

China

Immediate Needs for Children and Women Affected by the Qinghai Earthquake

From April to October 2010



23 April 2010

1. CRITICAL ISSUES FOR CHILDREN

A 7.1-magnitude earthquake hit Yushu Tibetan Autonomous County in northwest China's Qinghai Province, at 07:49:37 AM on Wednesday 14 April 2010. The epicentre is calculated to be 30 km west of Jiegu Township (Population: 93,000), the capital of Yushu County and about 800 km southwest of Xining, the Qinghai provincial capital. The epicentre of the earthquake is 1,905 km southwest of Beijing. By 19 April, over 1,000 aftershocks had been recorded.

As of 20 April, 2,046 people were reported dead, 193 missing and 12,135 injured (including 1,434 severely injured). So far, 6,870 people have been rescued from debris, but many others remain buried. Local houses, mostly made of wood and earthen walls, were not earthquake-resistant and over 85 per cent of the homes in the epicentre have collapsed, leaving 100,000 people homeless.

Yushu County is located 4,000 metres above sea level in the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, an earthquake-prone region. The present earthquake, however, is the largest seismic event to occur within 200 km of the epicentre in a century. Yushu is designated a "national-level poverty county," with per capita net income of farmers and herdsmen averaging 2,448 yuan (about 350 USD) in 2008. In addition to Yushu County, five neighbouring counties (Chengduo, Zhiduo, Zaiduo, Nangqian, Qumalai) were also affected by the earthquake. In total, these six counties are home to 357,000 people, including 174,900 women and 122,700 children aged 0–17 years, 97 percent of whom are of the Tibetan ethnic minority.



In the Yushu earthquake zone, one out of every three people is a child below the age of 18. With homes destroyed, schools severely damaged, and friends and family members killed, missing or injured, the social rhythms, familiar comforts, and daily routines that were once a part of the lives of children have been terribly disrupted.

Vulnerable to cold, hunger and psychological distress, children and women require urgent life-saving assistance. UNICEF is working closely with the Government of China, and has begun to respond to the immediate needs of children and women in the earthquake zone by temporarily borrowing US\$ 2 million from the Emergency Programmes Fund at headquarters, as well as funds from ongoing programmes in country; these funds are internal loans and will have to be repaid. As the earthquake response continues in the coming days and weeks, additional funds will be needed to protect the lives of earthquake survivors and help children and women regain a sense of normalcy in the aftermath of the emergency. UNICEF is therefore submitting this Immediate Needs Document to request **US\$ 5,000,000** to meet the immediate and medium-term needs of children and women in the earthquake zone.

2. UNICEF'S EMERGENCY RESPONSE: ISSUES & ACTIONS

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Issues

The earthquake caused serious damage to medical facilities, collapsing both the Yushu Prefecture Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Hospital and the Yushu County MCH Hospital, and damaging eight other medical facilities. Medical supplies are urgently needed to provide emergency care for earthquake survivors, thousands of whom are injured. In addition to the damage caused to health clinics, preliminary assessments suggest that the earthquake caused substantial damage to cold storage facilities, making it difficult to keep vaccines and interrupting routine immunization service.

Even before the earthquake, health indicators for children and women in Yushu County lagged behind national averages, with low hospital delivery rate (62.7 per cent vs. 94.5 per cent nationally) and high infant mortality rate (22.7‰ vs. 14.9‰ nationally).

Urgent Actions

UNICEF is working with local and national counterparts to respond to the emergency health needs of children and women in the earthquake zone:

- Provision of emergency health and nutrition supplies, obstetric and neonatal equipment (labour and delivery beds, neonatal resuscitation bags, infant incubators, etc) and micronutrient sachets;
- Provision of essential health services for children and women, including outreach services to remote areas ;
- Provision of surveillance services to monitor children's and pregnant women's nutritional status and support to corrective actions as needed;
- Support to the preparation and dissemination of educational materials for the affected population, including information about infant feeding, hygiene and psychosocial support ;
- Assessment of the cold chain system and the child immunization registry information system;
- Social mobilization and procurement of equipment to support vaccination campaigns and reestablishment of routine Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI).

In the coming days and weeks, UNICEF will support the establishment of temporary health facilities and work with counterparts to restore health and nutrition service delivery. Local health authorities in the earthquake zone are preparing an emergency child immunization campaign, covering Hepatitis A, tetanus, and MMR (measles, mumps and rubella). UNICEF is working with counterparts to assess the extent of the damage caused to the cold chain system and procure equipment as necessary. UNICEF will support the training of the local staff who will be conducting the vaccination campaign, and also support the development and printing of Tibetan-language social mobilization materials.

NON – FOOD ITEMS

Issues

Over 85 per cent of homes in the epicentre collapsed in the earthquake, leaving 100,000 people homeless. Local authorities have established 26 displacement centres, each accommodating around 1,000 families, but cold weather has emerged as an immediate danger to earthquake survivors. Even as temperatures in the earthquake zone fall to below freezing at night, many children and families have been sleeping in the open in the days after the earthquake, trying to keep warm under blankets. Snow and rain are common in the region at this time of year, and the earthquake zone was struck by a hailstorm on 20 April.

Urgent Actions

- Distribution of life-saving and critical relief supplies such as blankets, jackets, trousers and boots

To date, local counterparts have requested UNICEF's assistance for 2,000 wool blankets, 9,000 sets of warm jackets, trousers and socks for children, 6,000 pairs of children's boots, and 2,000 sets of newborn clothing.

EDUCATION

Issues

As of Friday 16 April, state media have reported that 103 students and 12 teachers were killed in the earthquake, with another 684 injured. Final figures are likely to reflect a large proportion of child deaths, given the large child population of the earthquake-affected area. Fully 50% of students in Jiegu Township are boarding students, sent from surrounding areas to the county capital for their studies.

Yushu County has 50 primary schools, 3 teaching sites (grades 1–3 only), 4 junior secondary schools, 3 senior secondary schools, and 1 vocational secondary school, with a total of 22,719 students and 1,086 teachers. Local education authorities estimate that 80 per cent of primary schools and 50 per cent of secondary schools in Yushu County have been severely damaged. It is reported that out of a total of 139,175 sqm of school buildings, 36,572 sqm (26 per cent of total) have collapsed and another 61,574 sqm (44 per cent of total) were badly damaged. Yushu Ethnic Vocational School and No.3 Complete Primary Schools are worst damaged. UNICEF's experience in emergencies has found that returning children to school is critical to supporting their psychosocial health and providing them with a sense of normalcy in the aftermath of emergencies. Education must not be interrupted.

County-level administrative data from 2008 indicate male-female parity at the primary school level (8,004 girls and 8,732 boys), but three times as many boys as girls at the secondary school level (1,282 girls and 3,547 boys).

Urgent Actions

The State Council has requested that all schools in the earthquake zone reopen by the end of April. To minimize interruption to children's education, the following urgent interventions are needed:

- Provision of insulated school tents, each measuring 72 sqm and accommodating 50 schoolchildren;
- Distribution of school-in-a-box, including culturally-appropriate basic educational materials for students and teachers, sports kits, and library kits (with Chinese and Tibetan language books);
- Technical assistance to quickly normalize the return to school for children living in the devastated areas, and ensure the provision of high quality and culturally-appropriate education;
- Psychosocial support to teachers and schoolchildren as needed in both day schools and boarding schools;

UNICEF will continue to work with education authorities to determine the educational needs of earthquake-affected children and plan future interventions.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

Issues

Water supply systems have ceased operation in Jiegu Township as a result of electricity cuts in the aftermath of the earthquake. It is currently difficult to assess the full extent of damage to water supply systems. Even before the earthquake, water infrastructure in this remote rural area was lacking, with only one out of every three families having access to piped water.

The earthquake displaced 100,000 people who are now living in temporary shelters and camps in Jiegu Township. Bottled water has been provided to the temporary shelters and camps, but the Ministry of Water Resources has expressed concern about the availability of clean drinking water in the coming days and weeks.

The earthquake has also made maintenance of proper hygiene practices difficult. The lack of sanitation facilities means that waste is left in the open, where it can breed disease.

Urgent Actions

- Provision of at least 40,000 hygiene kits containing soap, shampoo, toothbrush and toothpaste, towels and other personal hygiene supplies;
- Monitoring of earthquake-affected population's access to and quality of water and sanitation facilities in settlement camps, schools and communities;
- Establishment of water points, latrines and handwashing facilities as necessary;
- Dissemination of hygiene messages in local languages.

In collaboration with local and national counterparts, including the Ministry of Water Resources, the National Patriotic Health Campaign Committee Office, and the Ministry of Education, UNICEF will ensure access to clean water, sanitary facilities, and a hygienic environment in the temporary shelters and settlements. UNICEF will also work with counterparts to identify actions needed to restore and improve water and sanitation infrastructure in schools and communities.

CHILD PROTECTION

Issues

The earthquake has had a devastating impact on children and their families. Half of all the schoolchildren in the earthquake zone are boarding school students, meaning that they were not with their families when the earthquake struck in the early morning of a school day.

At this time, local civil affairs authorities are still determining the number of children who have lost one or both parents to the earthquake. Initial reports, however, suggest that the number may be quite high. Media reports, for example, have quoted the principal of the No. 3 Primary School in Yushu County as stating that 300 students at the school have lost at least one parent in the earthquake. Already, local civil affairs authorities are reporting that people have been contacting the government to inquire about adoption of "earthquake orphans." UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA) to ensure that no unauthorized movements of separated/orphaned children take place. In discussions with UNICEF, MCA has reconfirmed its position, in line with the UNICEF approach, that the priority now is to provide safe shelter for separated children and begin family tracing and reunification efforts. Any long-term placement of children who are confirmed to be orphans will only be considered at a later stage. These priorities are aligned with the lessons learned and experience from the 2008 Sichuan earthquake.

Given the loss of lives caused by the earthquake and the extensive damage caused to homes, schools and communities, psychological distress to children and other vulnerable groups has been identified as a grave concern. From its experience in previous relief efforts in China, including the Sichuan earthquake two years ago, UNICEF found that 90–95 per cent of children and women are able to recover from psychosocial services alone, but 5–10 per cent are in need of more expert treatment. Failure to promptly and appropriately address the psychological and social needs of children and communities can have long-term consequences on their capacity to recover.

Urgent Actions

- Support to unaccompanied and separated children, including family tracing mechanisms and family reunification;
- Assessment of the psychosocial needs of earthquake-affected children and provision of such services in schools and communities as needed;
- Establishment of community-based child protection networks and systems and social work services to safeguard children against the increased risk of exploitation and abuse in the aftermath of the emergency;

- Establishment of culturally-appropriate Child-Friendly Spaces to provide children with safe environments in which children can socialize, play and receive psychosocial support.

UNICEF is currently working with counterparts to arrange an assessment of the psychosocial support needs of earthquake-affected children. The National Working Committee on Children and Women (NWCCW), citing the success of UNICEF's Child-Friendly Spaces in the aftermath of the 2008 Sichuan Earthquake, is now requesting support to help establish Child-Friendly Spaces in the Yushu earthquake zone. These Child-Friendly Spaces would play a critical role in providing community-based services to meet the immediate and medium-term needs of children and their families.

Government counterparts have also expressed the critical need for logistics support to carry out effective relief efforts, identify families of separated children, carry out family reunification and identify extended family members for placement of separated children. Both the local Civil Affairs Bureau and Yushu Orphan School lost their vehicles in the earthquake, hampering efforts to date.

COORDINATION AND LOGISTICS

Issues

The most urgent emergency relief materials are currently being delivered by road, rail and air. The geographic situation of the affected region is very complex and roads and transportation have been affected to varying degrees, leading to logistical difficulties. The only connection between Yushu and the provincial capital of Xining is China National Highway 214 (G214). The 820 km trip normally takes 12–15 hours by car, but inclement weather and increased traffic on the two-lane highway in the aftermath of the earthquake have led to bottlenecks and delays. Meanwhile, Yushu Airport, 30 km southwest of Jiegu Township, can only land A319 airplanes.

UNICEF has emergency relief items in stock with suppliers and Long-Term Arrangements for a number of urgently needed items. These emergency preparedness measures, as well as experience and expertise in supply procurement, are playing a critical role in expediting UNICEF's procurement of emergency relief supplies.

Urgent Actions

- Coordination, monitoring and support of health, education, WASH and protection interventions, in line with UNICEF's Core Commitments for Children in Emergencies ;
- Facilitation and coordination of assessments;
- Monitoring of supply deliveries through to end-users;
- Monitoring and reporting on the situation of children and women in the earthquake zone during the ongoing response and early recovery phases.

Throughout the early days of the earthquake response, UNICEF has been in close contact with government counterparts, including both the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA), which serves as the overall coordinating body for disasters, and the various line ministries, such as Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Water Resources and Ministry of Public Security. The office is also closely coordinating all activities with the other UN agencies through the UN Disaster Management Team (UNDMT), of which UNICEF is the chair. For example, the UNICEF-supplied micronutrient sachets being sent to the earthquake zone are to be accompanied by the emergency food relief being sent by the World Food Programme (WFP).

3. ESTIMATED FUNDING REQUIREMENTS FOR PLANNED ACTION FROM APRIL 2010 TO OCTOBER 2010

At this time, UNICEF is responding to the immediate needs of children and women in the earthquake zone by temporarily borrowing US\$ 2 million from the Emergency Programmes Fund at headquarters, as well as funds from ongoing programmes. These funds will have to be repaid. As the earthquake response

continues in the coming days and weeks, additional funds will be needed to protect the lives of earthquake survivors and help children and women regain a sense of normalcy in the aftermath of the emergency.

UNICEF is requesting **US \$5,000,000** to meet the immediate and medium-term needs of children and women throughout the affected areas for the coming six months.

Table 1. Estimated funding requirements from April to October 2010**

	US\$
Health and Nutrition	1,200,000
Non - Food Items	500,000
Education	1,500,000
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	500,000
Child Protection (including psychosocial support)	800,000
Coordination and Logistics (including monitoring and evaluation)	350,000
Advocacy and Communications	150,000
Total*	5,000,000

*The total includes a maximum recovery rate of 7%. The actual recovery rate on contributions will be calculated in accordance with UNICEF's Executive Board Decision 2006/7 dated 9 June 2006.

**Funds received against this appeal will be used to respond to both the immediate and medium-term needs of children and women as outlined above. If UNICEF should receive funds in excess of the medium-term funding requirements for this emergency, UNICEF will use those funds to support other, under-funded emergencies.

Further information on the UNICEF emergency programme in China can be obtained from:

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