Key Facts and Actions

- South Africa has the highest number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Africa, currently at over 5,900 cases with 103 deaths. The first confirmed case was recorded on 5 March 2020.

- Since 26 March, the country has been observing a lockdown, one of the strictest responses anywhere in the world. Government interventions include a dusk-to-dawn curfew and a ban on alcohol and cigarettes.

- The efforts of the lockdown, combined with a vigorous case-finding involving 28,000 community health workers, has slowed down the rate of spread of the epidemic, buying some time for the health sector to prepare for an anticipated higher number of cases.

- The government has provided relief (cash grants, financial aid and food donations) to the most vulnerable populations (children, elderly, the unemployed). On 22 April, the government announced increases in the amount of cash grants to children to mitigate the effects of the lockdown on food prices and family incomes.

- On 1 May, the government slightly eased the lockdown restrictions. It also released a risk-adjusted five-point plan which will guide government actions for easing restrictions.

- Shortages of PPE and other equipment are a major cause of concern in South Africa as in other countries.

- UNICEF technical capacity support and system strengthening of the Department of Basic Education (DBE) continues, including embedded technical assistance and supporting DBE in implementing the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the basic education sector to provide guidance to schools and education offices on how to prepare for the re-opening of schools.

- UNICEF established new partnerships with two civil society organizations. Through collaboration with the ‘Action Support Centre’, 5,000 refugees and migrant families will receive immediate relief, counselling and advice services. Through partnership with Childline South Africa, UNICEF will support scaling-up of services offered by its nine call centres. The 86 counsellors at these call centres will provide mental health and psychosocial support to children affected by lockdown across the country.

- UNICEF is directly supporting the COVID response in Gauteng and Free State and is supporting the COVID-19 provincial Command Centres, the body responsible for the overall coordination of the epidemic response. Through the Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Technical Working Group, UNICEF has supported government efforts to improve access to maternal, neonatal and child health services during the COVID lockdown. While maternal and child health services have been identified as essential services, major disruptions were still experienced due to lack of public transport in the light of the recent COVID lockdown and general misunderstanding about conditions of the lockdown. Challenges such as inadequate training of health care workers on Infection Prevention Control (IPC), disruption in maternal and child health services and increase in defaulters not coming back into care have been identified. The members are developing plans to address the challenges.

- On 30 April, the UN Country Team launched a Flash Appeal worth **US$ 136 million**. Focus areas of the Flash Appeal include health, education, protection, WASH and governance. UNICEF is leading the education and WASH response while actively contributing to the health, nutrition and protection response.
Situation Overview

South Africa reported its first confirmed COVID-19 case on 5 March. As of 30 April, there were over 5,900 confirmed cases and 103 deaths with 2,746 patients who recovered. The highest number of cases are in the Western Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape. The Government of South Africa took early measures to prevent the further spread of the virus.

Key measures taken to date include:

- Declaration of a State of Disaster
- Closing of national borders
- Nationwide lockdown effective 26 March 2020
- Scaling-up of screening and testing
- Easing of lockdown restrictions on 1 May
- R500 billion stimulus package to address COVID-19’s social and economic impact, which includes a short-term top-up of the Child Support Grant

Coordination

UNICEF is part of coordination mechanisms with Government and the UN. Within the UN, UNICEF participates in RC-led coordination meetings. To support national planning and response, UNICEF takes part in the following coordination mechanisms:

- The Maternal Health Technical Working Group which is supporting efforts to improve access to maternal, neonatal and child health services during the COVID-19 lockdown.
- The education sector coordination of the response under the auspices of the Education Sector COVID-19 Interim Steering Team with a Secretariat at the National Education Collaboration Trust.
- The National Coordination Committee and the Water and Sanitation Technical Group. Through this mechanism, local municipalities, under the direction of the Department of Water, are providing informal settlements with hand washing with soap (HWWS) facilities.
- The One UN Gender Task Group has conducted a situation analysis on gender-based violence (GBV) responses and built a database of societal actors working on the GBV and child protection response. This information will be used to visually map access to service points for women or children at risk. In the context of the Protection Working Group, agreement has been reached to develop a strategic plan for the work using all surveys on GBV and databases on GBV and child protection already developed.
- The UN Communication Group Crisis Team, on which UNICEF is an active member, meets twice-weekly to craft and support the joint messaging, outreach, visibility and advocacy efforts of the UN in South Africa to mitigate the effects of the pandemic.

UNICEF Response:

Education

The education response has five main activity areas: early childhood, primary, secondary education and adolescents geared towards making parents active participants in the learning, development and safety of their children while at home through the provision of resources and materials. Specific areas of UNICEF support appear below:

1. UNICEF is supporting the DBE through the Children’s Radio Foundation to develop and provide education messages to learners through youth-friendly radio media. The following resources are being made available and the content has been carefully curated to be available online and for broadcast¹:

¹ The DBE website has been updated with current and relevant content inclusive of reading resources and websites.
2. Learner Support Programmes for online and broadcast support resources comprise subject content from early childhood to FET, with a special focus on Grade 7 and Grade 12 learners. This is specifically tailored and includes broadcast, app-based and online support programmes through content development and digitalization, with installation of receivers in the most vulnerable populations.

3. UNICEF technical capacity support and system strengthening of DBE continues, including embedded technical assistance and supporting the Department of Basic Education in implementing the SOPs for the basic education sector to provide guidance to schools and education offices on how to prepare for the re-opening of schools.

4. In ECD, UNICEF has rapidly generated a long list of innovative materials. A sample of these products is listed below:
   a. *Tshwaragano Ka Bana (Working together for children): ECD support to parents of young children*: Daily early learning activity for parents of young children to encourage active participation in the learning and development of their children. By the end of April, 13 issues had been distributed via existing networks to reach parents and all are currently being translated in all official languages.
   b. *Let’s play, learn and grow together series: Booklet 1: Me!* Booklet developed to support parents and young children with reading, pictures and ideas for children from birth to five. Developed by the Department of Basic Education and UNICEF, the booklets focus on the early learning and development of children and are available in all 11 official South African languages.
   c. *Activation of ECDmobi* A free application that provides parents with ideas to support their children’s learning - through-play according to their age. It is fun, playful and is based on the DBE’s National Curriculum Framework for Children from birth to four years. It is available on the Google Play (search for “ECDmobi”) or the DBE’s Cloud at: [https://dbecloud.org](https://dbecloud.org)
   d. *Active Learning@Home* (a partnership programme between the DBE, UNICEF South Africa and the LEGO Foundation) provides parents with easy activities to keep children from Grade R to 9 learning and developing while not in school during the lockdown. It focuses mainly on language and mathematics activities and makes use of objects around the house. The first four have been published and distributed via various networks and platforms.
      [https://www.unicef.org/southafrica/research-and-reports](https://www.unicef.org/southafrica/research-and-reports)
   e. *South Africa has a School Health and Sanitation Support Programme* whose mandate is to provide a Basic and Essential Sanitation and Hygiene Package for each school (handwashing stations, classroom/office, toilet/bathroom, food preparation areas, protective gear for cleaning). Through its advocacy with corporate partners, UNICEF has been able to expand the scope of this initiative in the context of the COVID-19 response. These partners include Tiger Brands, Nestle, and the Woolworths Trust.

### Social Policy and Child Protection

1. **UNICEF** and other stakeholders (civil society organisations, academic institutions, government officials and representatives from the corporate sector) successfully advocated for a top-up of the Child Support Grant (CSP) for the 13 million child-recipients of this assistance. On 21 April, President Ramaphosa announced a comprehensive economic social stimulus package, including:
   a. An increase of the Child Support Grant by R500 for six months;
   b. Increase of other grants by R250 for 6 months;
   c. A COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress Grant of R350 for 6 months;
   d. Distribution of food parcels by end of April;
   e. A new model for food assistance through food vouchers and cash transfers; and
   f. The UNICEF Executive Director congratulated President Ramaphosa for the comprehensive stimulus package.

2. UNICEF established new partnerships with two civil society organizations. Through collaboration with the ‘Action Support Centre,’ 5,000 refugees and migrant families will receive immediate relief, counselling and
advice services. Through partnership with Childline South Africa, UNICEF will support scaling-up of services offered by its nine call centres. The 86 counsellors at these call centres will provide mental health and psychosocial support to children affected by lockdown across the country.

3. In partnership with FAO and WFP, UNICEF is providing technical support to the Department of Social Development on food relief, mapping, nutrition and M&E along with WFP, FAO and civil society. This is part of the UN effort on COVID-19 vulnerability assessments.

4. In partnership with the South African Red Cross Society, UNICEF is providing essential relief items to marginalised populations as well as outreach and awareness on COVID-19, child protection, GBV and referral systems.

5. UNICEF developed four radio Public Service Announcements in English and in isiZulu, a 30 second rap song on handwashing, and four podcasts on children's rights, parenting, child care and mental health, a live Instagram with UNICEF Volunteers Advocate (and popular celebrity) Maps Maponyane, and an emoji animation on mental health which was amplified by multiple media platforms and many partners in and beyond the country.

6. UNICEF has provided logistical support to social workers/social auxiliary workers to continue as first responders for GBV Therapeutic Support at Thukuzela Care Centres.

7. UNICEF produced a Policy Brief on the impact of the implementation of the Disaster Management Act on the budget in comparison with the Public Finance Act, and what it means for children in the areas of health, social development and education. This is on the UNICEF website: https://www.unicef.org/southafrica/reports/brief-public-finance-children-national-state-disaster

### Health and Nutrition

1. UNICEF is directly supporting the COVID Gauteng and Free State responses by supporting the COVID-19 provincial Command Centres, the body responsible for the overall coordination of the epidemic response. Through the Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Technical Working Group, UNICEF has supported government efforts to improve access to maternal, neonatal and child health services during the COVID lockdown. While maternal and child health services have been identified as essential services major disruptions were still experienced due to lack of public transport in the light of the recent COVID lockdown and general misunderstanding about conditions of the lockdown. Challenges such as inadequate training of health care workers on IPC, disruption in maternal and child health services and increase in defaulters not coming back into care have been identified. The members are developing plans to address the challenges.

2. In line with the government decision to slightly ease the lockdown on 1 May, UNICEF and WHO are assisting the Ministry of Health in the development of the catch-up plan for immunization in close consultation and coordination with all provincial health department officials and specific districts.

3. UNICEF had a lead role in the development of guidelines for immunization to ensure that children in homeless shelters and migrant populations do not miss out on service delivery and plans are of high quality.

4. During African Vaccination Week (24 – 30 April), the National Department of Health with support from UNICEF and WHO, focused on social mobilization to raise awareness about the importance of ending vaccine-preventable child deaths, including measles. While there is no vaccine for COVID-19 yet, communities were reminded that safe and effective vaccines exist for vaccine-preventable diseases, for which immunization is the only, safest and most cost-effective tool.

5. Two members of the UNICEF staff are in Gauteng and Free State, supporting the COVID-19 provincial Command Centres, the body responsible for the overall coordination of the epidemic response. During a recent visit to the quarantine sites in Gauteng, the UNICEF staff identified several shortcomings including the inadequate training of nurses in Infection Prevention Control and staff shortages. In Free State, in the four health facilities visited, of concern is an increase in defaulters not coming back into care due to COVID-19 fears, the absence of dieticians, some stock outs of supplements for children and the need for clear communication regarding continuity services. These visits have been extremely valuable in providing insights into how COVID-19 is affecting continuity of services and in informing national and local strategies to improve access to maternal, neonatal and child health services.
UNICEF is supporting government through the National Coordination Committee and is a member of the Water and Sanitation Technical Group. Through this mechanism, local municipalities under the direction of the Department of Water are providing locations of high-risk areas within informal settlements where there is a need for hand wash with soap (HWWS) facilities to curb the spread of COVID-19.

So far, one HWWS station has been installed in the Western Cape (Khayelitsha) and four in Gauteng (Alexandra). Further roll-out is planned in all provinces targeting the highest priority areas first, with 10 locations secured in the Eastern Cape and a further 11 in the Western Cape.

A system has been put in place to ensure sustainability and timely refilling of liquid soap and the water tanks by the respective municipalities. The installation of the handwashing stations is accompanied by on-site hand washing demonstrations, and the C4D and Community Engagement programme which is being integrated with the roll-out.

Communication, Communication for Development (C4D), Community Engagement & Accountability

UNICEF developed the C4D/RCCE plan to link on-the-ground community engagement and hygiene promotion with the installation of the handwashing stations in high-priority areas, and joint planning processes have been established for the C4D/WASH programmes.

Start-up activities include the installation of environmental cues on and around the stations to encourage health-protective behaviour. These include social distancing markers for paved and unpaved areas, designed with the support of our partner, Envirosan. Among these markers are a set of stickers of “eyes” to be applied to the green tank at handwashing stations, to convey the sense of social pressure and approval of handwashing, designed in house and pre-tested with UNICEF volunteers, a handwashing graphic, local language messages, and a graphic of faces wearing masks.

UNICEF and is in the process of identifying and engaging with implementing partners for each location, to support them to lead local level engagements, identification of vulnerable households for distribution of essential hygiene and food supplies, and community-level feedback mechanisms.

The team is working on the potential to use community radio, including through our partnership with the Children’s Radio Foundation, and local language radio to amplify community voices and messages. Communications will concentrate on hygiene promotion and health protective behaviours and integrate messages/actions and resources from social protection and education.

A series of four radio public service announcements (PSAs) in six of the country’s official languages were produced by the UN Communication Group, on which UNICEF is the Vice-Chair. These PSAs are being broadcast on several national and regional radio stations of the SABC during the course of May.

The new SACO website was launched on 23 April and is an extensive and is a trusted and increasingly-visited repository of COVID-19 information. In addition, the social media platforms of SACO (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and TikTok) over the past six weeks have continued to grow in terms of viewership and engagement.
7. A range of media interviews, facilitated by the Communication and Partnerships section, were conducted, largely with the UNICEF Deputy Representative, Chief of Child Protection and Chief of Education. These interviews were with national and international television, radio, online and print media platforms.

8. The results of the Human Sciences Research Council survey of South Africans’ responses to the lockdown and immediate implications for health promotion and information will also help inform our RCCE response. A dipstick community level rapid assessment is being planned to fill gaps.

**Funding Overview and Partnerships**

1. UNICEF started the *Little Hands Matter* campaign on 19 March to raise funds for the building of 10 hand washing stations. By 28 April, we had exceeded our target by raising over R220,000 for 11 handwashing stations. Our corporate partner, Discovery Vitality, strengthened this campaign by asking their Vitality members to support it in April. A total of R60,000 was raised which Discovery Vitality then doubled, allowing for six handwashing stations to be built.

2. SACO has shared an appeal for support with corporate partners, prospects and major donors for our COVID-19 response. Funds were raised from Momentum Metropolitan (US$ 25,000) for our work on psychosocial support for children. In addition, we raised US$ 300,000 from Unilever, US$ 75,000 from the company Orbia (Mexico) and US$ 53,000 from Puma (Germany) to build handwashing stations and facilitate hygiene education in informal settlements. We raised $ 6,700 from a major donor and received a contribution in-kind of Pampers diapers from P&G to the value US$ 42,500 which we distributed with our implementing partners, the Limpopo Trust and Mothers 2 Mothers, for our COVID-19 response.

3. We are in dialogue with MTN, led by ESARO, to cultivate a shared-value partnership over the COVID-19 response and beyond. In addition, we received data bundles and modems valid for six months which we donated to our partner, the National Association of Child Care Workers.

4. P&G has committed to donating 480,000 packs of sanitary pads, valued at US$ 480,000 which we will share with our implementing partners of the Education, Health and Child Protection sections.

5. With the funds received for WASH, we have contracted two of our corporate partners, Envirosan and Jojo Tanks, both partners of our CEO Network, to build the first 100 hand washing stations in informal settlements.

6. SACO is planning to facilitate a virtual UNICEF CEO network meeting in the week of 11 May to discuss our COVID-19 response, what is needed and how they can support UNICEF over this period.

**Challenges**

Lack of prior experience with a nationwide emergency with significant impact on education has revealed systemic, institutional and human resource constraints that limit effective sector-wide coordination and response. The National Education Collaboration Trust has undertaken to mobilize the private sector and other partners around the response, but has not had major prior experience in dealing with such emergencies.

**Who to contact for further information**

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Muriel Mafico  
Deputy Representative  
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## Annex A: Summary of Programme Results, UNICEF South Africa, May 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Target to 31 Dec 2020</th>
<th>Results as of 27 April 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of children – and parents - supported with distance/home-based learning [ECD, Primary, Secondary Ed]</td>
<td>7,200,000</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Policy and Child Protection</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children, parents and primary caregivers provided with community-based mental health and psychosocial support</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>8,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of UNICEF personnel &amp; partners that have completed training on GBV risk mitigation &amp; referrals for survivors, including for PSEA</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of households (affected by COVID-19) receiving humanitarian multi-sector cash grant for basic needs</td>
<td>13,000,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health, Nutrition and WASH</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of people reached with critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items) and services</td>
<td>2,500,000</td>
<td>5,000³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children &amp; women receiving essential healthcare services, including immunization, prenatal, postnatal, HIV &amp; GBV care in UNICEF supported facilities</td>
<td>TBC</td>
<td>TBD/C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of primary caregivers of children aged 0-23 months who received IYCF counselling through facilities and community platforms</td>
<td>TBC</td>
<td>TBD/C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risk Communication</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of people reached on COVID-19 through messaging on prevention and access to services</td>
<td>7,000,000</td>
<td>4,200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of people engaged on COVID-19 through RCCE actions</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>20,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of people sharing their concerns and asking questions/clarifications for available support services to address their needs through established feedback mechanisms</td>
<td>800,000</td>
<td>24,814</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² Preliminary figures
## Annex B: Funding Status*, UNICEF South Africa, May 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Requirements (US$)</th>
<th>Received (US$)</th>
<th>Funding gap from HAC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>HAC</td>
<td>Regular Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and WASH</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Protection</td>
<td>1,550,000</td>
<td>775,000</td>
<td>775,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>5,090,000</td>
<td>2,545,000</td>
<td>2,545,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data collection and analysis of disease and secondary impact on women and children</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication for Development</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,000,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,000,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,000,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>