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Reporting Period: July to September 2021

Highlights

Since the beginning of the pandemic, there has been a total of 35,514 confirmed COVID-19 cases, including 2,999 cases among 0-19 years old, 764 deaths, 33,195 recoveries and 966 active cases (as of September 20). UNICEF continues to support the Government in its multisector response to COVID-19, co-leading the Prevention and Control/WASH and Risk Communication and Community Engagement pillars.

Three mass vaccination campaigns have been supported to increase coverage to date. As a result, to date, 556,073 people (>18 years) have been fully vaccinated, representing 21% of the target population (2,690,855). Mauritania ranks number 8 out of 52 countries on the African continent and is ranked first in the West African sub-region.

A total of 21 of the 55 districts are experiencing a nutritional emergency with a global acute malnutrition rate above 15% and/or a SAM rate above 2%.

Mauritania

COVID-19 Situation Report No. 04



Situation in Numbers



35,514 COVID-19 confirmed cases
33,195 COVID-19 recoveries
764 deaths (March 2020- September 20, 2021)



556,073 people have been fully vaccinated

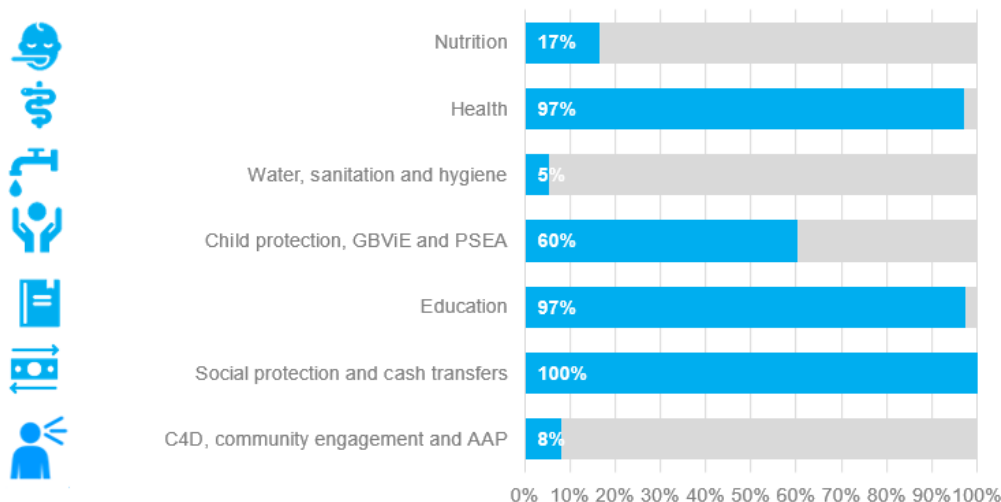


740,000 Children in need.

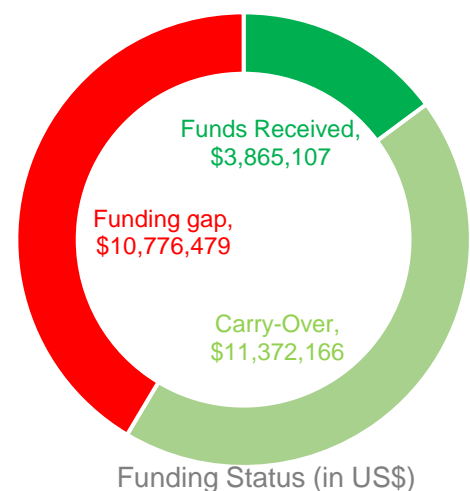


10.8 M US\$ required gap

UNICEF's Response and Funding Status



Needs US\$ 17,7 million



*The funding available includes the carry-over and funds received in the current year. The funding for education is the result of a large carry-over from previous years.



Child in medical consultation © UNICEF Mauritania 2021/Pouget

Funding Overview and Partnerships

In 2021, HAC is currently funded at 39% for interventions relating to nutrition, health, WASH, education, child protection, communication and social protection. There is a great need for sustaining efforts along the peace-humanitarian-developmental nexus. UNICEF Mauritania wishes to express its heartfelt gratitude to all public and private sector donors.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

Since January 2021, Mauritania has recorded 21,150 confirmed cases, 19,785 cured cases (with some cases being carried over from 2020) and 402 deaths. With the arrival of COVID-19's third wave in late June 2021, a new set of restrictions have been reinstated and later eased in mid-September. Regarding COVID-19 vaccination, Mauritania is pursuing its strategy and prioritizing those at risk and vulnerable to the infection. Thanks to the communication efforts, the population's hesitation has been overcome gradually, contributing to the success of national mass vaccination campaigns. A polio outbreak has called for increased surveillance and the development of national campaign which will be held in the last quarter of the year. If the first rains were recorded later this year, levels of biomass are generally good. However, some parts of Gorgol and Hodh Chargui show a pastureland deficit. The M'Berra camp is currently hosting 67,466 Malian refugees, including 39,300 children as of August 2021. Refugees and host communities needed continued humanitarian assistance to access basic social services.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

Health

As part of the Integrated Community Case Management (ICCM) intervention in the nutritional emergency districts, 5,612 children in the country have already been treated for diseases such as diarrhea, acute respiratory infections (ARI), malaria, and severe acute malnutrition starting January 2021. UNICEF is currently providing technical support to the PMTCT implementation process in the country by building capacity of 30 health providers from 15 health districts (15 midwives and 15 laboratory technicians). Regarding essential newborn care, 500 health facilities (three hospitals, 15 health centers and 300 health posts) are being equipped with newborn resuscitation equipment. The coverage analysis of the national immunization programme for the first six months of 2021 shows that, out of a target population of 76,186 infants, 63,032 infants were vaccinated with Penta 1, of which 62,090 returned for their third dose (81.5% of the target). However, 14,096 infants did not receive their third dose and 942 infants dropped out between the first and third dose of Penta. In regions directly supported by UNICEF (HEC, Assaba, Guidimakha), 19,444 infants received their Penta1 dose and 19,306 received their Penta3 dose, i.e. 79% of the target. In addition, 34,337 children aged 0-11 months were vaccinated against measles in the refugee camp and the host population. Support is currently provided in order to respond to the polio outbreak. UNICEF provided technical, logistical, and financial support to government for the launch of COVID-19 vaccination throughout the country. The country mobilized a total of 1,429,800 vaccine doses: 27,000 AZ and 108,000 J&J doses from UA/AVAT, 856,800 doses from GAVI/COVAX (554,400 AZ and 302,400 J&J), and 438,000 doses from Sinopharm from the government's bilateral cooperation (China and the United Arab Emirates). As of September 14, 556,073 people (over 18 years of age) have been fully vaccinated, representing 21% of the target population (2,690,855): 105,315 have received two doses of AZ, 83,883 of Sinopharm and 366,875 of J&J.

Nutrition

In January, the nutrition technical group estimated the acute malnutrition burden of 2021 at 147,312, including 36,233 SAM cases. Since then, 58,447 (86%) children aged 6-59 years screened for 13,656 SAM cases have been admitted for treatment, representing a 44% of the annual target (30,798) and 38% of the annual burden (36,233). MAS admissions are 60% lower than last year at the same period (1,724 cases in January 2020) although this figure may be underestimated due to underreporting. The IMAM's three key indicators at the national level met SPHERE standards with a cure rate of 14%, a death rate of 0.9%, a default rate of 14.4%, and a non-response rate of 0.6%. After two consecutive years of drought and food insecurity, followed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the nutritional situation remains precarious. An estimated of 30,218 cartons of ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) are needed for the integrated management of acute malnutrition (IMAM). During this semester, more than 18,000 cartons of RUTF were procured by the Ministry of Health from domestic resources for distribution in the last quarter of 2021. To date, a total of 12,974 cartons of RTUF have been distributed throughout the country. As part of wasting prevention, 81,985 primary caregivers of children aged 0-23 months continued to receive infant and young child feeding (IYCF) counselling through facilities



Breastfeeding child © UNICEF Mauritania 2021/Pouget

and community platforms. 61,290 children aged 6 to 23 months received micronutrient powder distribution for home fortification in 8 emergency services (Aioun, Ould Yenge, Selibaby, Khabou, Kaédi, Bababe, Boghe, Kankossa). In addition, in June, through the Ministry of Health's integrated mass campaign, 592,566 (87%) of children aged 6-59 years received vitamin A supplementation and 540,670 (89%) of children aged 12-59 years received deworming tablet. The SMART 2021 nutrition survey carried out in July and August indicated that acute malnutrition continues to be a concern. The GAM rate is 11% and the SAM rate is 1.9% nationally with geographic disparities. 21 of the 55 districts are experiencing a nutritional emergency with a global acute malnutrition rate above 15% and/or a SAM rate above 2%.

WASH

WASH in school and in health centres activities implementation continued during this quarter despite the closure of classes. These activities covered 69 schools (28 in Guidimakha, 10 in Assaba, 16 in Hodh Chargui, and 15 in Dar Naim, Nouakchott) and 36 health centres (11 in Guidimakha, 10 in Assaba and 15 in Hodh Chargui). Facilities benefited from latrines construction and drinking water supplies installation and incineration tanks. These schools cover 19,307 beneficiary students (including 9,430 girls and 9,877 boys) and over 200 teachers in four regions. In partnership with SERV'EAU and Moundi, a total of 320 latrines were built in 45 localities in Hodh Chargui and 1,296 latrines in four communes from Assaba. As part of the response to the third wave of COVID-19, nearly 13,260 people living in localities which declared having ended open defecation benefited from awareness sessions on COVID-19 prevention measures. 6,903 people, including 3,626 women, living in 45 newly declared villages have benefited from sensitization sessions on sanitation and hygiene promotion through the CLTS (Community-led total sanitation approach), conducted in the Bassiknou district. Thirty-six (36) of the forty-five (45) triggered localities have officially ended open defecation. A total of 19,495 people including 10,241 women in 195 villages linked to the Bassiknou and Timbedra districts have been sensitized on hygiene promotion and prevention measures against COVID-19. In addition, six boreholes equipped with solar energy now provide access to drinking water and hygiene facilities for 2,000 of the most vulnerable people in Guidimakha and Assaba where malnutrition is widespread. UNICEF also continues supporting monthly meetings as part of its co-lead role in the Infection Control and Prevention pillar with the co-lead of the DHP (Department of Public Hygiene, Ministry of Health). During supervision and assessment missions related to care and support and infection control and prevention in COVID-19 units in all hospitals in Mauritania, critical situations regarding the access to water and hygiene were identified in the hospitals of Kiffa (Assaba), Kaédi (Gorgol), Tijikja (Tagant) and Rosso (Trarza). Following the diagnosis of WASH problems carried out jointly by UNICEF and Department of public hygiene, the following recommendations were made, among others:



Child searching for water © UNICEF Mauritania 2021/Pouget

- For the hospital in Tijikja: (i) the construction of latrine blocks, (ii) the construction of a self-sufficient and sustainable water supply system and the rehabilitation of the entire existing sanitation system
- For the Kiffa hospital: i) rehabilitation of existing toilets and construction of new latrines outside the buildings to facilitate their maintenance, ii) unblocking of the water tower pipes and blocked distribution pipes, iii) connection of the Kiffa hospital to the new water network.
- At the Kaédi hospital, construction of an incinerator.

To anticipate any flood related emergencies, UNICEF pre-positioned relief supplies at the Ministry of Interior's Civil Protection civil and in Guidimakha, Gorgol, Trarza, Assaba and Hodh Chargui regions. This stock includes a large quantity of bleach (13,650 1-liter bottles) and 10 motorized pumps (90m³/h each). In Bassiknou, the contingency plan for flood risk preparedness in case of heavy rains was updated under the UNICEF co-lead. This exercise contributed in estimating and evaluating the response capacity of humanitarian actors based in Bassiknou.



Girl taking a test © UNICEF Mauritania 2021/Pouget

Education

The COVID-19 pandemic further weakened an already strained education system. The outbreak has also highlighted inequalities in the access to quality learnings and gender disparities and has also exacerbated the digital divide. UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Education, in close collaboration with its implementing partners, in ensuring the continuity of education, but also to promote digital learning. In M'Berra refugee camp, thanks to the synergy among sector actors, 1,500 children (714 boys, 786 girls) were enrolled in 30 pre-primary education centres, 5,405 children (2,613 boys, 2,792 girls) in primary school, and 413 children and adolescents (279 boys, 134 girls) are enrolled in secondary school. A total of 1,675 adolescents, including 933 girls and 742 boys aged 14-18, have benefited from literacy programmes. 600 children aged 10-13, including 326 girls who were out of school, were able to enter school after remedial lesson. Finally, 342 out of school children, including

172 girls, attended remedial lessons, allowing them to reintegrate school. UNICEF provided support for the organisation of two national Malian exams for the refugees in August 2021. For the DEF (Lower secondary school exam), 49 regular candidates including seven girls and 42 boys participated to the session. Among the participants, 37 were considered as free¹ⁱ candidates 11 girls and 26 boys. As for the Baccalaureate (Upper secondary school exam), 28 regularly enrolled students (eight girls and 20 boys) attended the session. 104 candidates (78 boys and 26 girls) who were not registered in schools also sat for the exam.

Child Protection

UNICEF and child protection partners identified 1,578 vulnerable children (860 girls) during the reporting period, including 159 children (88 girls) living in the M'Berra refugee camp. Among them, 1,200 children received assistance, including the psychosocial support to 388 children (277 girls), medical care to 181 children (165 girls) survivors of violence and income generating activities for 74 children and their families. Of these, 100 children (54 girls) were provided with referral services through the Child Helpline. The lack of civil registration continues to be a silent impediment to formal schooling and other social services in the country. During the reporting period alone, 1,209 children, including 625 girls, were identified as being without any birth certificate or civil registration papers in Gorgol, Guidimakha, Hodh Chargui, Nouakchott, and Nema. To date, 184 children, including 99 girls, have already received their birth certificate or civil registration papers, while the remaining cases are still being processed.



Children obtaining their civil registration © UNICEF

To address the root causes of child protection incidents in the country, UNICEF and its implementing partners trained 118 religious and traditional leaders (18 women) on child protection standards and on the consequences of gender-based violence. In M'Berra refugee camp, eight Khotbas (sermons) were carried out following these trainings, reaching over 500 women, men and children with crucial sensitization messages addressing these harmful social practices. To engage with the youth and promote their self-determination, 251 adolescents (221 girls) were trained in the Gorgol and Guidimakha regions. These young change agents are committed to provide their fellow community members tools and information towards ending harmful practices. The Lutheran World Federation announced its withdrawal from Mauritania in December 2021, ending its 48-year presence in the country.

¹ Not enrolled at school

Supply and logistics

The CO is supporting the Ministry of Health in the supply for vaccines and vaccination equipment. In addition, the CO is at the forefront for the vaccination roll out providing financial and technical support through staff and consultants for training and supervision, vaccines deployment to the last mile, and contribution to community engagement, social mobilisation and risk communication. The country received a total of 1,429,800 vaccines doses: 27,000 doses AZ and 108,000 doses J&J from UA/AVAT, 856,800 doses from GAVI/COVAX (554,400 AZ and 302,400 J&J) and 438,000 doses of Sinopharm from the government's bilateral cooperation (China and United Arab Emirates). In addition, the country received four UCC units from UNICEF donation as part of the introduction of Pfizer vaccines doses reception during the last quarter 2021.



Communications for Development (C4D), Community Engagement & Accountability

Through the communication pillar of the COVID-19 pandemic response, UNICEF is contributing to ongoing sensitization and community dialogues at the level of public and new media, local radios, influencers and social workers on the prevention of COVID-19 including the vaccination promotion. Nearly 200 young people, community leaders and women mobilisers received key information during training sessions conducted in Nouakchott and in the country's regions on interpersonal communication involving the themes of child protection, hygiene, and prevention against COVID-19. Community dialogues conducted through these platforms have reached nearly 1,800 people. The involvement of religious leaders as mobilisers during preaching was also an emblematic element in the promotion of barrier actions against COVID-19. Half a dozen imams from the most vulnerable neighbourhoods of Nouakchott (Dar Naim) have been involved in home visits for their communities. To date, nearly 556,073 target persons have been vaccinated with the contribution of the communication interventions. On social media, from July to September, 32 publications (videos and human-interest stories) related to the COVID-19 pandemic were disseminated. As for the publications, they reached approximately 126,919 people with a total of 7,535 interactions (clicks on images, comments, shares, etc.)



Social Protection:



As part of the implementation of the social protection programme in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, 8,895 households received a cash transfer from UNICEF Mauritania, through the Ministry of Social Affairs, Childhood and Family. These beneficiaries were selected in the capital Nouakchott among vulnerable families, with at least one person living with disability. Cash beneficiary households also benefited from messages on nutrition, health, and child protection, in order to enable them to adopt for behaviours change measures.

Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

Although the cluster system is not functioning in Mauritania, UNICEF plays a leading role in coordination mechanisms. UNICEF support the Ministry of Health in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the communication strategy for COVID-19 prevention in schools, health facilities and the community. Technical support is also provided in the facilitation of immunization during campaigns as well as cash transfer activities. Nutrition cluster coordination meetings have been held under the Ministry of Health and UNICEF's leadership in order to discuss and monitor the humanitarian response, including the continuity of essential nutrition services throughout the country. UNICEF is supporting the daily monitoring of IMAM stocks at the operational level and specific actions are being taken to avoid stock-outs at the health facility level. In the area of health, technical and financial support has been provided to the coordination of the Ministry of Health on the issue of vaccination, including COVID-19. There is significant involvement in improving the cold chain for storage and availability of vaccines. UNICEF continues to co-lead the coordination of the PCI and RCCE pillars with the Ministry of Health. These coordination mechanisms involve other UN agencies, national and international NGOs that participate. In regard to the IPC, many activities have taken place, including coordination meetings, monitoring and supervision visits to health facilities to assess and improve IPC standards for patients.

Human Interest Stories and External Media

Publications

<https://www.facebook.com/UNICEFMauritania/videos/161921719348430/>
<https://www.facebook.com/UNICEFMauritania/videos/678488716878136/>
<https://www.facebook.com/UNICEFMauritania/posts/2930696477172443>
<https://www.facebook.com/UNICEFMauritania/posts/2925623354346422>
<https://www.facebook.com/UNICEFMauritania/posts/2922417541333670>
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<https://www.facebook.com/UNICEFMauritania/posts/2918524615056296>
<https://www.facebook.com/UNICEFMauritania/videos/240832511260471/>
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<https://www.facebook.com/UNICEFMauritania/videos/481662653180783/>
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<https://www.facebook.com/UNICEFMauritania/videos/506075837132383/>
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<https://www.facebook.com/UNICEFMauritania/posts/2885863644989060>
<https://www.facebook.com/UNICEFMauritania/posts/2883237548585003>
<https://www.facebook.com/UNICEFMauritania/posts/2879232265652198>
<https://www.facebook.com/UNICEFMauritania/posts/2876158935959531>

Next SitRep: 11 January 2022

UNICEF Mauritania : <https://www.unicef.org/appeals/mauritania>

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Annex A Summary of Programme Results

Indicator	UNICEF Total Target	Total result
Risk Communication and Community Engagement		
Number of people reached by COVID-19 prevention messages	1,800,000	602,873
Number of people engaged on COVID-19 through RCCE actions	300,000	57,307
Number of people sharing their concerns and asking questions/clarifications for available support services to address their needs through established feedback mechanisms	1,000,000	
WASH and IPC		
Number of people reached with critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items) and services	39,150	23,072
Number of healthcare facilities staff workers and community health workers provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	5,000	1,500
Number of healthcare facility staff workers and community health workers trained in Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)	1,666	
Number of children under treatment for SAM with access to safe water, for drinking, cooking and hygiene through household water treatment	11,264	7,077
Number of children with access and using appropriate sanitation and hygiene facilities in health and nutrition centres and schools in refugee camps, host communities and villages with high SAM burdens	26,000	19,307
Health		
Number of healthcare providers trained in detecting, referral and appropriate management of COVID-19 cases among children, pregnant and breastfeeding women	132	
Number of children and women receiving essential healthcare services, including immunization, prenatal and postnatal care, HIV care and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) response care in UNICEF supported facilities[1]	82,017 children; 29 158 women	62,090 children
Number of children aged 0 to 11 months reached with measles vaccination in the refugee camp and host population	82,017	34,337
Number of children aged 0 to 59 months with common childhood diseases reached with appropriate and integrated management of childhood disease services	7,740	5,612 (total since July 2019 =12,557)
Nutrition		
Number of primary caregivers of children aged 0-23 months who received IYCF counselling through facilities and community platforms	91,765	97,774
Number of children 6-59 months admitted for treatment of severe acute malnutrition (SAM)	30,798	13,656
Number of pregnant and lactating women reached with an integrated package of IYCF services	169,480	134,314
Education		
Number of children supported with distance/home-based learning		
Number of school-aged boys and girls (aged 3 to 17 years) in the refugee camp and host community affected by humanitarian situations receiving learning materials	24,350	21,298
Number of out-of-school boys and girls aged 3 to 17 years with access to education	6,400	2,617
Child Protection and GBV		
Number of children without parental or family care provided with appropriate alternative care arrangements	300	147
Number of children, parents and primary caregivers provided with community-based mental health and psychosocial support	7,000	4,168
Number of children and adults that have access to a safe and accessible channel to report sexual exploitation and abuse	1,000	247
Number of survivors of sexual and gender-based violence reached with gender-based violence response interventions	7,000	607
Social Protection		
Number of households reached with humanitarian cash transfers across the sectors	36,662	8,895

Annex B Funding Status

Applied to Sector	Requirements	Available Funds		Funding gap	
		Funds Received	Carry-Over	\$	%
Nutrition	6,050,000	396,995	605,630	5,047,375	83%
Health	950,000	921,642	99	28,259	3%
Water, sanitation and hygiene	2,820,000	67,778	85,667	2,666,556	95%
Child protection, GBViE and PSEA	2,760,000	815,566	847,411	1,097,023	40%
Education	2,800,000	1,593,126	1,134,559	72,315	3%
Social protection and cash transfers	300,000	0	8,601,953	0	0%
C4D, community engagement and AAP	2,031,799	70,000	96,847	1,864,952	92%
Total	17,711,799	3,865,107	11,372,166	10,776,479	61%