Highlights

- Over the past week the South Asia region recorded 17,717 new confirmed cases bringing the total to 35,844 cases and 1002 deaths. The number of cases more than tripled in Bangladesh (370%) and Maldives (330%). India reported 10,107 new cases bringing the total to 20,470 cases. Similarly Pakistan added 4,088 new cases bringing the total to 10076.
- Due to the pandemic, predictions are made that the South Asia region will experience the worst economic performance in the last forty years. According to the recent World Bank report, the regional growth is estimated to decline from 6.3% to a range between 1.8 and 2.8 percent in 2020 with half of the countries at risk of economic recession. The Maldives will be most impacted with the GDP expected to fall by between 8.5 and 13 percent this year.
- The ongoing lockdown measures have had a significant impact on the lives and livelihoods of the poor including provision of health services. In Pakistan, reports indicate an increasing trend of measles and diphtheria cases due to constrained access to health services.
- The World Bank warns that the pandemic will exacerbate inequality and disproportionately impact the poor. UNICEF country offices continue to engage with governments and advocate for social protection for the most vulnerable population to mitigate the negative and collateral impacts of the pandemic.
- Over 465 million people have been reached across the region with key COVID-19 prevention messages as UNICEF country offices continue to support governments in promoting risk communication and community engagement.
- UNICEF and partners have reached 20.8 million children and adolescents with distance/homebased learning.

UNICEF’s Response Budget in South Asia

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<td>RCCE</td>
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UNICEF Appeal 2020
For South Asia
US$ 80.4 million

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Funding Status (in US$)

- Funds received, $19,546,876
- Others, $6,355,553
- Funding gap, $54,518,609
Funding Overview and Partnerships
UNICEF South Asia appeals for US$ 80.4 million to support government efforts and interventions to prevent the spread of the virus and respond to those that have been affected through provision of critical supplies and adequate health care and responding to the social economic impacts of the disease. UNICEF has so far received $19.5 million from the CERF, Asia Development Bank, DFID, Global Partnership for Education (GPE), Japanese Government, World Bank and Facebook Foundation. In view of the worsening situation, additional funding is urgently required to support government, communities and children to scale up intervention for preparedness and response to stop the spread of the virus and support government service delivery system and respond to social impacts of the pandemic.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs
During the reporting period, South Asia region recorded 17,717 new confirmed cases bringing the total to 35,844 cases and 1002 deaths. The number of cases more than tripled in Bangladesh (3772) and Maldives (86). With daily increase ranging from 266 to 492 cases, Bangladesh cases are doubling every 2.5 days, making the country’s caseload the fastest rising in the region¹. Despite the lockdown and other containment measures, cases continue to rise steadily across the region with 1092 cases reported in Afghanistan; 310 cases in Sri Lanka, 32 cases in Nepal and 6 cases in Bhutan. India reported 10,107 new cases bringing the total to 20,470 cases. Similarly Pakistan added 4,088 new cases bringing the total tally to 10,076 cases². Limiting transmission and implementing physical distancing measures is a daunting task in a region with some of the highest population densities in the world and significant numbers of poor people with lower access to health, and water and sanitation services. According to data analysis of affected people from Bangladesh, 68% of the affected population are men and 32% are female. Similarly, in Pakistan men account for 75% of the affected people. The proportion of male is higher because they are exposed more as they tend to go out of their homes more than female counterparts. In terms of age, 63% of those affected are less than 45 years old (9% of those affected are less than 18 years old, 27% are aged between 19 to 30, 27% aged between 31 and 45, 23% aged between 46 and 60, 14% for those aged 60 and above) they account for less than 17% of deaths. On the other hand, those aged 50 years and above account for 82% of the deaths³. However, in terms of knowledge on transmission of Corona virus, a recent assessment in Nepal showed that most of the youth believed that they cannot contract the disease. This demonstrate that there is a significant knowledge gap regarding the transmission of the disease.

Due to the pandemic, the South Asia region is expected to experience the worst economic performance in the last forty years. According to the recent World Bank report⁴, the regional growth is estimated to decline from 6.3 % to a range between 1.8 and 2.8 percent in 2020. Maldives will be the hardest impacted with the GDP expected to fall by between 8.5 and 13 percent this year, as tourism has dried up. The report also warns that the pandemic will exacerbate inequality and disproportionately impact the poor, as they are likely to contract the disease but also lose their job, declining remittances and increasing food prices. With the ongoing lockdown measures and economic crisis, governments in the region have introduced different relief packages to secure access to food and cushion the most vulnerable from the impact of the economic downturn. For example, Pakistan recently launched a $900 million cash transfer program secured to support 12 million vulnerable families while Indian government announced the free

¹ Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research, Govt. of Bangladesh (as on 21.04.2020
² South Asia Association for Cooperation (SAARC) Disaster Management Centre; http://www.covid19-sdmc.org/
³ Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Health Services, Regulation and Coordination
⁵ http://www.covid19-sdmc.org/
⁶ World Bank 2020, South Asia Economic Focus; The Economic Impact of COVID-19 on South Asia; The Cursed Blessings of Public Banks;
provision of 5 kg of rice or wheat and 1 kg of preferred pulses per person each month to 800 million people for a period of three months.

**Partnership and Coordination**
The UNICEF regional office and country offices continue to engage and work in close collaboration and coordination with WHO, governments, Inter Agency taskforces/other UN agencies, Centre for Disease Control, INGOs and other stakeholders including donor agencies such as Asia Development Bank, World Bank and others. In Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, India and Sri Lanka, UNICEF is actively engaged in the UNCT coordination mechanism to support the government response. In Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Nepal where government led cluster or sector mechanism remain active, UNICEF co-leads the WASH sector, Education, Nutrition and Child Protection and is engaging in the inter sectoral working group to develop joint inter-sectoral preparedness and response plan. Through the sector or cluster leadership, UNICEF Country Offices continue to support governments in planning, coordination and/or implementation of the education response to the COVID-19. UNICEF Afghanistan and Nepal have established response plans and are supporting their implementation through the Education Cluster. UNICEF Sri Lanka has supported the Ministry of Education in developing the Draft Education Cluster Response Plan. UNICEF Bangladesh, Maldives and Pakistan are working closely with their Ministries of Education to develop education response plans.

**Summary Analysis of Programme Response**
The Regional Office and Country offices response plans have been developed in alignment with the 2020 WHO Global Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP), and the 2020 UNICEF COVID-2019 Humanitarian Action for Children Appeal. The key priority for the RO/CO response plans is on the immediate measures that must be undertaken to ensure preparedness and response actions to prevent and respond to the COVID-19 outbreak in each country focusing on the following areas; (1) risk communication and community engagement, (2) critical medical and Water Supply and Hygiene (WASH) supplies and services, (3) provision of healthcare and nutrition services, (4) access to continuous education and child protection services, and promoting cash transfers to address the social impact of the epidemic. Recognizing the specific impact on women, adolescents and children, the strategy includes engagement with women leaders and organizations to reach communities, and integration of measures for Gender Based Violence (GBV) prevention and response across sectors.

Building on UNICEF country wide networks, ongoing programs and vast network of partners, UNICEF in South Asia stepped up its engagement in risk communication and community engagement relying on its know-how on hygiene promotion, social and behaviour change communication and experience from previous epidemics, including in this region (SARS, H1N1 etc).

**Afghanistan Country Office;**
**Risk Communication and Community Engagement**
- 3,750 social mobilisers of Immunization and Communication Networks (ICN) engaged and equipped with protective gear to raise awareness on COVID-19 and demonstrated proper handwashing practices with soap.
- 405,766 households with 773,358 people reached with COVID-19 prevention awareness messages.
- 6,996 community influencers and local authorities’ representatives attended COVID-19 awareness sessions.
- C4D is supporting round table programs in the eastern region to increase awareness on COVID-19. The round table meetings are being attended by high officials from different departments. The reach of the program is around 200,000 people.
- UNICEF is tracking, collecting and analyzing rumors from all regions and different sources.
- A video spot about promoting 'staying home' was developed and finalized and is ready for airing.

**Critical medical supply and WASH Services**
- Distributed 450 kilogrammes of chlorine bleaching powder to department of urban water supply in Kandahar province which provide safe drinking water to 37,492 people through utility source.
- Distributed 500 kilogrammes of chlorine bleaching powder to the Department of Reconstruction of Balkh, Jawzjan, Sari pul and Department of Public Health of Samangan. The chlorine was meant to be used as surface disinfectant of isolation centers in Sari pul, Jawzja, Balkh and Samangan provinces.
- UNICEF and partners installed solar panels part of water network in Islam Qala border crossing point with Iran in Herat province.
- Hygiene promotion in Herat IDPs formal sites is underway with support of 52 newly recruited hygiene promoters (42 females and 8 males) reaching nearly 50,000 people. In addition, 400 IDP families (2,800 people) were provided with 12 bars of soaps per person.
- To improve WASH services in hospital facilities UNICEF installed a water tank and water filter for the Herat hospital with isolation wards for COVID 19 patients and the system serves currently 78 patients and 12 staff in isolation wards.
**Provision of adequate health and nutrition care**
- 15 out of 60 Mobile Health Teams (MHTs) supported by UNICEF are involving in COVID response.
- The Nutrition section continue to support the Public Nutrition Directorate in communicating critical information related to service delivery and infant feeding in the context of COVID-19. Information was translated into Pashtu and Dari.
- The Nutrition section prepared a guidance note for zonal offices which includes key messages and actions to maintaining essential nutrition services related to treatment and prevention of undernutrition in the context of COVID-19. District level microplanning for adaptation of nutrition programming in COVID-19 situation developed.
- Frequency of visits for SAM treatment services has been adjusted from weekly to every two weeks due to movement restrictions.
- Preventive messages for infant and young child nutrition are being revised in the context of COVID-19 for counselling cards to reflect adapted measures.

**Access to continuous education and child protection services**
- 24,493 people including 14,210 children (girls: 6455, boys: 7757) and 10281 community members (women: 5282, men: 4999) received knowledge and skill on COVID-19 as well as child protection risks that might occur during COVID-19 and mechanisms to ensure full protection.
- In coordination with WASH section, soap and masks were distributed to 850 children and staff in the institutions in the eastern region.
- Ministry of Education (MoE) has finalized the COVID-19 Response plan and started implementing it. MoE announced the broadcasting of the TV content for grade 12 will be started on Saturday 25th April through Ma’arif TV and national TV channels across the country.
- The EIEWG developed self-learning modules for children with no access to TVs and radio targeting the children in the hardest to reach areas focusing on community-based education.

**Social Protection/Humanitarian Cash Transfers**
- UNICEF is designing a multi-purpose child grant to cover basic survival needs for children in Herat, targeting 5000 of the most vulnerable households with two transfers per household over a period of three months. Transfer values and frequency will be based on Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) calculations and will be aligned with other agencies’ cash transfers programmes.

**Bangladesh Country Office;**

**Risk Communication and Community Engagement**
- 37.5 million people have been reached with information on: (i) staying at home (ii) social distancing (iii) hygiene and handwashing and other key messages. This week’s highlights include videos with actors and cricketers; a new Meena cartoon; a video co-created with UNFPA and JICA that celebrates nurses and midwives; and a myth-busting challenge that counters misinformation.
- A one-minute handwashing instructional video has been launched on all social media platforms as well as the UNICEF website and has reached over 8.4 million views as of 16 April.
- Religious leaders are promoting messages through 234,186 mosques (nationwide) on (i) staying home (ii) handwashing and (iii) locations of soap distribution for those who cannot afford to buy it, reaching an estimated 46.5 million people (an increase from 11.5 million last week). In addition, 169,722 Rohingya refugees were reached last week bringing the total to 492,655 refugees reached through mosque-based messaging in the Rohingya camps to date.
- COVID-19 guidelines for journalists have been developed and published on the UNICEF Bangladesh website COVID-19 information hub, as well as circulated to 30 journalists specializing in health reporting.
- A new public service announcement about online education has been broadcasted by Bangladesh Betar and Radio Naf 99.2 for students in host communities. COVID-19 messaging continues by radio and TV in Cox’s Bazar, with 70 per cent coverage in camps and 100 per cent coverage of the eight Upazillas.56,872 Rohingyas were involved in WASH-focused community engagement to minimize barriers and promote motivators for the adoption of COVID-protective behaviours last week, with 48,740 people receiving soap to allow them to continue handwashing with soap.

**Critical medical supply and WASH Services**
- UNICEF supported the procurement of 14 ventilators, 24 oxygen concentrator, 57 pulse oximeters and 12 laryngoscopes. These items were handed over to the Secretary, Health Services Division, MOHFW to strengthen COVID 19 case management.
- UNICEF supported the development of job aids for rationalizing the use of PPE based on the latest WHO guidelines and a handbook for COVID-19 management from the Chinese Ministry of Health.
• Severe shortages of PPE and oxygen therapy equipment continue to impede an adequate response. UNICEF is working with its global Supply Division and in-country partners to find solutions.

• UNICEF provided technical and financial support, including for spare parts, which supported the repair and disinfection of 712 tube wells in 10 districts under Rangpur, Rajshahi and Barisal Divisions. These actions benefited 71,200 people.

• 21,530 bars of soap and 6,955 kg of bleaching powder were provided as part of a weekly distribution to 64 districts was provided to support 1,000 newly constructed handwashing devices.

• UNICEF has increased water supply from 20 to 25L per person per day to help scale up of hygiene practices related to COVID-19. 490 Rohingya Water User Committee members have been trained to provide operation, maintenance and repair as access to the camp becomes more restricted. 160 handwashing devices with soap have been established in public locations in collaboration with local authorities.

Provision of adequate health and nutrition care

• UNICEF has supported the development of guidance for all districts to improve the continuity of services, such as ‘Antenatal Care or Delivery Care during current COVID 19 crisis’. For immunization, 30 per cent fewer vaccinations were conducted and 40 per cent fewer children were vaccinated in March 2020 as compared to March 2019. Catch up campaigns are being planned and will be implemented when feasible.

• Following the assessment of the facilities country wide, an implementation strategy and plan to enhance preparedness and functionality of these units has been drafted. An online dashboard for the assessment has been developed, which allows viewing each SAM facility’s status.

• A prepositioning distribution plan has been developed to supply essential commodities to all districts. Three months’ of F-75 (430 cartons) and F-100 (500 cartons) will be dispatched sub-nationally by the end of the month.

• All 14 UNICEF-supported health facilities plus 1 diarrhoea treatment centre in Teknaf are functional. Two ambulances have been repurposed for COVID-19 referral. Key concerns include inadequate PPE for health workers; interrupted referrals for non-COVID-19 patients to upazilla health complexes and the district hospital; and space for quarantine.

• There has been a reduction in SAM admissions in the camps due to COVID-related fears and restrictions: The number of admissions had declined from 275 admissions in February to 74 in the first half of April. At this rate, admissions in April will be only half of those from February. 224 of the 688 children enrolled in SAM treatment received a double-ration of ready-to-use therapeutic food this week (the others received it the previous week).

• 1,792 mothers and 33 adolescent girls were trained last week to measure their children/siblings for acute malnutrition via MUAC tape in the absence of active case finding due to COVID-19; since 1 March 4,166 mothers have been trained and seven children referred by trained mothers for treatment.

• An online training on COVID-19 prevention and control organized by the Nutrition Sector and facilitated by WHO has been cascaded to 202 nutrition staff.

Access to continuous education and child protection services

• To reach more than 25 million students from pre-primary to Grade 12 in public schools, madrasahs and technical streams, the ICT division of the Government of Bangladesh is working to implement remote learning using multiple platforms, including TV, mobile phone, radio and internet. General education classes are telecasted on weekdays, with primary school children receiving two hours’ instruction per day, and three and half hours per day for secondary students. Live classes for Grades 11 and 12 are broadcasted through a government portal.

• Through the Child Helpline, 10,884 cases (67 per cent boys) were supported. Children and women affected by violence including GBV were provided with case management and psychosocial support. The need for these services is increasing every week, with stronger support needed for overstretched domestic violence services. Few locations exist for women and children who are affected by violence to seek safety and protection.

• Grave concerns exist for the tens of thousands of children in various forms of institutions and detention facilities. Advocacy with the government for release and reunification of children where it is safe to do so continues;

• 6,334 refugee households with school-age children were reached by 773 Rohingya volunteer teachers to disseminate messages about caregiver-led home-based learning. The messages disseminated included printed text in Burmese, pictorial messages for young children and audio clips developed by the Education Sector Technical Working Group.

• During the reporting period, new alternative care arrangements were made for 89 children (54 girls); psychosocial support for 11,256 individuals (6,489 children, 5,336 females, 2 per cent with disabilities); case management for 858 children (451 females) and GBV services for 25 refugees (24 female) including case management, psychosocial support and referrals.


Bhutan Country Office;
Risk Communication and Community Engagement

- Engaged more than 11,200 volunteers and community influencers to disseminate COVID-19 preventive and containment messages and advisories on maternal and child health, nutrition, learning and protection concerns triggered by COVID-19.
- Developed an illustrated COVID-19 and related key message booklet in two languages (Dzongkha and English) for use by frontline workers, government officials, volunteers, media and other community influencers for public engagement and awareness creation.
- Procured 40 TV screens for virtual conference and online training of volunteers and frontline workers for public engagement.
- UNICEF Bhutan is sharing #COVID19STORIES received through COVID19 Diaries campaign https://www.unicef.org/bhutan/covid-19-diaries. Since the launch of the campaign 55 testimonials have been received from young people (13-24 years) across the country including from those who are in quarantine.
- UNICEF Bhutan Youth Ambassador engaged in creating content in the national language.
- Launched social media campaign on breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding practices.

Critical medical supply and WASH Services

- UNICEF in partnership with MoH, SNV and local governments has completed 13 permanent and more handwashing facilities in Thimphu Thromdey, Phuentsholing Thromdey, Samtse District and Mongar district to encourage and promote handwashing amongst 12,200 people to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Health is conducting a rapid assessment of WASH in Health Care Facilities through a COVID response template developed in google form which has been shared with flu clinic/quarantine/isolation managers.

Access to continuous education and child protection services

- Till date, 144 people including 43 adults (20 male and 23 female) adults and 101 children (45 boys and 56 girls) have contacted the Sherig Counselling online platform set up to provide counselling and psychosocial support in response to COVID-19 pandemic. The 101 children were referred to counsellors in their respective districts and provided counselling services.
- Resources such as “GBV Case Management Guidance during COVID 19” and “Guidance on Children Deprived of Liberty during COVID-19” have been developed to support counsellors, mental health professionals and case workers providing services to children in need.

India Country Office;
Risk Communication and Community Engagement

- Over 1 million frontline workers, including health and other platforms have been mobilized and trained on COVID-19 Risk Communications. More than 400,000 Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI), Self Help Groups (SHGs), National Service Scheme (NSS) have been trained in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Telangana, UP, West Bengal.
- More than 2.7 million people reached with targeted messages and community engagement approaches which comprised of RCCE materials, social mobilization through folk media, community radio, faith-based organizations.
- The 1st round of a nation-wide rapid assessment through U-Report to assess people’s knowledge, attitudes, and practices around COVID-19 has been completed with more than 23,000 respondents. The survey focuses on information/misinformation around prevention, social distancing, responses, and self-quarantine measures. Findings will identify information gaps and help strengthen India’s COVID-19 Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) Plan. Preliminary results which can be accessed from https://india.ureport.in/opinion/1632/ indicate that 7% of the population have not heard about COVID-19.
- Multiple states including Maharashtra, Telangana, MP, Odisha and UP have completed training of over 89,969 Swachagrahis, SBM focal points, CSO partners, on several topics related to WASH COVID response.
- Social media reach for the past week has been 50 million people. Content about COVID-19 appeared on social media feeds 15 million times on average every day and was seen by seven million on average per day. Total reach for the campaign since March has been 288 million. Content focused on countering social stigma and discrimination, and on positive parenting. A Facebook and Instagram LIVE concert for children with celebrity supporter Ricky Kej in Bangalore and musician Lonnie Park in New York was streamed (in collaboration with Facebook and Book My Show), while a Tweet-a-thon was held with CyberPeace on online safety.

Critical medical and WASH supplies and Services

- UNICEF State Office in Maharashtra leveraged more than USD 250,000 for WASH essentials and medical equipment from corporates. Similarly, in Uttar Pradesh, UNICEF has partnered with Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), which has provided Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including about 2,215 Multi-Layer Face Masks, 2215 Alcohol Based Hand Rub and 2,000 pieces of Surgical Gloves to the district administration of Shrawasti and Bahraich.
• Sessions were held by COVID-19 Academy, an initiative by SPHERE India, for Safe environmental sanitation and Hygiene and IPC during COVID 19. UNICEF engaged with multiple stakeholders such as CSOs, FBO’s, CBO’s. COVID-19 Academy completed 8 courses with enrollment of 9371 volunteers (5841 male and 3157 female). Self-help groups set-up under the Maharashtra State Rural Livelihood Mission (MSRLM) have started producing cloth-based masks, hand sanitizers and disinfectants. UNICEF partner Swayam Shikshan Prayog in Osmanabad district is working with communities from drought prone village to produce cloth masks based on guidelines given by MoHFW.

Provision of adequate health care, including case management, WASH and nutrition

• The UNICEF immunization team has contributed to drafting national guidelines for immunization services during COVID-19. The finalization and approval of such guidelines will be taken forward by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

• Session on Responsive Parenting for Young Children in times of COVID-19 conducted on COVID-19 Academy as well as a session on Maintaining Healthy Eating and Lifestyle for General Population was conducted by National Center of Excellence and Advanced Research on Diets. The latter reached out to 964 participants who have volunteered to support local level authorities to deliver services to address direct and secondary impact of COVID-19.

• The UNICEF health and nutrition teams across states have supported the adaptation and roll out of SOPs and Guidelines for continuity of critical health services.

Access to continuous education and child protection services

• Following the Supreme Court order, systems have been put in place and guidance was shared to monitor and follow up on children in institutions. All 17 UNICEF supported states have completed orientation on prevention and response to COVID 19 and have reached 313,513 children in alternative care. 3,142 children without parental care have also been supported. At present with UNICEF guidance, 3 states have set up daily monitoring mechanisms (Bihar, Karnataka and Jharkhand) to track children who have been sent home from Institutions as this number continues to be an area of concern. Two states (Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan) have initiated follow up of children in foster care and kinship care arrangements.

• UNICEF continues to provide support to partners for provision of Psychosocial support (PSS). 21,940 children have been reached, through support to child protection functionaries in 7 States. A manual on psychosocial support for Children during COVID-19 for Parents and Caregivers has been developed.

• Online safety has emerged as a critical issue. In a recent global compilation of reports of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) found online, India stands right on top of the list, with 11.7% of the total reports. To respond to this, UNICEF India has worked with the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights and Cyberpeace Foundation to issue an advisory on online safety of children. To ensure more uptake of this advisory, UNICEF India with Twitter and other partners recently held a twitter chat which saw an engagement of nearly 3 million people and a lot of discussion on the topic.

Data Collection and Analysis of collateral impacts of COVID-19

• Rapid Needs Assessments in 9 migrants and shelter camps were conducted in four districts of Maharashtra. The findings will support state to develop a real time shelter management protocol and tracking the migrants and vulnerable population. Similarly, in the state of Odisha UNICEF is undertaking a Rapid Need Assessment of the situation in partnership with Inter Agency Group covering food security and nutrition, health, migration, gender, child protection, etc.

• Budget analysis on impact on states’ finance are ongoing (Odisha, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Kerala, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, UP). This will be used to influence the states supplementary budget.

Maldives Country Office;
Risk Communication and Community Engagement

• With the announcement of a lockdown of the capital Male’ and later nationwide following community transmission, the risk communication messaging focused on advising the public on the importance of staying at home more than ever to contain the spread while staying in touch with loved ones despite physical distancing, and building healthy/inclusive routines to ensure everyone is mentally and physically fit and strengthen their resilience to stress.

• Daily messages and infographics are disseminated through UNICEF Maldives social media channels. The theme during the reporting period focused on conveying the importance of early childhood development and positive parenting practices during the COVID-19 pandemic. These messages aimed at parents and caregivers provided guidance on making opportunities available for children to play, relax and keeping regular routines to help them be happy and less anxious.
Access to continuous education and child protection services

- Tele-classes for primary and secondary grades (1 to 12) continued as planned until 15 April 2020. However, all tele-classes were discontinued by the Ministry of Education (MoE) following the announcement of the first case of community transmission in Male’. Currently, discussions are underway between UNICEF and MoE on alternative ways of continuing education. Few schools in the Atolls continue to offer classes through Google Meet, in other cases teachers connect via Viber with students, however there is no standardized approach.
- Training of teachers on Google G-suite continued this week. A total of 25 teachers have been certified to date since the project started in 1st April 2020.
- As of now, in partnership with the local NGO ‘Advocating the Rights of Children (ARC)’ messages targeting the issues faced by children and families have been developed and disseminated on social media channels.
- UNICEF is now actively participating in the Working Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services, established at the National Emergency Operating Centre (NEOC), to address the mental health issues of children, women and other vulnerable groups.

Social Protection/Humanitarian Cash Transfers

- UNICEF is providing financial support to two interventions to support an initial 1,000 families who need immediate help through the provision of targeted emergency food relief to families and meals for the homeless in collaboration with the MoGFSS and Male’ City Council.
- A total of 81 homeless persons and drug users were identified who are being supported with basic needs and accommodation. Currently 31 people are hosted in Immadudin School, drug users are being integrated into families where possible or supported through National Drug Agency.
- Upon the request of the National Social Protection Agency (NSPA), UNICEF and the International Policy Centre (IPC) are developing a concept for introducing a time-bound targeted child grant to support some of the most vulnerable families to meet essential needs.

Nepal Country Office;
Risk Communication and Community Engagement

- UNICEF launched the first five episodes of the radio programme, “Corona Capsule”, and seven episodes of the television programme “Corona Care” (which focus on COVID-19 risk communication messages). The messages were aired through 340 radio stations and popular television channels reaching more than one million people (79 per cent male and 21 per cent female). The radio and television programmes are also broadcasted on Facebook, podcasts and the mobile application “Hamro Patro” and UNICEF Nepal website.
- UNICEF continues to provide support to Ministry of Health and Population in addressing rumours, misinformation and concerns related to treatment procedures.
- Multi-lingual (local languages) public service announcements of COVID-19 preventive and protective messages continue to be aired through more than 400 radio stations - reaching more than two million people.
- UNICEF Nepal social media channels reached over 20 million people and engaged nearly 2.7 million people with messages on COVID-19 as of last week. A social media pack for key nutrition messages about breastfeeding and complementary feeding in the context of COVID-19 is being disseminated.
- UNICEF’s parenting portal, with resources for parents to support home well-being of their children received more than 100,000 visits in the past month with social media messages on parenting through UNICEF channels reaching more than seven million people.
- A private sector engagement strategy has been deployed to drive family friendly policies. A dedicated site for the private sector has been created in Nepali on the UNICEF Nepal website. The page has received 12,800 page views to date. This will help business to adhere to various measures to continue their businesses during COVID-19.

Critical medical and WASH supplies and Services

- UNICEF provided 15 different types of critical WASH supplies to COVID-19 designated hospitals, including hand sanitizers (18,945), water purification tablets (19,600) and flocculants / disinfectant (144,000), hygiene kits (410), buckets and mugs (230) based on a minimum package of priority support.
- UNICEF also provided a total of seven medical tents to the government to operate fever clinics; a horizontal autoclave (210 litre capacity) for the decontamination of infectious waste prior to disposal; and supplies such as surgical masks (9,000), surgical gloves (9000), hand sanitizers, blankets and LLIN bed nets to support the designated COVID hospitals and the isolation facilities.
- The WASH and Health teams jointly conducted rapid assessment of three quarantine centres (two in Province 5 and one in Province 2) and 10 health care facilities in Province 5 and Province 2 using the agreed joint assessment tool. It was found that these facilities lack adherence to infection prevention and control protocols. They also identified critical needs in terms of basic WASH services.
Provision of adequate health care, including case management, WASH and nutrition

- With UNICEF support to the National Health Training Center (NHTC), a training package for community level health workers including Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHV) is being developed to complement the Nepali version of online learning/training packages for medical doctors, nurses and health workers, and managers in designated COVID-19 health facilities. A total of 54 health workers have been trained so far.
- With the support of UNICEF, the Kanti Children Hospital began a child and adolescent mental health clinic this week. A clinical psychiatrist and psychologists provide clinical and psychosocial management support, including an initial 10 requests for services this week.
- According to the routine health service statistics, in the past month utilization of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) treatment services at Outpatient Therapeutic Care Centers (OTCC) has ceased, which is most likely due to the lockdown situation. There have been no reports of new cases of severe acute malnutrition referred to health facilities for treatment, which is a consequence of cessation of mass screening, and zero children have returned to OTCCs for follow up visits and treatment monitoring also because of lockdown measures.
- UNICEF supported the government to pre-position 710 cartons of RUTF and 40 cartons of micronutrient powder from the warehouses of Province 2 to 136 local governments and from the district health office warehouses of Province five (Karnali) and Sudurpaschim province to their respective Outpatient Therapeutic Care Centers (OTCCs).

Access to continuous education and child protection services

- The mapping of available digital learning materials has been completed and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) digital learning portal is being finalized. The identified materials will be uploaded in accordance with the curriculum of grade 1-10 on the digital learning portal. The identified materials cover around 25 per cent of the entire curriculum, mostly grades 6-10 curriculum, including guidance on use of these materials by children and teachers to facilitate online learning.
- Several local governments have started distance teaching programme through FM radios for Secondary Education Examination (SEE) appearing students with support from the education cluster partners
- Through UNICEF’ and cluster partners technical assistance contents of self-learning materials for pre-primary and grade 1 are endorsed and now being uploaded in the Centre for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD) website. Editing of grade 2 and 3 is completed and is in designing process.
- Two education specific PSAs are being aired through 34 local FMs in 18 districts through Education Cluster Partners. The PSAs give key messages to parents on how to keep children engaged at home during the time of lockdown. PSAs are uploaded in the website of CEHRD for wider dissemination. (https://www.doe.gov.np/article/1057/education-specific-psa-focusing-on-covid-19.html)
- UNICEF and the World Bank agreed to facilitate the Government in the development of Nepal’s application for the COVID-19 accelerated funding window, for which Nepal is eligible for funds of up to US$ 15 million. The funds will support both the immediate response (for which the World bank will channel funds to the education cluster through UNICEF) and the early recovery response through the gGovernment.
- Education Clusters have been activated in four provinces (Province 2, Province 5, Karnali Province and Sudurpaschim Province). Karnali Province and Sudurpaschim Province approved COVID-19 education preparedness and response plan whereas Province 2 and 5 have initiated the process to develop it.
- A total of 1,589 people (943 females and 646 males) have received psychosocial services through existing helplines and telephone. Among the total callers, 76 were referred for psychiatric consultation and other services. Most of the calls were related to information on symptoms of COVID-19, information on where to seek relief support and to share their feelings of fear and anxiety.
- To date, 1,598 children have been released from institutional care facilities and sent to their guardians, representing roughly 34 percent of total children in institutional care facilities in the Kathmandu Valley where the highest number of children in such care. Out 198 institutional care facilities contacted by phone, 14, caring for 305 children (93 girls) indicated shortages in basic supplies (food, water etc.).
- A total of 227 children (including 3 girls) nationwide, in pre-trial detection or serving a correction order of less than one year were released to their guardians following a court order.
- Messages produced by National Child Rights Council and UNICEF on behalf of the protection cluster on vulnerability of children in the current situation and promotion of the use of Help-line services reaching approximately 15 million people through radio networks.

Social Protection/Humanitarian Cash Transfers

- UNICEF is planning to implement an emergency cash transfer programme jointly with the World Bank and DFID using existing government social protection mechanism. UNICEF is already discussing with Ministry of Finance and National Planning Commission on economic relief packages.
- Following the presentation of a draft relief, resilience and recovery plan to regional representatives of the International Financial Institutions, the Government of Nepal met with the core group of the Social and
Economic Recovery cluster to gain support for a rapid assessment of needs of vulnerable groups and development of a cross-sectoral early response plan.

- Following a series of discussions with National Planning Commission, UNICEF has been invited to an NPC’s first consultation on the “Economic Impact of COVOID 19” where the government is expected to announce formation of a ‘Social Protection and Livelihoods Group’

Data Collection and Analysis of collateral impacts of COVID-19

- UNICEF Nepal is working on a paper to understand the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 on children, women and their families in short, medium and long term.
- To complement the analysis, a data collection instrument for a telephone survey was tested with a small number of households for clarity. A monthly telephone survey to assess the social and economic impacts of child caregivers is planned to run for 6 months with additional IVR, automatized voice questions on simple topics, to maintain a pulse on the impact of COVID-19 on children.

Pakistan Country Office;
Risk Communication and Community Engagement

- An estimated total of 33,000,000 people have been reached through TV and radio from Government, UNICEF and UNDP resources. For Ramadan, mass media activities will be intensified through partnership with UNILEVER, PTV, other TV channels, Radio Pakistan and 48 FM radio stations in provinces, including community radio stations.
- Digital Pakistan support to the Ministry of Health on social media has reached more than 19.7 million people this week through their Digital Media platform. UNICEF works closely with Digital Media team.
- A 3rd RCCE brief, informed by combined analysis of the social and behaviour data, daily social medial sentiment data and records from the polio helpline (1166) has been approved and released. The key findings include concern over whether social distancing will be maintained during upcoming Ramadan; stigma and violence against children, and the need to strengthen the messaging around child protection. Informed by the findings, a RCCE plan for Ramadan has been developed with all partners agreeing to intensify social distancing messages during this period. The findings have been used to inform the Health Minister’s media briefings, advocacy and to inform decision making for programme related issues.
- Through existing polio alliances and health programme, 23,113 religious leaders have been engaged and mobilised to promote social distancing, encourage praying at home and to promote key messages on COVID-19. Engagement with religious leaders, particularly Imams, is a key strategy for Ramadan to influence the general population.
- UNICEF’s Advocacy and Communication and polio social media platforms have reached more than 23 million people (5.2 million this week) and collectively the Government and UN Agencies have reached 55.5 million people with social media posts.
- Polio infrastructure such as a helpline, social media hub, CBVs continues to be mobilised for reaching population with key messages on COVID-19, using a combination of channels including WhatsApp, religious leaders’ engagement, mobilization of influencers and celebrities etc. Social profiling was done in hot spots (areas with more than 10 confirmed cases) to have a tailored communication approach to reach to particular communities with a specific strategy for the Ramadan. The Polio helpline which is being used for COVID-19 has received over 1.7 million calls and responded to a total of 372,258 calls. With the increased capacity of helpline now reaching 250 helpline agents, the helpline is now able to respond to higher number of calls. UNICEF supports the 85 agents and the rest are supported by Digital Pakistan. The average weekly proportion of calls answered has increased from 19.2 per cent last week to 47.2 per cent during the reporting period.
- Through Sindh Emergency Operating Centre and polio goodwill partnership with Daraz.pk, Pakistan's largest online retailer is being supported to include key COVID-19 prevention messages in their packaging and deliveries. IEC material has been packaged in their delivery boxes so that they can reach their customers.
- A total of 2,447 journalists, reporters and bloggers have been engaged (an increase of 1,173) at both federal and provincial level for promoting key messages on COVID-19 and to counter negative media and Corona myths.

Critical Medical and WASH Supplies and Services

- A total of 49 new hand washing stations (HWS) were installed at communal points bringing the total number of HWS to 334 across all the provinces (Baluchistan: 4, Sindh: 32, KP: 254, Punjab: 44) enabling around 500,000 people (100,000 new) to wash their hands with clean running water and soap.
- Using WASH communication networks over 1.59 million people (420,255 new) have been reached with COVID-19 hygiene promotion messages (Sindh: 322,260, KP: 294,558, Punjab: 838,574, Baluchistan: 131,519). In addition, over 2,367 sanitary and 420 frontline workers have been trained on IPC with UNICEF support (in Baluchistan: 287, Sindh:299 and Punjab:1781 till date.
- An additional 12,000 people have benefitted from WASH facilities installed at the previously reported 109 Health Care Facilities (HCF) i.e. (Baluchistan: 16, Sindh: 19, KP: 29, Punjab: 45). Cumulatively, over 103,000 people have benefitted from these facilities across the four provinces.
A contribution in kind of 20,000 bars of soap and 8,000 bottles of bleach has been received from Unilever to support the COVID-19 response.

Access to continuous education and child protection services
- A total of 637,459 School Management Committee/Parent Teachers Committee (SMC/PTCs) members, teachers and education personnel have been reached with prevention messages for the COVID-19 response with 603,154 reached during this reporting period. Additionally, during the reporting period 2,570 parents have been reached with messages encouraging learning activities and importance of continuity of learning taking the total to 10,675 parents.
- A total of 96 content-based videos of Mathematics, Science and English subjects have been shared with 2,791 Parent Teacher Committees through WhatsApp to support the continuity of learning. In Sindh, UNICEF is also providing new curriculum-based worksheets to 10,188 ALP students (5,998 girls) from 330 Non-Formal Basic Education Centres (NFBEC) to ensure continuity of learning.
- 4,246 children directly benefitted from alternate learning opportunities through UNICEF support taking the total to 18,002. Additionally, in the reporting week 314 teachers in Balochistan have been trained on psychosocial support which is part of preparedness plan for safe reopening of schools.
- A total of 578 social workforce professionals (279 women and 299 men) have been trained in psychosocial support and stigma prevention through package developed by UNICEF in all provinces, including 225 this week (Punjab: 81, KP: 77, Sindh: 67).
- A total of 2,359 parents, caregivers, children and individuals (130 girls, 118 boys, 1,077 women, 1,034 men) received Psychosocial Support and Services (PSS) by trained social workforce professionals in Punjab, KP and Sindh with 882 being reached this week. This includes 10 people (5 women and 5 men) affected by the virus received specialized PSS services in Sindh and KP.
- There are reports of increases in violence against children that are starting to emerge across the country and UNICEF with the support of Magenta is designing a study on the impact of confinement on Violence Against Children to further inform programming whilst, at the same time, continuing to strengthen Child Protection systems to prevent and respond to violence against children.

Provision of adequate health and nutrition care
- To build capacity of the health workers, UNICEF provided technical assistance to Federal and Provincial Health Departments for development of orientation modules on COVID-19 response for PHC facility based and community-based health workers where these workers will be trained through virtual trainings at different level.
- UNICEF is supporting the Provincial and Regional health departments to ensure the continuance of essential primary health care services in 125 targeted health facilities reaching 537,239 people (Baluchistan: 353, Sindh: 523,995, KP: 506), including the immunisation of 8,851 children (under 1 year) against measles.
- With UNICEF support 2,465 frontline health workers were trained on infection prevention and control and another 5,738 frontline health workers and community volunteers were oriented on COVID-19 and referral of suspected cases.
- UNICEF has supported Punjab health department to procure of basic PPEs (48,092 masks, 61,208 gloves and 874 sanitizers) for frontline health workers. So far, 874 frontline health workers in the targeted health facilities received PPEs.
- At national level, UNICEF continues to work with RCC 19 Task force to develop nutrition messages in the context of COVID-19. Based on the three messages on protection and promotion of breastfeeding and promotion of complementary feeding a radio spot was developed and approved by the government. So far messages on UNICEF Pakistan Facebook page have reached 120,000 viewers and messages to promote positive Infant and Young Child Feeding practices in Punjab reached over 1.3 million people through multiple channels (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter and WhatsApp).
- The number of SAM treatment sites providing nutrition services increased by 7 this week making a total of 2,751 SAM treatment sites nationally, however, service uptake continues to be compromised by movement restrictions. A total of 12,503 SAM children have been admitted for treatment, of which 6,758 were reached during the reporting period (KP: 3,398; Punjab: 667, Balochistan: 290 and Sindh: 2,403). Counselling on IYCF practices reached 6,408 pregnant and lactating women received during the reporting period. (KP: 3,943, Balochistan: 1,557 and Sindh: 908) and 40,890 in total.

Sri Lanka Country Office;

Risk Communication and Community Engagement
- The Government, UNICEF and WHO mass media campaign on addressing stigma, and symptoms and caregiving, had an estimated TV reach of 7.7 million people (based on pre-evaluation data).
- On social media the campaign gained a unique reach of over 2.7 million. The content was viewed over 7.6 million times. As at day 11, all video assets accumulated over 1.5 million video views. For all phase II content, related to both stigma, and symptoms and caregiving, there were over 300,000 engagements.

7 The sharp increase from the previous 34,305 reported figure is due to under-reporting of KP figures in the previous sitreps which has now been corrected and is being reflected in the cumulative figure.
Critical Medical and WASH Supplies and Services

- Evaluation of WASH needs in 55 hospitals identified for the establishment of isolation facilities were completed and estimates were prepared for identified WASH needs. Based on the needs and prioritization of the MoH, the premier Children’s Hospitals (Lady Ridgeway Hospital) and the premier Maternity Hospital are supported with improving their isolation facilities.

- WASH and IPC guidance note for schools was developed and shared with the MoE and the Ministry of Health (MoH) for finalization.

Provision of adequate health and nutrition care

- MoH is planning and developing a strategy for the resumption of essential health and nutrition services. UNICEF is supporting the MoH in developing the guidance on continuation of the MNCH&N services in the return to normalcy. The MoH has issued guidance to the district authorities on measures to resume immunization services, nutrition clinics, and weighing centers.

- UNICEF is working with the Family Health Bureau (FHB) in developing a user-friendly pocketbook for the field health staff providing maternal child health (MCH) and Nutrition services. It gives essential information for the staff in re-starting and continuation of MCH and Nutrition services in the COVID 19 back drop. About 7000 field health workers would benefit from this handbook.

- Capacity building of the community health staff is an important requirement in the COVID-19 response. Work is underway to establish Audio visual facilities and on-line training capabilities at the Family Health Bureau the focal point for training.

- UNICEF is advocating on managing children with MAM and SAM in the community. MoH has started production at the Thriposha factory (supplementary food) and distribution to the Regional Stores. Where required they are distributing Thriposha to the domiciliary setting through the Public Health Midwife.

Access to continuous education and child protection services

- With technical and financial support from UNICEF the MoE conducted a rapid fact-finding assessment through its existing WhatsApp channels and phone-based interviews. While the preliminary data generated through this assessment has fed into the development of the draft Education Response Plan, the overall data collected is currently being analysed and a brief report will be prepared outlining the methodology, findings and recommendations from the assessment.

- The National Institute of Education, with technical support from UNICEF is currently finalizing the learning package for grade 1. The print-based materials will be distributed to all students for all grades in type 2 and 3 schools mostly in hard to reach geographical locations, thus ensuring equity provision of continuous learning to children in vulnerable areas.

- To support the national efforts on ensuring continuous learning, another consignment of 3,000 face masks and hand sanitizers have been delivered to the Ministry of Education (MoE) to protect 1,500 education officials including academics and schoolteachers who are currently involved in the content development of the learning materials.

- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for digital case management had been finalized and distributed Island wide for implementation. So far 156 children in need of care and protection have been reached through digital case conferencing and 23 children were supported on proper alternative care arrangements.

- 1,600 children in institutional care were reached with COVID-19 risk communication messages. Formal working modalities established with the National Probation Commissioner, Provincial Commissioners (9), UNICEF team and Sarvodaya for coordinated service provisions for children in institutional care. Already around 640 children institutions and 72 re-unified children were reached through UNICEF support. 19 Children in certified schools were already re-unified with their families in Northern province. With the support of social service work force, a monitoring mechanism was established to continuously monitor the situation of children recently re-unified with their families.

- Nationally, UNICEF is technically contributing to establish virtual psychosocial support network via the National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) psychosocial support team with the partnership of NCPA, Save the Children, LEADS and World Vision. In addition, MHPSS network established in Eastern and Northern provinces for effective Psychosocial First Aid (PFA) support, counselling and further referrals. Around 416 children have been already reached through PFA support.

- To ensure that all children in Sri Lanka continue to receive adequate support on violence against children, UNICEF supported the 1929 hotline operation by the NCPA, through basic IT support to 16 NCPA officers to continue hotline operation.

Social Protection/Humanitarian Cash Transfers

- UNICEF has produced two analyses papers to inform the social protection response by GoSL and the support provided by IFIs and other actors; these briefs discuss who qualifies for the initial package and the adequacy of the transfer amount.
## Funding Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Requirements ($)</th>
<th>Funds available</th>
<th>Funding gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Humanitarian resources received ($)</td>
<td>Other Resources ($)</td>
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<td>Afghanistan</td>
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<td>Bangladesh</td>
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<td>Bhutan</td>
<td>1,800,000</td>
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<td>India</td>
<td>8,797,750</td>
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<td>Maldives</td>
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<td>Pakistan</td>
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<td>Sri Lanka</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>19,546,878</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,355,553</strong></td>
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### Next SitRep: 29th April 2020
UNICEF continues to monitor the situation very closely and situation reports will be issued on regular basis as the developments unfold.

### Internal and External Media
India; Strengthening the capacity of frontline workers in Maharashtra to tackle the spread of COVID-19; [https://www.indiawaterportal.org/articles/wash-times-covid-19](https://www.indiawaterportal.org/articles/wash-times-covid-19)
Nepal; Learning a new reality in Education; [Learning in a new reality: Teachers from different parts of the country reflect on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on children’s learning](https://www.unicef.org/nepal/stories/learning-new-reality-teachers-different-parts-country)

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Response Areas</th>
<th>UNICEF and IPs Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Risk Communication and Community Engagement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of people reached on COVID-19 through messaging on prevention and access to services</td>
<td>500,000,000</td>
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<td>464,544,684</td>
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<td>132,660,967</td>
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<td># of people engaged on COVID-19 through risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) actions</td>
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<td>1,408,049</td>
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<td># of people sharing their concerns and asking questions/clarifications for available support services to address their needs through feedback mechanisms.</td>
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<td>Infection Prevention and Control (Critical Health and WASH Supplies and Services)</td>
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<td># of people (health facility and community workers) reached with critical personal protective equipment (PPE)</td>
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<td># of people (health facility and community workers) trained on Infection Prevention and Control (IPC).</td>
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<td># of people reached with critical WASH supplies and services for prevention and control</td>
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<tr>
<td>Access to essential health care and nutrition services</td>
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<tr>
<td># of health care providers trained to detect, refer and appropriately manage COVID-2019 cases in children, and pregnant and breastfeeding women</td>
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<td>2,538</td>
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<tr>
<td># of women and children receiving essential health care services including immunization, prenatal and postnatal care, HIV care and Gender based violence services in UNICEF Supported facilities</td>
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<td># of primary care givers of children aged 0-23 months who receive IYCF counselling through facilities and community platforms</td>
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<td># of vulnerable women and children provided with essential nutritional micronutrients supplements</td>
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<td>12,503</td>
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<tr>
<td>Access to continuous Education and Child Protection Services</td>
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<tr>
<td># of children supported with distance/home-based learning</td>
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<td># of schools implementing safe school protocols (COVID-19 prevention and control)</td>
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<td># of children, parents and primary caregivers receiving community-based mental health and psychosocial support services</td>
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<td># of affected children left without parental care provided with appropriate alternative care arrangements</td>
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<td>4,372</td>
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<td># of UNICEF personnel and partners that have completed training on GBV risk mitigation and referrals for survivors including sexual exploitation and abuse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Protection/Humanitarian Cash Transfers</td>
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<tr>
<td># of households affected by COVID-19 receiving humanitarian multi-sector cash grants for basic needs</td>
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