Highlights

Following the first case of COVID-19 in the country, the Government of Colombia took early and rigorous measures to curb the spread of the virus, including a nationwide quarantine introduced on 25 March. Four months into the pandemic, official data report over 211,038 confirmed cases – of whom 49 per cent remain still active, 51 per cent are recovered, and 10 per cent are children – and 7,166 deaths.

The 120-day quarantine is impacting livelihood and social-economic indicators; for this reason, the Government decided to gradually reopen economic sectors. Starting from 1 June, a new phase of the nationwide quarantine begun, characterized by less stringent measures and a decentralization of decision-making to the regions. On 23 June, the Government announced the extension of the nationwide mandatory quarantine till 15 July and the extension of the sanitary emergency and borders closures till the end of August. The virus spread to all 32 departments of Colombia, reaching not only urban areas but also rural and remote areas, such as the Amazon and Pacific coast, where indigenous people live, and the Atlantic coast, where afro-descendants population communities live. In those areas there is limited access to health, protection and WASH services, and scarce local support networks.

In addition to its immediate health effects, the COVID-19 pandemic is also impacting the humanitarian landscape in Colombia. The virus acts as a catalyst for the three pre-existing simultaneous crises: i) forced displacement/confine ment due the presence of illegal armed groups; ii) natural disasters, such as drought and floods; and iii) influx of Venezuelan migrants. New and exacerbated humanitarian needs for the most vulnerable population have been arising and deepening.

UNICEF response strategy has been focusing on ensuring children’s rights are being fulfilled. Since the onset of the emergency on 6 March, some of the main results include:

- UNICEF expanded its interventions, prioritizing territories most affected by COVID-19, such as the Amazon, Choco, the Caribbean Coast and Tumaco, Nariño. Access to WASH has been provided through the installation of handwashing stations, promotion of good hygiene practices, delivery of hygiene kits, and purchasing and delivering of personal protection equipment (PPE) for health workers. Likewise, key prevention messages have been shared as part of the Communication for Development (C4D) strategy. A KOBO survey has been used to track communities’ feedback, as part of the Accountability to Affected Population (AAP) initiative.

- UNICEF, as per the Ministry of Health and Social Protection request, purchased PPE, including more than 180,000 face masks and 12,000 N95 face masks for health personnel in the territories most affected by COVID-19.

- UNICEF worked together with the Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF) to respond to the needs of children in the COVID-19 context, through the delivery of PPE to guarantee the continuity of care services for children.

- UNICEF supported the ICBF helpline 141, to expand the attention capacity and strengthen its psychosocial support to serve children and adolescents. The helpline aims to reach more than 20,000 children.

- UNICEF continued to support the development of distance learning materials through La Aldea strategy, reaching agreements with local education authorities to support 14,000 children in Barranquilla (Atlántico department) and 10,000 in Nariño department.

Sources:
*National Institute of Health, as of July 22.
**Ministry of Education, SIMAT (Integrated Registration System)
Funding Overview and Partnerships
Since the launch of UNICEF COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC 2020), the humanitarian needs and the original funding requirements have increased due to additional requests for support made directly to UNICEF. UNICEF Colombia current financial requirement is US$ 10,536,580. As of July 2020, UNICEF had received US$ 2.3 million against the HAC appeal, the funding gap stands at 78 per cent. UNICEF Colombia has received generous contributions from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), the US Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (BPRM), DFID, ECHO, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, private in-kind contributions through the US Fund for UNICEF and the United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF, and UNICEF’s Global Thematic Humanitarian Funds, as well as individual and corporate donors in Colombia. UNICEF is grateful for the funds received so far, which have allowed for the timely implementation of immediate actions in response to COVID-19. In consideration of the 78 per cent funding gap, UNICEF would require additional flexible funds to ensure continuity of critical services such as distance learning and access to health services currently underfunded.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response
Risk communication and community engagement (RCCE)
Communication for Development (C4D) designed and implemented a communication strategy based on community radios and alternative communication platforms to ensure access of information to the population and promote active participation in a local production of information. Local production of information ensures that communities themselves identify rumors that affect them and define the key messages to address them; promote local empowerment and ensures that information represents the cultural diversity, challenges, and strengths of every community. With the communication community-based strategy, UNICEF works with indigenous, afro descendant, host, and migrant communities and local radios across the country, gathering 30 community radios and local, alternative communication platforms in 16 departments of Colombia. With the community radios and communication platforms, UNICEF jointly build radio broadcast messages, audiovisuals, and printed materials about 3 main subjects: 1) Basic prevention on COVID-19, 2) activities with families as a strategy to reduce violence, and 3) learning at home.

C4D strategy has reached 475,419 with key-life saving information; 643 community, adolescent leaders and teachers have actively participated in local information production, and 851 people had access to feedback mechanisms.

UNICEF promoted the participation of more than 249 adolescents in 13 territories in Colombia in four UNICEF-led activities to strengthen their life and leadership skills and promote self-care and safety for them and their families on COVID-19 prevention. Likewise, 228 adolescents created informative bulletins on the prevention measures, reaching over 1,800 adolescents. UNICEF teen engagement network has more than 6,551,129 impressions on social media, 48,160 interactions on Facebook, and 363,885 interactions in 28 Instagram posts.

Provision of critical medical and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) supplies and improving infection and prevention control (IPC)
UNICEF leads the WASH response in the following departments: Amazonas, Choco, Nariño, Norte de Santander, Arauca, La Guajira and Atlántico. The response includes establishment of handwashing stations, provided with soap and water; delivery of hygiene kits, EPP, and supplies for cleaning and disinfecting public spaces, health centers, shelters, etc. In addition, UNICEF supports the Health Secretariats through deployment of two WASH professionals per territory.

Early in June, UNICEF carried out an interagency mission to the Amazonas department to support the WASH response with 10 handwashing stations, cleaning and disinfection supplies, and spray pumps. In addition, a field response has been established in the departments with the highest rate of infections per 100,000 inhabitants (3,126 x 100,000), and most of them are indigenous people. To improve access to handwashing, UNICEF has also procured and delivered more than 130 handwashing stations in urban areas. To support the governmental response, UNICEF procured cleaning and disinfection supplies. As of June 2020, UNICEF delivered more than 5,600 hygiene kits for the promotion of good hygiene and COVID-19 prevention practices. The kits include soap, towel, antibacterial gel and face masks.

UNICEF supported the opening of a shelter called “Tienditas” in Villa del Rosario, at the border with Venezuela. This space has a maximum capacity of 700 migrants per day. With the support of UNICEF, the gap in water, sanitation and hygiene services of this space has been bridged.

At national level, UNICEF is supporting the development of guidelines for school WASH infrastructure assessments. UNICEF provides technical support to education and sanitation sectors, including the Ministry of Education, to ensure a safe back-to-school approach. In addition, UNICEF provided information on COVID-19 protection measures, reaching vulnerable populations, such as migrants returning to their country of origin and indigenous communities. UNICEF continues to lead the WASH group at the national and sub-national levels in La Guajira, Arauca, Nariño, Choco and Norte de Santander, identifying gaps and needs to coordinate the response with the government and the cluster partners.

Overall, thanks to UNICEF ongoing WASH interventions in La Guajira, Arauca, Amazonas, Norte de Santander, Choco and Nariño, at least 90,000 girls, boys, adolescents and women had access to handwashing stations, hygiene kits, EPPs and hygiene promotion activities to prevent COVID-19.

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1 Including new funding received against the COVID-19 HAC appeal.
Continuity of health care for women and children

Healthcare response has been mainly focused prevention of COVID-19 transmission through the delivery and use of PPE, delivered to the Ministry of Health and ICBF, six local health authorities and seven public health care providers. These distributions were complemented by training on the use of PPE, reaching more than 400 health workers and community representatives.

UNICEF provided technical assistance to seven public health institutions through workshops and development of documents to adapt interventions to the COVID-19 context in the provision of primary health care services, such as prenatal care, vaccinations and child development services, aiming to ensure continuity of services to prevent negative impacts on the health of mothers and children. Moreover, through promotion activities on hygiene practices and other preventive measures, UNICEF reached 472 members of the educational community in 28 schools, 455 families in Uriabia-La Guajira, and community members in five Territorial Spaces for Training and Reincorporation (ETCR). UNICEF adjusted all its activities with migrants and host communities to the new COVID-19 situation. As an example, the 11 child-friendly spaces (Early Childhood Development -ECD) in Arauca, La Guajira, Norte de Santander and Nariño were transformed into 19 Child-Friendly helplines to guarantee the continuity of care for 3,136 families. Support groups on WhatsApp and Facebook were created to share key messages on: i) prevention of COVID-19, ii) psychosocial care for families and communities, iii) emotional support and psychosocial first aid, iv) health and nutrition care, through referral of cases, v) activation of gender-based violence (GBV) and child protection protocols, vi) activation of support networks, vii) pedagogical support based on promotion of care and self-care.

Access to continuous education, child protection and GBV services

UNICEF continues to support the development of distance learning materials through La Aldea strategy, reaching agreements with the Barranquilla Secretary of Education for ensuring support to 14,000 children, and with the Nariño department for another 10,000 children. In areas where access to the Internet and social networks is limited, 8,147 printed books have been delivered and radio announcements have been prepared to continue to support education. At the request of the Ministry of Education, UNICEF has provided direct technical assistance to the Ministry of Education in the implementation of the distance education strategy and the return-to-school protocol. The latter includes psychosocial, pedagogical, governance, budget, biosecurity, management guidelines, and elements that will allow defining key actions and timeline for health promotion adapted to the COVID-19 context for 200 prioritized schools. In addition, with the education secretariats at the local level, schools’ rapid assessments have been carried out for the reopening. In response to the Venezuela migration flow, actions have been adapted to COVID-19. Educational materials and printed guides have been delivered to the families of the 2,095 children beneficiaries of the Learning Circles and formal education activities. To guarantee continuity of education. Complementary actions, such as deliveries of food, hygiene kits and key COVID-19 prevention messages were carried out.

In the area of child protection, 30 girls and boys, who lived on the streets before the pandemic, received support in La Guajira, in collaboration with the Significarte Foundation. Services provided include psychosocial support, care and shelter. UNICEF supported the design and operationalisation of the ICBF helpline 141, to strengthen its psychosocial support capacity. UNICEF has participated in the Temporary Group of COVID-19 and GBV, led by the Ombudsman Office and UN Women, promoting a focus on the rights of the child in the exchange of information, situation analysis and inter-institutional coordination for prevention and response to violence. UNICEF supported the strategy for the prevention and comprehensive care of sexual violence in the Barranquilla District, Mi Casa Mi Hogar. Material for children and youth was prepared with key messages on prevention of sexual violence and information on reporting lines, which has been delivered to more than 18,000 children and adolescents.

UNICEF developed a toolkit to prevent violence against children and adolescents in the COVID-19 context. Thanks to the support of partners and allies, to whom the transfer of the methodology has been made, more than 466 children and adolescents and their families in La Guajira, Norte de Santander and Arauca have been reached with printed material on personal care and prevention of violence. As of June 2020, UNICEF had provided prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) training to implementing partners. A total of 184 staff members (147 women, 37 men) participated, and additional trainings will be conducted to ensure 100 per cent attendance by UNICEF implementing partners.

Social protection

UNICEF is designing a multipurpose cash transfer programme for 1,000 households participating in the UNICEF Learning Circles in the border territories with Venezuela (Arauca, Riohacha and Cucuta), and it is expected that this intervention will begin in August. The aim is to mitigate drop-out risks as well as the COVID-19 socioeconomic impact on children’s food security and shelter. This intervention will contribute to guarantee the fulfillment of the rights of children and adolescents and will have a focus on prevention of COVID-19 and prevention of violence against children, as well as on continuous access to education and child protection services.

At the same time, UNICEF is providing technical support to the National Department of Statistics (DANE) to include a child-focused perspective in the national survey “Social Pulse”, a first evaluation aimed at understanding the COVID-19 effects and impacts on the well-being of children and families.

Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

Guided by the Core Commitments for Children (CCCs), UNICEF response strategy focuses on supporting national and local health, education, social protection and child protection systems through policy development and capacity building, leveraging local partnerships and networks. Special focus is on the most vulnerable populations, including indigenous communities and Venezuelan migrants, with special emphasis on large cities, such as Bogota and Barranquilla, and on the border territories with Venezuela and Ecuador. UNICEF works closely with PAHO, which leads the inter-institutional commitment with the Ministry of Health and with the Ministry of Education. An inter-agency working group has also been created to review the readiness of the

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3 Temporary areas established by the Colombian government for ex-members of the FARC-EP.

Supply section

UNICEF has focused an important part of its response on the procurement and delivery of PPE, as a mean to provide support to both the national government and local authorities in the territories most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This included more than 180,000 surgical masks, 12,000 N95 masks, 6,000 disposable gowns and other supplies, such as nitrile gloves, glasses and caterpillar hats for health workers, as per request of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection.

At local level, UNICEF is supporting health secretaries, family commissioners and regional centers of the ICBF in Chocó, Amazonas, Arauca, Norte de Santander, La Guajira, Atlántico and Nariño departments through the delivery of additional PPE and training. In addition to hygiene supplies such as antibacterial liquid soap, cleaning and disinfection products, portable handwashing, garbage bags, hygiene kits, among others.

UNICEF is in the process of purchasing 552,000 ready-to-use therapeutic food to support ICBF and local health secretaries. This will contribute to the 1,000 days to change the world initiative, ICBF modality by providing ready-to-eat meals to improve the nutritional status of more than 23,000 children under 5 years of age at risk of acute malnutrition.

2020 targets and results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)</th>
<th>Target for Dec 2020</th>
<th>Target for Dec 2020</th>
<th>Target for Dec 2020</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of people reached on COVID-19 through messaging on prevention and access to services</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,345,565</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,561</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,560</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Results by 30 June 2020</td>
<td>821,158</td>
<td>1,274</td>
<td>2,160</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Number of people sharing their concerns and asking questions/clarifications for available support services to address their needs through established feedback mechanisms</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Results by 30 June 2020</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>47%</td>
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<tr>
<th>WASH / Infection Prevention Control (IPC)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of people reached with critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items) and service</strong></td>
<td><strong>259,600</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Results by 30 June 2020</td>
<td>18,250</td>
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**Target for Dec 2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)</th>
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<tr>
<td>125,000</td>
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Results by 30 June 2020

92,259

**Continuity of health care for women and children**

<table>
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<th>Target</th>
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<tr>
<td>128,290</td>
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Results by 30 June 2020

1.172

**Access to continuous education, child protection and GBV services**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
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<th>Provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)</th>
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<tr>
<td>200,000</td>
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Results by 30 June 2020

7,000

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<td>200</td>
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Results by 30 June 2020

30

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<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>19%</td>
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Results by 30 June 2020

3,960

**Human Interest Stories and External Media**

UNICEF communications messages reached 60,783,094 people on social media channels, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, due to UNICEF’s presence on Facebook’s COVID-19 Information Center. UNICEF developed appropriate messaging on COVID-19 prevention, access to services, and visualization of UNICEF’s response to COVID-19. UNICEF continued promoting children and adolescent participation by producing podcasts, videos and blogs. UNICEF activated a web site with useful information on COVID-19, including parenting guides, a guide for journalists, youth mental health articles among others. Additionally, UNICEF created Historias de Cuarentena, a landing page to publish stories during confinement, including the story of Adda Williana, a three-year-old Venezuelan migrant girl living in Colombia with her family (this story has over 5 million reach on Facebook). Also, Good-Will Ambassadors contributed by writing their experiences during the quarantine.

**Next SitRep: August 2020**

UNICEF Colombia Country Office: [https://www.unicef.org/colombia/](https://www.unicef.org/colombia/)

If you want to know more about the UNICEF response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Colombia, visit our website [here](https://www.unicef.org/).