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Reporting Period: 1-30 November 2021

UNICEF in South Asia

Regional Humanitarian Situation Report No. 26



Situation in Numbers



864 million
People in need of humanitarian assistance



367 million
Children in need

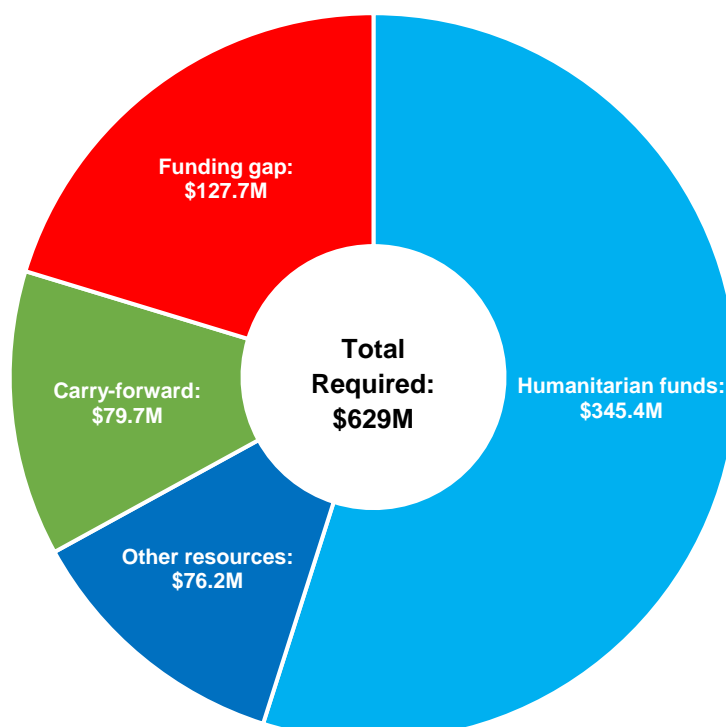


127 million
COVID-19 vaccine doses delivered through COVAX Facility

Highlights

- Downward trends of COVID-19 infection in some countries continued. As of December 9, there have been 39,174,186 confirmed COVID-19 cases of which 38,467,835 recovered and 564,515 deaths were reported in the region. Since mid-January, over 127 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been delivered to the region through COVAX Facility.
- The new variant of concern, Omicron has entered the region with dozens of cases reported, primarily in India.
- The humanitarian situation in Afghanistan remains dire with severe food insecurity caused by drought, and with critical public services that children and families rely on at risk of collapse.
- 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\$127.7 million (20 per cent) remains and hampers UNICEF's ability to respond.

UNICEF HAC Appeal 2021 US\$629 Million (Regional Total)



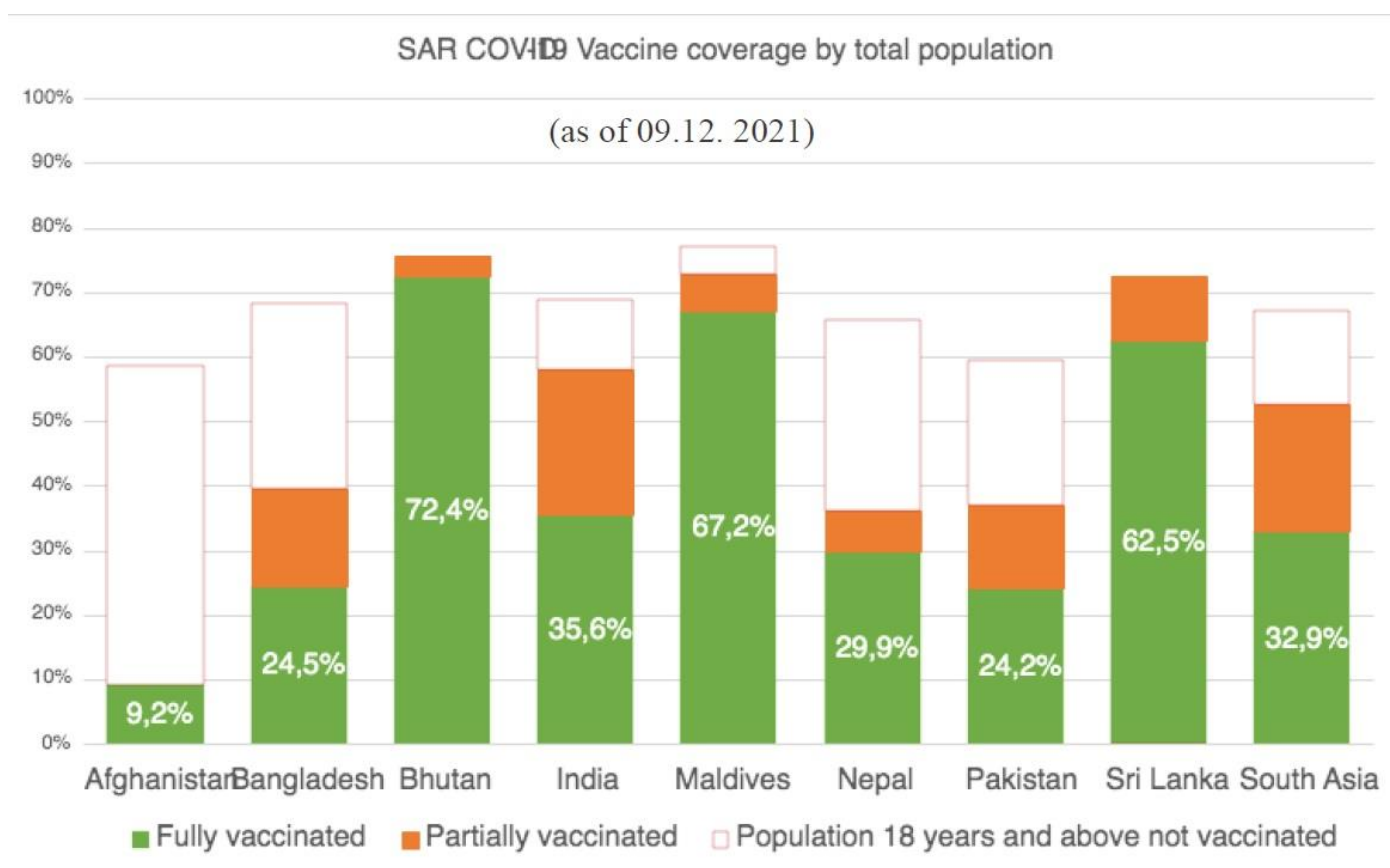
Regional Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

As of 9 December, a cumulative total of 39,174,186 confirmed COVID-19 cases, of which 38,467,835 cases recovered, and 564,515 deaths were reported in the region of South Asia¹. In the month of November, an overall downward trend of new cases was observed in the region, except for Afghanistan where there was a slight increase. Sri Lanka continues to show a high number of deaths per capita compared to other countries in the region, also showing a high test positivity rate at above 5 per cent. By the end of November, dozens of cases of the new variant Omicron have been confirmed in the region of South Asia, primarily in India. The variant's transmissibility, clinical severity and impact on vaccines remain uncertain as data is still limited.

Afghanistan is facing its second drought in four years, and reportedly the worst in 27 years. The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis, updated in October 2021, shows a deteriorating food security situation, with worrying implications for the winter lean season. An estimated 22.8 million people, or 55 per cent of the population, are expected to be in crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity (IPC 3+) between November 2021 and March 2022, a nearly 35 per cent increase from the same season last year (16.9 million). No provinces are categorised as IPC 1 and 2 for the period through March 2022. Some 9 million people are projected to be in IPC 4 – the highest number in the world, both in absolute and relative terms. Economic impacts continue with critical public services that children and families rely on—health, education, WASH and child protection— at risk of collapse. Winter has set in, and with increasing numbers of vulnerable families having to make desperate choices between fuel for heat, food, or winter clothing.

COVID-19 Vaccination

Over 1.6 billion doses have been administered across South Asian countries since January 16, 2021 with 33 per cent of the total population fully vaccinated and 53 per cent having received the first dose. Within this figure, more than 127 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 9.2 per cent of the total population is fully vaccinated. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan are yet to reach the global target of at least 40 per cent of the population fully vaccinated by December 2021.



COVID-19 vaccination of pregnant women has started in Nepal, making it the seventh country in the region to do so. Afghanistan remains the only country not administering COVID-19 vaccines to pregnant women. Booster doses have been administered in the Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. In Pakistan, they are being administered as a preventive measure against Omicron variant. Some vaccine hesitancy was reported for the booster dose currently given to health workers and people aged 60 years and above in Sri Lanka.

¹ SAARC Disaster Management Centre, Situation Report – 628: http://www.covid19-sdmc.org/sites/default/files/situation_report_document/Situation-Report-09-12-2021.pdf

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

Afghanistan

Nutrition

- UNICEF continued delivery of lifesaving nutrition services in partnership with the Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS) and humanitarian partners through fixed health facilities and mobile teams. In November, a total of 37,437 children aged under-five with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) were provided with lifesaving treatment services. UNICEF is working with implementing partners to ensure the distribution of therapeutic supplies in the first quarter of 2022.
- Around 100 newly deployed nutrition-integrated mobile teams provided lifesaving preventive and treatment services for displaced and host communities in the 28 provinces. From August to November, an estimated 6,000 children aged 6-59 months were provided with treatment services through these mobile teams. UNICEF is working with partners to scale up the number of nutrition and health mobile services to 160 teams.
- A rapid Mid Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) nutrition assessment was conducted in November 2021 on a purposive sample drawn from 26 sites hosting IDPs and at-risk communities across 14 provinces. MUAC measurements were performed on 4,638 children under the age of five years. The proportion of children found with acute malnutrition ranged from 4.9 per cent to 42.3 per cent, with high proportions found in large urban settings. The assessment indicated a worsening malnutrition context that requires immediate assistance.
- A mass media campaign of community sensitization to improve service-uptake and reduce misuse of ready-to-use-therapeutic food is underway.

Health

- In November, UNICEF continued to respond to growing health needs by supporting the health system, strengthening community capacity, and operating mobile services in remote, hard to reach and in need areas. Over 60 Mobile Health Teams (MHTs) provide essential health and nutrition services for people in need in 15 provinces. Services include malnutrition prevention, treatment, and counselling services for children, PLWs and caregivers; immunizations; medical consultation and treatment; and antenatal care/postnatal care visits for pregnant and lactating women. MHTs will also provide Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) services.
- The MHT scale-up plan calls for 77 additional MHTs in phase 1 (implementation will start in Jan 2022) and another 83 MHTs in phase 2, focusing on provinces where the health and nutrition needs are most acute.
- Oxygen Plant Installation work with operational testing has been completed in 10 provinces (Balkh, Samangan, Jawzjan, Sar-i-Pul, Faryab, Farah, Helmand, Herat, Parwan and Paktia).
- Over 60,000 children under one year were reached with routine immunization, including Bacillus Calmet Guerin, Diphtheria Tetanus Pertusis, and Measles Containing Vaccine. Million people received COVID-19 vaccines. The total number of people vaccinated against COVID-19 is over 4.4 million. Preparation for the measles campaign in Balkh province targeting around 300,000 children aged 9-59 months is underway.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

- In November, 15 schools in Ghor Province were provided with improved access to water, sanitation and handwashing facilities reaching 3,345 students, including six schools for girls with 1,240 students. Two healthcare facilities in Ghor were supported with the installation of solar water systems, latrine upgrade, construction of septic tanks and provision and installation of water storage tanks and handwashing facilities.
- 32,043 people benefited from hygiene promotion and the distribution of hygiene supplies including the distribution of 34,000 bars of soap in Herat, Badghis and Ghor, while hygiene promotion is ongoing in Laghman, Kandahar and Zabul along with the repositioning of hygiene supplies for 50,145 people.
- 2,072 people benefited from the repair of a gravity-fed water system, while 6,440 people benefited from the repair of solar-powered water supply systems in Badghis. Six solar-powered water systems were completed in Herat for 2,695 people; three in Ghor for 1,484 people; and nine in Badghis for 4,018 people. All 8,197 persons benefited from increased safe hygiene awareness through hygiene promotion. UNICEF continued to provide emergency water through water trucking to an estimated 25,204, drought-affected people in Nimroz and Kandahar. UNICEF was able to reduce water trucking for more than 193,000 people in Northern Afghanistan following the arrival of the rains which improved the drought conditions.

Child Protection, GBViE, and PSEA

- UNICEF with the support of its partners and extenders scaled up immediate and life-saving child protection responses to address the dire needs of children and their caregivers, reaching a total of 33,383 individuals (10,935 boys, 9,676 girls, 7,410 men and 5,362 women). Among them, 16,498 individuals benefited from MHPSS through recreational activities, psychosocial support services and referral; 1,308 children (776 boys and 532 girls) were reached with case management services. This includes family tracing and reunification for 183 unaccompanied and separated children (180 boys and 3 girls). Over 6,050 individuals were reached with messages on the risks of explosive ordnances and remnants of war to prevent injury and death, particularly amongst children. A further 4,946 people were reached with Gender Based Violence (GBV) response, prevention, and risk mitigation services.
- In the north of the country, UNICEF and its partners continued to engage with the de facto authorities. At least 140 members of the de-facto authorities and 220 religious leaders were sensitised on child protection concerns. As a result, the Taliban have signalled a willingness to release children within its ranks.
- In the south, UNICEF continues to advocate for the release and reintegration of children in detention. Life-saving supplies including warm clothes and hygiene kits were provided to 30 children in detention facilities that UNICEF has so far assessed. At least 880 vulnerable families were been provided with cash assistance as part of a case management programme focused on unaccompanied and separated children, and children living and working in the street. The cash assistance is accompanied with awareness raising on COVID-19, as well as child labour, child marriage, and child recruitment.

Education

- The education system in Afghanistan is on the brink of collapse and 20 years of investment and progress are under threat due to prolonged school closures due to COVID-19, and the political and socio-economic crises. Restrictions on girls' access to secondary education negatively impacts equitable access to learning. Nevertheless, 758,701 children were reached with access to education by the end of November 2021. Over 238,000 out-of-school children (124,554 girls) gained access to education in 7,604 community-based education (CBE) classes. WASH and hygiene interventions to prevent COVID-19 and cholera were implemented in 736 public schools reaching 351,352 students (107,217 girls). At least 100,000 students received teaching and learning materials.
- The de facto Ministry of Education issued a letter asking all Provincial Education Directorates to reopen Teacher Training Colleges without specifying whether this applies to both male and female students. Based on this letter, the GATE (Girls Access to Teacher Education) programme restarted in nine provinces (Bamyan, Khost, Dikundi, Ghazni, Wardak, Zabul, Kunar, Laghman and Badghis) out of 17 provinces. A total of 193 students graduated, and two dropped out. The GATE programme in Kandahar, Helman, Nimroz, Farah, Ghor, Paktia and Paktika provinces is awaiting instructions from the de-facto authorities to resume operations. In some provinces, negotiations have started at provincial level authorities to re-open the GATE classes. UNICEF now has access to all hard-to-reach areas previously under Taliban control. The demand for community-based education classes is much faster than resources allow. Schools in 28 provinces across the country (cold climate provinces) have closed for winter break and will re-open in the third week of March 2022.

Social Protection and Cash Transfers

- In November, UNICEF rapidly scaled up the use of humanitarian cash transfers (HCT) to respond to the growing humanitarian need. Large scale registration of households started in Wardak and Nuristan provinces, targeting households with children with disabilities, PLW, and female-headed households. With its partners, UNICEF registered 42,317 households in HOPE (Humanitarian cash Operations and Programmes Ecosystem), UNICEF's dedicated Management Information System for HCT. These families will be assisted with short term cash transfers during winter months, starting early December. In November, UNICEF also successfully delivered cash transfers to 1,165 households in Samangan province, 886 households in Kabul, registered households in Herat and Ghor, and prepared for cash distribution in Kandahar. UNICEF is using cash to address the multiple crises faced by households, including COVID-19, drought, winter and displacement.
- The availability of cash to support the implementation of programme activities in the field remains a major challenge. Moreover, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has still not been re-established, leaving a vacuum at national level for engagement and advocacy.

C4D, Community Engagement and AAP

- During the reporting period, 3,841 community education sessions related to AWD were conducted in the Central, East and South regions reaching 523,757 people. To scale up hygiene promotion, 27,000 religious leaders and 11,840 community influencers and health workers were oriented on prevention of cholera and provided with key messages to deliver in their community in the Central region and the South region. 17,000 community members were engaged and reached with prevention of cholera messages in Central, Southern region and Eastern regions.
- To address COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy, 316,818 community members were sensitised on the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination. In addition, 2,661 members of various community platforms were mobilized and trained on addressing COVID-19 hesitancy and improved their knowledge and skills on promoting COVID-19 vaccination.

Gender and Adolescents Development and Participation

- 1,644 community members (316 male, 547 female, 481 boys and 300 adolescent girls) in the provinces of Daikundi, Herat, Kandahar, Kabul were reached with awareness and mobilization on various topics (i) GBV prevention (ii) gender-equitable norms, (iii) women and girls' rights, (iv) prevention of early child marriage and awareness raising on COVID-19.
- 288 beneficiaries (143 women and 145 adolescent girls) were provided with psychosocial support and various recreational activities – an effective entry point for group therapy.
- 60 frontline workers (53 male and 7 female) were trained on GBV prevention and COVID-19 risk mitigation in Kandahar.
- 130 community influencers (50 religious leaders and 80 men) were trained on their role to prevent violence against women and girls, prevention of child marriage and promotion of women's access to health care services in Kandahar and Herat provinces.
- 1,320 (550 adolescent boys and 770 adolescent girls) were reached with life skills training and mentoring sessions through established multipurpose adolescent groups in Herat, Kandahar.
- 21,600 (5,000 men and 8,000 women, 4,100 boys and 4,500 girls aged between 10 and 24 years) in Kandahar were reached via local ZMA FM radio programmes on GBV, women's rights, and access to health services.

Bangladesh

Nutrition

- By 30 November 2021, 10,368 children (5,873 girls) with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) have been treated. From 2020 to 2021, functionality of SAM facilities increased from 27 per cent to 49 per cent. National Vitamin A campaign reached more than 96 per cent (22 million) of children 6-59 months. Through increased monitoring of the priority nutrition indicators, Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) counselling increased from 41-84 per cent and maternal nutrition counselling increased from 55-87 per cent.
- 6,456 Rohingya Refugee children under five including 4,078 girls and 108 Children with Disabilities (CwD) suffering SAM without medical complication and 322 SAM children (105 girls, 6 CwD) with medical complication were treated in UNICEF-supported 27 outpatient therapeutic programme and two stabilization centres respectively. House-to-house approach for Vitamin A supplementation reached 146,976 Rohingya children 6-59 months (72,702 girls) and Deworming campaign in the camps reached 100,601 children 24-59 months (49,295 girls), 96 and 97 per cent of the target.

Health

- As of 30th November 2021, out of the 138,247,508 COVID-19 vaccination targets in the country, a total of 34.3 million received the 2nd dose representing 21 per cent of the target population. The Government of Bangladesh with support from various donors is embarking on a nationwide campaign drive to increase the COVID-19 vaccination uptake. The vaccination rate is expected to increase by the end of December 2021.
- During the reporting period, 2,839 Rohingya Refugee children aged 0-11 months (1,365 girls) were vaccinated with Penta 3 in Cox's Bazar. 14,651 Rohingya Refugees including 4,376 women and 10,275 under five children (4,874 girls) received outpatient consultations.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

- During the reporting period, 658,560 people (336,912 female) gained access to safe water supply and 154,160 (79,784 female) benefitted from basic sanitation facilities. UNICEF and the Department of Public Health Engineering supported the continuity of safe school reopening through the provision of WASH services (water points repair, installation of hand washing station, latrine disinfection for the Infection Prevention Control), benefitting 436,544 children (247,936 girls).
- With UNICEF support, a total of 18,000 Rohingya Refugees and 1,000 host community population has improved access to basic water supply facilities through the rehabilitation and reconstruction of five piped water networks and 120 tube wells with handpumps. In addition, access to basic sanitation has been improved for 10,800 Rohingya Refugees (5,512 female and 324 people with disabilities, PWD) and 192 host population (96 female, two PWD) through the reconstruction of 262 latrines, 134 bathing spaces, two faecal sludge management sites and ten plastic sludge transfer stations.

Child Protection, GBViE, and PSEA

- During the reporting period, UNICEF reached 33,878 children and primary caregivers (14,389 female) with community-based mental health and psychosocial support while 57,272 people (43,619 female) accessed Gender Based Violence (GBV) risk mitigation, prevention, and response interventions. Further, UNICEF and its partners supported persons with disabilities through individual case work follow-up, supported children with psychosocial counselling, reaching a total of 2,976 people.

Education

- Education institutions (except pre-primary) have been providing in-person learning for 38,311,635 students (19,302,812 girls) nationwide in a phased manner. Among them, 553,244 children (276,622 girls and 8,299 CwD) have continued learning remotely using digital media and home-based projects. Additionally, with UNICEF support, 136,214 marginalised children (68,588 girls) have accessed formal or non-formal education through printed learning materials. Nationwide, the Secondary School Certificate Examination started on 14 November 2021.
- As of November, 2,111 (79 per cent) Learning Centres (LCs) in the camps out of 2,688 (education sector supported) for levels 2-4 re-opened for in person teaching and learning while observing COVID 19 infection preventions measures. The re-opening has allowed 102,753 Rohingya children (48,091 girls) to engage in learning activities supported by teachers. However, Level one LCs (pre-primary) learners are not yet allowed to return to class as per the government guidelines. In addition, 138,022 children (67,242 girls) are supported with home-based learning (mainly level one).

C4D, Community Engagement and AAP

- UNICEF and partners conducted the cross-sectoral rapid assessment on child safety concerns after the school reopening where 557 parents (84 per cent female) were interviewed nationwide. The findings revealed 88 per cent parents are sending their child to school, 65 per cent think physical distancing is hard to maintain, 47 per cent think mask wearing habits are not properly maintained at schools and 38 per cent were concerned about the non-availability of vaccines at schools.
- In Cox's Bazar, UNICEF partners' community engagement sessions on maintaining COVID-19 appropriate behaviours, Dengue awareness and vaccination reached 136,232 people (81,896 female) in 51,907 households. A total of 7,672 people (3,882 female) visited the Information and Feedback Centres (IFCs) in the camps and registered 2,044 feedback, 5,151 queries, and 477 complaints. Most concerns related to health and non-food items and were referred to the relevant service points immediately.

Emergency Preparedness, Response and Disaster Risk Reduction

- In November, the second round of Oral Cholera Vaccine campaign in Ukhiya and Cox's Bazar covered 614,779 people (97 per cent of the target) of >one year (323,859 female). Additionally, 165 LCs were repaired in the camps, benefitting nearly 13,200 learners (6,864 girls). A total of 17 staff of Nutrition partners and UNICEF supported health facility managers were trained on fire safety and disaster risk reduction. Fire extinguishers and first aid boxes of eight integrated nutrition facilities and all health facilities were updated. UNICEF health partners also updated fire incident contingency plans.

Bhutan

Health

- UNICEF completed Training of Trainers (TOT) workshop for 40 District Health Officers and maternal and child health focal person on cold chain equipment management and maintenance, training of 30 health staff and caretakers on cold chain equipment handling and routine maintenance in three districts (Samdrup, Jongkhar and Chukha).
- UNICEF completed cold chain capacity assessment of health facilities in three districts (Zhemgang, Samdrupjongkhar and Pemagatshel). One walk-in-cooler of 30,000 litres capacity installed at Dewthang Hospital.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

- UNICEF completed the installation of six handwashing stations in six public places in four districts, which is expected to benefit about 570 people (80 people at Tashiyangtse Dzong area, 60 people at Chorten Kora, 180 people at Lhuntse Dzong area, 50 people at Lhuntse vegetable market, 50 Zhemgang hospital and 150 Zhemgang Municipal area).

Child Protection, GBViE, and PSEA

- The Ministry of Education in partnership with UNICEF rolled out the training for peer helpers in 64 schools from 10 districts, using the *"I Support My Friends in School"* manual which was adapted from the global "I support my friends" training resource kit. School counsellors used the same tool to facilitate trainings for 1293 peer helpers (679 female) on how to best support a friend in distress, building on the principles of psychological first aid. In 2022, the training will be rolled out to schools with counsellors in the remaining 10 districts.
- To standardize the case management procedures for Gender-Based Violence (GBV) cases, UNICEF supported the NGO RENEW, to train 44 case managers (29 female) to provide case management services to the survivors of GBV using the guidelines on case management of GBV including during emergencies.

Adolescent Development and Participation (ADAP)

- To equip children, adolescents and youth with 21st century, employability skills and inculcate entrepreneurial mindset from the early age, UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Education to introduce Adolescent Skills and Employability (ASE) Generation project in 64 schools and 10 youth centers starting from December 2021 to December 2022. This project will benefit around 10,000 young people (5,000 female).
- Around 40 youth volunteers (20 female), five community leaders, and 10 local government officials were oriented on importance of engaging young people in the decision-making process in communities including during emergency.
- About 30 out-of-school adolescents and youth attended a capacity development workshop and were empowered with life skills, communication and networking skills, and connected with potential employers through targeted sessions on entrepreneurship, vocational and employment schemes to interact.

Education

- Bhutan piloted the Caring for Caregiver package from May 2021. The pilot programme reached out to approximately 260 caregivers in three pilot districts— Punakha, Tsirang, Trashigang— representing Bhutan's three regions. The package was rolled out in partnership with the Ministry of Education targeting caregivers of children from 3-5 years through centre-based Early Childhood Care and Development programme. Caregivers who were a part of the interventions reported decreased levels of anxiety and depression.

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

- UNICEF support to the government at district, state and national levels helped to maintain continuity of essential nutrition services for women and children during the COVID-19 pandemic, despite the devastating second wave. UNICEF technical assistance resulted in updated protocols and guidance with nutrition platforms disseminated through government and development partner channels.
- In Bihar, despite the devastating the second wave of COVID-19, advocacy by UNICEF and partners ensured delivery of take-home rations to 3.1 million at their doorsteps.
- UNICEF support to the Government of Madhya Pradesh was able achieve 86 percent coverage of Vitamin A supplementation, 69 per cent adolescents and 95 per cent pregnant women continued to receive iron and folic acid. More than 90 per cent of children received growth monitoring services and 79,034 children with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) received treatment.
- In Odisha, UNICEF support enabled distribution of Iron and Folic Acid (IFA) tablets to 3.5 million adolescents at the doorstep for addressing anaemia. In 2021, dry ration was made available to 4.5 million recipients across the state. The state has resumed all essential services delivery through Anganwadi Centres (AWCs), namely MCHN, Growth monitoring, Supplementary Nutrition Programme.

Health

- By the end of November, India has administered about 85 percent of its population with the first dose and 50 percent of the targeted population received full vaccination. UNICEF has been instrumental in providing both technical and logistical support as well as supporting on the development / adjustment and implementation of communication strategies for the introduction of the COVID-19 vaccine in a phased manner.
- UNICEF supported in need assessment and augmentation of cold chain capacity through procurement and installation of 4195 electrical and 599,950 non-electrical cold chain equipment (CCE). In October, UNICEF supported in airlifting the first tranche (5 out of 188.7 million) of syringes to meet urgent requests by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW). So far, 6.7 million are received in India and other batches to come by end of the year.
- UNICEF supported the MoHFW in the development of Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), and capacity building of more than 170 cold chain technicians in the repair and maintenance of CCE through online training modules. UNICEF fostered the quality of vaccination through enhanced monitoring and supportive supervision. As of 5th December 2021, 132,367 Supportive Supervision visits were conducted using standardized checklists to offer mid-course correction at COVID-19 vaccination centers. UNICEF supported states in the implementation of special strategies e.g., near-to-home and workplace vaccination, camps, and door-to-door vaccination (or Har Ghar Dastak) to increase reach and promote vaccine uptake.

- UNICEF advocated and supported MoHFW for sustaining focus on essential quality maternal and newborn care during COVID-19, including National consultation for Newborn Action Plan (INAP) 21-30 roadmap -decadal plan to achieve INAP 2030 goals Four representatives' states (Uttar Pradesh, Meghalaya, Jammu & Kashmir, Telangana) is in process of preparing a state-specific framework to be released in March 2022.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

- UNICEF support to nodal government departments and partners enabled access of critical WASH supplies and services to schools, health care facilities and community. Training community level service providers on interpersonal communication and WASH helped schools to implement safe school protocols and promote safe hand washing behaviour in rural and urban areas across the country.
- Interpersonal communication has been mainstreamed into 11,000 existing and 3,386 new schemes of national flagship programmes to benefit 550,000 population with access to safe water in the state of Odisha.
- UNICEF supported WASH gap assessment and capacity building on implementing safe school protocols for COVID-19 prevention and control reached 80,000 schools in West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Gujarat.

Child Protection, GBViE, and PSEA

- During the reporting period, UNICEF continued to assist departments across states in developing guidelines and SOPs on issues related to child protection in times of COVID-19 pandemic. Institutional and community based mental health and psychosocial support coupled with case management tools with referral linkages was a priority. Childline and youth volunteers together with community formed the basic framework for prevention and response to child protection vulnerabilities.
- In Bihar, UNICEF supported the Railway Childline project across 11 stations helped in identifying and rehabilitation of 23,952 unaccompanied children.
- In the state of Madhya Pradesh 48,137 child protection functionaries are capacitated on ending violence against children, preventing child marriage, and adolescent and youth participation for child protection and compliance to covid protocols. Over 30,000 (63 per cent female) teachers oriented on Protection of Children from Sexual Offences and preventing child sexual abuse.
- In Maharashtra, 48,888 adolescents and youth accessed health, education, and protection services as part of COVID-19 response. 29,343 children and 2921 caregivers were linked to mental health and psychosocial support.

Education

- UNICEF technical support to state governments and partners in the development and rollout of digital and non-digital content in local languages, lesson plans, learning resource materials led to enhanced access and use of learning materials ensuring continuity of learning for around 21.53 million children (47 per cent girls), especially for children from hard-to-reach geographical areas, children with disabilities, out of school children and children from disadvantaged and marginalized communities.
- Furthermore, with technical support from UNICEF, eight states departments of education are implementing catch-up and learning recovering programmes in addressing and mitigation learning loss of 15.83 million children (48 per cent girls), due to extended closures of schools in the states.
- UNICEF technical support to Ministry of Education and National Council of Educational Research and Training in the development of assessment framework, sampling design, item development and pilot analysis led to the design and conduct of National Achievement Survey 2021 in 118,000 schools covering 3.6 million students across the country.

Social Protection and Cash Transfers

- Evidence-based advocacy and technical assistance by UNICEF and partners enabled new cash transfers for 7,661 children orphaned during COVID-19 pandemic. 449,912 vulnerable households were able to access emergency government assistance.
- Across eight programming states, UNICEF worked with local government stakeholders and women Self Help Groups (SHG) to build capacity to deliver shock responsive, gender and child sensitive social protection programs. In Andhra Pradesh, across 13 cyclone affected districts, 2,500 government village volunteers trained to reach 250,000 households. In Telangana, across 100 villages, 800 village government functionaries and 5,000 CBOs trained on child friendly local governance and emergency preparedness.
- In UP, 58,000 local government heads trained on promoting COVID-19 appropriate behaviors. In Rajasthan, state level support to government identified 103,208 vulnerable households including 10,725 children, resulting in stronger coordination mechanisms to deliver social protection. In Assam, 2196 local governments and 2000 SHGs were oriented on COVID-19 management and vaccine preparedness.

C4D, Community Engagement and AAP

- The strategic focus of UNICEF-supported Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) interventions ensured visibility of messages, social mobilization, and community engagement. Continued demand and access to basic services on health, nutrition, WASH, education, and child protection services even amongst most vulnerable communities has been a key focus of programming during the reporting period.
- Through its robust RCCE interventions and special vaccination drives, the Government of Andhra Pradesh was able to fully vaccinate 55.5% of 39.5 million eligible population. The state of Madhya Pradesh vaccinated 80,857,608 population in 52 districts with support from UNICEF.
- In the state of Uttar Pradesh, RCCE plans have been adopted by over 11 departments. Dastak communication initiative continued (approx. 29.4 million USD leveraged) while integrating and promoting COVID-19 vaccination cumulatively reaching over 28.8 million households. Half a million frontline functionaries have been enabled twice. Positive trends in reduction of vaccine hesitancy (from over 30 per cent to approx. 2 per cent) and an increase in social capital capacities (98 per cent SHG members have received training on COVID-19) have been observed in the state of Uttar Pradesh.

Emergency Preparedness, Response and Disaster Risk Reduction

- 2021 witnessed an escalation in hydro-meteorological hazards continuing beyond their normal period of occurrence, particularly in the month of November. Heavy rains in October-November and the subsequent flooding affected 400,000 people in the districts of Alappuzha, Idukki, Kottayam, and Pathanamthitta districts in Kerala. UNICEF in the state of Kerala supported the state Inter Agency Group and District Disaster Management Authority to provide humanitarian assistance to the four most affected districts. Rapid Needs Assessment was conducted in four districts, followed by Joint Disaster Needs Assessment in four districts. Newly established child friendly spaces are reaching 500 children in 15 Gram Panchayats (GPs). Psychosocial programs initiated in 15 GPs.

Maldives

Nutrition

- The technical and coordination support to the national nutrition programme continued throughout November, and the support in turn indirectly enabled a total of 1,067 children to receive growth-monitoring services and 253 parents and caregivers received IYCF counseling from the 12 reporting sites.
- The UNICEF-supported consultant placed in the Health Protection Agency continues to support the implementation of Social and Behaviour Change Communication strategy on first 1000 days, providing nutrition specific interventions, including breastfeeding counseling, growth monitoring and promotion (GMP) and IYCF.
- During the reporting period, a session on gestational diabetes and nutrition counselling was conducted for health professionals in one of the hospitals at the central level. A total of 18 health professionals (nurses) participated in this session. A Further session on "Managing diet during diabetes" was conducted for the staff of Ministry of Health for advocacy and awareness, reaching a total of about 50 health professionals. All sessions included components on COVID-19 specific scenarios, and considerations for when patient was sick.

Health

- UNICEF continued to support the government's efforts to plan and roll-out the COVID-19 vaccination campaign through technical assistance placed within the EPI programme. As of 1 December 2021, a total of 395,807 people has received the first dose and 364,229 people have received the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, covering 87.01 per cent of people over 18 years of age with a first dose and 79.79 per cent with two doses.
- The UNICEF-supported public health officer placed in Health Protection Agency provided 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 November, a total of 518 pregnant women were registered and 540 pregnant women received antenatal care counselling from a total of 20 reporting facilities in the periphery.
- UNICEF continued its advocacy and provided support to ensure essential health services remain undisrupted. As such, technical support to provide child health care services in the urban health center during COVID-19 emergency time continued, including immunization and of children with routine vaccines. Furthermore, a total of 248 children attended immunization at the 12 sites in the periphery UNICEF was providing monitoring and support.
- UNICEF supported the Health Protection Agency to conduct trainings on pre-term care package for health professionals in the main tertiary hospital and other hospitals in the greater Male' area. The training sessions built the capacity of healthcare providers to deliver quality care for premature babies at the facility level, including when COVID-19 is suspected or confirmed. A total of 60 healthcare professionals (6 male and 54 female) were trained, including doctors and nurses.
- The technical support from UNICEF in the form a cold chain international expert is providing key guidance and hands-on support to the procurement of cold chain equipment and training of personnel.

Child Protection, GBVIE, and PSEA

- UNICEF Maldives supported the Ombudsperson Office to provide capacity building for social workers from all care intuitions on monitoring and audit tools.

Education

- Based on the lessons learned from the COVID-19 response in the Education sector, UNICEF supported the revision of the existing Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan for Education to incorporate pandemic and terror attacks as additional emergency scenarios. A high level multi-sectoral advisory committee was formed which enabled the contribution and consensus of all relevant sectors. Following the revisions, the respective school Standard Operating Procedures for each emergency scenario were also developed.
- UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education to assess the learning levels of students at primary level when students returned to school after the COVID-19 related lockdown. To address the issue of learning loss, a remediation plan was developed, and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy was revised to incorporate remediation through differentiated instructions. A total of 210 teachers were oriented on the revised strategy.
- UNICEF supported the National Institute of Education to build institutional capacity of curriculum developers and teacher educators in blended learning and online pedagogy and assessment. Through this support a total of 34 teacher educators and 216 teachers became more knowledgeable and confident in applying the skills in online classroom.

C4D, Community Engagement and AAP

- UNICEF is working with Maldivian Red Crescent Society to ensure RCCE messaging effectively reach people with special needs including migrant workers, people with disabilities and the elderly, and engage them now particularly through CSOs which represent them to find out how messaging/engagement can be improved. Focus is also on understanding how to redesign new content to suit their needs (e.g., audio messages or use of radio to reach more elderly). Through these efforts, both agencies are also supporting the work to address misinformation which is fueling the vaccine hesitancy.

Gaps/Challenges

- The limited human resource within the health sector combined with the dual demands of health sector staff is affecting efficient delivery of results.

Nepal Nutrition

- A total of 11,408 (1,608 in October) children aged 6-59 months with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) have been treated in 863 Outpatient Therapeutic Centres (OTCs) and 22 Nutrition Rehabilitation Homes (NRH) across the country over the period of January-November 2021, with UNICEF support.
- 90 per cent children (of around 2.4 million) aged 6-59 months received Vitamin A supplements during the two-day national Vitamin A campaign conducted by Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) on 24-25 October 2021. Furthermore, 88 per cent of children (of around 2.1 million) aged 12-59 months also received deworming tablets during this two-day nationwide campaign.
- Caregivers of 39,441 children aged below 23 months received IYCF counselling during the reporting period. In addition, UNICEF continued ongoing support for IYCF information dissemination and counselling services via telephone, radio, SMS, TV, and other social media communication channels.
- UNICEF has been supporting MoHP to implement simplified approach for the treatment of moderate and severe acute malnutrition throughout the country by using the ready-to-use therapeutic food. 35 out of 77 districts health workers have already been trained.

Health

- A total of 18,317,508 doses² of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered as of 30 November, covering 50 per cent of targeted population aged over 18 years with one dose of vaccine and 42 per cent with two full doses. UNICEF continued to provide technical support in effective vaccine management, vaccination campaign including supply management of vaccine and devices. Meanwhile, on 14 November, the government rolled out the Pfizer³ BioNTech vaccine (received in October through COVAX facility) targeting, for the first time, children aged 12 years and above, from high co-morbid group, and was administered from 24 selected tertiary level hospitals nationwide. The Pfizer first dose reached 53,836 patients with chronic illness and adolescents aged 12-17 years old.
- In November, UNICEF and partners reached 5,767 parents and caregivers of children and adolescents with mental health sessions/support. Likewise, 77 frontline health workers were reached through similar sessions at COVID-19 hospitals.
- UNICEF and the Biomedical Engineering Foundation Nepal (BEFON) continued technical support to all 16 COVID-19 designated hospitals for repair and maintenance of oxygen therapy equipment. In November, the BEFON team visited eight hospitals and monitored and ensured proper operation of the oxygen equipment.
- UNICEF provided three million vaccination cards, 1,288 units of oxygen cylinders (50 liters) to the government for COVID-19 case management.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

- UNICEF has reached about 202,927 people including 48,720 returnees over the period of January-November 2021 with at least one or more WASH services and supplies (hygiene kits, soap, sanitizers and drinking water) including risk communication messages.
- About 93,550 people (2,250 in November) benefitted from the installation of handwashing stations in various settings such as communities, health care facilities (HCF), isolation centres, schools and point of entry at borders.
- 32,870 people benefitted from provision of sanitation facilities at the points of entry, schools and HCF. In addition, around 2,945 health workers were trained on WASH/IPC in relation to COVID-19. A total of 94 HCFs are supported with WASH facilities.
- UNICEF as the co-lead of WASH Cluster is supporting to conduct joint monitoring visits, led by the lead agency, Ministry of Water Supply, in all seven provinces with the objective to monitor the quality of response, sustainability of the interventions and areas of improvements at provincial and local level. The joint visits have so far been completed in four provinces (Province One, Gandaki, Karnali and Sudurpaschim provinces) covering 15 districts' 15 HCFs, two points of entry, eight isolation centres, four schools, etc. This joint monitoring is also supported and participated by WASH cluster member agencies.

Child Protection, GBViE, and PSEA

- UNICEF and its partners supported 9,704 people (3,615 male and 6,089 female) including those staying in home isolation, children in correction homes, vulnerable children and families affected by floods and landslides reached with psychosocial interventions.
- 484 health personnel from one-stop crisis management centres were trained on gender-based violence (GBV) and effective co-ordination and delivery of age-appropriate GBV services to children experiencing violence. 18,530 people (6,722 male and 11,808 female) were reached with GBV prevention or response services. Additionally, UNICEF reached 199 new children (36 boys and 163 girls) with protection helplines and emergency intervention services.
- During this year's '16 Days of Activism against Gender-based violence'⁴ (25 November -10 December), UNICEF partnered with the European Union, UN Resident Coordinator's Office, UN-Women, and other UN agencies in Nepal in events amplifying survivor's voices and advocated for reforms, including adaptation of GBV prevention and response services to the specific needs of children and adolescents.
- UNICEF continued its support to community-based alert mechanisms. 29 community volunteers were oriented on the protection monitoring and incident reporting (PMIR) system. 522 persons (338 female) were virtually trained on identification and care of children without adequate care.

Education

- In November, UNICEF and its partners distributed self-learning materials to 25,874 number of pre-school and primary level children (49 per cent girls) to ensure learning continuity of children. Altogether, 93,933 children (46,025 girls) have been reached with printed self-learning materials since the COVID-19 second wave in April.

² https://covid19.mohp.gov.np/covid/englishSituationReport/61a6099f1a8e9_SitRep660_COVID-19_30-11-2021_EN.pdf

³ <https://tinyurl.com/2p8pbha5>

⁴ <https://bit.ly/3GW5ynW>

- UNICEF in partnership with local governments and partners trained 2,150 stakeholders (child club members, parent teachers association/school management committee members, government officials, etc.) on comprehensive school safety.
- To ensure safe and protective learning environment at school during post-pandemic situation, UNICEF and its partners provided training to 453 teachers on safe reopening of schools and safety kits distribution (masks, infra-red thermometer etc.) in 183 schools and installation of improved handwashing stations in 20 schools in Karnali and Sudurpaschim provinces.

Social Protection and Cash Transfers:

- UNICEF is implementing a shock-responsive social protection (SRSP) intervention and designed a SRSP response, aiming to support families through the local governments (municipalities) using the existing social protection system. UNICEF has started to implement the emergency cash through a “Cash Plus” approach that targets the most vulnerable people and children, including Dalit families, and is reaching 9,000 households. Meanwhile, the existing list of a social protection scheme has been updated to address exclusion, making it possible to implement a real-time monitoring of the cash distribution.

C4D, Community Engagement and AAP

- Collection of community feedback has considerably increased with the training of radio journalists, in partnership with the Association of Community Radio Broadcasters. 27 radio journalists were trained on collecting community concerns, questions, and grievances.
- The monthly listening insights, collected from 57 radio listening groups, as well as through Nepal Scouts and NRCS community volunteers was shared with the MoHP and RCCE stakeholders to adjust the RCCE actions, accordingly.
- More than seven million people were reached through dedicated radio and television programs with contents on COVID-19 testing, public health safety compliance, vaccine availability and efficacy including focus on safety and preventive measures in schools.
- The UNICEF-initiated local mask movements in support of compulsory mask wearing campaign continued to gain momentum in November. Province Two Chief Minister’s office, provincial health directorate and youth mobilisers and Nepal Scouts volunteers are supporting the mask movements with a focus on population in markets, offices, shops, and public transportation.
- 19 municipalities in Province Two were further oriented on compulsory mask initiative and are conducting mobilisation across the province. Additionally, 26 volunteers were mobilised in nine districts of Karnali and Sudurpaschim provinces to promote public health and social measures through door-to-door communication and community meetings. This is complemented by establishment of mask bank for distribution to poor families.
- UNICEF Nepal reached around 9.2 million people on social media with content and messages on reimagining a better post-pandemic world for children, various vaccine arrivals in the country, and national Vitamin A campaign.
- During the reporting period, UNICEF-supported Crisis Media Hub at MoHP, produced round 100 multimedia contents on COVID-19, mental health, Omicron new variant, Pfizer vaccine rollout, and COVID-safety behaviours during festivals. These contents were produced and disseminated through MoHP’s Viber group and social media, UNICEF and several other RCCE members and partners' radio network and community activities.

Pakistan

Nutrition

- UNICEF supported a total of 3,076 OTP sites, which provided nutrition services (Balochistan: 183; KP: 125; Punjab: 1,755; Sindh: 1,013).
- With UNICEF direct support around 450,762 children (224,489 boys and 226,273 girls) of 6-59 months of age screened for malnutrition using mid upper arm circumference (MUAC) at nutrition sites (Balochistan: 62,229, KP: 42,177; Punjab: 214,193 and Sindh: 132,163)
- A total of 64,372 SAM children (boys: 29,246 and girls: 35,126) have been admitted for Severe Acute Malnutrition treatment.
- A total 586,132 children 6-59 months (boys: 287,366; and girls: 298,766) received multi-micronutrient supplementation.

Health

- UNICEF continues to support provincial and regional health departments to ensure continuity of essential primary health care services including immunization, antenatal care, postnatal care, delivery services, childcare and curative care for adults in 136 targeted health facilities reaching 5.1 million people.
- Measles immunization reached total of 138,487 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 25,662 frontline workers in 2021.
- UNICEF-supported IPC training reached 17,185 frontline health workers in total.
- UNICEF supported the training of 10,387 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 1,732 pediatricians trained.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

- To date, more than 686,551 people have gained access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities in 111 Health Care Facilities, contributing towards reducing the risk of COVID-19 infection.
- Almost 2.2 million people have been supported with hygiene promotion services including COVID-19 prevention and control information.
- UNICEF supported an overall fabrication and installation of 1,070 handwashing stations placed at strategic points in cities and communities enabling over 2.33 million people thus far to wash hands properly.
- UNICEF reached an overall of 378,784 children (193,180 girls and 185,604 boys) in the 712 schools (KP 571 in, 30 in Balochistan and 111 in Sindh) with WASH/IPC services

Child Protection and GBVIE

- UNICEF and its partners have trained a total of 11,843 social workforce (7,245 women and 4,598 men) in psychosocial support and stigma prevention in all provinces through a package developed by UNICEF.
- A total of 380,704 children, caregivers and other community members (74,660 girls, 64,103 boys, 125,412 women, 116,529 men) received psychosocial support by trained social workforce professionals in Punjab, KP, Sindh, Baluchistan, GB and AJ&K
- Messages on stigma and violence against children have reached a total of 13,648,757.
- The total number of children who received child protection services supported by UNICEF in Sindh and Balochistan has reached 4,265 children (1,784 girls and 2,481 boys).

Education

- Safe operation of schools is supported through adoption of SOPs in schools with the guidance and engagement of 16,481 (6,732 women) teachers and education officers, who have accessed training in safe reopening and operation of schools across Pakistan.
- Parents have been reached with encouraging messages for enrolment/attendance of children through SMS and different social media platforms, taking total number of parents reached to 587,341.
- In addition, 40,589 teachers and education officers (15,412 female) accessed training on mental health and psychosocial support, across Pakistan.
- UNICEF continued to support dissemination of student vaccination resources that include fliers, posters, and banners. To support digital Learning Initiative, rubric for teachers and students under finalization and training of 10 pilot schools to be carried out in the second week of December.
- Otermans Institute supported 17 weeks online training started from 17th November 2021, the online training is provided to 100 students (39 girls) from Punjab and Sindh and focused on functional English, build basic soft skills and communication skills.

C4D, Community Engagement and AAP

- With special focus on high-burden districts, and through health alliances and existing polio structures, 91,398 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 71.6 million people were reached through TV, radio and press.
- On social media, Facebook continue to be the major platform for UNICEF Pakistan. During the reporting period UNICEF received 8,019,809 total impressions and 126,470 total engagements.
- 15.2 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. 3,404,235 calls have been responded to so far.

Gaps/Challenges

- All four provinces are facing stock out of nutrition supplies, which is affecting the continuation of nutrition services. To address this challenge, UNICEF procured additional ready to use therapeutic food (RUTF) stock worth of 0.8 million.
- Following COVID-19 SOPs for community engagement sessions on stigma, Violence Against Children (VAC) and Gender Based Violence (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 supported the Ministry of Health (MoH) in convening technical inter-ministerial coordination meetings and preparing the relevant documents in preparation for the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit (Tokyo N4G Summit 2021) on 7 - 8 December 2021 which enabled the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) to showcase strong financial and non-financial commitments aimed at ending malnutrition in all its forms by ensuring equal access to safe and nutritious diets by all.
- UNICEF and the Medical Research Institute developed a comprehensive national level research proposal to fill the gap of updated data on the micronutrient status among women and children and the coverage of interventions to improve the status of micronutrients in women and children in Sri Lanka. The updated data would ensure necessary control and prevention of micronutrient deficiencies by acting as a baseline for monitoring on-going nutrition intervention programmes and in identifying new interventions such as fortification of staple foods with key micronutrients.

Health

- The National Effective Vaccine Management Assessment (EVMA) was completed in November. UNICEF ensured high level technical support through international and local consultancy services and financial support to complete the EVMA. The National sample included the Central Vaccine Store, 16 Regional Medical Stores and 31 Medical Officers of Health offices. Data entered in the EVMA 2.0 online package, would go through a process of data cleaning prior to generating the report.
- Responsive parental care is the foundation of early childhood development and paves the pathway for the human capital development of the country. Children, who have been treated at, and discharged from, neonatal intensive care units (NICUs) are at a high risk for developmental delays and disabilities. Given that the country's health system does not provide adequate

guidance to working parents on how to care for such children, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Perinatal Society of Sri Lanka to conduct a symposium with the objective of creating a policy dialogue that will inform and contribute to the larger advocacy on parental care through adopting an evidence-based, inclusive, life-cycle approach for all from early childhood period.

- Regular hands-on in-service training in Essential Newborn Care is mandatory to ensure the knowledge, skills and competencies of the healthcare workers caring for the newborns. Overcoming the restrictions imposed by COVID-19 pandemic to conduct regular trainings, UNICEF provided technical support to the Family Health Bureau to conduct the first ever four-day hybrid type of Essential Newborn Care Course in three major hospitals in Gampaha district which reports the highest number of births annually. In this hybrid course, the lectures were delivered by respective resource persons online and the clinical practice sessions were conducted on site by the experts in the respective hospitals.
- Sri Lanka is a focus country for the Primary Health Care (PHC) accelerator and the country was in agenda of the larger PHC-A meetings in November. UNICEF joined with WHO in supporting the MoH in preparation for the meeting, which was held on November 2, where the Director General of Health Services of the MoH and Representatives of WHO and UNICEF made presentations. UNICEF presented the finding and recommendations from the formative evaluation of Community Health Worker policies and systems support in Sri Lanka, conducted by UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia, which would feed into the post-Astana national health care strengthening plans.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

- UNICEF as the sector lead, organized the WASH sector meeting in collaboration with the State Ministry of Rural Divisional Drinking Water Supply Projects Development, to understand the organizational level responses and preparedness for upcoming monsoon season amidst of COVID-19 health emergency and continuation of the organizational efforts in 2022.
- The initial preparations and bidding process to install incinerators in two base hospitals are in the process. UNICEF coordinated site visits of the bidders and had several discussions with the proposed hospitals to gather relevant technical information such as location of the incinerators, waste generation patterns and rate.
- Water safety plan manual for community operated water supply schemes was launched. The manual support Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and communities to develop water safety plans for their drinking water supply schemes considering multi-hazards risk assessments, climate change and emergency preparedness to ensure the safety and security of water supply.

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 32 children were reunified with their families and prevented 156 children from being separated from 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 continuously strengthened, and 462 children were supported through psychosocial first aid by trained Child Protection officers.
- 32 children were supported through coordinated case management during the reporting period.
- The National Child Protection Authority was supported to strengthen the child protection coordination and rollout of coordinated child protection emergency response. During this period, one coordination meeting was organized with the participation of all child protection agencies at national level.

Education

- Continuing the support to the Provincial Departments of Education (PDE) on Back-to-School activities, UNICEF assisted the Uva and Central provinces to train more than 600 teachers who are in charge of school health clubs, on information and implementation of school level activities. In Eastern province, more than 500 secondary teachers have benefited from the division-based psychosocial support training organized by the province.
- Home-Based Learning programme of the Ministry of Education (MoE) supported by UNICEF has particularly supported children with focus on those who were out of school or less contact during school closure and would complement the government's 100 days adjusted curriculum to support the learning recovery efforts. In Eastern province, numeracy and literacy based diagnostic assessment for Grade 5 has been completed and that for other primary grades is in progress. Using a blended approach, UNICEF also supported East, Uva and Central provinces to prepare adjusted curriculum for preschools.
- The Psychosocial Support Services guidelines developed by UNICEF, MoE and PDE in North and Eastern provinces is being printed and will be distributed to approximately all 113,000 secondary teachers in schools. Furthermore, UNICEF will support the MoE to provide ToTs in the remaining seven provinces to support the nation-wide roll of the guidelines.
- UNICEF agreed with the MoE and Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka 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 technical partner has been finalized by the TEC in December 2021. 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. UNICEF hosted consultations to verify information and is preparing to share the final drafts and discuss the findings with the GoSL. 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 partnered with Sarvodaya and held consultations with leaders from five districts. The consultations highlighted the difficulties people in these areas face, the problems they have in accessing social protection and the vulnerabilities COVID-19 has created.
- UNICEF created a brief on the 2022 budget speech and disseminated it to the general public. The brief included comments on the gaps in child-sensitive and shock-responsive proposals in the budget speech.

C4D, Community Engagement and AAP

- A campaign on COVID-19 appropriate behaviours was 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 (HPB)/MoH, was informed by the result of a Knowledge Attitudes and Practices (KAP) survey conducted pre-campaign.
- UNICEF in collaboration with HPB completed a second KAP survey, the results of which are undergoing validation and will be used to inform the next round of RCCE campaign.
- UNICEF supported the safe reopening of schools by disseminating key messages and guidance to parents and the general public on how to protect children from getting COVID-19. The guide for parents included ensuring children have masks, packed food for school, sanitizer, and checking temperature daily before departure for school.
- 439 trained Community Leaders were mobilized by UNICEF to monitor the adherence of new normal guidelines and COVID-19 protective practices in 2,639 community level settings covering all parts of the country.
- UNICEF trained 401 children in childcare institutions in Western Province on IPC measures and strengthening their preparedness to the pandemic, by also providing essential hygiene supplies.
- Together with the Estate and Urban Health Unit of the MoH and Office of the Regional Director of Health Services in Batticaloa, UNICEF disseminated risk communication audio messages and promoted protective practices also targeting the Deepavali festival season through the public address systems, reaching over 900,000 highly vulnerable populations in plantation communities and Batticaloa District.

Human Interest Story

After 18 months of school closures, children in Bangladesh thrilled to be back in class:
Closures have brought to light that schools provide children with much more than an education

In Bangladesh, schools were closed for 18 months, throughout the entire first year and a half of the COVID-19 pandemic, until 12 September 2021 when they reopened again. Beyond falling behind on their education, when schools were closed, children missed out on many things – from school meals to routine vaccinations. Some experienced social isolation and increased anxiety. Others were exposed to abuse and violence. With schools now open, primary students in Dhaka, Bangladesh’s capital, share what it’s like to be back in class.

*Nine-year-old Afsana Mimi says:
“Studying is important. I would like to become a teacher...While I was studying at home, I could not meet other students; I could not show my work to my teacher. I did not feel like studying as I was studying alone. Now, that I can go back to school, I can interact with everyone. I really enjoy going to school.”*



*Eleven-year-old Abid Sarkaer says:
“I was very happy when I found out that schools would reopen. I think the math’s class and the play time are the best part of the school days, but I really like everything about my school. After finishing my classes, usually I run to the playground to play with my friends.”*

Nine-year-old Riya Moni says:
 “I like everything about school. I like all the classes. The best part of being at school is learning from my teacher as I like her a lot...I was very happy when I heard schools would reopen. I can meet my friends and teacher again...When I grow up, I want to be a policewoman. I want to help others.”



UNICEF/UN0527650/Sujan



UNICEF/UN0527688/Sujan

Nine-year-old Fatema Akter says:
 “The best thing about going back to school is that I can meet my friends, teachers, study with others and play with others. I did not like to study while I was studying at home...I want to become a doctor so that I can help people.”

Regional Funding Overview & Partnerships

In the region of South Asia, UNICEF funding needs are a total of US\$629 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 20 per cent, amounting to more than US\$127.7 million at the end of November.

Funding Status

HAC Appeal	Requirements (\$)	Funds available			Funding gap	
		Humanitarian funds received in 2021(\$)	Other Resources (\$)	Carry-over (\$)	\$	%
Afghanistan	191,957,992	188,579,719	-	32,045,638	-	0%
Bangladesh	203,618,874	63,448,125	72,425,110	17,597,971	50,148,668	25%
India	126,664,902	71,399,912	-	18,950,975	36,314,015	29%
Nepal	25,530,000	15,077,705	-	3,531,228	6,921,067	27%
Pakistan	61,406,942	2,626,360	3,756,731	7,080,662	47,943,189	78%
South Asia Region (incl Bhutan, Maldives, Sri Lanka)	19,838,343	4,246,748	0	561,310	15,030,285	76%
Total	629,017,053	345,378,569	76,181,841	79,767,784	127,688,859	20%

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