



Briefing for students supported to sit the National Exams, Ar-Raqqa © UNICEF/2021

Reporting Period: 1 – 31 May 2021

# Whole of Syria Humanitarian Situation Report

May 2021



## Situation in Numbers



**6,080,000**  
children in need of humanitarian assistance



**13,400,000**  
people in need



**6,700,000**  
Internally displaced people (IDPs)



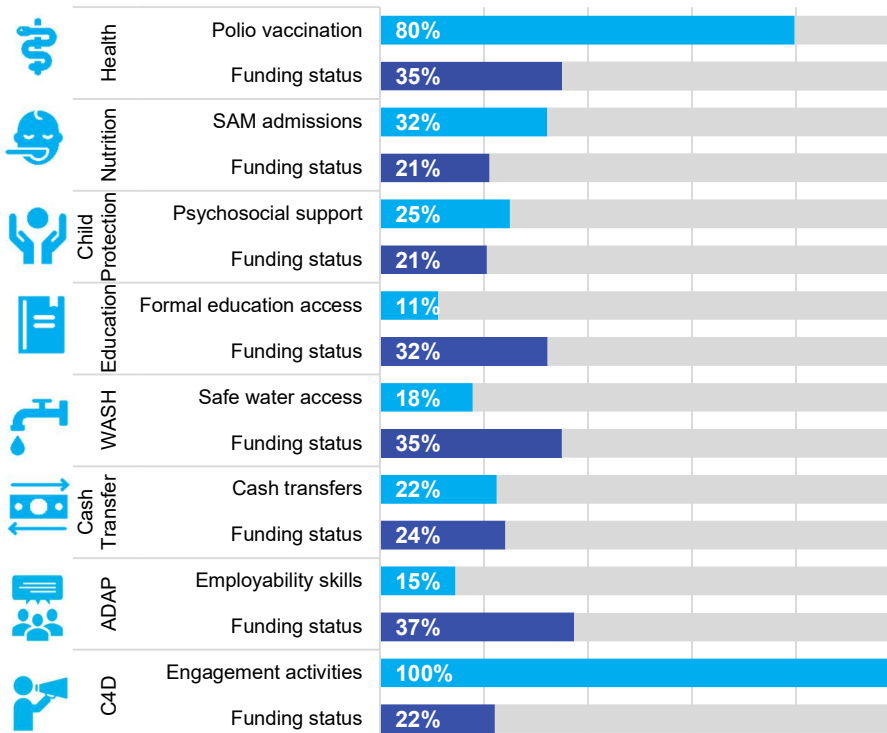
**2,565,766**  
Children in hard to reach areas

(source: OCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview, 2021)

## Highlights

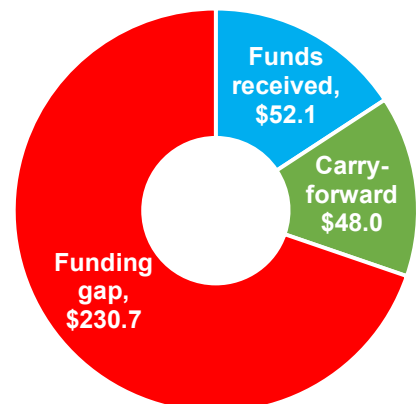
- The Education Sector, led by UNICEF, in coordination with sector and inter-sectoral partners and the Ministry of Education, supported the participation of 5,783 children who travelled crossline or cross-border to sit the Grade 9 or 12 national exams in five governorates.
- COVID-19 vaccines accessed through the COVAX facility have been provided to 46,397 people over 55 years of age or with pre-existing chronic diseases in government-controlled areas (results are not yet available for northeast Syria) while 17,593 health and social workers (3,272 female) have received their first dose in northwest Syria.
- The Syria [Humanitarian Needs Overview](#) (HNO) of 2021 was released in May and highlighted the plight of the population after 10 years of conflict. According to the HNO, 13.4 million people, including 6.1 million children are in need of humanitarian assistance. This is a 25 per cent increase in the number of children in need from 2020, with needs exacerbated by economic decline.
- In 2021, UNICEF requires US\$330.8 million to provide life-saving assistance to 9.1 million people (including 5.5 million children) across Syria. There is currently a 70 per cent gap in funding needs.

## UNICEF's Response and Funding Status



## Funding Status

UNICEF Appeal: US\$ 330.8 million



Note on the C4D Indicator: Significant over-reach in the response is due to the target focusing only on the Health and Education programmes, while all programmes are undertaking relevant activities. The target will be modified during the mid-year HAC Review

## Funding Overview and Partnerships

In 2021, UNICEF requires US\$330.8 million to provide life-saving assistance to 9.1 million people (including 5.5 million children) across Syria according to the [Humanitarian Action for Children \(HAC\)](#). Of the total funding requirement, US\$100,163,267 are available, with a US\$230,663,308 (70 per cent) gap. The HAC is being reviewed as part of the Humanitarian Response Planning for 2021.

Funding gaps for the Nutrition and Social Protection programmes remain significant at 79 and 76 per cent of requirements respectively, while families struggle to cope with a deteriorating socio-economic environment and high levels of food insecurity. Child Protection interventions are also severely underfunded (79 per cent), limiting the ability of UNICEF to prevent, mitigate and respond to the consequences of the types of negative coping mechanisms that are often adopted during times of crisis.

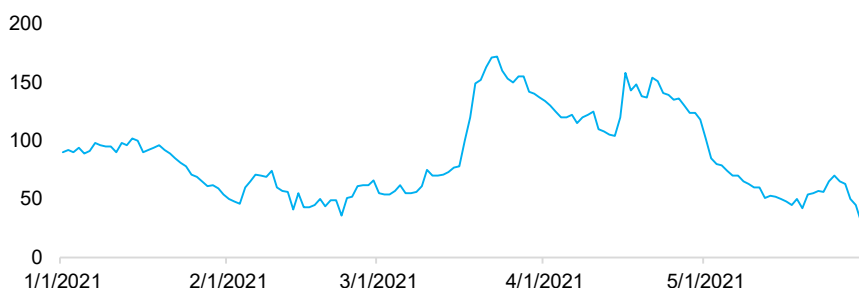
The [HNO](#) for Syria for 2021 was released in May and highlighted the plight of the population after 10 years of conflict. According to the HNO, 13.4 million people, including 6.1 million children are in need of humanitarian assistance. This is a 25 per cent increase in the number of children in need from 2020, with needs exacerbated by economic decline. According to heads of households surveyed, priority needs include food and nutrition (71 per cent); livelihoods (50 per cent); and winterization, including shelter materials (30 per cent).<sup>1</sup>

This year, the Governments of Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Norway, Russia, Spain Sweden, Switzerland, United States, as well as ECHO, the Syria Humanitarian Fund and UNICEF national committees have generously contributed to ongoing UNICEF humanitarian response across Syria. UNICEF expresses its sincere gratitude to all public and private partners for the contributions received.

## Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

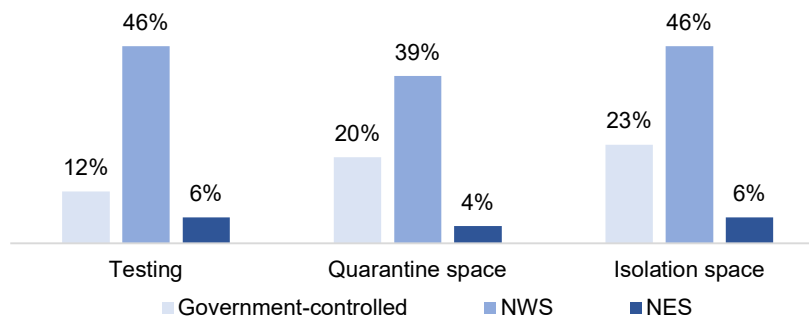
**COVID-19:** As of 31 May, the Syrian Ministry of Health (MOH) had confirmed 24,639 cases of COVID-19 including 1,790 deaths since the start of the pandemic. There were 1,836 new cases in May, less than half as many new cases as confirmed in April.<sup>2</sup> While daily confirmed case numbers have decreased, concerning signs remain, including test positivity rates above 50 per cent in Homs, As-Sweida and Tartous. Actual cases likely far exceed the number of confirmed cases due to limited testing throughout the country<sup>3</sup>.

**Graph 1: Daily confirmed COVID-19 cases in government-controlled areas, 2021**



As of 7 June, authorities in northeast Syria (NE Syria) have reported 18,036 COVID-19 cases, including 732 deaths. New daily cases have declined in NE Syria, which may be due in part to recent lockdown measures<sup>4</sup>. An additional 23,541 cases including 670 deaths have been reported from northwest Syria (NW Syria) as of the end of May.

**Graph 2: % of sub-districts reporting the availability of COVID-19 medical services**



Source: UN HNAP

The UN Humanitarian Needs Assessment Programme (HNAP) released a series of COVID-19 Rapid Assessments, focusing on the use of COVID-19 prevention

<sup>1</sup> With no significant differences between female and male heads of household. From the Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA), October 2020 as reported in the 2021 HNO.

<sup>2</sup> WHO, [COVID-19 Dashboard](#).

<sup>3</sup> OCHA, [Syrian Arab Republic: COVID-19 Humanitarian Update](#) No 26, 10 June 2021.

<sup>4</sup> OCHA, [Syrian Arab Republic: COVID-19 Humanitarian Update](#) No 26, 10 June 2021.

measures and availability of response services. The assessments looked at government-controlled areas, NE Syria and NW Syria where 53, 60 and 52 per cent of people have sufficient knowledge of COVID-19, according to key informant interviews. The assessments pointed to a lack of COVID-19 medical services (see Graph 2) and an infrequent application of prevention measures such as compulsory mask wearing, social distancing and lockdowns, the latter not used in any sub-district in the country.

**Drought conditions:** Eastern Syria is currently experiencing drought conditions<sup>5</sup> with several governorates reporting rainfall levels in 2020-2021 significantly lower than the long-term average while many locations received no rainfall during critical months for crop development (January to March). In NE Syria, these conditions are being further compounded by the reduced rate of water flow in the Euphrates River, the main source of drinking water for an estimated 5.5 million people<sup>6</sup> in Ar-Raqqa, Aleppo and Deir-ez-Zor. As the summer season progresses, water needs are on the rise in host communities and camp settings. The river is also a major source of water for irrigation and hydropower<sup>7</sup>. Reduced energy production has resulted in areas of NE Syria now receiving only one to two hours of electricity per day. Together with existing fuel shortages, this has also led to the reduced operation of water pumping stations. UNICEF is assessing the situation through the WASH Sector and OCHA; the Government of Syria has also raised concerns.

**Alouk Water Station:** Since a fire at an electricity sub-station disrupted power to Alouk Water Station on 12 April, the station continues to operate either intermittently and/or at reduced capacity, affecting an estimated one million people including 460,000 people in Al-Hasakeh and Tal Tamer Cities, as well as over 70,000 people in Al-Hol and other camps and settlements in the area. Further information is available in the WASH Sector Response section below.

**Northwest Syria:** The security situation in NW Syria remains unchanged with hostilities continuing in southern Idlib, northern Hama and western Aleppo with regular explosions from improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and unexploded ordnance, particularly in northern Aleppo and Idlib. Artillery shelling on 1 May in Afrin killed one girl<sup>8</sup> while the active conflict along the front lines in the southern Idlib, western Aleppo, northern Hama and Jabel Al Zawiya axis resulted in the death of one child, one man and one woman, with others injured, on 7 May in Atareb.<sup>9</sup> On 19 and 24 May, two IED incidents occurred in Jarablus resulting in the killing of three civilians and injury of two more.<sup>10</sup>

**The relocation of IDPs from southern Syria:** On 20 May, three buses carrying 35 families (140 individuals) displaced by local agreements left Um Batna in Qunaitra for NW Syria. The families received medical check-ups and are now hosted in a new IDP camp in northern Idlib.<sup>11</sup>

**Fires:** Fires have destroyed large areas of agricultural land in NW Syria. The Civil Defense has said that 30 hectares of cultivated land (primarily wheat fields) have been destroyed so far. The burning of agricultural land has become an annual occurrence around this time as wheat and other crops are ready for harvest and has left families dependent on agriculture without livelihoods.

**Socioeconomic crisis:** Historically high food prices have left 40 per cent of the population unable to afford nutritious food and nearly half of Syrian families surveyed saying that adults are eating less so children can eat.<sup>12</sup> The national average price for the standard food basket<sup>13</sup> decreased by two per cent in April 2021, the first decrease since August 2020. The decrease is believed to be tied to improvements in the informal exchange rate. The national average price remains 247 per cent higher than in April 2020. The overall price decrease also hides monthly price increases from March to April in four governorates, including an 11 per cent increase in Damascus and 9 per cent increase in Rural Damascus.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> EU Copernicus Emergency Management Service Joint Research Centre Global Drought Observatory, [Drought in Syria and Iraq – April 2021](#), 22 April 2021.

<sup>6</sup> UN News, [During relative calm, growing humanitarian suffering in Syria, a 'tragic irony'](#), 26 May 2021.

<sup>7</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, German Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources, [Inventory of shared water resources in Western Asia](#), 2013.

<sup>8</sup> Security Update, 4 May 2021 and UNOCHA Daily Situation Update

<sup>9</sup> OCHA Daily Situation Update on 7 May 2021

<sup>10</sup> Weekly Security Update 18 to 25 May 2021

<sup>11</sup> UNOCHA Daily Situation Report on 21 and 22 May 2021

<sup>12</sup> UN News, [During relative calm, growing humanitarian suffering in Syria, a 'tragic irony'](#), 26 May 2021.

<sup>13</sup> A standard food basket is defined as: a group of dry goods providing 2,060 kcal a day for a family of five for a month (37 kg bread, 19 kg rice, 19 kg lentils, 5 kg sugar and 7L vegetable oil).

<sup>14</sup> WFP Syria Country Office Market Price Watch Bulletin, April 2021, Issue 77.

## Summary Analysis of Programme Response

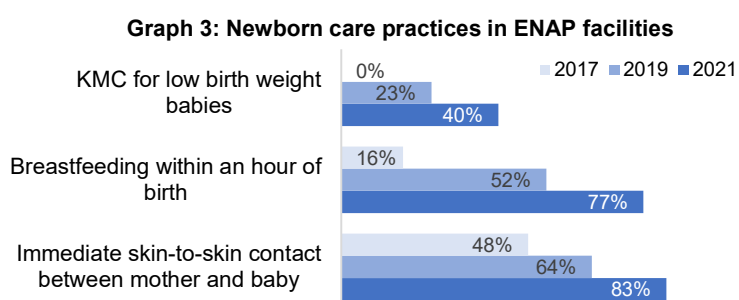
### Health

**COVID-19 vaccines** accessed through the COVAX facility have been provided to 46,397 people over 55 years of age or with pre-existing chronic diseases in government-controlled areas (results are not yet available for NE Syria) while 17,593 health and social workers (3,272 female) have received their first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine in NW Syria. Meanwhile, 69,528 health workers have received vaccines provided through other donations. Efforts continue to both roll out vaccinations and to generate demand for them (See the Communication for Development section below for details on demand generation). As part of the on-going COVID-19 response, 277 healthcare facility staff and community health workers (150 females) received personal protective equipment from UNICEF in May while 150 health workers (90 females) were trained on the detection, referral and appropriate management of COVID-19 cases in Damascus, Rural Damascus, Dar'a, Quneitra and Aleppo; 315 health workers have been trained this year.

In May, 132,967 **free medical consultations** (52,235 for boys, 50,452 for girls, 42 for men<sup>15</sup> and 29,858 for women) were provided by UNICEF implementing partners through fixed centres and mobile teams in 14 governorates. This includes 27,023 in NE Syria (5,137 in Al-Hol Camp) and 37,845 in NW Syria. This was 60,000 fewer consultations than the previous month, as was expected due to the Ramadan period and Eid El-Fitr holidays.

A training of trainers on **newborn care** at home was conducted in Damascus for 20 health workers (16 females) in May, while 150 other health workers (131 females) were trained on topics including neonatal resuscitation, Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) and breastfeeding best practices in the five hospitals participating in the Every Newborn Action Plan (ENAP)<sup>16</sup>. So far this year, 1,045 health workers and community volunteers have been trained on newborn care. An update on ENAP

indicators for this quarter showed a prematurity rate of 16 per cent; a neonatal mortality rate of 1.8 per cent (more than half due to prematurity); and a still birth rate of 1.5 per cent, along with improvements in key practices (see Graph 3).



In terms of **routine immunization**, 50,626 children under 1 year (25,359 girls) received their third dose of diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus (DPT) vaccine. Out of these, 7,929 children (3,956 girls) were in NW Syria. UNICEF supports social mobilizers who provide health promotion and advocacy for vaccination to caregivers of children under 5 years through household visits. Any zero dose or under-immunized children are referred to the nearest vaccination centre to complete their vaccination schedule. During May, 29,489 new caregivers received messages from these social mobilizers in NW Syria. Additionally, 23,909 caregivers (17,520 women) were reached with health promotion in the rest of the country, 5,408 of whom were in NE Syria (1,577 in Al Hol Camp).

### Nutrition

In May, UNICEF and partners screened 161,891 children and women (67,237 boys, 67,675 girls and 26,979 pregnant or lactating women) for acute malnutrition, 99,289 of whom were screened for the first time this year. This included 26,278 children and 10,779 women in NE Syria, of whom 4,616 children and 1,261 women were in Al-Hol Camp. Through this active case finding, 1,034 children under 5 (463 girls; 590 in NW Syria and 285 in NE Syria including 66 in Al-Hol Camp) were identified with **severe acute malnutrition (SAM)** and enrolled for treatment. All UNICEF-supported nutrition treatment centres meet Sphere standards performance rates.

**Micronutrients** were provided to 44,733 beneficiaries (11,235 boys, 11,450 girls and 22,048 women), out of which 11,733 children under 5 (5,871 girls) and 18,477 women were reached for the first time this year. Stock shortages of micronutrients as highlighted in April continued to affect the capacity of UNICEF to provide every child screened for malnutrition with micronutrients. It is expected that this will be back on track in June. Separately, 6,904 children under 5 and 6,133 pregnant and lactating women in NE Syria received micronutrients.

To protect, promote and support optimal infant feeding practices, UNICEF and its partners **provided infant and young child feeding (IYCF)** awareness sessions to 152,055 new caregivers (135,645 females) focusing on the prevention of malnutrition, skilled breastfeeding counselling and appropriate IYCF practices, including for 12,109 caregivers in NE Syria.

<sup>15</sup> Primary health care consultations target women and children under 5.

<sup>16</sup> These are main public hospitals in Damascus, Hama, Tartous and Lattakia.

During May, UNICEF and its partners reached 166,400 beneficiaries including 52,475 boys, 50,260 girls and 63,375 pregnant and lactating mothers and caregivers with nutrition services in Idleb and northern rural Aleppo. This brings the total reach of UNICEF and its partners from January to May 2021 to 671,701 beneficiaries out of the targeted 1,360,000 in NW Syria. This includes 167,369 boys, 165,222 girls and 120,678 pregnant and lactating mothers screened for acute malnutrition, out of which 2,322 boys and girls were identified with, and treated for, SAM. Micronutrients were provided to 26,982 boys, 29,215 girls and 133,637 pregnant and lactating mothers while 103,476 mothers and caregivers received counselling on optimal IYCF.

### Nutrition Sector Response

During April (the latest for data is available), the Nutrition Sector led by UNICEF reached 216,749 children and pregnant and lactating women with preventive and curative nutrition services. This includes 762 boys and 1,220 girls identified with moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) and 201 boys and 280 girls identified with SAM. These children, along with 957 pregnant and lactating women with MAM were admitted for treatment.

Based on the Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring assessment undertaken in 2020, an action plan was endorsed in May by all sector partners for 2021. Agreed actions include ensuring the participation of agencies undertaking nutrition-sensitive interventions in the sector and providing capacity building on cross-sectoral issues such as protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. The Nutrition Sector has also reactivated its thematic working groups on the community management of acute malnutrition and IYCF.

The Sector is working closely with UNICEF and WFP to secure all required nutrition supplies to prevent any stockouts. Due to product standards issues, there have been challenges importing ready-to-use therapeutic food for the treatment of SAM, with UNICEF and the sector is advocating with MOH officials at all levels to resolve the issue.

### Child Protection

In May, UNICEF and partners newly provided lifesaving messages and face-to-face awareness sessions to mitigate the **risk of explosive devices** to 36,959 children and caregivers (20,327 girls and women; 13,900 from NE Syria and 7,628 from NW Syria) across the 14 governorates. This brings the total from the beginning of 2021 to 353,367 children and caregivers (194,352 girls and women). During the reporting period, 26 people were killed and injured (including three children killed and two injured) by explosive ordnance in Hama, Deir-ez-Zor, Aleppo, Rural Damascus, Dar'a and As-Sweida. In response, UNICEF is expanding risk awareness interventions in heavily contaminated areas of rural Hama where people are returning.



©UNICEF/2019 A risk awareness session in Tadmour, Rural Homs, May 2021

In NE Syria, **child protection services continue in Al-Hol Camp** and in May, six unaccompanied Syrian children (one girl) from UNICEF interim care centres (ICCs) were reunified with their families, while 95 Iraqi households (381 individuals, 159 males, 222 females), including 197 children were repatriated to Iraq.

Deteriorating living conditions, frequent exposure to violence and multiple displacements have profoundly impacted children's psychological well-being, while COVID-19 pandemic and increased transportation costs are limiting their access to services<sup>17</sup>. In May UNICEF and partners newly reached 25,732 children and caregivers (14,153 girls and women) with structured and sustained **child protection and psychosocial support services**, including 12,665 children and caregivers in NE Syria and 1,902 children in NW Syria, bringing the total reached this year to 103,684 children and caregivers. This was a significant increase from the previous month, as a new psychosocial support programme cycle was launched. **Parenting programmes** newly reached 7,771 parents and primary caregivers (5,336 females) including 6,311 in NE Syria and 348 in NW Syria, bringing the total to 16,075 parents and primary caregivers reached since the beginning of 2021 with sessions aimed at enhancing their skills and knowledge to care for and protect their children.

In May, UNICEF and partners continued to provide **child protection and gender-based violence (GBV) case management**, reaching an additional 1,260 children and caregivers (693 girls) as well as 22 women who received GBV case management. This includes 466 children in NE Syria and 167 children in NW Syria. Referrals were newly provided to 1,495 children (717 girls) and 117 caregivers (75 females), bringing the total to 5,734 children (2,679 girls) and 780

<sup>17</sup> Implementing partners report parents' increasing reticence to send their children to activities and limitations concerning the number of children who can join the sessions as well as increased transportation costs due to the fuel crisis.

caregivers (536 females) reached with referrals to education, family tracing, GBV, health, legal and social protection support since January.

In response to the increased prevalence of GBV in Syria, especially intimate partner and family violence, child and forced marriage and sexual violence and exploitation (HNO 2021), GBV **awareness raising** was newly provided through campaigns or door-to-door visits to 21,095 children and caregivers (11,602 girls and women), including 15,535 children and caregivers in NE Syria. Meanwhile, protection awareness sessions in NW Syria were provided to 2,392 people (1,316 girls and women, 1,076 boys and men).

In the coming months, UNICEF will focus on expanding partnerships with local NGOs in rural Homs, rural Hama and newly-accessible areas of Idleb to ensure the provision of child protection interventions in areas that are severely in need but have not yet been reached. Meanwhile, in NW Syria, funding constraints have meant that UNICEF has not yet been able to renew all of its 2020 partnerships. To date, only 8 of the 15 partnerships are currently active. Despite these limitations, in May, UNICEF and its partners provided child protection services to 9,494 children (4,662 girls) and 2,802 caregivers (1,543 women) from 49 communities in 18 sub-districts of Idleb and Aleppo.

### **Child Protection Area of Responsibility (AOR) Response**

The Protection Sector and Child Protection AOR are discussing with OCHA to increase the Syrian Humanitarian Fund (SHF) fund allocation for protection. Core protection activities involved include community mobilization; child protection; GBV prevention, mitigation and response; legal assistance; and community-based protection. Affected groups will include separated and unaccompanied children; survivors of severe GBV, and those who continue to be affected by conflict. Meanwhile, an exercise will be launched in August by the Global Child Protection AOR to under a capacity needs assessment for the delivery of mental health and psychosocial support services and to develop a sector capacity building plan.

### **Integrated National Exam Support**

[Education Sector in collaboration with other Sectors | UNICEF Education | Child Protection AOR | UNICEF Child Protection | UNICEF Communication for Development](#)

The final Grades 9 and 12 certificate exams for the 2020-2021 academic year started from 30 May and will continue up to 22 June. Among the 518,670 students who registered to sit the exams, 16,507 (8,557 girls) registered from areas outside government control. As of 31 May, 5,783 students (2,993 girls; 4,495 Grade 9 and 1,288 Grade 12) had travelled crossline and cross-border and are staying in the accommodation centres in five governorates, including Aleppo (4,632), Ar-Raqqa (625), Dier-ez-Zor (131), Hama (134) and Rural Damascus (261, all Syrian students living in Lebanon). Other students (55 students from newly accessible areas of Idleb and 9,120 students from NE of Syria) are travelling crossline daily rather than staying in the accommodation centres.



**Students hosted in student accommodations, Ar-Raqqa ©UNICEF/Syria**



**Sanitization of exam centres in Ar-Raqqa to ensure adherence to COVID-19 safety protocols ©UNICEF/Syria**

The Education Sector, led by UNICEF, coordinated with the Ministry of Education and related sector and inter-sectoral partners<sup>18</sup> to support the travel and accommodation of these 5,783 children during the exam period. Contributions from inter-sectoral partners include the provision of supplies (food; non-food items such as mattresses, blankets and utensils; and hygiene and sanitation supplies such as masks and soap) and services (transportation, remedial classes, psychosocial support, case management, mine risk awareness and COVID-19 awareness, among others). MOE is organizing and assuring the safety of the students, while also providing mobile health teams.

<sup>18</sup> Including UN agencies (UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and WHO); international NGOs (NRC, GVC, PUI, AKF, TGH, AVSI, EIEA and OXFAM); Red Crescent agencies (ICRC and SARC); and national NGOs (ASSLS, Al-Birr Association, Syria Development Trust, SSSD, SCS Hama, RSRP, Social Care, ICDA and GOPA).

Child Protection AOR partners installed complaint boxes in all accommodation centres and are monitoring and sharing feedback received from students and chaperones with relevant partners for follow up. One common issue was the need for cold water; the centres are now provided with two ice blocks each day. Other students requested an adjustment in the hours they were able to leave the accommodation centre, the hours for which have since been adjusted.

One of the main challenges encountered so far has been logistical delays, which saw some supplies such as masks, hygiene kits, ceiling fans and stationery arriving after the students, although before the start of the exams.

The UNICEF Representative along with the UN Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator strongly advocated to facilitate the travel of the students crossing from Idleb through check points opened for the students for this purpose in coordination with the Government of Syria and all other stakeholders.

## Education

According to the 2021 HNO, there are 6.8 million children (50 per cent girls) in need of education assistance in Syria, an increase of 200,000 children from 2020.<sup>19</sup> Ninety-four per cent of all school-aged children are living in areas with severe, extreme or catastrophic education conditions, mainly concentrated in Aleppo, Idleb and Rural Damascus. In May, UNICEF continued efforts to address gaps in access to and quality of education with 2,197 children newly reached with **formal education** services and supplies, including 19 in NW Syria, for a total of 196,833 children (91,503 girls, 1,918 with disabilities) reached in 2021. There was also an increase in children reached with **non-formal education** with 5,622 children supported, including 91 in NW Syria, reaching a total of 416,844 (190,974 girls) for 2021. Of these, 5,355 children with disabilities have been reached in 2021 in both formal and non-formal settings.

To mitigate the challenges posed by COVID-19, so far this year, UNICEF has provided **distance and/or home-based learning** to ensure 76,055 children (35,505 girls) can continue learning during the intermittent school closures due to COVID-19. According to the HNO, however, the reach of these interventions has been constrained by a lack of electronic devices and connectivity and other restrictions, as well as difficulty in supporting and monitoring home learning.

UNICEF also trained 228 teachers (169 females) in May to improve their capacity and skills as learning facilitators in child-friendly classrooms, for a total of 7,782 education personnel trained so far in 2021. In NW Syria, psychosocial support remains another priority. UNICEF supported 550 children (223 girls) in formal settings and 17,621 children (8,202 girls) in non-formal settings with psychosocial support in May. Referrals and case management continued to be an integrated support between education and child protection. Fifty-eight children (32 girls) were provided with Child Protection case management referrals in May.

## WASH

UNICEF supports the repair and rehabilitation of water supply systems, guided by the findings of the needs-based vulnerability mapping and by the principle of “Minimum reliable services for all – rather than all services for some”. In May, UNICEF completed the rehabilitation of seven wells in Rural Damascus, providing sustained **access to safe water** for 152,000 people (35,868 boys, 33,911 girls, 42,823 men and 39,398 women). This increased the number of people who have benefited from an improved water supply in 2021 to 741,296 people (189,139 boys, 187,933 girls, 176,785 men and 187,439 women) out of a target of four million.

In terms of **safe sanitation**, UNICEF finished the replacement of sewerage networks in two neighbourhoods in Deir-ez-Zor City. Old cracked and leaking sewerage networks were replaced to reduce community-level health risks. UNICEF received feedback about the project directly from beneficiaries and a supervisory committee. As a result, UNICEF changed the design of the project to connect 16 buildings with the main sewerage system instead of using septic tanks. A new sewage system in Sajno Village in Tartous replaced septic tanks, which, according to local sources had been causing water-borne diseases. As a result of these two sanitation projects, 94,500 people (29,025 boys, 26,658 girls, 20,008 men and 18,809 women) are now accessing adequate sanitation services. So far this year, 618,898 people (164,782 boys, 164,403 girls, 138,559 men and 151,154 women) have benefitted from improved sanitation, of the target of 1,360,000 in 2021.

During the reporting period, UNICEF sustained **emergency life-saving WASH services** including the provision of safe drinking water through water trucking for the residents in IDP camps and collective shelters in NE Syria and Rural Aleppo as well as returnees in Rural Damascus, benefiting 291,345 people (65,536 boys, 65,907 girls, 75,311 men and 84,591 women). In IDP camps including Al-Hol, UNICEF maintained monthly life-saving activities such as cleaning and maintaining WASH facilities, desludging septic tanks and solid waste collection, benefiting 44,760 out of 64,627 IDPs. Life-saving water supply and sanitation services were also provided to 405,895 IDPs (211,065 female) in NW Syria.

<sup>19</sup> OCHA, [Humanitarian Needs Overview](#), March 2021.

For the first time, **e-Vouchers** (Cash and Voucher Assistance) were introduced in a pilot project reaching 10,230 IDPs residing in eight informal settlements/camps in NW Syria to procure hygiene items of their choice; half of the e-voucher amount is redeemable for cash. Based on the pilot, UNICEF will review how to scale up to its NW Syria WASH caseload of 2.7 million people. Meanwhile, hygiene kits were supplied to 121,173 IDPs (63,010 females).

In terms of **WASH in schools**, UNICEF supported the rehabilitation of WASH facilities in seven schools in Ar-Raqqa, Aleppo and Rural Damascus, improving access for 2,884 students (1,472 girls) to gender-responsive and child-friendly WASH facilities that also address the special needs of children with disabilities. As part of the COVID-19 response, 87,000 boxes of Aqua Tabs were delivered to 13 health centres in Homs Governorate.

The lack of local production or importation of sodium hypochlorite in Syria poses major risks for the availability of safe water. UNICEF secures the majority of the local requirements for sodium hypochlorite to **disinfect all water systems** in the country, ensuring the provision of safe drinking water to around 13.6 million people across Syria. Drinking water safety was also guaranteed for over 475,000 people in NW Syria through water disinfection.

### WASH Sector Response

WASH Sector co-leads, UNICEF and the Syria Arab Red Crescent (SARC), with WASH Sector partners are working to optimize available resources for the delivery of quality WASH services. From January to April 2021, the WASH Sector reached 1,507,300 people (397,916 men, 446,825 women, 351,319 boys and 311,240 girls) with safe drinking water through the repair and rehabilitation of drinking water systems while 441,040 people (112,720 men, 133,833 women, 102,227 boys and 91,593 girls) were provided with essential WASH supplies. In response to the interruptions at Alouk water station (please see the Situation Overview above), WASH Sector partners, including UNICEF, ICRC and Action Against Hunger trucked up to 3,231m<sup>3</sup> of water a day, though this was lower than the 4,000m<sup>3</sup>/hour production capacity of the station. Trucking continued through May.

During this period, two key gaps were identified namely: (i) inadequate funding, and (ii) the need for unhindered safe humanitarian access to critical drinking water infrastructure such as Alouk water station. Through UNICEF, the Sector continues to advocate for prioritization of funding. Separately, and in close coordination and collaboration with the UN Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator, OCHA and ICRC, the Sector continues to advocate for unhindered safe humanitarian access.

### Adolescent Development and Participation (ADAP)

During the reporting period, 37,894 young people aged 10-24 years old (18,921 girls) newly benefited from ADAP services including skills building and engagement opportunities. This included vulnerable groups such as out-of-school children, IDPs, returnees, working adolescents and adolescents with disabilities in 12 governorates. So far this year, 120,822 young people have been reached, including 1,180 adolescents with disabilities.

Out of the total reach in May, 5,313 young people (3,097 girls) benefited from skills development courses including life skills and citizenship education (critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, etc.); entrepreneurship; and vocational training (refrigeration and air conditioning, accounting, electric repair. etc.). Meanwhile, 33,518 young people (16,548 girls) participated in sports for development, youth clubs and cultural activities.

### Social Protection and Cash Transfers

During the reporting period, UNICEF has continued to support the delivery of results for children through two main humanitarian social protection interventions: (i) Integrated Social Protection Programme for Children with Disabilities; and (ii) the Basic Needs Support Programme.

#### Youth-Led Initiative: Exam support

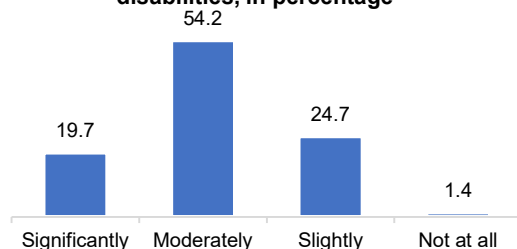


Through the ADAP Programme, young people have been supported to plan, implement and lead their own initiatives. "Do it!" is one such initiative by students at the Faculty of Psychology and Social Science in Aleppo who offered peer-to-peer support to students sitting their national exams.

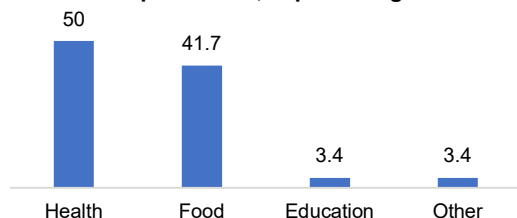
Forty young people (35 girls) were trained by an expert on the key messages to be passed to the students, focusing on stress management, self-esteem and time management. Participating students also received a Time Management Notebook designed by an entrepreneur who has received seed funding from UNICEF. The young people focused on marginalized schools and institutes in eastern Aleppo, where they reached 422 students (339 girls).



**Graph 4: Capacity of assistance to cover the needs of children with disabilities, in percentage**



**Graph 4: Most common expenditures, in percentage**



followed by food (41.7 per cent). Twenty per cent of families reported that the transfer helped them to significantly cover the basic needs of their child(ren) with disabilities, while 54 per cent reported that it helped them moderately.

A **one-time humanitarian cash transfer to support the basic needs of children** in areas with high levels of displacement reached 101 households (271 children, 128 girls) in Homs Governorate in May. This brings the total number of households reached since the beginning of the year to 19,317 (46,342 children, including 21,812 girls and 477 children with disabilities) in Rural Damascus, Homs, Tartous and Lattakia. The limited capacity of the FSP to transfer cash also meant that that planned May target of 1,816 households in Tartous and Lattakia could not be reached.

#### Communication for Development (C4D), Community Engagement and Accountability for Affected Populations (AAP)

From 25 to 29 May, UNICEF in collaboration with MOH and related health departments ran a nationwide community-level campaign to promote the uptake of **COVID-19 vaccines**. A monitoring exercise accompanying the campaign showed that 13 per cent of respondents thought the vaccine was not safe. Forty-five per cent had concerns about vaccine side effects and effectiveness. The campaign reached 190,766 people, and focused on educating people about the vaccine, its importance and safety, and the registration mechanism. As a result, the daily number of people registering to be vaccinated increased after the start of the campaign according to the platform. In Dar'a for example, there was an increase from 40 to 144 people registering per day after the campaign was launched.

In NE Syria, campaigns have been implemented in Al-Hasakeh and Ar-Raqqa including: a) training of 85 health workers on demand generation; b) advocacy, consultations and seminars with health workers and doctors; c) awareness sessions inside the vaccination centres and IDP shelters, d) dissemination of posters featuring key vaccine information; and e) cars with megaphones to announce the vaccine availability in rural areas. In Al-Hol Camp, activities included meetings with community leaders, awareness sessions for mothers and disseminating posters around the camp.

The main drivers of hesitance in the camp are a) concerns about vaccine safety; b) using the AstraZeneca vaccine in Syria while it was stopped in other countries; c) infertility concerns associated with the vaccine; and d) the perception that Health Sector is conducting experiments on the IDPs, because they are marginalized groups, and the vaccine is deadly. Clarifying concerns around these issues are then looped back into on-going demand generation efforts.

In NW Syria, UNICEF and the Syria Immunization Group (SIG) with the support of implementing partners are undertaking targeted COVID-19 vaccination social mobilization activities to mobilize health and community workers for the first phase of vaccination. Specifically:

- 1,127 awareness sessions were conducted for 8,208 health and community workers
- 6,486 household visits were undertaken

<sup>20</sup> The monthly payments are transferred on a quarterly basis.

- 3,616 reluctant targeted people were successfully counseled and mobilized for vaccination
- 18,233 targeted health and community workers mobilized for the vaccination
- 961 locations include health, community and NGO centres were provided with promotional materials

Community engagement activities in support of **routine immunization** focused on hard to reach areas with high rates of unvaccinated children based on the vaccination officers' reports. Special attention was provided to camps and informal settlements in Al-Hasakeh and Ar-Raqqa where UNICEF and 65 volunteers trained by the Department of Health reached 25,129 individuals (14,565 females) through community engagement activities such as home visits, meeting with influencers, awareness sessions with mothers and loudspeakers.

## Human Interest Stories and External Media

During the reporting period, UNICEF Syria highlighted its support to vulnerable children through its [cash transfer for children with severe disabilities](#) programme and [case management](#) services as well as its [supportive learning](#) programme. UNICEF Syria also documented its support to children and families in Rural Damascus through the [rehabilitation of sewer networks](#).

In Homs, UNICEF underlined its efforts to keep children safe with a [photo album](#) about its explosive ordnance risk education interventions. UNICEF also published communication material capturing its support to children during the winter months in [East Ghouta](#), [Rural Damascus](#), [Idleb](#) as well as [Al-Hol](#) and [Roj](#) Camps in NE Syria through the distribution of winter kits to children aged 0 to 14 years.

## Annex A

### Summary of Programme Results

Sector	Overall Needs	UNICEF and IPs response			Sector response <sup>21</sup>		
		2021 target <sup>22</sup>	Total results	Change since last report	2021 target	Total results	Change since last report
<b>Health</b>							
# children aged 6 to 59 months vaccinated against polio	13.2M	3,200,000	2,552,752	0 <sup>23</sup>			
# children and women accessing primary health care in UNICEF-supported facilities		1,800,000	754,007	132,967			
# health care facility staff and community health workers trained on infection prevention and control		1,000 <sup>24</sup>	315	150			
<b>Nutrition</b>							
# children aged 6 to 59 months with severe acute malnutrition admitted for treatment	4.7M	13,500	4,343	1,034	17,447	3,831	925
# primary caregivers of children aged 0 to 23 months receiving infant and young child feeding counselling		1,450,000	505,037	189,017	915,063	507,602	128,985
# children and pregnant and lactating women receiving micronutrients		960,000	395,467	103,528	2,563,000	320,151	85,751
<b>Child Protection, GBVIE &amp; PESA</b>							
# children and caregivers accessing mental health and psychosocial support	5.6M	415,000	103,684 <sup>25</sup>	25,732	880,000	210,874	129,947
# women, girls and boys accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention or response interventions		120,500	52,086	21,095			
# children accessing explosive weapons-related risk education and survivor assistance interventions		2,380,000	353,367 <sup>26</sup>	36,959			
<b>Education</b>							
# children supported with educational services and supplies in formal settings	5.7M	1,750,000	196,833 <sup>27</sup>	2,197	3,300,000	1,033,648	59,351
# children in non-formal education benefiting from education services		400,000	416,844 <sup>28</sup>	5,622	1,256,530	438,586	235,091
# teachers and education personnel trained		44,000	7,782 <sup>29</sup>	228	76,524	11,489	1,674
<b>Water, Sanitation &amp; Hygiene</b>							
# people accessing a sufficient quantity of safe water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene	15.7M	4,140,000	741,296 <sup>30</sup>	217,338	8,000,000	2,230,610	271,444
# people reached with handwashing behaviour change programmes		550,000	366,751 <sup>31</sup>	50,980	5,500,000	1,382,743	139,397
# people have improved access to sanitation services		1,360,000	618,898	120,405	4,000,000	935,076	108,172

<sup>21</sup> Sectors results as of April 2021.

<sup>22</sup> 2020 targets have been retained; updated targets for 2021 will be added once the 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan is finalized.

<sup>23</sup> This indicator is reported based on campaigns and will increase only when further campaigns are run.

<sup>24</sup> Target under revision for 2021, at which point achievement will be on track.

<sup>25</sup> Underachievement due to delayed approvals, however, programming is on-going and expected to reach target.

<sup>26</sup> Underachievement due to delayed reporting.

<sup>27</sup> Formal Education is a seasonal indicator, with the response starting in September with the opening of the academic year.

<sup>28</sup> The significant over-reach is due to Self-Learning Materials that were purchased late in 2020 and distributed in mid-2021. The target will be modified during the HAC Review.

<sup>29</sup> These trainings are ongoing; however, the results will be reported once the cohort finishes the training.

<sup>30</sup> Slow progress as water system projects take on average four to five months to complete, at which point results will be reported.

<sup>31</sup> Significant increase due to increased access in NW Syria

Social Protection & Cash Transfers						
# households reached with humanitarian cash transfers across sectors		86,000	19,317 <sup>32</sup>	101		
# girls and boys protected from extreme weather through the provision of non-food items		490,000	84,525 <sup>33</sup>	20		
Adolescents & Youth						
# adolescents and youth aged 10 to 24 years promoting social cohesion and civic engagement at the community level		200,000	90,251	33,518		
# affected adolescents and youth aged 10 to 24 years receiving life-skills and citizenship education and employability skills		300,000	43,639 <sup>34</sup>	5,313		
C4D, Community Engagement & AAP						
# people participating in engagement actions for social and behavioural change		1,002,500	1,506,987 <sup>35</sup>	1,506,987		

## Annex B: Funding Status

Section	Requirements	Funds available		Funding gap	
		Received Current Year	Carry-Over	\$	%
Health	\$38,819,971	\$7,505,482	\$6,095,740	\$25,218,748	65%
Nutrition	\$23,920,391	\$1,674,719	\$3,371,929	\$18,873,743	79%
Child Protection, GBVIE & PSEA	\$34,221,760	\$1,930,488	\$5,110,860	\$27,180,412	79%
Education	\$74,666,582	\$13,287,097	\$10,729,076	\$50,650,408	68%
WASH	\$98,314,219	\$21,672,640	\$12,680,355	\$63,961,225	65%
Social Protection & Cash Transfers	\$48,850,736	\$3,028,325	\$8,754,090	\$37,068,321	76%
Adolescents & Youth	\$10,912,957	\$2,786,749	\$1,288,323	\$6,837,885	63%
C4D, Community Engagement & AAP	\$1,119,960	\$247,394	-	\$872,566	78%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$330,826,575</b>	<b>\$52,132,895</b>	<b>\$48,030,372</b>	<b>\$230,663,308</b>	<b>70%</b>

\*Funding for COVAX demand generation has been made available as part of health, and C4D funds have also been integrated into relevant sector funds.

## Next SitRep: 20 July 2021

UNICEF Syria Crisis: <https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/syrian-crisis>

UNICEF Syria Humanitarian Action for Children Appeal: <https://www.unicef.org/appeals/>

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<sup>32</sup> Underachievement due to delayed approvals and limited capacity of FSPs.

<sup>33</sup> The current underachievement is due to a lack of funds received in a timely manner to procure and distribute the winter clothing kits during the winter season. The next distribution cycle will begin before the next winter season.

<sup>34</sup> The slow progress is due to delays in getting approvals as well as to lack of flexible funds regarding life-skills component.

<sup>35</sup> Due to the recent establishment of reporting mechanisms required for this indicator, it is being reported for the first time in this sitrep. Significant over-reach in the response is due to the fact that the placed target includes the caseload of Health and Education programmes only, while all other programmes are reporting now against it. The target will be modified during the HAC Review