



A fully masked boy at the UNICEF@75 commemoration at Bintumani Hotel in Freetown, Sierra Leone @UNICEF/Sierra Leone/2021/Harding

Sierra Leone

Humanitarian Situation Report No. 4



Situation in Numbers



3,300,000 children in need of humanitarian assistance



4,800,000 people in need*

Reporting Period: 1 January to 31 December 2021

Highlights

UNICEF continued to support the COVID-19 vaccine deployment in the country. As of 31 December 2021, a total of 2,308,000 vaccine doses had been received, including 1,357,800 doses under COVAX. A total of 615,160 people are fully vaccinated and 1,261.841 persons had been vaccinated with at least one dose.

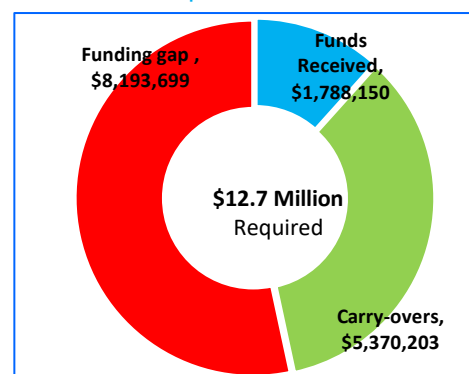
UNICEF supported two rounds (with one mop-up) of polio reactive campaigns (with nOPV2) in which over 1.6 million children under five years were immunized, and COVID-19 surge vaccination campaign in December with 264,739 vaccine doses administered.

Risk Communication and Community Engagement related to COVID-19 prevention, EVD preparedness and the polio outbreak reached 3.7 million people, including through interactive programmes in 59 radio stations across all 16 districts.

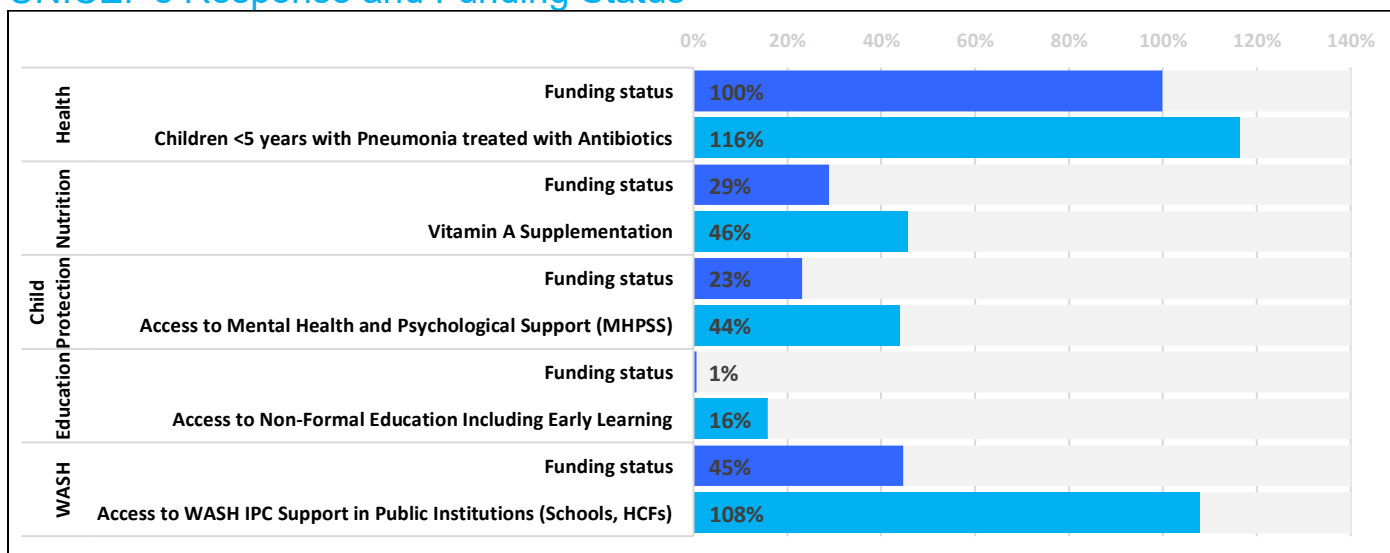
UNICEF supported the coordinated response to fire outbreaks in Susan's Bay and Wellington, Freetown by distributing learning materials to 700 children, providing psycho-social support to 5,515 children, nutrition counselling and risk communication.

UNICEF Appeal 2021

US\$ 12.7 million



UNICEF's Response and Funding Status



*Statistics Sierra Leone, 2015 Population and Housing Census, December 2016; and WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for WASH 2019

Funding Overview and Partnerships

In 2021, UNICEF received a total of USD 1.79 million¹ from the Government of Japan, the Republic of Korea, the United Kingdom Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the Government of Sierra Leone and pooled Global Thematic Humanitarian Funds and UNOCHA (CERF) for the humanitarian response in Sierra Leone. GAVI, The Vaccine Alliance, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the French Committee for UNICEF, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the US Fund for UNICEF and pooled Global Thematic Humanitarian Funds from several partners contributed to the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) to increase access to COVID-19 vaccines in Sierra Leone. UNICEF expresses its sincere gratitude to all public and private donors for the contributions received. A funding gap of 64% however remains.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

During the year, with the resurgence of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in neighbouring Guinea in February 2021 and confirmation of a case of Marburg Virus Disease along the border with Guinea in August 2021, UNICEF supported the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) in actively pursuing preparedness measures to address the threat of spillover into Sierra Leone while simultaneously preventing and addressing urban fire disasters, responding to COVID-19, and rolling out vaccination and immunization campaigns for polio and measles.

As of 31 December 2021, a cumulative total of 6,983 confirmed COVID-19 cases, 123 deaths and 4,490 recoveries had been reported by the Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MoHS). After the second and third waves of COVID-19 in January and June/July, indications show that a fourth wave of COVID-19 started in mid-December 2021. Sierra Leone officially started the nationwide roll out of COVID-19 vaccines on 22 March 2021. As of 31 December 2021, 7.4 per cent of total population were fully vaccinated.

The GoSL issued public notices and announcements and imposed several curfews and restrictions on public gatherings. Although enforcement has been challenging, the government has consistently called for the respect of public health protocols and an increase in vaccinations.

UNICEF response to two fire outbreaks in Susan's Bay in March and in Wellington on 5 November 2021 strengthened emergency preparedness and response capacities.

Together with WHO and UNFPA, UNICEF advocated with the MoHS to ensure continuation of essential health and nutrition service delivery. As lead agency in several sectors, UNICEF also supported the coordination of humanitarian activities through the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) and Ministries. UNICEF provided significant support to the GoSL as the main procurement agency for COVID-19 and other essential supplies.

¹ This amount does not include carry-over figures from 2020 and contributions for ACT-A.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

Health



Olayinka Davies, a Community Health Worker in Ginger Hall Community, east of Freetown, checks the COVID-19 vaccination card of a member of her community.

Since 2020, UNICEF has been supporting the MoHS in sustaining access and demand for quality essential health and nutrition services through the development of the guidance documents, capacity building, provision of supplies and equipment, and social mobilization. In 2021, a training programme equipped a total of 322 trainers and 5,282 health workers in periphery health units (PHUs) and hospitals nationwide with necessary skills, knowledge, competency, and confidence to continue providing essential maternal, neonatal child health and nutrition services in the context of COVID-19 pandemic.

Integrated campaign for Inactivated Polio Virus (IPV) vaccine and routine immunization catch-up was conducted in June 2021, targeting children who missed IPV during switch and children defaulted from routine immunization. As a result, 394,404 children 36-59 months received IPV, cumulative total of 204,623 children (defaulters) received various routine vaccination doses. In response to the circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2) outbreak, over 1.6 million children under five years of age were vaccinated with nOPV2 during two rounds of polio campaign in May and July 2021 and a mop-up round in August 2021.

Following the third wave of COVID-19 pandemic in Sierra Leone from June to July 2021, UNICEF intensified its support to the MoHS in enhancing oxygen supply capacity. Technical assistance was provided to estimate the demand, identify the gaps and develop standard operating procedures (SOP). Three oxygen plants which UNICEF had procured are installed in Makeni, Bo and Kenema Regional hospitals.

Procurement of drugs, medical supplies, equipment, personal protective equipment (PPE), in support of the response to public health emergencies, including for COVID-19 and targeted vaccinations to address the outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) and Marburg Virus Disease (MVD) in neighbouring countries, also continued.

During the year, UNICEF supported the GoSL in COVID-19 vaccine deployment from planning, vaccine supply chain, cold chain, to demand creation. As of 31 December 2021, the country has received a total of 2,308,000 vaccine doses, including 1,357,800 doses delivered under COVAX. With French funding, UNICEF supported the 10-day third national surge campaign in December reaching 264,739 people. As of 31 December 2021, a total of 615,160 persons (7.4 % of total population or 13.2 % of target population > 18yrs) were fully vaccinated and 1,261,841 persons had been vaccinated with at least one dose. Cold chain capacity improved dramatically through procurement and installation of 430 solar refrigerators in PHUs, 22 large solar

refrigerators in all district vaccine stores, 1 ultra-cold-chain freezer and 1 Walk-In-Cold Room at central level during the year.

Nutrition

A decline in community nutrition coverage was observed in Q4 2021 at 9 per cent compared to Q4 2020 coverage at 17 per cent. The low coverage is partly due to incomplete reporting and delays in the recruitment of Community Health Workers (CHWs) who conduct quarterly nutrition screening in communities. The rates of malnutrition in 189,040 children screened in communities in the fourth quarter indicate that the moderate and severe acute malnutrition (MAM and SAM) rates have slightly reduced from 10 and 4 per cent respectively in Q4 of 2020 to 7 and 3 per cent respectively in Q4 of 2021. Notwithstanding the reduction, close monitoring of the food security situation is needed to address any negative implications of COVID-19 on the nutritional status of children.

From January to December 2021, 42,588 SAM children (20,713 boys and 21,875 girls) were admitted to the Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition (IMAM) programme with 98 per cent of the 36,532 children discharged from the programme were cured, meeting the SPHERE standards.

Through collaborative work between UNICEF Sierra Leone, MoHS and Helen Keller International, with support from Global Affairs Canada to improve under-five vitamin A coverage, a total of 1,280,401 and 686,904 children have been reached during semester 1 and 2 respectively.

With support from the Government of Japan, UNICEF co-led the validation meeting of the National Nutrition Survey 2021 using the Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) methodology. The findings of the survey were presented, reviewed and endorsed, and a report was drafted and reviewed by the MoHS technical working group.

In response to the frequent fire outbreaks in Sierra Leone, UNICEF, as a Nutrition Pillar co-lead, initiated the development of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for the Management of Burn Patients which was finalized with technical inputs from clinical dieticians of Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the Government of Ghana and Ministry of Health and Sanitation.

Child Protection

The Psychosocial Support (PSS) Pillar led by the Ministry of Social Welfare (MSW) and co-led by UNICEF monitored children in COVID-19 quarantine in all districts during the year and provided Psychological First Aid (PFA) to a total of 1,309 children and 3,511 adults.

In response to the Susan's Bay fire incident in March 2021, UNICEF supported the MSW to set up and operate a protection desk/coordination point for PSS pillar partners at the disaster site, which enabled the provision of PFA to 5,515 children (2,493 boys and 3,022 girls) and 3,738 adults (1,327 male and 2,411 female) cumulatively. In addition, the PSS Pillar was also mobilized to provide PFA to the victims of the fuel tanker explosion in Wellington, Freetown on 5 November 2021 in which 154 people died. Within this intervention, 124 adult victims (86 males, 38 females) and 18 child victims (6 males, 12 females) were reached, together with 185 adults among their close relatives (111 males, 74 females) and 18 children (1 male, 17 females). Due to the chaotic aftermath of the explosion, 30 other direct adult victims and 556 adult relatives were provided with psychological support.

UNICEF continued to support the '116' toll-free helpline operated by the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs (MoGCA) which, during the year, recorded 160 cases of rape, sexual assault and other forms of violence against women and children, as well as incidents of child abuse. In 2021, UNICEF also supported the National Secretariat for the Reduction of Teenage Pregnancy (NSRTP) to conduct radio programme discussions in seven districts, and the MSW and civil society partners in 16 districts, to disseminate information on gender-based violence (GBV), teenage pregnancy, child marriage, and protection issues related to adolescent girls, with an estimated reach of 50,000 and 160,000 people, respectively.

Education



A pupil of the R.E.C Primary School at Hastings observes the prescribed COVID-19 protocols by keeping his mask on in school © UNICEF Sierra Leone /2021/Mason

UNICEF continued to support the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) and the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education (MTHE) to ensure learning continuity across all levels of the education spectrum in Sierra Leone.

During the year, the MBSSE with support from UNICEF distributed teaching and learning materials that were in stock at the UNICEF warehouse to 434 pre-primary and primary schools, benefiting 182,663 children and 5,247 teachers from the Western Area in line with the MBSSE's Strategic COVID-19 Response Plan developed by the Ministry. A total of 20 recreation kits, 60 school-in-a-box, uniforms, school bags, shoes, and underwear, and teaching and learning materials were distributed to 700 school children and 60 schools affected by the fire disaster that occurred in March 2021 at Susan's Bay slum in Western Urban Area district. Fifty ECD kits were also distributed by the MBSSE in 50 schools for 200 children, and 170 teachers from the 60 schools participated in Psychosocial training to provide general support to the affected children at Susan's Bay.

UNICEF and Save The Children, co-leads of the Education Pillar, developed a draft Terms of Reference (TOR) and a work plan to guide future emergency intervention in the education sector. The TOR and work plan will be shared with the MBSSE and education stakeholders for validation and approval. Earlier in the year, UNICEF provided technical support to the MBSSE to develop an Education Sector Ebola Preparedness and Response Plan following the resurgence of Ebola cases in neighbouring Guinea.

WASH

With the risk of EVD spill over from Guinea, UNICEF worked with the District Health Management Teams in eight border districts to train 215 health workers and deliver WASH Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) supplies to 50 priority healthcare facilities. UNICEF also contributed to the revision of the national Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) preparedness and response plan in coordination with the Directorate of Health Security and Emergencies (DHSE) and WASH WASH/IPC pillar.

In collaboration with Guma Valley Water Company, MoHS and the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA), UNICEF provided household WASH supplies, and safe water to 1,597 families (7,093 people)

affected by the fire outbreak in Susan's Bay in March 2021 through the installation and networking of drinking water storage tanks with a total storage capacity of 40,000L.

UNICEF continued to work with MoHS and the Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR) to provide solar powered boreholes, water supply and improved sanitation services to 45 health care facilities designated as COVID-19 treatment centres. Water supply from the boreholes of 31 Periphery Health Units (PHUs) was also extended to host communities, reaching an estimated 28,310 people and 14 schools.

As WASH pillar co-lead in Sierra Leone, UNICEF worked with NDMA and relevant ministries (MWR/MOHS) to develop the Terms of Reference (TOR) and workplan to guide future emergency interventions in the sector.



UNICEF supports delivery of water for residents of Susan's Bay as part of early response to a fire incident in March 2021
© UNICEF Sierra Leone/2021

Social Protection

Payments under the COVID-19 Social Safety Net (SSN) programme were undertaken in the last quarter of 2021, with a total of 33,663 households receiving benefits. Post-monitoring activities were completed for the COVID-19 Emergency Cash Transfer (ECT) programme, under which 32,342 households received payments in 2021. Payment activities included Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) Community Monitors, staff from the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA), Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and members of the inter-ministerial Technical Steering Committee for Social Protection who were trained on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) risk mitigation in humanitarian and social cash transfers in April 2021.

Planning for the pilot registration to add people with disabilities to the national social protection registry progressed, with pilot dates set for January 2022. Technical support for this exercise has been received from UNICEF HQ to finalize the questionnaire, including appropriate questions for children with disabilities.

Communications for Development and Accountability to Affected Populations

Throughout the year, UNICEF continued to support the Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) response to COVID-19 pandemic, EVD preparedness and polio outbreak campaigns.

UNICEF supported the Public Health National Emergency Operations Center (PHEEOC) with building and piloting a real-time [public Misinformation and Rumors Tracking platform](#) to manage the spread of rumours, misinformation and perceptions.

Community platforms, including 3,800 CHW, 1,128 Community-Led Action (CLA) and 2,760 KOMBRA network mobilizers, and 4,000 religious' leaders were oriented and supported across districts to promote adoption of priority health behaviors in relation to polio, COVID-19 and Ebola prevention and vaccination, with an estimated 1,115,000 women, men and youth directly engaged in reflective dialogue. Interactive radio programmes in 59 district/community radio stations were also leveraged to support information on COVID-19, Polio and Ebola prevention among others, with an estimated 3.7 million people reached across all 16 districts.

UNICEF coordinated with NaCOVERC and MoHS and NGO partners, GOAL and Restless Development, the training and deployment of 1,082 trained CLA mobilizers in eight border districts from May 2021 with support to 3,929 communities in the design and implementation of community-driven and localized solutions for EVD and COVID-19 prevention and control. UNICEF also advocated with MoHS to improve coordination at district, chiefdom and PHU levels between vaccination teams and social and community mobilizers, including supporting the integration of social mobilizers in each of the 1,385 vaccination teams deployed for the 5-day surge campaign in December 2021.

UNICEF supported the newly established NDMA in the activation of its Social Mobilization and Risk Communication Pillar and the drafting of a six-month communication and community engagement disaster response plan. UNICEF, acting as co-lead of both MOHS/EOC and NDMA Social Mobilization Pillars, also facilitated coordination in response to the Wellington fuel tanker explosion, including a joint press briefing and establishment of a community listening mechanism.

Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

Under President Office, the newly created NDMA coordination structure provides leadership and systematic coordination for timely response to emergencies through operational planning, preparedness, response and monitoring mechanisms. UNICEF co-chairs the Food and Nutrition, WASH, Education, Psycho-social and Communication Pillars, and is an active member of the NDMA Inter-Pillar Coordination forum.

Throughout the year, UNICEF coordinated national humanitarian health activities through the Public Health National Emergency Operations Centre (PHNEOC) and district level activities through the District Emergency Operations Centres (DEOCs). Together with WHO and UNFPA, UNICEF advocated with the MoHS to ensure continuation of essential health and nutrition service delivery, which in 2020 led to the creation of 'non-COVID-19 service' sub-group as part of the Case Management Pillar within the Emergency Operation Centre (EOC).

As the main procurement agency for the GoSL for COVID-19 supplies, as well as non-COVID-19 health and nutrition supplies, UNICEF provided significant support to the Medical Logistics Pillar within the EOC for supply forecasting, technical advice for specification, coordination, and resource mobilisation.

UNICEF co-leads the COVID-19, Polio and Measles Risk Communication and Social Mobilization (RCSM) pillars, supporting coordination for rapid development of RCSM strategies and costed plan, as well as active engagement and updating of RCSM partners on priority needs, activities and gaps to ensure active implementation.

UNICEF coordinated integrated GBV interventions across the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs (MoGCA), MBSSE and the National Secretariat for Reduction of Teenage Pregnancy (NSRTP). Monthly child welfare coordination and emergency preparedness meetings are held in six districts.

Human Interest Stories and External Media

Human Interest Story:

More people are now taking COVID-19 vaccines in Sierra Leone due to effective social mobilization

By Issa Davies

27 October 2021 | **Freetown**, Sierra Leone - With a megaphone in one hand and a pile of posters with messages of COVID-19 in the other, Joseph Jabati, a COVID-19 social mobilization worker, perambulated energetically the length and breadth of Salina Community, a small settlement in Bo, southern Sierra Leone. As he moved from stall to stall in the market area, his megaphone bellowed the sound of a siren to attract people's attention, followed by messages encouraging people to go to the vaccination point that has been temporarily set up in the community to get vaccinated against COVID-19. See full story [here](#).

Joseph Jabati, a COVID-19 Social Mobilizer in Bo, accompanied by a vaccination health worker echoed COVID-19 vaccine sensitization messages through a megaphone in a market.
© UNICEF Sierra Leone/2021/Davies



External Media:

Through UNICEF Sierra Leone [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages, messages were posted demonstrating COVID-19 prevention protocols, the [impact of COVID-19](#), the [importance of vaccinations](#) and UNICEF's [responses to the pandemic](#). UNICEF also worked with NARCOVEC to produce and disseminate a 10-part series of messages on COVID-19, which was developed with children. Through the ad-credit facility initiated at global level, there was a boost in audience reach with social media posts related to COVID-19. The [country office website](#) has also been regularly updated with COVID-19 updates.

UNICEF also worked with local influencers, nominated by NACOVERC as Share4Mama Salone Ambassadors, who used their platforms to disseminate messages on COVID-19 prevention and response. Comedian [Kindo Armani](#) and songstress [Fantacee Wiz](#) contributed video messages on the importance of

vaccination uptake and participated in an [online panel discussion](#) on how vaccines can bring us closer together.

UNICEF contributed to regional advocacy work – including [Call from Africa on COVID19 vaccines NOW](#) campaign.

Press releases with COVID-19 related information and updates were developed and disseminated to create public awareness about the diseases and the response. The press releases included vaccines arrival announcement, including through the [COVAX Facility](#), announcements of the handover of [GAVI funded cold chain equipment](#), handover of [Government of Japan for its contribution of USD\\$700 000](#) to COVID -19 response, announcement on the [Government of Korea's donation](#) of face masks and the handover of medical supplies and equipment procured through [Islamic Development Bank \(IsDB\)](#).

In addition, UNICEF contributed COVID-19 related content to five international media platforms, which reached international audiences with updates on Sierra's Leone's COVID-19 response. UNICEF 75 commemorations in December 2021, aimed at influencing stakeholder support to support better opportunities for children during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

Next SitRep: Inputs into Regional HAC 2022

UNICEF Sierra Leone Humanitarian Action for Children Appeal: <https://www.unicef.org/appeals/>

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Annex A: Summary of Programme Results

Sector	Overall Needs	UNICEF and IPs Response	
		2021 target	Total results
Health	620,700		
# children < 5 years with pneumonia treated at primary health care facilities and in community with oral antibiotics		314,000	441,284
# of children aged 6-59 months vaccinated against measles		450,000	465,186
# children < 23 months who missed their scheduled Vaccination;(defaulters) traced and referred for vaccination at facility or outreach site		23,000	219,997
# people reached through messaging on access to health services		1,800,000	3,700,000
Nutrition	1,900,000		
# primary caregivers of children 0-23 months receiving with IYCF counselling		305,775	656,333
# children aged 6-59 months with SAM admitted		38,000	36,532 (total treated as cured) 42,588 (admitted Jan-Dec) (20,713 boys and 21,875 girls)
# children aged 6-59 months receiving vitamin A supplementation every 6 months		1,500,000	1,280,401 (Semester 1) 686,904 (Semester 2)
Child Protection	1,100,000		
# children and caregivers accessing mental health and psychosocial support		20,000	8,811(total) 2,216 boys, 2,232 girls, 2,181 men, 2,182 women
# people with access to safe channels to report sexual exploitation and abuse		1,800,000	85,742
# women, girls and boys accessing GBV risk mitigation, prevention or response interventions		63,000	219,485
Education	3,265,000		
# children receiving individual learning materials ²		60,000	182,663
# children accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning		600,000	95,081
WASH	2,900,000		
# people accessing a sufficient quantity of safe water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene		100,000	61,215
# people reached with critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items) and services		100,000	7,093
# of people engaged and reached with accessible information on COVID-19 prevention especially on targeted messages on handwashing and use of WASH services		350,000	<i>Not yet quantifiable</i>
# of institutions (HCF, schools, maternities) supported with a minimum WASH & IPC package and demonstrating IPC improvements		100	108
Social Protection	160,000 HHs		
# households benefitting from new or additional social assistance measures provided by governments to respond to COVID-19 with UNICEF support		65,000 HHs	66,005 HHs
C4D/Community Engagement			
# people participating in engagement actions (for social and behavioural change)		350,000	1,115,000

² Education has a 99% funding gap. These learning materials were previously funded, kept in the UNICEF warehouse and distributed in this quarter and last quarter.

Annex B: Funding Status

Sector	Requirements	Funds available		Funding gap	
		Humanitarian resources received in 2021	Resources available from 2020 (Carry-over)	\$	%
Health	1,660,976	137,267	4,141,761	0	0%
Nutrition	3,239,024	683,782	252,239	2,303,003	71%
Child Protection	1,596,000	370,366	0	1,225,634	77%
Education	1,078,000	0	6,970	1,071,030	99%
WASH	3,500,000	596,735	969,233	1,934,032	55%
Social Protection	1,660,000	0	0	1,660,000	100%
Total	12,734,000	1,788,150	5,370,203	8,193,699	64%

*Resources available from 2020 (carry-over) are for on-going health activities initiated in 2020 which were not originally planned as part of the 2021 HAC Appeal. As such, even though carry-over funding from 2020 exceeds 2021 requirements, planned activities under the 2021 HAC Appeal remain unfunded. Funding gaps are capped at 0.