

Impact of COVID-19 on Children and Families in Latin America and the Caribbean

The Latin America and the Caribbean region has become the new epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic¹, upending the lives of many children and their families. This pandemic is as much a health crisis as a social and economic threat, creating extremely challenging situations, particularly amongst the most vulnerable.

Children are the hidden victims of this pandemic.

Millions of boys, girls and adolescents are facing poverty, being affected by violence and conflict, uprooted, potentially dying from preventable causes, being out of school, or missing out essential vaccines. Providing them with access to health, education, water, sanitation and hygiene, nutrition and protection has never been so critical.

Children and their families are already suffering from large scale disruptions of basic social services.

Their access to health, food, housing, minimum income and safe social interaction is increasingly affected. Over 154 million children, about 95 per cent of the enrolled, are temporarily out of school in Latin America and the Caribbean². This has serious consequences on children learning, particularly on the most vulnerable who may never return to school. Moreover, schools' closures have also entailed the interruption of access to school feeding, health, water, sanitation and hygiene and

psychosocial support. Since the outbreak, more than 80 million children have stopped receiving hot meals across the region³.

The impact of COVID-19 outbreak across the region is threatening children's rights at a scale not experienced before. Those already living in poverty will be pushed into even more dire straits as livelihoods collapse and economies suffer. It is estimated that the number of people impacted by poverty could increase from 185 to 214.7 million (34.7 per cent of the region's population); while people in extreme poverty could increase from 67.4 to 83.4 million⁴. These numbers are particularly alarming for child poverty, accordingly to UNICEF **the number of children living in poor households will increase by 21.7 per cent**, from 71.6 million to 87.2 million children⁵.

Across the region, millions of migrants and refugees are particularly exposed to the virus as they have limited access to water and sanitation and practicing social distancing is challenging. Moreover, border closures have meant children and families on the move are often stranded at borders where they are in need of sustained humanitarian and protection assistance. Containment measures are severely impacting these groups and xenophobia is likely to increase.

UNICEF protecting children and their families

UNICEF has more than **70 years of experience** ensuring the health, education, nutrition and protection of children, especially those most in need. UNICEF works in **the most challenging and least accessible places and is present in 36 countries in the region.**

UNICEF has an **integrated approach** to address the needs of children throughout their life cycle. UNICEF **brings public and private sector actors together** to find multi-stakeholder solutions and has a **unique dual humanitarian and development mandate** to work towards the realization of the rights of all children in emergency and development settings.

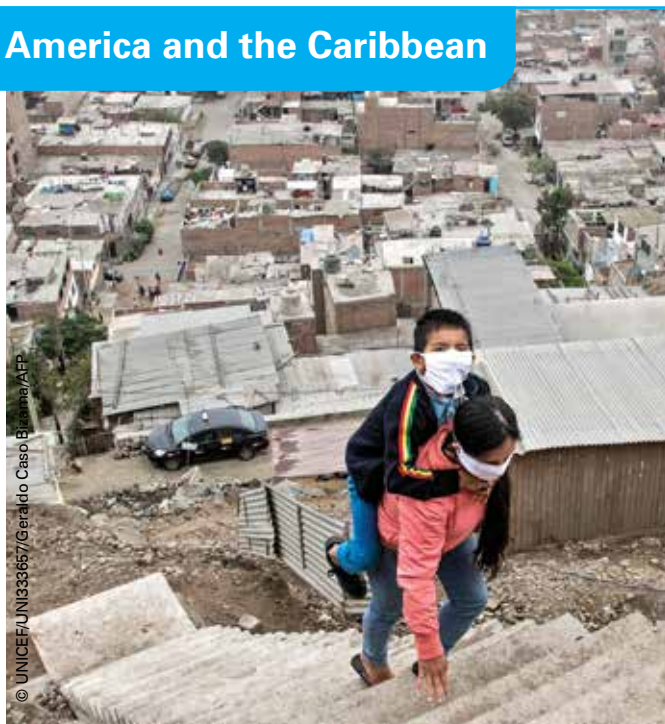


UNICEF response to COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean

Together with WHO and other UN agencies, governments and local partners, UNICEF is leading on preventative actions and is committed to continuing to deliver assistance to children, their families and health and social workers across the region.

The work of UNICEF contributes both to outbreak control and to mitigation of socio-economic impacts of the pandemic and containment measures, including the provision of essential basic services for children, women and vulnerable populations.

Given the frequency changes in the nature and extent of the crisis, UNICEF's response strategy is periodically updated. **UNICEF is working in the following five priority pillars** to protect children and their families from COVID-19 and to address the secondary impacts of both the disease and the efforts being made to halt its spread in Latin America and the Caribbean.



Pillars

Strengthen risk communication & community engagement.

- Provide accurate and evidence-based messages.
- Tackle and respond to misinformation.
- Promote handwashing and hygiene practices and physical distance measures to improve preventive practices.
- Tackle rising xenophobia and discrimination against migrant and displaced population.
- Develop FAQs, guidance and resources for parents, pregnant women and children.

Improve infection, prevention and control; and provide critical medical, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) supplies.

- Distribute critical hygiene and prevention items as well as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- Ensure access to WASH services for health facilities, households living in affected and high-risk areas, in reopened schools and in public spaces.
- Train personnel on Infection, Prevention and Control measures.

Support continued access to essential health and nutrition services for women, children and vulnerable communities, including case management.

- Promote and ensure that women and children have continued access to essential health care services, (including immunization, prenatal and postnatal care), and mental health care.
- Ensure continuity of primary health care services and specialized health care services for women, children and adolescents affected by chronic diseases and HIV.
- Support the continuation of school feeding programmes while schools are closed.

Support access to continuous education, social protection, child protection and gender-based violence services.

- Ensure educational continuity through flexible distance home-based learning.
- Support safe return to schools, as detailed in the Framework for Reopening Schools⁶.
- Provide guidance for parents and caregivers on how to support children studying at home.
- Strengthen protection services, including remote services for violence prevention.
- Establish response and referral mechanisms for gender-based violence, mental health and psychosocial support services.
- Provide technical assistance for adaptation of social protection systems to respond to the crisis.

Data collection, social science research for public health decision making.

- Collect and analyze social science data related to COVID-19 on social and care-seeking behaviors and the outbreak's impact on children and pregnant women.
- Target specific at-risk population to better understand outbreak dynamics and the appropriateness of response strategies at the community level.
- Promote knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) studies on WASH.

CENTRAL AMERICA AND MEXICO



Costa Rica Provide children in care or detention with vital hygiene kits to protect themselves.



El Salvador Provide psychosocial support, development of life skills and life plans for returnees, victims of violence and displaced children.



Guatemala Provide technical support for cash assistance programmes for the most vulnerable.



Honduras Provide children who are detained or need alternative care due to virus with professional counselling and support.



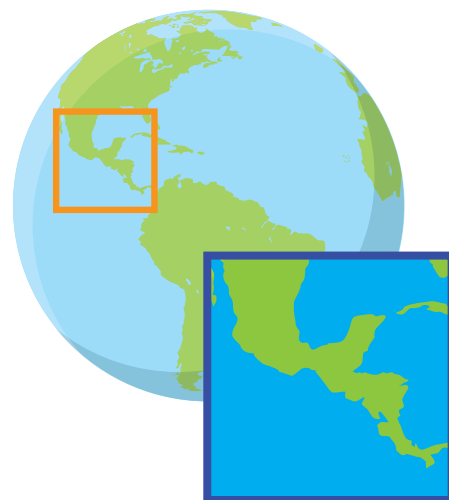
Mexico Strengthen violence prevention remote services as helplines and hotlines.



Nicaragua Support implementation of COVID-19 prevention protocols in schools.



Panama Provide WASH and hygiene supplies to migrant settlements.



CARIBBEAN



Eastern Caribbean Area Provide free access to recognized education on-line platforms for children in need.



Belize Provide pregnant women and their children with basic nutrition package to address and prevent malnutrition.



Cuba Develop online education materials and train teachers in remote learning.



Dominican Republic Develop playful e-learning activities for primary school children.



Guyana Support implementation of distance learning modalities.



Haiti Provide PPE and supplies for health centers and community health workers.



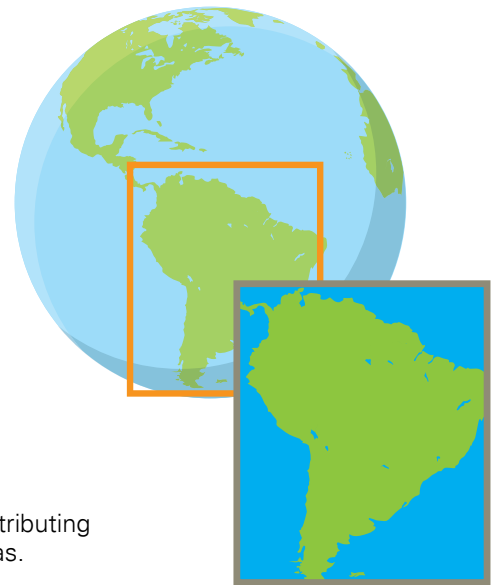
Jamaica Provide psychosocial support and guidance for addressing parenting challenges during confinement through a support helpline.



Suriname Develop and disseminate hand washing and prevention campaigns nationally.

SOUTH AMERICA

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|  | Argentina | Provide health workers and health facilities with protective equipment and supplies. |
|  | Bolivia | Provide assistance for schools reopening, ensuring they met the health and WASH protocols. |
|  | Brazil | Empowering youth migrants and refugees with communication equipment, connectivity and training to enable them to disseminate preventive messages. |
|  | Chile | Provide key prevention messages through social media channels. |
|  | Colombia | Build and rehabilitate handwashing facilities as well as distributing hygiene, PPE and WASH supplies on border and rural areas. |
|  | Ecuador | Provide cash assistance for migrant and refugees affected by COVID-19. |
|  | Paraguay | Monitor and ensure migrant shelters have health and safe conditions to prevent from the virus. |
|  | Peru | Develop guides for parents and caregivers to help protect and care for children and youth in the time of COVID-19, translated into Quechua and signal language. |
|  | Uruguay | Communicate to pregnant women with appropriate breastfeeding recommendations during COVID-19. |
|  | Venezuela | Provide the most vulnerable with access to safe water and critical hygiene supplies as well as health centers with PPE and oxygen equipment. |



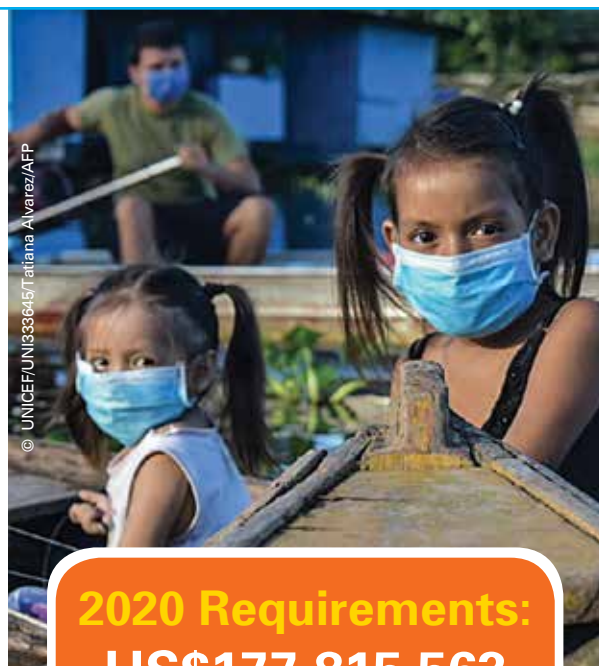
The maps in this document are stylized and they are not to scale. They do not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers.



Urgent funding needs

The COVID-19 pandemic can have serious consequences on the lives of boys, girls and adolescents. **UNICEF calls upon the international donor community to prioritize the needs of children and their families** as part of the international response to the crisis. The consequences of prolonged funding gaps will hamper UNICEF's capacity to address urgent needs and mitigate the medium and long-term effects of the crisis.

In response to the fast-evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF has revised its regional appeal to US\$177,815,563 to provide urgent and adequate response to the COVID-19 crisis in Latin America and the Caribbean. This request is part of the 2020 UNICEF COVID-19 [Humanitarian Action for Children Appeal](#) at the global level. The following tables provides an indication of UNICEF's expected funding needs to respond to the COVID-19 crisis in the region by pillar.



2020 Requirements:
US\$177,815,563

Pillars	Funding in US\$
Strengthen risk communication & community engagement	14,829,424
Improve infection, prevention and control; and provide critical medical, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) supplies.	80,763,777
Support continued access to essential health and nutrition services for women, children and vulnerable communities, including case management	15,463,084
Support access to continuous education, social protection, child protection and gender-based violence services	54,988,091
Data collection, social science research for public health decision making	2,061,889
Coordination, technical support and operational costs	1,061,500
TOTAL	177,815,563

Funding Requirements per Country

Country/Office	Requirements in US\$	Country/Office	Requirements in US\$
Argentina	7,300,000	Guyana / Suriname	4,500,000
Belize	1,787,674	Haiti	51,713,000
Bolivia	6,000,000	Honduras	600,001
Brazil	12,001,714	Jamaica	1,050,000
Chile	130,000	Mexico	5,000,001
Colombia	10,536,580	Nicaragua	3,500,000
Costa Rica	864,500	Panama	1,500,000
Cuba	1,605,933	Paraguay	3,320,700
Dominican Republic	1,610,000	Peru	3,520,000
Eastern Caribbean Area	9,281,240	Uruguay	1,216,500
Ecuador	15,115,650	Venezuela	26,828,520
El Salvador	2,500,000	LAC-Regional Office	4,055,550
Guatemala	2,278,000		
TOTAL			177,815,563



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“UNICEF is working to help prevent the spread of the virus among communities in the affected countries. We are sharing accurate information on how to keep families safe, providing hygiene and medical kits to schools and health clinics, and mitigating the impact of the outbreak on children’s access to health, education and social services.

Now more than ever, we count on our donors to continue supporting our mission for those with nothing and no one – despite these difficult times.”

Henrietta Fore, UNICEF Executive Director

¹ PAHO Press Conference on May 26th, <www.paho.org/en/media/weekly-press-briefing-covid-19-situation-americas>, accessed 01 June 2020.

² UNICEF, ‘COVID-19: Más del 95 por ciento de niños y niñas está fuera de las escuelas de América Latina y el Caribe’, <www.unicef.org/mexico/comunicados-prensa/covid-19-m%C3%A1s-del-95-por-ciento-de-ni%C3%B1os-y-ni%C3%B1as-est%C3%A1-fuera-de-las-escuelas-de>, accessed 03 April 2020.

³ WFP, ‘Podemos pasar al aprendizaje en línea, pero no a comer en línea’, <<https://historias.wfp.org/26-de-33-paises-han-suspendido-susprogramas-de-comidas-escolares-en-america-latina-y-el-caribe-5687c79e75a3>>, accessed 03 April 2020.

⁴ ECLAC, ‘The social challenge in times of COVID-19’, <https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/45544/1/S2000324_en.pdf>, accessed 01 June 2020.

⁵ UNICEF, Save the children, <www.unicef.org/press-releases/covid-19-number-children-living-household-poverty-soar-86-million-end-year>, accessed 04 June 2020.

⁶ UNICEF, UNESCO, WFP and World Bank, ‘Framework for Reopening Schools’, UNICEF, <www.unicef.org/documents/framework-reopening-schools>, accessed 06 May 2020.

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