UNICEF HAC Appeal 2021
US$ 579.3 million (Regional Total)

Funding gap, $293.3M
Humanitarian funds, $119.5M
Other resources, $75.2M
Carry-forward, $91.3M

Total Required $579.3M

Highlights

- The humanitarian situation remained dire in South Asia with some new surges of COVID-19 cases in the region. As of July 30, there have been 35,108,330 confirmed COVID cases of which 33,883,939 cases recovered and 488,628 deaths were reported in the region of South Asia. From mid-January to late-August, 45.5 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been delivered to the region through COVAX Facility, including 22.2 million doses through dose-sharing mechanism.

- UNICEF continues to deliver life-saving and essential services to women, children and most vulnerable populations in South Asia, responding to flooding and landslides caused by monsoon heavy rain in the late July in India and Bangladesh.

- Escalation of conflict in Afghanistan, compounding existing humanitarian needs resulting from drought, COVID-19, ongoing violence, further aggravated the situation of up to 10 million children relying on assistance.

- 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 over US$293 million (51 per cent) remains and hampers UNICEF’s ability to respond.
Regional Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

As of 30 July, a total cumulative of 35,108,330 confirmed COVID cases of which 33,883,939 cases recovered and 488,628 deaths were reported in the region of South Asia1. Bangladesh witnessed its worst surge of COVID-19 cases in July, with the highest daily new cases recorded soon after Eid al-Adha festivity, while Pakistan suffered from the fourth wave and experienced a similar spike of cases after Eid. Resurgence of COVID-19 cases was also seen this month in Nepal, as rolling average of daily cases increased by almost 46 percent from 1,604 on 1 July to 2,338 on 31 July, with an average positivity rate of 20 per cent. While the situation in India calmed down compared to preceding months, the absolute number of cases is still at an alarming level.

In addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, monsoon heavy rain and subsequent flooding continued to exacerbate the already dire humanitarian situations in the region. In India, continuous high-intensity rainfall in the fourth week of July caused flooding and landslides in more than six districts of the State of Maharashtra. 1.2 million people were estimated to be impacted including 400,000 in more than 3,000 villages (approx.) and six medium level towns. There have been reported 215 deaths including 48 children and 11 people missing, the majority of which were casualties related to landslides. In Bangladesh, between 27 July and 18 August 2021, Cox’s Bazar has experienced around 1,048 mm of rainfall—over 700 mm between 27 July and 3 August, and 127 cm between 16 and 17 August alone, affecting 83,407 refugees including 25,342 of them being displaced as well as 10 dead. In Nepal, a total of 390 incidents of flooding and landslides have been reported so far, where 64 people have lost their lives and 485 families have been displaced.

At the time of release of this report, Afghanistan experienced a severe escalation of conflict following the announcement of withdrawals of US and NATO troops, which triggered an increase of internally displaced people to over 550,000, nearly 60 per cent of whom are children, and intensified emergency facing the country’s children and their families. The combined impact of insecurity, internal displacement, poverty, COVID-19 and water scarcity is being felt by the most vulnerable: children, including children with disabilities, women, including pregnant women, and the elderly.

Half of the population - more than 18 million people, including around 10 million children - needs humanitarian assistance. UNICEF predicts that without urgent action, 1 million children under the age of 5 will be severely malnourished by the end of 2021. The humanitarian needs of children and women are only likely to increase over the coming months amidst a severe drought and consequent water scarcity, the devastating socioeconomic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the onset of winter.

COVID-19 Vaccination

Over 654 million doses have been administered across South Asian countries since January 16, 2021 with 8 per cent of the total population fully vaccinated and 27 per cent having received the first dose. Within this figure, a total of 45.5 million doses have been received across all eight South Asian countries through COVAX facility, including 22.2 million doses through dose-sharing mechanism. Only in Bhutan (72%), Maldives (65%), and Sri Lanka (54%) have a significant percentage of the total population received at least one COVID-19 vaccination dose (61%, 55%, and 23% fully vaccinated, respectively). In other countries, the level of coverage is still alarmingly low, though steadily increasing.


[Diagram: SAR COVID-19 Vaccine coverage by total population]
Summary Analysis of Programme Response

Afghanistan

Nutrition
- Nutrition programmes continued throughout the country with some localized disruptions where there has been active fighting, with services resuming thereafter for both humanitarian and development activities.
- At the time of release of this report, an estimated 11,000 children aged under-five was provided with lifesaving services for severe acute malnutrition (SAM) through Basic Packages of Health Services (BPHS) health facilities and mobile teams across the country. This is slightly lower than expected and does show that there is a dampening effect on access either due to COVID-19 and/or the escalation of the conflict.
- UNICEF is working with government and partners on the distribution of therapeutic supplies for the fourth quarter of 2021 and prepositioning of supplies for the winter-affected provinces for the winter session for first quarter of 2022. Sufficient SAM supplies will be in place with some supplies arriving through Pakistan that are being delivered by road, avoiding the serious issues related to supply arrivals at the Hamid Karzai International Airport.
- UNICEF integrated the nutrition preventative and treatment services to the two mobile health teams for IDP settlements in Kabul and is working to ensure integrated mobile teams are scaled up rapidly, with planning in place for deploying nearly 50 more teams over the next quarter as feasible.
- UNICEF is in the process of doubling the nutrition extenders in the field to further support, coordinate and monitor the field level nutrition programming.

Health
- More than 5,000 women and children, including Internally Displaced Population (IDPs) received life-saving interventions through UNICEF-supported mobile health teams.
- At the time of release of this report, 200,000 people received COVID-19 vaccines while close to 2 million have been reached since the vaccination started in March 2021.
- Measles outbreak continues to affect thousands of children, and efforts are ongoing to discuss with the incoming MoPH leadership regarding measles outbreak response.
- Similarly, health contingency plan is currently adapted to zonal level and rolled-out, while prepositioning and dispatches of health supplies, including COVID-19 vaccines, to the field offices to support provinces are ongoing.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
- 12,500 drought affected people in 27 villages in Chkhansor district of Nimroz province received safe drinking water through water trucking.
- 17,500 people in informal settlements in Kabul province received hygiene supplies and benefited hygiene messages
- 5,520 people in informal settlements in Kabul province accessed safe drinking water through rehabilitation of 12 hand pump wells and construction of 6 new hand pump wells.
- 1,141 conflict related IDPs in Kandahar city who camped in Khakrezwal high school received safe drinking water. UNICEF is also supporting operation and maintenance of sanitation facilities/services in concerned area.
- 3,144 people in Nahr e Shahi district of Balkh province participated in the hygiene promotion program. The eligible and vulnerable people amongst them will also receive supplies in the coming month.

Child Protection, GBVIE, and PSEA
- UNICEF child protection programme reached a total of 32,092 children (19,474 boys and 12,618 girls) with lifesaving child protection services, of which 21,221 (68 per cent) were children supported with Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services. Children were also provided with other services including provision of interim care for children, Gender Based Violence (GBV) care, general case management and provision of specialized services to children, including cash assistance.
- As a result of increased violence across the country, UNICEF also provided awareness activities on Explosive Ordinance Risk Education (EORE) to 1,135 people (700 men and 435 women) in the conflict affected areas. The awareness raising message included guidance on actions that families are expected to take before and during displacement to reduce the risk of explosive ordnances for children.
- UNICEF, working in collaboration with the Child Protection Sub Cluster, concluded the collection of data on the Children Associated with Armed Forces and Groups (CAAFAG) context analysis. The Context analysis will help to inform UNICEF and the Child Protection Sub Cluster response strategy on how to engage in CAAFG programming in the country.
- UNICEF PSEA taskforce has revised and updated and translated PSEA materials for Staff, partners and beneficiaries into Pashto and Dari, currently under reprint. The IEC materials will increase awareness on SEA and new reporting guidelines.

Education
- During the first two weeks of August, midterm and end-of-year exams (class level) were finalized. Schools remained closed, either due to summer holidays or awaiting formal communication from the Ministry of Education on re-opening of schools after COVID-19 lockdown. Preparatory activities aimed to support the resumption of education activities were affected by the ongoing political developments. UNICEF continues to engage with all actors to advocate for the reopening of schools and continued access to education for girls. During the reporting period, UNICEF distributed textbooks, classroom materials and tents in six provinces benefiting 7,503 children, including 3,902 girls.
Social Protection and Cash Transfers
- Preparations for multipurpose cash distribution are underway following the roll out of HOPE MIS in July. The evolving context since the change of the government has delayed efforts towards registration and actual cash distributions.
- Registration of 1,000 vulnerable households is underway in Samangan in preparation of multipurpose cash distribution expected to start as soon as the financial sector reopens.
- A further 360 households were registered in Jalalabad and ready for cash distributions once the financial service provider resumes operations.
- Existing caseloads from previous Humanitarian Cash Transfer programmes in Heart (2,500 households) and Ghor (300 households) are being considered for further support. These are households reached through the winter programme and support to vulnerable households of children living in the streets and working in brick kilns.

C4D, Community Engagement and AAP
- A rapid information needs assessment has been conducted through U-Report to assess priority information needs of at risk and affected populations with focus on their access to humanitarian assistance and preferred complaints and feedback mechanisms, reaching over 100,000 people from all over Afghanistan.
- Approximately 1,200 IDPs in Padola camp in the outskirts of Kabul City, have been provided with information on hygiene promotion, health, nutrition, protection and COVID-19 prevention measures along with humanitarian assistance.
- AAP and C4D related questions have been integrated in WASH End-User Monitoring and Programme documents to ensure intervention are coherent and well monitored over the next four months.
- An Integrated Emergency Booklet with key lifesaving information during messages has been revised and is currently under printing for distribution to CSO partners and communities.
- As part of the Spotlight Project, 46 inter-agency staff have participated in the orientation and development of IEC materials for GBV prevention and response.

Gender and Adolescent Development and Participation
- UNICEF in collaboration with local partner supported COVID-19 affected adolescent girls and young women to access lifesaving information and services unique to their needs through women and girls’ safe space model. In Bagrami Safe Space in Kabul, the following beneficiaries have been reached with various services within the month of July: 893 beneficiaries (adolescent girls, youths and women) visited the women and girls safe space during the period, provided with information on gender roles, GBV risk mitigation and available basic services (GBV and health) and benefitted from various services of the safe space such as literacy learning, usage of library, usage of internet and computer, English language awareness program and vocational learning.
- A total of 383 beneficiaries (331 women and 50 adolescent girls) raised their awareness about GBV prevention -and GBV available services through UNICEF-supported house-to-house visits by case workers in Bagrami.
- The regional team had meetings and sensitized 250 (170 men and 80 women) CDC members about GBV prevention in Bagrami villages. Besides the CDC members promised to help our team for smooth implementation of the project and preventing GBV cases.
- 27 beneficiaries including adolescent girls, youth and women received psychosocial support during the reporting period through Bagrami Safe Space.
- Furthermore, UNICEF supported the establishment of seven men and boys’ networks in Kandahar and Herat and members are being engaged in prevention of GBV and to promote child rights. UNICEF also supported establishment of seven multi-purpose adolescent groups (MAGs) and seven Adolescents and Youth Networks (AYNs), using these adolescent platforms. A total of 23 male and 37 female adolescents have been engaged on key messages on GBV and information that promote positive behaviours in their own communities.
- 16 mentoring sessions for 320 adolescent boys and girls in Herat mainly focusing on child marriage and GBV.

Cluster Coordination
UNICEF Afghanistan Country Office is cluster leading agency for WASH, Nutrition, and Education.

a. Education:
- During July nearly all schools remained closed due to COVID-19 mandated closures from the Ministry of Public Health. During the same period there was an increase in insecurity across the country and with or without COVID-19, most schools and community-based education (CBE) schools would have needed to remain closed due to ongoing fighting in the provinces and districts. Schools were only reopened on the 27th July to facilitate for exam administration.

b. WASH:
- 246,262 people reached by WASH assistance in July (2,356,597 people since January, thanks to 27 partners).
- UNICEF as Cluster Lead Agency (CLA) Provider of Last Resort (PLOR) is providing safe water through water trucking in Chakhansor district of Nimroz province to around 12,500 people affected by drought. Nimroz is one of the water-stressed areas where ground water is either not available or not drinkable due to high salinity and people rely on rainwater. The intervention is ongoing from last two months to avoid displacement of people from their places of origin.
- WASH partners have emergency stocks in 44 locations across 26 provinces (26,460 hygiene kits, 5,679 water kits, 1,865 latrine kits/slabs, 31 water storage tanks of different capacities and 3.3 million Aqua tab) that can cover the needs of 185,000 people for a period of one month.

Gaps/Challenges
- As a result of the challenge posed by the ongoing insecurity in the country, implementing partners have not been able to work fully and to provide services. The conflict increased access constraints during the period. Moreover, there a funding gap to support the full deployment of a range of extenders to support the monitoring and reporting on grave Child Rights violations.
Bangladesh

Nutrition

- A total of 7,162 children (4,103 girls) were admitted for severe acute malnutrition (SAM) treatment till July 2021, according to District Health Information System report (DHIS2). UNICEF has provided necessary technical support to finalize the requirement of therapeutic food in SAM facilities across the country along with finalization of supply distribution plan. Emergency supplies are yet to be delivered to the SAM unit due to a strict lockdown and lack of coordination between government institutions such as Central Medical Store Department and National Nutrition Services.

Health

- In July, 2,925,645 people were vaccinated with the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine and 48,005 people with the second, which made the total first dose of vaccination to 8,819,675 people (5.1 per cent of the total population). Another 5.5 million doses of Moderna COVID-19 vaccine were received in July.
- In July, UNICEF and partners provided primary health consultations for 11,536 including 8,451 under five children (65 per cent female) and 10,289 including 4,688 under five children (78 per cent female) in Rohingya refugees camps and host communities in Cox’s Bazar respectively. In addition, 2,770 (1,346 girls) and 5,987 children aged 0-11 months (2,936 girls) received Penta 3 vaccines at refugee camps and host communities respectively.
- As of 31 July, there were 13,792 COVID-19 cases (2,461 Rohingya refugees) identified in Cox’s Bazar. UNICEF supported Severe Acute Respiratory Infections Treatment Centres (SARI ITC) at Teknaf to scale up available beds from 60 to 95 for COVID-19 case management. Bed occupancy was 43 per cent as of 31 July.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

- With UNICEF and Department of Public Health support, in July, 167,070 people, including 61,850 women and 3,670 People with Disabilities (PwD), were provided access to safe water and 114,190 people (40,760 women and 2,340 PwD) benefited from functional latrines. The lack of emergency WASH supplies remains a challenge.
- In response to the monsoon heavy rain and flooding in Cox’s Bazar, UNICEF repaired a total of 376 latrines, 59 tube wells, 144 bathing cubicles, 25 tap stands, 5 water networks and 10 faecal sludge management plants in eight camps, in order to provide safe water and sanitation to 12,413 people (6,331 female, 124 PwD). Additionally, 4,266 households with estimated 21,330 people were provided with water purification tablets and jerry cans and engaged to improve household water treatment and storage practices.
- In the host communities, 1,117 water points were disinfected, and safe water provided through trucking, benefitting 22,000 people (12,203 female and 218 PwD). A total of 2,921 latrines were disinfected and 65 handwashing devices established: benefitting 16,500 people (8,092 female and 157 PwD). Key hygiene messages were delivered to 2,343 households, benefitting 11,000 people (7,428 female and 112 PwD).

Child Protection, including GBV

- In July, UNICEF provided community-based mental health and psychosocial support (PSS) to 44,366 children and primary caregivers (19,779 female) including 1,361 PwD. 76,526 people (46,346 female and 2,908 PwD) could access Gender Based Violence (GBV) risk mitigation, prevention or response interventions at national level.
- In Cox’s Bazar, COVID-19 pandemic-imposed restrictions and monsoon floods exacerbated protection needs for women and children. Nevertheless, UNICEF reached 1,717 vulnerable children (43 per cent female, one per cent children with disabilities) providing psychosocial first aid, PSS, and case management and referral to specialized services. 4,145 individuals (35 per cent female, two per cent PwD) have been reached by community-based mechanisms and volunteers including messages to combat drowning. UNICEF has also reached 2,544 individuals (76 per cent female, one per cent PwD) with GBV messages, case management, PSS, referrals, and dignity kits.

Education

- In July, 1,696,414 children (848,207 girls) have accessed TV and internet-based learning packages supported by UNICEF to minimize learning loss while schools remained closed due to the pandemic. The remote learning support will be continued by the government and other stakeholders. UNICEF is supporting the government in developing blended learning strategies to ensure accessibility, affordability and quality of learning for all children.
- 77,294 children (37,533 girls) were reached with radio programme that guided caregivers on how to support their children’s learning activities at home. Stories were aired over the radio to improve listening and comprehension skills. Additional resources are being developed for caregivers to enable them to support their children’s learning.
- 1,089 learning centres (LCs) and 226 toilets have been damaged by the ongoing monsoon season in Cox’s Bazar. The progress of repair has been slowed by the ongoing lockdown with only 144 damaged LCs being repaired.

C4D, Community Engagement and AAP

- The mass movement due to the Eid-al-Adha celebration and withdrawal of lockdown posed serious challenges to the prevention of COVID-19 transmission. Messages were disseminated on Eid-al-Adha focusing on cattle market management and approximately 5,000,000 people benefited from key recommended behaviours through various channels including miking by 64 districts information offices.
- 38,838 people (20,806 female and 418 PwD) in Rohingya refugee camps and 13,643 (7,694 female and 103 PWD) in host community were engaged on key life-saving behaviours and referrals to services with focus on COVID-19 prevention and vaccination. Bangladesh Betar and Community radio Naf broadcasted 66 variety programs on COVID-19 prevention,
vaccination and referral services through the SARI ITC. Furthermore, 646 people (314 women and four PwD) in refugee camps and 716 (270 women and 4 PwD) in the host community visited the Information and Feedback Centres to voice their needs/concerns including feedback and complaint on humanitarian services.

**Emergency Response and Disaster Risk Reduction**
- In July, UNICEF prepositioned emergency nutrition supplies for monsoon response and provided uninterrupted services to 561 SAM children (369 girls) including eight children with disabilities (CwD). 49,500 people (27,723 female) including 487 PwD in host communities have also benefitted from emergency WASH interventions. Improved functionality of community volunteers and Community Based Child Protection Committees (CBCPC) facilitated door-to-door visits and helped maintain a protective environment for children.
- COVID-19 related restrictions slowed down repair works, nevertheless, UNICEF plans to continue working on preventing soil erosion and waterlogging in the facilities, replenish supplies (i.e., tarpaulin, rope, medicine) and hold virtual refresher training for case workers on remote case management for children and caregivers’ survivors, and those at risk.

**Bhutan Health**
- The second dose of COVID-19 vaccination was launched on 20th July, vaccinating 90 percent of the eligible adult population. In addition, children aged 12-17 years in the high-risk red zones were vaccinated with the first dose of COVID-19 vaccination.
- UNICEF supported the roll-out of the nationwide mass vaccination campaign throughout its development and implementation phases guided by the UNICEF/WHO assisted COVID-19 vaccine deployment plan, capacity building and training of health workers, and the roll-out of the RCCE strategy.
- UNICEF facilitated the arrival of the 2nd dose COVID-19 vaccines through the COVAX facility as well as other sources through bilateral relations and procured personal protective equipment (PPE) for health workers for vaccination sessions. UNICEF provided financial and logistics support for the Fast-Track delivery of COVID-19 vaccines for the second dose: 500,000 doses from the United States, 250,000 from Denmark, 172,500 from Bulgaria and 10,000 from Croatia.
- 283,650 pieces of surgical masks and 200 (150 adults, 50 child) body bags were handed over to the Ministry of Health.
- To date, two ultralow temp freezers (-86°C), seven walk-in-cold rooms (WIC, +2°C to +8°C) and one walk-in freezer (WIF, -15°C to -25°C) have been installed in the leading hospitals.
- The procurement plan for cold chain equipment, funded through the Government of Japan has been finalized for delivery between August and October 2021. The products include one Foster 30m³ (Mono cooling unit), twenty large Deep Freezers, one hundred eighty-six small Deep Freezers, forty-five Ice Lined Refrigerators, spare parts for deep freezers and LIR, one thousand vaccine carriers, one hundred cold boxes, and five hundred Temperature Monitoring devices.
- 200 pieces of Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) binders and training materials on KMC for premature and low birthweight newborns were delivered to the Ministry of Health.

**Water, Sanitation and Hygiene**
- Installation of handwashing stations outside with provision of safe water at entrances and provision of safe water within five Primary Health Centres (PHC) for hand hygiene, drinking and IPC was completed in Wangdue district and estimated to benefit 220 people daily and at Damji PHC in Gasa district estimated to benefit 25 people daily.
- UNICEF completed installation of two handwashing stations in public place in Gasa district is expected to benefit about 1,550 people (1,500 people at Gasa hot spring area and 50 people at district headquarters).
- UNICEF installed Installation of handwashing stations outside with provision of safe water at entrance and provision of safe water within the seven PHC and One Sub-post for hand hygiene, drinking and IPC was completed in Punakha district estimated to benefit people daily (Thinleygang PHC 50, Lobesa Sub-post 30, Nobgang PHC 25, Goenshari PHC 5, Tshochasa 25, Samdingkha 45, Kabisa 45 and Shengana 10) reaching all PHGs in the district.
- Implementation of activities are either delayed or postponed due to restricted movement, lockdowns, vaccination, monsoon rain, roadblocks, and delay in trans-shipment of raw materials from India.

**Education**
- The data collection of the end-line assessment for the impact of the Care for Caregivers (CFC) package (the baseline assessment data collection was done in May), was completed in July. The CFC package, which focuses on a strengths-based counselling approach to build caregiver confidence, support stress management, self-care, conflict resolution skills, family engagement, and social support, was piloted by UNICEF in partnership with the Ministry of Education in three districts (Punakha, Tsurang, Trashigang), benefitting approximately 260 caregivers.
- While schools normally have summer break over the entire month of July, this year the government decided to cut the break to 15 days in the second half of July, to provide an additional 15 days to schools to make up for the learning losses due to COVID-19 related disruptions in the school calendar. The school premises were also used as vaccination centres for the weekend second dose COVID-19 vaccination campaign which started from 20th July.

**Child Protection, GBVIE, and PSEA**
- Towards providing women and girls with a safe entry point for services and a place to access information, UNICEF supported the NCWC and RENEW to establish three space spaces for women and girls in three districts on a pilot basis.
- Standards for the safe spaces along with an SOP is being developed to ensure quality of the services provided. Once operational, the safe spaces will offer an opportunity to more 40,000 women and girls in these three districts to engage with each other, exchange information, and rebuild community networks and support.

**Communication for Development (C4D), Community Engagement & AAP**
- UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health in developing and implementing community engagement interventions (RCCE) to support the national vaccine roll-out plan.
• Community engagement by local government officials, health workers and youth continued to promote the second dose of COVID-19 vaccination until the end of the vaccination campaign.

India

Nutrition

• In most states, nutrition services related frontline functionaries are assigned to support COVID-19 prevention and vaccination, which has negatively impacted nutrition services for children and pregnant women.
• 11,674 children aged 0 to 59 months with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and complications were admitted for inpatient treatment in Nutrition Rehabilitation Centers (NRCs).
• Health Management Information System was taken offline in June 2021 for updates but reports available for April 2021 indicated that 1,935,358 pregnant women receiving iron and folic acid (IFA) supplementation were reported to have received 180 IFA tablets.
• In April 2021, despite closure of schools 13,847,272 in-school girls and 13,729,201 in-school boys received IFA supplements. Additionally, Anganwadi centres provided IFA supplements to 2,799,683 out of schoolgirls aged 10-19 years.
• There has been successful advocacy for screening for SAM in children under five to be integrated into Nutrition Month (September 2021). In July, the revitalization of growth monitoring and promotion program was initiated across the most populous states of India with National Center of Excellence Kalawati Saran Children’s Hospital.

Health

• In the month of July 2021, India became the second fastest country to cross the mark of 470 million doses; however, only 32.8 vaccine doses have been administered per 100 people and the share of population fully vaccinated was only 7.11.
• UNICEF supported strengthening of cold-chain capacity in 523 districts through augmenting overall cold chain space by 71% in 1,389 cold chain points.
• UNICEF has continued to support augmenting medical oxygen and related products; 3,714 oxygen concentrators have been delivered and additional 936 are under delivery. 512 High Flow Nasal Cannulas have been delivered and 6 Oxygen generation plants installed with additional 34 in pipeline.
• UNICEF continues to strengthen testing capacity; it installed 251 RT-PCR test machines with an additional 249 in procurement, delivered and installed 64 Mass thermal scanners, installed 58 RNA extraction machines with additional 42 are under distribution.
• UNICEF supported diverse state and national level initiatives in systems strengthening and capacity building of, and psychosocial support to, healthcare workers.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

• 2.4 million people were provided with critical WASH supplies and services including direct support, e.g., critical sanitation equipment with support of the partnership with LIXIL.
• Over 13 million people have been reached with handwashing messaging in preparation of school reopening. The Ministry of Education appreciated UNICEF for the development and roll-out of the COVID-19 Responsive Behaviour module, which helped train around 200,000 teachers to date, 65% of whom have obtained certificates.
• 20,300 schools across five states have started implementing Safe School Protocols developed with the technical support of UNICEF, which will lead to the reopening of schools
• Overall, 461,561 service providers (51 per cent female) have been trained and engaged on infection prevention and through partnership with ASCI and the CDC, an additional 5,000 healthcare facility staff across eight states were reached.
• In the aftermath of Cyclone Tauktae in Gujarat, UNICEF continued to mobilize hygiene kits for the most affected villages and families in three districts and worked with the state disaster management entity to develop government-led short, medium, and long-term response plans. UNICEF provided technical support to Water and Sanitation Management Organisation (WASMO) to monitor status of water supply in the villages and supported capacity building of response partners.
• In the aftermath of Cyclone Yaas which hit West Bengal on 27 May, UNICEF continued to provide sanitation and hygiene items to support families, whose houses are completely damaged, to get back to normal life and adopt safe hygiene practices.
• UNICEF in Maharashtra, after the devastation caused by the July floods, worked with partners to develop the Joint Rapid Needs Assessment, for which UNICEF supported the training of 100 volunteers to collect household and village data. UNICEF worked with a partner platform to ensure that various needs were being met, helping NGO partners distribute water supply, cleaning materials and kits. There is a response plan to provide sanitation and hygiene kits with essential medicines to 24,000 vulnerable families and 24,000 children, covering five districts
• In response to the floods that have affected the state of Bihar last month, UNICEF in Bihar had conducted online trainings of Sukhshrang, a group of community volunteers, in 279 gram panchayats (GP) within six affected districts, who in turn supported message dissemination in their GPs. In addition, an online orientation with 850 state, district and block field officials were conducted to help improve disaster response efforts and advocate for preparedness. Support was also provided in developing the Joint Rapid Needs Assessment which was shared with the state government to help inform the response.

Child Protection, GBVIE, and PSEA

• All 17 program states continue to engage with adolescent platforms and networks to mobilize them on issues related to ending child marriage, GBV and COVID-19 appropriate behaviour.
• The Government of Madhya Pradesh has launched Aagaz, an ‘End Violence Against Children’ (EVAC/GBV) program in 52 districts. 235 youth supported as peer educators to train other adolescents and youth on EVAC and GBV prevention and response services. 200,000 adolescents and youths are expected to benefit from this initiative directly.
• A total of 171,479 children and caregivers were supported with MHPSS services. Certified course on MHPSS for CP functionaries rolled out in Assam and Gujarat in partnership with NIMHANS including for emergency response.
• 1,714, families of children on the move or in child labour were supported with access to social protection and protective services in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. In West Bengal, 3,571 community members were reached through community outreach for preventing trafficking and child labour.

• To date, 187,148 persons reached through social media platforms on prevention of child labour and trafficking in the context of COVID-19.

Education

• Most schools and all Anganwadi centres continue to remain closed due to the pandemic. Eight states have initiated the process to reopen schools.

• 15.5 million children (50.5 per cent girls) in 17 states access formal or nonformal education, including early learning with the continued technical support from UNICEF to state government and partners.

• UNICEF continues to provide technical support to state governments and partners in the development and roll out of alternate/innovative learning recovery programs with special focus on reaching disadvantaged/marginalized children to mitigate loss of learning.

• UNICEF is providing technical support to states in the development, adaptation and roll out of national guidelines on parental support to learning at home.

Social Protection and Cash Transfers

• UNICEF advocated with national and state governments to develop social protection measures for emergency assistance during the pandemic and for emerging vulnerabilities. UNICEF provided technical support in designing social protection responses to children orphaned during the pandemic across multiple states.

• UNICEF is convening partners and building evidence on vulnerabilities of migrant household in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Advocacy on promoting portability in social protection for children exposed to migration, disseminating results from UNICEF study conducted across five source and destination states.

• UNICEF is providing technical assistance to the NITI Aayog on a microsimulation evaluation of national social protection schemes to develop an integrated social protection framework. Phase 2 of the evaluation is completed and presented to the Technical Group.

• UNICEF supported social protection delivery interventions in two states (Odisha and Jharkhand) reached over 40,000 families in nine months of implementation through complex interventions and case management support on accessing wage support programs, food security entitlements and pension programs.

C4D, Community Engagement and AAP

• With support from 1,350 coalition partners—including the government (the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Youth Affairs)—the Young Warrior Movement incubated by YuWaah and UNICEF became a nationwide movement. A knowledge and learning hub containing over 400 resources on COVID-19 in 13 languages was launched, and over 7,000 capacity-building sessions were held. In July, over three million actions were taken by two million young people against COVID-19.

Emergency Preparedness, Response and Disaster Risk Reduction

• The State Government of Assam and UNICEF are collaborating to launch a helpline called ‘Manojna’ to provide mental health and psychosocial support services to the people affected by disasters including COVID-19 on 9 August 2021. This initiative has been led by Assam Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA), supported by UNICEF together with the Guwahati Medical College and Hospital, National Health Mission Assam, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL—a Govt of India owned telecom service provider) and StepOne (A non-profit tech start up).

• UNICEF and development partners of Maha-PECO-Net platform Maharashtra have developed SOPs and FAQs to address vaccine hesitancy through social action. It is being used in 312 Villages (Gram Panchayats) across 6 districts benefiting 300,000 people including 90,000 children and 140,000 women. The SOP helps operationalise ‘Village Health and Help desk,’ assists people on the other side of the digital divide to register for the COVID-19 Vaccination. It assists the citizens to avail the health-related entitlements, provides guidance for distribution and usage of WASH supply for CAB+. Government

Gaps/Challenges

• Religious congregations at which massive crowds gather will continue to remain a significant challenge to containing COVID-19 risk.

Maldives

Nutrition

• UNICEF Maldives, in partnership with the government, conducted several activities during the World Breastfeeding Week, with a focus on safe, continued breastfeeding during COVID-19. This included online interactive panel discussions with breastfeeding experts.

• A total of 15 health care professionals from the main tertiary hospital were trained in breastfeeding, which will contribute to promotion of breastfeeding within the hospital, in line with the hospital’s breastfeeding policy. Communication and advocacy materials surrounding breastfeeding week’s theme were also disseminated widely on social media platform throughout the week to engage and raise public awareness.

• UNICEF is providing technical support to the urban primary health centre to strengthen growth monitoring and infant and young child feeding (IYCF) services. A total of 395 children also received growth-monitoring services (197 female and 198 male) and a total of 18 children received nutrition counseling through UNICEF supported technical assistance.

Health

• UNICEF Maldives is providing technical support to Ministry of Health through a dedicated cold chain technical specialist for timely technical backstopping to strengthen the immunization supply chain capacity of the country.
• UNICEF continues to support the government’s efforts to rollout the COVID-19 vaccination, with UNICEF’s technical support embedded within the epidemiological programme being instrumental to the microplanning and monitoring of activities. UNICEF also supported the procurement of critical vaccine consumables for the efficient roll-out, as well as supported the delivery of vaccine to the country, which included bilateral donations from two countries via COVAX.

• UNICEF supported public health officer placed in the urban health centre continues to support safe immunization of children with the routine vaccines. In the month of July, 190 children (84 male and 106 female) were vaccinated in the centre.

Child Protection, GBVIE, and PSEA
• UNICEF Maldives has provided technical support for clinical supervision to strengthen the capacity of social workers at the Ministry of Gender, Family and Social Services. A total of 772 sessions have been conducted as of 10 July 2021. Additionally, UNICEF, in partnership with the ministry has also launched a nationwide Campaign on Prevention of Sexual Violence against Children and Women.

• UNICEF is supporting Maldives Police Service to conduct a sensitization programme on child rights and child protection, envisaged to improve service provision in cases of violence against children (VAC). Currently, 12 different atolls have been covered, with a total of 252 officers.

• UNICEF, through its partnership with NGO Advocating the Rights of Children and Thibaa Psychology, reached 931 high-school students (596 female and 335 male) for mental health and psycho-social support awareness sessions.

• UNICEF, through its partnership with NGO Hope for Women, is providing pro-bono legal services for survivors of domestic violence and gender-based violence. As of July 2021, 16 legal consultations were held for six clients, and online peer support group sessions are being conducted weekly.

C4D, Community Engagement and AAP
• UNICEF Maldives is supporting the development of a video series for the Health Emergency Operations Centre (HEOC) to document socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially its impacts on children and families. 10 videos will be produced by 30 Sept, and 10 more in the next months.

• To improve young people’s COVID-19 vaccination rate (currently relatively low), UNICEF is working with the HEOC to engage student unions of local universities and colleges to train them as advocates to engage with their peers. A training session for the first batch has been completed who will go on to develop communication and advocacy materials including eight videos (different concepts) and posters to be used in the joint campaign run by all the academic institutions, with the aim to reach students in the capital and in the outer islands.

• UNICEF is working with HEOC and Maldvian Red Crescent to launch a blog to have stories and memories of COVID-19 journeys of different people to positively engage adolescents and young people to continue upkeep of life saving behaviours and to promote mental wellness through positive practices and togetherness.

• To improve guidance for at-home COVID-19 patients, UNICEF supported HEOC to develop a short video on managing COVID-19, especially home remedies to ease symptoms and what to do in different situations when a person is tested positive of COVID-19.

• To prepare school communities for the arrival of Pfizer vaccines (US donation through COVAX) to be administered to children between 12-17 years, UNICEF supported online training sessions for 131 doctors and healthcare workers (vaccine demand generation and addressing mis/disinformation and hesitancy), as well as nearly 3,000 parents.

Nepal Nutrition
• With UNICEF’s technical assistance, Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) has endorsed the use of “simplified approaches for the treatment of children 6-59 months of age who are moderately or severely wasted.

• Since January 2021, 1,384 (169 in July) children aged 6-59 months with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) have been treated in 22 nutrition rehabilitation homes and 4,112 (1,403 in July 2021) children 6-59 months have been treated for severe wasting without complications in 768 OTCs located across the country.

• 16,634 children aged 6-23 months received multiple micro-nutrient powders and care takers of 38,061 children received infant and young child feeding counselling. UNICEF continues to support MoHP for infant and young child feeding information dissemination and counselling services via telephone, radio, TV and other social media communication channels.

Health
• UNICEF provided 800 units of oxygen cylinder (50l), 22,900 units biohazard bag for COVID-19 case management 430,650 pieces of surgical disposable mask, 25,000 pieces of mask (N95/KN95), 2.7 million disposable gloves, 21,264 alcohol based hand sanitizer (500 ml/bottle), 24,200 face shields, five million pieces of auto disable (AD) syringes (0.5ml) and 600,000 pieces of vaccination cards.

• UNICEF and its partner provided mental health support to 7,889 people through trained counselors and mental health workers. This included 873 children aged less than 10 years (473 boys and 400 girls), 6,217 adolescents (3,171 male and 3,046 female), 799 COVID-19 patients and frontline health workers.

• UNICEF supported installation of 15 hoarding boards, 19 wall paintings with RI pictorial messages, distribution of 314 immunization schedules, 258 counseling posters, 100 immunization clinic posters at strategic locations.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
• UNICEF reached 24,912 people with at least one or more WASH services and supplies (hygiene kits, soap, sanitisers and drinking water) including risk communication messages.
**Child Protection, GBVIE, and PSEA**

- UNICEF supported 933 children (472 boys and 461 girls) with appropriate care arrangement including family reintegration, placement in interim/transit care and emergency assistance; out of which 420 children (200 boys, 220 girls) were referred to different services such as health, security and justice.
- UNICEF trained 46 volunteers on protection monitoring and incident reporting system.
- Through the deployment of psychosocial counsellors and community-based psychosocial workers reached 3,489 people (1,663 male and 1,826 female) including those staying in home isolation and affected by flood in Melamchi in Sindupalchowk district of Bagmati Province.
- Furthermore, UNICEF trained 77 community psychosocial workers on psychosocial first aid from flood and landslide affected areas and 174 service providers (56 male and 118 female) on providing survivor sensitive gender-based violence (GBV) related services in Province Two and Lumbini Province.
- 145 persons (28 male and 117 female) were reached with GBV prevention or response services in July.

**Social Protection and Cash Transfers**

- UNICEF continued its advocacy on strengthening the social protection systems in Nepal through evidence generation for informed policy making. Four analytical reports have been produced which aims to assess the accountability mechanism and beneficiaries’ viewpoints on the registration processes of social security assistance (SSA) programme.
- Deep-dive into Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) through the lens of disability and social security allowance (SSA) has also been carried out — the findings and recommendations will be disseminated among policy makers and other stakeholders.
- UNICEF has been working closely with the government of Nepal and other development partners such as Save the Children for quality and rapid expansion of the national universal child grant programme in 11 new districts. The recent 33 per cent increase in the benefit size is expected to ameliorate the economic stress of the households.

**C4D, Community Engagement and AAP**

- More than 7.2 million people were reached with COVID-19 preventive and vaccination contents through megaphone announcement, radio programme and community volunteers. Altogether, 10,750 people engaged in COVID-19 and vaccination content sharing through door to door visits and megaphone announcement in 79 municipalities.
- 32,000 questions and concerns related to COVID-19 testing requirement, vaccine availability and its priority groups, misinformation were responded through community volunteers, radio, and television programme and MoHP media brief.
- UNICEF also worked with private sector to promote emergency helpline numbers at more than 18 outlets including in the areas close to border with India reaching 6,000 customers per day and shared information on proper mask usage reaching 1.5 million satellite television customers across Nepal.
- UNICEF-supported Crisis Media Hub at the Ministry of Health developed 36 graphics and videos reaching thousands of people through the Ministry’s Viber group, national television, and radio stations as well as RCCE members.

**Gaps/Challenges**

- As vaccination drives against COVID-19 have paced up, overcrowding in the vaccination sites has been observed as authorities struggle to manage the huge demand.
- Transport of vaccine and commodities to remote area is difficult and costly, and it becomes more challenging as this needs to be done in different phases in accordance with target age groups.
- Adherence of public health safety measures by political leaders and government staff has been a constraint for promotion of practices for general public.
- Systematic community-based screening of children to detect for wasting and psychosocial interventions remains constrained due to restrictions on physical contacts in place due to COVID-19 and limited access to vaccines.
- There are financial constraints in meeting the nutrition, social protection and WASH related needs in the most affected areas.
- Reaching the flood and landslide affected population remains a challenge due to road blockage, limited internet, and phone access in Helambu and Melamchi of Sindupalchowk district.
Pakistan
Nutrition
- A total of 3,065 UNICEF-supported outpatient therapeutic programme (OTP) sites provided nutrition services, around 100,050 children of 6-59 months of age (49,078 boys and 50,972 girls) screened for malnutrition using MUAC at nutrition sites, and a total of 88,682 children suffering from severe acute malnutrition (SAM) (39,602 boys and 49,080 girls) have been admitted for treatment.
- UNICEF ensured a total 233,401 children 6-59 months (115,243 boys and 118,158 girls) received multi-micronutrient supplementation.
- With UNICEF’s support, counselling on infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices in the COVID-19 context through Lady Health Workers and other community-based networks reached 61,363 pregnant and lactating women during this period through community engagement efforts.

Health
- UNICEF is supporting provincial and regional health departments to ensure continuity of essential primary healthcare services including immunization, ante-natal care (ANC), post-natal care (PNC), delivery services, childcare and curative care for adults in 136 targeted health facilities reaching 2.65 million people.
- Measles immunization reached a total of 83,469 children vaccinated against measles in the 136 UNICEF supported health facilities.
- UNICEF has provided basic personal protective equipment (PPE) (gloves, sanitizers and masks) to a total of 16,158 frontline workers during year 2021.
- UNICEF-supported IPC training reached 9,578 frontline health workers in total.
- UNICEF supported the training of 3,496 frontline health workers and community volunteers on COVID-19 and case identification and referral of suspected cases.
- Clinical Management of Children with COVID-19 training was provided to a total of 1,354 paediatricians trained during 2021.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
- UNICEF rehabilitated and installed WASH facilities which included ultraviolet water filters, toilets and handwashing stations in 98 healthcare facilities (HCFs). To date, 422,681 people have gained access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities in these HCFs contributing to reducing the risk of COVID-19 infection among the healthcare workers and the general public especially caregivers and children seeking essential health services.
- UNICEF supported an overall fabrication and installation of 998 handwashing stations placed at strategic points in cities and communities enabling over 2.3 million people thus far to wash hands properly.
- Almost 1.5 million people have been so far supported with hygiene promotion services including COVID-19 prevention and control information.
- UNICEF has supported the training of 3,679 frontline sanitary and health workers on WASH/IPC in HCFs and high-risk communities on WASH/IPC.
- UNICEF reached an overall of 282,256 children (138,305 girls and 143,951 boys) in 472 schools with WASH/IPC services.

Child Protection, GBVIE, and PSEA
- UNICEF and its partners have trained a total of 8,658 social workforce professionals (5,214 women and 3,444 men) in psychosocial support and stigma prevention in all provinces through a package developed by UNICEF.
- A total of 317,457 parents, caregivers, children and individuals received psychosocial support by trained social workforce professionals. This includes 1,447 Individuals (228 girls, 183 boys, 706 women and 330 men) who received specialized counselling sessions in all the provinces.
- Messages on stigma and violence against children have reached a total of 11,006,836.
- The total number of children who received child protection services supported by UNICEF in Sindh and Balochistan has reached 2,906 children (933 girls and 1,973 boys).

Education
- UNICEF contributed to support safe operation of school’s teachers and education officers by training them on safe reopening and operations of schools, taking total teachers and education officers reached to 9,641 (3,552 women).
- 20,547 teachers (9,300 women) and education officers have been trained on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS).
- To support continuity of learning, 530,348 parents have been reached with encouraging messages for enrolment/ attendance of children through SMS and different social media platforms.
- A comprehensive Teacher’s Vaccination Communication strategy has been developed and shared with all provinces.
- Information materials on Continuity of Learning (CoL) and staying safe at school have also been provided to implementing partners in KP with their branding for further dissemination.

C4D, Community Engagement and AAP
- The federal and provincial RCCE teams finalized a strategy and action plan to help reduce infection and virus transmission during the religious week of Eid-ul-Adha.
- Through health alliances and existing polio structures, 74,442 religious leaders were engaged and mobilized to promote a higher risk-perception towards COVID-19 and its hidden dangers.
- Through national and private media channels with messages on COVID-19 prevention and vaccination reached 50.6 million people.
- On social media, Facebook has been the best performing platform for UNICEF Pakistan with 79,133,152 total impressions and 1,254,823 million total engagements.
- 13.34 million at risk people have been reached with COVID-19 preventive messages through social mobilization activities supported by polio health workers.
• The helpline also provided critical information on where the population can get tested and/or get treatment for COVID-19. 1,670,460 calls have been responded to so far.

Emergency Preparedness, Response and Disaster Risk Reduction
• UNICEF provided technical and financial support to National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and cofacilitated two Emergency Preparedness and Response workshops held in Lahore and Karachi (Sindh on 6th-7th July & Punjab on 14th-15th July). 84 government frontline government officials from most at-risk districts benefited from the training.
• UNICEF is also maintaining minimum contingency stock for 150,000 people and long-term agreements for procurement and services. As of July, UNICEF has nineteen stand-by Contingency Programme Cooperation Agreement (PCA) available.

Gaps/Challenges
• In 2021, with the revised appeal UNICEF Pakistan needs US$ 61.4 million to support the in-country humanitarian response. US$ 12.21 million (20 per cent) have been received to provide humanitarian support in the country. Additional funds have been received from USAID to support the rollout and response of COVID-19 vaccine. A critical funding gap of US$ 49.19 million (80 per cent) persists and impede the provision of essential emergency services throughout the country especially for preparedness, nutrition and C4D response.
• The issue on the quality of Ready to Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) is not yet resolved and all efforts are made by UNICEF nutrition and supply team to manage this matter at the earliest to avoid disruption in the continuation of nutrition services.
• Despite progress on the vaccine coverage in country with fully vaccinated at 5 per cent and 93 per cent of the available vaccines utilized, vaccination rate is still very low in comparison to the eligible population. Expedited vaccine availability needs to be advocated for and looked into.
• For WASH due to limited resources, UNICEF focused mainly on handwashing in public places, schools and HCFs. However, providing handwashing stations and soap to vulnerable households could have had a significant positive impact.

Sri Lanka
Nutrition
• During the first week of August, which is the Breastfeeding Week for 2021, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health (MoH) to develop and print a leaflet (125,000 quantities) with key messages on continuing breastfeeding during COVID-19 in both national languages. Many postnatal mothers miss receiving support through domiciliary visits by the Public Health Midwife due to ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the aim of this leaflet is to fill that gap and educate mothers, partners, and supporters to continue/support breastfeeding.
• UNICEF supported the Family Health Bureau in printing the Lactation Management Trainer manual for the use of master trainers in the COVID-19 dedicated maternal newborn hospitals, to ensure continued capacity building of healthcare workers to maintain breastfeeding support at the time of birth and until breastfeeding is established in the postnatal wards and Special Care baby units. One hundred trainers will be provided with material and refresher training would be conducted virtually, so that they can train their staff internally.

Health
• UNICEF continued to strengthen the Cold Chain Management system through procurement of more equipment, including 750 vaccine careers, 100 ice lines refrigerators and 300 cold boxes. This timely supply contributed to a rapid rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination campaign in the country.
• UNICEF’s support to the MoH in revising and strengthening the modules in the Effective Vaccine Management Assessment (EVMA) continued during July 2021, following the inputs received from the targeted EVMA conducted in April. This is in preparation for the National EVMA planned to be conducted in September 2021.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
• As a follow-up for the capacity building programme conducted in the first half of 2021, UNICEF procured and delivered waste care management equipment and supplies to four base hospitals treating COVID-19 patients.
• A calendar with COVID-19 prevention tips, importance facts on vaccination, information and contacts details of government services for COVID-19 was developed and distributed among 12,500 people living in high-risk areas in urban and estates.
• A foldable card with pictorial messages to prevent COVID-19 infection during working hours was developed targeting 20,000 waste handling workers in 64 local authorities.

Child Protection, GBVIE, and PSEA
• UNICEF and partners supported 52 children in lockdown areas to ease psychosocial impact of lockdown by distributing family recreational kits and reunified 7 institutionalized children with their families. These children are supported with an established monitoring mechanism through the social service workforce at village level.
• District psychosocial forums in Jaffna and Batticaloa districts were strengthened, and 32 children were supported through psychosocial first aid by trained Child Protection officers.
• Through continued advocacy by UNICEF and partners for proper alternative care arrangements for separated children due to COVID-19 response, the health authorities and Probation Department agreed to work together at village level to ensure proper care for the children who are being separated from infected and/or quarantined parents.

Education
• UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education’s Home-Based Learning programme by developing the teacher and parental guidelines to support the implementation. Due to the teacher strike however it is yet to be launched.
• In Uva and Central provinces, UNICEF supported in developing communication messages on avoiding stigmatization of children who have contracted COVID-19 once they return to school. Video clips have been developed and uploaded onto education websites and WhatsApp groups in the provinces.
UNICEF, Ministry of Education and Provincial Departments of Education (PDE) in North and Eastern provinces developed a package of psychosocial support tools and material for teachers to address the needs of children and teachers themselves which was validated in these provinces in July 2021. UNICEF also discussed with the PDEs on training for teachers using virtual means as originally face-to-face training was planned. In addition to Northern and Eastern provinces, with support from the Ministry of Education, the psychosocial guidelines for teachers have been validated among selected secondary teachers in Western and Southern provinces.

Social Protection and Cash Transfers

- UNICEF began collecting data for a fifth round of the household surveys to assess the social and economic impacts of COVID-19. The nationally representative survey will assess the entrenched vulnerabilities created by COVID-19 a year into the crisis and, unlike the four surveys in 2020, will include purposive samples from some of the districts with the highest cases per day.
- UNICEF conducted stakeholder consultations for a Public Expenditure Review on Social Protection and to document the effectiveness of the government’s social protection response to COVID-19. These papers are being developed in partnership with the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG). The evidence will be used to advocate for lifecycle based social protection and the expansion of the existing universal Voucher for Pregnant and Lactating Mothers, with the highest-level government officials.
- UNICEF partnered with a community-based organisation to initiate a public dialogue on social protection by creating awareness, hosting stakeholder discussions with local leaders, and facilitating avenues for public engagement in policy formulation. Through these discussions with local leaders UNICEF will also get a better sense of the needs of each community at this time.

C4D, Community Engagement and AAP

- With the increasing risk of COVID-19 spread during the third wave, from May until mid-July UNICEF and the Health Promotion Bureau (HPB) of the MoH conducted various communication campaigns to educate people on prevention behaviors of COVID-19, which reached over 15 million people via national TV and 5.3 million people through social media, including 1.6 million engagements.
- UNICEF also commenced the data analysis of the first round of Knowledge, Attitude and Practices (KAP) research and completed the development of creative strategy for the campaign on COVID-19 Appropriate Behaviour (CAB).
- UNICEF disseminated risk communication messages and promoted protective practices through the public address systems and mobile units with LED screens reaching 1.5 million most vulnerable populations in high risk areas.
- U-Report poll conducted engaging 2,260 young people on COVID-19 Vaccines. Opinions shared by young people were shared with the HPB and MoH and a Q&A session was organized with the HPB to provide answers for the questions raised through the poll.

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

Afghanistan

Nourishing a community

A nutrition counsellor discusses the challenges of ensuring patients have a healthy diet

The day starts early for Tayebe, as a nutrition counsellor working in a health clinic in the northern Afghanistan, supported by an European Union grant.

Tayebe prepares herself a nourishing breakfast of eggs and glass of milk and breastfeeds her 7-month-old baby, Elina. Recently, Tayebe has also begun to introduce foods, such as soft fruit and bread dipped in meat gravy, into Elina’s diet – guidance that she shares with the mothers she counsels at the clinic.

In Mazar, there are often unpredictable electricity outages and water shortages which can make leaving for work on time difficult for Tayebe.

“It's always a rush to get out of the house and remember everything I need for Elina during the day.”

Holding Elina tight, Tayebe leaves the house at 07:30 and walks 4kms to work. It takes her around 25 minutes to get to the clinic. With temperatures as high as 45C, it can be a tiring journey. As she walks, her mind often wanders. She worries about the deteriorating security in her country, the drought, and how her patients, mostly impoverished mothers, will cope as nutritious food becomes more difficult to find.

Having completed 14 years of education, Tayebe has been a nutrition counsellor for the last 6 years. She loves her job and is motivated by the desire to help mothers and children in the community in which she grew up to be healthier and happier.
Sometimes patients ask her questions she can’t answer which frustrates her. But she’s ambitious. She plans to study medicine and become a Doctor.

The clinic is open from 08:00 to 16:00. It is a busy facility and Tayebe is only able to spend around 10-15 minutes with each mother. Depending on their level of literacy, she counsels them using charts and photographs to show them what to eat, how to cook and how to breastfeed.

“As a working mother, I know I’m unusual in Afghanistan, and I’m very lucky to have such supportive colleagues. Elina gets so much attention and love every day. There’s always someone to cuddle her. I make sure to have moments dedicated to Elina throughout the day to keep her stimulated. Being able to take a break and bring her to the garden is so important. In the clinic, the air is heavy with sickness and grief; out here, it’s clean and fresh and healthy. It calms us both down and I feel rejuvenated.”

“My patients are often poor women. When I ask them about healthy diets, they get embarrassed and shift their feet nervously. Then, we talk about their situations at home and I change from being a nutrition counsellor to a mental health counsellor. I have to be resourceful and think about what works for them in their circumstances. They can’t afford meat. So, for example, I tell them, ‘maybe your neighbour has a cow, and you could ask for a cup of milk; if he has hens, ask for an egg; if you have grains, you can cook them with vegetables for a nutritious meal.’

"Being a working mother is a balance. Having Elina with me in the clinic can be difficult because I have a lot of mothers to counsel; I also have a lot of responsibilities at home so it’s tiring. But I try to care for Elina first, and feed her and give her time, while doing all I can for the patients who come to see me. I know that my job is important and already this role has proved so worthwhile. We can see the impact of the counseling on our nutrition charts. My greatest joy is when I see what I say making a difference. With more time, we will have even more impact."

“The best thing about my job is finding a mother who doesn’t know about healthy diets; often her child will be malnourished. Then, hand in hand, we go through the process of nourishing the child and educating the mother. The mother listens and begins to use ingredients differently to cook better food, and then, slowly, slowly, we see the child gain weight and become more energized. It’s not easy because the people are poor and don’t have much money to buy nutritious food but I tell them that with some small changes they can, for example, cook beans with a vegetable for a healthy meal.”

Nepal

A focus on young minds amidst disaster

_In central Nepal, children affected by recent floods and landslides receive mental health support from clinical psychologists mobilized as part of a UNICEF-led initiative_

Sindupalchowk, Nepal: The arrival of the monsoon in mid-June this year was marked by days of heavy, incessant rainfall in many parts of the country. Among these was Sindupalchowk District in central Nepal, which experienced flash floods and landslides that led to devastating losses of life and property.

Responding to a request from the Melamchi Municipality authorities to help address psychological issues among children and young due to this traumatic event, a mental health session was recently conducted in the village of Danwar, one of the areas hit hardest by the disaster. Part of the UNICEF-initiated child and adolescent mental health (CAMH) programme that was started in 2020 in collaboration with the Kanti Children’s Hospital/CWIN Nepal, the session connected over 40 local children with experts in the field of child psychiatry and psychology.

“Children don’t have a very advanced capacity to process trauma,” says Ram Pukar Sah, one of the clinical psychologists who facilitated the session. “That’s why disasters can have such a huge impact on their mental health, because it makes them feel like nothing is in their control.”

That combination of “helplessness and hopelessness”, already set in motion to an extent by the COVID-19 pandemic in recent times, means that children could easily be suffering a great deal of stress and anxiety without us realizing it, according to Ram Pukar.

“Because they are young, we tend to assume children don’t understand or feel too much,” Ram Pukar says. “But they are constantly internalizing things they see and hear, and deeply affected by what is happening around them.”

Heled on the premises of a local school in Danwar, the session started with getting the children and young people to be comfortable with the facilitators, so that the latter could take better stock of their states of mind. Many seemed initially scared and closed off, but as time went on and following their participating in different relaxation exercises designed to calm them, they seemed more willing to open up.

Through the discussions, facilitators discovered that many of the children were having trouble sleeping, suffering nightmares and sleep paralysis, as well as anxiety-related symptoms such as sweating, restlessness, loss of appetite, among others. “Several of the
children talked about how it felt to learn that their school had collapsed in a landslide," Ram Pukar says. "And there were some who had directly witnessed their homes being swept away, which is terrifying in so many ways for a child."

Aside from helping the children vent their emotions related to recent events, the session also included activities designed to teach them the differences between a “good touch” and a “bad touch”, in an effort to help them better identify instances of abuse.

Ram Pukar says there was a clear change in the participants' moods and bearings by the end of the day. "While they had seemed awkward and shy at first, they were actively taking part later on," he says.

"It really moved us to see smiles on faces where they hadn't been before."

The participants were also among 120 other disaster-affected children from the village who were provided hygiene kits by the team with UNICEF support – containing basic sanitation and cleanliness supplies, as well as some recreational materials like drawing books, color pencils and a toy.

Following the session, the CAMH team met with local psychosocial counsellors in the area – associated with TPO Nepal and Tarangini. Following the meeting, the counsellors were assigned to follow up with the children who had attended the session and linked to the Kanti Children’s Hospital for referral, tele-counselling and other support services in case any psychological or mental health issues are identified. Plans were also made to conduct similar sessions in other villages in the municipality.

"People here have already lost so much during the pandemic, and natural disasters have only worsened things – they are going through a lot of pain and stress," says Bhagwati Nepal, Deputy Chief of the Melamchi Municipality. "It would be great to conduct such mental health sessions regularly for different groups – children as well as parents."

A variety of interventions have been taken forward through the CAMH programme – including training for psychosocial counsellors around the country, mental health sessions for teachers, nurses/frontline health workers and caregivers of children, as well as sessions designed for children themselves. In the span of just nine months, the programme has reached more than 24,000 parents, teachers and caregivers; more than 2200 nurses and frontline health workers and more than 26,000 children and adolescents.

Regional Funding Overview & Partnerships

At the end of July, UNICEF funding needs are a total of US$579.3 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 cross broader need in South Asia as well as 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 51 per cent, amounting to more than US$293 million at the end of July.

Funding Status

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<td>48,124,596</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>25,530,000</td>
<td>3,491,405</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>61,406,942</td>
<td>1,376,360</td>
<td>3,756,731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asia Region (incl Bhutan, Maldives, Sri Lanka)</td>
<td>18,447,360</td>
<td>1,796,965</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>579,312,078</strong></td>
<td><strong>119,465,385</strong></td>
<td><strong>75,199,596</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Who to contact for further information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who to contact</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Telephone number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George Laryea-Adjei</td>
<td><a href="mailto:glaryeaadjei@unicef.org">glaryeaadjei@unicef.org</a></td>
<td>+977 985 1020913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Director</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Office for South Asia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Carmen van Heese
Regional Adviser Emergency
Regional Office for South Asia
Tel: +977 980 1030064
Email: cvanheese@unicef.org

Gunter Boussey
Regional Adviser Health OiC
Regional Office for South Asia
Tel: +977 980 2308584
Email: gboussey@unicef.org

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2 Afghanistan HAC is in the process of being revised and the budget is expected to increase to approx. US$192 million.