Reporting Period: 1 July – 30 September 2021

Highlights
From the period since the ceasefire came into effect on 27 July 2020, there has been a 32 per cent' decrease in the number of security incidents compared with the preceding twelve months. In the first nine months of 2021, there has however been a notable intensification, with the UN (United Nations) recorded 84 civilian casualties in the conflict zone, among them four children were killed, and six children were injured.

In the reporting period, the epidemiological situation significantly deteriorated across the country, with a fourfold increase in the number of cases month-over-month (from 34,000 in August to 130,000 by end of September), prompting the introduction of "yellow-zone" restrictions countrywide. Ukraine’s national vaccination campaign remained slow, with less than six million of its adult population being fully vaccinated as of 30 September. The access to the non-government-controlled areas (NGCA) remained a major challenge for the humanitarian community from the start of the pandemic.

In the reporting period, UNICEF received about USD 10 million, out of a USD 14.7 million appeal. Because of the carry over funding from 2020, the funding gap indicator is zero, however the HIV/AIDS, health and education programmes still remain under-funded.

UNICEF’s Response and Funding Status

UNICEF Appeal 2021
US$ 14.7 million

Funding Status (in US$)

- Carry-forward, $5M
- Funds received, $10M
Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs
The ongoing hostilities continued to affect schools and hospitals along the Line of Conflict (LoC) in eastern Ukraine. During the reporting period, five functional education facilities sustained damages due to military incidents. School #77 in Horlivka was hit on 12 July. On 26 August three schools in various locations sustained damages on the same day (school in Staromykhailivka, school #85 in Donetsk city and school #4 in Zolote-5). School #14 in Yasynuvata was damaged on 21 of September. While the latter attack had minimal impact on the infrastructure (several windows were damaged), children and staff had to take shelter for up to three hours. The attack resulted in the withdrawal of some children from the institutions due to concerns of parents regarding children’s safety and security at school. Over the reporting period, the WASH cluster recorded four incidents affecting the critical water infrastructure.

In September, the Government of Ukraine adjusted the criteria for school operation in the context of COVID-19 and linked it to the vaccination rate among school staff. On September as the school year has started in Ukraine the whole of the country was in the ‘green’ zone and all schools have opened for face-to-face learning. However, by the end of month, as infection rates started to climb up, schools in Donetska NGCA were closed for an extraordinary vacation and a few schools in GCA (Government Controlled Area) shifted to distance learning due to COVID-19. An estimated 140,000 children are now affected by school closures in eastern Ukraine.

A 320 per cent rise in COVID-19 cases was observed in the GCA, while the number of new cases allegedly increased by 47 per cent in NGCA. In NGCA, the situation was particularly concerning, with bed occupancy rates of COVID-19 designated hospitals reported to be rapidly reaching or exceeding their maximum capacity. Due to the worsening epidemiological situation, online learning modalities were reinstated, and attendance in public places was limited to 50 per cent capacity.

Funding Overview and Partnerships
UNICEF has appealed for USD 14.7 million to sustain the provision of life-saving services for children and women in conflict-affected eastern Ukraine, to respond to both the impact of the seven-years armed conflict and COVID-19 pandemic. As of end of September 2021, UNICEF received USD 9.9 million, out of a USD 14.7 million appeal. While the overall funding gap was zero with carry-over funding from 2020, some sectors remained significantly under-funded in the first nine months of the year. Particularly, funding for the HIV programme remains worryingly low, negatively impacting UNICEF’s ability to deliver critical support to children and their families in the NGCAs, who are the most vulnerable population group in the area. Funding for education and health programmes remains low, with over 30 per cent gap.

In 2021, the governments of the United States, Germany, UNICEF’s German National Committee and ECHO have generously contributed new funding to UNICEF Ukraine’s Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) appeal. Additionally, UNICEF received funding from the Global Humanitarian Thematic fund. UNICEF expresses its gratitude to all its donors for the contributions received to date.

Humanitarian Strategy
In 2021, UNICEF’s strategy in eastern Ukraine continues to focus on protecting children and realizing child rights on both sides of the LoC, in GCA and NGCA of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, while responding to the vulnerabilities caused by the dual crises of armed conflict and COVID-19. To respond to the urgent needs of 820,000 people including 510,000 children, UNICEF is investing in strengthening social services, explosive ordinance risk education (EORE) and psychosocial support, as well as health, education and water and sanitation (WASH) services. The capacities of local professionals, authorities and civil society actors continue to be enhanced to strengthen preparedness and accountability to affected children. In line with the commitments to bring more linkages between the humanitarian and development interventions - UNICEF launched new initiatives of building the capacity of local authorities to improve access to quality, inclusive, age- and gender-sensitive social services to increase families’ resilience to protection-related risks and help find durable solutions to local challenges.

2 According to OCHA.
3 This funding appeal is for the humanitarian response programme targeting the conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic in eastern Ukraine only. UNICEF’s COVID-19 funding appeal for the rest of Ukraine is included in its regional COVID-19 appeal for Europe and Central Asia.
UNICEF is working with humanitarian partners to target the most vulnerable. As the lead agency for the WASH cluster and the child protection sub-cluster, UNICEF continues to advocate with parties to the conflict to comply with international humanitarian law and child rights standards. The pandemic has impacted access to all health services, including immunization and primary health care, as well as schools and social care institutions, necessitating specific protective measures for both institutions and professionals. To reduce the transmission of COVID-19, UNICEF continued its risk communication activities to raise awareness and increase knowledge through multimedia channels, targeting care providers, parents/caregivers and the general public. This is particularly critical as handwashing and good hygiene practices are essential to COVID-19 prevention.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

Health

During the reporting period, UNICEF Ukraine conducted a series of online webinars, live interviews, and media interviews, targeting healthcare workers, community leaders, educators, volunteers, and the public on topics related to infection prevention and control, immunization during the pandemic, effective communication with patients on COVID and COVID vaccination, COVID-19 and COVID vaccination of educators. In general, over 40 educational events were conducted, some having reached up to 31,000 people on UNICEF and Ministry of Health social media accounts and YouTube. Due to the pandemic related restrictions, many training events were organized in online modality, allowing a larger engagement of the medical professional. More than 20 zoom webinars were organized, on COVID immunization, including on effective communication, international experience in COVID vaccination, to debunk of myths and misinformation about COVID vaccines some having reached up to 42,400 and 27,300 people on social media accounts.

Within the program for children and families affected by HIV/AIDS which target groups received HIV prevention, care & support, and psychosocial services at their households and in state facilities. 67 new beneficiaries received needed assistance during the reporting period. Additionally, 120 beneficiaries, including two HIV-positive children and 118 babies from HIV-positive mothers were received medical services from multidisciplinary clinical teams.

WASH

In July-September 2021, UNICEF, in partnership with ADRA, continued to support water trucking to the Novotroitske entry/exit checkpoint and to a range of educational, health, and social institutions in 8 localities along the LoC with limited access to safe water. In total, nearly 5,100 residents of the assisted towns and villages and about 2,000 people passing through the checkpoint each month have benefited from water trucking. In addition, bottled water was regularly provided to 249 residents of Staromarivka and Vodiane who are the settlements on the line of contact without other options for access to safe drinking water.

During the reporting period, UNICEF continued to support Voda Donbasu water utility company by procuring water treatment chemicals. In July-September, chlorine was delivered to the Karlivska, Velykoanadolska, Artemivska and Slovianska filtering stations in Voda Donbasu. In September, the Starokrymska filtering station which supplies drinking water to the city of Mariupol was also supported. In total, these filtering stations provide drinking water to nearly 1.4 million people in Donetsk Oblast. In July-September, UNICEF supplied 199 tons of chlorine to Voda Donbasu.

Education

During the reporting period, UNICEF provided hygiene supplies to over 400 education facilities in eastern Ukraine to ensure that schools to comply with the safe school operation guidelines in the times of COVID-19. Ten schools in Donetsk NGCA with a total of 1,800 children enrolled received essential education supplies such as furniture and sports equipment. These interventions ensured uninterrupted access to a safe learning environment for the most in need girls and boys and contributed to restoring a sense of normalcy in their communities.

In August, the Government of Ukraine approved the Safe Schools Declaration (SSD) implementation plan, translating commitment into action, and supporting education in emergencies. Actions envisioned by the plan focus on developing mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on attacks on education; integrating conflict-sensitive approaches into education policies, curricula; enhancing the protection of education facilities in eastern Ukraine and ensuring continuity of education. The round-table discussion was held in Kyiv in September, providing an opportunity to galvanize support for and accelerate the implementation of the commitment to keep every educational facility in eastern Ukraine safe for
children and teachers. The discussion brought together government stakeholders, the humanitarian community and civil society to safeguard the right to education for all.

**Child Protection**

In the reporting period, UNICEF in partnership with national non-government organizations (NGOs) continued providing community-based psychosocial support (PSS) to children, youth and their caregivers residing in conflict-affected settlements alongside the LoC in NGCA. In total, 775 beneficiaries, including 599 children (286 boys, 313 girls) and 176 adults (155F/21M) benefitted from psychosocial support activities. In addition to this, 93 community professionals (88F/5M) were reached with capacity building activities aiming to improve their knowledge on child protection issues, including on positive parenting. Also, UNICEF ensured access to protection and specialized services for eight children (5 boys and 3 girls) with disabilities.

In a government-controlled area (GCA), UNICEF partnered with the international NGOs Terre des Hommes and Polish Humanitarian Action providing access to PSS services for adolescents and youth, including children victims of mine and explosive remnants of war (ERW) and children with disabilities living in the most conflict-affected areas in Donetsk and Luhansks oblasts. The partner conducted PSS group and individual sessions via online and offline modalities in schools located in 0-20km from the contact line. As a result, 940 (453F/487M) beneficiaries received PSS through online and offline group and individual sessions such as You Create, Method Writing and other PSS activities. In addition, 208 (189F/19M) educators, parents and caregivers received skills and knowledge on PSS, inclusion, and positive parenting through online and offline training sessions. More than 850 leaflets and information materials on positive parenting, PSS, violence against children and other protection issues were distributed among participants. Moreover, the partner continues to provide case management to child landmine/ERW victims and their caregivers affected by the conflict. 18 child mine/ERW victims and adult mine survivors, including three new beneficiaries were provided individual case management.

In July-September 2021, UNICEF continued supporting 12 PSS/gender-based violence (GBV) mobile teams in Donetsk and Luhansks regions, GCA in provision of PSS through online consultations by telephone and Skype to 9,757 survivors of GBV/domestic violence (out of which 1,845 calls were from children) and emergency outreach to the population living along the contact line. In the reporting period, the number of cases on all types of violence increased by 16 per cent. Around 54 per cent of all reported cases (adults and children) are related to violence, 18 per cent to COVID-19. More than 5,000 beneficiaries were referred to the local social service departments, Police and/or Free Legal Aid.

UNICEF continued to support National toll-free Child Helpline for online consultations to children, caregivers, and youth. During the reporting period, 1,279 beneficiaries (951 children and 318 adults) received consultations out of which 82 per cent were girls/women, including 35 beneficiaries with disabilities. Out of all calls, 51% were related to violence against children (including bullying cases); 42 per cent were related to mental health and psycho-social wellbeing of children, including increased number of cases of self-harm and suicidal attempts; seven per cent are related to relationships in the family. In the reporting period, the number of cases of physical and sexual violence and self-harm increased by eight per cent. Among all calls, more than 900 were referred to other service providers, namely to Social Protection Centers for family, children and youth, Police and/or Free Legal Aid and Mental Health services.

UNICEF Ukraine in partnership with Global Child Protection Area of Responsibility (CP AoR) carried out a few activities on mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), including MHPSS Capacity Gap Analysis, revision, adaptation, and field testing of MHPSS curriculum for non-specialized services, facilitation of training sessions for 30 representatives of NGOs and government counterparts in eastern Ukraine.

UNICEF continued providing explosive ordnance risk education to children, educators, and caregivers. Jointly with implementing partner, the HALO Trust, 8,638 children, and 5,543 adults have been reached with safe behaviour and practices on mines and ERW during reporting period (July-September). Since schools were closed for the summer vacation, the sessions have been held in children's camps, kindergartens, and on undertaking household visits (more than 6,000 visits) for face-to-face communication with adults and caregivers. More than 5,000 people have been educated during celebration events of Independence Day and City Days in Mariupol, Kramatorsk, Sloviansk. During these events, UNICEF cartoons were broadcasted on big screens, large-format coloring sheets were available for
children to color-in, and other edutainment materials produced by UNICEF were disseminated among visitors. The education corner was divided into different topics on explosive ordinance risk education (EORE) so every visitor could pass through all of them carefully and step by step and could receive edutainment materials from UNICEF by answering correctly to all trainer’s questions. Thus, each beneficiary attended the full EORE session and could check and raise their awareness on safe behaviour and practices.

Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy
UNICEF continued to lead the WASH Cluster and Child Protection Sub-Cluster and co-lead the Education Cluster. UNICEF also actively participated in the Health Cluster and Mine Action working groups. In 2021, regular coordination activities continued, including organization of several coordination meetings to discuss and agree upon a several issues related to the humanitarian response in eastern Ukraine and how to improve coordination mechanism to better respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. UNICEF has also been at the forefronts of delivering vaccines against COVID-19 through the COVAX facility, helping to deliver millions of doses of vaccines to Ukraine starting from March 2021.

In view of the escalation of the rhetoric around the conflict and heightened security situation between January to May, UNICEF initiated a contingency planning exercise, both for its programmes as well as within the clusters. UNICEF’s preparedness and contingency planning tools have been activated to identify possible scenarios and develop a response plan based on the most likely scenario.

Communication
UNICEF Ukraine continued highlighting the impact of the double crisis of conflict and COVID-19 on children in eastern Ukraine and positioning UNICEF as a credible voice speaking on behalf of children living in isolated communities near the ‘contact line’. To date, three human interest stories, two videos and a joint statement on Safe School Declaration progress were produced and released. Including a lead story for Der Spiegel and ARTE highlighting the water crisis facing children in the conflict-affected eastern Ukraine.

A lifetime under fire for seven year old in eastern Ukraine, telling about a young girl that prepares to go to school for the very first time, became a top three performer on local Facebook with 20,000 reactions gained. Both - the video story and narrative - have supported UNICEF Ukraine press statement released together with the Ministry of Education and Sciences and the European Union as a part of the global back to school campaign, and ahead of the Day to Protect Education from Attacks. The press statement, Ukraine galvanizes its commitment to protect schools from attacks in conflict-affected areas, welcomed the efforts of the Ukrainian Government to help keep children learning and protected in conflict-affected areas by signing the Safe School Declaration Action Plan and supporting education in emergencies.

During the World Water Week, UNICEF Ukraine released the narrative and video story Water project pumps new life into villages in eastern Ukraine. This new project, supported by partners, means that thousands now have access to a stable water supply, after years of disruption.

UNICEF Ukraine, retaining the focus on a climate change and children, produced a video story from Mariupol on how Ukrainian schools join global effort to build brighter future for everyone.

UNICEF remains at the forefront of the humanitarian response and continues to reach vulnerable children and families affected by protracted conflict with life-saving services.

Next SitRep: 15 January 2022

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5 Not for all indicators the latest up-to-date cluster data was available at the time of the reporting or no cluster target is available. The remaining cluster data will be reported in the next Situation Report.
6 Some UNICEF results will be reported in the next Situation Report as data were not available or the project activities did not yet start.
7 The Health Cluster indicator for direct health service provision includes both children and adults, whereas the UNICEF HAC indicator is specifically for mothers and children under 5.
8 The Health Cluster indicator for number of people trained on IPC and management of COVID-19 is combined in one indicator, whereas the UNICEF HAC indicator splits them into two.
9 At the time of the reporting, the relevant data was not available from partners. The results will be reported in the next report.
10 The cluster indicator for the number of people trained on IPC and management of COVID-19 is combined in one indicator, whereas the UNICEF HAC indicator splits them into two.
11 The activity has been launched recently with no full data available at the time of reporting. The full data will be reported in the next report.
12 The activity started in June. More results will be included in the next report.
13 UNICEF reached more beneficiaries than planned as a result of the additional COVID-19 related activities on hygiene supplies distribution (mostly e-vouchers).
14 This extensive coverage is because of the support to healthcare facilities.
15 The main reason for overachievement is related to the UNICEF support to a healthcare facility in Novoazovsk, NGCA. Overall, 19,250 people benefitted from improvement of sanitary conditions in this facility.
16 Target is for the whole Protection cluster and all sub-clusters. ChP sub-cluster has targets for the whole Protection cluster, but also for the broader activity and indicator. 
17 There was an increased demand for online counselling services from children and caregivers about the cases of violence, as well as self-harm and suicidal attempt cases.
<table>
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<th>Sector</th>
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<th>Funds available</th>
<th>Funding gap</th>
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<td>Received Current Year, $</td>
<td>Carry-Over, $</td>
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<td>Health</td>
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* As defined in 2021 Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal for Children for a period of 12 months

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18 UNICEF continues to implement this activity and more data will be reported in the next quarterly report.

19 In 2021, UNICEF received significant funding for COVID-19 response and managed to support more schools in the implementation of the Safe School Protocols than initially planned.