Situation Overview and Humanitarian Needs

As of 15th July 2020, Ghana remained the second most impacted country in the West and Central African region after Nigeria, ranking fourth in the number of cumulative cases in the WHO Africa region, following South Africa, Egypt and Nigeria. The number of people confirmed to have contracted the coronavirus in Ghana now stands at 24,988. Between 1st and 15th July, the number of confirmed cases increased by 6,854. There are currently 3,716 active cases and 139 people who have died from COVID-19. The highest number of cases of COVID-19 are recorded in the Greater Accra, Ashanti and Western Regions.

As part of measures to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in schools, the Government conducted fumigation exercises and equipped targeted schools with hand-washing facilities, as final year students returned to prepare for their examinations. Between 1st and 15th of July, thirteen students and teaching staff in secondary high schools across the country contracted the virus. The students and staff are in isolation and receiving medical and psycho-social support.

An increasing number of Government Officials have been observing a 14-day quarantine after being in contact with colleagues who had tested positive for the virus. On 11 July 2020, the Ministry of Education reported that a large number of staff had tested positive for COVID-19 after a mass testing exercise was carried out for employees. Following this, a fumigation exercise was conducted in the Ministries of Education, Local Government and Rural Development and the Ghana Education Service to sanitize the offices and surroundings.
UNICEF’s COVID-19 response

In support of the Government of Ghana’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF coordinates with the United Nations Country Team, Development Partners, INGOs, civil society organizations and the media to protect children and their families from exposure to the virus and support the continuity of services. A UN Response Plan was developed to identify priorities. In line with the UN Programme Criticality Assessment results, UNICEF ensures that its staff and implementing partners can safely continue delivering critical activities to respond to COVID-19, taking all precautions required.

Health & Nutrition

An additional 500 frontline health workers have been trained in the Greater Accra Region on Infection Prevention and Control and Standard Operating Procedures to suspect, confirm, manage and refer COVID-19 cases.

UNICEF, in collaboration with WHO, supported the Ghana Health Service to facilitate a five-day training workshop on the combined Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) course aimed at improving the knowledge, skills and competencies of key service providers in the context of COVID-19.

UNICEF strengthened the capacity of 36 service providers, including doctors, midwives, nutrition officers and public health nurses from nine regions (Ahafo, Ashanti, Bono, Bono East, Northern, North East, Savannah, Upper East & Upper West) through a training to facilitate downstream trainings, monitor the implementation of IYCF in their respective regions and promote and support exclusive breastfeeding and complementary feeding practices in the context of COVID-19.

To ensure the continuity of services, UNICEF supported the Ghana Health Service in reaching 213,000 adolescent girls across the country (both in-school and out-of-school) with Iron and Folic Acid (IFA) supplements through the health facility platform, from January to May 2020. In addition, through advocacy, indicators on Iron and Folic Acid supplementation of school-age girls are now integrated into the national health information system.

Water Sanitation & Hygiene

Enhanced risk communication, disinfection, inspection and monitoring for compliance of the Government’s COVID-19 protocols is in progress. In the Greater Accra region, about 575 premises, including low-income settlements, shops, lorry parks, taxi ranks, markets and public toilets have been disinfected.

As part of this initiative, UNICEF reached over 8,000 people with messages on handwashing, social distancing and coughing/sneezing etiquette (at least 1,200 were children).
Enhanced risk communication also continued to be rolled out in Upper West, Upper East, Northern, Savanna, Oti, Volta and Central Regions, reaching over 40,000 people within the reporting period.

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) technical and business support programming is in planning stages to improve supply of handwashing devices, mainly in public spaces, particularly outside the major urban centres.

**Education**

UNICEF worked with the MoE / GES to support teachers in preparing final year students for the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). A total of 276 (248 male, 28 female) Junior High School teachers for the core subjects - science, mathematics, English and social studies - in two regions (Oti and Northern) have been equipped with gender responsive pedagogies and health protocols in school amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, teachers were trained on:
- strategies for reintegration;
- provision of additional support to girls whose learning have been disrupted due to school closure; and
- observation of health and safety protocols to promote COVID-19 free learning environment.

UNICEF, in cooperation with the Centre for Learning and Childhood Development (CLCD) and other partners – Ministry of Gender, Children, Social Protection (MoGCSP), Ghana Education Service (GES), Ghana Health Service (GHS) - has completed preparations for the upcoming national and sub-national level stakeholder engagement on the implementation of cross-sectoral protocols related to COVID-19.

The field work for the rapid risk assessment is ongoing to inform the GES regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the education system and learners, and how to respond to their specific needs.

The mainstreaming of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in support of children with special needs, including those with disabilities, in the distance learning programme has started. Gaps are being identified and measures recommended to integrate the UDL content to enrich resource materials for all, especially learners with special needs.

**Child Protection**

During the reporting period, Government and NGO partners across the country reached 136,320 people (26,841 girls, 24,351 boys, 43,156 women, and 36,284 men) with education on better parenting. UNICEF emphasized good and bad behaviours, risks related to child labour, adolescent pregnancies, sexual and gender-based violence, and the importance of integrated community-based psychosocial support services.

In the Upper West Region, children eased their anxiety related to the closure of schools. With the reopening of schools for final year students during the period, child protection teams in the Greater Accra region engaged students on COVID-19 prevention protocols, as well as how to keep safe from violence and how to report if this should happen.
Cumulatively, UNICEF and its partners reached a total of 482,039 people in over 200 communities across 51 districts in 15 regions. Different channels were used such as community information centres, information vans, megaphones, home visits, small group meetings in markets as well as schools. These sessions have been beneficial in providing community members with vital information on COVID 19 prevention, positive parenting and protective behaviours, including non-stigmatization of COVID-19 patients.

Community members were engaged with content from the child protection community facilitation toolkits and posters with standard COVID-19 prevention and mitigation messaging, endorsed by the Ghana Health Service.

The Ghanaians Against Child Abuse (GACA) campaign continues to reach out to people with COVID-19 and child protection related helplines and better parenting messages. The movement reached a total of 301,113 people through GACA social media handles with COVID-19 and child protection messages (up from 198,760 reported during the last reporting period). The number of followers has also increased from 30,971 to 31,011.

Workshops for traditional and religious leaders continued to be held early July, to use their influence at community-level and serve as agents of change. The leaders started to disseminate key messages on COVID-19 and child protection. Some of the traditional and religious leaders were hosted on Atinka Radio to discuss the prevention of child abuse and implementation of protocols. The estimated audience of Atinka Radio in Accra is about 650,000, including boys and girls. The leaders also recorded 12 messages (10 in local dialects and two in English language) to be broadcast on radio and television stations starting mid-July.

Seven (7) Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) drawn from the Greater Accra region were brought together to receive an orientation on the delivery of integrated social services at the decentralised level. These MMDAs are part of the 60 MMDAs that UNICEF is supporting to provide quality services to vulnerable girls and boys and families. A total of 35 participants across all sectors attended the orientation. In his remarks, the Regional Minister of Greater Accra Region called on all the officers to work hard in making the programme a success. The UNICEF Representative shared real-life examples from the field to explain why and how it was essential to ensure the integration of social services at the district level to support the wellbeing of the most vulnerable and promote gender equality.

**Social Protection**

UNICEF continued to provide technical expertise and support the national Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) cash transfer programme. Partners used RapidPro for the first time to monitor the effectiveness of the payments that took place in April and May. A questionnaire was sent to about 10,000 beneficiaries, 4,000 community volunteers and 260 district social welfare workers, with multiple choice answer options, using a free SMS platform.
The questions focused on getting feedback on whether communications went well, payments were received and whether there were any major bottlenecks that need to be addressed in the future.

The RapidPro questionnaire also allowed UNICEF and the MoGCSP LEAP Unit to inform beneficiaries that had not received the payments about redress and grievance mechanisms they could use, such as the Ministry of Gender’s 24-hour “Helpline of Hope”.

The debut of RapidPro in supporting LEAP emergency payment monitoring and communication was successful. Whilst it highlighted specific areas for improvement – both in using the platform and for the payment delivery - it proved to also be a potentially powerful tool for future use programmes to rapidly developing crises, and to address general client satisfaction in social protection delivery.

Communication

Two of UNICEF’s WASH technical experts were featured on a one-hour prime time national television programme on July 2nd. They outlined best practices on hygiene and sanitation in response to COVID-19, highlighting the different approaches to ensure effective hand washing with soap in a variety of contexts. UNICEF’s support to environmental health workers, which includes training on risk communication, disinfection and inspection was mentioned in a feature story in a flagship newspaper publication. The story reached about 100,000 people.

During this reporting period, a newspaper targeting children, the Junior Graphic, promoted the importance of handwashing in schools.

U-Report Ghana participated in a global poll addressing the well-being of young people, specifically on mental health awareness and negative experiences online during the COVID-19 pandemic. Over 44% of respondents have admitted not being able to hear from or reach out to friends for emotional/personal support. Over 46% feel less safe than before and 45% are having more negative experiences online. These include inappropriate content (28%), cyber bullying (25%), harassment and unwanted contact (17%) and hate speech (13%).

UNICEF Ghana joined the global social media ‘PAUSE’ campaign initiated by the United Nations to address the effects of misinformation and fake news on COVID-19. The campaign will run throughout July and messages have reached almost 50,000 people so far across platforms.

Other messages on Distance Learning, Child Online Protection and Mental Health Awareness during COVID-19 have reached over 1 million people across platforms.

UNICEF will launch the Fifteen and Fearless mini-series, of which the Ghana Country office is participating on the 24th July and will rollout one episode per week. This series highlight the lives of fifteen-year-old girls
over the course of five episodes. This is part of the 12-country global programme to end child marriage, a broader year-long commitment to the Generation Equality campaign. It seeks to raise awareness on the situation of adolescent girls in the COVID-19 pandemic and their role as change makers. Two adolescent girls who represent Ghana, Memunatu and Selina, are contributing to this initiative which will be launched and promoted on Facebook and YouTube.

Adaptations to ongoing UNICEF programmes

In coordination with the Government of Ghana and the UN Country Team, UNICEF has accelerated its Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) to stem curtail the spread of the virus. UNICEF has also focused on the promotion of Infection Prevention and Control, disease surveillance, appropriate feeding, the provision of supplies and logistics, the development of learning tools in the context of remote/distance learning and the provision of support for the most vulnerable, including through social protection and integrated social services. UNICEF is also supporting the national WASH response through coordination and WASH infrastructure in health facilities and schools. In all areas, COVID-19 interventions are being adapted to ongoing UNICEF programmes. Work Plans were revised in consultation with line Ministries to identify and adjust activities and budgets to best support the COVID-19 response.

Funding Overview and Partnerships

UNICEF continues to coordinate closely with the UN Country Team in Ghana on joint planning and programme response. As part of the Global UNICEF Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC), UNICEF in Ghana appealed for US$ 18.2 million to facilitate continued access to essential, quality and inclusive social services and the protection of children and families affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. To date, thanks to the support of development partners and private donors such as DFID, USAID, the Government of Japan, China International Development and Cooperation Agency, Standard Chartered and Mastercard Foundation, UNICEF has raised US$ 10.4 million. Other development cooperation agencies and partners such as the World Bank (PEF), Netherlands, Global Affairs Canada and KOICA have expressed solidarity to support the delivery of results for children across the country. A total of US$ 7.8 Million are still required to fill the continuing gaps in ensuring a comprehensive and effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic, for vulnerable children, young people and families in Ghana.

External Media (Links)

https://web.facebook.com/gbcghana/videos/192930278823529/


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## Annex A – Ghana - Summary of Programme Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantitative Indicators Sector</th>
<th>UNICEF and IPs Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risk Communication and Community Engagement</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCCE Indicator 1: Number of people reached on COVID-19 through messaging on prevention and access to services.</td>
<td>8,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCCE Indicator 2: Number of people engaged on COVID-19 through RCCE actions.</td>
<td>1,800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCCE Indicator 3: Number of people sharing their concerns and asking questions/clarifications for available support services to address their needs through established feedback mechanisms.</td>
<td>200,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WASH and IPC</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPC Indicator 1: Number of people reached with critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items) and services.</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPC Indicator 2: Number of healthcare facilities staff and community health workers provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).</td>
<td>2,512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPC Indicator 3: Number of healthcare facility staff and community health workers trained in Infection Prevention and Control (IPC).</td>
<td>8,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity of Health Care Indicator 1: Number of healthcare providers trained in detecting, referral and appropriate management of COVID-19 cases among children, pregnant and breastfeeding women.</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity of Health Care Indicator 2: Number of children &amp; women receiving essential healthcare services, including immunization, prenatal, postnatal, HIV &amp; GBV* care in UNICEF supported facilities.</td>
<td>403,420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nutrition</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity of Health Care Indicator 3: Number of primary caregivers of children aged 0-23 months who received IYCF counselling through facilities and community platforms.</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Continuous Education, Child Protection and GBV Services Indicator 1: Number of children supported with distance/home-based learning.</td>
<td>9,177,934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Continuous Education, Child Protection and GBV Services Indicator 2: Number of schools implementing safe school protocols (COVID-19 prevention and control).</td>
<td>42,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child Protection and GBV</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Continuous Education, Child Protection and GBV Services Indicator 3: Number of children without parental or family care provided with appropriate alternative care arrangements.</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Continuous Education, Child Protection and GBV Services Indicator 4: Number of children, parents and primary caregivers provided with community based mental health and psychosocial support.</td>
<td>260,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Continuous Education, CP &amp; GBV Services Indicator 5: Number of UNICEF personnel &amp; partners that have completed training on GBV risk mitigation &amp; referrals for survivors, including for PSEA*.</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Protection</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Protection Indicator 1: Number of households (affected by COVID-19) receiving humanitarian multi-sector cash grant for basic needs.</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative Indicators</td>
<td>Responses</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>In the last reporting period, what are the top (up to 3) access issues/constraints due to COVID-19 and related response measures, as identified in feedback mechanisms from affected populations, for each of these service areas:</td>
<td>Responses:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| (a) Health services access                                                             | 1. Ghana has recorded an increasing number of cases of COVID-19 during the reporting period.  
2. Testing capacity is still limited, with delays in receiving test results.  
3. It has been challenging to obtain specific data related to children.                                                                 |
| (b) Nutrition services (management of wasting/SAM; nutrition supplements, other services) | 1. Lack of supplies for management of severe acute malnutrition.  
2. Under the Girls Iron Folic Tablets Supplementation programme, pregnant women attending Antenatal care are benefitting, while some school-age girls are being reached through the health facility platform. |
| (c) Access to food                                                                      | 1. Continued increase in food prices in different regions.  
2. Reports of lack of access to fresh vegetables and fruits.                                                                                                                                          |
| (d) Water Sanitation & Hygiene                                                          | 1. Government-led procurement is still constrained.  
2. The UNICEF Supply team is providing leadership in coordinating the procurement of high-volume supplies for PPEs and hygiene consumables, on behalf of the UN system. |
| (e) Education services including continuation of learning options                       | 1. Challenges in engaging learners with special needs;  
2. Limited capacity at the regional and district levels within the education sector to initiate and sustain distance learning initiatives;  
3. Limited parent and learners’ digital literacy.                                                                                                                                                    |
| (f) Child protection related services                                                   | While birth registration services are being offered by Births and Deaths Registry, there appears to be a drop in the number of people bringing their children to get birth certificates especially in Greater Accra and Kumai regions. |