



UNICEF/Tajikistan/2021/S. Odinaev

# Tajikistan Humanitarian Situation Report No. 2



Reporting Period: 1 January to 31 December 2021

## Highlights

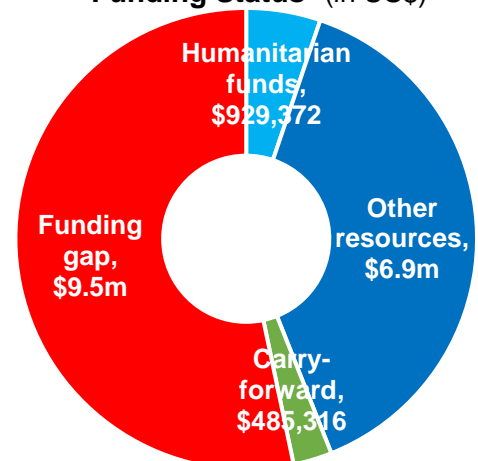
- Although the risk of transmission of new and more easily transmissible variants of COVID-19 remains high in Tajikistan, a strong government effort to vaccinate the country's population has led to a relatively low number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the country in 2021.
- Despite the logistical challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF and partner's support to the government helped ensure that there was no stock out of essential vaccines and lifesaving items at the primary and secondary health facility levels and no interruption of the essential health services was reported. In addition, with UNICEF support, 7,351 children with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) were admitted to the integrated management of acute malnutrition (IMAM) programme.
- Together with the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), UNICEF ensured continuous access to school during the reporting period by implementing a nation-wide safety campaign in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, benefitting more than 2.2 million school children (980,766 girls) and 151,896 pre-schoolers across the country. In addition, a total of 643,531 students, teachers and admin staff were reached with critical water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) supplies in education facilities.
- UNICEF worked with parents, teachers, community leaders and authorities to raise awareness, prevent and protect children, especially girls, from sexual and gender-based violence, reaching 31,817 people including 20,512 females (18,988 girls) and 11,305 males (10,375 boys).
- UNICEF received US\$ 929,372 in new humanitarian funding, plus an additional US\$ 485,316 in carry-over humanitarian funds from 2020. In order to meet the urgent needs of children affected by the pandemic, UNICEF also leveraged US\$ 6.9 million available resources from existing programmes, leaving a shortfall of US\$ 9.5 million.

## Situation in Numbers

-  **2,800,000**  
children in need of humanitarian assistance
-  **1,600,000**  
children need health and nutrition support
-  **620,000**  
In need of WASH supplies and services
-  **368,000**  
Children in need of social protection

## UNICEF Appeal 2021 US\$ 17.9 million

Funding Status\* (in US\$)



\*Funding available include funds received in 2021, carry-over from 2020 and repurposed funds with agreement from donors.

## Funding Overview and Partnerships

In 2021, UNICEF Tajikistan appealed for **US\$ 17.9 million** to provide lifesaving humanitarian support for women in children in Tajikistan. In 2021, UNICEF has received **US\$ 929,372** in new humanitarian funding, plus an additional **US\$ 485,316** in carry-over humanitarian funds from 2020, leaving a significant funding gap to meet the needs of children in Tajikistan. UNICEF expresses its sincere gratitude to all public and private donors for the contributions received, including generous contributions from the European Union, GAVI, Xylem Fund, US Fund for UNICEF and the United Nations Multi Partner Trust. UNICEF also recognizes the generous contribution of the World Bank to the Government of Tajikistan towards social protection. This contribution allowed UNICEF to focus limited resources towards technical support for social protection rather than the funding of cash transfers.

Given the significant gap in humanitarian funding, UNICEF leveraged **US\$ 6.9 million** from existing programmes funded by the European Union, Islamic Development Bank, World Bank and UNICEF thematic funding to address needs around the impact of the pandemic, including around **US\$ 5 million** from the European Union towards infection prevention and control (IPC). In this way, UNICEF was able to reach the targets of several indicators despite a funding shortfall of **US\$ 9.5 million**. Due to the lack of funding however, several needs of children remained unmet, particularly in areas of nutrition, WASH, child protection and communications for development (C4D). Flexible resources remain critical to UNICEF's ability to respond effectively and efficiently to this crisis in a comprehensive way and cover unfunded priority areas. Without adequate and timely funding, UNICEF and its partners will be unable to support an adequate response to the humanitarian needs of children and their families.

## Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

Although the risk of transmission of new and more easily transmissible variants of COVID-19 remains high, the government's successful rollout of COVID-19 vaccine in 2021 likely contributed to the significant drop in the number of new COVID-19 cases reported in the country during the second half of the year. As of 31 December 2021, Tajikistan reported 17,493 confirmed cases of COVID-19 resulting in 125 deaths since the beginning of the pandemic.<sup>1</sup> Tajikistan was the first Central Asian country to receive COVID-19 vaccine through the COVAX mechanism in March 2021, with the official launch of the National Vaccine Deployment Plan. As of 31 December, over 3.8 million people (65.3 per cent of the targeted population) received one dose and 52.2 per cent received both doses of COVID-19 vaccine. Frontline health workers and medical professionals were the first to be vaccinated, with teachers also being included as a priority group. Health workers continue to conduct active surveillance and invite people for vaccination. UNICEF's support to the government's vaccine rollout is reported under the global Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) [situation reports](#).

In 2020, 2 million school children and 143,938 pre-schoolers were affected by school closures. While COVID-19 challenges remained in 2021, schools operated without interruptions since August 2020, which has been a significant achievement for the country. However, limited WASH resources in schools have created a challenge for IPC efforts. Across Tajikistan, 1,500 schools lack adequate WASH facilities. Likewise, 4.9 million people lack access to basic sanitation at home, thus leaving a significant portion of the population at risk of COVID-19.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, Tajikistan's economy began recovering from the pandemic in 2021, with GDP growing by 8.7 per cent in the first half of 2021 compared to 4.5 per cent in 2020; however, this growth did not benefit everyone equally. In 2021, the food basket price increased by 17 per cent compared to the start of 2020. Coupled with the loss of economic opportunities due to the pandemic, primarily remittances, this has caused severe stress in household food access. According to the World Bank, 33 per cent of households reported reduced food consumption in August 2021 compared to 28 per cent in 2020.<sup>3</sup> Inadequate food consumption and feeding and care and hygiene practices are major risk factors for acute malnutrition. More than 220,000 children in Tajikistan continue to suffer from stunted growth while another 60,000 children under five years face increased risk of death due to severe acute malnutrition. Additionally, over 40 per cent of children and women of reproductive age are anaemic due to poor eating patterns and lack of quality health and nutrition services.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also increased children and women's vulnerability to gender-based violence,<sup>4</sup> and left more children living in poverty. Findings of an impact assessment of the COVID-19 pandemic to children's right to protection suggest that although COVID-19 has deteriorated the economic situation of 42.4 per cent of the families affected by migration, 58.6 per cent of families did not receive any governmental assistance. The level of

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<sup>1</sup> WHO, [COVID-19 Dashboard](#)

<sup>2</sup> WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for WASH, the World Bank and the Tajikistan Ministry of Education and Science, 2017

<sup>3</sup> World Bank, [Tajikistan, Country Economic Update, Summer 2021: Rebounding Economy, Challenges Remain](#), 2021

<sup>4</sup> 'Integrated Socio-Economic Response Framework to COVID-19 (ISEF) for Tajikistan'.

discouragement and depression was high among caregivers, 83.4 per cent of children were prevented to enjoy physical interactions with peers due to the fear of being infected. A proportion (31.6 per cent) of respondents reported developing mental and social problems, while 31.3 per cent had problems with the family member finding a job upon returning from migration.

Apart from the devastating impact of COVID-19, children in Tajikistan also experienced multiple humanitarian and security incidents in 2021, including a polio outbreak, floods, landslides, mudflows in Khatlon region (affecting more than 18,000 people), an earthquake in Rasht valley (affecting 16 villages and damaging over 300 households and more than 20 social sector facilities), a border dispute with Kyrgyzstan (with the total affected population during the acute phase at around 6,500 people).<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, in early 2021, Tajikistan began receiving an increasing number of asylum-seekers from Afghanistan – UNHCR registered 5,598 new arrivals in 2021. By 31 December 2021, over 1,100 Afghan refugees have been resettled in Canada, bringing the total number of registered Afghan refugees in Tajikistan to 10,886 people.<sup>6</sup> UNICEF's response to these emergencies are reported in regional [situation reports](#).

## Summary Analysis of Programme Response

### Health

UNICEF jointly with MoHSPP constantly monitored the provision of health services to women and children during the COVID-19 crisis. In 2021, a total of 654,426 children and women accessed primary health care in UNICEF-supported facilities. UNICEF in close coordination with the private sector, humanitarian and development partners and UNICEF supply division, facilitated the timely procurement, delivery, and distribution of cold chain equipment, integrated management of childhood illness (IMCI) drugs, personal protective equipment (PPE), and lifesaving equipment and medicine. As a result, despite the logistical challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was no stock out of essential vaccines and lifesaving items at the primary and secondary health facility levels and no interruption of the essential health services was reported.

### Nutrition

In line with the government plan of action to reduce prevalence of wasting, UNICEF supported the government in the implementation of an integrated response to addressing the need of malnourished children and pregnant and lactating women, including preventive and curative nutrition services. UNICEF supported training of 632 healthcare workers to strengthen their capacity to provide Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) counselling and maternal nutrition counselling. This resulted in 515,954 caregivers of young children and pregnant women being provided with maternal nutrition and IYCF counselling throughout 2021.

UNICEF also supported with procurement of nutrition commodities for treatment of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and monitoring and supportive supervision including on the job training, in close collaboration with the technical working group on the integrated management of acute malnutrition (IMAM). In 2021, 7,351 children with SAM were admitted to the IMAM programme, out of which 6,958 children with SAM were treated and cured. However, due to funding constrains, micronutrient supplementation was not provided for the targeted children of 6-59 months.



*Amina, a 4 year old girl from Dushanbe benefits from UNICEF's IMAM programme*

### Child Protection, GBViE and PSEA

UNICEF continued supporting the operationalisation of Family and Child Support Centres in close partnership with MoHSPP. Caregivers of children, mainly children with disabilities were supported online to acquire skills to work with their children preventing them from being placed in the residential childcare institutions. As of 31 December 2021, 928 children, among them children with disabilities, received online support, including psychosocial support, recommendations on prevention of COVID-19, and legal support to receive medical and social services.

UNICEF continued working with parents, teachers, community leaders and state authorities to raise awareness, prevent and protect children, especially girls from sexual and gender-based violence. In doing so, UNICEF set up complaint and referral mechanisms in 51 schools of 10 districts of the country. Overall, 31,817 people, including 20,512 females (18,988 girls) and 11,305 males (10,375 boys) were covered with public awareness and prevention activities.

<sup>5</sup> This does not include those who are unregistered or in the border districts.

<sup>6</sup> UNHCR Tajikistan, Refugee Population Figures as of 31 December 2021

## Education

The operationalization of the National COVID-19 Mitigation and Response Plan in education, in line with the National Education Strategy 2030 and Mid-term Education Action Plan 2021-2023 represented major achievements in 2021 supported by consultations with government counterparts, UN Agencies, international financial institutions and community-based organisations. The endorsed strategy, action plan and related costing exercises enabled UNICEF to scale-up its interventions with focus on inclusive education, disaster risk reduction (DRR), and promoting quality education and digital learning in line with Reimagine Education global Initiative.

In line with UNICEF LearnIn initiative, UNICEF, in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) and the European Union, supported digital transformation of the education system through development of a national digital education roadmap. A nation-wide assessment resulted in localized solutions for school-based digital infrastructure, internet connectivity and innovative partnerships with the private sector. Digital content and platforms were developed focusing on parental care during COVID-19, early childhood, and primary-general secondary education. Over 500 quality inclusive multi-media lessons for grades 1-11 were developed, with 410 teachers and 120 methodologists and specialists capacitated in the development of interactive TV lessons.

UNICEF, together with the MoES, ensured continuous access to school during 2021 by implementing a nation-wide safety campaign in response to COVID-19, benefitting more than 2.2 million school children (980,766 girls) and 151,896 pre-schoolers across the country. Activation of the digital campaign with posts and videos for teachers, children and parents resulted in a total reach of 832,360 people (332,944 women).

## WASH

Responding to the critical WASH and IPC needs in schools, UNICEF in partnership with the MoES reached 893 education facilities (22 per cent in the country, including 818 secondary schools and 75 education facilities with special status - e.g. boarding schools, orphan children's homes, specialized institutions for children with disabilities) with the distribution of hygiene items (liquid soap, bleaching liquid gel, 65 per cent calcium hypochlorite and hand sanitizers) to help strengthen their protocols on IPC. Within these 893 education facilities, 643,531 individuals (students, teachers and admin staff including 292,880 girls, 304,834 boys, 26,574 women and 19,243 men) were reached with critical WASH supplies. Due to lack of funding, infrastructure related interventions to improve access to water supply, sanitation (toilets) and hygiene (handwashing stations) were not achieved as planned.



*Rehabilitated WASH facilities and supplies in Nurek, Khatlon oblast provided by UNICEF help ensure a safe learning environment amidst*

## Social Protection and Cash Transfers

As part of the 2021 HAC appeal for Tajikistan, UNICEF sought funding to provide direct cash transfers to poor and the most vulnerable families affected by the pandemic. Due to underfunding of the HAC and in light of the generous contribution of the World Bank to the Government of Tajikistan for cash transfers, UNICEF did not provide cash transfer support in response to COVID-19 in 2021. Nonetheless, poor and most vulnerable families, who are registered through targeted social assistance programmes, received additional emergency cash assistance to cope with consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic through the World Bank support to the Government of Tajikistan. These payments were made utilising a cash transfer system that was developed by the World Bank and the Government of Tajikistan with UNICEF technical assistance in 2019.

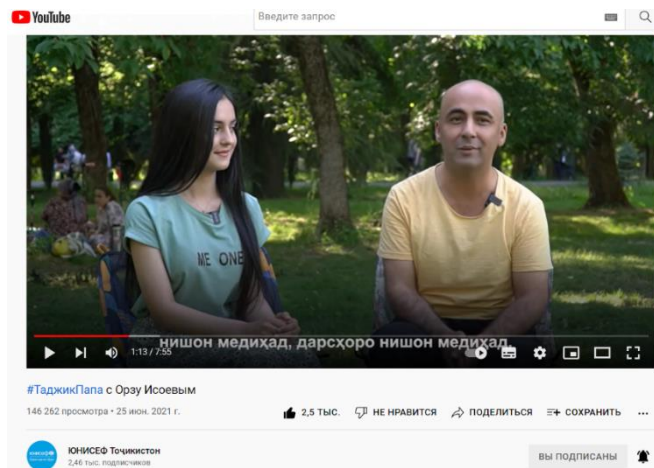
In addition, UNICEF continued its support to the Government of Tajikistan to develop a comprehensive social protection mechanisms and robust social work system to better meet the needs of vulnerable children, including children affected by migration, in contact/conflict with the law, emergencies, repatriated and children with disabilities. Specifically, UNICEF conducted two studies: i) Current Situation of the National Social Protection Sector; and ii) Impact of COVID-19 on Children's Right to Protection. The objectives of the former study were to determine current vulnerable groups in the country who are covered by any social protection mechanisms and identify potential groups that are excluded from formal protective mechanisms. The later study was focused on deprivations faced by children affected by migration. It revealed that over 58 per cent of families did not receive any governmental support during the pandemic. Outcomes of the studies led to determining gaps and developing set of recommendations for improvement of the national social protection system. Moreover, these studies lay a solid foundation to advocate among government for: a) development of social protection eco-system, i.e. social protection management information system disaggregated by type of vulnerability, assistance/support and service provision; b) efficiency analysis of current social protection programmes in

the country and assess their effectiveness (i.e. either to re-programme and/or merge the ineffective programmes or top-up to better ones); c) commissioning Core Diagnosis of Social Protection System aimed at further developing social protection eco system.

## Mental Health

A set of videos featuring mental health and psychosocial support issues for adolescents and parents were broadcasted on UNICEF digital platforms with a coverage of 186,505 viewers. Unfortunately, due to the lack of interest of donors in funding the mental health programmes in country, the provision of distance psychological support (through phone) to minimize impact of COVID-19 among children and parents/caregivers was not continued in 2021.

*Screenshot: In June 2021, UNICEF TCO engaged a famous local journalist and blogger, Orzu Isoev, to share his experience of supporting his adolescent daughter mental health during COVID-19. This engagement was part of the Parenting Month activations.*



## C4D, Community Engagement and Accountability to Affected Population

A total of 3.4 million people were reached through various interventions including face-to-face/door-to-door community engagement and communication campaigns by UNICEF and partners in 2021. Videos were broadcasted on the national and six regional TV channels and audio spots were placed on various radio channels. These interventions reached an estimated 92 per cent of the country's population. Moreover, 15,500 information, education and communication (IEC) materials (posters, stickers, button pins) were produced and disseminated through the risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) working group at hospitals, bus stations, schools, markets, and government offices. UNICEF also conducted two rounds of a digital campaign on RCCE and demand generation reaching a total of 419,477 people. In addition, UNICEF supported the updating of the national COVID-19 website (<https://covid.tj>).

These communication materials were also replicated by other partners, including Agha Khan foundation and Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan (RCST). In addition, UNICEF developed the inter-agency Community Consultations on the Response Actions (CORA) tool to close the feedback loop in line with the humanitarian aid provided to or received by the at-risk communities and the affected population. The CORA tool was first used by UNICEF, IFRC/RCST, and the MoHSP for COVID-19 community engagement and consultations across the country in August-September 2021.

UNICEF, with MoHSP and WHO, conducted eight capacity building events (refreshers for frontline workers and staff of Republican Centre for Immuno-Prophylaxis (RCIP), and Republican Centre for Healthy Life Style (RCHLS) for master trainers from RCIP and RCHLS, regional RCIP directors and key media journalists and influencers. Targeted training content was developed focusing on interpersonal communication, key messages on vaccination, FAQs, vaccine safety and efficacy, crisis communication and creating an enabling environment for vaccination. A total of 226 participants were trained and the master trainers cascaded training to almost 3,500 vaccinators and health workers across the country. In addition, 23 activists from CSOs and journalists were trained to amplify RCCE efforts to support vaccination and preventive measures.

Furthermore, UNICEF initiated collective inter-agency mapping of RCCE activities for COVID-19 response and recovery across the country. In order to tailor communication interventions, UNICEF also conducted community consultations on COVID-19 response and recovery actions.

## Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

UNICEF continued strengthened technical support, education sector coordination and leadership resulting in the operationalization of the National COVID-19 mitigation and response plan in education, in the areas of equity, inclusiveness and digital transformation. UNICEF further supported the MoES in DRR activities and provision of hygiene supplies, thus mitigating the impact of multiple emergencies facing the country, including COVID-19, while ensuring continuous safe school functioning and access to quality learning opportunities for all children.

Being part of the COVID-19 technical working group, UNICEF played a pivotal role along with the MoHSP and RCCE partners in coordination, planning and implementation and monitoring of the RCCE, demand generation and capacity building interventions. The RCCE working group under United Nations COVID Response Group was strengthened to serve as a common services platform for effective coordination, harmonization and amplification of awareness raising efforts to promote positive behaviours across the country and help mitigate the risks associated with COVID-19. UNICEF continues to advocate for the establishment of a government led RCCE working group.

The WASH Sector Coordination continued to function in the field of WASH in healthcare facilities (co-led by UNICEF in partnership with the MoHSPP) and WASH in Emergencies (led by UNICEF). The response was mainly focused on potential Afghan refugees and support to the government to increase preparedness capacity. In addition, the WASH in Schools Coordination Platform was set in partnership with the MoES to ensure collaboration amongst partners.

## Human Interest Stories

UNICEF, [Combating malnutrition among young children in Tajikistan amidst COVID-19](#), January 2022

UNICEF, [Safe and quality education: School children across Tajikistan return back to safe schools](#), September 2021

UNICEF, [Navigating pregnancy during the COVID-19 pandemic](#), September 2021

UNICEF, [Promoting handwashing and enabling a safe learning environment for schoolchildren in Tajikistan](#), May 2021

UNICEF, [Tajikistan becomes first country in Central Asia to receive COVID-19 vaccine through COVAX Facility](#), March 2021

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## Summary of Programme Results

Area of Response	2021 target	UNICEF Results			Change since 30 June 2021
		Total #	Male/Boys	Female/Girls	
<b>Health</b>					
# children and women accessing primary health care in UNICEF-supported facilities	550,000	654,426	-	-	▲ 280,565
<b>Nutrition</b>					
# children aged 6 to 59 months with severe acute malnutrition admitted for treatment	17,000	7,351	3,912	3,439	▲ 6,601
# primary caregivers of children aged 0 to 23 months receiving infant and young child feeding counselling	500,000	515,954	-	515,954	▲ 165,954
# children aged 6 to 59 months receiving multiple micronutrient powders	500,000	- <sup>7</sup>	-	-	-
<b>WASH</b>					
# children accessing appropriate water, sanitation and hygiene facilities and hygiene services in learning facilities and safe spaces	49,000	641,098 <sup>8</sup>	328,622	312,476	▲ 597,714
# people reached with critical water, sanitation and hygiene supplies (including hygiene items) and services	643,400	68,914	29,891	39,023	▲ 48,828
<b>Child protection, GBVIE and PSEA</b>					
# children and caregivers accessing mental health and psychosocial support	11,250	- <sup>9</sup>	-	-	-
# women, girls and boys accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention or response interventions	32,000	31,817	11,305	20,512	-
# unaccompanied and separated children reunified with their primary caregiver or provided with family-based care/alternative care services	1,000	928	537	389	▲ 573
<b>Education</b>					
# children accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning	2,000,000	2,256,781 <sup>10</sup>	1,185,610	1,071,171	-
# teachers trained on delivering digital, distance and blended learning	13,000	7,919	-	-	▲ 162
# parents and caregivers of children under 5 years receiving early childhood development counselling and/or parenting support	250,000	260,000	-	-	▲ 224,811
<b>Social protection and cash transfers</b>					
# households reached with cash transfers through an existing government system where UNICEF provided technical assistance and funding	44,772	- <sup>11</sup>	-	-	-
<b>C4D, community engagement and AAP</b>					
# people participating in engagement actions for social and behavioural change	2,683,800	3,400,000	-	-	▲ 3,391,573
# people who shared their concerns and asked questions/clarifications to address their needs through established feedback mechanisms	50,000	13,076	-	-	▲ 13,076

<sup>7</sup> Results not achieved due to lack of funding.

<sup>8</sup> In the 2021 UNICEF Tajikistan HAC, UNICEF aimed to reach the general population with WASH interventions. However, as the year progressed, the WASH needs became greater in schools. In order to support the continuous safe environment so that schools could remain open throughout the school year, UNICEF shifted its focus towards WASH in education facilities versus WASH in the community.

<sup>9</sup> Results not achieved due to lack of funding.

<sup>10</sup> Since schools in Tajikistan are fully operationalized since August 2020 and UNICEF interventions related to COVID-19 outbreak response are targeted at all schools nationwide, total #of children enrolled in both formal and no-formal education, including early learning (based on MoES official statistic) is indicated here as reached, particularly through safe back to school campaigns.

<sup>11</sup> Support was provided through the World Bank directly to the Government of Tajikistan.

## Funding Status

Sector	Requirements	Funds available			Funding gap	
		Humanitarian resources received in 2021	Other resources used in 2021	Resources available from 2020 (Carry-over)	\$	%
Health	\$ 2,033,876	\$ 358,550	\$ 5,065,314	\$ 485,316	\$ (3,875,304)	-
Nutrition <sup>12</sup>	\$ 1,685,880	\$ 171,947	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,513,933	90%
WASH <sup>13</sup>	\$ 4,455,540	\$ 83,081	\$ 225,067	\$ -	\$ 4,147,392	93%
Child Protection	\$ 1,065,717	\$ -	\$ 443,910	\$ -	\$ 621,807	58%
Education	\$ 1,509,783	\$ 270,878	\$ 907,785	\$ -	\$ 331,120	22%
Cash Transfer	\$ 5,350,254	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,350,254	100%
C4D	\$ 1,762,826	\$ 44,916	\$ 285,947	\$ -	\$ 1,431,963	81%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 17,863,876</b>	<b>\$ 929,372</b>	<b>\$ 6,928,023</b>	<b>\$ 485,316</b>	<b>\$ 9,521,165</b>	<b>53%</b>

<sup>12</sup> In the 2021 UNICEF Tajikistan HAC, Health and Nutrition were displayed together in the funding requirements table with a total funding need of US\$ 3,719,756. These sectors were separated in this situation report to accurately show the funding gap in the nutrition sector.

<sup>13</sup> Available funds were for hygiene supplies (soap, chlorine, hand sanitizer and other disinfectants) only, but not infrastructure related interventions to improve access to water supply, sanitation (toilets) and hygiene (handwashing stations).