

UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION

HAITI

IN 2007



CORE COUNTRY DATA

Population under 18 (thousands)	3846
U5 mortality rate	120
Infant mortality rate	84
Maternal mortality ratio (1990-2005, reported)	520
Primary school enrolment ratio	67*
Primary school enrolment ratio for girls	57*
% U1 fully immunized (DPT3)	43
% population using improved drinking water sources	54
Estimated no. of people (all ages) living with HIV, 2005 (thousands)	190
% U5 suffering from moderate and severe underweight	17

Source: *The State of the World's Children 2007*
*2003 Census

Summary of UNICEF financial needs for 2007

Sector	US\$
Health and nutrition	1,800,000
Water, sanitation and hygiene	1,600,000
Education	1,200,000
Child protection	1,500,000
Preparedness	390,000
Total*	6,490,000

* The total includes a maximum recovery rate of 7 per cent. The actual recovery rate on contributions will be calculated in accordance with UNICEF Executive Board Decision 2006/7 dated 9 June 2006.

1. CRITICAL ISSUES FOR CHILDREN

Haitian children continue to live in dire conditions due to violence linked with political instability, chronic poverty, and a virtually absent child protection system. The daily life of a typical Haitian child is a struggle to survive. With weak State institutions, overall extreme poverty and a serious brain drain access to food and basic social services is decreasing. Every year, tropical storms, mudslides and heavy rains add a new plague to the already precarious livelihood of children and their families in most of the regions of Haiti. Unless families are supported to regain or strengthen coping mechanisms, future emergencies may be disastrous for children and women.

Recurrent crises in the last few years have resulted in an increasing number of vulnerable children. According to the preliminary results of the latest Demographic and Health Survey (*Enquête mortalité, morbidité et utilisation des services*/Mortality, morbidity and use of services survey – EMMUS IV) more than one-quarter of children are orphans or otherwise vulnerable. Many more are deprived of basic services and are victims of violence, exploitation and abuse. Child mortality rates in Haiti are the worst in the Americas. One child out of five dies from preventable illnesses before reaching the age of five. Health projects have an uneven geographical spread, with the result being patchy services, understaffed and poorly supplied. UNICEF estimates that across the country, 23 per cent of under-five children suffer from moderate to severe malnutrition, with much higher rates in rural areas. Diarrhoea is the leading cause of death for under-five children – not surprising with only 50 per cent of the population having access to water and 70 per cent of water systems not functioning anywhere near full capacity.

In addition, Haiti's HIV prevalence rate remains the highest in the region. However, efforts to stem the spread appear to have had results, with a slight decreasing prevalence rate according to the preliminary results of EMMUS IV. The latest figures (from 2004 by the Ministry of Health accompanied by independent institutions) pointed to a 3.44 per cent prevalence rate, based on tests of pregnant women. At least 200,000 children have lost one or both parents to AIDS. An estimated 19,000 children are living with HIV/AIDS; 6,000 among them need medical treatment, but only 300 have access to antiretroviral therapy.

According to the Ministry of Education figures, more than 70,000 schoolchildren did not have a chance to complete the schoolyear in 2005, mainly due to security, and overall well over 500,000 school-aged children are not receiving an education. In a country in which 80 per cent of schooling on offer is private, school fees constitute the main obstacle. Parents often choose to either rotate their children in school or have them attend only a few years.

Against Haiti's backdrop of violence and poverty, child labour is another issue of serious concern. An estimated 300,000 children, amounting to 1 in 10, are engaged in domestic work. Three-quarters of these are girls. This phenomenon is spreading beyond Haiti's border to the Dominican Republic, where between 2,000 and 3,000 children are crossing annually in search of a better life. Port-au-Prince alone is the home to 2,500 street children, working and/or sleeping in the streets. A loosely estimated 1,000 children are associated with armed gangs in Port-au-Prince, as messengers, spies, and some even carry guns and participate in the fighting. More than half of girls and women living in those areas have been victims of rape.

2. KEY ACTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2006

During the course of 2006, UNICEF has, together with its local, national and international partners, addressed emerging humanitarian requirements and sought out opportunities to improve the lives of the most desolate and disadvantaged children. Despite serious access problems, UNICEF managed to undertake key protection, health, nutrition, water and sanitation, and education activities. As explained further below, the main activities focused on preventing youth from joining or continuing to take part in armed gang activity (well over 2,000 targeted), on vaccination

campaigns for children and women of childbearing age, on supplementary and therapeutic feeding of acutely malnourished children (10 centres covering about 1,000 under-five children), on improving water, sanitation and hygiene in 40 schools and 2 health centres, and providing supplies to schoolchildren and schools. Except for the nutrition sector, humanitarian efforts have been concentrated in Port-au-Prince areas – primarily in Cité Soleil – which are the ones most marred by violence, general lawlessness, extreme poverty and consequent rights violations. This was in line with the expressed strategy of the United Nations family to address most urgent needs and help decrease violence due in large part to a lack of services and alternatives to violent behaviour.

The efforts in Cité Soleil thus serve as the case in point. For years, powerful gangs have seized control over the community, forcibly recruiting children, and keeping away outsiders, including most humanitarian workers. Violence and increased poverty have forced many schools to shut down, leaving thousands of children without an education. Following the election of René Préval as the new President in February, the gangs declared a unilateral truce, and the area finally became accessible.

To address the protection concerns of children implicated in and affected by armed violence, UNICEF, together with AVSI (*Associazione Volontari per il Servizio Internazionale*), gave psychosocial support, returned to school or provided vocational training to 2,250 children, as alternatives to the violent environment. Together with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the local authorities, UNICEF identified requirements to bring every child back to classrooms in Cité Soleil. For this purpose, water and sanitation facilities are being improved in 40 schools, while essential supplies are distributed to all students and their teachers in all 201 schools. Across Port-au-Prince, 271 schools and more than 68,000 children are being provided with basic learning materials in the most violence-affected neighbourhoods. Recently, the plans for the children's disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme were initiated by UNICEF. Together with a multitude of local and international governmental and non-governmental actors, the focus is on ensuring that children's best interest is always given highest priority, on supporting reinsertion and on providing viable alternatives for every child, with education as the best means to protect them against violence.

As part of the preparedness efforts to ensure quick evaluation and response in case of a disaster, UNICEF has partnered with WFP, *Terre des Hommes* and CARE to pre-position essential emergency supplies in three strategic locations outside the capital. Together with stocks in Port-au-Prince, UNICEF can presently distribute essential supplies to 3,000 families. In addition, local authorities and NGOs have been trained in emergency response, with a particular emphasis on child protection. As a first step, three departments in the south of the country (the most prone to natural disasters) have been targeted. The work is focusing on increasing the capacity of partners to ensure the protection of children in case of sudden onset disasters, but is also beneficial for the ongoing brewing conflict-related emergency. Principal activities undertaken include workshops involving the local Risk and Disaster Management Committees, presently focusing on psychosocial support and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of women and children in emergency settings.

3. PLANNED HUMANITARIAN ACTION FOR 2007

Coordination and partnership

UNICEF remains an active member of the United Nations-led coordination structure, under the umbrella of the (recently arrived) United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Memoranda of understanding in different sectors with UNFPA, UNOPS, WFP and WHO/PAHO being finalized serve as evidence of the joint action in the United Nations family. Close liaison continues with the Government Department of the Protection of Civilians, which has the overall lead of humanitarian activities.

Regular programme

The regular programme has just been extended by one year to align it with the Government-led Poverty Reduction Strategy. Humanitarian preparedness and response activities are incorporated into each of UNICEF's main programmes: health and nutrition, education, and child protection. The gradual shift away from a project approach and instead improving the life of larger proportions of the country's children (i.e., going to scale) continues. The operational work in several field locations will continue to maintain the hands-on expertise and to inform policy at central level. But, renewed emphasis is put on influencing central decisions with regard, for example, to national budget questions and finding ways to target all in a group of children who may have a specific right violated. In essence it means undertaking what has the largest possible impact for the largest amount of children whose rights are being violated.

Health and nutrition (US\$ 1,800,000)

Up to 50,000 vulnerable children and mothers will benefit from the following key activities:

- Procure and distribute essential emergency drugs and health kits and equipment for 10 health centres;
- Train health workers at district levels in immunization services, including monitoring, and in cold-chain maintenance;
- Vaccinate against measles and, as required, other communicable diseases;
- Support improved infant and young child feeding practices;
- Train health personnel as well as open and support six therapeutic feeding centres for severely malnourished children;
- Procure and distribute vitamin A and de-worming treatment to all children under 14 years.

Water, sanitation and hygiene (US\$ 1,600,000)

Some 250,000 persons, with special emphasis on children and women, will be reached through the following key activities:

- Drill 30 new boreholes and rehabilitate 200 existing boreholes to provide safe drinking water to some 200,000 people;
- Rehabilitate/construct five water stations;
- Construct 2,000 household latrines;
- Train 500 water local management committee members and local water authorities on management, operation and maintenance;
- Promote health and hygiene education and hygiene awareness in 50 schools and 500 local communities;
- Support one water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) policy development expert for one year.

Education (US\$ 1,200,000)

Up to 40,000 mostly primary schoolchildren and 700 teachers will benefit from the following key activities:

- Supply basic material (books, backpacks, pencils, notebooks, etc);
- Procure school supplies and recreation kits;
- Provide training, with special emphasis on HIV/AIDS and non-violence;
- Undertake light rehabilitation of water systems and latrines in two communes;

- In case of a major natural disaster, set up 50 school structures to ensure emergency education for 20,000 children.

Child protection (US\$ 1,500,000)

An estimated 1,000 children affected by armed violence, including those associated with armed groups, 5,000 children infected and/or affected by HIV/AIDS, and 2,500 street children are targeted in three departments through the following activities:

- Provide medical care and psychosocial support to street children, including HIV/AIDS prevention, testing, treatment, counselling and peer education;
- Provide medical, psychological and legal support to victims of sexual violence;
- Promote HIV/AIDS prevention and provide community-based psychosocial support to persons living with HIV/AIDS and their children, and medical and psychosocial care for children infected and/or affected by HIV/AIDS;
- Support reintegration of vulnerable children (affected by armed violence, street children, survivors of sexual violence and orphans and other vulnerable children) through schooling, life skills training, etc.;
- Train all social workers and facilitators for vulnerable children;
- Set up youth associations;
- Organize social activities for children in peace-building, including information, education and sensitization sessions on child rights, conflict resolution, self-esteem, and prevention of HIV/AIDS/sexually transmitted infections;
- Support identification, documentation, tracing, care and reunification of separated children.

Preparedness (US\$ 390,000)

Given the continued threat of natural disasters and the fragile political landscape, UNICEF needs to be prepared to respond in a coordinated way at all times through a comprehensive and continuous preparedness plan (requirements for preparedness activities in protection, health and education are covered under the respective budgets in those sectors). Key activities will include:

- Training of governmental and non-governmental partners;
- Emergency officer salary and related costs for one year;
- Logistic officer salary and costs for one year;
- Geographic information system officer salary and related costs for one year.