Highlights

Viet Nam, as with many other countries, has been deeply affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In an effort to contain the outbreak, the Government has imposed strict regulations including travel restrictions, school closures and shut down of non-essential service facilities. The pandemic, together with these control measures, have had major multidimensional impacts on the lives of all populations in Viet Nam, especially children, women and other vulnerable groups. According to the World Bank\(^1\), poverty rates could double (from 18% to 31%) among households in Vietnam linked to manufacturing reliant on imported inputs. Viet Nam's economic growth rate in 2020 is expected to reduce by 1.5 - 2.7%. Viet Nam is among the most vulnerable economies to global crises, due to its strong economic integration, tourism and 50% of the population working in agriculture and the informal sector – key aggregate affects include elevated external debts and sizable fiscal deficits negatively and directly impact on social services.

Among the most serious of the impacts is the disruption to essential healthcare (including reduced health seeking behavior), nutrition services and education; parents and caregivers struggle with alternative childcare arrangements, with some children left alone at home, others drawn into child labour; loss of income and social distancing is leading to economic and psychological stress, which among others, results in increased levels of domestic violence, gender based violence affecting women and children. It is increasingly evident that children are at high risk of not getting the care, education and protection they need. Women are also particularly vulnerable given their presence in the informal sector and recognizing the double burden they shoulder to earn money to keep food on the table, as well as their role in caring for children (now at home) and the elderly family members.

UNICEF Viet Nam (VCO) has developed a cross-sectoral preparedness and response plan to support the Government which covers 05 priority areas: (i) Risk communication and community engagement (RCCE); (ii) Provision of critical medical and WASH supplies; (iii) Provision of continued access to essential healthcare and nutrition services; (iv) Access to continuous education, social protection, child protection and gender-based violence protection services; and (v) data collection and social science research on the social impacts of COVID-19.

Funding Overview and Partnerships

In total, UNICEF Viet Nam currently estimates an appeal of just over 4 million USD to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 by reducing human-to-human transmission as well as to begin to gather real time data on the challenges faced and respond effectively to the primary and secondary

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impacts of the disease on children and women in Viet Nam. Over time, the impact is worsening, and our information on this is growing. Factored into the estimated total is the funding already received. To date, USAID, the Government of Japan and the Global Partnership for Education have generously contributed to UNICEF Viet Nam COVID-19 responses with a total of USD 1,815,957 to be programmed in the 5 priority areas. UNICEF Viet Nam sincerely appreciates this financial support which will enable us to respond swiftly to Government’s urgent requests and sustain regular communication and services essential to the well-being of Vietnamese children and their caregivers. Without sufficient funding children and their caregivers will not have adequate access to essential healthcare, nutritional care, sanitation, education, protection and psychological support.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

On 1 April, Viet Nam’s Prime Minister declared a national pandemic and launched a national social distancing campaign, with stricter measures than had previously been in place. As of 3 April, 233 confirmed cases of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) have been reported in Viet Nam. This figure increased sharply in the latter half of March, rising from 16 to over 200 in roughly 20 days. Among them, 75 cases have fully recovered. Over 73,000 tests have been undertaken for screening of the virus. Currently, there are over 4,500 suspected cases under surveillance and isolation and approximately 72,900 contacts under health monitoring and isolation, of which approximately half are isolated in quarantine centres2. Many of these are connected to the Bach Mai Hospital in Hanoi, Vietnam’s biggest hospital, a hotspot which has been linked to 43 confirmed cases to date. Children have been kept out of school since early February and parents/caregivers struggle with finding alternative childcare arrangements. While on-line classes are attempted, the crisis has exposed a significant digital divide – between those with access to both device and internet and those without. The delivery of essential and routine healthcare, including vaccination and nutrition services have been interrupted or put on a halt entirely. While an effective measure against transmission, self-quarantine and social isolation produce side effects of psychological stress and greater risks of domestic violence against children and women.

Summary of Programme Response

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<th>Critical Areas</th>
<th>Key action</th>
<th>Estimate beneficiaries</th>
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| Risk communication & community engagement (RCCE) | • Produce communication materials in ethnic/sign languages and child-friendly language on COVID-19 prevention and controls, psychosocial support and, prevention of violence against children (VAC) and gender-based violence (GBV) in emergencies, and distribute through UNICEF and Government partners media networks nation-wide  
• Implement joint UNICEF – Ministry of Health media campaign to promote social solidarity and a culture of kindness among children and young people around COVID-19  
• Partner with TikTok Viet Nam to raise public awareness about the importance of self-isolating and following the Government’s instructions  
• Partner with VTV7 (National TV channel on Education) to produce TV series “At home during pandemic” to provide parents with practical information on how to care and protect children during the pandemic.  
• Disseminate UNICEF’s messages to people in rural communities through provincial TV/radio networks and communal loudspeaker systems | • 30 million reaches on mass, online and social media, nationwide  
• 319,000 children reached with targeted messages and information on COVID-19 on personal hygiene and improved sanitary practices |
| Critical supply & logistics                 | • Procure and provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs), micronutrients, soap, hand sanitizers, ceramic water filters for health facilities, schools, social protection centres, and households in vulnerable provinces | • 2,000 health staff reached with critical Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)  
• 490,000 people and children reached with essential WASH supplies |

2 All data drawn from Ministry of Health, COVID-19 Latest Update (6am 3 April 2020)
### Provision of continued access to essential healthcare and nutrition services

- Provide IYCF counselling, child stimulation and maternal and child health services through outreach/mobile health teams
- Promote hygiene and environment cleanliness practices
- Support to ensure availability and continuity of improved water at households and communities
- Train health staff (IPC, case detection, referral and management)

- 3,000 pregnant women
- 1,200 infants
- 10,000 parents and childcare givers
- 1,640 local health officers and social welfare, child protection officers

### Provision of access to continuous education, social protection, child protection and GBV protection services

- Support Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) in the development and implementation of a large-scale and inclusive distance learning strategy to ensure continued learning, especially for the most vulnerable, including girls.
- Invest in and prioritise internet connectivity in rural and underserved areas, provide the necessary technology and develop and promote the usage digital tools by teachers.
- Ensure the continuity of inclusive services, especially for children with disabilities, including home visits
- Invest in skilling teachers and school managers to ensure continued learning
- Ensure meaningful participation of children and adolescents in the COVID-19 response through the student-led social innovation clubs, and build their capacity to educate and help their peer groups, families, and communities
- Support preparations for school re-opening, including the provision of WASH supplies
- Take special measures to close any learning gaps, including enabling pathways back to school and support a ‘back to school’ campaign.
- Provide case management, psychosocial support, alternate care services
- Develop minimum protection standards for prevention of VAC and GBV in quarantine centres
- Train National Help Line staff, social workers and child protection staff in psychosocial support and prevention of VAC, GBV in emergencies

- 9,964,000 school-age children
- 22,000 children from Social Protection Centers

### Data & Social Research

- Conduct rapid assessment on social impact, vulnerability analysis of children
- Develop a real-time monitoring system through sentinel surveillance of households, focused on health and well-being.

- Informs response programming and development of relevant social polices

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### Summary of Actions Taken

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<th>Key actions taken</th>
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| **Risk communication & community engagement (RCCE)** | - Long and short versions of Vietnamese sign language stop-motion videos on the do's and don'ts for children produced and distributed over 30 online media, through UNICEF and official Government social media channels  
- More than 30 online assets including videos, images with prevention and public health messages, and infographics widely disseminated through online and social media channels, including mummy bloggers and Kidsonline (a cloud-based Nursery and Kindergarten management system in Viet Nam)  
- Launched a national TikTok site Happyathome (challenge #ONhaVanVui) with more than 380 million views, 38,471 videos and 35 million likes  
- Produced a handwashing dance video with a Vietnamese celebrity dancer and kids and disseminated on social media |

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| Critical supply & logistics | • UNICEF posts on social media (Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, etc.) related on COVID-19 have more than 2 million reaches  
• Dissemination of communication materials relating to COVID-19 through private sector networks – Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), International Business associations, business consultancies, companies (employing white-collar and blue-collar employees).  
• Development of a 2-pager on family-friendly workplace in the context of COVID-19 (adapted from the regional guidance) which was disseminated through private sector networks.  
• First episodes of “At home during pandemic” were on air from April 1 with UNICEF’s expert blog. The development of the expert blog is on-going.  

| Provision of continued access to essential healthcare and nutrition services | • Signed purchase order for 15,000 coveralls which are expected to be delivered to Ministry of Health (MOH) in the second week of April  
• Consolidated plan on WASH supplies (soaps, hand sanitizers and ceramic water filters) for schools, commune health centers and communities. Preparation of a distribution plan and distribution channels including to provincial Departments of Education and Training  
• Facilitated UN collaboration in procurement of supplies for Covid-19 through UNICEF Supply Division.  

| Provision of access to continuous education, social protection, child protection and GBV protection services | • Provided MOH with technical advice for development of a temporary guideline for supporting pregnant mothers and children with COVID-19  
• Assisted the National Institute of Nutrition to plan for the maintenance of critical nutrition services for disadvantaged populations (e.g. nutrition communication for breastfeeding and complementary feeding, Vitamin A and deworming program for children and micronutrient for pregnant women)  
• Implemented critical nutrition interventions of UNICEF’s Integrated Early Childhood Development programme  

| Data & Social Research | • TOR for rapid assessment on social impact and vulnerability analysis of children has been advertised  
• Rapid assessment questionnaire on children and social protection (cash assistance and social protection centres) has been drafted and will be sent to 63 provinces via Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA)  
• UNICEF chaired the first meeting of joint UN working group on social impact of COVID-19, involving FAO, ILO, IOM, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNIDO, UN Women, WHO and RCO  
• Planning began with RO and partners for the development a real time monitoring system through sentinel surveillance of households, focused on health and well-being |
Key challenges

Facing the situation of COVID-19, the immediate challenges for the Government of Viet Nam include:

1. The lack of a system in place to measure the social impacts of this pandemic on families
2. There is an urgent need for a social protection package combined with rapid data collection on the access to essential services, in particular, social and protection services among the most vulnerable groups
3. Difficulties in ensuring adequate supply of PPEs as well as other health equipment and facilities essential for Covid-19 prevention and treatment
4. Lack of disaggregated data (by gender and age) on COVID-19 suspected cases, especially in quarantine centres
5. An overwhelmed and inadequate hotline system to receive cries for help in domestic violence situations, combined with the lack of trained professionals in communities to identify and respond to women and children at risk of violence, abuse, trafficking and exploitation
6. Relatively small numbers of test conducted till date (73,000 as of 3 April).

Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

UNICEF coordinates closely with WHO and other UN agencies in planning and implementation of UNCT COVID-19 Support Plan through the operation of UN Technical Working Group and sub-working groups such as the UN sub-working group in RCCE. UNICEF also is also reaching out to international multilateral agencies including the World Bank, IMF and ADB for joint work on the rapid assessment, monitoring surveillance and sectoral responses.

In addition, UNICEF coordinates closely with leading Ministries on Covid19 (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Training, Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Culture, Information and Sports), provincial Departments of Health as well as relevant INGOs and local NGOs (such as Save the Children) in planning and implementation of strategic, comprehensive RCCE activities.

Human Interest Stories and External Media

To be updated.

Next SitRep: 20 April 2020


UNICEF Viet Nam COVID-19 media assets: https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1e4hs2N6baVTsH3uL8WvVAR1JH5M0j4Im


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