The Latin America and Caribbean region faces concurrent crises, compounded by COVID-19, with millions of people in need of assistance. The effects of the pandemic continue to affect millions of children and their families, leaving many of them relying on humanitarian support.

In the 15 countries and territories included in this appeal, UNICEF will support the most vulnerable children, families and communities, affected by the health and socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19. At the regional level, UNICEF will provide technical assistance to country offices, building preparedness capacities at all levels and ensuring linkages between humanitarian and resilience efforts.

UNICEF is requesting US$29.1 million to address COVID-19-related humanitarian needs at the country level (US$21.7 million) and to support overall emergency preparedness and response across the region (US$7.4 million). Priorities include the safe return of children to school, infection prevention and control, and support for the continuity of basic services.

This map does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. The countries in light blue are embedded in this regional appeal. The countries in dark blue have corresponding standalone appeals or are covered under crisis appeals.
HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

Rapid-onset and protracted situations are impacting the well-being of millions of children across Latin America and the Caribbean. In 2021, the region faced concurrent crises, compounded by COVID-19, including the socioeconomic and political situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (over 7 million people in need); the Venezuelan migration crisis (7.2 million people in need); the effects of an earthquake and the economic, social and political crisis affecting Haiti (4.4 million people in need); at least 8.3 million people in need of assistance in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras due to poverty, violence and climate shocks; the persistent violence and other situations leaving 6.7 million people in need in Colombia; and over 20,000 people affected by a volcano eruption in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, among other emergencies.

Between January and September 2021, over 1.9 million people, including some 624,000 children, were affected by mid- and large-scale disasters in 22 countries and territories. Thousands are still struggling to thrive after these disasters hit the region, in addition to the devastation caused by hurricanes Eta and Iota in 2020, in parts of Nicaragua and other countries.

In a region where 169 million children live in areas where at least two climate and environmental shocks overlap, and as the frequency and intensity of climate-related disasters increases, the consequences for children may be disastrous. With at least 4.2 million children facing crisis-levels of food insecurity in Haiti and Central America, and approximately 47 million people in the region living with hunger, the consequences for the nutrition, health and well-being of millions of children are concerning. Poverty, inequality, socio-political turmoil, paired with the long-term effects of the pandemic, have led to internal displacement and cross-border migration throughout the region, exacerbated protection risks including gender-based violence, resulting in humanitarian needs among the most vulnerable, including migrants and indigenous communities.

HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY

The UNICEF Regional Office will provide direct and remote support to country offices to address the increasing number of complex crises affecting children. This support includes technical assistance, quality assurance and oversight to ensure timely and effective humanitarian response in pursuit of the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs), including cross-cutting programming (i.e., on gender, early childhood development, adolescents and disabilities). Emphasis will be placed on leadership and coordination to ensure the CCCs’ roll out. The Regional Office will support country offices with human and financial resources when immediate response is required.

UNICEF will also focus on ensuring solid capacities and resources for emergency preparedness — in compliance with UNICEF’s Minimum Preparedness Standards — to provide effective humanitarian coordination and collaboration with governments and other partners, mobilize surge capacity, supplies and implement cash-based interventions at the onset of an emergency. UNICEF will invest in advocacy; feedback, monitoring and reporting tools for partners and affected populations; evaluation of humanitarian action; sector coordination; and protection of sexual exploitation and abuse, at all levels.

Across countries and sectors, UNICEF will work to ensure linkages between humanitarian action, development programming, climate change adaptation, risk management and resilience, including advocating for child-sensitive climate and environmental policies, promoting youth engagement and the implementation of programmes with a build-forward-better approach, with special focus on migration contexts. Grand Bargain commitments are mainstreamed across UNICEF’s strategies, including on localization, strengthening government and local actors’ capacities; accountability to affected population mechanisms; and ensuring the quality and impact of humanitarian cash transfers. UNICEF will continue supporting the response to residual humanitarian needs in parts of Nicaragua, following 2020 hurricanes Eta and Iota.

STORY FROM THE FIELD

In Paraguay, UNICEF supports training of health and education professionals to help parents and caregivers create sensitive, joyful and stimulating spaces that promote their children’s development, even during COVID-19.

Nahara, who was born prematurely, attends physical therapy on the advice of several doctors who saw possible complications in the child.

“When she first came here, she suffered motor and cognitive delays and had a visual deficit,” explains Dr. Cirila.

Nahara received massage treatment and support to help her move her legs and arms. Along with relaxing music and delicate care, this soon helped her strengthen her muscles and reflexes.

Read more about this story here

At the Nemby District Hospital in Paraguay, Nahara plays with Doctor Cirila, who was trained by UNICEF to facilitate early childhood counselling in times of COVID-19.
COVID-19 REGIONAL RESPONSE

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION (COVID-19)

Latin America and the Caribbean has been severely impacted by COVID-19, surpassing 44 million confirmed cases, including over 1.3 million cases and 24,780 deaths in the countries included in this appeal. Although 35% per cent of the region’s population is vaccinated against COVID-19, as more adults receive vaccines, children – not yet eligible for vaccinations in many countries – represent a larger percentage of hospitalizations and deaths. The humanitarian and socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 have been devastating for children and families, given the combination of reduced income sources of poorer families, cramped living conditions, domestic violence, compromised physical and mental well-being, digital divide, the absence of in-person learning, and the disruption of essential services, among others. Over 3 million children have temporarily stopped attending in-person classes in countries in this appeal, and while schools reopened gradually, thousands have remained out of school for over one year and many risk dropping out due to access barriers. More than 30 million people could fall into poverty in the region in the absence of active policies to protect or substitute income flows. Millions of vulnerable children and families will rely on humanitarian support to cover their basic needs.

HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY (COVID-19)

The UNICEF strategy focuses on protecting the most vulnerable children, families and communities from exposure to COVID-19 and its impacts. This will be achieved by supporting a public health response focusing on prevention, care and treatment (including supplies); strengthening and complementing government and partner efforts to maintain/restore/ scale-up essential services, including for health, nutrition, WASH, child protection, gender-based violence, education and social protection; reinforcing effective coordination and collaboration with governments and partners; disseminating key information to reduce disease transmission and its impact, and ensuring that materials and services are equally accessible for people with disabilities and available in local languages. Notably, the COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated violence, exploitation, and abuse as children are cut off from key support services while simultaneously suffering the additional stress placed on families and supporting children to feel safe is a priority. Promoting the safe return to school where appropriate, and ensuring distance learning alternatives including through the provision of learning materials will continue. UNICEF will invest in data collection, monitoring, including for accountability to affected populations, and evaluation, to support evidence-based advocacy. Response strategies will be linked to systems strengthening for long-term actions to ensure linkages between humanitarian action and development programming. Special focus will be on continuous surveillance of situations of concern across the region, aiming at rapid identification of support needs and actions. UNICEF’s strategy is grounded in country-level response plans that are adjusted over time as the pandemic situation and humanitarian needs evolve.

2022 PROGRAMME TARGETS

Nutrition
- 21,350 primary caregivers of children aged 0 to 23 months receiving infant and young child feeding counselling
- 9,190 children aged 6 to 59 months receiving multiple micronutrient powders

Health
- 70,000 children aged 6 to 59 months vaccinated against measles
- 34,510 children and women accessing primary health care in UNICEF-supported facilities
- 24,707 children receiving the minimum set of vaccines
- 14,500 health workers reached with PPE

Water, sanitation and hygiene
- 39,950 people accessing a sufficient quantity of safe water for drinking and domestic needs
- 26,250 girls and women accessing menstrual hygiene management services
- 272,520 children use safe and appropriate WASH facilities and hygiene services in learning facilities and safe spaces
- 105,000 people reached with critical WASH supplies

Child protection, GBVIE and PSEA
- 49,300 children and parents/caregivers accessing mental health and psychosocial support
- 42,800 women, girls and boys accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention and/or response interventions
- 16,780 people reached with awareness activities and community mobilisation interventions on PSEA

Education
- 100,850 children accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning
- 872,000 children receiving individual learning materials
- 11,750 teachers trained on EiE including psychosocial support, education preparedness and response

Social protection
- 500 households reached with cash transfers through an existing government system where UNICEF provided technical assistance and/or funding
- 35,000 households benefiting from new or additional social transfers from governments with UNICEF technical assistance support

Cross-sectoral (HCT, C4D, RCCE and AAP)
- 1,161,980 people reached through messaging on prevention and access to services
- 620,000 people engaged in risk communication and community engagement actions
- 39,000 people with access to established accountability mechanisms

Programme targets are provisional and subject to change upon finalization of response planning documents.

Progress against the latest programme targets is available in the humanitarian situation reports:
https://www.unicef.org/appeals/lac/situation-reports
This appeal is aligned with the revised Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, which are based on global standards and norms for humanitarian action.
FUNDING REQUIREMENTS IN 2022

UNICEF is requesting US$29.1 million, including US$21.7 million to address humanitarian needs resulting from COVID-19 in 15 countries and territories,52 and US$7.4 million to support emergency preparedness and response to emerging crises, and region-wide efforts for ensuring linkages between humanitarian action and development programming; build shock-responsive social services; and keep the protection of children at the centre of humanitarian action. Humanitarian funds channelled through the Regional Office will be strategically allocated to country offices based on gaps in the field.

In response to the needs emerging from COVID-19, and based on the progress made in 2021, UNICEF has identified priority actions requiring sustained funding in 2022. To ensure the safe return to schools, UNICEF will support authorities in the implementation of protocols and guidelines, will provide essential WASH supplies and improved infrastructures, as well as learning materials. Based on the context and identified needs at the country level, funding is needed to reach health facilities and communities at risk with essential WASH supplies. UNICEF will support healthcare facilities to ensure continuity of quality services for women and children, including immunization services, and will provide personal protective equipment for front-line workers. In addition, nutrition counselling and screening will be prioritized. Vulnerable families impacted by the socioeconomic consequences of COVID-19 will be reached through new/existing cash-based government-led mechanisms supported by UNICEF. All countries part of the appeal have prioritized the provision of psychosocial support, as well as interventions to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse.

Given current and potential humanitarian scenarios in the region (hurricanes, violence, civil unrest, migration, internal displacement, public health emergencies, extreme weather, food insecurity and other impacts of climate change), UNICEF requires flexible and multi-year resources to support priority preparedness initiatives at the country/regional level that will improve response capacities. Without flexible funds, UNICEF will be unable to prepare for and immediately deploy needed support for rapid-onset emergencies.

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ENDNOTES

1. UNICEF’s public health and socio-economic COVID-19 response, including programme targets and funding requirements, is integrated into the standalone country, multi-country and regional Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) appeals. All interventions related to accelerating equitable access to COVID-19 tests, treatments and vaccines fall under the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) global appeal.

2. Including COVID-19 specific response. The 11 independent states and 4 territories directly covered by this regional appeal are Cuba, the Eastern Caribbean Area (Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Turks and Caicos Islands), Nicaragua, Paraguay and Suriname. Compared to 2021 where 21 countries were covered, countries covered in other 2022 sub-regional HACs have not been included here. While, Argentina and Jamaica no longer require humanitarian COVID-19 support as needs are well addressed by national authorities and have been removed from regional HACs.

3. In 2021, humanitarian interagency appeals in the region note that at least 33.6 million people are in need of humanitarian support. In 2022, these crises will be covered by different Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) appeals (Venezuelan outflow and COVID-19, Mexico and Central America, Haiti, Venezuela).

4. The in need figures reflect the pressing needs of the major sectors that UNICEF supports for all countries in the region.


6. Estimated by UNICEF, based on data from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and UNICEF on the number of children missing immunization in 2020, in 30 countries and territories in the region, according to estimated national immunization coverage.


8. Including countries with schools partially or fully closed in the region. Data extracted from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Institute of Statistics, and information provided by UNICEF country offices by the first week of September 2021.

9. For 2022, five Humanitarian Action for Children appeals have been issued in the Latin America and Caribbean region, including: two standalone appeals (Haiti and Venezuela); two multi-country appeals (children on the move from Venezuela and COVID-19 in South America; and Mexico and Central America), and a regional appeal. The current regional appeal comprises the COVID-19 response in countries that are not part of the previously listed appeals; regional technical capacity, emergency preparedness and response; and early action support in case of emergencies not covered by other appeals.


20. The Grand Bargain is a unique agreement between some of the largest donors and humanitarian organizations, who have committed to getting more means into the hands of people in need and improving the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action.

21. Residual humanitarian response to Eta/delta-related needs in other countries are considered under the Mexico and Central America HAC appeal.


25. UNICEF U-Report polls among young people (May 2021), with over 8,000 participants across the region, found that more than 25 per cent had experienced anxiety, 15 per cent depression, and one in every two respondents felt less motivated to do activities they usually enjoyed.

26. According to UNICEF country offices tracking of disruption of essential services in some countries part of this appeal, as of May 2021, disruptions were still visible in services such as home visits by social services/justice workers, family planning, vaccination campaigns, maternal and newborn health, routine vaccination, mental health an nutrition programmes in schools, among others.

27. As of September 2021, according to data available for Anguilla, Cuba, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and Paraguay.

28. As of September 2021, schools remained closed in Anguilla, Cuba, Grenada and Saint Lucia, affecting 1.9 million students. Schools were partially opened in Paraguay and Saint Kitts & Nevis, affecting approximately 1.1 million students. Schools are fully opened in British Virgin Islands, Montserrat, Nicaragua, Suriname, and Turks and Caicos Islands. In Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are on academic break.


30. COVID-19-specific programme targets established for the 11 independent states and 4 territories directly covered by this regional appeal.

31. UNICEF is committed to needs-based targeting, which means covering the unmet needs of children; and will serve as the provider of last resort where it has cluster coordination responsibilities.

32. This section reflects the consolidated targets of the countries included in the regional appeal only.

33. Covering Cuba, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Suriname.

34. Covering Cuba and Nicaragua.

35. Covering Cuba.

36. Covering Nicaragua and Paraguay.

37. Covering Nicaragua and Paraguay, supporting immunization activities for children that have missed vaccinations and/or follow ups due to COVID restrictions.

38. Covering Cuba, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Suriname.


40. Covering Nicaragua and Paraguay.

41. Covering Eastern Caribbean Area, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Suriname.

42. Covering Cuba and Suriname.

43. Covering Eastern Caribbean Area, Nicaragua and Paraguay.

44. Covering Nicaragua and Eastern Caribbean Area.

45. Covering Cuba, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Suriname.

46. Covering Nicaragua, Paraguay, Suriname and Eastern Caribbean Area.

47. Covering Eastern Caribbean Area.

48. Covering Paraguay and Suriname.

49. Covering Eastern Caribbean, Cuba, Nicaragua, Paraguay and Suriname.

50. Covering Nicaragua, Paraguay and Suriname.

51. Covering Cuba, Nicaragua and Paraguay.

52. Funding requirements for COVID-19 response have decreased from 2021 to 2022 due to fewer countries covered (21 in 2021). COVID-19 response and funding needs in some countries previously part of this appeal have been transferred to other 2022 appeals. Other country offices have mainstreamed COVID-19 support in their development programmes.

53. Regional Office requirements are spread across all multi-country appeals for the region (including children on the move from Venezuela, Central America and Mexico).

54. Regional office technical capacity needs here are solely to address needs covered in this HAC. Note that to support responses in other 2022 sub-regional HACs regional office technical capacity requirements are included in respective HACs, i.e., US$2.2 million for UNICEF’s CAMEX HAC, and US$5.7 million for UNICEF’s Venezuela outflow HAC.