UNICEF Angola COVID-19 Response Interventions. Issue # 2

Background
On 21 March, the Ministry of Health of Angola announced its first two confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the country. As of 20 April, Angola has reported a total of 24 confirmed cases of COVID-19 (16 active), with six recovered and two deaths. Since then, a declaration of a state of emergency has been activated on 27 March resulting in the application of a two-week lockdown, up to 11 April along with other restrictive measures. However, based on the epidemiological evolution of the coronavirus in Angola, on 9 April, the state of emergency was revised and extended for additional 15 days that is, until 26 April 2020.

In February, the Government of Angola had developed a National Contingency Plan to control the Coronavirus epidemic (2019-NcoV). Under the leadership of the government (Secretary of the State for Public Health), in coordination with WHO and other UN agencies, Angola Country Office (ACO) is supporting the sectoral preparedness and response plans to COVID-19 focusing on: (i) coordination; (ii) risk communication and community engagement; (iii) infection prevention and control; (iv) continuity of health care (also including nutrition); (v) continuous access to services (education and child protection); and (vi) social policy (cash transfer and social services referral). In addition, UNICEF and other UN agencies and donors have joined efforts to mobilize resources for COVID-19 response and preparedness initiatives.

UNICEF Response
UNICEF’s response is aligned with the Global Humanitarian Response and the Country Preparedness and Response Plans (National and Regional Coordination Mechanisms) on COVID-19. ACO is working with key line ministries, including Ministry of Health, Education, Social Action and the National Institute for Children to reach 3,830,533 people with integrated interventions to (a) limit human-to-human transmissions; (b) identify, isolate, and care for patients early; (c) risk communication and community engagement-RCCE and (d) minimize social and economic through multisectoral partnerships.

ACO is supporting the government with the development of the national and provincial (Luanda) RCCE strategy targeting 15.6 million people, setting up a cash transfer programme targeting 400,000 families, development of the protocols for nutrition under COVID-19 context and distribution of critical WASH supplies for infection prevention and control, continuous education access through alternative modes such as TV/Radio education instruction, distribution of workbooks and online learning. Programmatically, ACO COVID-19 interventions include the following:

Health
- Translation and adoption of the National Directorate of Public Health (DNSP) COVID-19 flowcharts and protocols for pregnant women, delivery and post-partum services;
- Review approaches to continue provision of routine maternal and newborn health services during COVID-19 pandemic;
- Development of e-learning training packages for ANC, delivery and infection control in the context of COVID-19;
- ACO has procured protective and critical supplies strengthen infection prevention and control, including 8,700 different masks, 150, infra-red thermometers, 2,500 gloves, 2,500 liters of hand sanitizer;

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1 Targets are based on ACO response and it includes 3,100,000 people to be reached through RCCE and 730,533 through programme interventions on IPC, continuity of health care, continuous access to education, child protection and social protection.
Nutrition
- Endorsement and dissemination of three guidance notes on simplified protocols for management of severe acute malnutrition, counseling on Infant and Young Child Feeding and Vitamin A supplementation in the context of COVID-19.
- Drafted e-learning training modules on nutrition programming and service delivery in the context of COVID-19 for remote training of frontline health workers engaged in nutrition programmes in Angola. Cascade trainings using the e-learning training package are scheduled to start end of April with UNICEF financial and technical support targeting 533 health workers from Luanda, Huila, Cunene, Namibe, Bié and Cuando Cubango provinces;
- Procured PPE kits (masks, gloves, hand sanitizers and masks FFP2) for 533 health workers and 902 community health workers in Luanda, Huila, Bié, Cunene, Namibe and Cuando Cubango provinces;
- Distributed 4,750 boxes of ready-to-use therapeutic food, 3,150 boxes of ready-to-use supplementary food, 100 boxes of therapeutic milk F-75 and 30 boxes of F-100 for treatment of an estimated 4,750 children with Severe Acute Malnutrition and 3,150 children with Moderate Acute Malnutrition, all of which, critical to ensure continuity of nutrition services in Luanda, Huila, Bié, Cunene, Namibe, and Cuando Cubango provinces.

WASH
- Supported the development the WASH component of the UN Joint Response Plan to COVID-19, which provides critical IPC, control of WASH supplies, including improved WASH services in health care facilities, schools and communities;
- Supported the provincial Government of Luanda to develop the WASH component the national COVID-19 response plan (guidelines, drafting of action plan and tools to strengthen Government’s preparedness and response to COVID-19);
- Supported the rapid needs assessment of WASH conditions in 14 health care facilities of Luanda in response to COVID-19 preparedness and Infection Prevention and Control;
- Procuring emergency WASH supplies (30,000 bars of soap, bleach, 700 boxes² of water purification tablets, 2,625 packages³ of water treatment products, 10,000 collapsible jerrycans, masks, gloves and alcohol gel/sanitizer) for up to 100,000 people in Luanda, Huila, Cunene, Uíge and other affected provinces;
- Supplied provincial governments of Luanda, Cunene, Huila and Uíge, Bié with essential WASH items (100 boxes of water purification tablets, 500 collapsible jerry cans, and 4,442 buckets with taps, 3,000 bars of soap, 3,000 liters of chlorine) to strengthen infection prevention and control for 90,000 people for two months.

Education
- Supported the Ministry of Education (MoE) to revise its COVID-19 contingency plan for the sector to ensure continuity of education and safe return to education once classes resume for the estimated 9 million children⁴ in Angola without access to education following the government’s lockdown to curb COVID-19 pandemic;
- Supported the Ministry to
- Mobilized human and financial resources (US$ 150,000) to support the MoE resume access to education via alternative modes, including TV/radio educational instructions, distribution of workbooks and online learning. Daily Portuguese and math classes for zero to six grades have been broadcasted since 2 of April with each day a new topic;
- Leading the development of COVID messages together with C4D to enrich the content of available materials, making sure the TV classes content also have sign language and supporting the MoE to develop printed materials for students in remote area that have no access to TV and radio.

² Each box contains 14,000 tables making 9,800,000 tablets
³ Each package contains 200 packs making it 525,000
Risk Communication
- 420,000 people reached with messages on prevention and access to health services disseminated through social media and radio;
- 1,134 people shared their concerns on available support services through the COVID-19 helpline 111;
- Supported the development of the national RCCE for COVID-19, which have been approved by MoH;
- Support the rapid assessment on knowledge, attitudes and practices and risk perceptions between 12-20 March by MoH in Luanda, Uíge, Cabinda and Cunene. Results of the KAP were used to inform the framing of the RCCE plan and as a baseline for assessing the impact of COVID-19 interventions;
- 24,000 posters and 10,000 leaflets on prevention were produced and distributed with support from UNICEF and to be used by social mobilizers in Luanda, Uíge, Huila, Cunene, Mexico e Bié provinces.

Child Protection
- Supporting the National Institute for Children (INAC) and CSO partners to ensure child protection is mainstreamed in the government’s contingency measures for COVID-19, with focus on preventing and responding to unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), children in conflict with the law and refugees;
- UNICEF is working with the National Institute for Children (INAC) to ensure child protection is embedded in the Government contingency plan, including quality case management and continuum of care, prevention of gender-based violence and provision of psycho-social support;
- 39 residential care institutions and emergency shelters hosting approximately 4,000 children across Angola have supplied with critical WASH supplies;

Social Protection
- Supporting the development of the government’s social protection action plan for Luanda, which includes cash transfer and operationalization of 8 CASIs. Developing the capacity of 50 staff from CASIs;
- Supporting the adaptation of an existing cash transfer pilot programme and CASIs in Uíge, Bié and Mexico to assist around 17,500 children. Developing the capacity of 120 social activists to support implementation of the cash transfer and CASIs;
- Working with Parliament to support the public budget review exercise as part of the Ministry of Finance response to COVID-19.

Resource Gaps:
UNICEF Angola COVID-19 Response Plan requires $8,226,000 of which, ACO has secured only US$820,000\(^5\), leaving the plan significantly underfunded by 90 percent. It is vital that UNICEF continues to secure additional resources to mitigate the coronavirus pandemic and its negative social and economic outcomes, without which, UNICEF and partners will be unable to timely respond to COVID-19. ACO needs additional $7,406,000 to fully implement its COVID-19 Response Plan.

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\(^5\) It includes RR, $500,000 from SIDA, %70,000 GPE and $20,000 seed-funding from the RO.