practical expertise of both lay people and professionals who are actively involved in protecting the rights of vulnerable children.

Final guiding question for the evaluation were:

- How adequate is the policy and legal framework for sustaining and expanding the present child protection system?
- How adequate are the material (finances, in-kind) and human resources (number, knowledge, attitude and practices of decision makers and professionals) for a) sustaining and b) expanding the child protection system?
- What are the current system component and interaction gaps that need to be addressed in order to achieve sustainable expansion?

UNICEF's contribution to the child protection system reform was evaluated along the following guiding questions:

- To which system components has UNICEF contributed?
- How relevant, efficient, effective and sustainable were UNICEF's contributions to the development of these components, and what has been their long-term impact?
- How efficiently has UNICEF been in contributing to the NPA and UNDAF, and how has it fulfilled its responsibilities within CPD, CPAP, AWP's? Were there any AWP objectives that were not covered, and what were the reasons for it? What was the quality of monitoring and evaluation activities for programme activities, and were they sufficient to gauge progress and perform corrections?
- What kind of development partnership has UNICEF pursued with international and national counterparts?
- How have these contributed to the child protection system development?
- What type of financial and human resources did UNICEF use in its child protection programme? Were these resources sufficient and complementary to what other partners were investing? Was the investment justifiable considering the benefits?
- Has the Government put in place any mechanisms and financial budget allocations that ensure the continuation of activities that have been financed by UNICEF to date?
- Which should be the priority areas for UNICEF's future targeted investments, areas to exit from and new areas to expand into, in order to achieve maximum impact on the development of the country's child protection programme in coordination with its partners?

4. Methodology

The consultant conducted an assessment and evaluation mission to Armenia between July 10th and 31st, 2007. The assessment included

- A comprehensive desk review of all relevant reports, studies, policy documents, laws and decrees; documents of relevant NGOs and international donors; UNICEF internal documents
- Semi-structured interviews with stakeholders on national, district and local level about their goals, implementation activities, evaluation of success, identification of challenges, possible next steps in programme and project development, views on the child protection system reform as a whole, suggestions for its improvement, as well as an evaluation of their partnership experience with UNICEF³
- Interactive round table meetings with major stakeholders in the beginning and at the end of the field mission
- Several UNICEF internal assessment and evaluation meetings

Information was verified, as much as possible, through data triangulation, and the interviewees' views were compared to their actual activities. An inventory of the most relevant child protection implementation activities between 2005 and 2007 was created, based

³ The list of interview partners is compiled in Annex 2 Assessment Activities

on observations and interviews during the field visits, annual reports, project documents etc. This inventory is presented in *Annex 3 – Child Protection Implementation Activities of UNICEF and its Main Counterparts 2005 – 2007*.

The data base for the evaluation is marked by several constraints:

- Many implementation guidelines were not available in English.
- The scope of the assessment and time constraints posed some limitation to in-depth inquiry, for example regarding the application of operational guidelines in the field, concrete case management etc.
- Project monitoring and evaluation data were frequently informal, and only few evaluation reports were accessible during the assessment period.
- The assessment schedule and timing did not leave room for interviewing children and parents directly. Their participation was gauged by interviewing project representatives and evaluating the participatory potential of the diverse project activities.
- The activities of some smaller NGOs that also appear to be involved in family and child protection work but have not been direct participants in the child protection system reform movement⁴ are not included in the analysis, due to lack of detailed project information.

5. Context of the child protection system reform

5.1. Political and economic situation

After its independence from the former Union of Soviet Republics in 1991, Armenia stepped into a period of radical and fundamental political, social and economic reforms. Serious transformation problems emanated from the need for structural reforms and the lack of preparation of the country's institutions to act in a market environment; the need to overcome the damage of the 1988 earthquake that had left around 400.000 people without shelter, property, and the basic means of existence; the need to shelter around 360.000 refugees from Azerbaijan due to the inter-country conflict about Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as the need for rehabilitation of the border areas with Azerbaijan because of repeated shelling that caused more than 70.000 people to become internally displaced persons, etc. The situation was further aggravated by a crippling transportation blockade that was enforced by nearly all neighbouring countries, the complete disruption of former economic ties, the breakdown of many industrial enterprises etc. This led to widespread impoverishment of the population, income inequality, and the polarization of society to an appalling degree⁵. Between 1989 and 1993, the country's gross domestic product was reduced by 50 percent, the largest decline in the new Commonwealth of Independent States and one of the sharpest recorded by any country⁶. Income inequality among the Armenian population was 0.593 in 1999 and 0.535 in 2001 and thus among the highest in the world⁷. A quarter of the population emigrated within a decade in search of work and a better life abroad.

In an effort to reverse the country's decline and establish a liberal market regime, the Government of Armenia introduced comprehensive economic reforms in the mid-1990s.

⁴ See World Bank Small Grants Programme 2004 - 2007

⁵ Government of the Republic of Armenia: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, Yerevan 2003, p.13

⁶ UNICEF *Armenia*: Armenia, Yerevan 2005, p. 5.

⁷ Government of the Republic of Armenia: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, Yerevan 2003, p. 36

Armenia's economic growth has been high and averaged 7.8 percent per year since 1998, unemployment decreased between 1996 and 2003 from 35-37% to 25-26%, and the minimum salary was raised from 2 US dollars to 22 during the same period in line with the basic food basket. In 1999, the Government introduced a family benefit system that provides direct assistance to approximately 25 percent of the households that fall below the poverty level. Along with high economic performance, this factor helped to reduce the number of people living in extreme poverty from about 28 percent of the population in 1996 to 7.4 percent in 2003, and further down to 4.6% in 2005. Absolute poverty declined during the same period from 55.1% to 42.9%, and to 29.8% in 2005.^{8,9}

5.2. Social impact

Until 2003 approximately half of the country's population was still poor and one of every seven residents was unable to meet basic survival needs.¹⁰ Women were much more likely to live in poverty than men, and children were more likely to be affected than any other population group. Worst hit by poverty were families with three and more children. This vulnerability profile has not changed in more recent household surveys¹¹.

The 2003 Household Survey showed that the total percentage of people living below the subsistence minimum had dropped but rural poverty had not improved at all.¹² Regional disparities emerged. While poverty rates in the capital Yerevan had been reduced by half, poverty rates had increased in four *marzes*¹³ (Gegharkunik, Armavir, Shirak and Aragatsotn) which are inhabited by about 30 per cent of the country's population.¹⁴ In the whole CEE/CIS region including Armenia, poverty affecting children has recently become concentrated in specific groups: children in large or non-nuclear families, children living in institutions, in rural areas and disadvantaged regions, and children belonging to ethnic minorities¹⁵.

In the poorest and most socially disadvantaged families, parents sometimes do not register their children at birth due to administrative barriers, officials' requests for informal payments and high transportation costs. By chance, several hundred children without birth certificates were identified in various locations in 2005/2006. Many families have also become dependent on state institutions as "social safety nets." By 2003, more than 11,000 children, which amount to 7.5 percent of the school-age population and seven times more than the number in 1990, had been sent to 53 state boarding schools, the majority of them by parents too poor to

⁸ National Statistical Service, Statistical Analytical Report: Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia, 2004

⁹ National Statistical Service, Statistical Analytical Report: Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia, 2006, p.17f

¹⁰ The National Statistical Service calculates the poverty line as persons living on one US dollar per day, adjusted on the basis of Purchasing Power Parity and as persons consuming less than 2,100 kilocalories per day. Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, p. 25, p. 48

¹¹ National Statistical Service, Statistical Analytical Report: Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia, 2006, p.32

¹² Armenia Country Brief, unpublished report of the United Nations Development Programme, Armenia, October 2004.

¹³ *Marz* refer to administrative unit covering at least four to five regions; Armenia is divided into 11 *marzes* including Yerevan.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre: Innocenti Social Monitor 2006. Understanding Child Poverty in South Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. Florence, 2006. p.iii

provide adequate care. In addition, 80 percent of the 900 children in state orphanages had been admitted as "social orphans" by parents from impoverished households.¹⁶

Violence against children in connection with poverty has also become increasingly a public issue. A 2003 survey with 2147 interviewees found that in vulnerable, primarily women-headed households the highest rates of violent family conflicts happened between the mother and her children (67.3% reporting), the mother and her parents-in-law (13.1%), grandparents and grandchildren (10.8%). Caregivers' reasons for committing violence against children were primarily the difficult financial situation (86.1% reporting), housing conditions (47.0%), and unemployment (44.4%). Children reported that they faced mostly conflicts with their parents because of food (74.4%), clothes (82.1%), acquisition of textbooks (30.5%), writing utensils (42.3%), expenses for school parties (53.8%) and payment for extra classes (61.8%). In order to prevent violence against children, the interviewed families suggested the improvement of financial conditions (80.7%), the activation of psychological services (65.8%), the activation of NGOs dealing with women and children (54.2%), TV and radio programs (52.4%). Considerable violence against children was also found in less vulnerable families and in schools. Between 33 and 40% of adults thought that slapping is a legitimate means of child raising¹⁷.

The combination of declining income levels and the commercialisation of public services led also to a sharp decline in access to health care and education. Until 2005, healthcare utilization has remained generally low, particularly in rural areas and among the poor. Low overall public spending on health, affordability constraints (health services are mainly paid out-of-pocket) as well as the amount of informal payments that are reportedly requested by many health professionals¹⁸ are the main reasons why the poor do not seek health care or use informal health services¹⁹. On average, the poorest households spend only 2% of their means on health care, while the richest households spend 9.3%. This means that children in vulnerable families are at risk of being underserved with regard to health care as of an early age, with potentially serious consequences for their overall development.

By the end of the 1990s, nearly one-third of all families could no longer pay for supplementary education costs, and those who were able were forced to spend their limited funds on school transportation and food. Although virtually all Armenian children attended primary school, only 20 percent participated in pre-school programmes, in contrast to approximately 80 percent of children who attended preschool at the time of independence. Attendance rates among refugees and minorities at primary schools were below the national average, and 30 percent of these groups had left school by grade ten.²⁰ The still small total rate of school dropouts has been increasing, and the effectiveness of the education system is impaired by more or less hidden absenteeism. The latter is mainly caused by poverty, lack of transportation, collapsing school infrastructure and seasonal migration for work²¹. A current study on child labour is going to shed more light on the reality and causes for school children's work²². Several surveys²³ carried out in the country showed that 31 per cent of households were not or hardly able to deal with incremental expenses needed for education.

¹⁶ Social Indicators of Poverty, Ministry of Statistics, UNDP, Armenia, 1998, pp. 50-52

¹⁷ UNICEF Armenia and the Armenian Relief Society: Violence against Children in the Republic of Armenia, 2003

¹⁸ Economic Growth and Child Poverty in the CEE/CIS and the Baltic States, Innocenti Social Monitor 2004, p. 4.

¹⁹ National Statistical Service, Statistical Analytical Report: Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia, 2006, p.64

²⁰ Generation At-Risk, Ministry of Education and Science, NSS, UNHCR, UNICEF, Armenia, 2001, pp. 6-14

²¹ Dr. H. Hua in collaboration with UNICEF: School wastage. Yerevan, 2006.

²² **Harmonic Society Social Workers Association in collaboration with UNICEF Armenia: Child Labour. Yerevan, 2007 (ongoing).**

²³ As cited in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, Yerevan, Armenia, 2003, p.68.

In 2005, the poorest households spent 1.6% of their consumption capacity on education, while the richest households invested 6.3% of their means into education²⁴. As documented earlier, disputes about school related extra expenses are frequently triggers for family violence. Lack of financial resources for education puts children potentially at a disadvantage with regard to academic progress and success.

5.3. International, Government and civil society interventions to address economic and social inequalities

In 1999, the Government of Armenia (GoA) introduced the *System of Poverty Family Benefit*, based on procedures that define the level of vulnerability of households according to composition and place of residence. This system undergoes annual review and improvement with technical input by the World Bank (WB)²⁵. Pensions and the poverty family benefit make up for 43% of the total average monthly income of the poorest 20% of the population. The poverty family benefit reaches, however, only 27% of the poor and 51% of the very poor population²⁶.

GoA initiated the development of the *Poverty Reduction Strategy in 2000* through a participatory approach and with the support of scholars, experts, public and political figures. The *Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP)* was approved in August 2003 as a basis for public policy development. It comprises development and reform measures in the following fields:

- Public administration, administration of local authorities and the judicial system; anti-corruption policy and the improvement of the business climate; tax policy
- Social assistance systems (family benefits and other social assistance programmes), pension systems and employment programmes (unemployment benefits, supporting job search, retraining and financial assistance to the unemployed, public works programmes)
- Investment in health and education (increased accessibility of primary health care and general education facilities, optimization and increased efficiency of both; better salaries, training)
- Infrastructure development (water utilities, road construction, energy sector).
- The PRSP is currently under revision with regard to strategies and indicators.

In response to a Government appeal for international support to achieve these national goals, the *United Nations* developed a *Country Assistance Framework (UNDAF)* for the five-year period from 2005 to 2009 with the aim of reducing economic, social and political inequality in the country. The UN assured support in four areas of cooperation: economic equity, social equity, democratic and environmental governance, with a strong emphasis on a human rights based approach to programming and implementation²⁷. Recognizing that quality, accessibility and affordability of basic social services is critical for ensuring the well-being of the population, the UN identified social equity as a key area of cooperation. To achieve the aforementioned goals, UNDAF supports consequently initiatives that aim at consolidating and building human capital within three main activity clusters:

²⁴ National Statistical Service, Statistical Analytical Report: Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia, 2006, p.74

²⁵ Interview with Susanna Hairapetyan, World Bank, on 23.07.07

²⁶ National Statistical Service, Statistical Analytical Report: Social Snapshot and Poverty in Armenia, 2006, p.80

²⁷ United Nations Development and Assistance Framework Armenia 2005 – 2009, p.2

a) Contributing to the well-being of the poor and socially disadvantaged by helping duty-bearers formulate and implement policies and plans aimed at improving social services. - Here, UNDAF provides

- Assistance with establishing a comprehensive national programme on maternal and child health, in particular, programmes aimed at strengthening standards and improving the quality of services.
- Support to the Government's strategy on primary health care, in particular, programmes aimed at strengthening standards and improving the quality of services.
- Support to the Government's strategy on reproductive health (RH), in particular, programmes aimed at increasing access to information and improving the quality of services.
- Support to the Government's National Programmes on Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) Prevention, in particular, programmes aimed at implementing the United Nations Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS.
- Assistance with establishing a comprehensive strategy on at-risk children, in particular, programmes aimed at introducing standards of care and improving the quality of services.
- Support to the national registration system, in particular, programmes aimed at developing a unified birth and infant registration system based on international standards.

b) Increasing access to basic services for the poor and socially disadvantaged by helping to create an enabling environment that promotes community-based social programmes. - UNDAF's contributions consist of

- Assistance with strengthening community-based services, in particular, programmes aimed at improving the provision of health and education services for poor and socially disadvantaged children in targeted communities.
- Support to social assistance programmes at the community level, in particular, programmes aimed at improving the nutritional status of the poor and socially disadvantaged.

c) Strengthening the capacity of the poor and socially disadvantaged to contribute to their own well-being by raising awareness, enhancing skills and increasing participation in the development and provision of social policies and services. - UNDAF activities include

- Organisation of a series of seminars, workshops, roundtables and trainings for parents, youth, families, communities and care-givers aimed at raising awareness about social services and strengthening capacities to participate in social policy development and provision.
- Organisation of a series of seminars, workshops, roundtables and trainings for communities, NGOs, CBOs and at-risk groups aimed at raising awareness on Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) and HIV/AIDS prevention and strengthening capacities to participate in the development of STI and HIV/AIDS policies.

- Organisation of a series of seminars, workshops, roundtables and trainings for NGOs and CBOs aimed at strengthening capacities to implement and monitor child-care services²⁸.

The *European Union (EU)* and *WB* support similar development goals through their respective programmes. The EU launched a 10 year Food Security Programme in agreement with the GoA in 1997²⁹. It targets improvement in the agricultural and social sectors of Armenian society through direct support to the State budget. Conditions of support are re-negotiated on a regular review basis. Since 2001, the EU has invested into the reform of the social welfare system:

- The *management of orphanages*: including basic standards of care and licensing;
- The *re-organization of the education of socially vulnerable children* in order to promote their re-integration into their communities, by transforming 10 boarding schools into mainstream schools and 7 more into temporary boarding care centres (process will be concluded in 2007);
- *Establishment of individual rehabilitation plans* for every institutionalized child in cooperation with MOLSI and MOE. World Vision (WV) supported this initiative.
- Since 2003, the EU Food Security Programme has also supported a programme for the rehabilitation of graduates from orphanages, which is currently administered by the Armenian Relief Society (ARS) and the Armenian Democratic Forum (ADF).
- The *strengthening of the child protection system*, particularly the NCCP, the Child Protection Units (CPUs) in the marzes and the Guardianship/Trusteeship commissions in the local communities, regarding clarification of their responsibilities and collaboration mechanisms. Work in 2007 focuses on the elaboration of standards and procedures for CPUs concerning the needs assessment of vulnerable children.
- *De-institutionalization efforts*: through supporting the Lori marz de-institutionalization pilot project since 2006, by converting 90% of the rehabilitation budget for each child into social and psychological support services for family re-integration. This is supplemented by an assistance package for school utensils and food.

According to Mrs. Ispiryan, this EU social welfare reform programme has been and is to some extent still challenged by a number of factors. These concern difficulties to reach a common understanding of the concept of child protection outside the framework of institutionalized care, transferring care responsibility from government institutions to NGOs, and monitoring and evaluating the implementation of standards of care. Standards themselves are still relatively unspecific, but seem to have resulted in some positive impact on the quality of care in the institutions. School directors need also time in order to understand and appreciate the value of individualized educational plans for disadvantaged children.

The EU Food Security Programme will expire by the end of 2007. It is currently supplemented by the EU TACIS Programme. TACIS has been providing policy advice for the strengthening of the child protection system since 2005. At present, it is supporting the child protection infrastructure in Armenia through the provision of computers and vehicles for eight marzes. An assessment of the training needs of the public child protection bodies will take place in the near future and will be followed by training. Further on, support to public awareness campaigns on child protection is planned, as well as the installation of a cross-sectoral integrated management and information system for all child care and protection data that are collected on local, marz and central levels. There is, however, currently no long-term EU plan to support the social welfare reform further, although priority area 3 of the new

²⁸ United Nations Development and Assistance Framework Armenia 2005 – 2009, p.7f

²⁹ The following information is based on the interview with Helen Ispiryan, Coordinator, EU Food Security Programme, on 23.07.07

European Neighbourhood Policy/EU-Armenia Action Plan pledges to continue reform efforts in the fields of labour, social security and social protection³⁰.

From the range of interventions proposed in the PRSP, the WB Country Assistance Strategy focuses on three areas: to promote private sector led economic growth, to make growth more pro-poor, and to reduce non-income poverty by improving access to education, healthcare and basic infrastructure services. Since 1999, WB has been supporting MOLSI through essential technical and financial input into the development of its Poverty Family Benefit System, and through its Social Protection Administration Project 2004 – 2007. The later promotes public administration, law and justice reform through the introduction of compulsory pension and unemployment insurance, among others³¹.

WB and MOLSI conduct an annual poverty assessment. The current challenge lies in reaching those 30% of the poor who are not yet included in the assistance system because they find the application process very difficult and often do not possess the required documents. Another area of future collaboration will be the development of community-based strategies to combine financial assistance with the economic activation of households so that they can lift themselves out of poverty

WB and MOLSI are also currently finalizing an integrated management system for all data of the ministry that concern employment, pensions and assistance schemes. In principle, this system can be linked with the MANUK database on children in institutions, deprived of parental care and under adoption.

In addition, WB has supported the pilot project of establishing two community day care centres for families and children at risk in Gyumri and Yerevan in 2004. The UNICEF assisted child care centre was also sustained by this project. Because of the success of these alternative, community-based service models the Government has included four more community day care centres in Tavoush marz in its State budget for 2008 and plans to have 25 of such centres established in various marzes by 2010. Standards for the staffing, administration and technical performance of such centres still need to be reviewed and finalized in partnership with the local communities that will need to assume the responsibility and ownership of these centres.

WB is ready to support such a project again if it is conducted on a large scale³². In general, WB promotes civil society building through NGO formation and networking. Recognizing that partnerships between governments, businesses and civil society organizations (CSOs) are nowadays one of the most effective ways to raise standards of living and achieve sustainable development., WB has by now supported the public participation of underprivileged sectors of the population (people with disability, refugees, socially vulnerable women) in Armenia through its Small Grants Programme for several years³³. WB strongly believes that CSOs play a critical role in helping to amplify the voices of the poor in the decisions that affect their lives. Accordingly, grants focus on empowering people who have been historically excluded from society's decision-making processes, such as women, youth, people from racial and ethnic groups, people with low-income, and people from rural areas. They also aim to enhance partnerships with key players in support of the development process. Key players include government agencies, CSOs, multilateral and bilateral agencies, foundations, and the private sector³⁴.

³⁰ Commission of the European Communities Proposal for a Council Decision COM (2006) 627 final

³¹ <http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects> 28.07.07

³² Interview with Susanna Hairapetyan, World Bank, on 23.07.07

³³ <http://www.worldbank.org.am> 28.07.07

³⁴ <http://go.worldbank.org/2Q99HIK2U0>, “NGOs and Civil Society”, 01.09.07

Numerous national and international NGOs have launched programmes and projects as early as 1988 to address and alleviate the negative economic, social and psychological impact of the natural disasters, war and forceful economic transformation that have been affecting the Armenian population to date. Among those with the longest experience are the ARS, the Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR), ADF, World Vision (WV), Medecins sans Frontieres, Bridge of Hope (BOH), Narek/Arevamanuk/Leonardo Gmyur Child Protection Social Fund (LGCPSF) etc.

6. Legislation and policies concerning the protection of children's rights until 2005

Since its independence, Armenia has established an impressive record of legislation and policies regarding child rights' protection. It ratified the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) in 1992 and committed itself to adapt national legislation and its executive acts accordingly. On 29 May 1996, the National Assembly adopted the *Child's Rights Act*. In 1997, an *Office of Family, Women's and Children's Affairs* was set up as part of the Ministry of Social Welfare. This office has wide-ranging tasks, which include developing policies to improve the social position of women and to uphold the rights particularly of vulnerable children³⁵.

In June 2001, the Government installed a *National Commission for the Development of a National Plan of Action for the Protection of the Rights of the Child*. A respective working group included the Ministries of Social Security, Justice, Health, Education and Science, Internal Affairs and Culture, Youth and Sports, the National Assembly as well as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) under the coordination of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The working group incorporated proposals made by the UN Committee on the *Rights of the Child*³⁶ and the Outcome Document of the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children "A World Fit for Children". It also linked its suggestions to the main provisions of the national Poverty Reduction Strategy³⁷. The outcome was a *National Plan of Action for the Period 2004 to 2015 (NPA)* which concentrates on the following fields of children's rights: legislation; health; social security, (including the elimination of child labour); education; leisure, entertainment and cultural life; juvenile justice (including the protection of children from inhumane treatment and all forms of exploitation). It focuses in particular on the needs of children in especially difficult circumstances: disabled children, beggars and vagrants, orphans, victims of abuse and poverty, and those in conflict with the law³⁸. The NPA's budgetary targets and implementation indicators lay down wide-ranging commitments and challenges for the Government that appear not to be easy to meet.

Armenia adopted also the *UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice ("The Beijing Rules")*, the *UN Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency ("Riyadh Guidelines")* and the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in*

³⁵ Committee on the Rights of the Child – Consideration of Reports submitted by State Parties under Article 44 of the Convention – Second periodic reports of State Parties due in 2000 - Republic of Armenia, 2002 (CRC/C/93/Add.6 17 July 2003), paragraph 17

³⁶ Committee on the Rights of the Child – Consideration of Reports submitted by State Parties under Article 44 of the Convention - Concluding Observations: Republic of Armenia (CRC/C/15/Add.225 26 February 2004)

³⁷ National Plan of Action of the Republic of Armenia for the Protection of the Rights of the Child 2004 – 2015. Yerevan, 2005, p. 2

³⁸ Ibidem, p. 3

Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime. The latter was ratified in 2003³⁹.

Since 2002 the Government has initiated *Child Welfare Reforms*, including a package of policy documents, new laws, regulations and other amendments to the legislation. The four key legal reform documents were:

- The *Family Code*, which includes also a section on foster care;
- The *Civil Code*, with a section on the procedures of birth registration;
- The *Labour Code*, which includes articles on child labour in compliance with ILO standards;
- The *Criminal Code*, that includes articles on child abuse, neglect and trafficking.

The *Order of Child Adoption* was first approved by the Government on 12 February 2000. In adoption processes, preference is given to the citizens of the Republic of Armenia. If no Armenian citizen adopts the child within a period of three months, the child becomes eligible for adoption by a foreign citizen. The three months period does not apply to the stepfather, stepmother and relative of the child living outside Armenia, as well as in cases where there is a preliminary written agreement between the parents of the child and the person wanting to adopt the child. The last specification opens the door to the trafficking of children⁴⁰. The adoption procedure was recently changed, charging the courts with the final decision. Courts are, however, currently not staffed with qualified social workers who can conduct professional case studies. They rely, therefore, on the recommendations of the CPUs. Armenia is signatory to The Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Inter-Country Adoption of 1993. This obliges the Government to make sure that inter-country adoptions of children take place in the best interest of the child and with respect for his/her fundamental rights as recognized in international law.

The GoA decree of 27 November 2003 issued the *State Strategy of Child Care Reforms*. The activities to be undertaken within this programme are: the creation of a social work institute involved in children's issues; development of support mechanisms for children in conflict with the law and socially vulnerable children; expansion of the network of kindergartens; creation of day care centres for children in all eleven administrative districts (marzes) of the country; assessment of the needs of the biological family of the child in order to reintegrate children in residential care back to their families; development of support mechanisms for families; parental education with regards to the necessary knowledge and skills for child upbringing; training of staff involved in child care; provision of opportunities for vocational training and higher education; implementation of support programmes for foster care; revision of legislation on children deprived of parental care etc.⁴¹.

The *Law of the Republic of Armenia on the Social Protection of Children deprived of Parental Care* which was issued in 2003 defines the legal, economic and organizational foundations, goals, principles and forms of social protection of children deprived of parental care. The law applies to children deprived of parental care, as well as persons up to the age of 23 classified as being deprived of parental care (Article 1).

Article 6 of the same law specifies the minimum state guarantees for the quality of life for children deprived of parental care, which include mainstream education; vocational training and higher education based on merits; free medical care and services; provision of food in

³⁹ Republic of Armenia (Consultant Hayk Khemchyan): Legislative Reform Initiative - Phase II National Study - Civil Law Legal Tradition, Yerevan 2004, p. 5

⁴⁰ Ibidem, p. 15

⁴¹ Ibidem, p. 4 f

accordance with minimum nutritional standards; organization of their rehabilitation and leisure; vocational counselling for children after the age of 16; securing and protecting employment in accordance with national legislation; personal support for social adaptation and psycho-social rehabilitation; the right to housing; provision of free legal assistance in accordance with national legislation.

Article 7 of the same law defines that children who have graduated from the secondary school and are deprived of parental care are accepted and can study in State vocational and higher education institutions free of charge.

The new *Criminal Code of the Republic of Armenia* was endorsed in 2003. It defines the characteristics of criminal responsibility and punishment of minors, criminal assaults against minors, and circumstances where a criminal assault is aggravated due to the fact that it is committed against a minor. The code has a separate chapter on assaults against the interests of the family and the child (chapter 20). The following are considered criminal assaults: violence against children; involving the child in a crime; involving a child in anti-social acts; illegally separating a child from his/her parents or replacing the child; trafficking of children; publishing the secret of adoption; failure to execute the duty of child upbringing; child neglect; improper execution of parental responsibilities; abusing the rights of the foster parent or guardian. The law stipulates now also criminal responsibility in case of misleading reporting to bodies of registration of civil status acts. The article on human trafficking has also been expanded, by clarifying the characteristics of the *corpus delicti* of this criminal assault.

The *2004 National Study on the Legal Traditions of the Civil Laws of the Republic of Armenia* in comparison to the CRC highlighted, however, several shortcomings of the protection of children's rights in Armenia. The study emphasized the need to improve both the legislative and infrastructural basis for child protection in order to ensure full conformity with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It suggested the following main action steps:

- A unique child rights' protection body needs to be established. (The NCCP was created in October 2005).
- The lack of coordination among key state actors needs to be overcome by stable multi-sectoral cooperation mechanisms in child protection.
- Cooperation between governmental bodies and NGOs who are the main advocates and actors for children's rights needs to be improved
- Gaps in legislation related to children and their families need to be overcome, particularly with regards to birth registration, de-institutionalization, child labour, violence against children, legal age of marriage for girls and other legal gaps raised in the conclusive observations of the CRC committee on the Armenian CRC report, 2004.
- Poor law enforcement mechanisms inherited from the SU need to be improved according to international standards. This concerns especially the development of standards, regulations and guidelines for professions and services.
- The general lack of awareness regarding children's rights in society needs to be addressed by a general information campaigns. Awareness raising among decision makers and professionals working with children is particularly important⁴².

The study highlights that there is currently no law that prescribes the allocation of financial resources in the State budget in order to satisfy the needs of children. It stressed the need to

⁴² Ibidem, p. 24 f

supplement legislative reform and implementation through appropriate social policy, targeting in particular the alleviation of poverty.

The *Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child of February 2004* criticized the lack of follow up of previous recommendations by GoA⁴³ but acknowledged the –though slow- legal reform process⁴⁴. Suggestions were made to empower local authorities in child protection, to strengthen cooperation between the Government and the NGOs⁴⁵, adequate disaggregated data collection⁴⁶, as well as the establishment of efficient mechanisms for implementation and monitoring of the NPA⁴⁷. The Committee recommended proper resource allocation for the protection of children's economic, social and cultural rights. It suggested that the Government should develop ways to establish a systematic assessment of the impact of budgetary allocations on the implementation of rights of the child, and to collect and disseminate information in this regard⁴⁸.

7. The state of Armenian families and children in 2005

International monitoring data registered mild to moderate improvements in various aspects of Armenia's economy, health, education and social care systems between 2003 and 2005. Several indicators remained, however, highly problematic, such as

- A further absolute reduction of the employment ratio (number of employed as % of population aged 15 – 59) by 2.6%;
- A further absolute increase of the general divorce rate (per 100 marriages) by 3%;
- An increase of the mortality rate of 15 – 19 years old adolescents due to external causes, including suicide, from 12.9 to 21.3 per 100,000;
- An increasing incidence of sexually transmitted diseases among 15 – 19 years old (newly registered cases of syphilis and gonorrhoea per 100,000) from 9.1 to 19.4;
- An increasing incidence of tuberculosis (as new cases per 100,000 population) from 44.7 to 62.3;
- An increase in newly registered cases of HIV from 29 to 75;
- An increase of the rate of children in residential care (per 100,000 population aged 0 – 17) from 564.9 to 713.8;
- An increase of the rate of children in infant homes (per 100,000 population aged 0 – 3) from 49.9 to 52.2⁴⁹.

These data show that economic, health, social and psychological stress and strain have persisted and partly intensified during this period, and that the need to protect children's survival, participation and development rights has remained as urgent as ever.

⁴³ Committee on the Rights of the Child – Consideration of Reports submitted by State Parties under Article 44 of the Convention - Concluding Observations: Republic of Armenia (CRC/C/15/Add.225 26 February 2004), paragraph 5 f

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, paragraph 7

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, paragraph 9 f

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, paragraph 11 f

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, paragraph 15 f

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, paragraph 17 f

⁴⁹ <http://www.unicef-irc.org/databases/transmonee>; Children in CEE/CIS database: Armenia (21.07.07)

Three important national studies about the situation of children in need of special protection, conducted in 2005, provide more detailed insight into their living conditions.

a) Strengthening the Rights-Based Child Protection System in Armenia - Situation Analysis of Children in Lori Marz. 2005

Based on a Memorandum of Understanding between the Government, the marz authorities and UNICEF, Lori marz was chosen as a representative Armenian marz with regard to poverty, migration, trends of population and economic growth characteristics. A working group consisting of local experts, decision makers and service providers was trained by UNICEF to conduct a situation analysis based on a Human Rights Based Approach to Programming (HRBAP) methodology. The mapping and analysis of child protection practices in Lori marz identified important gaps and challenges to the system. On the whole it was found that weaknesses in the registration and social monitoring system as well as understaffing had a negative impact on children deprived of parental care, children with disabilities, abused children and other children at risk. Based on the findings from Lori marz as a “model marz”, the HRBAP methodology helped to create model systems to secure the protection rights of each of the above groups of children. It also led to an action matrix for improving the status of child protection, which has been pursued since then. This matrix highlighted, among others, the need to disseminate relevant child protection information among immediate caregivers and in local communities, and to establish systematic monitoring, reporting and intervention mechanisms on marz and local level through proper resource allocation by regional and national governments.

b) MOH, National Statistical Service, ARS, UNICEF: Childhood Disability in the Republic of Armenia. Situation Analysis 2005

This countrywide representative study found a 12% incidence rate of disability among young children, which is considerably higher than the previously known 1%. Only 15% of children with disability aged 0 – 8 years were actually registered as disabled and received satisfactory services. Among the general child population of this age group, 2% were found to have gross motor disability (most frequently cerebral palsy), 1.9% a fine motor disability, 1.3% a hearing disability, 12.5% a vision disability, 9.3% a speech- language disability, 0.7% suffered from epilepsy and 11.2% from mental-psychological disorders. Eighty-five percent of children with mental retardation, 76% of children with speech disorders, 53% of children with vision disorders and 42% of children with hearing disorder had not received medical treatment. Geographic remoteness made access to services impossible for 35.9% of the families who participated in the study. Absence of community based services and families' heavy financial burdens were quoted equally often as causes for not pursuing medical care.

c) ARS: Children in Orphanages and Special Schools in Armenia: Potential Victims of Trafficking and Exploitation? Yerevan, 2005

Between November 2004 and April 2005, a quantitative study was conducted with a 10.6% proportional sample of the 11,745 children in 12 orphanages and 54 special schools in RoA who were in 7th – 10th grade, 289 graduates from orphanages in six marzes that were identified through snowball sampling, 125 teachers and caregivers from orphanages and special schools, and 89 Armenian immigrants to Greece and the US who were contacted through Armenian embassies and the Armenian church. In addition, a total of 57 experts representing the State administrative system, local self-government, law enforcement bodies, the education, health and social welfare sectors, as well as NGOs and media in the selected 6 marzes were invited to participate in the survey.

The majority of families of both children in institutions and graduates were in critical financial situations. More than one third of respondents in both groups claimed that their family incomes would not suffice to buy even the most essential food items. In addition, they faced serious problems with regard to housing, employment, and health care. Many surveyed children encountered also serious psychological problems, such as fear of the future and lack of family warmth. Respondents agreed generally that institutionalized children are among the most unprotected and vulnerable groups of society, because of material deprivation, an unfavourable family environment, psychological and legal insecurity.

The level of awareness regarding trafficking was highest among the surveyed experts and lowest among the institutionalized children. On the whole, the general awareness level was low. In total, the respondents reported 93 cases in which children from a particular institution or graduates were trafficked.

Nine percent of the institutionalized children and 20.4% of the graduates from orphanages stated that they considered emigrating from Armenia because of lack of jobs in the country, chances to find well-paid jobs abroad, uncertainty of perspectives and lack of legal protection. They had, however, little idea about the migration regime in other countries. The results of these studies fed into the design of interventions on various levels of the child protection system to prevent the trafficking of children.

8. Child protection programme developments 2005 – 2007

8.1. Legal and policy framework

The *NPA* is observed by all involved ministries in their annual planning and budgeting. Action plans and budget proposals are submitted in autumn through the NCCP to the National Assembly for discussion and approval for the next year. Ministerial performance is monitored by the office of the Prime Minister.

In implementation of the *NPA* the GoA has endorsed three major decrees since 2005. They concern:

a) The establishment of a National Committee for Child Protection (NCCP)

The NCCP is chaired by the Minister of Labour and Social Issues. His ministry provides the secretariat of the NCCP. Its members are the Deputy Ministers of MOLSI, MOH, MOES, MOJ, MORG, heads of the responsible technical departments within each ministry, and the police. International organizations and NGOs involved in child rights protection can be consulted and invited to the NCCP meetings. The NCCP meets every three months. Its main functions are

- to submit proposals related to the implementation of the *NPA*;
- to submit proposals related to the implementation of the annual plans for child rights protection in Armenia;
- to discuss and submit proposals on citizens' applications and complaints related to the activities of CPUs of marz authorities (Yerevan municipality), with the exception of cases defined by Armenian legislation;
- to submit proposals regarding activities of State governance bodies and NGOs related to prevention of juvenile delinquency;

- to discuss the progress of realization of commitments that RoA assumed under international agreements in the area of the protection of the rights of the child, and present proposals on their effective realization;
- to discuss drafts laws regarding the protection of the rights and interests of the child, and present conclusion on these;
- to discuss annual reports of marz (Yerevan municipality) heads on activities of CPUs, and submit a summary report to the prime minister
- to submit proposals regarding the implementation of State protection programs for the protection of the rights of children in difficult situations
- to support the process of training for staff of departments of CPUs of the RoA marz authorities (Yerevan municipality)⁵⁰.

b) The establishment of Child Protection Units (CPUs) as part of all marz authorities⁵¹

The CPUs are tasked with child rights protection in the marzes and Yerevan city, particularly of those children who are deprived of parental care; the protection of families, women and children in general, and the implementation of targeted State programmes of social protection for families, women and children in their respective marz. They are asked to collaborate with the local trusteeship and guardianship commissions who are responsible for the placement of children without parental care in the best interest of the child, regional social services agencies, employment centres, medical-social assessment committees of the marz, the police, NGOS and other institutions involved in the care and protection of children in the respective marzes⁵². In detail, each CPU is tasked with

- implementing the policy aimed at the protection of the family, women and children in the marz;
- developing and implementing marz (municipal) programs aimed at the protection of the family, women and children;
- developing and implementing programs aimed at the social protection of and targeted assistance to children in difficult situations;
- on the basis of the results of studies and assessments, developing psycho-social rehabilitation programs for children deprived of parental care and those classified as such
- realizes protection of education rights of children who have dropped out of mainstream school system and those with special education needs;
- jointly with police department for juvenile issues discussing orientation issues of the placement of begging, vagrant and delinquent adolescents and those having committed crimes; protects the rights and interests of adolescents;

⁵⁰ Decree of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia October 28, 2005 N 835 – N on establishing a National Committee on Child Protection, approving the By-Laws and composition of the Committee, III. Functions of the Committee

⁵¹ The Republic of Armenia Government Decision of October 27, 2005, N 1833-N on Amendment of some Decrees of RoA Government; Joint Directive of the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs and the Minister of Regional Governance of RA of November 17, 2005, on approving Sample Charters of Child Protection Departments of Marz Authorities (Yerevan Municipality) of the Republic of Armenia

⁵² Ibidem, General Provisions

- on the basis of information received from police department for juvenile issues implements the registration of begging, vagrant and delinquent adolescents and those who have committed crimes; compiling and maintaining a database of these adolescents in the marz (Yerevan city);
- submitting annual reports on its activities of the protection of the rights of children to marz governor (mayor);
- on the basis of assessment of children deprived of parental care and their needs, submitting a conclusion to trusteeship and guardianship bodies on the placement of children in orphanages, boarding institutions or foster families;
- documenting the need of a child for special conditions of education and giving a conclusion on the selection of special education institution to the parent (guardian);
- on the basis of information received from trusteeship and guardianship bodies, completing a regional registry of children deprived of parental care and those classified as such and compiling a regional database for children deprived of parental care and those classified as such living in the marz (Yerevan city);
- sending photos and copies of personal cards of children deprived of parental care and those classified as such to the MOLSI for centralized registration of children and organizing support to the placement of children in families of citizens of the Republic of Armenia who are permanent residents of the country; ensuring social guarantees for children classified as those deprived of parental care, as stipulated by the legislation of the RoA;
- where a change in the legal basis for the status of the child deprived of parental care recorded in the regional registry comes into existence (recovery of parental rights by the parent(s), adoption of the child, etc.), duly notifying MOLSI within 7 days;
- on the basis of all necessary documents received from a citizen of RoA permanently living in the country and intending to adopt a child as well as the act of assessment of the person and his/her living conditions, giving a conclusion on the feasibility of adoption by that person;
- on the basis of positive conclusion registers the person intending to adopt a child as a candidate for adoption; records his/her data in the registry, completing the personal card of the candidate and sends the copy to MOLSI within 3 days after registration;
- informing the applicant in a written form on negative conclusion on the feasibility of adoption drawn by marz authority (municipality) within 5 days;
- within one month after receiving all necessary documents from the person having expressed an interest to become a foster parent, conducting a study of the person and his/her living conditions and preparing a respective act;
- based on necessary documents received from the person intending to become a foster parent as well as the act of assessment of the person and his/her living conditions, drawing a conclusion on the feasibility of the person becoming a foster parent;
- in cases of positive conclusion, registering the person intending to become a foster parent as a candidate for foster parent, recording his/her data in the registry, completing the personal card of the candidate and within three days submitting the copy to MOLSI;
- implementing registration of children - candidates for adoption and within 3 days submitting copies of their personal cards to the MOLSI for centralized registration;
- implementing other tasks stipulated by the legislation of RoA.

The CPUs have been working since summer 2006. At the time of this report, their work concentrated on collecting data and conducting assessments concerning children deprived of parental care in their marzes. Interviewed CPU members in Ijevan and Yerevan indicated that they needed a stronger budget for their work in order to upgrade their communication, transportation and documentation facilities. They also felt that they needed training in programme and project management as well as in all aspects of child protection, yet particularly in early identification and intervention. They missed clear lines of authority, modes of collaboration with other departments, and referral mechanisms. They had come to realize through their work that awareness and knowledge about children's rights and needs were weak in many local communities, among immediate caregivers, in the health and education system, as well as in local trusteeship/guardianship commissions.

c) The "Strategy for Reforms in Social Protection of Children in Difficult Situations for 2006-2010"⁵³

In pursuit of the realization the NPA, the Government acknowledges the difficult situation of many children and has designed a system of interventions that provide material and non-material assistance packages, promote de-institutionalization, emphasize prevention, and support a network of community-based alternative services⁵⁴. The Social Protection Reform Strategy aims at addressing the special needs of children deprived of parental care (including children in orphanages), children with disability, children in boarding schools, school dropouts, beggars and vagrant children. It acknowledges the influence of poverty on the situation of children, the important role of social workers and comments on the lack of NGO services in many marzes. The Strategy comprises the following activities:

- Training of personnel of child care and child protection institutions;
- Implementation of welfare standards in child care and child protection institutions;
- Elaboration of part-time care programmes for children in orphanages;
- Assessment of the needs of children in orphanages, special State educational institutions and child care and child protection boarding institutions;
- Implementation of de-institutionalization programmes;
- Introduction of the system of foster care;
- Implementation of foster care programmes;
- Implementation of State assistance to graduates from child care organizations;
- Social assistance to the graduates from New Kharberd specialized orphanage for children with disabilities
- Training of personnel of the CPUs;
- Assessment of children in difficult situations;
- Establishment of child care and protection day centres;
- Development of a network of social workers;

⁵³ Government of the Republic of Armenia Decree No 206-N of January 12, 2006 on approval of the "Strategy for Reforms in Social Protection of Children in Difficult Situations 2006 – 2010" and pilot programme for 2006 on "De-institutionalisation of children from Vanadzor orphanage, special educational institutions No:2 and No:3 in Vanadzor, special educational institution No:1 in Stepanavan and No:1 in Spitak"

⁵⁴ Ibidem, chapter 2

- Establishment of child care and protection boarding institutions;
- Establishment of medical-social rehabilitation centres;
- Analysis of databases on children in difficult situations; regular reporting on child protection issues and development and implementation of annual programmes in the framework of the NPA;
- Inventory of child care and child protection institutions and elaboration and adoption of legislation for accreditation and licensing of child care and child protection institutions;
- Elaborating procedures of coordination with and monitoring of NGO programmes;
- Designing and implementing mass media campaigns and assessing their impact.

It must be noted here that, by maintaining the goal of establishing boarding institutions for child care and protection, the GoA continues to support the idea of social exclusion of vulnerable children. At the same time, the decree promotes child care and protection day centres. In order to achieve the most comprehensive protection of children's rights, it is recommended to give priority to the consolidation and expansion of such community-based and family-friendly day care and protection centres over the establishment of more boarding institutions. Community care centres, in combination with improved social assistance to families, will be a viable alternative to institutionalization and will minimize the need for boarding institutions in the future.

Supplementary decrees have been issued concerning the *reform of the Family Code*. This reform creates a set of legal procedures for adoption that gives ultimate authority to courts. In line with the Social Protection Reform Strategy, some *orphanages and special boarding schools* are currently being transformed by decree *into child care centres*, such as the special educational institutions No.2 and No.3 in Vanadzor, special educational institution No.1 in Stepanavan and No.1 in Spitak.

8.2. Child protection implementation activities

The synopsis of implementation activities that is presented in *Annex 3 "Child Protection Implementation Activities of UNICEF and its Main Counterparts 2005 – 2007"* documents the diverse actions that have been undertaken by various stakeholders to put the above laws and decrees into practice.

They can be grouped into ten clusters:

- Public awareness and media
- Publishing of policy documents
- Laws and decrees
- Research
- Data collection and establishment of databases
- Implementation of policies, laws and decrees
 - on administrative bodies on national, marz and community level
 - on institutions and services
 - for all children
 - on orphanages and boarding schools
 - for children with disabilities
 - for children in conflict with the law
 - de-institutionalization and alternative services (foster care and adoption)

- children at risk of abuse and neglect
- Capacity building (resource centres)
- Training
- Community empowerment and participation of children and families at risk
- Cooperation between stakeholders

The following table gives an overview of the extent to which stakeholders have been active agents in the different activity clusters, according to the information that was available during the assessment period. The numbers indicate the number of their activities in each cluster.

	Public awareness and media	Publishing of policy documents	Laws and decrees	Research	Data collection and databases	Reform of administrative bodies	Reform of institutions and services	Capacity building of resource centres	Training	Community empowerment	Cooperation between stakeholders
GoA			2			4					
MOLSI			3	1	3	1	17	1	2		3
MOES			1				2				
MOH				1			4				
MOJ							1		2		
Police							3		2		
NCCP	1										1
Marz authorities				1			1				
CPUs			1		1						
National Statistical Services				1							
Yerevan State University								1			
National Institute of Education								1			
HRBAP working group							>1	1	1		
UNICEF	9	>2	3	4	2	1	17	3	12	3	3
EU			3		1	2	8				
OSCE				1							
UNDP				1							
World Bank					1			1			
USAID	1										
Mission East			1				2	1			
Oxfam							1				

	Public awareness and media	Publishing of policy documents	Laws and decrees	Research	Data collection and databases	Reform of administrative bodies	Reform of institutions and services	Capacity building of resource centres	Training	Community empowerment	Cooperation between stakeholders
WV	1		2				6	1	2	1	1
BOH	3			1			4	2		1	1
ARS				2			3				
FAR							2	2	2		1
ADF							1				
COAF							1			1	
Aravot NGO			1				2				
Tatev NGO							1				
Armenian Eye Care Project							1				
LGCSPP	1						1			1	
Arabkir Medical Centre							3		1		
Social Workers Association				1							

Main characteristics of the child protection activities between 2005 and 2007 were as follows:

- Public awareness and media campaigns about child rights protection and the special protection of vulnerable children have been mainly executed by UNICEF and major national NGOs, with little government involvement.
- Laws and decrees have been elaborated in cooperation between the relevant ministries, major NGOs and UNICEF. Information about them has been disseminated, frequently by UNICEF, in training programmes with professionals in various child care and protection programmes and institutions, and in awareness raising campaigns with families and decision makers⁵⁵.
- Population coverage with relevant child protection information is, however, far from complete. It appears necessary to develop a strategic communication plan that uses different information packages for various target groups and works with multipliers, in order to achieve a functional level of awareness and knowledge about children's rights and relevant protection issues on all levels of the child protection system, including families and communities. In principle, this will improve support for child protection development efforts.
- Relevant research has been conducted in cooperation between ministries, UNICEF and technical State and professional bodies, with financial support from international donors. International donors and UNICEF support also the development of databanks. The different information management systems are not yet well-integrated.
- Most child protection activities have taken place with regard to the reform of institutions and services that serve vulnerable children and their families. The involvement of international agencies and national NGOs surpasses that of state bodies considerably by their sheer numbers. Neither NCCP nor the CPUs have so far been involved in service development.
- Several community care centres have started to provide community-based, child- and family friendly support and rehabilitation services to vulnerable children and their families with great success. They will be financed in the future by central or local authorities. The Government supports the introduction of more of such centres in other locations.
- The most comprehensive child protection reform activities have taken place in Lori, Tavush, Gegharkunik and Shirak marzes as well as in Yerevan. These are only five out of the total of twelve marzes (including Yerevan). Some activities are also taking place in Armavir, Ararat and Syunik marzes. Expansion does not necessarily include transfer of lessons learnt and some of the child protection activities appear scattered. Neither a central coordinating body or mechanism, nor a strategic long-term planning process can be identified.
- Centres of knowledge and skills building in child protection are emerging in connection with the social work department of Yerevan State University, the model inclusive schools (supported by the expertise of BOH and WV) and the foster care institute initiative/ Arabkir Medical Centre, LGCSPP and the Reception and Orientation Centre of the FAR display also considerable expertise and professionalism in the field. The HRBAP working groups and the child protection network are also promoting exchange of ideas and experiences.
- Training activities have taken place with parents, staff of institutions and services, administrators and decision makers. They have covered different aspects of child

⁵⁵ See sections 8 and 9 of Annex 3 Child Protection Implementation Activities of UNICEF and its Main Counterparts 2005 - 2007

protection but not in a comprehensive and integrated way, nor with a long term perspective. UNICEF and major Armenian NGOs have collaborated with the respective ministries according to need. Respective training material is being included in the training of policemen, social workers, preschool and school teachers, pediatricians and family doctors.

- Activities that strengthen the participation of vulnerable children and their families, promote community empowerment and cooperation between all stakeholders are taking place but are not yet integral to child protection activities.

8.3. Challenges to the child protection system

A content analysis of the total of 18 interviews with the various stakeholders and service providers resulted in the following matrix of challenges that they identified for the development of their own work with vulnerable children and their families, as well as for the child protection system as a whole. The cell numbers indicate how frequently the respective issue was explicitly addressed. The rows are organized in descending order of frequency. Total frequencies of 3 and less are not included⁵⁶.

	Total (max. n=18)	Policy makers (n=4)	CPUs (n=2)	NGOs (n=4)	Service providers (n=8)
I. The child protection system					
Lack of targeted economic support for vulnerable parts of the population and their protection (related to low budget allocations, limited infrastructure and services, and insufficient budgeting, specifically for the child protection system reform)	13	3	2	2	6
Lack of collaboration between ministries, international donors, local communities and NGOs	13	4	1	4	4
Absence of stable and sustained state policy development, strategic planning, coordination, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, (affects sustainability of pilot projects/services)	12	2	1	3	6
Lack of public awareness regarding child development and child protection (including parents, teachers, officials, general public particularly in the marzes)	10	3	1	1	5
Inconsistent implementation of existing laws, rules and regulations, unclear procedures, insufficient monitoring and follow-up (affecting particularly CPUs)	10	4	2	0	4
Lack of a unified conceptual and system approach to child protection (impairs quality of work as well as coordination).	9	2	2	2	3
Frequent delegation of responsibilities to NGOs; activities are often donor-driven and not sustainable; partly lack of interest of responsible State bodies on marz and community level	8	2	1	2	3
Lack of evidence-based practice	7	2	2	2	1

⁵⁶ Annex 4 “Challenges to the Child Protection System as Identified by Stakeholders” contains a graphic presentation of these findings.

(no comprehensive and systematic data collection and dissemination for policy planning, project development and intervention)					
Community members are not sufficiently empowered to participate in the development of child protection.	7	1	1	2	3
Lack of awareness and competence among different stakeholders, particularly CPUs and heads of local communities, with regard to child protection, and consequently slow implementation in the marzes	7	2	0	3	2
Negative public attitude towards vulnerable children	6	1	0	1	4
Deficient information exchange and coordination of diverse child protection projects.	4	2	1	0	1
I. Child protection services					
Knowledge and skills deficits among decision makers (CPUs, guardianship/trusteeship commission) and professionals with regard to child protection	14	3	2	3	6
Lack of preventive, early detection and rehabilitative interventions strategies, material and human resources, absence of a continuum of services	8	2	2	0	4
Need for improvement of the quality of services on local level through staff training, provision of specialists and better payment	7	2	2	1	2
Lack of knowledge among teachers regarding child friendly upbringing, special education and inclusion; continuous influence of defectology model	7	1	2	2	2
Need for more professional material and tools, particularly for assessment	6	1	1	2	2
Lack of quality control of services	5	2	1	2	0
Insufficient service coverage for rural population	4	1	0	2	1
Absence of licensing and monitoring mechanisms for NGOs work	4	2	1	0	1

The interviewed *policy makers* were most concerned about gaps in collaboration between stakeholders on all child protection system levels. They were aware of shortcomings in the implementations of laws, rules and regulations, monitoring and follow-up procedures. They believed that insufficient public awareness on child development and protection rights was an obstacle to the development of an efficient protection system. They also acknowledged that, on the whole, public child protection bodies (CPUs, guardianship/trusteeship commissions) as well as governmental and NGO service providers needed better knowledge and skills for effective child protection.

Representatives of major *NGOs* that have a long history of active involvement in the development of the Armenian child protection system, such as ARS, WV, BOH and FAR, were equally concerned of the collaboration gaps and the need for competence building of public child protection bodies and professional service providers. Their position and experiences had made them also acutely aware of the lack of long-term governmental child protection policy development, and deficits in the implementation, monitoring, evaluation and sustainability mechanisms of projects and services. They felt that child protection related awareness, knowledge and skills in some marz CPUs and among the heads of local communities were still low, and thus slowed down the development of effective child protection on the sub-national level.

Service providers expressed that the absence of a stable, long-term official child protection policy and insufficient financial support for vulnerable families as well as for effective child

protection services were major hindrances. Several of them saw donor-driven policy and service development as a related impediment to their work. Many interviewees were not sure about the long-term sustainability of their projects. Lack of public awareness and understanding for children's development and protection rights, and insufficient knowledge and skills among counterparts (child protection bodies and professionals) were seen as further important obstacles.

Spread across all groups, although not in the forefront, were concerns about the need to improve local child protection mechanisms through more evidence-based practice, working on a unified conceptual understanding of child protection, and knowledge and skills building particularly among teachers. Better staffing and equipment with tools and materials, as well as better payment for professional service deliverers in local communities were also demanded.

The identified challenges to the child protection system can be grouped into seven main clusters:

- Insufficient economic support for vulnerable families and for the child protection system;
- Insufficient policy development, strategic planning, and deficient mechanisms of application, monitoring and evaluation;
- Insufficient database and empirical feedback for policy development and application;
- Shortcomings in collaboration between stakeholders;
- Need for training and capacity building of CPUs, local commissions and professionals in the field;
- Deficits in the development of a continuum of services because of lack of material and human resources and insufficient coordination;
- Continuous deficits in public awareness and understanding for vulnerable children.

These critical areas need to be targeted in future programming, in order to optimize the Armenian child protection system.

Case vignette: De-institutionalization, foster care and adoption

The de-institutionalization initiative that aims at providing previously institutionalized children from socially vulnerable families with family based care, through either support to their original families, or through the organization of substitute care by guardians or foster parents, faces particular challenges. These are symptomatic for systems in transformation. Boarding institutions and orphanages have remained reluctant to release their children into foster care or back to their families because of the inherent loss of income for the institution. They have, on the other hand, favoured international adoption of children, particularly by the Armenian diaspora, because of the financial gains involved. Financial support to the biological families, as envisaged in the original de-institutionalization strategy, was at the same time postponed by MOLSI, and the EU has not favoured the transfer of financial means per student from the boarding schools to their families, in order to facilitate their return⁵⁷. The Social Protection Reform Strategy provides arguments for maintaining and even expanding boarding institutions for vulnerable children. An assessment of the foster care project in August 2006 concluded that there was a need for

- Clarification from MOLSI regarding its foster care policies, for example with regard to the minimum age of foster children and their identification; identification, training, follow-up and remuneration of foster parents; training of professionals involved in foster care; safeguarding the best interest of the child in all aspects of foster care strategies and practices;

⁵⁷ Interview with Helen Ispiryan, EU Food Security Programme Coordinator, 23.07.07

- Establishment of a support mechanism to parents, other care givers, and children, and assignment of responsibilities in relation to this;
- One to one work with prospective carers who continue to view fostering as a way of 'trying out adoption', or those who see this as an opportunity to replace a lost child – putting the best interest of the child in the centre of motivation and decision making
- Identification of children and young people for foster care, and preparation of children for foster care;
- Matching of children and families, placement of children and post-placement support;
- Ongoing work with institutions regarding their support of foster care⁵⁸.

8.4. Lessons to be learnt from good practices

Many examples of good child protection practices were observed during the interviews and field visits. Good practice is judged here according to such criteria as accessibility and use by local community, inclusion, multi-professional comprehensive services, evidence-based practice, participation and empowerment of vulnerable children and their families, networking, advocacy and sustainability. The following examples are non-exhaustive.

- **HRBAP working groups**

The consultant met in several locations with different members of the HRBAP working groups. They held various positions as administrators on marz and local level, as juvenile police, heads of NGOs and community care centres, academicians and trainers. Their interviews generated the most comprehensive information regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the child protection system. It was noticeable that the participants had learnt to cooperate, and that considerable knowledge transfer had taken place between them. Many of them had become “agents of change” in their institutions and home communities. All interviewees were highly motivated to continue their involvement in the child protection system reform. They expressed, however, disappointment that several important recommendations that had evolved from the HRBAP work, for example concerning the functioning of the CPUs and the data collection and monitoring system, had not been incorporated in subsequent laws and decrees.

- **Dilijan Community Care Centre**

The Dilijan Community Care Centre started in 2000 when BOH supported an initiative of parents with children with disabilities. The centre provides after school care and rehabilitation services (physiotherapy, speech therapy, special education) leisure time activities (art, music, IT), psychological, social, legal and vocational counselling for children with disability between 5 and 15 years, their siblings and parents. The centre conducts life and parenting skills training, awareness campaigns on the CRC and NPA, and debate clubs for adolescents. It also collects information on school dropouts and disability. It helps young people and adults to find employment and obtain the state support that they are entitled to. Every child with a disability is assessed by a multi-professional team. Rehabilitation takes place according

⁵⁸ Eileen M. Brady, Northumbria University Disaster and Development Centre: Consultancy Report for EVERYCHILD – Development of Foster Care in Armenia with Fund for Armenian Relief (FAR), 11th – 28th August 2006, p.8

to an individualized plan. The centre has gained high social value in the local community and cooperates well with health services, local authorities and administration. The centre has been operating mainly with support by BOH, OXFAM and UNICEF. The local community donated the land for the present premises and has provided financial support for the first time in 2007. State funding is expected as of 2008⁵⁹.

- **Gyumri Community Day Care Centre**

This State funded centre started operations in 2006 but builds on the expertise of a local NGO that has been caring for neglected, abused, street and working children in Gyumri and the surrounding area since 2002 with support by UNICEF. The focus of the centre's work is on the whole family at risk. Based on a comprehensive diagnosis of the child and its family that is established by a multi-professional team of doctors, nurses, psychologists, pedagogues and legal counsellors, an individualized rehabilitation plan is drafted. Services include health, psychological, legal and social counselling, educational support to children, assistance in obtaining financial entitlements from the State, and help with search for employment. In the point of view of the director, the centre's work has repeatedly prevented children from being institutionalized. Collaboration with local authorities was described as good with respect to organizing family benefits, but difficulties were experienced with the local CPU that still favours institutionalization as a means to solve pressing social problems. Non-discrimination, self-reliance and empowerment are important values in the work of the centre. The centre's services are very much in demand. As a State institution it is, however, not authorized to offer support group programmes. The original NGO continues to offer supplementary parenting skills training, and trains parents in lobbying and advocacy. The centre expands its data base on street and working children steadily. This is also built on the previous work of the NGO⁶⁰.

- **Leonardo Gmyur Child Protection Social Fund Gyumri (LGCSPF)**

This centre is the continuation of "Narek" psychological centre that was originally initiated by Medecins sans Frontieres in 1989, in order to address the psychological needs of survivors of the devastating earthquake that destroyed the city. From 1991 until 2005, the centre was under the auspices of MOES. In 2005, MOES closed the centre. Since then, the supporting "Arevamanuk" Fund has been renamed and operated a private comprehensive counselling centre under the above name. The centre serves all children whose healthy growth and development is threatened, including children with disabilities, and their parents. It provides psychological, social, special educational and emergency services and offers a wide range of educational facilities that can be used by all members of the community. The centre's services are much sought for but many families face difficulties in paying even the low standard fees for services. The centre has a multi-professional team. It has been widely involved in child protection development and reform initiatives as a resource for needs assessment, training, service development (especially with regard to prevention and early intervention) and public awareness raising. It collaborates with other technical resource centres in the country, such as Arabkir Medical Centre and Yerevan State University. The centre does currently not receive any State funding⁶¹. Sustainability is at stake due to insecure future private funding sources.

- **Child Reception and Orientation Centre Yerevan**

In 2000, the State Police handed the Child Reception and Orientation Centre Yerevan over to FAR, which has been funding it since then. It has been operating since 2005 in its current

⁵⁹ Interview with Susanna Matinyan, director, and Nora Kachatryan, trainer, on 17.07.2007

⁶⁰ Interview with Geghanush Gyunashhyan, director, on 19.07.07

⁶¹ Interview with team members on 19.07.07

form. As a crisis intervention centre, it receives all kinds of socially vulnerable children. Children undergo a comprehensive medical, psychological, social and educational assessment. Their families are immediately contacted and assessed, and comprehensive rehabilitation plans are established according to the findings. Children and their families are followed up according to need and in collaboration with many local NGOs who promote family and community integration. Multi-professional case discussions take place on a daily basis. Outreach programmes, a hotline service, a foster care project and an NGO network supplement the crisis intervention services. The centre operates cost-effectively with minimum staff. It has gained expertise in foster care issues. In the absence of social workers at courts it is often asked to identify the best child care arrangements in case of divorce⁶².

• **Children of Armenia Fund Rural Model Village Cluster Project**

The private Children of Armenia Fund started a comprehensive rural development project in partnership with UNDP and other donors in several very poor villages in Armavir marz in 2006. This project targets the improvement of the basic infrastructure, creation of better economic opportunities and the upscaling of social, health and educational services. It includes a UNICEF-funded psychosocial programme. This aims at securing the fulfilment of the human rights of children and youth through awareness raising, training, support of self-organization, participation and advocacy, and provision of counselling services. The psychosocial project reached more beneficiaries, provided a higher number of services and trained more community members on human and children's rights than originally projected within its first year of existence. At present, it needs to extend the length of its trainings and specify the training content more, improve its data management system and strengthen collaboration among all stakeholders⁶³

These models of good practice give hope that comprehensive and effective, community-based child protection can be achieved. Several lessons can be learnt from them, such as:

- The HRBAP working groups showed that the different stakeholders of a marz are, in principle, able to work together for better child protection. This example shows that joint research, analyses and planning, based on solid theoretical and methodological grounds, can lead to the development of a common understanding and language, and facilitate competence transfer. Active involvement at all stages of the process enhances participants' motivation, yet lack of influence on the implementation and follow-up may generate natural frustration. The HRBAP working group example shows that regular involvement of MOLSI throughout the whole project would have been useful, in order to promote the official adoption of the working group outputs.
- The Dilijan and Gyumri Community Day Care Centres and LGCSPF exemplify the impressive child protection technical expertise that has been gained over several years in different marzes in collaboration between volunteers (parents) and professionals, and the both productive and conflicting relationship between originally private/NGO child protection initiatives and official decision makers and child protection bodies. They demonstrate the social significance and preventive value of community-based, multi-professional child protection work, as well as the fact that true community-orientation leads to the expansion of originally more specialized services, in order to find solutions for the multiple problems of vulnerable children and their families. At the same time,

⁶² Interview with Dr. Mira Antonyan, director, on 24.07.07 and centre's pamphlet

⁶³ Interview with staff members on 25.07.07 and Avetik Mejlumyan: Evaluation Report on Psycho-Social Project Support to Children and Families in Karakert, Dalarik, Shenik, Argina, Myasnikyan and Lernagog Communities in Armavir Marz to Children of Armenia Fund and UNICEF, June 2007

these projects still suffer, like most others, from an insecure financial basis. This makes it difficult for them to plan and act with a long-term perspective.

- LGCSPF and FAR's Child Reception and Orientation Centre demonstrate that voluntary initiative and practical experience, paired with technical expertise and professionalism, can create technical resources that achieve recognition throughout the country. Existing projects can develop a potential to become important springboards for new child protection initiatives.
- The evaluation of the COAF Model Village Cluster Project demonstrates that its psychosocial support programme meets an important need of the local population. Such a programme needs, however, to be accompanied by measures that assure acceptance by other stakeholders and community non-users.

9. Evaluation of the child protection programme

One can derive a set of answers to the guiding questions of the evaluation as follows.

What is the scope and quality of the system components?

Poverty remains a major risk factor for children's survival, development, and participation in the society of their country. Approximately one third of the population continue to live in absolute or extreme poverty, and thirty percent of the eligible population are not yet reached by the family benefit system. The population in certain rural areas, women headed households and children are at a particular risk of being poor. For children and youth, poverty is related to poor use of health and rehabilitation services, dropping out of the education system, institutionalization and exclusion, exposure to neglect, abuse and the risk of trafficking, lack of hope for the future and general psychological distress. Awareness concerning child development, children's rights and protection is still limited within the population.

In detail, the assessment shows:

- Awareness raising and training of caregivers, educators, professionals and children themselves on children's rights and the protection of vulnerable children have started, partly with measurable success, but reached at best a few thousands.
- The general public attitude towards children's needs and rights and their protection is still often marked by ignorance, including the media.
- De-institutionalization appears to be a slow process against considerable resistance, and is marked by lack of agreement on values and practices.
- Alternative, community-based care centres and substitute family care arrangements, inclusive education projects etc. have developed well in recent years, but can only cater for the needs of limited numbers of beneficiaries in selected locations.
- Community care centres cooperate frequently with families, and sometimes with health and education services. The different life spheres of a many children, such as family, school, rehabilitation centres, child care institutions etc. remain, however, disconnected
- Social and unemployment assistance for vulnerable families do not yet reach all families in need and are not yet connected with income-activating measures.
- Child protection policy, infrastructure and service development continue to be substantially supported by local and international NGOs, private and international donors.

- Public budgets for child protection measures in the area of social, psychological, health and education services are expanding slowly, but without identifiable long-term strategic planning.
- The State budget is currently not planned with a continuous and integrated view on protecting the rights of vulnerable children and their families in all necessary aspects.
- The State has developed the legal framework for the protection of vulnerable children further, advanced de-institutionalization and inclusion – while perpetuating occasionally in its implementation the tradition of exclusion - and created responsible bodies for child protection on national, marz and local levels. Law implementation, monitoring and evaluation still show, however, gaps and inconsistencies, and the new child protection bodies have not yet developed full competency, nor benefited from all the wealth of positive experience in the field.
- Policy, programme and project development by both State and NGO actors are often not yet data-based and therefore not fine-tuned to local needs.

What is the scope and quality of interaction of the system components?

- So far, concerned parents and children have directly participated in child protection development activities only in a few cases.
- NGOs, the government and international bodies have repeatedly worked together on child protection laws, decrees and related research.
- A strong deficit exists in the development of a shared good practice. This is currently still dominated by NGOs. Mutual feedback mechanisms and mechanisms of improvement through learning from each others' experience are lacking.
- More relevant information about child protection issues is being gathered by different stakeholders but different sets of data are not yet efficiently connected. There is no mechanism for the dissemination of relevant information to all agents in the field.

In how far are knowledge, attitudes and practices of agents in the system based on a Human Rights Based Approach to Programming (HRBAP) and implementation?

- The HRBAP working groups in Lori marz are certainly an excellent example for teaching and applying HRBAP. Individual group members continue to implement this approach in their own work.
- Awareness raising and training of various groups of stakeholders seem to have been fruitful. Many examples were, however, encountered in which different agents, for example local communities and guardianship/trusteeship commissions, heads of institutions, members of CPUs etc., do explicitly not practice HRBAP. Primarily due to lack of awareness and understanding of children's rights and child protection, they thus perpetuate the exclusion and stigmatization of vulnerable children.
- Future programming needs to take into account that changes in knowledge and attitude do not immediately translate into changed practice. Social research shows that lasting practice change requires approximately a decade of consistent work.

How well is the continuum of services developed?

- A continuum of services for children with disabilities and socially vulnerable children is currently being established around a handful of – mostly NGO and internationally funded - good practice centres that address children's and their families' needs, and the environment in which they live, through a multi-professional approach, and adhere to

principles of early detection and intervention, holistic treatment, empowerment and networking.

- Collaboration with supplementary services is dependent on shared values and attitudes. Weak links are still frequently reported between service providers, local trusteeship/guardianship commissions, and CPUs.
- The continuum of services for children in orphanages is currently being extended until their transition into adulthood.
- A systematic continuum of services for de-institutionalization and re-integration for children deprived of parental care and those in conflict with the law is not yet existing. This appears to be related to a lack of common understanding of the child's rights for family or family-like care and rehabilitation in its natural environment, lack of financial and human resources.

How much does the child protection system reform gravitate towards prevention and early intervention in children's natural environment?

- The emergence of multi-purpose community care centres creates more opportunities for prevention, early detection and intervention.
- At the same time, financial and attitudinal obstacles are slowing down the pace of the de-institutionalization process.
- Knowledge and understanding of children's developmental needs and rights appears still limited among many stakeholders, particularly those who own traditional institutions of child care, local and marz child protection bodies, and sometimes also donors. Formation of shared values, knowledge and skills building need to be promoted through joint practical care for children from a child rights perspective.

How much do children and parents participate actively in the development of the child protection system?

- Within the NGO movement and over many years, parents and children with disabilities have become active agents for their own rights to a certain extent.
- Only few child protection projects have included parents and children as active cooperation partners from their very beginning.
- Besides, children's and families' involvement has been promoted through a variety of awareness raising and training initiatives, but not in any systematic way.

How adequate is the policy and legal framework for sustaining and expanding the present child protection system?

- The NPA has clear goals to improve the Armenian legislation in the field of child protection. It is committed to the comprehensive realization of the legal, physical, intellectual, moral, social and spiritual development rights of the child according to the Armenian constitution and international standards. Dedication to the improvement of the child protection system is a natural consequence. In light of the HRBAP principles and evolving new practices in Armenia it seems, however, advisable to review and amend the provisions of the NPA sections on health, education and juvenile justice.
- PRSP's social assistance and pension systems and its health and education investment schemes need to be reviewed and amended in light of their effectiveness for the protection of vulnerable children and their families, as found through the studies and practical experiences of the last years. A social-psychological component should be added

as a foundation for long-term strategic financial planning, in order to achieve comprehensive and high quality, human rights based service coverage of vulnerable children and their families throughout the country. In this way, the State would assume full responsibility as duty bearer.

- UNDAF's social equity policy goals lend full support to the child protection system reform drive.
- Armenia's legal provisions concerning the work of the NCCP and CPUs, as well as the Social Protection Reform Strategy, create a clear framework for the child protection system reform and its expansion. Weaknesses are primarily found on the implementation level, due to lack of clarity in concepts and guidelines, shortcomings in material and human resources as well as the quality of follow-up, monitoring, documentation and evaluation. Collaboration between different stakeholders on marz and local level (general health and education services, juvenile police, CPUs, marz health, education and social protection departments, local guardianship/trusteeship commissions, child care centres) needs to be streamlined and simplified, and duplication of tasks and responsibilities has to be avoided (for example concerning the assessment of children's protection needs). It is recommended that stakeholders continue the avenue of cooperation that was created by the HRBAP working groups, and work together to create a comprehensive, child rights - and evidence-based best practice child protection system in one selected marz. Feedback from controlled practice will quickly highlight system waste and friction, and help to identify adequate strategies, procedures and actions. Such a project needs to be based on up-to-date scientific knowledge and practical experiences, and be supplemented by efforts to create a common conceptual understanding of child protection.

How adequate are the material (finances, in-kind) and human resources (number, knowledge, attitude and practices of decision makers and professionals) for a) sustaining and b) expanding the child protection system?

- As documented extensively, the stable material and human resources for effective and comprehensive child protection in Armenia remain seriously limited. The State has started to invest more in selected projects and thus set an example for its commitment as a duty bearer, but long-term comprehensive resource development country plans in the area of child protection are still missing.
- Considerable technical experience and expertise in child protection are, however, available in the country, particularly in non-State funded, community-oriented service centres, and among stakeholders of various backgrounds who have been involved in child protection activities for a long time with a strong child rights orientation. Knowledge transfer needs to take place between them and the new child protection bodies and services. This will happen best through joint projects that are beneficial for all parties.

What are the current system component and interaction gaps that need to be addressed in order to achieve sustainable expansion? How can this take place?

These questions lead to the following recommendations for the development of the Armenian child protection programme 2007 – 2009.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARMENIAN CHILD PROTECTION PROGRAMME

1. The *PRSP and the NPA need to be reviewed and updated* in light of the child protection experiences of recent years. PRSP understands poverty as impossibility to meet minimum biological, social, and cultural needs, due to a combination of low level of economic participation, limited health and educational capabilities, high risk exposure and low empowerment. Child protection is concerned with several of these factors. Its inclusion into the PRSP should, among others, be negotiated as an act of advocacy and awareness raising. - The NPA goals and plans regarding children's legal protection, the protection of their rights for health, education and participation need to be revisited and elaborated in greater detail in light of the developments in the child protection field, with a view on establishing an integrated, rights-based service system.
2. The *State needs to improve the budgeting for the social and psychological protection of vulnerable children and their families*. Family assistance should, among others, be based on an assessment of the uncovered protection needs of their children. Following comprehensive community profiling of vulnerable families and children, budgets should be prepared for the establishment of community-based child and family protection services. Service budgets need to be linked to agreed-upon standards of service delivery. In principle, WB has offered further technical support in this matter⁶⁴.
3. *All stakeholders need to commit themselves in a joint agreement to prioritizing community-based protection, prevention, early intervention and rehabilitation* for all vulnerable children and their families, and to reduce special institutions to the just necessary minimum within an agreed-upon time frame.
4. *The State needs to develop a phased strategic plan that secures the establishment of comprehensive, child rights based protection services for all vulnerable Armenian children within the time frame of the NPA*, and to assume full responsibility as duty bearer by spearheading this effort. This plan needs to be guided by the vision of a continuum of integrated, rights- and community-based child protection services. Besides determining the scope and quality of such comprehensive services and the necessary financial means, this plan should also specify the mechanism for building up the necessary human resources. It should describe the input of NGOs and other donors and their coordination with State activities, with a focus on the State assuming main responsibility over a set period of time. The plan needs to specify how successful models of child protection can be systematically transferred to all other marzes.
5. *Local communities in general, and vulnerable children and their families in particular, need to become empowered partners in the development and implementation of all child protection activities*. This necessitates systematic awareness raising, knowledge and skills building programmes among local population on child rights and protection issues, but also on communication, problem solving, team work, negotiation skills and lobbying. An empowerment programme approach is advised, that uses trained local resource persons for further dissemination of information and skills building. Learning-by-doing strategies are recommended.
6. *Knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding vulnerable children and their protection need to be enhanced and unified among all stakeholders* through intensified exchange of expertise and experience, learning from international experience, and shared practice, as laid down in the following suggestions.

⁶⁴ Interview with Susanna Hairapetyan, World Bank, on 23.07.07

7. Similar to the earlier HRBAP working groups, it is suggested to *develop a "best practice model of a continuum of services" model, by having all stakeholders work together on optimizing services in one or two selected marzes within a clear project logframe, that puts as its goal the maximum realization of vulnerable children's survival, development and participation rights, within a realistic time frame of 3-5 years.* - This project is meant to be a joint learning experience for all parties involved, through which they will develop a common approach to child protection. The working group should include national, marz and local child protection policy makers, administrators, governmental and non-governmental service providers, other technical resource persons, as well as children and their families. - The centre of this model service network should be the existing multi-purpose and multi-professional community care centres, that are primary service providers for children and families. It will be important that these community care centres receive and care for all vulnerable children without discrimination, as different vulnerabilities share many common causes. The centres need to be staffed accordingly. - . Services by the centres and all other educational, health, social and legal services in these marzes need to be developed according to the provisions of the CRC, and aspire to the highest professional standards. - Already available operational guidelines and standards of care need to be tested and improved through applying them in practical case management. Strategies for implementation, monitoring and evaluation need to be clear and transparent to all parties. – Project developments and results should be exchanged as of the earliest possible time with other policy and decision makers, administrators, service providers, and professionals, in order to prepare the expansion of the best practice model to other marzes. The working group members should be committed to assist these marzes later in applying this model, tailored to the local conditions.
8. *Child protection policy, project and service development need to be evidence-based, carefully documented, analyzed, monitored and evaluated.* Clear monitoring and evaluation standards need to be developed jointly, with some expert assistance, by all stakeholders, and be applied through peer-monitoring and evaluation. Data need to be stored, interlinked and regularly disseminated. All child protection projects need to come up with *lessons to be learnt for better practice.*
9. *Knowledge transfer needs to take place systematically between experienced child rights protection practitioners and new professionals.* Efforts should concentrate on transforming models and experiences of good practice into teaching material, that is used for pre- and in-service training of all professionals who work with children in need of protection.
10. A *centralized "child protection resource and communication centre" should be established in connection with the highest child protection body, or an outstanding technical or academic institution in the country.* Its goals should include: comprehensive data collection and dissemination, project documentation, research, transformation of field experience into training material, teaching and training, facilitation of national and international exchange, support to public awareness campaigns etc. The centre needs to be user-friendly and open to all sectors of Armenian society. The centre should also serve as a facilitator of communication between all stakeholders and organize regular workshops, conferences and training seminars.

10. Evaluation of UNICEF's child protection programme

In light of the previous analysis, the initial evaluation questions concerning UNICEF's child protection programme 2005 – 2007 can now be answered.

To which system components has UNICEF contributed?

The synopsis of implementation activities (Annex 3) shows that UNICEF has had major input on all system levels, with a special focus on institutional reform and service development (17 activities), followed by training (12 activities) and awareness campaigns (9 activities).

How relevant, efficient, effective and sustainable was UNICEF's contribution to the development of these components, and what has been their long-term impact?

During the interviews and field visits, counterparts expressed in general that they consider UNICEF as a main motor of child protection programme development and system reform in Armenia. They also laude the organization for using limited means efficiently, particularly when compared to other donors.

- a) *Awareness campaigns:* This assessment found that UNICEF's activities have substantially contributed to an advanced level of awareness regarding child protection issues among senior and mid-level decision makers and administrators on both governmental and NGO sides. These stakeholders are largely able to speak a common language while voicing their - sometimes different - opinions. CPU and local committee members still do not show a homogenous level of awareness and understanding of children's rights and protection. Existing gaps need to be addressed through more awareness raising and training, eventually in collaboration with EU initiatives.
- b) *Publishing and printing:* UNICEF's publications are widely acknowledged and referred to.
- c) *Legal reform:* Between 2005 and 2007, UNICEF has contributed significantly to the reform of the Family Code, the Law on the Education of Children with Special Needs and the Decree on the Transformation of Special/Boarding Schools into Child Care Institutions, and has aided in the dissemination of knowledge about these laws among decision makers, administrators and practitioners. The implementation of these laws needs, however, to be monitored and evaluated.
- d) *Research:* UNICEF supported research on the situation of children in Lori marz (2005) has set off major child protection system reform initiatives, raised the motivation, awareness, understanding and initiative among the participating stakeholders and promoted lasting inter-sectoral cooperation. The 2006 study on school wastage and the ongoing study on child labour are shedding light on critical child protection issues, such as the prevention of exploitation and other harmful working conditions, and the protection of children's rights for health, education, and leisure. Their results will feed into new protection activities.
- e) *Establishment of databases:* The UNICEF-supported MANUK database has become operational in June 2007. It collects data on children deprived of parental care, child abuse and child labour, in a coordinated effort between MOLSI, MOJ, civic registration bodies, CPUs and several NGOs. If connected with the WB sponsored social protection information system, it will contribute to providing better assistance to vulnerable children and their families. Further integration with the EU sponsored information system should be considered. UNICEF might decide to follow up on this subject.

- f) *Reform of administrative bodies:* UNICEF has supported the establishment of the NCCP and the CPUs (2005). UNICEF's contribution to NCCP activities is much appreciated. Several CPUs like to cooperate with UNICEF on the development of their work while others are still more reluctant. It was noted that, due to fluctuation in partnership constellations between MOLSI, EU and UNICEF, UNICEF's influence on the child protection administrative reform has somewhat lessened in recent years. Awareness raising and training of CPUs and local committees needs to be continued in a spirit of partnership.
- g) *Reforms of institutions and services:* UNICEF has invested intensively, together with ministries, responsible NGOs and/or other donors, into
- upscaling the quality of services for children with disabilities (multiprofessional assessment, early detection and intervention concept, inclusive preschool and school education, establishment of child development centres, social protection strategy);
 - juvenile justice reform (including professional standards and de-institutionalization);
 - the de-institutionalization of socially vulnerable children, prevention of institutionalization and support to family and foster care;
 - early detection and intervention in child abuse and neglect cases, community care centres and psychosocial support programmes for socially vulnerable children.

In the field of childhood disability, UNICEF's support to the relevant NGOs (BOH and WV) in earlier years has helped these to develop considerable expertise, to the extent that they have become major civil society actors in the field. The child development centres are technically well established within the primary health care system but need a secure long-term budget.

The juvenile justice reform project has created much awareness and readiness for action on the mid-level management of the State police but has been moving slowly at times due to some reservations within MOJ.

Rights-based support for socially vulnerable children, which claims the respect, protection and fulfilment of their survival, development and protection rights from the State and civil society as duty bearers, is generally well provided by the community centres. Their staff is highly motivated, knowledgeable and aspiring. The centres need stable long-term State financial support.

Both the foster care and the de-institutionalization projects have been adopted by the Government yet their execution is slow, mostly due to conceptual confusion and the absence of a stringent and consistent implementation policy. UNICEF might need to promote the conceptual development of alternative family care and support systems further, as well as the supervision of the transformation process. Before de-institutionalization can be fully implemented, supplementary community-based protection structures need to be in firmly in place.

- h) *Capacity building:* UNICEF has lent substantial support to the development of the child protection system reform and the foster care institute. It has also helped to build up inclusive education resource schools and the child protection NGO network, and enriched the teaching of the social work department at Yerevan State University through repeated cooperation projects. The results of these investments are durable.
- i) *Training:* UNICEF training activities have been manifold but there is no integrated mechanism to assess their short-, medium- and long-term impact. UNICEF is advised to specify detailed training goals and to develop appropriate assessment and evaluation strategies and tools. Successful training experiences should be made available for further use by other counterparts.

- j) *Community empowerment and participation of socially vulnerable children and families:* UNICEF's activities in this field are of a more recent nature. It is advisable to integrate these components into all UNICEF activities and to develop strategies and tools to assess their impact on the protection of the rights of vulnerable children and their families. UNICEF might choose to initiate at a later stage an exchange of community empowerment and participation experiences with other counterparts who pursue similar strategies.
- k) *Promoting cooperation between stakeholders:* UNICEF has achieved an excellent reputation in Armenia for being able to bring different parties together in order to address important child protection issues. Multiple child protection networks are practically operating in the country, yet it seems that the new child protection bodies (NCCP and CPUs) need to become somewhat more integrated into the already existing networks.

In summary, UNICEF has contributed efficiently and effectively in areas of great relevance for the development of effective child protection in Armenia. Many investments have become permanent. Effectiveness and sustainability are in some cases hampered by conceptual differences with and between counterparts that still need to be overcome, and the general challenge to achieve stable long-term State commitment and funding. There is a potential for more efficient and effective use of training activities.

How efficient and effective has UNICEF been in contributing to the NPA and UNDAF, and how has it fulfilled its responsibilities within CPD, CPAP, AWP? Were there any AWP objectives that were not covered, and what were the reasons for it? What was the quality of monitoring and evaluation activities for programme activities, and were they sufficient to gauge progress and perform corrections?

Through its child protection programme, UNICEF has contributed significantly to improving vulnerable children's rights according to the NPA provisions⁶⁵. It has also acted fully in line with UNDAF's action plan for social equity, by investing into the reform of education and health services, as well as into the quality and accessibility of basic social services in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals and PRSP⁶⁶.

Since 2007, UNICEF's AWP have become explicitly connected with projected UNDAF goals⁶⁷. Most of the numerous 2005 – 2007 AWP goals have been achieved, as documented in Annex 3⁶⁸. Measuring the AWP achievements against the UNDAF annual and five year project results and the five year programme outcomes proves, however, to be difficult, as many of the latter are not well operationalized and measurable.

The child protection programme has also been operating well within the framework of the current CPD that was approved by UNICEF's Executive Board on 17 January 2005. Its aims are:

⁶⁵ National Plan of Action of the Republic of Armenia for the Protection of the Rights of the Child 2004 – 2015. Yerevan, 2005, p. 3

⁶⁶ United Nations Development and Assistance Framework Armenia 2005 – 2009, p.7

⁶⁷ See 2007 Annual Work Plan Child Protection Armenia, Programme Cycle 2005 – 2009, Project Code and Title YY 401-03; YI 402-03; ZA 403-03 Legal and administrative reforms on child protection; Strengthening the child protection accountability mechanisms; Child and family participation in child protection, p.1f

⁶⁸ See Annex 4 Synopsis of UNICEF Child Protection Annual Work Plans 2005 – 2007, Objectives, Achievements, Constraints and Follow-Up Priorities

- sustaining achievements and scaling up good practices and approaches;
- ensuring the quality and standards of key interventions that are applied nationally while focusing on the most disadvantaged groups;
- developing and adopting appropriate policies;
- enhancing the capacities of service providers to deliver quality care and services;
- fostering communities' and young people's participation⁶⁹.

Regarding the field of child protection, the CPD envisages that

- support to legal and administrative reform will ensure that by 2009, national and local authorities will have strengthened skills in monitoring the implementation of the NPA. Policies and implementing guidelines will be in place in support of families at risk for prevention of institutionalization, the establishment of alternative services; for child abuse, neglect, and child labour, juvenile justice administration and early identification of childhood disability. Child protection bodies will be established at marz and municipal levels.
- service providers and caregivers in child protection at national and sub-national levels will use improved standards of care for children at risk by 2009. Children at risk and with disabilities in five marzes will be identified early and provided with legal, psychosocial, health and rehabilitation services. Also by 2009, professional and performance standards for all staff working with children at risk will be in place. Local authorities in the same five marzes will be able to find alternatives for at-risk children from within their communities. Care providers will be able to provide adequate and appropriate care and protection to children in crisis situations, particularly for those deprived of parental care.
- local authorities in five marzes will facilitate and support the inclusion of vulnerable families in social protection programmes. Civil society organizations will have increased knowledge and skills of standards of care and policies and improved skills to work with children at risk. NGOs will also be able to monitor the protection of rights of at-risk children and will be able to report back on violations to child protection bodies and national and local authorities. Vulnerable families will be aware of and able to access and participate in alternative care services in their communities. Parents, children and young people will be better informed of their rights, and of issues related to violation of these rights such as domestic violence and human trafficking.

The CPD also emphasizes the need to create venues and opportunities for dialogue between community based organizations, NGOs, national and local authorities on NPA implementation⁷⁰. The 2005-2009 Programme of Cooperation between the Government of Armenia and the United Nations Children's Fund (2005-2009 Country Programme Action Plan CPAP) adopted this programme outline and was consequently signed in February 2005. CPAP emphasizes in addition the need to continue and strengthen existing partnerships through technical working groups including marz authorities, the inclusion of young people's groups on national and local level, and UNICEF's facilitation of stronger linkages between national and local levels on children's issues. UNICEF declared also its commitment to cooperate with the OSCE on juvenile justice, the prevention of trafficking, human rights and peace building, with the EU Food Security Programme on de-institutionalization and the establishment of child protection bodies, and support to the Human Rights Ombudsman regarding capacity building on CRC monitoring. UNICEF declared also its readiness to step up efforts in supporting the development of a research agenda that will generate key data and information on the situation of children, young people and women⁷¹. Like the UNDAF project results and programme outcomes, the CPD and CPAP goals require more a more precise

⁶⁹ UNICEF Executive Board: Revised Country Programme Document Armenia, E/ICEF/2004/P/L.10/Rev.1, 1 November 2004, p.7

⁷⁰ Ibidem, p. 9f

⁷¹ p.10 ff

operationalization in order to measure the achievements of the child protection programme with regard to reaching these goals.

With regard to AWP, few problems and postponements were experienced, primarily due to external causes. Within the AWP 2005, awareness raising and training in local communities took place with difficulties and delay because of late municipal elections. Further difficulties were encountered in the preparation of activities because of lack of coordination of the work of various donors for the child welfare reform. Consequently, cooperation with programme coordinators in the respective ministries became more difficult. Within the AWP 2006, the development of probation services as part of the reform of the juvenile justice system was postponed due to late agreement on the terms of reference. The training of judges on the new Family Code did not take place, because the implementation mechanism was not developed in due time. Likewise, staff in child care institutions could not be trained on assessing children, due to the late development of the assessment tool.

UNICEF child protection programme progress has only been assessed through internal evaluations that use UNDAF indicators. These are, however, unspecific and, therefore not very suitable to gauge progress and make programme corrections. It could be a beneficial exercise for the child protection programme team members to work on their own operationalization of UNDAF (as well as CPD and CPAP) goals in cooperation with the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, by working backwards from the goals that have been set for 2009. These goals need, however, to be corrected in light of the programme experiences and in recognition that UNICEF is obviously only one of many players in the complex system of child protection in Armenia. Monitoring and evaluation categories need to capture both quantitative and qualitative aspects of change. They have to assess system strengthening, financial and human resources development. With regards to human resources, knowledge, attitudes, skills as well as practices have to be assessed.

What kind of development partnership has UNICEF pursued with international and national counterparts?

The child protection programme has established very good work relationships with MOLSI, MOH, MOES, MOJ, the State Police, as well as with the NGOs who work in this field. It has assisted major NGOs through ongoing project support in becoming experts in their field, and expanding their role from providing emergency aid and service provision to policy development, strategic planning, capacity building, advocacy and lobbying. The increasing competence of these counterparts has resulted in recent years in greater autonomy, occasionally at the expense of communication and networking. UNICEF might want to resume its leading role as facilitator of productive exchange, in order to put the evolving competences to use for further qualitative development of the whole child protection system.

WB has been a good supporter in establishing the very successful multi-purpose community social care centres in Yerevan and Shirak marz, that have consequently encouraged the Government to pursue the opening of such centres in Tavoush marz. The World Bank is ready to invest into such social protection reform projects on a larger scale if requested by the Government⁷².

The EU Food Security Programme has been a counterpart in the social protection and de-institutionalization initiative. After drawing for years upon UNICEF's expertise, the EU's active cooperation seems to have lessened during the last two years through one-sided reduction of communication. In the assessment interview, the EU Food Security Programme coordinator even questioned UNICEF's contribution to the de-institutionalization and social protection initiative. At the same time, the quality of cooperation of the EU with service

⁷² Interview with Susanna Hayrapetyan, 22.07.07

providers in the field was repeatedly criticized by the latter during interviews for being top-down oriented and non-inclusive.

The development partnerships with OSCE and USAID were not part of the assessment schedule, nor was the relationship with the Human Rights Ombudsman. The consultant believes, however, that contacts and collaboration should be strengthened with these partners in the future through a coordinated effort of the whole UNICEF office, as part of UNICEF's commitment to fulfil the CPAP and increase the efficiency and effect of child protection system reform efforts.

How have these development partnerships contributed to the child protection system development?

The analysis shows that these development partnerships have boosted the qualitative changes of the Armenian child protection system in recent years. MOLSI is a committed partner in the child protection system reform. It has been a main actor in policy development, legal reform, the establishment of the NCCP and CPUs, as well as service transformation from exclusive institutions to community-based services. Its senior and mid level management is well informed and open towards new concepts and practices. The ministry faces, however, constraints with regards to long-term strategic planning and budgeting, staff number, qualification and training, as well as soft- and hardware for supervision, monitoring and evaluation.

NGOs, medical and psychological centres have been the main counterparts in the successful development of alternative, community-based services, teaching, training and research, and in the promotion of community participation and empowerment.

Further child protection system development will need a closer cooperation between governmental and civil society organizations in order to achieve unified and integrated concepts, standards and approaches. Both within UNICEF and among its counterparts voices were repeatedly heard that emphasized the need to reactivate the tradition of regular coordination meetings. These had been organized by UNICEF until 2005.

Development partnerships with the EU and WB have lent strength to the child protection system reform through corresponding budget support. Closer cooperation could, however, lead to better mutual understanding and greater effects of financial investments, particularly with regard to de-institutionalization, development of alternative, community-based services, and the capacity building of CPUs.

What type of financial and human resources did UNICEF use in its child protection programme? Were these resources sufficient and complementary to what other partners were investing? Was the investment justifiable considering the benefits?

UNICEF's child protection programme has been funded from regular and other resources, the latter providing the major part of its budget resources. To date, funding has been sufficient to insure the implementation of all AWP activities. The impact of UNICEF's work seems to justify the financial investments. Funding from other resources is, however, in principle unstable and can only be secured on an annual basis. This necessitates regular fundraising activities that occupy human resources within the office.

The child protection system reform can only be completely implemented as a joint effort of UNICEF, GOA and other donors. Lack of joint conceptualization and planning appear to

occasionally hamper the synergy that could in principle arise from this collaboration, and thus the effectiveness of investments.

With two staff members, the human resources of the UNICEF Child Protection Unit appear insufficient in light of the current scope of the programme, and the needs for continuous fundraising, more detailed planning, supervision of implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

UNICEF has successfully worked on building up national capacity in child protection. Competent mid-level political, administrative and technical resource persons, with whom UNICEF collaborates successfully in the implementation of its programmes, were identified primarily in the capital as well as in few selected marzes. In general, the number and qualification of professionals and NGOs in the marzes are largely insufficient for the development of effective child protection.

A number of experts from the CEE/CIS region have been identified who can assist in developing the child protection system further.

Has the Government put in place any mechanisms and financial budget allocations that ensure the continuation of activities that have been financed by UNICEF to date?

The NPA specifies budget contributions by the State, international donors and NGOs for various child protection activities, but does not indicate any mechanism for shifting the financial input from UNICEF and other donors gradually to the State budget. It is also not clear what kind of service standards can be maintained through these allocations. With regard to concrete projects, the Government has mostly taken on partial financial support within its annual budget plan, but there is currently no binding long-term commitment. According to service providers, State support usually does not cover all current expenses. There is a clear need for strategic long-term financial planning of a country-wide child protection system. This should specify donor contributions, as well as a mechanism for the gradual transfer of financial responsibilities to the State budget.

Which should be the priority areas for UNICEF's future targeted investments, areas to exit from and new areas to expand into, in order to achieve maximum impact on the development of the country's child protection programme in coordination with its partners?

UNICEF needs to invest into the development of the Armenian child protection system with two targets: to optimize and round up previous investments, and to inject its resources at sensitive points with maximum outcome for the development of the whole system. Two sets of recommendations are, therefore, formulated.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE OPTIMIZATION AND COMPLETION OF
CURRENT PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES**

1. Improve UNICEF internal cross-sectoral planning, monitoring and evaluation of child protection activities.
2. Promote the connection of the MANUK database with the WB supported social protection information system, and assess a possible connection with the EU sponsored information system.

3. Develop a communication strategy and conduct systematic awareness raising campaigns for local communities (families, guardianship/trusteeship committees and local authorities) and marz authorities (services and CPUs) with regard to children's rights and the protection of vulnerable children, in collaboration with national NGOs and EU. Inform and train children, adolescents and parents to become competent development partners. Build up local capacity, and outsource awareness raising campaigns to local resource persons, once technical and delivery standards are secured.
4. Support the development of adequate monitoring and evaluation standards for the implementation of child protection laws, rules and regulations, and lend technical support to the monitoring and evaluation practice until standards of application are secured.
5. Support and conclude reform initiatives in the juvenile justice system, with a focus on the judiciary.
6. Help to consolidate the conceptual development of non-institutionalized child care arrangements and protection services, assist in the execution of de-institutionalization, and strengthen community-based child protection service structures.
7. Create stronger links between national, regional and local child protection stake holders.
8. Optimize the planning, monitoring, evaluation, documentation and dissemination of training programmes and activities in child protection and build up local training capacity. Outsource training once standards are met.
9. Strengthen cooperation with national and international partners and donors, such as the EU, WB, OSCE and the Armenian Human Rights Ombudsman.

Several of the above activities can be concluded within a set time frame and, therefore, exited. Some of them are, however, of a longer term nature and crucial for the qualitative development of the child protection system.

The current child protection system with its multitude of activities, as laid out by the CPD and CPAP, can be strengthened best by investing into those general components that will have the broadest long-term impact on the whole system development. These are

- Public awareness and understanding of child rights and protection
- Improvement of financial and human resources
- Strategic planning for full coverage
- Knowledge and skills building
- System transformation towards a continuum of child rights oriented, participatory, community-based services
- Establishment of standards of service delivery, monitoring and evaluation.

UNICEF is advised to concentrate in the remaining years of the current programme cycle on those system-strengthening components to which it can contribute its special expertise.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE UNICEF CHILD PROTECTION PROGRAMMING

1. Concentrate on the development of a continuum of non-discriminatory, participatory, child's rights oriented, community-based child protection services, through support to the "best practice model of a continuum of services" project. This will also promote cooperation between all stakeholders, and provide an opportunity to field-test and improve on existing laws, decrees and implementation guidelines, including standards of service delivery. Collaborate with international donors, particularly the EU, regarding the involvement of official child protection bodies.

2. Support the establishment of the "child protection resource and communication centre". This centre will help to collect, expand and develop the country's knowledge base in child protection. It will contribute to a better dissemination of information through media-supported awareness raising, and to capacity building by creating and applying field-tested training programmes. Cooperate particularly with NGOs and CSOs in the field.
3. Lend support to strategic planning for comprehensive child protection, including financial and human resources planning, in collaboration with international donors (WB).

Acknowledgements

This evaluation report is the result of intense and productive cooperation with many partners within a short time. All UNICEF counterparts deserve a heartfelt thank you for taking the time for sharing their enthusiasm, valuable experiences and views, and constructive criticism. The interest of HE the Minister of Labour and Social Issues, Mr. Aghvan Vardanyan, and Deputy Minister Mr. Philaret Berikyan, in the design and results of the assessment, and the dialogue with Mrs. Lala Ghazaryan, Head of the MOLSI Family Department, are much appreciated. They symbolize the positive force of cooperation that has left its mark on the development of the child protection programme.

Special thanks go to Mrs. Naira Avetisyan, UNICEF Child Protection Officer, for her relentless support to the assessment. It was a pleasure to benefit from her vast knowledge, and her thoughtful feedback on observations and first evaluations. Her excellent communication skills and connections to the field made contacts with counterparts very easy. Mrs. Malathi Pillai, UNICEF Programme Coordinator, enriched the evaluation through her critical inquiries. Both of them and Mr. Sheldon Yetts, UNICEF Country Representative, have contributed to the report in its final form through their helpful and detailed comments and questions. It was a pleasure to work with the UNICEF Armenia office.

Annex 1

Terms of Reference for the Assessment of the Child Protection Programme in Armenia (10.07. – 20.08.2007) - Excerpt

Terms of reference or work assignment:

The purpose of this consultancy is to assess the initial key results in the field of child protection system reform which is underway and to provide a forward-looking analysis for UNICEF's strategic positioning and development results.

The consultancy will have two major objectives:

- To assess the child protection programme results against the Country Programme Action Plan (2005 – 2009) and Country Programme Document outcomes
- To assess the key components of the child protection system reform in Armenia and UNICEF's contribution to the reform

In doing the above, the assessment will result in the

- identification of the range and quality of development partnerships forged and their contribution to the child protection outcomes;
- gaps (capacity, policy, resource) and challenges and suggested mid-term corrections;
- policies and legislative instruments in place;
- development of recommendations to position UNICEF for better results.

Methodology and technical approach:

The consultancy will include

- a comprehensive analysis of available information (desk review) – country situational analyses on child protection (including national laws, policies, action plans etc.), country – specific work programmes, project proposals, progress reports, log frames etc.;
- consultations, focus group discussions with key government partners (MOLSI, MOES, MOH, MOJ, State police, local authorities) and civil society partners (INGOS/NGOs and CBOs)
- consultations with donor agencies (EU, World Bank) involved in the child welfare reforms
- field visit to project sites, interviews and consultancies with key stakeholders and counterparts (government and NGO) in the field of child protection to capture difficulties, extract elements of good practice and for reference in formulating recommendations;
- tracking progress at UNICEF outcome level using the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), Country Programme Document (CPD) and Annual Work Plan result matrix;
- development of a report with follow-up recommendations for UNICEF office.

Annex 2

Assessment Activities Josi Salem-Pickartz Child Protection Expert for the MTR UNICEF Armenia

10 – 30 July, 2007

Date/time	Activity
10.07 04:55	Arrival by the Austrian Airlines, pick up at the airport and transfer to the “Congress” hotel
13:30 -14:30	Meeting at the hotel, lunch
15:00 -16:30	Briefing by Child Protection team
16:30 -18:00	Briefing by Education and Health teams
11.07- 13.07	Desk review of child protection documents Work in the office
11.07 12:00	Meeting with the: - Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Issues, Mr. Philaret Berikyan
16.07	Meeting with the counterparts : - MOLSI, MOES, Police, WV, FAR,ARS, BOH, COAF
17.07 -20.07	Field visits in Shirak, Lori and Tavoush marzes - Visiting the day care center for children at risk, orphanage for children with disabilities and LGCSPF (child abuse and neglect projects) in Gyumri - Meeting the HRBAP experts, foster care coordinator, and visiting the child development center (MOH) in Vanadzor - Visiting Tavoush marz CPU, Ijevan and Dilijan community centers
20.07.07 10:00-11:30 14:00 -15:30 16:00 -16:30	Meeting the project managers in: - WV- Kristina Mikailidi - BOH- Susanna Tadevosyan - ARS – Anna Mnatsakanyan
23.07 11:00 15:00	Meeting with: - EU, Helen Ispiryan - WB, Susanna Hayrapetyan - CPU Yerevan
24.07 10:00 -11:30 14:00 -18:00	Visiting FAR reception center and meeting with the coordinator of foster care project and child labour study Mira Antonyan Preparation to the RT discussion
25.07 11:00- 12:00	- Meeting with Lala Ghazaryan, Head of Family department of the MOLSI - Meeting with Naira Gharakhanyan, Project manager of community COAF psych-social project in Armavir marz

26.07. 15:00	Meeting with the Minister of Labour and Social Issues Mr. Aghvan Vardanyan
27.07 15:00	Round table with counterparts
28.07 - 30.07	Drafting of the report
31.07 04:00	Pick up from the hotel and transfer to the airport

Annex 3

Child Protection Implementation Activities of UNICEF and its Main Counterparts 2005 – 2007

1. Public awareness and media	
Activities	Involved parties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPA and PRSP awareness raising in Lori (2005) and Tavoush marz (2007); 	UNICEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPA annual conference on child protection (2005) 	UNICEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round table on social protection of people with disabilities (2005) 	UNICEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness raising about violence and child abuse in Shirak marz (2005) • Awareness raising about violence and child abuse in Lori marz region (2006 – 2007) 	UNICEF, LGCSPF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round table on administrative documents for child protection system reform (2006) 	UNICEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seminars and round tables for 250 decision makers (including NCCP and CPUs) on child protection issues (2006) 	UNICEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government participation in international conferences on child protection and study tour on child protection reform for NCCP members to Austria (2005 - 2007) 	UNICEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-day International Symposium on Child Protection in Armenia (2006) 	UNICEF, WV, USAID
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness raising on child welfare reforms for decision makers in marzes (2006 – 2007) 	NCCP, UNICEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Sunflower” monthly magazine by persons with disability; • Theatre group of able-bodied and disabled persons; • Training for journalists on non-discriminatory reporting 	BOH

2. Policy documents	
Activities	Involved parties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of child protection handbook for parliamentarians at the Parliament with UNICEF Regional Director (2005) 	UNICEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translation, printing and dissemination of child protection documents (2005 - 2007) 	UNICEF

3. Laws and decrees	
Activities	Involved parties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reform of Family Code (2005) with change of adoption procedures: recommendations for adoption are issued by local adoption commission and forwarded through the CPU to the court; an interministerial commission decides on international adoptions 	MOLSI, EU, UNICEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RoA Government decision (N1833-N) to amend decrees concerning Yerevan municipality and the marzpetarans and create Child's Rights Protection Units 	GoA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of a National Committee on Child Protection by decree N835-N of October 28, 2005 	GoA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Protection Strategy 2006 – 2010 for Children in Difficult Circumstances through decree N206-N (MOLSI as responsible ministry; includes special needs assessment and individual rehabilitation plans for children in institutions, schools and service centres; institutional reforms; licensing of institutions; de-institutionalization and family reunification; reform of adoption system; foster care legislation; database) 	MOLSI, EU
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transformation of special/boarding schools into child care institutions (2006) by decree No:206-N of January 12, 2006 regarding approval of the “Strategy for Reforms in Social Protection of the Children in Difficult Situations for 2006-2010” and pilot programme for 2006 on “De-institutionalisation of children from Vanadzor orphanage, special educational institutions No:2 and No:3 in Vanadzor, special educational institution No:1 in Stepanavan and No:1 in Spitak” 	MOLSI, EU, WV, Aravot NGO, UNICEF, CPUs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on the Education of Children with Special Needs, involving inclusive education (2005) 	MOES, BOH, WV, Mission East, UNICEF

4. Research	
Activities	Involved parties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRBAP Project: Strengthening the Child Protection System in Armenia - Situation Analysis of Children in Lori Marz. 2005; (preparation of child protection system reform) 	UNICEF, MOLSI, Lori marz authorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childhood Disability in the Republic of Armenia. Situation Analysis 2005 	UNICEF, MOH, National Statistical Service, ARS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children in Orphanages and Special Schools in Armenia: Potential Victims of Trafficking and Exploitation? Yerevan, 2005 	ARS, OSCE

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hayan Hua, Case Study on School Wastage in Armenia, UNICEF Armenia, 2006 	UNICEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNDP/Brian Iselin: Counter-Human Trafficking Institutional Assessment Armenia March – April 2007 	UNDP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Study on Child Labour (2007, ongoing) 	UNICEF, “Harmonic Society” Social Workers Association

5. Data collection and establishment of databases	
Activities	Involved parties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of MANUK database on children at risk and for adoption; sharing of data with National Statistical Service 	UNICEF & MOLSI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement of national data on sensitive child protection issues (birth registration, child labour) (2007) 	UNICEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated Management and Information System for MOLSI (2007 – 8) 	MOLSI, EU-TACIS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated management and information system for government with regard to pensions, social assistance and employment (can be linked with MANUK) 	WB
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPUs' data collection about children and families in difficult circumstances (ongoing) 	MOLSI, CPUs of marzes

6. Implementation of policies, laws and decrees	
A) Policy and State administrative bodies on national, marz and community levels:	
Activities	Involved parties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundation of the National Committee on Child Protection NCCP (2005) 	GoA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundation of Child Protection Units and Adoption Commissions in marzes (2005) 	GoA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundation of Guardianship/Trusteeship Commissions in local communities (2005) 	GoA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual programme and budget of the National Plan of Action are prepared by the line ministries, coordinated by MOLSI and submitted to National Assembly 	GoA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCCP works continuously on streamlining child protection policy on national, marz and local level 	MOLSI, EU & UNICEF

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of training needs of NCCP and CPUs (2007-8) 	EU (TACIS)

6. Implementation of policies, laws and decrees	
B) Institutions and services	
Activities	Involved parties
B1) All children:	UNICEF, Arabkir Medical Centre, MOH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocols for multidisciplinary assessment of children with disabilities 0 – 5 years (2006) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of multidisciplinary assessment teams for children of school age (Republican Centre Yerevan, Syunik and Shiwak marzes) 	WV
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment tools and curriculum development for inclusive education (ongoing) 	BOH, Mission East
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s reception and orientation centre (since 2000), a temporary shelter with multiprofessional crisis intervention and follow-up for children at risk, aiming at family strengthening, providing hotline, outreach services and foster care (2005 – 2007) 	FAR, police, MOLSI
B2) Orphanages and boarding schools:	ARS, MOLSI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsorship programme for children without parental care through ARS (since 1992) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards of care; types of institutions (2005) 	EU, MOLSI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State support for graduates from orphanages through housing, legal aid and psychosocial support (2005) 	EU, MOLSI, ARS, ADF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines for the development of individual rehabilitation plans for children deprived of parental care (2006-2007) 	EU, MOLSI, WV
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admission criteria to child care and child protection institutions; licensing, supervision and reporting of institutions (2006 - 2007) 	EU, MOLSI, UNICEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum material and human resources requirements for child care in institutions (2007) 	MOLSI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transformation of 17 special schools into mainstream schools or temporary boarding schools (2005 – 2007) 	EU, MOLSI, MOES, UNICEF, WV
B3) Children with disabilities:	UNICEF, MOLSI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social protection strategy for people with disabilities (2005; launched with NGOs in 2006) 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early detection and intervention concept for children with disabilities (2006) 	MOH, UNICEF, Arabkir Medical Centre
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulation concerning rehabilitation services for children with disabilities (2006) 	MOH, MOLSI, UNICEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preschool education and support to inclusive education of children with disabilities; development and follow-up on individual development plans, of training material and teachers' training 	WV, UNICEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to inclusive education in schools (300 children in Yerevan): training of teachers and development of materials 	BOH, UNICEF, Mission East
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renovation of orphanages for children with disabilities in Kharberd and Gyumri through State budget with continuum of services for young adults with disabilities(2007) 	MOLSI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free provision with eye glasses for children with vision problems 	ARS, Armenian Eye Care Project
B4) Children in conflict with the law: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handbook for juvenile police (2005); 	UNICEF, police
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of concept of probation services (2007); 	MOJ, UNICEF, SPDC NGO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • De-institutionalization of Yerevan No. 18 Special School for juveniles in conflict with the law 	MOES, WV
B5) De-institutionalization and alternative services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • De-institutionalization initiative in Lori marz since 2006; • Prevention of institutionalization of 20 children at risk through family support (2006) • Re-integration of 52 children from special institutions into their families (2006) 	MOLSI, EU, Aravot NGO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field test of some administrative documents for child protection system reform (2006) 	UNICEF, HRBAP working group in Lori marz
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of foster care pilot project in Lori and Gegharkunik marz as well as Yerevan; establishment of 3 foster care centres; placement of 20 children from orphanages in foster families (2006); • Support to government and FAR for foster care model in Yerevan, Lori and Gegharkunik marzes (2007); 25 children de-institutionalized and 68 protected from institutionalization through family support or foster care (2007) • Foster care funding and procedures; will be included in State budget as of 2008 	UNICEF, MOLSI, FAR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption procedures are reviewed 	MOLSI

B6) Children at risk of abuse and neglect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalization of regulations regarding early detection and intervention of child abuse cases and introduction to the NCCP (2005) 	UNICEF, MOLSI, Police, LGCSPF, MOH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psychosocial support project for children and youth at risk as part of a rural development project (since 2006) 	COAF, UNICEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity building of six community centres in Shirak, Lori, Ararat, Tavoush marzes and in Yerevan (2006); in-kind support for some centres by local municipalities since 2007; 4 Tavoush centres will be State and municipality funded as of 2008 	UNICEF, BOH, Tatev and other NGOs, local authorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of two child development centres for children with disabilities in Lori and Gegharkunik marzes (2006); early identification of 500 children at risk and with disabilities and provision with community-based quality services in Yerevan, Gegharkunik and Lori marzes 	UNICEF, Arabkir Medical Centre
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 multiprofessional community centres for children with disability and at risk, with focus on inclusion (to be handed over to local or central government) 	WV
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 multiprofessional regional community centres for children with disability and at risk in Tavoush marz 	BOH, UNICEF, OXFAM

7. Capacity building	
Activities	Involved parties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social work department at Yerevan State University 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HRBAP working group on child protection system reform in Lori marz (2005) 	UNICEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster Care Institute 	UNICEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Protection Network 	FAR, WV, BOH and others
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 schools as future resource centres for inclusive education 	BOH, UNICEF, Mission East, WB, National Institute of Education

8. Training	
Activities	Involved parties

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orphanage staff on standards of care, immunization, rehabilitation of children with disabilities, children's growth and development (2005); • Child welfare reforms (2006); • Seminars on child care and professional standards (2007) 	UNICEF, MOLSI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social workers on foster care and children at risk (2006) 	UNICEF, FAR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of social workers, foster parents and caregivers of orphanages (2006) 	UNICEF, FAR, MOLSI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Juvenile police on child rights, abuse and trafficking (2005); on professional manual for juvenile policemen (2006); • National team of trainers on healthy lifestyle and prevention of crimes for children at risk (2007) 	UNICEF, police
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff in juvenile colony on criminal-procedural law (2005) 	UNICEF, MOJ
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic registration bodies of all marzes on Family and Civic Registration Codes (2005, 2007) 	UNICEF, MOJ
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of health workers and families in Lori and Gegarkunik marzes on prevention, early identification and intervention for childhood disability (2005 - 2007) 	UNICEF, Arabkir Medical Centre
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of KG and special school teachers and assistants on childhood disability and inclusive education (2006) 	WV
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRBAP experts trained child protection experts in Tavoush marz (2006) 	UNICEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of decision makers, service and care providers on child abuse in Shirak, Lori and Tavoush marzes (2005 - 2007) 	UNICEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of more than 300 decision makers in Lori and Tavoush marzes on NPA and child welfare reforms (2006 - 2007) 	UNICEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of NCCP and CPUs on data collection and local plans of action for children (2006 - 2007) 	UNICEF

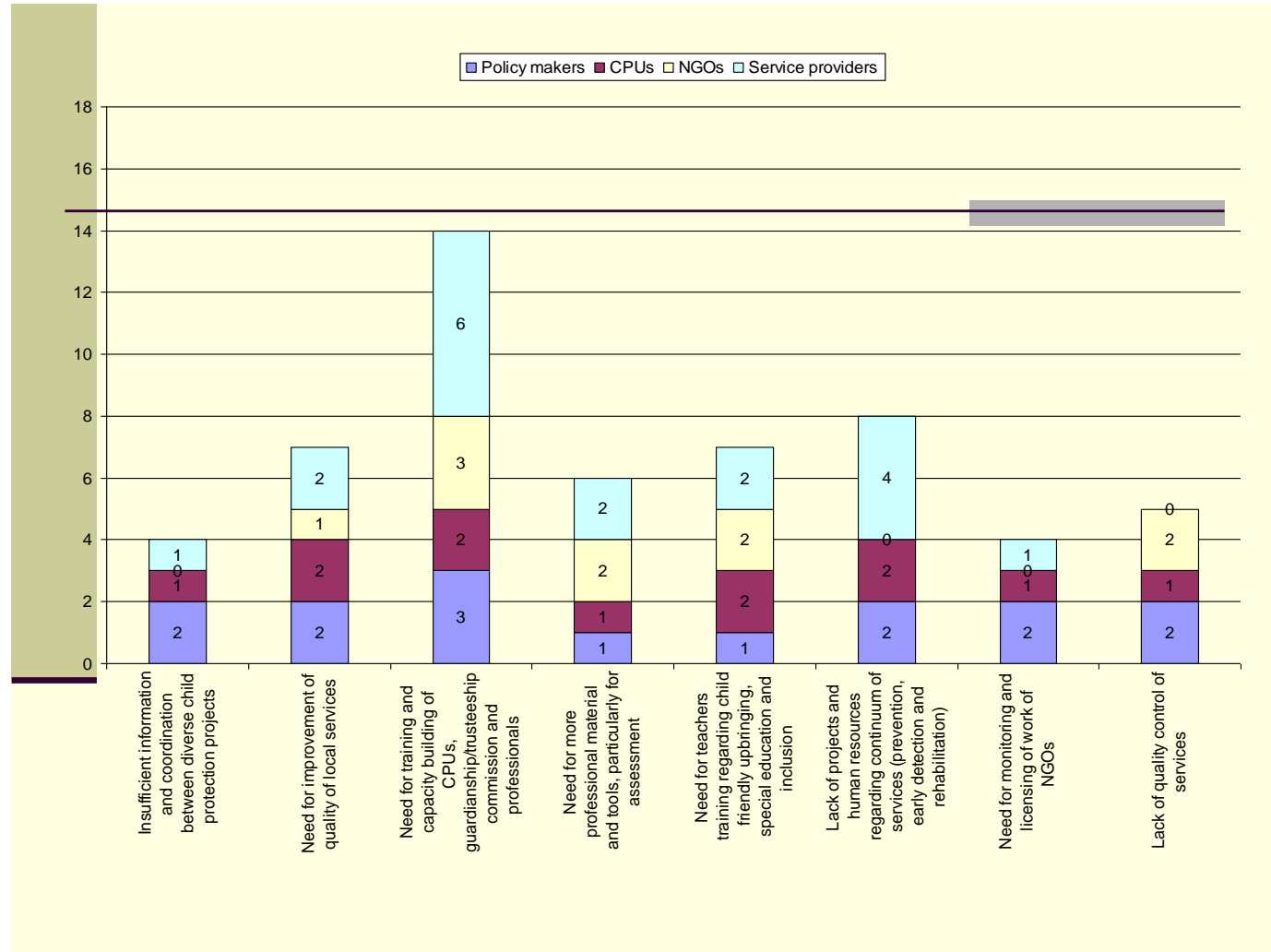
9. Participation of children and families at risk and community empowerment	
Activities	Involved parties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents' of children with disabilities support and advocacy groups since 1998 	BOH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 500 community members, parents and children in Lori and Tavoush marzes become aware of child rights, child trafficking and are able to refer child rights 	UNICEF, Goyartevum NGO

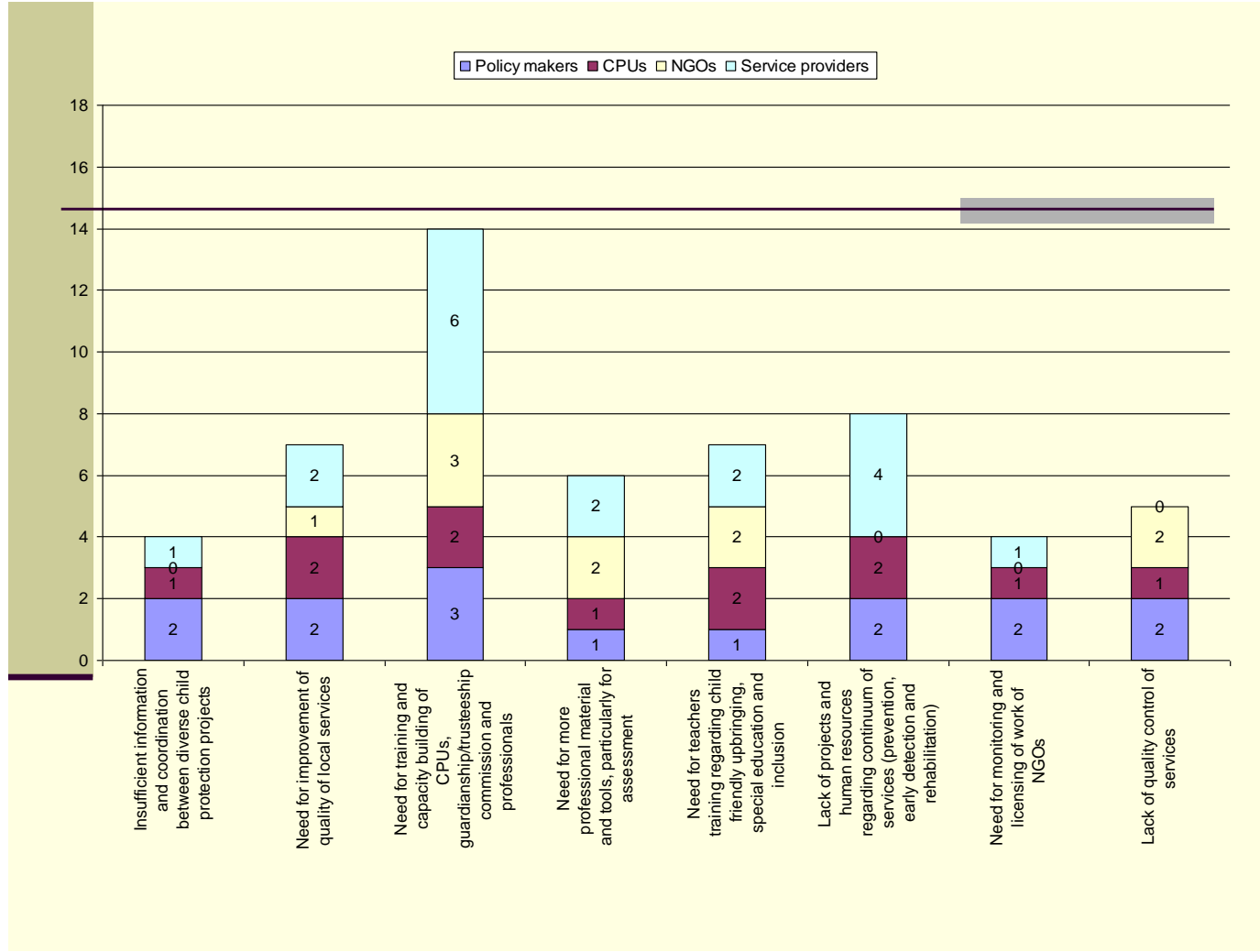
violations to CPUs (2006 - 2007)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness raising among children, families, communities and NGOs on child rights, abuse, neglect (2005 - 2007) 	UNICEF, LGCSPF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community participation and empowerment as part of the rural development project in Armavir marz (as of 2006) 	COAF, UNICEF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child's rights training with 7-9th graders in Syunik marz, peer education sessions, self-organization of children into community action groups (2006) 	WV

10. Cooperation between stakeholders	
Activities	Involved parties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Round table on social protection of people with disabilities (2005) 	UNICEF, MOLSI, NGOs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Round table on administrative documents for child protection system reform (2006) 	UNICEF, MOLSI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seminars and round tables for 250 decision makers (including NCCP and CPUs) on child protection issues (2006) 	UNICEF, MOLSI, NCCP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Protection Network/Education for All (as of 2006) 	FAR, WV, BOH and other NGOs

Annex 4

Challenges to the Child Protection System as Identified by Stakeholders - graphic summary





Annex 5

Synopsis of UNICEF Child Protection Annual Work Plans 2005 – 2007, Objectives, Achievements, Constraints and Follow-Up Priorities

AWP 2005		
Project: Legal and administrative reform in child protection	Project: Strengthening of child protection accountability mechanisms	Project: Child and family participation in child rights protection
1. Support to child welfare reform	1. Strengthening of the functioning of the child protection system	1. Child and family participation in child rights protection
a) Development of policy documents on child protection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participatory development of legal and administrative documents on child protection such as child protection committees, children's disability, psychosocial and social needs assessment, special and inclusive education, standards of care for children in special schools, implementation mechanisms for family code, social protection of children deprived of parental care and other child rights related acts (with ministries, marz administration, police, communities, NGOs) 	a) Establishment and capacity building of child protection bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment and capacity building of a child protection unit in Lori marz with training of experts (with Lori marz and communities) 	a) Advocacy for the rights of vulnerable children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training of staff of local authorities, community centres and parents on child rights and law implementation including NPA through seminars and round tables (with ministries, State police, marz authorities and NGOs)
b) Follow up on legislative reform initiative and HRBAP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Study of probation institute for children in conflict with the law (with MOJ) - Study of international and local documents on children's rights, development and publishing of information package (with MOJ and MOLSI) - Child protection system reform in Lori marz through working groups and training of experts (with MOJ, MOLSI, marz authorities and communities) 	b) Quality services for vulnerable children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacity building of professionals working in child protection through training of social workers, judges, law enforcement bodies and care givers in orphanages (with ministries, state police, marzes and communities) 	b) Parental education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training of foster and biological parents on child rights, child care and upbringing through seminars and round tables (with ministries, State police, marz authorities and communities)
c) Advocacy for child welfare reforms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness raising on NPA, PRSP and child rights issues through round table discussions (with ministries, state police, marz authorities and communities) 		
	2. Alternatives to institutionalization	2. Prevention of child rights violations
	a) Promotion of foster care:	a) Prevention of child trafficking:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of foster care project in Gegarkunik marz and Yerevan through working groups on foster care and training of social workers, foster parents and caregivers in orphanages (with MOLSI, marzes and communities) - Implementation of deinstitutionalization of orphanages pilot programme in Lori marz through assessment of families (with MOLSI, marzes, communities and NGOs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness raising with ministries, State police, marz authorities and communities through training of service and care providers and organization of round tables
	<p>b) Establishment of community centres for children at risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacity building and establishment of community centres through supplies and provision of quality services through the centres in Shirak, Gegharkunik, Lori and Tavoush marzes (with MOLSI, marzes, communities and NGOs) - Development of model for community centres for children with disabilities through working groups (with MOLSI, MOH, marzes, communities and NGOs) <p>Capacity building /establishment of community centres for children at risk</p>	<p>b) Prevention of child abuse and neglect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness raising through training of service and care providers and organization of round tables (with ministries, State police, marz authorities and communities)
AWP 2005 Annual Objectives		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Child protection bodies are functioning at national and sub national levels. - In two marzes 30% of children with disabilities and children at risk have access to community based centres. - 50% of care providers in orphanages have enough skills to provide of quality care based on standards of care. - 10% of children of one orphanage and 20 children at risk are placed in foster families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local authorities prioritize and have enough skills for monitoring and implementation of NPA. - 10% of families and local authorities in Lori marz know how to refer child rights issues and violations to local child protection bodies. - Children and care providers in orphanages and special schools are aware of child rights sensitive issues (trafficking, abuse). - Families of children 	---

	referred to the community centres in 3 selected marzes are aware of the rights of their children.	
2005 Annual achievements⁷³		
1.	Development of implementation mechanisms for legal acts	
2.	Development of financial mechanisms for child with special needs	
3.	Development of social protection strategy for people with disabilities	
4.	Early identification and early intervention of childhood disability	
5.	Establishment of Child Protection bodies at marz and national levels	
6.	Development of handbook for juvenile police	
7.	Finalization of regulation on early identification, early intervention and referral of child abuse cases	
8.	Child protection system reforms in Lori marz (HRBAP initiative), establishment of working groups at marz and community levels	
9.	Awareness raising on NPA and PRSP in Lori and Gegharkunik marzes	
10.	Organization of annual conference on NPA on child rights protection	
11.	Launch of child protection handbook for parliamentarians	
12.	Participation in round table on child abuse, in Slovenia	
13.	Round table on social protection of people with disabilities	
14.	Capacity building of care and service providers, i.e. trainings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - orphanage staff on state standards of care, immunization, rehabilitation for children with disabilities, child's growth and development - juvenile police on trafficking, child rights, child abuse, - decision makers, service and care providers on child abuse - staff of juvenile colony on criminal-procedural law - staff of civic registration offices on new civic registration law 	
15.	Establishment of Foster care institute in Armenia.	
16.	Establishment and support to community alternative centres (Noyemberian, Gyumri, Yerevan, Masis and Alaverdi)	
17.	Distribution of different supplies to orphanages, special schools, community centres, etc.	
18.	Implementation of child trafficking programme	
2005 Constraints⁷⁴		
-	2005 was the first year of new country programme cycle and the Annual Work Plan was signed with delay.	
-	Due to the elections of local authorities in communities majority of activities at community level were implemented with difficulties and with delay.	
-	Majority of programme coordinators at line ministries are overloaded by the work with different international organizations and donors (WB, EU, UN agencies).	
-	Not enough coordination of the work of major donors involved in the welfare reforms.	
Priorities for 2006⁷⁵		
-	Support to child welfare reforms (development of legal acts and implementation mechanisms)	
-	Capacity building of child protection bodies at national, marz and community levels	
-	Capacity building of service and care providers	
-	Awareness raising of staff at marz and community levels on child rights	
-	Support to community based alternative centres	
-	Continue with establishment process of Foster Care Institute in Armenia.	

⁷³ Minutes of the annual review meeting, Tsakhadzor/Armenia, 8 – 10 December 2005, p. 11

⁷⁴ Ibidem, p. 11

⁷⁵ Ibidem, p. 11

AWP 2006		
Project: Legal and administrative reform in child protection	Project: Strengthening of child protection accountability mechanisms	Project: Child and family participation in child rights protection
1. Support to child welfare reforms	1. Strengthen the functional mechanisms of child protection bodies	1. Child and family participation in child rights protection
a) Development of legal and administrative documents on child protection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support to working groups on child protection reforms: development of individual rehabilitation plans for children deprived of parental care (with MOLSI); transformation of special/boarding schools to care institutions (with MOLSI/MOES); regulation on rehabilitation services for children with disabilities (with MOLDSI); child assessment protocols for children at risk for disability (0-5 years) (with MOH and NGOs); professional guidelines for multidisciplinary assessment of children (with MOLSI, MOH, NGOs); study tour on child protection structures 	a) Establishment and capacity building of child protection bodies at national and marz levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of child protection body in Lori marz and training of experts in Lori marz (with MOLSI, Lori marz and municipalities) 	a) Advocacy for the rights of vulnerable children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training of local authorities, NGOs and other community organizations, parents and children on child rights and law implementation including NPA : organization of two seminars and three round table discussions in Lori and Tavoush marzes; training seminars for 500 children and care providers on CRC, child abuse and trafficking (with MOLSI, Lori marz authorities and municipalities)
b) Follow up on legislative reform initiative and HRBAP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of probation services for children in conflict with the law: working group on concept paper (with MOJ and State police) - Child protection system reform in Lori marz: establishment of two working groups on marz and community level; round table discussions on HRBAP (with MOLSI, Lori marz authorities and municipalities, local NGOs) 	b) Quality services for vulnerable children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacity building of professionals working in child protection: training of 25 social workers working with children at risk or in foster care; 30 judges on CRC, adoption and the family code; 100 caregivers in orphanages and special schools; 50 members of adoption/guardianship committees (with ministries, State police, marz and local authorities) 	b) Improved baseline data on child protection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - study on child labour and other child protection indicators (with ministries, state police, marz authorities, NGOs and other community – based rganizaitons)
c) Advocacy for child welfare reforms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 seminars and 7 round tables for more than 250 decision makers at national, marz and local levels on child protection issues (with ministries, State police, marz and local authorities in 5 marzes) 		
	2. Alternatives to institutionalization	
	a) Promotion of foster	

	<p>care:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of foster care project in Gegarkunik/Lori marzes and Yerevan: functioning of three foster care centres,; training of social workers, foster parents and caregivers of the orphanage (with MOLSI, FAR, international NGOs, marzes and communities) 	
	<p>b) Support to community centres for children at risk and children with disability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacity building and establishment of community centres in Shirak, Lori, Ararat, Tavoush and Yerevan marzes: provision of quality services to children and families; establishment of child development centres in Lori marz; support to community centres in Noyenberyan, Gyumri, Masis, Yereva, Lori (with MOLSI, marzes, communities and NGOs) 	
AWP 2006 Annual Objectives		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Legal and administrative documents for implementation of child welfare reforms are developed. - More than 250 decision makers at national, marz and community levels (in 5 priority marzes) have improved knowledge on child protection issues. - Child protection bodies are functional at national and Lori marz levels. - Concept paper on probation service and alternative to imprisonment for children in conflict with the law is developed. - More than 300 service/care providers have improved capacities to work with children at risk/with disabilities. - More than 1000 children at risk and children with disabilities have access to quality community services in 5 selected marzes. - 20 children are de-institutionalized and 40 children at risk are prevented from institutionalization through family reintegration and placement in foster families - More than 600 members of communities, parents and children are aware of their rights and are able to refer child rights violation cases to Child Protection bodies. - Baseline data on child protection is improved. 		
2006 Annual achievements⁷⁶		
<p><i>Legal reform achievements:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regulation on transformation of special/boarding schools into child care institutions. 	<p><i>Trainings</i> have been conducted for the following professionals working with children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 25 social workers - children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More than 100 local authority and NGO representatives have been trained on CRC, NPA, child rights protection

⁷⁶ Presentation during the annual review meeting

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guideline on development of individual rehabilitation plans for children deprived of parental care - Admission criteria to the child care and child protection institutions. - Protocols for multi-disciplinary assessment of children from 0-5yrs old - Regulation on rehabilitation services for children with disabilities <p>HRBAP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 working groups have been established (8 experts in each) and developed a package of administrative documents - Round table discussions on developed documents have been organized - Lori marz experts have trained Tavoush marz experts - Developed administrative documents have been considered during the legislative reforms and some of them are being field-tested by professionals <p><i>Child Welfare Reforms campaigns:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 200 copies of CRC Implementation handbook have been printed and will be used for training of trainers on CRC implementation in 2007. - 3 seminars and 7 round tables on child protection issues have been organized for 250 decision makers at national, marz and community levels (including NCCP meetings with CPUs units in marzes) - Government representatives have participated in international child protection conferences (ISPCAN – Child abuse and neglect congress - 2 experts, Child disability congress – 2 experts, Social protection of children conference - 3 experts) 	<p>at risk, foster care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 50 juvenile policemen – using the Professional Manual for juvenile policemen - 100 care givers in orphanages – social reforms on child welfare - 30 school kits have been procured and are being distributed to orphanages and community centers. <p><i>Alternatives to institutionalization:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of foster care pilot project in Gegharkunik and Lori marzes as well as in Yerevan: - Functioning of 3 foster care centers - Training of social workers, foster parents and care givers of the orphanages - Placement of 20 children from orphanages in foster families - Prevention of placement of 20 children at risk in orphanages through support to biological families <p><i>Community Centres for Children at Risk and with Disabilities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacity building of 6 community centers in Shirak, Lori, Ararat, Tavoush marzes and in Yerevan: - More that 1000 children at risk and children with disabilities have access to quality community services - Establishment of a child development center in Lori marz - Training of more than 60 health workers and 200 families on prevention, early identification and intervention of childhood disability 	<p>and legal acts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - About 200 children, parents, educators and other professionals working with children have been trained on child abuse and neglect cases.
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2006 Constraints

Postponed programs

- Juvenile justice – alternative to imprisonment
- Child labor study
- Training of judges
- Training of staff at child care institutions

Obstacles

- Time constraints
- Implementation mechanisms on Family Code have not yet been fully developed
- Poor coordination of inter-governmental programs
- Lack of multidisciplinary staff in marzes to provide quality services

Lessons to be learnt:

- Need to return to positive practice of regular coordination meetings facilitated by UNICEF since many problems still remain unsolved
- Meetings of NCCP and marz CPUs should be undertaken as frequently as possible
- Still there are child protection sensitive issues that remain out of public attention (birth registration, child labor/abuse, child mental health problems)

Priorities for 2007

Child welfare reforms

- Support to reforms of child care institutions (transformation of special schools)
1. Assessment of all children and their families in selected institutions
 2. Development of child individual reintegration/placement programs
 3. Capacity building of professionals on child care standards, child abuse and neglect cases at general education and special schools in the same communities
- Support to development of implementation mechanisms on child welfare reforms
 - Public awareness campaign on child welfare reforms
 - Round table discussions on birth registration, child labor, child mental health problems and other child protection issues
 - Capacity building of CPUs at national and marz level; support to data collection, data analysis and based on them development of local plans
 - Monitoring of implementation of NPA and child welfare reforms in marzes

Alternatives to child institutionalization

- Continuation of foster care pilot project
- Establishment of social integration community center for children with disabilities in Gegharkunik marz (model of Tavush marz community center)
- Establishment of child development center in Gegharkunik marz (model of Lori marz)
- Training of judges on implementation of Family Code /adoption, guardianship, parental rights/

Juvenile justice

- Community rehabilitation services for children in conflict with the law
- Rehabilitation justice manual for police/justice institutions employees

Capacity building of professionals working with parents and children on

- child rights, legislative reforms
- abuse and neglect cases

Study on child labor

AWP 2007		
Project: Policy development and advocacy – Legal and administrative reforms on child Protection	Project: Capacity development - Strengthening of child protection accountability mechanisms	Project: Child, family, Community participation – Child, family, community participation in child protection
1. Advocacy for a strengthened legal and administrative framework on child protection	1. Capacity development among service/care providers working with children at risk, deprived of parental care and with disabilities	1. Improved baseline data on child protection and empowerment of vulnerable children and their families.
a) Development of child protection administrative documents (probation services for children in conflict with the law; guidelines on prevention, identification and referral of children at risk) through support to the Government with technical expertise and facilitation of discussions.	a) Strengthen protection of children in child care institutions through training seminars on child care and professional standards.	a) Collection of data and identification of main forms and causes of child labour by conducting a nationwide Child Labour Study. Link – M&E section
b) Awareness raising of 300 decision makers at national and marz levels on NPA, child welfare reforms and child protection sensitive issues through organization of 12 round table discussions.	b) Capacity building of police on application of professional guidelines while working with children through organization of training seminars for 120 policemen from 11 marzes and from Police Academy.	b) Awareness raising among children, families, NGOs and communities on Child rights, child abuse and neglect, trafficking.
c) Support to data collection and development of local plans of action for children through capacity building of NCPC ⁷⁷ and CPUs.	c) Capacity building on prevention of crimes and promotion of healthy life style among children at risk through training of National team of trainers.	c) Translation and printing of Child Protection documents.
d) Capacity building of judges and civic registration bodies from all marzes through organization of training seminars on the Family and Civic Registration Codes.	2. Creation of alternative services to institutionalization	
e) Raising public awareness on child rights, NPA and child welfare reforms by organization of an advocacy/communication campaign.	a) Support to de-institutionalization project through the implementation of foster care model assisting to the Government and “FAR” NGO in implementation of the project in Yerevan, Lori and Gegharkunik marzes.	

⁷⁷ NCPC = National Child Protection Committee

f) Capacity building of Government and NGOs supporting the participation at international conferences, trainings and meetings.	b) Provision of quality community alternative services to children at risk and with disabilities supporting the 3 community centres.	
g) Evaluation of the child protection system reform by international expert hired by ISS and CEE/CIS RO.	c) Provision of quality services to children with disabilities through support and establishment of Child Development Centres in Lori and Gegharkunik marzes.	
h) Facilitate the mid term review process, by providing guidance to mid term review working groups involving key counterparts (Government, UN and Civil society)		
AWP 2007 Annual Objectives		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More than 300 decision makers at national and sub-national levels have improved knowledge on NPA for children, child welfare reforms and are able to implement them. - Child Protection bodies at national and marz levels are able to monitor the implementation of the NPA on children, address the child rights violation cases and collect data on children(in 3 marzes). - Concept on probation services for children in conflict with the law and guideline on prevention, identification and referral of children at risk are developed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least 400 service providers working with children at risk, children with disabilities and children deprived of parental care in 3 target marzes use the professional standards and standards of care. - 25 children de-institutionalized from two orphanages and 50 children prevented from institutionalization through placement into foster-care and support to families. - More than 500 children at risk and children with disabilities identified early and together with their families provided community-based quality services in Yerevan, Gegharkunik and Lori marzes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least 500 members of communities, NGOs, families and children themselves are aware of child rights and are able to refer child rights violation cases to Child Protection bodies. - National baseline data on child protection sensitive issues (such as child labour, birth registration and child abuse) is improved.
2007 Midyear achievements⁷⁸		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More than 300 decision makers at national and sub-national levels are trained on NPA for children, child welfare reforms and able to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 25 children have been de-institutionalized from two orphanages and 50 children have been 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More than 500 members of communities, NGOs, families and children themselves are aware of

⁷⁸ Naira Avetisyan personal communication 26.07.07

<p>implement them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Child Protection bodies in three marzes are able to monitor the implementation of the NPA on children, address the child rights violation cases and collect data on children. 	<p>prevented from institutionalization through placement into foster-care and support to families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More than 500 children at risk and children with disabilities have been identified early and are provided with community-based quality services in Yerevan, Gegharkunik and Lori marzes, together with their families. 	<p>child rights and are able to refer child rights violation cases to Child Protection bodies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National baseline data on child protection sensitive issues (such as child labour, birth registration and child abuse) is being improved.
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