The armed conflict in eastern Ukraine enters its eighth year and continues to take a heavy toll on civilians: ceasefire violations significantly intensified damaging homes, schools, water facilities and social infrastructure. Mine contamination remains a major source of threat to the life and safety of children. Limited access to basic services continues to threaten the mental and physical well-being of children. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose serious challenges for healthcare services and to increase child poverty.

In 2022, UNICEF will continue to safeguard children’s rights to safety, health, education, psychosocial support, protection and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services and address the needs of over 780,000 people. The response will address the impact of the armed conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic.

UNICEF requires US$15.1 million to provide access to basic services including WASH, immunization and health care, schooling and learning, psychosocial support and emergency cash assistance for children and families.

Seven-year-old Vika lives in Avdiivka near the ‘contact line’ in eastern Ukraine. She received a UNICEF backpack full of educational supplies to help her go to school for the very first time.
HUMANITARIAN SITUATION AND NEEDS

Ukraine continues to face the unprecedented dual challenge of coping with the effects of an eight-year armed conflict in the east and the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite efforts to find a peaceful resolution to the conflict, the situation remains difficult for the 3.4 million people, including 510,000 children living in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

In this context of protracted conflict, civilians bear the brunt of the crisis. Water and education infrastructure is frequently targeted, threatening children's access to safe water and schooling. Particularly in the non-government-controlled areas, access to learning is imperilled by weak teaching capacities and run-down infrastructure. Children and their families require continuous psychosocial support and protection services, including addressing gender-based violence (GBV) and assistance for victims of accidents related to explosive remnants of war, as well as mine risk education. Access to quality health services, especially for the most vulnerable, remains a daily challenge, exacerbated by the exodus of specialists.

In one of the world’s most mine-contaminated areas, the risk of stepping on a landmine remains a stark reality. Due to the conflict-related incidents in 2021, four children were killed, and four children and 13 women were injured.

The health system, including emergency medical services, which was already weak, has continued to be severely challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite efforts by the Government and partners, there remains low awareness among medical professionals. Pervasive vaccine hesitancy led Ukraine to record one of the lowest COVID-19 vaccination rates in Eastern Europe despite the surplus of vaccine supplies. Slow vaccination rates and relaxed quarantine measures have led to two big waves of exponential growth in new confirmed cases.

Despite robust progress in recent years, Ukraine experiences low child immunization rates, putting a large cohort of children at additional risk. Over 270,000 children under 5 years of age and their mothers need critical health support, including immunization.

As of September 2021, following lockdown decisions in eastern Ukraine, some 140,000 children were affected by school closures. While a distance education programme has been launched, many vulnerable children have been excluded due to limited connectivity and lack of information technology.

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit vulnerable groups particularly hard and exacerbated pre-existing inequalities. According to a recent study, child poverty in Ukraine has increased to 65.7 per cent in the Donetsk Oblast. Children and adolescents with HIV/AIDS in the conflict area continue to face serious challenges in accessing quality care and support.

SECTOR NEEDS

195,000 children in need of quality life-saving services

1.7 million people lack access to safe water

290,000 children need protection services

10,000 people in need of income support

250,000 children need education support

STORY FROM THE FIELD

As the conflict in eastern Ukraine reaches the seven-year mark, one young girl prepares to go to school for the first time. In September, Vika turned seven years old – her seventh birthday since the conflict broke out in eastern Ukraine.

"Mom, do you hear the shooting again?" she asks her mother, Anna.

"Yes. It’s just like Winnie the Pooh," Anna replies. "Boo! Are you scared?"

"No," says Vika. "Because you are next to me!"

This is the only life she has ever known – one filled with shooting, landmines and explosions.

Read more about this story here
In 2022, UNICEF’s strategy in Ukraine will continue to focus on protecting children and realizing child rights on both sides of the contact line, in government-controlled and non-government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk, while responding to the vulnerabilities caused by the dual crises of conflict and COVID-19.

To respond to the urgent needs of 780,000 people and children, UNICEF will strengthen social services and child protection, psychosocial support; and health, education and WASH services. The capacities of local professionals, authorities and civil society actors will be enhanced to strengthen preparedness and accountability to affected children, in line with the Grand Bargain commitments.

UNICEF will improve access to quality, inclusive, age- and gender-sensitive social services to increase families’ resilience to protection-related risks. UNICEF will work with humanitarian partners to target the most vulnerable, while also strengthening education, social welfare, health and other community-based services. As the lead agency for the WASH cluster and the child protection sub-cluster, UNICEF will continue to advocate with parties to the conflict to comply with international humanitarian law and child rights standards. This includes advocacy and technical support to the Government to implement the national action plan of the Safe Schools Declaration.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted safe access to all services, including immunization and primary health care, schools and social care institutions, necessitating specific protective measures for institutions and professionals. To address this, UNICEF will continue to strengthen the capacities of the local authorities and service provision facilities in infection prevention and control to ensure a safe environment at the facility level.

To reduce the transmission of COVID-19, UNICEF will continue risk communication activities to raise awareness and increase knowledge on COVID-19 prevention measures through multimedia channels and community outreach activities, targeting care providers, parents/caregivers and the public. UNICEF and its partners will also increase access to hygiene supplies and drinking water.

UNICEF will engage with pre-school and school-aged children with edutainment activities for healthy practices on nutrition, hygiene and social skills development. Advocacy will be conducted at the national and local levels, including in government-controlled and non-government-controlled areas to facilitate the provision of essential and quality services for children and women.

UNICEF will continue supporting community-level services and GBV services while increasing advocacy to strengthen public services. These actions will directly contribute to improving linkages between humanitarian action and development programmes in order to support durable solutions.

In response to the notable increase in child poverty rates in Ukraine, UNICEF will introduce an emergency cash assistance programme supporting the most vulnerable children.

**HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY**

**2022 PROGRAMME TARGETS**

### Health
- 40,000 health care facility staff and community health workers trained in infection prevention and control
- 50,000 mothers and children under 5 years benefiting from direct health service provision
- 20,000 health care providers trained on detection, referral and appropriate management of COVID-19 cases

### Water, sanitation and hygiene
- 780,000 people accessing a sufficient quantity of safe water for drinking and domestic needs
- 145,000 people reached with critical WASH supplies
- 24,500 people provided with improved access to appropriate sanitation

### Child protection, GBViE and PSEA
- 20,000 children and parents/caregivers accessing mental health and psychosocial support
- 25,000 women, girls and boys accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention and/or response interventions
- 40,000 children accessing explosive weapons-related risk education and survivor assistance interventions

### Education
- 300 schools implementing safe school protocols (infection prevention and control)
- 18,500 girls and boys benefiting from education and early learning supplies and rehabilitated inclusive schools and kindergartens
- 8,000 girls and boys benefiting from conflict-sensitive, risk-informed and life skills-based education delivered by trained teachers

### Social protection
- 10,000 households reached with UNICEF funded multi-purpose humanitarian cash transfers

### HIV and AIDS
- 600 children affected by HIV provided with continuous care and support services

### Cross-sectoral (HCT, C4D, RCCE and AAP)
- 50,000 people engaged in risk communication and community engagement actions

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Progress against the latest programme targets is available in the humanitarian situation reports: [https://www.unicef.org/appeals/ukraine/situation-reports](https://www.unicef.org/appeals/ukraine/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.

Programme targets are provisional and subject to change upon finalization of the inter-agency planning documents.
FUNDING REQUIREMENTS IN 2022

UNICEF requires US$15.1 million to meet the humanitarian needs of children, adolescents, women and families affected by the double crises of the armed conflict and COVID-19 pandemic and provide critical services for affected populations in eastern Ukraine. The 2022 funding ask for eastern Ukraine has slightly increased, as UNICEF intends to introduce an emergency cash assistance programme in response to significantly high levels of child poverty and to support the shock-responsive social protection system. The funding appeal will also enable UNICEF to build the capacities of the health system to better respond to the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and implement critical WASH interventions to address gaps in hygiene and infection control. UNICEF will continue supporting immunization coverage in the non-government-controlled areas, expand education coverage and increase access to social services for vulnerable families and their children, including mental health and psychosocial support, gender-based violence services and services for children with disabilities. The appeal for health includes additional funding needed to support awareness-raising activities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. UNICEF’s appeal requirement is aligned with Ukraine’s 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan. Without sufficient and timely funding, UNICEF will be unable to support the response to the country’s continuous crisis.

*This includes costs from other sectors/interventions: HIV and AIDS (2.6%), Cross-sectoral (HCT, C4D, RCCE and AAP) (1.3%).

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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 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. Figure is based on the central customer data-base of the Voda Donbasu water utility company. It indicates the estimated number of people in eastern Ukraine who access drinking water from the central distribution network of the company, which receives critical support from UNICEF interventions, such as water treatment chemicals.

2. This funding appeal is for the humanitarian response programme targeting the conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic in eastern Ukraine only. UNICEF’s COVID-19 funding appeal for the rest of Ukraine is included in its regional COVID-19 appeal for Europe and Central Asia.

3. An estimated 3 million residents and 353,000 internally displaced persons are in the area directly affected by the armed conflict. Of these, 1.7 million live in government-controlled areas and nearly 1.7 million live in non-government-controlled areas. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. ‘Ukraine: 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan’. OCHA, 2020.

4. While the 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan estimates that 510,000 children living in conflict-affected areas are in need (15 per cent of the 3.4 million) a smaller number of children in need live in communities within 0 to 20 kilometres of the Line of Contact in government-controlled areas and non-government-controlled areas. These children are prioritized in the UNICEF response. ‘Ukraine: 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan’.

5. The Government of Ukraine is better prepared compared to 2020 and has allocated more funding for infection prevention and control supplies in the country. In view of this, UNICEF revised its overall target in the government-controlled areas. The figure is calculated based on the highest coverage programme target for WASH. UNICEF report various challenges in ensuring timely and quality assistance to survivors of GBV and to cases of violence against children, including the lack of shelters for survivors, the lack of qualified specialists, and support. The Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts are reported facing a high level of child poverty (65.7 and 57.7 per cent vs national average of 47.3 per cent). Report on Child Poverty and Disparities in Ukraine.

6. This was calculated using 15 per cent of the highest coverage programme target for WASH. This includes 48 per cent of girls (56,160) and 52 per cent of boys (60,840). It is important to note that population statistics remain highly problematic in the area and UNICEF uses various estimates to calculate figures on children. As UNICEF focuses on groups that are most vulnerable, there is a slight decrease in the number of children to be reached, compared to 2021. An estimated 15 per cent of the child population has a disability, so an estimated 17,550 children with disabilities will be reached.

7. While the levels of violence against boys, girls and women were already high in Ukraine prior to the conflict and, unfortunately, its protracted nature resulted in its’ normalization. According to the line contact, domestic violence, abuse at home, as well as neglect of children have become more prevalent and more severe in forms compared to the beginning of the conflict, as reported by child protection partners and the gender-based violence (GBV) mobile teams providing case management services. In 2021, more than 26,600 survivors of GBV/menstrual violence, including 4,800 children received psychosocial services through online consultations and emergency outreach in eastern Ukraine.

8. UNICEF leads cluster coordination for WASH, nutrition and education clusters and the child protection area of responsibility.

9. As of 3 October 2021, little more than 5 million people have been vaccinated against COVID-19, out of an estimated population of 41 million. This is despite Ukraine launching its vaccination campaign in March 2021. https://vaccination.covid19.gov.ua/

10. Some 102,900 children living in conflict-affected areas need education support as per ‘Ukraine: 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan’. UNICEF’s geographic focus is smaller than the Humanitarian Response Plan and will target communities within 0 to 20 kilometres of the Line of Contact in government-controlled areas and some parts of the non-government-controlled areas.

11. 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. UNICEF leads cluster coordination for the WASH, nutrition and education clusters and the child protection area of responsibility.

12. UNICEF leads cluster coordination for the WASH, nutrition and education clusters and the child protection area of responsibility.


15. Low immunization in Ukraine was initially caused by lack of vaccines in 2009-2015 along with vaccine hesitancy due to lack of trust in evidence-based medicine. In 2016, fewer than 50 per cent of children were vaccinated against measles according to the vaccination calendar. In 2017, the vaccination coverage increased. The COVID-19 pandemic has also impacted routine immunization, per the October 2021 UNICEF Knowledge Attitude and Practice survey: among 1,200 women with children under six years, the number of respondents willing to vaccinate their child according to the national immunization schedule decreased from 88 per cent in 2019 to 77 per cent in 2020. Although by the second half of 2020, access to vaccination services was largely restored from the levels of the late 2000s, and by the end of 2020 routine vaccination rates in Ukraine in children looked far, certain concerns remain. For example, the coverage of the measles vaccine in 2020 dropped to just over 83 per cent compared to 93.2 per cent in 2019.


17. The Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts are reported facing high levels of child poverty (65.7 and 57.7 per cent vs national average of 47.3 per cent). Report on Child Poverty and Disparities in Ukraine.


19. The Safe Schools Declaration is an inter-governmental political agreement that outlines a set of commitments to strengthen the protection of education from attack and restrict the use of schools and universities for military purposes. It seeks to ensure the continuity of safe education during armed conflict. Ukraine signed the Declaration in November 2019 and developed a National Plan of Action with UNICEF support. Advocacy efforts are needed to advance the implementation of the Plan.

20. While there is increased financing from the Government to institutions responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is an increased vulnerability among households in accessing WASH supplies, in particular hygiene supplies.

21. This is the estimated number of children living in conflict-affected areas that (both government-controlled and non-government-controlled areas) who are directly and indirectly impacted by the armed conflict and its consequences. Of these, 430,000 children live in communities within 0 to 20 kilometres of the Line of Contact in government-controlled areas and non-government-controlled areas that will be targeted by UNICEF, while the rest of the children live in the larger conflict area. ‘Ukraine: 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan’; and ‘Ukraine: 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview’.

22. This includes mental health and psychosocial support services. ‘Ukraine: 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview’.

23. Some 1.9 million people living in conflict-affected areas lack safe access to water as per ‘Ukraine: 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan’. UNICEF’s geographic focus is smaller than the Humanitarian Response Plan and will target communities within 0 to 20 kilometres of the Line of Contact in government-controlled areas and non-government-controlled areas.


26. Some 102,900 children living in conflict-affected areas need education support as per ‘Ukraine: 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan’. UNICEF’s geographic focus is smaller than the HRP and will target some communities within 0 to 20 kilometres of the Line of Contact in government-controlled areas and non-government-controlled areas.

27. This was calculated using 15 per cent of the highest coverage programme target for WASH. This includes 48 per cent of girls (56,160) and 52 per cent of boys (60,840). It is important to note that population statistics remain highly problematic in the area and UNICEF uses various estimates to calculate figures on children. As UNICEF focuses on groups that are most vulnerable, there is a slight decrease in the number of children to be reached, compared to 2021. An estimated 15 per cent of the child population has a disability, so an estimated 17,550 children with disabilities will be reached.


29. While there is increased financing from the Government to institutions responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is an increased vulnerability among households in accessing WASH supplies, in particular hygiene supplies.

30. ENDNOTES