Highlights

- June saw a significant and alarming increase in the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases – rising from 430 cases and 10 deaths on the 1st June to 1958 cases and 104 deaths on 30th June.

- ThiQar and Missan emerged as new hotspots for COVID 19 cases. The rapid increase in cases is overstretching the poor health infrastructure in the south and places added stress on a healthcare system already rendered vulnerable by decades of conflict and under investments.

- The increase in number of confirmed cases in June is partially attributed increase testing capacity nationwide; active contacts tracing and to easing of curfew in many parts of the country especially in the overcrowded areas and no adherence to the proper infection prevention measures/practices.

- In the reporting period, UNICEF has reached over 11.5 million people through online and offline channels and engaged close to 150,000 followers with key messaging on risk awareness, safe practices, parenting, and stigma.

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**Situation in Numbers**

- 97,159 Covid-19 cases (WHO July 2020)
- 3,950 deaths (WHO July 2020)
- 11.5 million people reached with risk communication messages (UNICEF, June 2020)

**UNICEF Appeal 2020**

**US$ 12.5 million**

- Funding gap, 5.3M
- COVID-19 Requirements, $12.5M
- Funds received, 7.2M
Summary of analysis programme

UNICEF’s response in Iraq is aligned with the 2020 WHO global Strategic Response Plan and the 2020 UNICEF COVID-2019 Humanitarian Action for Children appeal and Iraq’s National Development Plan UNICEF is targeting up to 3 million vulnerable people (including IDPs, refugees, returnees, and conflict-affected communities) with preparedness and/or response activities in alignment with the WHO country guidance.

The key strategic priorities in the response plans are on the immediate measures that must be undertaken to ensure preparedness and response actions to prevent and respond to the COVID-19 outbreak in each country focusing on the following areas: 1) Strengthening risk communication and community engagement (RCCE), 2) Provision of critical medical and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) activities and supplies related to improving infection and prevention control (IPC including procurement of PPEs), 3) Supporting continued access to essential health care services for women, children and vulnerable communities, including routine immunization, MNCH and Nutrition services, 4) Supporting access to continuous education, social protection, child protection and GBV services disrupted by the pandemic, 5) Data collection and analysis of impact on children, young people and women.

Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

In the reporting period, UNICEF has reached over 11.5 million people through online and offline channels and engaged close to 150,000 followers through its social media messaging on safe practices, parenting, and stigma. A total of 22,915 young people (702 offline and 22,213 online) have been engaged so far by UNICEF partners and the Directorates of Youth to lead peer-to-peer activities. This includes young people mobilisation through the U-Report COVID-19 chatbot, WhatsApp Groups, FB Messenger and Voices of Youth platform, which also featured stories and experiences of young people on COVID-19. The Youth Art Challenge launched by UNICEF’s Innovation Lab partner in Erbil concluded and received 12 interactive videos and posts by 10 young people, covering similar topics such as social distancing and adolescent mental health. In Najaf, the youth-led fundraising campaign Ta’dheed “solidarity” which launched early June to respond to the critical shortages in medical supplies in some designated hospitals in the governorate amid a significant rise in the number of patients with COVID-19 raised over 160,000 USD. 31 young people (9 girls), with support of UNICEF partners, supported the procurement of medical supplies and equipment, including Oxygen canisters and protective gears.

With lockdown measures re-introduced in Federal Iraq, youth in Baghdad and Najaf used online platforms to promote hygiene promotion and handwashing with soap. In Diwaniya, the Directorate of Youth has supported interactive messaging and materials to engage adolescents and youth through arts and self-expression. To mark World Menstrual Hygiene Day and drawing from a global partnership with the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, a poll was conducted with 2,000 adolescents. Among other findings, 16% of respondents reported that COVID-19 has made their periods harder to manage.

An awareness campaign on social protection in the COVID-19 context was completed in Duhok reaching 8,400 families or 45% of the total number of social safety net beneficiaries in the Governorate (a total of 56,600 individuals including 21,000 children benefited from the program). A similar campaign has been launched in Sulaymaniyah targeting 7,000 families.

Provision of critical medical and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) supplies and improving infection and prevention control (IPC)

In the first of its kind project since the corona virus outbreak, graduate students in the pharmaceutical department of the University of Karbala have produced 14,500 locally made hand sanitizers and 10,000 large products to disinfect surfaces, with the support of UNICEF and its partner the Karbala Directorate of Health.

Over the course of the month of June, the locally made disinfectant and hand sanitizers were distributed to primary healthcare centers in Thi Qar, Muthanna, Qadisiya Missan and Baghdad and benefitted an estimated 10,000 patients and 2,000 health workers. UNICEF also provided disinfection materials the hospitals in Al Karama, Al Karkh, Ibn Al Bitar, Al Shiekh Zayed and Al Yarmouk in Baghdad and will benefit an estimated 15,000 patients as well as 1,000 health workers.

UNICEF installed 50 new public handwashing facilities at 25 health care facilities providing critical health services for (5,000 patients and 500 health workers) at Karkh bank within Baghdad; (500) health workers reached with the provision of PPE in Baghdad;

UNICEF installed 70 public handwashing facilities at health care facilities, local markets and other public places in high-risk areas (Al Sadir, Al Bayaa, Zafaraniya, Al Shaab, Al Hurriya and Dora) within Baghdad and Al Iskan quarter in Hilla within Babil governorate. These places are used by over 150,000 people including around 70,000 children.
Approximately 3,930 hygiene kits were delivered to Qushtapa and Kawergosk refugee camps benefitting 23,580 Syrian refugees, while 33,630 IDPs will benefit from the distribution of 5,605 kits being delivered to Jedah camps. In cooperation with academic institutions at Kerbala University, 35,000 affected population along with 1,750 health workers reached with (4,500) locally produced hand sanitizers distributed to (34) HCFs in 4 districts within Kerbala.

UNICEF Erbil office has supported one temporary quarantine center in “Laylan 2 camp” in Kirkuk with WASH services comprising of two latrines and two showers. As of 2nd June, only two families (10 individuals) are in the quarantine center. UNICEF, in collaboration with the Department of Reformatory, has distributed PPE, hygiene materials and dignity kits to support 23 juvenile detention facilities and child institutions in Central and Southern Regions.

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

UNICEF has provided 1,200 health care workers with PPEs in the Health facilities providing COVID-19 services across the country. A total of 3,614 children 6-59 months screened with MUAC for growth in the IDPs/Refugees’ camps. A total of 51 SAM cases identified and referred for management; while 187 MAM cases identified and received proper treatment. Furthermore, 1,752 mothers of children <23 months benefited from IYCF counselling.

The first online TOT training on IPC for 137 staff from all DOHs was completed and a core team of master trainers developed in each Department of Health. The package of training included a general IPC package, immunization, MNH, Nutrition, and RCCE packages. These packages were adapted from the global UNICEF and WHO guidelines and translated to the local languages.

**Supporting access to Education, Child Protection and GBV services**

UNICEF partners further availed digital platforms to reach young people with needed skills development. The Global Adolescent Kit for Expression & Innovation: Adapted Resource Package for COVID-19 was launched in Iraq, offering adolescents a set of interactive activities that can be self-administered, promoting psychosocial wellbeing in times of stress. 102 young people (77 girls) have so far participated in these life skills sessions. In KRI, UNICEF-supported partners continued with e-learning through GSuite, a digital platform providing young people who stay at home easy access to learning opportunities. Over 1,107 adolescents (598 girls) have registered and benefitted from skills-building sessions on leadership, communication, business start-ups, IT and English courses, all facilitated by a certified trainer for each set of skills. The learning materials are delivered in Kurdish and Arabic, with audio and video contents and interactive exercises.

National exams in federal Iraq have been delayed until 1 Sep on the basis of increased infection rates. Exams in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I) are ongoing and supported by UNICEF through the provision of PPE and disinfection kits.

For the KR-I, UNICEF assessed the IT server infrastructure supporting the Ministry of Education’s new e-learning platform Ewana and found it being under capacity in terms of the volume of data traffic it was required to handle. On this basis, UNICEF agreed to procure a new system server and to upgrade the cooling system.

Despite the lockdown and movement restrictions imposed due to COVID-19 public health crisis, UNICEF, through its partners continued to provide critical child protection services including psychosocial support and case management to vulnerable children and young people in need of services using a variety of innovative approaches including remote service provision using mobile telephones. During the reporting period, 5,604 children and young people (2,873 girls) received PSS support, while 1,845 children and young people (926 girls) received case management support.

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Furthermore, 26 children (2 girls) were released from detention facilities in Federal Iraq bringing the total number of children released from pre and post trail since the beginning of the pandemic to 320 (32 girls). During the reporting period UNICEF implementing partners also provided case management services to 81 beneficiaries (50 women/31 girls) using GBV sub cluster approved tailored remote service modalities, in-person and home visits where possible. In addition 783 individuals (475 women, 269 girl, 19 boys, 20 men) received individual or group psychosocial services while 1,705 individuals (757 women, 555 girls, 207 boys and 186 men) were reached with community trainings and
awareness-raising sessions, promoting GBV prevention and safer environment for women and girls. In addition, 33 UNICEF staff from different sections were trained on GBV Risk Mitigation and response services.

**Secondary impacts on children and women**
The Ministry of Planning and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs continues the disbursement of emergency cash transfers, reaching so far 450,000 HHs out of a total of 2.1 million eligible HHs. The joint Ministry of Planning-UNICEF-World Bank assessment of COVID-19 on poverty and vulnerability has been finalized with the launch planned July. This will include discussions with relevant ministries and international partners on policy recommendations and required response measures focusing social protection, social services, and economic measures.

UNICEF supported the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Kurdistan Region to conduct awareness raising to 15,400 poor households who are beneficiaries of the Social Safety Net on COVID-19 prevention and assessing the deprivations faced by children and young people to inform response measures.

**External Communications**
**Joint Statement by the ILO and UNICEF on World Day Against Child Labour in Iraq**

UNICEF Iraq website: [https://www.unicef.org/iraq/](https://www.unicef.org/iraq/)
Humanitarian Action for Children: [https://www.unicef.org/appeals/](https://www.unicef.org/appeals/)

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