



UNICEF hygiene kits are distributed at a camp in A'zaz, northwest Syria, for families displaced by the earthquakes.

Earthquake Response in Syria

Humanitarian Situation Report No. 5

unicef 
for every child

Reporting Period: 7-14 March 2023

Highlights

- Since the first earthquake of 6 February, 97,400 households have been displaced. The number of collective shelters and their residents continues to fluctuate.
- Suspected cholera cases continue to increase, particularly in northwest (NW) Syria. Meanwhile, early this week 34 measles cases were confirmed in Aleppo.
- Together with WHO, UNICEF and partners are rolling out an oral cholera vaccine campaign (OCV), which commenced on 7 March. As of 13 March, 1.2 million individuals were reached, with the aim to reach 1.7 million individuals in NW Syria by 17 March.
- UNICEF is also supporting the Aleppo Department of Health's multiantigen National Immunization Days (NIDs), which will help in containing the measles outbreak. In NW Syria, a measles rubella-oral polio vaccine (MR-OPV) campaign is planned in the coming days, targeting 733,000 children aged 6-59 months with MR vaccine and 815,000 children 0-59 months with OPV.
- As of 14 March, 62,284 highly vulnerable people (12,287 families) in affected areas of Aleppo and Hama received emergency cash assistance to support them meet their basic needs. Results from the first rapid post-distribution conducted among beneficiaries in Aleppo governorate indicate that over 40 per cent of the cash was used by families for house repairs and rent.
- All key sectors remain significantly underfunded, particularly emergency cash transfers, health, nutrition and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) – resource constraints are hindering further scale up of the response.

Situation in Numbers

 **3,700,000**
children affected

 **8,800,000**
people affected

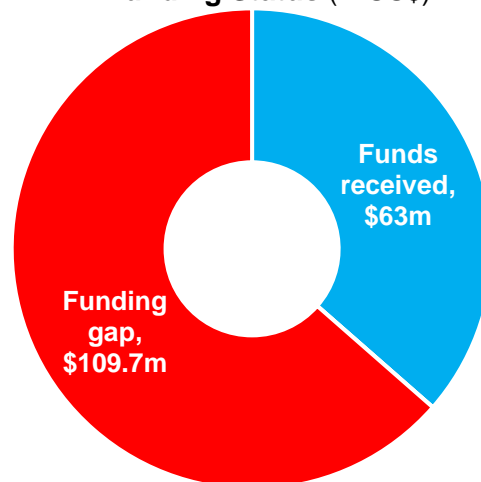
 **2,600,000**
children to be reached

 **5,400,000**
people to be reached

(Source: OCHA Syria Earthquake Flash Appeal, 14 February 2023)

UNICEF Appeal US\$ 172.7 million

Funding Status (in US\$)



Funding Overview and Partnerships

To respond to life-saving needs of nearly 3 million earthquake-affected children in Syria, UNICEF is appealing for **US\$172.7 million** to implement its [Immediate Response Plan](#), which is part of the [Inter-Agency Flash Appeal](#) and will inform the upcoming revision of the 2023 Syria HAC.¹

The immediate **response plan is only 36 per cent funded**, with US\$63 million funds received. All key sectors remain significantly underfunded, particularly emergency cash transfers, health, nutrition and WASH – resource constraints are hindering further scale up of the response. There is a need for additional flexible and unearmarked contributions to enable UNICEF and its partners to deliver services for children across Syria, regardless of their location.

Of the total funds received, US\$48 million (76 per cent) are from UNICEF core resources, UNICEF National Committees, UNICEF country offices with structured private sector fundraising activities and UNICEF's global giving online platform. The remaining US\$15 million received are from public sector partners including the governments of Australia and Japan, the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Accelerated Funding Grant. An additional US\$5 million from USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) is also expected to be received shortly. Other public sector partners have also pledged additional support, including the Government of Slovakia and the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO). UNICEF expresses its sincere gratitude to all private and public sector partners for their critical support to the earthquake response.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

According to local and government sources, about 6,000 people have reportedly been killed and more than 12,000 injured across Syria as a result of the multiple earthquakes that hit parts of Syria and Türkiye on 6 February.² More than 8.8 million people, including 3.7 million children and pregnant and lactating women, have been affected and many are now in urgent need of water, shelter, food, and emergency medical and psychosocial assistance.³

Since the first earthquake of 6 February, 97,400 households have been displaced.⁴ The number of collective shelters and their residents continues to fluctuate as humanitarian partners work to rehabilitate shelters, support the reopening of schools that have been used as shelters and install additional WASH facilities to ensure basic hygiene and minimum privacy requirements are met.⁵

Soaring prices and insufficient income means millions of families are struggling to make ends meet, amid an unparalleled economic crisis. According to the WFP Syria Weekly Market Update, nominal food prices remained high in the affected areas. The price of bread increased by 20 per cent, week-on-week, in Aleppo, and six per cent in Hama and Idlib. Soaring prices were observed for lentils, oil, sugar and rice across the governorates.⁶

According to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), despite various calls for a country-wide ceasefire to enable the swift, safe and effective delivery of aid and relief to those impacted by the earthquake, hostilities in earthquake affected areas have unfortunately not halted. Following a temporary lull in armed confrontations in the days immediately following the earthquake, airstrikes and mutual ground-based strikes have resumed at a regular pace.⁷ Furthermore, earthquakes have also been known to shift landmines and other unexploded ordnance, thereby increasing the risk of displaced children and families encountering unexploded ordnance, especially when on the move.

WASH

The already fragile water and sanitation infrastructure was extensively affected by the earthquake, with reports of damage and collapse of water reservoirs, water towers, water stations, network of sanitation facilities. This had a significant impact on the cholera response operations, affecting overall access to services, reduced partner capacity, diverted already limited funds available, and not least, negatively affected the mental health of the workforce.

Initial assessments by partners in earthquake affected areas in Aleppo, Idlib, Damascus, Deir-ez-Zor, Hama, Homs, Tartous and parts of southern Idlib indicate restoration of WASH sector status to pre-earthquake levels will require an estimated US\$75-80 million. Meanwhile, in NW Syria, the impact of the earthquake has resulted in an additional service delivery requirement in new locations, estimated to increase the existing target of 1.1 million people by 500,000 with an emphasis on WASH provision at community level, bringing the population in need of WASH services to 1.6 million.

¹ Prior to the earthquake, UNICEF appealed for US\$328.5 million for its 2023 Syria Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC), which includes response activities for NW Syria. The severity of humanitarian needs in Syria was further exacerbated by the earthquake, especially since people across the country were already suffering from a deteriorating socio-economic condition, a recent cholera outbreak, shortages of electricity, water and fuel and 12 years of protracted crisis.

² OCHA Syrian Arab Republic: Earthquakes, Whole of Syria Situation Updates, 1 March 2023

³ OCHA Syria Earthquake Flash Appeal, 14 February

⁴ OCHA Earthquake Needs and Response Overview, Syrian Arab Republic, 15 March 2023

⁵ OCHA Syria Arab Republic: Earthquakes, Situation Report No.3, 9 March 2023

⁶ WFP Syria Weekly Markets Update, 18 - 25 February 2023

⁷ FLASH REPORT | OHCHR Syria Office - Monitoring & Reporting Unit 6 March 2023

Health

At least 116 health facilities reported damages (including at least seven hospitals) in Aleppo, Hama, Latakia and Tartous.⁸ In NW Syria, at least 55 health facilities have been damaged with 15 health facilities having been suspended.⁹

Suspected cholera cases continue to increase, particularly in NW Syria. According to the WHO, between 25 August and 4 March, 100,598 suspected cases (7,949 new suspected cases in the past month) have been reported from all 14 governorates across Syria, including 104 associated deaths to date at a case fatality rate of 0.1 per cent. The most affected governorates to date are: Idlib (31,422 cases, 31.2 per cent), Aleppo (24,839 cases, 24.7 per cent), Deir Ez-Zor (20,673 cases, 20.6 per cent), and Raqqa (18,955 cases, 18.8 per cent).¹⁰

There are also reports of an increasing number of acute watery diarrhoea cases within shelters in the affected governorates. As of 13 March, UNICEF partners in shelters in Hama and Latakia reported 1,098 acute watery diarrhoea cases, 4,340 influenza cases, 2,462 lice cases, 636 cases of scabies, and confirmed 28 Hepatitis A cases.

Meanwhile, early this week in Aleppo, out of 55 highly suspected measles cases, 34 cases were confirmed to be measles. The cases are located across Aleppo city and in the rural areas, including two cases in collective shelters. In general, routine vaccination coverage among children, which was already alarming pre-earthquake, remains a key concern, particularly in light of the country's large number of over 150,000 'zero dose children'.¹¹

Nutrition

The earthquake impacted 3.7 million children and pregnant and lactating women and may exacerbate the nutrition situation of vulnerable children and women that was already alarming. A trend analysis from the Joint Food Security and Nutrition Assessment 2022 has shown that the level of acute malnutrition among children and women is steadily rising in the country since 2019, whilst stunting, micro-nutrient deficiencies and uptake of infant and young child feeding, and care practices remain concerning.¹² While it is early to see a significant increase in acute malnutrition following the earthquake, the nutrition cluster in NW Syria is anticipating an increased caseload of just over 10,000 cases associated with the earthquake.

Education

The earthquake damaged a total of 2,947 schools, including 2,513 schools in Aleppo, Latakia, Tartous, Hama, Homs and Idlib as well as 434 schools in NW Syria. Of these, 1,836 lightly damaged schools have reopened in Aleppo, Latakia, Tartous, Hama, Homs and Idlib. The Ministry of Education and education partners report that a total of 125 schools (including 20 in NW Syria) are currently being used as shelters – a reduction from 171 as some families left shelters and authorities merged a few shelters together in order to free schools to resume education.

Attendance rates in schools that have reopened have increased to over 90 per cent now, but some families are still worried about the safety of their children due to the conditions of schools.¹³ Fear for children's safety and continued tremors remain barriers however, prompting some caregivers to not send children back to school, even if schools are being re-opened. In Aleppo, Latakia, Tartous, Hama, Homs and Idlib, an estimated 141,000 students are still lacking access to schools because their schools are out of service or used as shelter. The situation in NW Syria also remains challenging, with the education cluster estimating that an additional 200,000 children may be out of school due to the earthquake, bringing the total number of school aged children out of school in NW Syria to 1 million.

Child Protection

The living conditions within collective shelters continue to put girls and boys at risk of child protection concerns, with an increase in reported cases of gender-based violence and harassment against girls. This is mainly due to the overcrowded rooms, lack of privacy, absence of adequate WASH facilities, and lack of proper reporting mechanisms that ensure accountability towards perpetrators. The lack of adequate lighting in several collective shelters has also been highlighted as a main concern, especially by girls and women.

UNICEF partners report that both children and parents in collective shelters continue to show signs of severe panic attacks, distress, insomnia, and disorientation. Children are still showing symptoms of fear and stuttering six weeks after the earthquake, highlighting the continued need for long-term psychosocial support. In a recent child protection rapid assessment in Aleppo, Latakia and Hama, seven per cent of respondents reported that they were aware of children who were separated from their parents or usual caregivers, reiterating the need for family tracing and reunification as well as appropriate alternative care support.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

UNICEF's earthquake Immediate Response Plan aims to reach 5.4 million people, including 2.6 million children, in the first three-month period of the response (February to May 2023). UNICEF addresses the immediate life-saving and urgent humanitarian needs of girls, boys, adolescents, and families through an integrated and gender-responsive approach prioritizing highly affected areas and areas of large displacement. UNICEF will leverage the established system for accountability to affected populations (AAP) and the prevention of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) in close collaboration with UNHCR, UNFPA and other partners. In line with UNICEF's

⁸ WHO Syria Earthquake Situation Report, 15 February

⁹ NW Syria Health Cluster, 26 February

¹⁰ WHO, Whole of Syria, Cholera Outbreak Situation Report No.14

¹¹ As per 2022 Ministry of Health data, the number of unimmunized children in Syria is 152,515

¹² Joint Food Security and Nutrition Assessment 2022

¹³ Ministry of Education data

Core Commitments for Children in humanitarian action, priority will be given to restoring essential health and WASH, psychosocial support, family separations, protection case management, provision of cash and winter items where possible.

WASH

UNICEF continued **monitoring the quality of drinking water** in Aleppo, Idleb, Hama, and Lattakia together with local water authorities. This will continue until regular service can be resumed following repairs to the water networks. Currently, UNICEF is in the contracting process for the immediate repair and replacement of water and sewage networks that have been impacted by the earthquake. In addition, UNICEF, in coordination with the Ministry of Water Resources, is supplying vital tools, equipment, and spare parts needed for the efficient operation and maintenance of damaged water infrastructure.

During the reporting period, UNICEF continued providing **life-saving WASH services and supplies**¹⁴ through water trucking to 127,227 internally displaced persons staying in temporary shelters in Aleppo city and Hama governorate. In Aleppo city UNICEF and partners also provided WASH supplies to the 2,500 people in shelters, including 138 packages of baby diapers, 548 packages of sanitary napkins, 350 family hygiene kits, and 314 jerrycans. In NW Syria, services such as water trucking, solid waste management, and desludging of septic tanks reached over 405,895 people. UNICEF and partners distributed over 45,000 family hygiene kits, reaching 216,314 people. Social, and behavioural change hygiene promotion sessions were also delivered to 331,704 people in NW Syria.

In addition, water quality management, through chlorination, continues to be provided to five water stations and 206 collective centres, serving 190,772 people (97,759 females) with **safe domestic water supply**. Moreover, UNICEF installed water tanks in ten earthquake damaged schools in Lattakia governorate, ensuring that 5,890 school children have access to clean and sustained drinking water.

In Lattakia and Jablah cities, UNICEF has restored **gender-responsive WASH facilities** in two schools that are used as shelters for 409 people and completed five prefab WASH units, providing 18 single-sex toilets and 12 showers in the sports stadium in Lattakia city – one of the largest shelters, hosting around 2,000 IDPs.

Health

During the reporting period, UNICEF and partners, including WHO, reached 16,562 people (including in shelters) with **lifesaving supplies and medical consultations** through 28 UNICEF supported health centres and 48 mobile health teams in Aleppo, Hama, Lattakia, Idleb, and Tartous. In addition, since the beginning of the response, UNICEF and partners reached 48,502 people in 13 centres in NW Syria.

UNICEF is also supporting the Aleppo Department of Health's multiantigen **National Immunization Days** (NIDs), which will also help in containing the measles outbreak, concentrating the campaign on the most affected neighbourhoods.

Meanwhile, together with WHO, UNICEF and partners began rolling out an **OCV campaign** on 7 March. Around 1,470 vaccination teams have been deployed for the campaign using a door-to-door vaccination strategy. As of 13 March, 1.2 million individuals were reached, with the aim to reach 1.7 million individuals in NW Syria by 17 March.

In NW Syria, a **MR-OPV campaign** is also planned in the coming days. The MR vaccine will target more than 733,000 children aged 6-59 months, while the OPV will target more than 815,000 children 0-59 months.

A total of 4,518 children were vaccinated with **routine immunization** while 886 women were vaccinated with tetanus and diphtheria vaccine in Aleppo, Homs, Hama, Idleb and Lattakia. In addition, UNICEF is working with local partners and youth volunteers and engage communities to ensure coverage of all children with vaccination.

Nutrition

During the reporting period, UNICEF and partners supported over 23,623 under-five children and pregnant and lactating women with **nutrition preventative and curative services**, including screening for acute malnutrition, in earthquake affected areas, including 15,837 children in Aleppo, Hama, Idleb, Lattakia, and Tartous, as well as 3,058 children and 4,728 pregnant and lactating women in NW Syria.

In Aleppo, Hama, Idleb, Lattakia, and Tartous, 5,303 children were **screened for acute malnutrition** during the reporting period, out of which 38 moderately malnourished children and 11 severely malnourished children were detected and admitted for treatment. A total of 9,621 pregnant and lactating women were also screened for acute malnutrition, of which 622 were admitted for treatment. Meanwhile, in NW Syria, 3,058 children were screened for acute malnutrition during the reporting period, out of which 465 children were identified and admitted for treatment of severe acute malnutrition to date.

In collaboration with WFP, during the reporting period UNICEF and partners also reached 37,122 children under-five and 13,935 pregnant and lactating women with **micro-nutrient** tablets and powder, including 34,714 children and 9,139 pregnant and lactating women in Aleppo, Hama, Idleb, Lattakia, and Tartous, as well as 2,408 children and 4,796 pregnant and lactating women in NW Syria. In addition, UNICEF provided **high-energy biscuits** to 2,153 children in Aleppo, Hama, Idleb, Lattakia, and Tartous as well as 2,408 children in NW Syria.

UNICEF and partners provided messages on appropriate **infant and young child feeding** practices in emergencies for 64,628 caregivers, including 61,748 caregivers in Aleppo, Hama, Idleb, Lattakia, and Tartous as well as 2,880

¹⁴ The number of people reached through this activity will fluctuate from week to week depending on how many people are currently living in shelters.

caregivers in NW Syria. UNICEF also initiated procurement of ready to use infant formulae (RUIF) which will be managed through the nutrition sector.

Education

During the reporting period, UNICEF significantly scaled up the coordination and implementation of **rapid assessments** of schools in Aleppo, Hama, Homs, Tartous and Lattakia. To date, a total of 2,748 schools have been assessed in these governorates. **Debris removal, minor repairs and light rehabilitation** started in 42 schools in Aleppo, Lattakia, Hama and Homs while preparations are ongoing to rehabilitate more than 388 schools. Preparations for school rehabilitation is closely coordinated with WASH sector to ensure that children can return to schools and resume their education in a safe environment with adequate gender and disability sensitive WASH facilities.

UNICEF provided **education supplies** and recreational kits for schools and shelters, covering the immediate needs of approximately 65,000 children (including 19,720 children in shelters) in Aleppo, Lattakia, Tartous and Hama. Additional supplies have been procured, including school kits, stationery, tents, prefabricated classrooms, school furniture and cleaning kits and materials aiming to serve the needs of over 255,000 students.

UNICEF also installed 11 **temporary learning spaces** in four collective shelters in Aleppo and started providing learning and recreational activities to over 440 children. UNICEF established eight **digital learning centres** (“Learning Cinemas”) in shelter locations in Aleppo and Lattakia and trained 53 facilitators and teachers on digital learning. Laptops and tablets pre-loaded with digital learning materials and interactive educational games along with projectors and batteries were provided to each centre; 2,040 children are benefitting from the learning cinemas.

In NW Syria, during the reporting period, 51,703 children (25,032 girls, and 6,671 boys) continued to receive **non-formal education** including self-learning and remedial classes in 94 schools and learning spaces. At least 7,334 children and adults benefited from psychosocial support activities (4,077 girls, 2,939 boys, 151 women and 167 men). UNICEF is also planning to scale up implementation with four partners with focus on children, parents and caregivers with mental health and psychosocial support for children and teachers, packages on education in emergencies for teachers, as well as awareness sessions for children and teachers on various issues, such as protection risks.

Child Protection

UNICEF and partners continue to support children and caregivers in collective shelters with **psychological first aid, mental health and psychosocial support**, recreational activities and parenting programmes. These sessions and interventions aim at decreasing levels of stress and provide the children and caregivers with tools and skills that can enable them to better cope with the challenges that they are facing. Parents have reported that children attending UNICEF supported activities are showing signs of improvement in their psychosocial wellbeing, including being more social and having increased appetite.

However, much work is still needed to ensure children in collective shelters receive needed support in the coming weeks and months. Therefore, UNICEF, together with the Syrian Commission for Family Affairs and Population, organized a set of trainings in Aleppo and Lattakia on the National Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Manual reaching more than 150 frontliners who are expected to deploy to collective shelters. Similar trainings will be organized in Hama in the coming days to ensure that frontline staff use the national manual to implement activities in affected areas.

To further respond to increased child protection vulnerabilities of children staying in collective shelters, UNICEF reached 19,154 children with much needed winter clothing, blankets, and recreational material to ensure that children have access to play material throughout their stay in the collective shelters. In Aleppo, Hama, Idleb, Lattakia and Tartous, 14,238 of children and caregivers were reached with key messages on how to cope during times of emergency.

Meanwhile, in close collaboration with implementing partners, UNICEF continues to provide **case management** services to 460 girls and boys severely affected by the earthquake. Out of these, 89 children are considered unaccompanied and separated children and have been referred to specialized services, including **family tracing, reunification** and provided with **alternative care arrangements** with extended family. In NW Syria, UNICEF partners worked on 773 cases (356 boys, 330 girls, and 87 women) this week, of which 174 have been opened in March.

Furthermore, since the beginning of February, **explosive ordnance risk education** was provided to 7,905 children (3,979 girls) and adults in child-friendly spaces and by mobile teams in NW Syria. Awareness on earthquake response behaviour was also integrated into these sessions with the aim to prevent harm and injury.

Cash Relief Response

UNICEF is using its two existing Humanitarian Cash Transfer (HCT) programmes to respond to the emergency. These platforms have been built over the years to be **shock responsive**, thus allowing immediate response to affected populations: (i) the [Cash for Basic Needs Support Programme](#) (emergency winter response); and (ii) the [Integrated Social Protection Programme for Children with Disabilities](#).

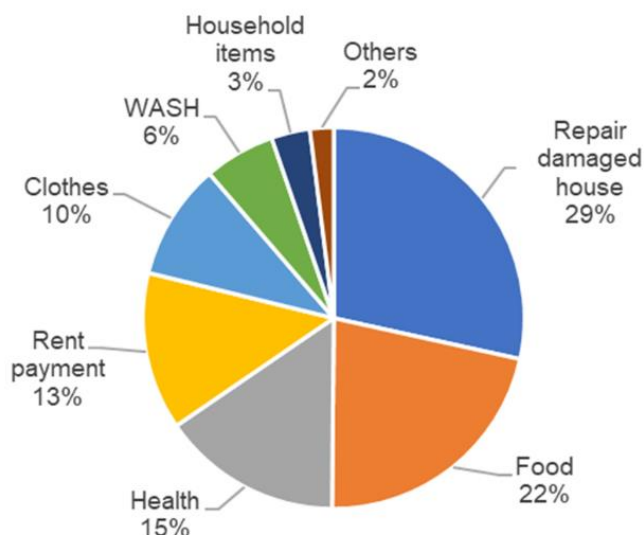
Through these platforms, unconditional cash assistance is provided to the most vulnerable families affected by the earthquake, including families caring for children with disabilities, orphans and children with chronic illness and female-headed families. In addition to cash, affected families with highly vulnerable children have started to benefit from case management and referral to social services.

Altogether, UNICEF is working on providing emergency cash assistance to about 200,000 vulnerable people (40,000 families) in earthquake-affected areas of Aleppo, Hama and Lattakia with two rounds of cash assistance. As of 14 March, 62,284 highly vulnerable people (12,287 families) in affected areas of Aleppo and Hama have received **emergency cash assistance** to support them meet their basic needs. Results from the first rapid post-distribution monitoring conducted among beneficiaries in Aleppo governorate indicate that over 40 per cent of the cash was used by families for house repairs and rent.

Good progress was made during the reporting period to prepare for the emergency response in Lattakia, where UNICEF is planning to provide emergency cash assistance to over 30,000 people in affected locations.

Meanwhile, UNICEF and partners in NW Syria are anticipating an expansion of the already existing cash programme by combining the current nutrition cash programme with a winterization top-up to reach 133,000 people. Cash assistance will be provided to families with children who have been affected by the earthquake, including displaced families residing in temporary shelters to meet their basic needs.

Use of cash assistance among families of children with disabilities in Aleppo



Source: Findings from rapid post-distribution monitoring conducted among 219 families of children with disabilities who received their first round of cash top-up in Aleppo in February.

Adolescents Development and Participation (ADAP)

Four adolescent friendly spaces continued to provide services in Aleppo, focusing on young people affected by the earthquakes. UNICEF provided sessions on **life skills in emergency** for 185 young people in collective shelters. In addition, 123 **young volunteers** were trained and participated in the distribution of blankets in collective shelters, conducted recreational activities and disseminated social and behaviour change (SBC) awareness messages through interactive theatre and storytelling for 526 children. UNICEF also conducted **basic vocational and educational trainings** for 116 young people in five collective shelters.

In Hama, eight life skills facilitators (2 female and 6 male) implemented an awareness session for 20 young people (9 female) on how to communicate during emergency, while a group of 39 volunteers (25 female) were trained on how to respond in case of any emergency. The group implemented an awareness initiative to provide awareness for school students on how to deal with earthquakes.

In Lattakia, UNICEF, in cooperation with Ministry of Culture, implemented several cultural activities (such as interactive theatre sketches, music and drawing) and sports activities for around 400 affected children and adolescents, in addition to distributing short stories to those children and adolescents in six shelters. Moreover, UNICEF implemented a **youth-led initiative** of several recreational activities for the purpose of physiological first aid and awareness raising about how to act in case of an earthquake, reaching 120 affected children and adolescents in Sheikh Saad in rural Tartous.

Social and Behavioural Change (SBC) / Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

At the national level, the UN group for social and behaviour change, and community engagement continues to coordinate its efforts at different fronts including streamlining **key messages** particularly in relation to measles and cholera as well as producing materials and monitoring SBC/RCCE towards having a unified format. In addition, on a weekly basis the group updates communication and engaging activities at the community level in various affected governorates in order to maximize the reach of mobilization efforts and avoid duplication. Finally, and through offline and online social listening, SBC partners are mapping misinformation to address community concerns and rumours as they emerge.

In Lattakia, Hama and Aleppo, during the reporting period 120 **edutainment activities** were conducted, involving 1,395 children (838 girls and 557 boys) and 4,852 **awareness-raising sessions and community dialogues** were undertaken in and outside of shelters. Moreover, 28,952 people were engaged and provided with crucial protection related information as well as hygiene and young child feeding practices.

Meanwhile, in NW Syria, RCCE activities resumed with integrated **educational messages** on earthquake, cholera, COVID-19, and the risks on other diseases in the context of the earthquake. RCCE partners are also using the newly emerged gateways for the earthquake responses in addition to the relevant regular structures. Face to face approach is still the most valid one in reaching and engaging with people. The needs remain high. Preliminary findings from a needs assessment show that there is a need for information regarding essential services. Social listening is informing the RCCE plans and intervention. Active rumour tracking has been put in place to log and track rumours and plan for communication interventions accordingly.

Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

As part of UN Humanitarian Country Team, UNICEF is scaling up its presence across the earthquake affected governorates of Aleppo, Hama, Homs, Idleb, Latakia and Tartous. UNICEF is committed to supporting the leadership and coordination of humanitarian response through its leadership or co-leadership of cluster/sector coordination for the WASH, nutrition and education clusters/sectors and the child protection area of responsibility.¹⁵

Currently, 61 staff with managerial, technical and senior cluster/sector coordination and information management capacity are being surged both into Damascus/ field office locations and into Gaziantep. In addition, around 40 staff are providing support to earthquake affected areas through support missions. As part of this scale-up, UNICEF has also significantly increased capacity for cluster/sector coordination at national and sub-national levels across the whole of Syria, including additional international surge capacity for national and sub-national level **WASH, education, nutrition and child protection cluster/sector coordination** in UNICEF field offices in Aleppo, Latakia, Homs and dedicated high-level cluster coordination for NW Syria.

UNICEF will ensure affected persons are reached through messaging on prevention and access to services, and existing complaints and feedback mechanisms (including sexual exploitation and abuse) will be scaled up with special attention to gender elements across all programmes and interventions.

As part of UNICEF's **accountability to affected populations (AAP)**, UNICEF is increasing the operating hours of its service line to accommodate the increased number of calls during the weekends. An agreement has been reached among sister UN Agencies on how to refer and manage cases to address the diverse needs of the affected population, in the areas, including but not limited to, shelter, non-food items, health, gender-based violence, legal documentation, and reunification with families. At the same time, agencies have agreed to share their respective services in the affected areas so the callers can be immediately referred to and provide with necessary support.

In addition to the community engagement and social and behaviour change support mainstreamed across all programmes, UNICEF will lead the coordination across UN and non-UN organizations for a relevant response in this area. Furthermore, UNICEF will lead strategic activities catered to building resilience of children and their families affected by the earthquake and strengthening partners' emergency preparedness as well as early recovery and resilience building following the humanitarian programme cycle.

External Media

To mark the grim milestone of 12 years of conflict in Syria, new communication content was published to focus on the looming malnutrition crisis resulting from the impact of the conflict, compounded with the devastating impact of the deadly earthquakes. This included a [press release](#), [a web story](#), [videos](#), and wide array of social media content to continue mobilising resources to children's immense needs in Syria.

Next SitRep: 26 March 2023

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¹⁵ All cluster coordinators costs are included into sectoral programme budgets

Annex A

Funding Status*

Section	Requirements (USD)	Funds received (USD)	Funding gap	
			USD	%
WASH	\$47,800,008	\$16,088,790	\$31,711,218	66%
Health	\$29,265,371	\$8,528,770	\$20,736,601	71%
Nutrition	\$18,361,542	\$4,844,654	\$13,516,888	74%
Education	\$31,300,000	\$12,897,016	\$18,402,984	59%
Child Protection GBViE	\$19,950,000	\$7,672,508	\$12,277,492	62%
Cash transfers and social protection	\$23,623,079	\$4,055,375	\$19,567,704	83%
Cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCCE, AAP, Evaluation, RO technical support)	\$2,400,000	\$215,410	\$2,184,590	91%
Being allocated		\$8,656,642 ¹⁶		
Total	\$172,700,000	\$62,959,165	\$109,740,835	64%

* As defined in UNICEF Immediate Response Plan for Syria (Earthquake), 16 February 2023, for a period of three months.

¹⁶ Funds still to be allocated to specific sectors but are already considered within the overall funding gap.