**UNICEF in South Asia**  
Regional Situation Report # 21  

**Highlights**

- The humanitarian situation remained dire in South Asia with the continued surges of COVID-19 cases in the region. As of May 31, there have been 30,785,067 confirmed cases reported, 377,369 deaths and 28,230,879 recovered, marking increases of over 9.5 million confirmed cases and over 129,000 deaths since the end of April in South Asia.

- From mid-January to late-June, over 12.5 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been delivered to the region through COVAX Facility.

- UNICEF continues to deliver life-saving and essential services to women, children and most vulnerable populations in South Asia. This includes over 2.46 million children and women accessing UNICEF-supported primary health care facilities, over 246,000 6-59-months’ old children admitted for Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) treatment and over 544,000 children and caregivers accessing mental health and psychosocial support.

- Substantial additional funding is required to deliver lifesaving support as well as containment and mitigation measures of COVID-19. Despite generous donor contributions, a funding gap of US$320 million (56 per cent) remains and hampers UNICEF’s ability to respond.

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**Situation in Numbers**

- **864 million**  
  People in need of humanitarian assistance

- **367 million**  
  Children in need

- **12.5 million**  
  COVID-19 vaccine doses delivered through COVAX Facility

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**UNICEF HAC Appeal 2021**  
US$ 568.8 million  
(Regional Total)

- **Humanitarian funds, $87.3M**
- **Other resources, $69.8M**
- **Carry-forward, $91.7M**
- **Funding Gap, $320M**
- **Total Required $568.8 M**
Regional Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

As of 31 May, a total cumulative of 30,785,067 confirmed COVID cases of which 28,230,879 cases recovered) and 377,369 deaths were reported in the region of South Asia¹ (at time of release of this report the number of COVID cases further increased to 33,266,261). In India, the COVID-19 surge was the worst witnessed in any country in a month since the beginning of the pandemic, both in terms of the absolute number of cases as well as fatalities; at the height of this surge more than 3 cases per second and nearly 3 deaths per minute. The immediate impacts inflicted on the health care delivery systems persisted as hospital admissions continued to climb steeply. In Afghanistan, the third wave of the COVID-19 reached the country.

Most of the countries in South Asia region have reported overstretched beds occupancy and shortage of health staff and medical supplies/equipment in densely populated regions. The situation in remote villages is that the healthcare is often not instantly accessible. Continued lockdown measures impacting families’ livelihoods, household food security and diets continue to be felt in the region increasing the vulnerability of young children to malnutrition. For example, a rapid nationwide survey of UNICEF Nepal, Child and Family Tracker (CFT) found 50 per cent of 2,891 respondents lost their jobs and almost none received support from the government. With significant income losses, there have been rises in food and nutrition insecurity, mental health cases, gender-based violence and learning discontinuation.

In addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, seasonal cyclones have exacerbated the already dire humanitarian situations in the region. On 17 May, an extremely severe cyclone Tauktae made landfall in the western Indian state of Gujarat, damaging over 30,000 dwellings. On 26 May, yet another cyclone Yaas has impacted India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. In India, it impacted the eastern Indian states of Odisha and West Bengal; in West Bengal, 4,500 low lying villages have been inundated with saline water following the storm surge that led to 145 breaches in embankments. In Bangladesh, the cyclone Yaas affected 1.3 million people, including nine people dead on the west of Bangladesh. In Sri Lanka, the cyclone triggered heavy rainfalls in southern and western parts of the country, affecting over 160,000 people. Meanwhile, conflict in Afghanistan has surged while international forces are withdrawing from remote area in a run up to departure from the country by July. In addition, the impact of drought has aggravated the humanitarian situation in countries like Afghanistan, leaving children and most vulnerable with low food security on brink of collapse. Countries continue to be in search of resources to support Governments’ efforts to contain COVID-19 with vaccination campaigns and preventive and curative health services as well as mitigate the consequences of COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 Vaccination

Over 307 million doses have been administered across South Asian countries since January 16, 2021 with 60 million people fully vaccinated, of which the majority was administered in India (276 million). Within this figure, a total of 12,543,340 (12,330,400 AstraZeneca and 212,940 Pfizer) doses have been received across all eight South Asian countries through COVAX facility. Overall, as a region, 13.2 per cent of total population have received their first dose, with 3.2 per cent fully vaccinated. Only in Bhutan (64 per cent) and Maldives (57.8 per cent) a significant percentage of the total population has received at least one COVID-19 vaccination dose and other countries remains alarmingly low.

![Share of people vaccinated against COVID-19]

Reaching Phase 1 (20 per cent of the total population) vaccination of frontline health and social care workers (3 per cent) and more vulnerable segments of the population (including older populations, those with co-morbidities, migrant and marginalized populations and teachers) is yet to be fully achieved. In several countries, teachers were targeted in National Vaccine

deployment plans (NDVP) but due to limited availability they were excluded from specific campaigns or were included through meeting age criteria.

Monitoring data from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Pakistan indicate that greater number of men are vaccinated compared to women. Causal relationship for inequitable access is unclear indicating the need for further causal analysis. No gender-disaggregated data is available from other countries.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

Afghanistan

Nutrition

- UNICEF and partners treated 114,694 children (51,612 boys, 63,082 girls) with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) reaching 27 per cent of the target and only 13 per cent of the total children in need.
- UNICEF has supported delivery of lifesaving nutrition and health services for the underserved population in the hard to reach areas and IDP settlements in five provinces through 26 mobile teams (11 in Kandahar, 6 in Helmand, 4 in Kunduz, 2 in Faryab and 3 in Herat). Of the total admission, a total of 23,632 children aged 6-59 months were admitted during May 2021 for SAM treatment services.
- A total of 7,642 pregnant and lactating women were provided with infant and young child feeding practices in emergencies (IYCF-E) services mainly through mobile teams which represent around 12.5 per cent of total target (60,000) for 2021, of which a total of 2,978 beneficiaries received services in May 2021.

Health

- UNICEF with mobile teams supported 147,054 women and children with provision of essential health services. Those services were included but not limited to provision of integrated management of childhood illnesses to 28,600 children under five (14,800 female and 13,800 male), psychosocial support to 380 (230 female and 150 male), support of first aid to conflict affected injuries to 570 clients (320 male and 250 female), screening of 17,400 children under five for nutrition and management of 840 SAM cases without complication, provision of 3,800 antenatal and postnatal visits to pregnant women, and support of 35 home deliveries who could not referred for institutional deliveries due to emergency situations.
- Total of 11,840 children under two in emergency affected areas received their vaccination (measles, polio, Penta and others) for protects against five major diseases: diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), hepatitis B and other diseases, as per national standards through UNICEF supported mobile health teams.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

- In April and May 2021, UNICEF provided safe drinking water 42,079 people all through durable water supply systems/water networks.
- UNICEF continued water trucking of the previously reported 1,685 conflict induced internally displaced people in Kandahar province, who live in informal settlement.
- A total of 6,626 people were reached with sanitation facilities/services, while 16,073 people were supported with hygiene supplies and hygiene promotion.
- Five schools have accessed safe drinking water and sanitation facilities including menstrual hygiene management room benefiting overall 4,638 students (2,640 girls and 1,998 boys).

Child Protection, GBViE, and PSEA

- In partnership with 15 national and international NGOs, a total of 43,757 children and adults (19,812 women/girls) benefitted from child protection services, of which 41,899 (96%) received community-based psychosocial support through door-to-door activities, referrals for specialized mental health services, static and mobile child friendly services and peer to peer support.
- As part of its Gender Based Violence (GBV), prevention, Risks Mitigation and Response, UNICEF initiated conversations with up to nine NGOs to support the implementation of the GBV activities. So far, only 187 of GBV survivors have been reached with services due to limited investment in GBV programming across the office prior to 2021.
- In the context of COVID-19, 8,935 individuals including 6,075 children and 2,860 adults have been provided the psychosocial and mental health support services in alternative modalities.
- UNICEF carried out community-based awareness raising on child protection issues and disseminated COVID-19 prevention and wellbeing messaging and reached 33,323 individuals including 19,254 children and 14,069 adults.

Education

- Under the Global Partnership for Education COVID-19 accelerated funding, UNICEF trained 19 participants from eight implementing partner agencies on Population-based M&E and Assessment Tools for Student Learning Assessment and Remedial Learning. The initiative aims to assess a total of 625,000 children in 1,250 schools which will inform the development of tailored catch-up classes for 312,500 of those children to make up for learning loss during the one-year school closure that began in March 2020 due to the pandemic.
- On the Saturday 29th May 2021, the government of Afghanistan announced a two-week closure of schools in 16 out 35 provinces due to an increase in COVID-19 infections in the country. It is anticipated that the two-week closure may be extended for a longer period, including an addition of more provinces to the decree. UNICEF continues to engage
with the Ministry of Education and implementing partners on exploring alternative learning modalities to children in the context of these recurrent closures, particularly if the two-weeks period is extended.

Social Protection and Cash Transfers
- UNICEF has been preparing for the roll-out of UNICEF’s dedicated Management Information System (MIS) for Humanitarian Cash Transfers. Preparations included designing two projects to pilot HOPE, including a child protection cash transfer project in Kandahar and a multi-sectoral drought response in Samangans. The MIS will improve accountability and transparency of cash programmes and will strengthen data protection and security of beneficiary data.

C4D, Community Engagement and AAP
- A small-scale study was conducted in April 2021 among schoolteachers about perception of COVID-19 vaccination. The outcome of the data shows that 45% of the teachers in the northern part of Afghanistan are not willing to be vaccinated
- 4,432 girls and 3,131 boys in 16 schools of Ghor province of Afghanistan received hygiene and COVID-19 prevention key messages.
- Four TV and five radios programs were conducted about COVID-19 and vaccination reaching to 230,000 people.

Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

Emergency Preparedness, Response and Disaster Risk Reduction
- UNICEF is the process of creating Humanitarian Program Document with Afghan Red Crescent Society to be able to reach the most vulnerable population in hard to reach areas and/or during the onset of emergency.

Bangladesh
Nutrition
- As of 31 May 2021, a total of 5,197 children (2,831 girls) were admitted for Sever Acute Malnutrition (SAM) treatment. Comparing to the admission rate in May 2020, it has increased nine folds despite the continuous COVID-19 pandemic situation.
- Intensive follow up with districts using nutrition information system and visualization tools, follow up of emergency supplies and monthly district meetings enabled UNICEF to discuss the performance and bottlenecks with government counterpart. UNICEF also supported the government to conduct second round of online SAM health facility preparedness and functionality assessment for activities in six months

Health
- In view of increasing COVID cases, urgent need for oxygen is leveraged by the Liquid Medical Oxygen plant establishment in 30 prioritized facilities is fully underway with Medical Gas Pipeline Systems work completed over 80 per cent in 14 facilities. As of 31 May 2021, 5,823,245 people (2,212,311 female) received the first dose and 4,259,460 people (1,539,028 female) received the second dose of COVID-19 vaccine.
- A total of 14,670 children 0-11 months (7,072 girls) received Pentavalent 3 vaccine in the Rohingya camps including 2,356 under five children (1,170 girls) as of May 2021. UNICEF-supported health facilities also provided a total of 48,239 children (22,697 girls) consultations in the Rohingya camps including 7,428 under five children (3,532 girls) in May.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)
- As of May 2021, UNICEF and the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) provided 207,872 people (118,764 female) with access to safe water and 205,824 people (107,244 female) benefitted from sanitation facilities.
- In Rohingya camps, UNICEF reached 117,959 people (61,339 female) by setting up 159 hand washing stations and delivering key COVID-19 messages through household’s visits and other methods. 24,929 WASH facilities including latrines, bathing cubicles, tube-wells and hand washing points were disinfected in community and public spaces. In host communities, UNICEF and partners reached 65,456 people (47 per cent female), including 1 per cent people with disabilities (PWD) with COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) messages, and 166,098 people (47 per cent female and 1 per cent PWD) with critical WASH services, including disinfecting and repairing facilities, installation of handwashing devices, and construction of new facilities.

Child Protection, including GBV
- As of May 2021, the Child Help Line (CHL) received 54,713 calls, of which over 79 per cent were related to violence against children and women and psychosocial support. Due to limited capacity and resources, 11,010 children (3,865 girls) were supported to referral mechanism. UNICEF supported the Department of Social Services to upgrade the CHL system that currently linked to case management system, for better coordination with social workers and CHL service providers, and effective case follow-up.
• 102 virtual courts are operational from April to May 2021, and more children continue to be released. 1,017 children (109 girls) in conflict with the law have been released from Child Detention Centres. Due to limited funding to meet reintegration expenses, only 468 children (67 girls) received cash assistance.

• 8,144 individuals (65 per cent female) in camps and host communities were reached with response services, risk mitigation measures and GBV prevention messages to address negative social norms and harmful practices.

Education
• Nationwide, children have lost 45% (103 days out of total 230) of school days in 2021. UNICEF supported technology-based approaches have provided access to 1,168,432 children (584,460 girls) to continue the learning. This includes 134,214 children (67,359 girls) accessing the integrated early childhood education activities.

• In the camps, UNICEF provided 9,447 portable radios along with storage devices (thumb drives and memory cards) preloaded with learning content and instructions for caregivers to enhance the caregiver-led education. Over 200,000 children (48 per cent girls) are targeted to improve their listening and comprehension skills, with instructions for caregivers and oral stories, filling in the gap of teachers through the radios. In camps where radio signal is weak, the storage devices enable caregivers to access the instructions.

C4D, Community Engagement and AAP
• In May 2021, UNICEF focused interventions on the border areas that reported a sharp rise in COVID-19 cases. An action plan has been developed to intensify Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) interventions in seven districts. Islamic Foundation under Ministry of Religious Affairs initiated to mobilize and engage around 20,000 Imams and religious leaders who have reached approximately one million people with COVID-19 protective messages.

• As of May 2021, UNICEF sensitized around 74,880 people to take COVID-19 protective measures through Interpersonal communication.

• In May 2021, 3,118 people (1,763 women and 6 PWD) in camps and 892 people (339 women and 5 PWD) in host community accessed the Information and Feedback Centres. 44,144 people (24,047 female and 347 PWD) in the community were engaged through interpersonal communications focusing on COVID-19 prevention including routine immunization.

Emergency Response and Disaster Risk Reduction
• As of May 2021, UNICEF and partners reached out 84,260 people including 43,086 female and 32 children with disabilities affected by the massive fire in Rohingya Camp 9, 8E & 8W on 22 March 2021, through critical support, including child reunification with parents, referral to health services, Psychological First Aid, safe corners for breastfeeding, screening for acute malnutrition, lifesaving treatment for SAM, supplementary food, non-food items, soap, dignity kits, injury treatment, and essential health services. Information on public health risks associated with poor hygiene were also disseminated through Clean Camp Campaign – People Led Total Hygiene approach. 281 water sources were tested for E-coli to ensure safe water supply and three Emergency Information and Feedback Centres were established to facilitate feedback/complaints of the affected population to relevant service providers.

Bhutan Nutrition
• National Nutrition Strategy was finalized with technical support from UNICEF. The national strategy incorporates both nutrition sensitive and nutrition interventions across the life cycle through multi-sectoral interventions and will help strengthen nutrition programme interventions despite the challenges of the pandemic.

Health
• UNICEF provided technical support to the development of a national costed action plan for health emergency response against the COVID-19 pandemic led by Ministry of Health (MoH) in collaboration with WHO.

• UNICEF is supporting strengthening of cold chain supply systems for vaccine management and lab management for COVID-19 as well. With financial support from ADB total two ultracold rooms were installed at Regional Centre for Disease Control and Expanded Programme for Immunization store. Remaining five walk-in-cooler/walk-in-freezer equipment were delivered at JDRNR (National Referral Hospital) in Thimphu (five units), Gelephu (two units), Mongar (one unit) and Samdrup Jongkhar (one unit) for installation.

• With technical support from UNICEF and WHO, the MoH has finalized the electronic joint reporting form for immunization programme, and reports on national routine vaccines and dry stocks submitted to GAVI.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
• UNICEF supported the Government of Bhutan in installing handwashing stations with provision of safe drinking water for hand hygiene in five Primary Health Care Facilities (PHC) in Wangdue district estimated to benefit 140 people daily (Jimithangka PHC 55, Uma PHC 15, Jalla PHC 15, Teki Agona PHC 25 and Gaselo PHC 30).

• Two handwashing stations were installed in public place in Wangdue district and two in Tsirang district for hand hygiene which is expected to benefit about 960 people (400 people at vegetable market, 60 people at flue clinic and 500 people at bus/taxi parking area).

Child Protection, GBViE, and PSEA
• UNICEF, through counsellors providing Psychosocial Support Services (PSS) to children and their families in the areas under lockdown, reached about 125 children (71 female) and 18 adults (9 female) in May.
• Cumulatively by May 30, 2020, 54,094 students (19,152 female and 34,943 male) children have been reached through Psychosocial Support Services sessions in schools by the school counsellors.

Gaps/Challenges
• Implementation of other planned activities are delayed due to restricted movement, lockdowns and delay in transshipment of raw materials from India.

India
Nutrition
• In most states, nutrition services related frontline functionaries have been assigned to support COVID-19 prevention and vaccination, which has impact nutrition services for children and pregnant women.
• In-person counselling activities for improved feeding, care and child development practices during the first 1,000 days have been constrained. To address these challenges, UNICEF has supported state governments to transition to nutrition messaging via telephone and digital platforms.
• UNICEF supported multiple states to issue or re-issue guidelines to ensure continuity of care for children with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) through the Nutrition Rehabilitation Centres, along with community-based screening.
• UNICEF continued and expanded its support to the National Rural Livelihood Mission in 19 districts of five states in 2021 for multi-sector nutrition actions via 45,000 self-help groups. The round two of sentinel monitoring was completed in May 2021.

Health
• India is the third fastest country to administer vaccines with more than 210 million doses reached; however, only 14.8 vaccine doses have been administered per 100 people so far.
• UNICEF supported installation of cold-chain capacity that strengthen vaccine storage capability at national and all state level as well as in 523 districts through augmenting 1,389 cold chain points.
• UNICEF has continued to support augmenting medical oxygen and related products; over 4,500 oxygen concentrators, 512 high flow nasal cannulas have been delivered to 10 states
• UNICEF continues to strengthen testing capacity, by delivering and installing 85 RT-PCR test machines in 73 laboratories in 25 states and union territories. 200 additional RT-PCR machines and 100 RNA extraction machines are being procured.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
• UNICEF continues to support line ministries (Ministry of Jal Shakti, Ministry of Panchayati Raj and MoHFW on the response to COVID-19 reaching affected communities. Three advisories on activating Swachhagrahis (sanitation volunteers), gram panchayats (village councils) and guiding the overall WASH inclusive COVID-19 response with dedicated resources were issued.
• 70,000 Swachhagrahis were trained and engaged on COVID Appropriate Behaviours (CAB) and Infection Prevention and Control in Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.
• UNICEF is supporting needs assessment and planning for WASH/IPC in Health and Vaccination centres, and directly delivered WASH services reaching 404 health centres and 500 vaccination centres.
• COVID-19 responsive training module for schoolteachers was developed and widely disseminated and UNICEF has led trainings in several states including Bihar and Assam with 44,000 schoolteachers trained and engaged to date.
• Hand Hygiene is being widely promoted, at national level with the development of the national roadmap and implemented in the field: 500 pedal operated handwashing stations provided in health facilities in Gujarat.

Child Protection, GBVie, and PSEA
• UNICEF continued to support the state governments in reaching children who have lost parent/s during the pandemic via technical guidance and inputs into protocols, implementation of schemes and optimal reach into communities.
• UNICEF in partnership with the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences (NIMHANS) has trained 1,270 Child Protection functionaries on grief counselling and methods to share difficult news with children regarding death or illness of parent/s and provide coping strategies.
• UNICEF has provided 25,000 reusable masks, 37,000 sanitizers and 11,500 face shields to a NGO partner, CHILDLINE’s staff across all states to ensure their safety on the ground.
• In support of the Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKS) national adolescent programme, in collaboration with MoHFW, 158 adolescent health counsellors and state representatives from Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh were trained on gender-based violence, and prevention of violence against children.

Education
• All schools and Anganwadis (ECD) remain closed due to the pandemic and summer vacation.
• UNICEF is providing technical support to the state governments and partners in the planning and development of guidelines for continuity of learning with a focus on evolving alternate strategies to reach children who do not have access to remote learning.
• UNICEF provided technical support in the development of digital and non-digital content along with preparation of self-learning resource materials for increased access and use of learning materials by students.
• UNICEF provided technical support in the preparation of guidelines and action plans for the back-to-school campaign and the development and roll out of learning resource packages of remedial education programmes to mitigate learning loss of children due to extended closure of schools.
• At the national level, UNICEF is providing technical support to Ministry of Education in the preparation of new guidelines for parents to better support learning at home.

Social Protection and Cash Transfers
• UNICEF has been working across the social protection and child protection domain to advocate for children who have lost parents during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some examples of policies that UNICEF India leveraged are:
  ➢ State Governments of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh have announced cash transfers to all children who have lost both their parents; and
  ➢ Madhya Pradesh has also added free education and ration for vulnerable children, linked to the cash transfer.
UNICEF continues to advocate with the state governments in Maharashtra, Odisha, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh to develop social protection programmes for these vulnerable children and link to complementary services.

C4D, Community Engagement and AAP
• Overcrowding at health facilities drove the need to develop comprehensive training packages and products on ‘CAB Plus’ (COVID-19 Appropriate Behaviors), adding elements such as home isolation, addressing self-medication, guidance on proving and use of pulse oximeters). These are being used by frontline workers along with their usual house-to-house screening, after being trained on their usage by National Health Mission.
• Through partnership with Facebook simple digital content on what to do if a person tests positive and how/when to isolate at home was promoted to millions free of cost.
• In Rajasthan Mask Nahi Toh Tokenge campaign, reached over 1.3 million people with the support of 104,000 youth volunteers.
• With infection spreading rapidly in rural and tribal communities, frontline and community health workers in all states were trained to conduct house to house visits and to engage with communities discussing fears, perceptions and preventive behaviours; 260,000 village and ward volunteers were trained to address COVID risk in the tribal districts of the states of Andhra Pradesh.

Emergency Preparedness, Response and Disaster Risk Reduction
• Local Government of four COVID hotspot cities in the most impacted state of Maharashtra provided technical support through deployment of 10 experts from RedR India to State Disaster Management Authority of Maharashtra and 4 Municipal Corporations of Mumbai, Pune, Nashik and Nagpur for strengthening public health system, anticipatory risk governance and preparation for third wave.
• UNICEF promoted platform, MAHAPECO-Net (https://mahac19peconet.org/) of 75+ organizations in the state of Maharashtra has outreach to 13 Cities, covering 2,666 urban localities including slum, low income settlements and housing societies, 382 villages and 36 districts and sub districts on CAB, CAB+Vaccine Help Desk, Community Outreach to remove vaccine hesitancy and leveraging supplies for WASH, Medical and household needs.
• With technical and funding support of UNICEF, an online flood reporting and information management system has been developed by government of Assam to address data and reporting gaps within mandatory daily flood, which is used by local administration of all districts of Assam.

Maldives
Nutrition
• A total of 305 children also received growth-monitoring services (145 males, 160 females). Due to the surge in cases in May, essential health services, including immunization at the urban health facility were continued on an appointment basis with restricted measures to comply with the national guidelines during the general lock down and restriction of movement.
• UNICEF’s support to implement the Social and Behavioral Change Communication Strategy on first 1000 days of life activities implemented and provided nutrition specific interventions including breastfeeding counselling, GMP and IYCF.

Health
• UNICEF and partners continue to plan and rollout the COVID-19 vaccination. To date (16th June 2021), 314,903 people had received the first dose and 181,759 had completed two doses of COVID-19 vaccine.
• Dedicated cold chain technical assistance deployed by UNICEF continues to support the government to address technical gaps, facilitate implementation of activities and timely technical backstopping to strengthen the immunization supply chain capacity of the country for the successful roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines.
• With the support of UNICEF’s technical assistance, during the reporting period, 311 children were vaccinated (125 Males, 186 females) at the central urban health facility. Data from other health facilities remains unavailable due to health staff being occupied with COVID-19 response.
• UNICEF supported Ministry of Health to continue the implementation of current COVID-19 response services and ensure call centre service continuity at Health Emergency Operation Center (HEOC), due to the surge in COVID-19 cases in May. Through UNICEF’s support, the phone system utilized for providing COVID19 response services, including contact tracing, addressing public queries and emergency referral of cases were upgraded to meet the growing service demands and ensure service continuity without disruption.
• UNICEF donated medical supplies is being utilized extensively to meet the demand due to increased hospitalization cases, and wider community spreads in several islands.
C4D, Community Engagement and AAP

- With UNICEF’s support, the Health Emergency Operation Center (HEOC) continues to engage the public with fact-based messaging which is crucial right now even with the daily case numbers having gone down significantly, and with restrictive measures being eased gradually.
- Continued engagement on social media, TV, Radio, and community messaging via vehicles (targeting migrant workers) has ensured that demand for the vaccines are good, with 46 percent of the target population currently having gotten double doses of the COVID-19 vaccines.
- To re-engage the public, messaging and content around preventive behaviours utilized the experience of survivors, facts-based messaging to exemplify the severity of the surge in infections and working with key influencers to engage directly with the public through their own platforms, was utilized by the HEOC with technical support from UNICEF.
- Additionally new mediums are going to be used to further improve engagement, and upcoming messaging and engagement to be done via Tik Tok videos on COVID-19 prevention, Blog to share personal experiences around COVID-19, 2 video songs targeting young people, a podcast series with a well-known influencer (not as a govt-led podcast) on staying safe from COVID-19 and Viber/Telegram Bots to cater for information and service needs around COVID-19.
- With the restrictive measures in place across the country, getting to engage people face to face to create awareness around COVID-19 prevention and on vaccine demand generation has not yet been possible

Gaps/Challenges

- There is a lack of real-time data from health sector on coverage of essential health services
- The steep escalation of COVID-19 in May 2021 led to health services reaching capacity exhaustion.

Nepal

Nutrition

- 1,215 children aged 6-59 months with SAM and complications have been treated in 22 nutrition rehabilitation homes and 2,405 children 6-59 months have been treated for severe wasting without complications in 620 outpatient therapeutic centres (OTCs) over the period of January - May 2021 with the support of UNICEF Nepal.
- UNICEF Nepal also supports the continuity of infant and young child feeding information dissemination and counselling services via telephone, radio, TV and other social media communication channels.
- As the nutrition cluster co-lead, UNICEF Nepal supported the government at federal level and all seven provinces for nutrition in emergency preparedness, including prepositioning of nutrition commodities (ready to use therapeutic food, micro-nutrient powder, vitamin A capsules, etc) and response for COVID-19 and upcoming monsoon. The nutrition cluster has also and disseminated a joint statement on Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies that articulates the prohibition of donation and distribution of infant formula via health facilities and directly to communities.

Health

- UNICEF Nepal delivered 600 oxygen concentrators, 75 oxygen analyzers, 1,000 pulse oximeters, 7,200 nasal prongs for oxygen delivery, 2 million surgical gloves, 22,900 biohazard bags, 25,000 N95 masks, 163,900 surgical caps and 2,000 body bags, 1.3 million vaccine certification cards and 600,000 Vero Cell vaccination cards. UNICEF Nepal also supported the transport and refilling of 2,767 oxygen cylinders.
- 11,259 home isolation kits were distributed to people in home isolation.
- UNICEF Nepal and WHO continued to support event-based surveillance, contact identification and follow up.
- UNICEF Nepal has been supporting Nepal’s COVID-19 vaccination campaign roll out, aligning with global and national priorities to fight the pandemic. Technical support provided included embedding health officers and cold chain logistics in technical support units and transportation of vaccines for vaccination roll-out on the ground.
- UNICEF Nepal supported the continuation of essential health services that reached 18,763 children (9,475 girls and 9,288 boys) with vaccination, 23,264 women with antenatal care and 11,408 women with delivery services.
- UNICEF Nepal provided mental health support to 51 people (27 girls, 18 boys and 6 adults) infected with COVID-19 and 25 children (16 boys, 9 girls) living with HIV.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

- UNICEF Nepal supported all seven provinces to respond to COVID-19 second wave as with the preparation of upcoming monsoon.
- UNICEF Nepal reached out to about 56,550 people including 29,771 returnees with at least one or more WASH services and supplies (hygiene kits, soap, sanitizers) including risk communication messages since January 2021. About 52,450 people (47,650 in May) benefitted from the installation of contactless hand washing stations in various settings such as communities (1), Health Care Facilities (45), isolation centres (19), schools (37) and point of entries (13). Furthermore, 5,470 people (2,840 in May) benefitted from provision of sanitation facilities including 14 construction/repair of toilets at Point of Entry. In addition to these supports, around 2,396 (75 in May) frontline workers were trained on WASH/IPC in relation to COVID-19, and 104 frontline workers on healthcare waste management.

Child Protection, GBVIE, and PSEA

- Child helpline services reached 278 children and gender-based violence prevention or response interventions reached 4,849 people (902 male and 3,947 female).
- To support the early identification of children without parental care including those bereaved by COVID-19, UNICEF Nepal in coordination with the National Child Rights Council is mobilizing an additional 300 community volunteers to identify children at risk of family separation and violence.
UNICEF Nepal continued technical support to local governments vulnerability assessments to ensure access to relief assistance for children at risk of exploitation and their caregivers. Assistance is being coordinated locally for 15,000 households with vulnerable children (18 per cent with disability-related vulnerabilities).

UNICEF Nepal and partners scaled up the deployment of counsellors and community-based psycho-social workers with a focus on most remote areas and vulnerable groups reaching a total 7,639 people (3,683 male and 3,956 female) with psycho-social support including 1,067 people in home isolation of which 21 were from bereaved households (grief counselling and referrals)

**Education**

UNICEF Nepal supported a learning continuity campaign in 30 municipalities by developing the education response plan to ensure the learning continuity of children. As a follow up, 652 elected leaders and municipal staff members were oriented in alternative education frameworks in 20 municipalities. Similarly, 678 learning support groups of parents have been formed and 1,615 parents (629 female) from these groups received parenting education through virtual trainings.

UNICEF Nepal provided psychosocial support orientation package aligned to the Child Protection psychosocial messages to 178 teachers, school management committee members and local level education officers.

UNICEF Nepal developed eight Information, Education and Communication products covering school safety protocols and alternative education. UNICEF and education cluster members distributed these materials to at least 188 municipalities, reaching 880,000 students (49 per cent girls) and 2,488 girls in 122 community learning centres.

A parenting education radio programme ‘Sikdai Sikaundai’ continues to be aired nationally since January through 85 radio stations.

**Social Protection and Cash Transfers**

UNICEF Nepal jointly with the World Bank developed an inter-agency advocacy initiative on the COVID-19 cash response based on data from the CFT survey calling on the government to respond to the families’ needs through existing social protection system, as well as enabling UN and civil society to deliver unconditional cash to affected families.

C4D, Community Engagement and AAP

UNICEF Nepal supported the production and airing of 55 episodes of Corona Capsule radio programme reaching more than 14 million people (43 per cent female and 57 per cent male) with messages on COVID-19 vaccine, preventive behaviours, treatment and testing.

UNICEF Nepal engaged private sector partners while launching the campaign “Mask Khai” (Where is your mask?). Private sector partners through their own social media networks and in-store, reach as many as 6,000 customers/day. A satellite TV company broadcasts public service announcements on mask use through seven channels reaching 1,500,000 customers across Nepal.

UNICEF provided support to address 1,200 community concerns, questions and grievances collected through offline and online platforms through radio and television programme, community volunteers, websites, viber network and press briefings. A new tool, “Talk Walker” systematically collects feedback from online social media platforms to further contribute to this effort.

UNICEF’s own social media content on COVID-19 prevention, vaccination, and response efforts gathered 230.4 million impressions, with an aggregate reach of 98.6 million users and 19.6 million audience engagements.

UNICEF trained 700 Armed Police Force (APF) deployed at the point of entry on duty of care, COVID-19 preventive measures and interpersonal communication.

At the community level, UNICEF Nepal with local partners has reached more than 282,000 people and an additional 46,337 returning migrants (29% female; 12% children below 18) with awareness raising messages during door-to-door visits, interpersonal counselling and megaphone announcements since January 2021. Over 5,600 volunteers (46% female) have been mobilized through the Nepal Red Cross, Scouts, and others to support this effort.

**Gaps/Challenges**

- With sharp increase in cases, number of cases requiring hospitalization and intensive care surged simultaneously leading to shortage of oxygen, medical equipment, personal protective equipment (PPE), medicines, and human resources.
- Response to the large-scale crisis has been constrained by lack of sufficient funding.
- A combination of global critical supply scarcity, lockdown and related suspension of flights, is significantly challenging delivery of critical supplies. On the other hand, lockdown and fear of getting infected in the absence of vaccination has limited the mobility of service providers such as nutrition workers, protection workers and teachers.
- A large influx of Nepali migrant workers continued to return to Nepal bringing additional challenge of managing the points of entries (land borders with India), given insufficient PPE, testing capacity and basic provisions for border workers and migrants waiting for admission and processing.
- Additional planned COVID-19 vaccination efforts have been constrained due to global vaccine shortages and Nepal is in urgent need of additional vaccine doses to complete vaccination of high-risk groups and beyond.
- Above average monsoon rainfall poses potential challenges of floods and landslides from June to August, which may lead to additional humanitarian impacts on the lives of women and children.
Pakistan

Nutrition

- Under Nutrition Response, around 131,389 children (67,008 girls and 64,381 boys) of 6-59 months have been screened for malnutrition using Mid Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) at 3,065 nutrition sites (23,852 in Sindh, 67,327 in Sindh and 40,210 in KP).
- A total of 58,939 children (32,779 girls and 26,160 boys) with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) have been admitted for SAM treatment with 12,906 SAM enrolments in OTP sites in the reporting period (7,168 girls and 5,738 boys), of which 2,001 are from KP province; 2,993 from Balochistan and 7,912 from Sindh province.
- A total of 134,748 children between 6-59 months of age (68,232 girls and 66,516 boys) received multi-micronutrient supplementation and during this reporting period 23,431 new children reached (11,508 girls and 11,923 boys), of which 8,002 are from Balochistan and 15,429 from KP.
- With UNICEF’s support, nutrition counselling sessions were conducted on Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices through the network of LHWs and reached 92,869 pregnant and lactating women during the month of May (27,119 in Balochistan, 13,111 in KP and 52,639 in Sindh) reaching a total of 524,257 individuals.

Health

- UNICEF is supporting the Provincial and Regional health departments to ensure continuation of essential primary healthcare services including immunization, Ante-Natal Care (ANC), natal, Post-Natal Care (PNC) services, childcare and curative care for adults in 136 targeted health facilities reaching 285,988 people during May (7,632 in Balochistan, 146,145 in Sindh, 2,337 in KP, 118,874 in Punjab and 11,000 in AJK) with a total reach of 1.75 million people.
- Measles immunization reached a total of 7,154 children under one (949 in Balochistan, 1,567 in Sindh and 4,638 in Punjab) during the reporting period with a total of 52,748 children vaccinated against measles in the 136 UNICEF supported health facilities to date.
- UNICEF has provided basic PPEs (gloves, sanitizers and masks) to 466 frontline health workers during the reporting period (241 women and 225 men) and reached a total of 15,426 frontline workers during 2021 thus far.
- UNICEF-supported IPC training reached 7,981 frontline health workers in total with 1,156 health workers trained during the reporting period.
- UNICEF supported the training of 3,253 frontline health workers and community volunteers on COVID-19 and case identification and referral of suspected cases with 1,112 trained during the reporting period (418 women and 694 men). Clinical Management of Children with COVID-19 training was provided to a total of 1,323 pediatricians trained in 2021.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

- More than 385,254 people cumulatively gained access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities in UNICEF supported health care facilities contributing towards reducing the risk of COVID-19 infection among the healthcare workers of which 61,413 gained access during the month of May.
- UNICEF utilized existing WASH programs such as Clean and Green Pakistan and communication networks of volunteers to undertake hygiene promotion and support RCCE efforts. Given the travel restrictions, UNICEF used digital and social media platforms to engage with communities, including with religious leaders in hygiene promotion.
- To promote handwashing by the public as one of the critical COVID-19 prevention and control measures, UNICEF supported the production and installation of 957 handwashing stations placed at strategic points in cities and communities enabling over 2.2 million people to wash hands properly.
- A total of 1,387,713 people (158,915 in the reporting period) were supported with hygiene promotion services including COVID-19 prevention and control information.
- UNICEF supported the training of 3,617 frontline sanitary and health workers on WASH/IPC in health care facilities and high-risk communities on WASH/IPC with 1,681 trained during the reporting period.

Child Protection, GBVIE, and PSEA

- UNICEF and its partners have trained a total of 6,299 social workforce professionals (3,911 women and 2,388 men) in psychosocial support and stigma prevention in all provinces through package developed by UNICEF, including 939 trained during the reporting period (543 women and 396 men in Sindh, Punjab, KP provinces and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K) region).
- A total of 262,180 parents, caregivers, children and individuals (42,718 girls, 41,783 boys, 89,946 women, 87,733 men) received Psychosocial Support and Services (PSS) by trained social workforce professionals in Punjab, KP, Sindh, Balochistan, GB and AJ&K with 37,650 reached within the reporting period (30,800 in Punjab, 1,792 in KP, 5,038 in Sindh and 20 in Balochistan). This includes 13,537 Individuals (2,330 girls, 2,005 boys, 4,967 women and 4,235 men) who received specialized counselling sessions in Punjab, KP and Sindh.
- Messages on stigma and violence against children reached additional 997,003 people during the reporting period increasing the total reach to 9,116,746 people.
- The total number of children who received child protection services supported by UNICEF in Sindh and Baluchistan has reached 2,228 children (759 girls, 1,469 boys), this includes 169 children (75 girls and 94 boys) who received child protection services during the reporting period.

Education

- During school closures, continuity of learning opportunities for children was supported through take home assignments in Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) centres in both Sindh and KP provinces. To facilitate a safe return to school, messages on safe school reopening and other information and education materials have been disseminated in all provinces.
Capacity building of teachers and education staff remains a priority, to help prepare them for their roles under education in the context of COVID-19. Mental Health and Psychosocial Support training reached an additional 4,242 teachers and education officers during the reporting period, taking the total number of teachers/officials trained to 8,883 (3,416 women). Cumulatively 9,030 (3,416 women) teachers and education officers accessed training in safe reopening and operation of schools.

To encourage continuity of learning, an additional 124,347 parents were reached with messages through SMS and different social media platforms during the reporting period, increasing total reach to 412,411 parents.

**C4D, Community Engagement and AAP**

- Television and radio remain the primary source of trusted information on COVID-19 in Pakistan and include agreements with media agencies effectively reaching all Pakistan provinces and territories.
- On social media, Facebook remains top sharing platform, on which there have been 78,219 engagement and 1,417,353 engagements overall. On Twitter, there have been 270,418 impressions and 7,292 engagements, while on Instagram, 84,031 impressions and 2,114 engagements during the month of May.
- The Polio helpline, now also used for COVID-19 purposes, responds to nearly 40,000 calls each day. Nearly 334,901 calls were answered over the reporting period with an overall 1,179,893 calls answered thus far. These calls provide critical information to callers on COVID-19 prevention, available services, vaccines and registration process. COVID testing, and also provides an opportunity for the population to express complaints and provide valuable feedback on services.
- Through existing polio alliances and the health programme, 65,649 religious leaders have been engaged and mobilized to promote the risk perception of COVID-19.

**Emergency Preparedness, Response and Disaster Risk Reduction**

- Contingency stock is being prepositioned for 100,000 people through minimum critical stock in the warehouse, in case it cannot be secured through LTAs at required lead time. Contingency Stock funding gaps stands at USDs $116,694.
- Keeping in mind any upcoming new COVID-19 wave, advocacy is required with government and partners on preparedness particularly for oxygen therapy. UNICEF is procuring 1,000 oxygen concentrators along with accessories under the Supply Financing Facility which will help government in minimizing potential oxygen shortage in the country in coming months.

**Gaps/Challenges**

- The nutrition services in KP province's settled districts are experiencing a shortage of supplies Ready to Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) especially in the COVID-19 high risk districts of KP. Funding constraints to support nutrition services in the Newly Merged Districts will lead to closure of 74 nutrition sites by 30th June 2021. UNICEF Pakistan however is continually advocating with donors in this regard.
- Due to limited resources, UNICEF focused mainly on handwashing in public places, schools and health care facilities in order to promote and provide handwashing stations and soap to vulnerable households
- Prolonged school closures increase risks of dropouts. UNICEF is working closely with the provincial departments to develop various approaches to prevent drop-out of students and increase the role of PTCs/SMCs and teachers at community level to bring children back to school. Donor funding for Education COVID-19 response is severely lacking. Resource mobilization strategy is being developed as part of the integrated education response to COVID-19.

**Sri Lanka**

**Nutrition**

- Initiated development of the Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) Tamil online training package by recruiting three Sinhala to Tamil translators. The conversion of the technical component of Sinhala IYCF online training package to the technological format is about 90% complete. Availability of the online IYCF training package would ensure update of knowledge, skills and competencies of doctors, nurses and public health midwives involved in IYCF service provision on a regular basis, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Procured 1,050 cartons of BP-100 Ready to Use Therapeutic Food required for the management of over 1,200 children diagnosed with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM), depending on the requirements of each diagnosed child.

**Health**

- Since mid-April, Sri Lanka has seen a rapid increase of COVID-19 cases with higher numbers of patients requiring oxygen therapy. UNICEF urgently provided oxygen supplies including jumbo and small cylinders, regulators, face masks and fire extinguishers to 12 COVID-19 management hospitals in Western and Sabaragamuwa Provinces.
- UNICEF also urgently supported to procure 11 adult ventilators for the newly established two Intensive Care Units at the National Hospital in Sri Lanka and Kothalawala Defense Academy Hospital in Colombo district.
- UNICEF supported the establishment of three High Dependency Units, each for pregnant and postnatal mothers in three hospitals in the Western, Eastern and Northwestern Provinces.
- The first batch of equipment to be procured through the funding from the Government of Japan to strengthen the Cold Chain Equipment system including ILRs, Freezers, Fridge Tags were delivered to the Ministry of Health in May 2021.

**Water, Sanitation and Hygiene**

- 10,000 people in low-income urban settlements are being reached through the hygiene promotion programme which includes handwashing promotion, and installation of handwashing points at the entrance of 22 low-income urban settlements under the purview of the Urban Development Authority.
Community champions identified and recognized by the Urban and Estate Unit of the Ministry of Health were mobilized to promote hygiene practices among the 22 Urban settlements and 3000 posters were printed to increase awareness on prevention of the spread of COVID-19.

**Child Protection, GBVIE, and PSEA**
- Capacity building of 18 Child Rights Promotion Officers was carried out during May 2021 on developing resilient skills of children and adolescents in communities through the children’s clubs network.
- 1,347 children living in 53 children's homes in the Eastern Province were reached on COVID-19 safety measures including development of risk assessment for all 53 children's homes.
- 13 children were reunified with their families from children's homes as part of the COVID-19 safety measures and a monitoring mechanism was established through the social service workforce to ensure continuous support for reunified children.
- District psychosocial forums in Jaffna and Batticaloa districts were strengthened for provision of mental health and psychosocial support, given the sudden spike of the virus spread in these districts.

**Education**
- As the schools remained closed nation-wide, around 600,000 primary school students (50% girls) in all nine provinces were supported with home-based learning in various modalities (online/off-line) through the provincial education departments.
- Additional procurement of hygiene and IPC kits was initiated targeting 400 poorly resourced schools in estate/plantation communities, to help strengthen their preparation for safe school reopening.
- Locally relevant C4D strategies in support of safe return to schools were developed in coordination with the provincial education authorities in North, East, Uva and Central provinces. This, focusing on vulnerable and at-risk children, will help their safe returning to school and hence mitigate school dropouts.
- UNICEF is working with Ministry of Education and provincial education departments in North and Eastern provinces, in view of its eventual nation-wide roll-out, to develop a package of psychosocial support tools and material for teachers to address the needs of children as well as those of teachers themselves.

**Social Protection and Cash Transfers**
- The Presidential Secretariat sought UNICEF’s technical advice on the social protection response to COVID-19, following which the government sent LKR 5,000 (est USD 25) emergency cash transfers to 5.4 million households in April and 5.7 million households in May. It is planning to send another round of transfers in June 2021.
- UNICEF is working with the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) to document the government’s social protection response to COVID-19 and will use this documentation to engage with government stakeholders on how they can reach more people.
- UNICEF has also been assessing the vulnerabilities of people through a series of nationally representative surveys and sharing the information with government to help inform and focus its COVID-19 response.
- UNICEF has been advocating that the government’s COVID-19 response reaches pregnant and lactating mothers and households with children through existing programs such as the food voucher for pregnant and lactating mothers.

**C4D, Community Engagement and AAP**
- 15 million people across the country were reached through an awareness campaign on COVID-19 Appropriate Behavior (CAB) on four leading national television stations (HIRU, Derana, ITN and Vasantha).
- UNICEF’s social media campaigns on CAB reached over one million people during May 2021.
- Together with the Ministry of Health (MoH), UNICEF completed a nationally representative telephone based Rapid Assessment to understand the changes in public knowledge, attitudes and practices related to COVID-19, its new strains and vaccine.
- UNICEF, MoH and Provincial Departments of Health Services commenced the dissemination of risk communication messages and promotion of protective practices through public address systems to the high-risk areas in Eastern, Central and Uva provinces, targeting 40,000 most vulnerable urban and plantation communities.

**Emergency Preparedness, Response and Disaster Risk Reduction**
- During the last week of May, due to the influence of cyclone Yaas and the settlement of the Southwest Monsoon season over Sri Lanka, heavy rainfalls were received in southern and western parts of the country. Over 160,000 people were affected by heavy rainfall, high winds and cutting failures in eight districts.
- Before the onset of the Southwest monsoon settlement, UNICEF pre-positioned essential camp management equipment, including Tarpaulin sheets, face masks, hand sanitizers and disinfectant liquids in the district forecasted to receive the highest rainfall as per the weather forecasts and modeling.
- Together with the Disaster Management Center, UNFPA, IOM and the Disaster Preparedness and Response Division of the MoH, UNICEF organized online training for the sub-national level government officers engaging in camp management services amidst COVID-19. The training created awareness on COVID-19 safety procedures, ensuring psychosocial wellbeing of displaced people, child and women friendly camp management, for 250 participants.

**Gaps/Challenges**
- Continued closure of schools and lack of access to online learning for the majority of vulnerable students in rural and estate sector remains a key challenge.
Human Interest Story

Sri Lanka

In 2021 UNICEF Sri Lanka launched a programme to address the psycho-social impact of COVID-19 lockdowns.

Implemented in partnership with the Department of Probation and Child Care Services, the programme provided 600 recreational kits to families reaching 1800+ children who lacked access to online services. The curated kits included games, crayons and printed parenting tips.

The programme received positive feedback; the kit helped reduce family tension (98%), and the parenting tips had been useful (93%). The programme is being expanded through a public private partnership to reach 2,500 more families (8,000 children).

Success story: “My education and future had suddenly become uncertain. My father lost his daily income. We were all unhappy. Then we received the recreational kit. We finally had something to be happy about. Do things as a family again. My father spent about 2hrs playing with us. We felt happy after a long time.” Sithmini (16). Gampaha District.

Bhutan

Bhutan has made considerable progress in promoting and protecting the rights of women and children. However, violence against women and girls persists in the country. According to a 2017 study on Violence against Women and Girls in Bhutan2, more than two in every five women experienced one or more forms of intimate partner violence in their lifetime and a 2016 research on Violence Against Children and Young People3 found that more than 60 per cent of children reported having experienced some form of violence once in their lifetime. The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified all forms of gender-based violence (GBV), particularly domestic and intimate partner violence and exacerbated the existing child protection risks for boys and girls.

To harmonize response systems and improve case management for GBV survivors, the National Commission for Women and Children (NCWC) and UNICEF held a week-long training of trainers for 15 service providers in Paro. One of the participants, Prakash Pradhan, who is a counsellor at RENEW, a CSO for women empowerment, recalled his experience of working with survivors of intimate partner violence. “I come across clients driven out of their homes and who had nowhere else to go,” he said. “Clients come to us as a last resort, but it should not be that way.”

Often, cases are reported late, and it results in the survivors blaming themselves and even impacts the service providers in delivering quality services.

Another participant, Sonam Yangchen, a case manager with NCWC shared her experience. “When clients come to us, we can see that they require our services. We can counsel them but, in the end, it is up to the clients and often, they decline the services. This makes it challenging for us to ensure justice for the survivor.”

Survivors of GBV, due to a myriad of circumstances tolerate the abuse. “The survivors face different forms of abuse. For example, someone who has endured physical abuse has also faced emotional and psychological abuse because it is inherent in the violent act,” said Prakash Pradhan. Besides the delay in reporting GBV incidents, there is also a risk of secondary victimization risking the safety of survivors. “It is critical to vitalize the community, advocate the responsibility and duty of individuals to report GBV,” he said, “Communities need to know violence is not tolerated and justice will be served.”

At the training, the participants also discussed their limitations as service providers in following up with clients, the limited options for reintegration into the mainstream society and the provision of legal aid. The training provided them with the knowledge and skills to effectively manage and support the survivors’ access to services. These skills will help service providers manage their cases in a harmonized case management system, in line with the best practices and international standards.

“The training provided us with a toolbox. Initially, we were unaware of all the different approaches of case management,” said a counsellor at NCWC, Tashi Dorji. “It provided us clear guidelines and procedures of communication, providing psychosocial support, handling different cases and better support the survivors of GBV.”

The master trainers will roll out the training to case managers of their organizations in May and it is expected that through the training, the survivors of GBV would receive quality care and support that addresses the harmful consequences of violence in order to help them heal and recover.

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2 NCWC; Study on Violence against Women and Girls in Bhutan; 2017
3 UNICEF and NCWC; Research on Violence Against Children and Young People; 2016
Regional Funding Overview & Partnerships

Given the increase in demand of humanitarian assistance mainly due to the spread of COVID that is hitting South Asia hard, a revision of Humanitarian Action for Children is underway. In view of the revision, Below a revised budget for India is included while revised appeals of other countries will soon be released as needed.

At the end of May, UNICEF funding needs are a total of US$568.8 million to sustain provision of life-saving health and nutrition services for women and children, promotion of safe behaviour through mass and community level mobilisation, including hand hygiene promotion, alternate education and/or return to school, provision of child protection and data gathering and analysis on impact of COVID19. The Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) Appeals further covers manmade and natural disaster response in particular for Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Regional HAC that covers Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka. UNICEF expresses its sincere gratitude to all public and private donors for the contributions received and continues to rely on their generous support to cover the overall funding gap of 56 per cent, amounting to more than US$320 million at the end of May.

Funding Status

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<th>Carry-over ($)</th>
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