Highlights

- The humanitarian situation remained serious in South Asia despite downward trends of the COVID-19 infection in some countries. As of November 10, there have been 38,862,350 confirmed COVID-19 cases of which 38,100,101 cases recovered and 551,561 deaths were reported in the region. Since mid-January, over 91 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been delivered to the region through COVAX Facility.

- UNICEF continues to deliver life-saving and essential services to women, children and most vulnerable populations in South Asia, in close collaboration with government counterparts, including the provision of WASH supplies and psychosocial support for people affected by unseasonal post-monsoon floods in Nepal.

- The humanitarian situation in Afghanistan remains critical with provision of essential services of health, nutrition and education continuing to be severely challenged. This is further compounded by acute food insecurity due to drought.

- Substantial additional funding is required to deliver lifesaving support, response to natural disasters, containment and mitigation measures of COVID-19, as well as potential cross-border shocks. Despite generous donor contributions, a funding gap of over US$188.8 million (30 per cent) remains and hampers UNICEF’s ability to respond.

UNICEF HAC Appeal 2021
US$627.6
(Regional Total)
Regional Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

As of 10 November, a cumulative total of 38,862,350 confirmed COVID cases of which 38,100,101 cases recovered and 551,561 deaths were reported in the region of South Asia¹. In the months of September and October, an overall downward trend of new cases was observed in the region, except for slight hikes in the end of October in countries apart from Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. A large number of deaths per capita was observed in Sri Lanka in the course of these two months; yet it has also demonstrated an overall downward trend throughout the reporting period.

Increase in the incidence of extreme weather events like floods and cyclones have continued to compound the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic creating grave consequences for children in the region. In India, the month of October witnessed unprecedented floods and landslides in the state of Kerala, affecting more than 1.5 million population including 136,500 children under five years and 52,500 pregnant and lactating mothers. In Nepal, the post-monsoon unseasonal heavy rainfall between 17 and 20 October across Sudurpaschim, Karnali, Lumbini and Province One triggered the heaviest floods and landslides in 2021, resulting in loss of lives, and heavy damage in the agriculture sector, especially the ready-to-harvest paddy crops. The heavy torrential rains, amidst final days of the biggest festival Dashain, claimed 121 lives (including 26 children) and injured 44 (8 children).

In Afghanistan, disruptions in services run by the Ministry of Public Health and Ministry of Education are commonplace. Salaries of teachers and health workers have been unpaid for months and life-saving activities are severely crippled. The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Report (Sept 2021-Mar 2022) was released, indicating that more than half the population of Afghanistan, a record 22.8 million people, will face acute food insecurity from November 2021. More than one in two Afghans are estimated to suffer from acute malnutrition by the end of the year. Severe drought conditions continue throughout by affecting 80% of the country with 53% of water points drying up due to drought in Badghis, Faryab and Ghor provinces. Moreover, disease outbreaks are also increasing; outbreaks of measles (24,471 cases), dengue fever (383 cases) and acute watery diarrhea (3,016 cases) and a cluster of malaria cases (136) continue to overwhelm struggling health services.

COVID-19 Vaccination

Over 1.36 billion million doses have been administered across South Asian countries since January 16, 2021 with 25 per cent of the total population fully vaccinated and 48 per cent having received the first dose. Within this figure, more than 91 million doses have been received across all eight South Asian countries through the COVAX facility. Nevertheless, there remains much regional inequity, with Bhutan, Maldives, and Sri Lanka having fully vaccinated over 60 per cent of total population, whereas in Afghanistan only 7.7 per cent of the total population is fully vaccinated.

Across the region, there have been efforts to reach particularly vulnerable groups such as pregnant and lactating women. However, Afghanistan and Nepal remain the only countries not administering COVID-19 vaccines to pregnant women. In the meantime, five countries in the region, namely Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, have commenced vaccination of adolescents of ages between 12 and 17 years.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

Afghanistan

Nutrition

- The provision of nutrition services continues in most service delivery points across the country through the Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS) and non-BPHS humanitarian partners following the funding commitment made by Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and Global Fund.
- UNICEF continues providing nutrition services through integrated mobile health teams for hard-to-reach and IDP communities across 15 provinces.
- UNICEF doubled the number of nutrition extenders in the field from 36 to 72. These newly recruited extenders were trained to provide further support and improve coordination and monitoring of the nutrition programmes at the field level.
- An estimated 30,000 children under-five suffering from severe acute malnutrition (SAM) were provided with lifesaving treatment services through mobile teams and BPHS health facilities across the country. In addition, a total of 150,000 women were provided with nutrition counselling services on maternal and infant and young child feeding.

Health

- In response to the rising measles cases, UNICEF, together with partners, are planning a nationwide integrated measles, polio, and vitamin-A campaign to respond to the measles outbreak.
- UNICEF provided essential and lifesaving supplies via mobile health and nutrition teams providing health services to the most vulnerable populations in hard-to-reach areas. More than 5,000 women and children (including IDPs) benefited from the health care services through 57 mobile teams across 2,000 service delivery points in 14 provinces.
- To address the immediate health needs and sustain the ‘Sehatmandi project’, UNICEF is partnering with WHO under the CERF project to maintain the provision of health services for the coming three months. Through this partnership, UNICEF will support more than 1,000 health facilities in 15 provinces that will provide essential health services to an estimated 12 million people, mostly women and children.
- Since the first reported cases of Acute Water Diarrhoea (AWD) on Sept 12th in Kabul, 3,016 cases have been reported across Kabul, Kapisa, Zabul, Laghman and Kandahar provinces. The majority of cases are reported in Kabul city (74%) with children under five accounting for 10.4% of the caseload. An integrated response plan has been developed and approved with the de-facto health authorities, and includes WASH, environmental health, social mobilization and community engagement and health activities.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

- 205,973 drought-affected people were provided with access to safe water through life-saving water trucking to 183 communities in Nimroz and Balkh provinces.
- Under the humanitarian WASH interventions, 4,021 people, including school children and teachers in three schools in Herat and Farah provinces, accessed safe drinking water, menstrual hygiene management facilities and handwashing facilities.
- In addition, 16,100 people in Herat, Nangarhar and Nuristan benefited from a hygiene promotion program in which essential WASH supplies, including hygiene kits and soap were distributed.
- During October, UNICEF continued to provide emergency water through water trucking to an estimated 193,000 people in six districts of Balkh province in drought-affected areas. Soap bars were also distributed to the affected people to encourage handwashing to prevent COVID-19.
- With cases of AWD cases increasing from mid-September, 2,550 kg of chlorine powder was distributed to the urban water supply authority in Kabul for mass chlorination of water in 11 hotspot locations of Kabul city benefiting an estimated 77,000 people. UNICEF provided over one million aquatabs to vulnerable people in AWD hotspot areas for the purpose of water treatment at the household level.

Child Protection, GBVIE, and PSEA

- UNICEF, through its partners and extenders, responded to the immediate and life-saving child protection needs of children and their caregivers affected by conflict and displacement. Together, we reached a total of 51,855 individuals (23,434 boys, 18,559 girls, 6,293 men and 3,569 women). Of this number, 24,900 individuals benefited from mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) through the provision of recreation activities, psychosocial support services and referrals.
- 18,574 individuals (8,485 boys, 5,647 girls, 3,412 men and 1,030 women) were reached through UNICEF and its partners with messages on explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) as a way of preventing injury and death, particularly amongst children.
- A total of 5,755 persons (1,350 boys, 1,765 girls, 1,320 men and 1,320 women) were reached with gender-based violence (GBV) response, prevention, and risk mitigation services across the country.
- To increase downstream capacity on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) among partners and beneficiaries, UNICEF continued to train frontline workers on PSEA. During the reporting period, PSEA training was conducted to 69 individuals (47 men and 22 women) who were drawn from adolescent youth network membership and extenders from Kandahar, Jalalabad, Badghis, Herat and Balkh provinces.

Education

- During the reporting period, UNICEF and partners established 380 new community-based education (CBE) classes throughout the country, bringing the total to 4,190 functional CBEs since August 15th, reaching 115,204 children of which 57% are girls.
- 123,249 school children (43% girls) received school bags with learning kits in public schools.
- The UNICEF supported Girl’s Access to Education program, providing teacher training for female teachers is still on hold as are Accelerated Learning Centres that were previously under District or Provincial authorities.

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2 Afghanistan: Infectious Disease Outbreak Situation Report #12 31 October 2021
3 The EORE intervention is part of scaling up of risk education activities particularly targeting newly accessible areas and IDP camps as the country opens and more people are poised to return to their areas of origin and other previously inaccessible areas.
UNICEF, through its partners, has been able to ensure 5,350 CBEs are running, reaching 142,797 children.

Support has been provided to 627 schools with the Global Partnership for Education funding to ensure safe operations (e.g. through the provision of handwashing facilities and soap) to prevent COVID-19 and promote safe hygiene practices.

Social Protection and Cash Transfers
- UNICEF started registration of more than 1,000 households in Samangan for a new Multi-Purpose Cash response, targeting households with children with disabilities, families with pregnant and lactating women, and female headed households in drought affected areas.
- UNICEF established new partnerships with financial service providers to continue to deliver assistance despite challenging financial conditions.
- As part of the integrated winterization strategy, UNICEF’s cash for winterization assistance will be designed to cover child specific expenditure at the household level, including winter clothing kits and blankets. This value is set at 105 USD per household, reaching 35,000 households with once-off winter assistance.
- In October 2021, UNICEF scaled up registration of households to provide humanitarian cash assistance in Samangan, Kandahar and Kabul. In Kabul, an initial 750 households received a multi-purpose cash assistance combined with child protection case management.
- UNICEF established new partnerships for large scale registration for winterization assistance in Central Region provinces (Logar and Wardak) and Eastern Region (Nuristan).

C4D, Community Engagement and AAP
- A total of 77 community health workers, 50 religious leaders and 161 school management Shura members were oriented on the benefits of the COVID-19 vaccine.
- 66 social mobilizers supported COVID-19 campaigns reaching 28,000 community members to discuss the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination.
- The poll on community needs through U-Report continues with 128,066 people currently participating. The main objectives of the poll are to gain a better understanding of community needs.
- A media campaign launched during the reporting period broadcasting key messages about COVID-19 vaccination and acute watery diarrhea, reaching approximately six million people across the country. 15 Radio programs and five round-table discussions on TV regarding COVID-19 vaccination reached 346,423 people.
- In addition, 150 community engagement sessions were conducted at health posts and communities across three districts in Nangahar province, reaching 3,000 individuals (1,920 males and 1,080 females) with key prevention messages on dengue fever, COVID-19 and AWD.

Gender and Adolescent Development and Participation
- 25 women and girls received life skills sessions in Bagrami Safe space in Kabul accompanied by psychosocial support and life-saving information on available basic services.
- 28 multi-purpose adolescent groups and five adolescent and youth networks were established. Through these adolescent platforms, 280 adolescent girls and 320 adolescent boys in Herat city, Zenda Jan, Injil and Karokh districts of Herat province were reached with awareness on education, GBV and child marriage preventions and various life skills education.
- A total of 3,100 participants (1,389 male, 1,711 females out of which 1,876 were adolescent girls and boys) including influential community elders, community members and local authorities were reached with awareness and information GBV prevention and community leaders’ role on protection of women and girls.
- 80 members of community men’s networks were orientated on their important role as change agents for the promotion of gender equality and GBV risk mitigation.
- Through mentoring sessions, 160 out-of-school adolescent girls were reached with key messages aimed at preventing child marriage including the promotion and value of education as well as GBV prevention.
- A total of 13 women and girls’ friendly spaces are fully functional in three provinces. Over 263 women and young girls were reached with psychosocial support sessions.

NFI
- UNICEF is planning to reach through the partners around 46,000 households in Kunduz province with nonfood items such as blankets and winter cloth kit. The aim is to support the families during the harsh winter of Afghanistan.

Cluster Coordination:
- In September, the Nutrition Cluster, in close coordination with government and partners, conducted series of meetings on development of Humanitarian Need Overview and Response Plan (HNO/HRP) 2022.
- UNICEF-led clusters continued to engage in the development of the inter-agency planning documents. A one-day workshop was held on October 11th to discuss targeting, prioritization, and planning figures, including calculations of the people in need.
- The WASH Cluster partners have been able to gain verbal agreement from the de facto authorities in most locations to allow female staff to work at the office and on the ground to continue to provide life-saving services.
- Orientations were provided to all clusters on the Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring (CCPM), in readiness for the annual CCPM survey to be conducted in November.

Gaps/Challenges
- Female humanitarian staff are still not able to return to offices in many locations across the country, which is having a significant impact on humanitarian work. While some districts/communities report female staff in the offices, the figures and evidence vary widely. There is no top-level call for all women to return to humanitarian work.
- All cluster partners continue to experience challenges with liquidity, affecting salary and contractor payments. Challenges remain across the country with varied permissions on women’s right to work, across and within provinces as well as across
clusters. This directly impacts education and child protection services and while some programming continues, there is a need to engage with authorities at all levels across the clusters to ensure harmonization.

**Bangladesh**

**Nutrition**
- By the end of October 2021, a total of 9,527 children (5,388 girls) with Sever Acute Malnutrition (SAM) were admitted for treatment. In Cox's Bazar, in Rohingya refugee camps, UNICEF-supported 27 integrated nutrition facilities admitted 5,827 children 6 to 59 months (63 per cent female including 1.6 per cent with disabilities) for SAM treatment. House-to-house approach for Vitamin A supplementation and Deworming campaign reached 146,976 children 6-59 months (72,702 girls) and 100,601 children 24-59months (49,295 girls) in all camps respectively.

**Health**
- By the end of October 2021, a total of 29 million people (13.5 million female) received the second dose of COVID-19 vaccine. UNICEF supported the Government of Bangladesh to increase ultra-low temperature cold storage capacity. A total of 26 ultra-low temperature freezers have been procured and installed allowing to store 9.6 million doses of COVID-19 Pfizer vaccine in September and October 2021.
- UNICEF is supporting the establishment of the Vacuum Insulated Evaporator for medical oxygen in 30 facilities. During the reporting period, UNICEF handed over 8 Liquid Medical Oxygen facilities to project director and 13 more facilities are ready for hand over. 29 facilities completed all renovation and installation work.

**Water, Sanitation and Hygiene**
- In the reporting period, UNICEF supported the Department of Public Health Engineering and Water Supply and Sewerage Authority to ensure continuity of critical WASH services in 495 sub-districts and selected municipalities, benefitting 764,567 people (48.5 per cent female). The major activities were to support repair, maintenance and disinfection of community managed water points and toilets, installation of hand washing stations.
- In Cox’s Bazar, UNICEF completed the reconstruction of five water networks, 68 tap stands, 260 latrines, 104 bathing space and a Faecal Sludge Management plant in the fire affected camps, reaching 18,700 Rohingya refugees (52 per cent female). In addition, UNICEF and partners responded to 29 cases of Acute Water Diarrhoea in camps and supported reopening of 535 schools in host community through disinfection of WASH infrastructure, water quality monitoring, distribution of jerry cans and installation of hand washing devices, reaching 218,580 students (124,111 girls).

**Child Protection, GBVIE, and PSEA**
- In the reporting period, UNICEF provided services to vulnerable children and women at national and in Cox’s Bazar. A total number of 75,736 (62,881 female) was reached with Gender Based Violence risk mitigation and referral survivor services. Consequently, UNICEF-targeted children and primary caregivers reached 139,521 (58,180 female) with community-based mental health and psychosocial support. UNICEF also provided 2,453 persons with disabilities (2,000 female) with psychosocial services.

**Education**
- Education institutions (except pre-primary) reopened in a phased manner and continued education of 38,311,635 students (19,302,812 girls) nationwide, including 2,280,802 children (1,140,401 girls, including 34,211 with disabilities) who have continued learning remotely using digital media and home-based projects and assignments. In addition, with UNICEF support, 136,214 marginalised children (68,588 girls) have accessed formal or non-formal education through printed learning materials.
- As of October, 1,632 Learning Centres (LCs) (75% of the total for level 2-4) are reopened, allowing onsite learning for 74,218 children (34,410 girls) for four days a week in Rohingya refugee camps. All the remaining LCs will be in operation gradually after ongoing repair and maintenance damaged by heavy rainfall and flood in the last monsoon. Due to COVID-19 restriction, level one/pre-primary children are not yet allowed to attend the LCs physically. However, they are participating in caregiver led home-based learning.

**C4D, Community Engagement and AAP**
- In Cox’s Bazar, UNICEF and partners reached 128,724 people in 45,324 households through Infection Prevention and Control sessions conducted by community volunteers on AWD/Cholera, COVID-19 prevention and vaccination. Furthermore, 6,442 people visited the Information and Feedback Centres in the Rohingya camps and registered 474 complaints, shared 1,332 feedback and 4,636 queries. Most concerns were related to health and non-food items, and immediately referred to the relevant service points.

**Emergency Preparedness, Response and Disaster Risk Reduction**
- In the reporting period, reconstruction of fire and flood affected LCs and WASH facilities has been accelerated after relaxation of COVID-19 restriction by the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commission (RRRC). UNICEF and partners reconstructed 501 LCs, 106 tube-wells, 216 latrines, 104 bathing facilities, 20 water points, and a fecal sludge management plant, benefitting 45,050 children and 34,988 Rohingya refugees (20,186 females, 302 persons with disabilities). Restructuring of camps infrastructures and slow approval process by RRRC remain critical challenges which inordinately hinder rapid reconstruction of UNICEF supported facilities.
- 1,000 (400 female) community volunteers and staff, 400 (50 female) religious leaders and 470 influencers including Camp in Charge, Majhi's and Hafeez were oriented, and deployed to support social mobilization before the Oral Cholera Vaccination (OCV) campaign in 34 camps. A total of 754,172 people (392,503 female) (87 per cent of >1-year population) received the first round of OCV in Teknaf and Ukhiya sub-districts of Cox’s Bazar.
Bhutan

Nutrition

- In September, first ever Micronutrient Symposium was organized by Ministry of Health (MoH) jointly with WHO, WFP and UNICEF where the micronutrient deficiency disorders, and strategic plans were discussed. Presentations held on Multiple Micronutrient supplementation for pregnant/ lactating women and Iodine Nutrition.
- Frist National Nutrition Task Force (NNTF) meeting was also held in September to finalize the TOR for NNTF and discussed about way forward plan for National Nutrition Strategy and Action Plan (2021-2025).

Health

- The Royal Government of Bhutan received the first consignment of 100,000 doses of 250,000 doses of Moderna vaccines on 22 October
- The second round of campaign for children 12-17 years was successfully conducted in 15 districts with the vaccination of 42,898 Children in last week of October 2021.
- Bhutan Cold chain supply system is strengthened through expansion of cold chain capacity at national and regional store and will be expanded in primary health care facilities aby December 2021. The action plan is presented to Director, Public Health, MoH. Cold Chain Capacity Assessment of Health facilities in completed in Haa and Chukha districts.
- Tripartite meeting between WHO, UNICEF and MOH was conducted to support the government with the development of investment case for mental health.
- 320,000 syringes of 0.5ml ordered under CDS funding and the vaccines are expected to arrive by end of November. 45 ice lined refrigerators and 2 ultra-low temperature freezers have arrived in country and ready for handover to MoH. Two biomedical van handed over to MoH to support supply systems.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

- Completed installation of two handwashing stations in public places, out of planned two handwashing station, in Chukha district which is expected to benefit about 1,950 people (150 people at Chukha Dzong and 1,800 people at Gedu).
- Installation of handwashing stations outside with provision of safe water at entrance and provision of safe water within nine primary health centres (PHCs) for hand hygiene, drinking and IPC completed in Chukha district estimated to benefit 175 people daily.

Child Protection, GBVIE, and PSEA

- UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education to develop the “I Support My Friends in School” manual adapted from the “I Support My Friends” resource package, developed globally by UNICEF, Save the Children/MHPSS Collaborative and WHO. Using the manual, 65 school counsellors (22 female) from ten districts were trained to facilitate training for peer helpers in their schools. The training will equip these children and adolescents with the skills to safely support a friend in distress and strengthen positive coping skills that will help themselves and their friends adapt during and after a crisis. The training in the remaining ten districts will be rolled out next year.
- The Bhutan Nuns Foundation with support from UNICEF is organizing a month-long awareness program to educate nuns from all 32 nunneries in Bhutan on the importance of menstrual hygiene management and GBV. 15,344 Sanitary napkins were distributed to all the nunneries which will ensure access to essential sanitary pads during the next 12 months.

Education

- Children of grades VII and VIII in Phuentsholing Thromde’ (high risk area) are back to school from 14th September 2021.
- UNICEF and the Ministry of Education developed 13 animation videos in the national language Dzongkha, and nine audio clips in Dzongkha, two other local dialects (Lhotshamkha-Southern region, Tshangla-Eastern region), and English for dissemination on national media platforms, local cable service providers, and mobile phone-based applications from September 2021. The videos on social media platform alone has been viewed over 2,477,962 and reached 1,097,721 as of Oct. 2021.

Cross Sectoral Issues

- Towards supporting the government’s response to the growing mental health issues in the country, UNICEF is leading (on behalf of the UN (including WHO, UNDP, UNODC, UNFPA), a series of high level consultations aimed at enhancing coordination around this important shadow pandemic issue.

Gaps/Challenges

- Health workers not being allowed to attend face-to-face training workshops impede skills building on quality health and nutrition services during the pandemic.
- Mental health has emerged as an important shadow pandemic issue which needs to be urgently addressed.

India

Nutrition

- During the reporting period, UNICEF maintained its support to the national and state governments advocating for reestablishment of essential nutrition services for children, adolescents, and pregnant women and particularly for children with SAM in facilities in 13 states and in community-based programs in 12 states. As a result, 254,124 children with SAM have been treated through facility and community-based programs from January to August 2021, more than double the number of cases compared to 2020 (116,630).
- In September 2021, Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) in 9 out of 14 states have remained closed but services are delivered through village health, sanitation, and nutrition days and take-home ration are provided to women and children in 14 states. By the end of October, most Nutrition Rehabilitation Centres have restarted across the country.

Health

- By the end of October, India surpassed administration of 1.06 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines. The strategic focus of UNICEF continues to be on supporting health systems and strengthening risk communication to improve COVID Appropriate
UNICEF continued to leverage cadres of frontline workers and government functionaries at various levels to further strengthen infection prevention and control measures including awareness messaging.

An online course on safe school protocol developed by UNICEF, hosted on the National Council for Education Research and Training portal enabled 220,376 educational functionaries to adopt safe school protocols in their respective schools. Around 13 million students were supported to adopt CAB behaviours and safe WASH practices in schools through UNICEF assisted cleanliness fortnight, across all states.

23.6 million people are adopting safe handwashing practices using soap, thanks to UNICEF supported awareness generation programmes across states.

Till date, 62,755 schools from multiple states have implemented safe school protocols. School readiness assessment was done in 37,000 schools in Maharashtra and 140 schools in Chhattisgarh.

During the reporting period, UNICEF delivered 75,000 N95 masks, 12,000 handwash liquid with 8,000 refill packs to high burden health care institutions in priority districts of Madhya Pradesh to ensure practices of safe environment among health care functionaries, mothers and children and care givers in health facilities.

Child Protection, GBVIE, and PSEA

During the reporting period, UNICEF continued to play a vital role assisting departments across states in developing guidelines and standard operating procedures on issues related to child protection in times of COVID-19 pandemic. Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services were rolled out in several states including Bihar (54 counsellors) and Assam (46 Childline functionaries), Uttar Pradesh, 300 professionals (166 females and 134 male) received training on counselling and 5,500 children were provided with MHPSS services in partnership with Lucknow University and partners.

Rajasthan Department of Social Justice and Empowerment with support from UNICEF identified a total of 4,497 children (147 children who lost both parents and 4,350 children who lost a single parent) affected during the second COVID-19 wave and linked them to COVID-19 Relief Package for Children.

In 1,000 villages of the state of Chhattisgarh Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan volunteers generated awareness on Risk Communication and Community Engagement in the context of COVID-19, including sanitization of the community areas.

Education

UNICEF India provided technical support to state government and partners to ensure continuity of learning at home benefiting around 17 million children (51 per cent girls) of the targeted 23.9 million children in 17 states.

UNICEF is providing continuous support in development of digital and non-digital content for improved access and use of learning resource materials for students. UNICEF has also supported in roll out of responsive parenting programmes and learning resource packages of remedial education programmes to mitigate learning loss of children due to extended closure of schools at the state level.

Schools have started reopening in most states especially at the secondary education level, though only 12 states have opened schools at primary level and only 3 states have opened early childhood centres. UNICEF has been continuously engaging and supporting state governments in implementation of safe school protocols including orientation of around 459,439 education functionaries at various levels.

Social Protection and Cash Transfers

UNICEF continued to advocate with national and state governments to inform emergency social assistance measures to emerging vulnerabilities. Across multiple states, UNICEF provides technical support in the design and monitoring of newly launched cash transfers to address acute vulnerabilities of children orphaned during COVID-19 in India. Joining force with over 5,000 protection schemes, UNICEF is helping to evolve a robust and integrated social protection framework for a resilient and inclusive COVID-19 response and recovery across the country.

UNICEF is taking the lead in developing and rolling out advocacy strategies on Climate Change, reopening of schools, and COVID-19 vaccination. These campaigns have benefited more than two million people in Maharashtra.

In Jharkhand, over 6000 migrant workers have been now linked with social protection schemes. More than 38,000 Frontline workers, Panchayati Raj Institutions, Self Help Groups have been oriented on CAB, Vaccination and GBV in four districts in the state of Jharkhand.

C4D, Community Engagement and AAP

27 million people were reached through UNICEF supported multimedia campaigns and IPC (Infection Prevention Control) with the active engagement of CSOs and youth volunteers across the country to adopt CAB, COVID-19 vaccinations, maintain hand hygiene and social distancing and to get tested.

Rajasthan employed faith-based institutions, religious leaders, schoolteachers, community leaders and social influencers to identify, orient, and engage about two million high-risk communities with key CAB messages.

Creative, audience centric content on the reopening of schools and promoting COVID-19 appropriate behavior was the central focus for this reporting period. As a result, about 12 million views of key messages on CAB, COVID-19 vaccination and child rights were achieved. UNICEF leveraged over 200 hours programming on private FM channels, 885 minutes on Doordarshan, 500 articles in newspapers and reached 800 faith leaders, 50 legislators, 450 journalists and 4000 youth.
UNICEF technical assistance for ensuring CAB by Champions of Change (school children) reached 80,000 schools in the state of Bihar through SOPs for safe reopening of schools, posters, and wagon wheel for Safe Thursday Program.

Emergency Preparedness, Response and Disaster Risk Reduction

UNICEF and its development partners continue to engage in flood response across several programme states integrating risk governance with CAB. UNICEF in the state of Gujarat supported the state Inter Agency Group and DDMA in Jamnagar to provide humanitarian assistance to 21 most affected villages in Jamnagar. NFI kits were distributed to 5000 vulnerable families living in shelter post the flood assessment.

1.2 million people in Bihar are adopting improved community preparedness to face floods with minimum loss of life and property. 554 Surakshha Praharis (Community Volunteers) are ensuring that schools in 282 Gram Panchayats in six districts of Bihar are adopting CABs and School Management Committees are supported for safe reopening of schools.

UNICEF in partnership with Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority trained 6000 education ward secretaries at village secretariat in preparation for safe school reopening.

In Odisha, 300 institutions including 150 AWCs and 150 Vaccination centres provided with Hygiene and PPE kits for IPC in three Yaas-cyclone affected districts.

Gaps/Challenges

In 2021, UNICEF supported capacity enhancement of various state governments for delivering adolescent and maternal health services to ensure quality programming across all 23 districts. COVID-19 pandemic and resultant service disruption due to closure of schools & AWCs along with exceptionally low reporting has affected the iron and folic acid supplementation coverage in some states.

Maldives

Nutrition

UNICEF is in collaboration with Health Protection Agency (HPA) to implement key nutrition specific activities in the Social and Behavior Change Communication strategy on first 1000 days of life, with a focus on COVID-19 response and preparedness. As such over 20 health professionals were trained on breastfeeding counselling and Infant Young Child Feeding (IYCF) Practices, which included COVID-19 safe practices. The trained doctors, nurses, and health workers are the front-line workers providing nutrition services to pregnant women and young children in the hospitals and health facilities.

UNICEF Maldives continued to provide technical support to the urban primary health centre to strengthen growth monitoring and IYCF services. During the reporting period, 1873 children (942 males, 931 females) received growth-monitoring services from the centre and a total of 59 children (33 females, 26 males) received nutrition counselling through UNICEF supported technical assistance. A total of 307 children in the ages of 2 to 5 years also received deworming and 536 children received vitamin A supplementation from the centre.

In addition, UNICEF’s technical support through HPA was extended to 12 islands to provide nutrition services to under five years. For the month of September, a total of 1382 children received growth-monitoring services and 209 parents and caregivers received IYCF counselling from the 12 reporting island facilities where the strategy is being piloted.

Health

UNICEF continued to provide technical assistance to the government’s efforts of the COVID-19 vaccination campaign. As of 1st November, a total of 394,633 people have received the first dose and 358,182 people have received the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, covering 86.84 percent of people over 18 years of age with a first dose and 78.53 per cent with two doses.

Public health consultant placed by UNICEF in the urban health centre continued to support safe immunization of children with the routine vaccines. During the reporting period, the centre vaccinated 699 children (338 males and 361 females). The consultant also has been providing technical assistance to monitor and track routine data on pregnant women, including support to implement individual birth preparedness plans for pregnant women and identification of high-risk pregnancies. During the month of September, a total of 123 pregnant women were registered and 443 pregnant women received ANC counselling from a total of 20 reporting facilities in the periphery.

Support has continued to be provided to the national mental health programme in HPA to develop a behavioural change strategy and a mental health communication campaign, through a consultative and evidence-based approach. The campaign will focus on using social and behavioural change strategies to tackle stigma and discrimination and seek to increase awareness on mental health and wellbeing, by re-framing good mental health as beyond the absence of a mental health condition.

UNICEF supported the government to complete effective vaccine management assessment in two sites in the periphery. Furthermore, on-site awareness session was conducted to the public health staff from the two designated sites on how to handle newly installed ice lined refrigerators and deep freezer (weekly and monthly maintenance checks). It also continued to support the procurement of immunization cold chain equipment to Maldives health sector, with funding from the Government of Japan. As such the first tranche of items and equipment worth nearly USD 100,000 were delivered and handed over to Ministry of Health in October 2021.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

A hand hygiene social media campaign was initiated on 15 October to mark the Global Hand Washing Day.

A total of 215 schools are being supported with IPC supplies, reaching a total of 75,000 students.

Child Protection, GBVIE, and PSEA

UNICEF 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 825 sessions have been conducted. 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 related to violence against children. Currently, trainings in 12 different atolls have been conducted for 363 officers.
UNICEF, through its partnership with NGO Advocating the Rights of Children and Thibaa Psychology, reached 1,201 (752 girls and 449 boys) high-school students and 43 parents 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. Currently, 17 legal consultations have been held for seven clients, and online peer support group sessions are being conducted weekly.

**Education**

- Remediation program to address learning loss prompted by COVID-19 is being developed.
- An additional batch of 1,500 teachers are being certified in G-suite for education.
- UNICEF is supporting the National Institute of Education to develop a comprehensive training program on online pedagogy and assessment for teachers.
- UNICEF in partnership with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the NGO ‘Women in Tech’ developed an information package on cyber safety when learning online and a training package for parents on online safety.
- UNICEF supported the MoE, to revise the existing Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan for Education and the School Emergency Operation Procedures to incorporate planning scenarios for pandemics.

**C4D, Community Engagement and AAP**

- UNICEF supported video series including on a child, an expecting mother and an expatriate worker explaining to their audiences on why they got vaccinated to boost coverage; on continuing to be safe from COVID-19 such those on Do’s and Don’ts outdoors; on how to keep a healthy lifestyle during times of COVID-19; and on things to be aware of and focus on COVID-19 patients, developed and disseminated through social media and other public-facing mediums.

**Nepal**

**Nutrition**

- Total of 9,800 (1,888 in September) children aged 6-59 months with SAM have been treated in the 863 Outpatient Therapeutic Centres and 22 Nutrition Rehabilitation Homes (NRH) across the country over the period of January-September 2021, with support of UNICEF.
- In September, 13,578 children aged 6-23 months received multiple micronutrient powder and 21,194 pregnant women received full course of iron and folic acid tablets, while 30,174 caregivers of children under five years old were counselled on breastfeeding and complementary feeding.
- To assess the nutrition situation, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) to conduct standardized monitoring and assessment in relief and transition nutrition survey in Saptari district. Survey’s initial results suggest an alarmingly high rate of child wasting.
- With UNICEF’s technical assistance, MoHP has expanded treatment services to moderately wasted children aged 6-59 months, by now also using the ready-to-use-therapeutic food.

**Health**

- During this reporting period, 17,915 children (8,778 boys and 9,137 girls) under 15 months old were vaccinated against vaccine preventable diseases, while a total of 17,231 women received the first antenatal care (ANC), 15,129 women had four focused ANC and 20,768 women delivered safely in health facilities.
- Over 15 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered by the government as of the end of October in Nepal, and UNICEF provided technical support in effective vaccine management; vaccination campaign including supply management of vaccine and devices.
- UNICEF provided 2,000 TaqPath for PCR test kits and 800 Oxygen concentrators for COVID-19 case management, 556,450 pieces of surgical disposable mask, 300,000 disposable gloves, 9,432 alcohol-based hand sanitisers (500 ml/bottle) and 10,000 face shields.
- UNICEF additionally provided four units of ultra-low temperature freezers (100 liters) for storage of Pfizer vaccine and distribution, to the government.
- With UNICEF procurement support, government received 3,296,000 pieces of auto-disable syringes, 36 units of refrigerators, 16,800 pieces of reconstitution syringes (2ml), 1,175 pieces of safety box and 100,620 doses of Pfizer vaccines and diluent from USA through COVAX facility; and also received 1.02 million doses of VeroCell vaccines with cost sharing from the Asian Development Bank.
- In response to the cholera outbreak in Kapilvastu district, since early October, UNICEF supported with various health interventions on the ground, together with its partners. Additionally, UNICEF supported the information, education and communication materials, community mobilisation, campaign preparation and cold-chain readiness as Nepal is set to administer 252,363 doses of Oral Cholera vaccine in late November 2021, in the affected municipalities of the district.
- UNICEF and partners provided mental health support to 29,449 people (21,627 children and adolescents; 7,810 parents and caregivers; and 12 frontline health workers working in the isolation centres and COVID-19 dedicated hospitals) through trained counsellors and mental health workers.

**Water, Sanitation and Hygiene**

- In September and October, UNICEF reached 26,300 people including migrant returnees, with at least one or more WASH services and supplies (hygiene kits, soap, sanitisers and drinking water) including risk communication messages.
- 17,100 people benefitted from the installation of hand washing stations in various settings such as communities, health care facilities (HCF), isolation centres, schools and points of entry at borders.
- 4,550 people benefitted from provision of sanitation facilities in points of entry, schools and HCFs. In addition, 55 health workers were trained on WASH/IPC in relation to COVID-19. A total of 22 HCFs were supported with WASH facilities.
- As part of Monsoon floods response, UNICEF reached 28,903 people in six districts, including around 15,000 people in October in the three districts that were adversely affected by unseasonal flooding through provision of water purification tablets, standard hygiene kits and bucket sets as per the request of local government.
• As response to the cholera outbreak in Kapilvastu district, UNICEF and partners reached 6,238 households (41,990 people) through several WASH interventions, in addition to supporting local municipalities in various fronts, such as water quality testing and door-to-door hygiene promotion campaign, with WASH Cluster members.

**Child Protection, GBVIE, and PSEA**

- UNICEF and its partners supported 10,993 people (3,992 males and 7,001 females) including those staying in home isolation and vulnerable children and families affected by floods/landslides, with psychosocial support.
- 2,889 people (735 males and 2,154 females) were reached with GBV prevention or response services. Additionally, 219 service providers (61 males and 158 females) were trained on providing survivor sensitive GBV services in Lumbini province.
- UNICEF reached 533 children (220 boys and 313 girls) with protection helplines and emergency intervention services, including appropriate care arrangement and emergency assistance, out of which 91 new cases in the reporting period (39 boys, 52 girls) were referred to different services such as health, security and justice.
- 137 teachers (67 males and 70 females) were trained on mandatory reporting of incidents related to violence against children including GBV, psychosocial support and referrals of students experiencing distress in Dhanusa, Parsa, Mahottari and Rautahat districts.
- 1,619 people (736 males, 883 females) were virtually oriented to identify and respond to unaccompanied, separated and other vulnerable children. In addition, 14 volunteers were oriented on protection monitoring and incident reporting.

**Education**

- In September and October, UNICEF distributed self-learning materials/packs to 61,742 pre-school and primary level children (52 per cent girls) in four provinces, to ensure learning continuity of the children without access to online and media education.
- UNICEF, in coordination with local municipalities, provided early childhood development (ECD) training and parental education to 23 female participants, and distributed 5,877 individual student kits to the adolescent girls from the most marginalized communities enrolled in formal education graduated through Girl’s Access to Education (GATE) programme.
- UNICEF’s distribution of 150 teachers’ kits to community schools benefitted 992 teachers (34 per cent females) and 440 children benefitted through the distribution of ECD kits in NRH and Kheldai Sikdai Kendra.
- UNICEF Nepal continued to support inter-ministerial committee to draft a technical document on how to handle COVID-19 related cases in schools in coordination between health and education stakeholders.

**Social Protection and Cash Transfers**

- In September, on the back of a concerted joint inter-agency advocacy by UNICEF, World Bank, European Union and UKaid/FCDO, the government announced a cash support of USS 85 (NPR 10,000 approximately) to 500,000 vulnerable families. The government’s planned response with inclusion of this cash support, for emergency cash payments through the public social protection schemes, is in progress and will be available only by end of December.
- UNICEF’s “Cash Plus” interventions, that targets the most vulnerable children from Dalit families in highly COVID-19 impacted municipalities, is being implemented in 12 municipalities, benefiting 40,000 people (10,000 children). The Cash Plus approach combines delivery/strengthening/outreach of key social services of WASH, nutrition and child protection to ensure that the impact of cash is maximised.

**C4D, Community Engagement and AAP**

- With schools gradually starting to reopen for in-person classes since mid-September, UNICEF communication efforts focused on the safe reopening of schools, together with the impact of COVID-19 on education as well as learning continuity of children. UNICEF and its partners continue to support in training and orientation on safe reopening of schools. These included social media messages on keeping children safe in schools.
- UNICEF and risk communication and community engagement working group in collaboration with the MoHP launched a national mental health campaign in October to raise awareness on how COVID-19 is impacting the mental health, especially of children and young people. The campaign reached 5.8 million people, gathered 28.2 million impressions and 3.5 million engagements online throughout October on UNICEF Nepal social media platforms.
- During the reporting period, UNICEF reached 8.3 million people, gathered 54.6 million impressions and 8.1 million engagements on social media through content focused on impact of COVID-19 on education, mental health, UNICEF’s response on the ground to floods and cholera outbreaks, as well as messages and contents from the UNICEF-supported Crisis Media Hub at MoHP, on COVID-19 prevention, vaccination and mental health.
- UNICEF in collaboration with the Province Two chief minister’s office and provincial health directorate and other municipalities initiated compulsory mask movements in the public places such as markets, offices, etc and the mask movement complemented with distribution of mask for poor families through establishment of mask bank, door-to-door visits and real time online mask use monitoring using DNA application platforms and reinforcement at strategic location. Real time mask monitoring dashboard was developed and shared with partners to assess the correct use of masks and promotion strategy accordingly.

**Pakistan**

**Nutrition**

- UNICEF supported a total of 2,951 outpatient therapeutic program sites, which provided nutrition services (Balochistan: 185; KP: 126; Punjab: 1,720 and Sindh: 920).
- With UNICEF direct support, around 269,675 children (131,995 boys and 137,680 girls) of 6-59 months of age screened for malnutrition using mid upper arm circumference at nutrition sites (Balochistan: 37,819, KP: 37,664; Punjab: 194,192 and Sindh: data not received).

4 [https://tinyurl.com/MUse0821](https://tinyurl.com/MUse0821)
• A total of 50,026 children suffering from SAM (22,731 boys and 27,295 girls) have been admitted for treatment.
• A total 494,362 children 6-59 months (242,499 boys and 251,863 girls) received multi-micronutrient supplementation.

Health
• UNICEF is supporting provincial and regional health departments to ensure continuity of essential primary health care services including immunization, ANC, Post-Natal Care (PNC), delivery services, childcare and curative care for adults in 136 targeted health facilities reaching 3.61 million people.
• Measles immunization campaign reached a total of 110,595 children vaccinated against measles in the 136 UNICEF-supported health facilities to date.
• UNICEF has provided basic PPEs (gloves, sanitizers and masks) to a total of 18,475 frontline workers in 2021.
• UNICEF-supported IPC training reached 11,910 frontline health workers in total.
• UNICEF supported the training of 5,293 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 1,413 pediatricians trained.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
• To date, more than 500,000 people have gained access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities in 98 Health Care Facilities, contributing towards reducing the risk of COVID-19 infection
• Almost 1.96 million people have been supported with hygiene promotion services including COVID-19 prevention and control information.
• UNICEF supported an overall fabrication and installation of 1,006 handwashing stations placed at strategic points in cities and communities enabling over 2.33 million people thus far to wash hands properly. To date, UNICEF has supported the training of 34,733 frontline sanitary and health workers on WASH/IPC in high-risk communities on WASH/IPC.
• UNICEF reached an overall of 327,180 children (166,861 girls and 160,319 boys) in 615 schools with WASH/IPC services.

Child Protection and GBVIE
• UNICEF and its partners have trained a total of 10,275 social workforce professionals (6,148 women and 4,127 men) in psychosocial support and stigma prevention in all provinces through a package developed by UNICEF.
• A total of 334,149 children, care-givers and other community members (52,037 girls, 51,111 boys, 119,051 women, 111,950 men) received psychosocial support by trained social workforce professionals.
• Messages on stigma and violence against children have reached a total of 12,273,037 people.
• The total number of children who received child protection services supported by UNICEF in Sindh and Balochistan has reached 3,721 children (1,606 girls and 2,115 boys).

Education
• Safe operation of schools is supported through adoption of SOPs in schools with the guidance and support of 10,142 (3,814 women) teachers and education officers who received training in safe reopening and operation of schools across Pakistan.
• To encourage learning activities of students, 565,156 parents have been reached with encouraging messages for enrolment/attendance of children through SMS and different social media platforms.
• In addition, 21,126 teachers (9,394 female) and education officers accessed training on mental health and psychosocial support, across Pakistan.

C4D, Community Engagement and AAP
• With special focus on high-burden districts, and through health alliances and existing polio structures, 89,004 religious leaders have been engaged and mobilized to promote a higher risk-perception towards COVID-19 and its hidden dangers.
• Television and radio remain the primary sources of trusted information on the COVID-19 in Pakistan. Cumulatively since the beginning of the year, more than 58.7 million people were reached through TV, radio and press.
• On social media, Facebook has been the best performing platform for UNICEF Pakistan with 82,573,575 total impressions and 435,491 total engagements.
• 13.6 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. 2,643,934 calls have been responded to so far.

Emergency Preparedness, Response and Disaster Risk Reduction
• Second Parliamentarians Caucus on disaster risks management meeting was held on 28th October 2021 in Islamabad in which 73 participants attended including 3 ministers, 4 senators, 11 members of national assembly, 14 members of provincial assembly, 4 DGs and 11 observers (including UN staff) and the staff of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Earthquake Reconstruction & Rehabilitation Authority and IRC. The toolkit has been designed for the Parliamentarian’s guidance and support.
• NDMA, Federal Directorate of Education in partnership with UNICEF, organized a seminar “Towards a Disaster Resilient Pakistan” on 7th Oct 2021 to mark the National Disaster Day, October 8. A total of 260 fruit trees were planted in five federal schools.
• Contingency stock being prepositioned for 150,000 people through minimum critical stock in the warehouse when cannot be secured through LTAs at required lead time.

Gaps/Challenges
• All the provinces are facing huge stock out of nutrition supplies, which is affecting the continuation of nutrition services in provinces. To address this challenge additional ready to use therapeutic food stock procured worth of 0.8 million by UNICEF.
• Following COVID-19 SOPs for community engagement sessions on stigma, Violence Against Children (VAC) and GBV continue to be a challenge, influenced by complacency, misconceptions, and overall denial of the existence of the COVID-19 by some segments of the population.
• Healthcare waste management remains an area requiring urgent attention from the authorities. UNICEF is therefore engaged with the Ministry of Health to coordinate waste management efforts and mobilize all concerned stakeholders and donors to support the proposed initiatives. Given the lack of resources hindering UNICEF’s capacity to address IPC/WASH needs in emerging high-risk areas, it has focused on hygiene promotion and ensuring functionality of already installed facilities.
• The arrival of the COVID-19 vaccine continues to overshadow the importance of continued adherence to the COVID-19 SOPs and of the use of masks. It is perceived as if vaccines have already ended the pandemic in Pakistan.

Sri Lanka
Nutrition
• UNICEF and the Medical Research Institute of the Ministry of Health assessed the quantity, quality, and gaps in nutrition services received by children living in urban underserved settlements in Sri Lanka. The study revealed that key nutrition services were maintained despite the pandemic with adequate awareness and perception of mothers. However, the quality of services such as targeted Thriposha supplementation, measuring height of children for early identification of wasting, coverage of vitamin A and multiple micronutrients, timely referral to nutrition clinics, age-appropriate counselling to increase exclusive breastfeeding among infants below 6 months and minimum acceptable diet for children aged 6-23 months need much improvement. In addition, early referral of children identified with Severe and Moderate Acute Malnutrition to nutrition clinics and ensuring regular supply of nutrition supplements and therapeutics in the clinics and referral hospitals, too need to improve.
• To ensure continuation of nutrition services, UNICEF procured 189 spring balances for the Family Health Bureau to use in the 189 field Child Welfare Clinics in the growth monitoring program.
• The ongoing Infant and Young Child Feeding formative research was expanded to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic is influencing household food security and infant and young child diets. The initial study findings suggest that many families faced difficulties to meet their nutrient needs due to pandemic’s impact on overall economic situation and food systems in 2020/2021.

Health
• In preparation of the Effective Vaccine Management Assessment (EVMA) in Sri Lanka to be conducted in November 2021, UNICEF introduced the EVMA 2.0 tool to the Managers and Assessors in the Epidemiology Unit of the Ministry of Health and procured 55 Android Tablets for them for online data collection. This ensured the availability of updated equipment and tools to carry out the National EVMA.
• During the third wave of COVID-19 pandemic, there were many emergency admissions of pregnant mothers for delivery. Due to poor socioeconomic situations and challenges posed by the pandemic, some of the pregnant mothers were admitted to the hospitals without the basic necessities. UNICEF supported the Family Health Bureau to provide 200 maternity kits to the neediest pregnant mothers admitting hospitals for childbirth.
• UNICEF supported the Provincial Department of Health Services in Eastern Province in procuring 10 High Flow nasal canulas for the use of High Dependency Units caring for COVID-19 patients in the province.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
• UNICEF developed and distributed COVID-19 prevention key information videos and leaflets among waste handling staff in local authorities and 5,000 vulnerable urban population. In addition, to build local government capacity on urban waste handling while ensuring COVID-19 prevention measures, a training manual on urban waste handling for public health inspectors and waste management staff of local authorities were developed in local languages and distributed.
• A questionnaire for the knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) survey on infection and prevention measures during waste collection were developed to conduct pre and post assessments to measure level of improvement of KAP among waste collection staff in local authorities after relevant trainings.
• Megaphones were purchased for the distribution among 150 Medical Officers of Health areas to disseminate hygiene and vaccination related messages under normal conditions among rural and urban communities and during vaccination at the level of medical officers of health.

Child Protection, GBViE, and PSEA
• UNICEF supported the Probation Departments in Northern, Eastern, Uva and Central provinces to implement deinstitutionalization program as part of the COVID-19 response, during which 86 children were reunified 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, Batticaloa, and Badulla districts were continuously strengthened, and 121 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.
• 67 Child Protection Officers provided refresher training on coordinated child protection support during COVID-19 period and their self-care.
• 37 children were supported through coordinated case management during the reporting period.

Education
• As the schools were partially opened from end of October, UNICEF supported the Provincial Departments of Education (PDE) in four provinces (Uva, Central, East and North) to support Back to School activities, including risk communication, C4D activities to assist safe return of children especially those most marginalized and stigmatized. Upon opening of schools, UNICEF has been also supporting attendance monitoring and implementation of adjusted curriculum for learning recovery in those provinces.
• Simultaneously, UNICEF continued to support the Home-Based Learning (HBL) programme of the Ministry of Education (MoE) by developing the teacher and parental guidelines to support the implementation. UNICEF supported all nine
implemented the efforts of the MoE and promoted.

- UNICEF, MoE and 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. The PDE in the Eastern province has provided a ToT to 60 master trainers (15 Sinhala and 45 Tamil) comprised of Assistant Directors, In-service advisors and senior teachers working in the area of counseling. Similarly, a ToT is being scheduled by the PDE for master trainers in the Northern Province. Furthermore, UNICEF will support the MoE to provide ToTs in the remaining seven provinces to cover nationwide. UNICEF has also mobilized funds to provide copies of the guidelines to approximately 113,000 secondary teachers in schools island wide during December.

- UNICEF agreed with the government (MoE) and Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka (ICTA) to develop and roll-out a nation-wide teacher capacity building programme on online teaching-learning, which includes awareness raising and promotion of online safety through teachers and parents. The TOR was developed jointly with the government and the selection of technical partner is in progress. The activities will be starting from December 2021.

**Social Protection and Cash Transfers**

- UNICEF has continued to work on the Public Expenditure Review on Social Protection and a document on the GoSL’s social protection response to COVID-19, together 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 of GoSL.

- UNICEF held consultations with government, civil society and development partners to assess the situation of children and the role UNICEF can play during the next country programme. Many of these consultations highlighted the impacts of COVID-19 on children, based on the data received from five rounds of household surveys in 2020 and 2021.

- UNICEF met with the Minister of Finance and advocated for the extension of the nutrition voucher for pregnant and lactating mothers from 10 months to until the child’s second birthday. The extension of the voucher was mentioned in the Minister’s budget speech on the 12th of November 2021.

- UNICEF conducted a U-report poll reaching 2,878 U-reporters, planned a social media awareness campaign, and hosted an online webinar on the issue of child poverty and vulnerability in Sri Lanka in lieu of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

**C4D, Community Engagement and AAP**

- A campaign on COVID-19 appropriate behaviours is being implemented on four key TV stations, Radio, Print and Digital media, reaching a cross section of audience in the country. The content, jointly developed by the Health Promotion Bureau/Ministry of Health, was informed by the result of a KAP survey conducted pre-campaign.

- To track myths, rumors and misinformation, UNICEF has supported the development of a digital social listening tool that is in use by the Health Promotion Bureau (HPB).

- UNICEF supported to strengthen HPB’s tech system by deploying two ICT officials for general administration, COVID-19 preparedness and response activities. UNICEF disseminated risk communication messages and promoted protective practices through the public address systems, mobile units and LED screens reaching 1.4 million highly vulnerable populations in high risk areas.

- UNICEF trained 2,371 community leaders on COVID-19 prevention and response measures, how to strengthen community support systems and a group of leaders (400) were connected to mobile messaging group as an established feedback mechanism.

- 372 trained Community Leaders were mobilized by UNICEF to monitor the adherence of new normal guidelines and COVID-19 protective practices in 2,061 community level settings covering all parts of the country.

- UNICEF provided COVID-19 essential hygiene supplies and trained 64 Probation Officers and Child Development Center managers in Western Province on promoting COVID-19 protective practices, behaviours and strengthening the preparedness among children in Child Care Institutions.

- In collaboration with the MoE, UNICEF is currently conducting Back to School Readiness U-Report poll to understand the preparedness and perceptions of children related to going back to school and engaged with 800 young people to collect their opinion.

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

- There had not been proper disaster-induced displacement camp management training in Sri Lanka during the past five years or more. As a result, many grass-root officials entrusted with camp management during natural disasters were not well equipped to provide lifesaving services or support to disaster-affected communities. In addition, humanitarian agencies lacked access to displacement camps due to prevailing COVID-19 pandemic in the country. To address this issue of lack of knowledge of key officials at a time when humanitarians cannot physically deliver services, UNICEF initiated coordination with the Disaster Management Centre (DMC), UNFPA, IOM and Ministry of Health’s Disaster Preparedness and Response Division to develop guidelines on Management of Safety Centres Amidst COVID-19 integrating child and gender protection, mental health and pandemic prevention, within one guideline, for the first time in Sri Lanka. As a result, UNICEF was able to strengthen the disaster management system to commence ensuring child, gender protection and mental health in camp management process. The Guidelines was launched during the International Day for DRR on 13 October 2021.
Human Interest Story

Mobile App helps reduce school dropout in Pakistan’s Sindh province

“One of the main reasons why so many students drop out of public schools is the lack of accountability of teachers and staff,” says Ghulam Fatima Ghaloo, Chief Monitoring Officer (CMO) in Dadu, a district of Sindh, the province of Southeastern Pakistan.

For many parents, sending their children to school makes no sense if no teacher is there to receive them. Teacher absenteeism has long been of concern, with another major issue being the lack of adequate facilities.

Born and raised in the small city of Dadu located on the western bank of River Indus, Ghulam Fatima Ghaloo is acutely aware of the difficulties which children, especially girls, face to get an education in the area. Poverty and cultural norms, which discourage girls from going to school, continue to be major hurdles.

“Most parents simply don’t see any point in sending their daughter to school when she is expected to marry young and become a housewife,” Ghulam Fatima says.

“The lack of basic facilities and the poor quality of education in schools eliminate any slim chance a girl may have had of convincing her parents to send her to school. Why would you send your daughter to study in a school which has neither washroom, nor electricity in the scorching heat of Dadu?” she adds. Ghulam Fatima is one of the few girls in her family who completed high school and went on to obtain a higher education. Ever since she graduated, she has worked to promote girls’ education. After volunteering to promote school enrolment in her community, she started working at Sindh Education and Literacy Department to help reduce the barriers that hinder learning.

She quickly realized that monitoring and improving school environment was a priority, as it encourages parent to enroll children.

It has also become a focus of Sindh Education and Literacy Department’s work under the Sindh Technical Assistance for Development through Enhanced Education Programme (STA DEEP).

With funding from the European Union and technical support from UNICEF, STA DEEP aims to provide the Department with technical assistance to build more responsive education systems that can provide equitable access to quality education for every child in Sindh.

One of the components of the programme is school monitoring, now done through a mobile application which covers more than 40,000 schools and nearly 120,000 teachers across the province. Sindh School Monitoring System indicators include teachers’ and students’ attendance, textbooks availability, weekly lesson plans prepared by teachers, and functionality of school infrastructure -- washrooms, availability of drinking water and electricity, school building condition.

In Dadu District, Ghulam Fatima supervises a team of 17 monitoring assistants who cover more than 2,000 schools. Equipped with motorcycles, they visit educational facilities unannounced and enter data into the mobile application in real time. All data is then transferred to a Dashboard which Monitoring and Evaluation officials can consult in the districts and in the provincial capital of Karachi.

The mobile application was initially developed in 2018 by Sindh Education and Literacy Department but soon stopped working due to technical issues. It has now been restored and upgraded under the STA DEEP programme.

Using a portable biometric device in which teachers must press their thumbs, the mobile app records teachers’ attendance, which has already resulted in a significant drop in absenteeism. Issues in school infrastructure such as a lack of functional washrooms or of access to drinking water can now be brought to the notice of Sindh Education and Literacy Department in real time.

The implementation of the mobile school monitoring application has had its fair share of challenges. Ghulam Fatima and her team faced a lot of resistance from teachers and Teachers’ Unions, as absenteeism and unannounced leaves used to be common. A few teachers have since retired early, while the others have accepted the change.

While the current monitoring system is up and running, efforts are underway to strengthen it further. Sindh Education and Literacy Department is working to develop Geographic Information System (GIS) based monitoring under STA DEEP.

“The majority of students in Sindh are enrolled in government schools that are scattered throughout the province, some in very remote locations,” Shahmir Khan Bhutto, Director General, Monitoring & Evaluation, Sindh Education and Literacy Department, says. “Using technology to improve school monitoring and reinforce the quality of education was logical.”

In Dadu, Ghulam Fatima says that the mobile application has been instrumental to improve equitable access to quality education.
“To fix the issues which schools face, we first need to be able to identify them,” she tells. “The mobile application has helped us remove some of the barriers which children faced to get an education. Some parents have even come forth to thank me. I am proud to be able to bring about positive change through my work.”

Regional Funding Overview & Partnerships
In the region of South Asia, UNICEF funding needs are a total of US$627.6 million to sustain provision of life-saving health and nutrition services, promotion of safe behaviours through mass communication and community engagement including hygiene promotion, promotion of safe return to school and continued alternative learning as well as provision of child protection services to tackle both direct and secondary impacts of COVID-19. It also aims to minimize the impacts of extreme weather events through emergency preparedness measures as well as immediate response. 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 30 per cent, amounting to more than US$188.8 million at the end of October.

Funding Status

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<tr>
<th>HAC Appeal</th>
<th>Requirements ($)</th>
<th>Funds available</th>
<th>Funding gap</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Humanitarian funds received in 2021($)</td>
<td>Other Resources ($)</td>
<td>Carry-over ($)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>191,957,992</td>
<td>129,008,686</td>
<td>32,045,639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>203,618,874</td>
<td>63,063,143</td>
<td>72,425,112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>126,664,902</td>
<td>70,121,093</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>25,530,000</td>
<td>10,123,303</td>
<td>0</td>
</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>4,198,213</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>627,626,070</td>
<td>277,890,798</td>
<td>76,181,843</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Who to contact for further information:

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