

COMMUNICATION for DEVELOPMENT

Beirut Explosions Response Overview

November 2020

SITUATION

- 200 killed, with more than 6,500 injured, of which over 1,000 are children.
- 300,000 people are in need, of whom 100,000 are children.
- Affected children are exposed to **increased vulnerabilities**, due to a currently volatile environment, limited access to safe water, food and medicines.
- Dramatic **spike in COVID-19 cases**: 87,197 cases as of 4 November from 44,482 cases on 4 October.
- Reduced capacity of **health staff** due to crowding of hospitals – **hospital beds and ICU capacity** for COVID-19 care; as well as, challenges in providing non-COVID-19 related care.
- **Relocation of displaced communities** and potential for accelerated COVID-19 transmission.
- **Lack of knowledge** and awareness about alternative services post Beirut explosion.
- **Lack of trust** in authorities further undermined and resistance against decisions of the national authorities and **false perception of young people** of not being at risk of COVID-19 leading to irresponsible behaviour and crowded gatherings.

CORE NEEDS

- Strengthen, expand and diversify evidence-based **community engagement** and community-led initiatives to mitigate the drastic spike of COVID-19 cases since the explosion.
- Conduct timely **outreach and awareness** on the ground to raise awareness of COVID-19 and other essential services for the affected population.
- Elevate **people's voices** to influence decision making by reinforcing and establishing **Interagency Complaints and Feedback Mechanisms (CFM)** through which affected communities can communicate with humanitarian agencies around any health and non-health related matters.

UNICEF IN ACTION

- UNICEF, as **Chair of the National Task Force on Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)** under the COVID-19 response, developed an RCCE & Accountability Work Plan and a Key Message Package to respond to the Beirut Blast emergency with national and local partners.
- **A total of 5,871 households** have been reached with COVID-19 risk messages in the affected areas.
- A series of rapid **focus groups discussions** and consultations were conducted with youth, affected households and caregivers, frontline workers and inter-agency groups to inform an evidence based RCCE response plan, develop a tailored messaging package.
- Technical support and guidance were provided to more than **800 volunteers** and activists on key **essential healthy and protective behaviours** in collaboration with the Lebanese University (LU)

- UNICEF partners engaged directly with **3,182 children** raising awareness on COVID-19 through recreational activities in the affected neighbourhoods.

FUNDING REQUIREMENT

A total of \$503,110 is needed to ensure 300,000 people are reached and engaged to minimize the spread of COVID-19 through messaging on prevention and to access to services.

TARGET

- **300,000 people are reached and engaged** to prevent COVID-19 transmission
- **50 community initiatives are launched and implemented** to promote child rights, lifesaving activities, protective behaviours, and COVID-19 prevention practices.
- **Complaint and feedback mechanisms are designed and implemented** to put people's needs at the centre of the emergency response.

ACTIVITIES: Immediate and Ongoing

C4D will prioritize the definition and implementation of an **evidence-based Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) explosion response plan** with five main activities:

1. Develop and implement a **RCCE strategic response plan** with the relevant government counterparts and partners to reach the affected population, including community-led interventions with municipalities promoting child rights, lifesaving activities, protective behaviours, and COVID-19 prevention practices.
2. Provide **capacity building on RCCE and Interpersonal Communication (IPC)** to local associations, frontline workers, volunteers, government counterparts and community influencers to support key populations.
3. Develop and design **relevant Information and Education Communication (IEC) materials** on key behaviours, and practices for the affected population.
4. Ensure consistent **advocacy activities** with central and local authorities, as well as with community influencers on key lifesaving skills, protective behaviours, and COVID-19 prevention practices.
5. Develop an **Accountability to Affected Population (AAP) workplan** and strategy focused on: community led initiatives, scale-up, RCCE partnerships, and innovation to identify needs, concerns, complaints and proposals of the affected population.

KEY PARTNERS

- Since the explosion, UNICEF has worked closely with partners and will continue to do so to implement immediate and ongoing risk communication and community engagement activities. Partners include the Lebanese Red Cross; Balamand University; Lebanese Ministry of Public Health; Lebanese Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, and the Lebanese Government Disaster and Risk Management Unit.

CONTACT INFORMATION

UNICEF Lebanon Country Office

Official Website: <https://www.unicef.org/lebanon/>

Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/UNICEFLebanon/>

Twitter Account:

<https://www.twitter.com/UNICEFLebanon/>

Instagram Account:

<https://www.instagram.com/UNICEFLebanon>

UNICEF Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC)

Lebanon Appeal, 2020:

<https://www.unicef.org/appeals/lebanon.html>

Who to contact for further information:

Lebanon Country Office:

YUKIE MOKUO, Representative

ymokuo@unicef.org

MARY LOUISE EAGLETON; Deputy Representative

meagleton@unicef.org

NAOKO AKIYAMA; Humanitarian Affairs Manager

nakiyama@unicef.org