



Mustafa and Soher are playing at the "Alki Zei" Homework & Creative Activities Center in Somos.

Refugee and Migrant Response on the Mediterranean and Western Balkans route



Humanitarian Situation Report No. 47


Reporting Period: 1 January to 31 March 2023

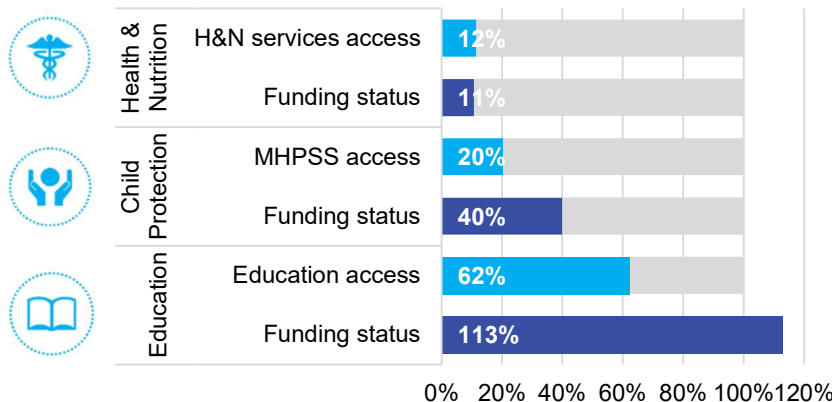
Situation in Numbers

Highlights

- Between January and March 2023, an estimated 50,233 refugees and migrantsⁱ, arrived in Greece, Italy, Bulgaria,ⁱⁱ Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, mainly from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, and North Africa. This represented a significant increase in arrivals of 80 per cent compared to the same period in 2022, pursuing the upward trend of the past four years and representing the highest number of arrivals in the first quarter of the year since the peak in 2016.
- In the five countries, UNICEF reached 9,159 children with child protection services, while 391 frontline workers improved their knowledge and skills on gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response. Around 19,984 children gained access to education, while 1,389 schoolteachers were trained on inclusion of refugee/migrant children. 568 children benefited from general health checks and referrals and 30,483 people participated in engagement actions for social and behavioural change.
- In quarter one of 2023, UNICEF received US\$ 1.5 million in new funding against its USD 37 million appeal. With US\$ 20.8 million of carry-forward funding, the appeal is 62 per cent funded. This however does not cover all countries and sectors equally with significant gaps in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Italy and across all sectors. UNICEF appreciates the generous contributions and continued support from its donors.

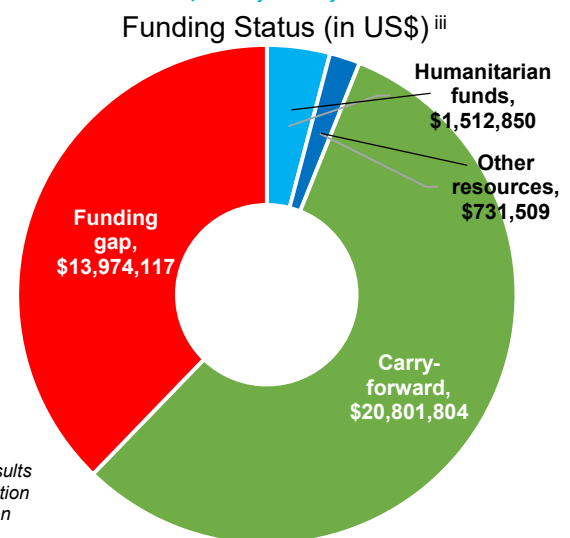
-  **6,540** - estimated # of children among arrivals in Q1 2023 in Greece, Italy, Bulgaria, and Bosnia and Herzegovinaⁱ
-  **50,233** - estimated # of arrivals in Q1 2023 in Greece, Italy, Bulgaria,ⁱⁱ Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovinaⁱ
-  **16,968** - estimated # of unaccompanied and separated children present in Greece, Italy, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovinaⁱ

UNICEF's Response and Funding Status***



^{*}For education, the funding status includes carryover from 2022 in Greece, which represents 93.5% of the total funding received, explaining the high status of funding. The implementation however, continuous in 2023, thus results are still to be reported. ^{**}For child protection, 24% of the available funding is allocated to Bulgaria for the construction of a safe zone for unaccompanied and separated children. Construction is ongoing and thus, results have not been reported yet.

UNICEF Appeal 2023 US\$ 37,020,280



ⁱ Estimations of arrivals are based on UNHCR, IOM, Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum, Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum, Greek Special Secretariat for Unaccompanied Minors, Italian Ministry of Interior, Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, Bulgarian Ministry of Interior and State Agency for Refugees, Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The figures do not include Ukrainian refugees who arrived in the region.

ⁱⁱ For Bulgaria, this only includes the number of asylum-seekers, the number of arrivals is not available but estimated to be much larger.

ⁱⁱⁱ The overall HAC funding gap status does not represent gaps by sector. For further details by sector, please refer to Annex B.

Funding Overview and Partnerships

By the end of March, UNICEF's [2023 Humanitarian Action for Children \(HAC\) appeal for the refugee and migrant response on the Mediterranean and Western Balkan routes](#) was 62 percent funded (US\$ 23 million), including US\$ 20.8 million carry-over from 2022ⁱⁱⁱ with only US\$ 1.5 million newly received in 2023. This included generous, multi-year contributions from the European Union (EU) to Greece for education which makes up US\$15.7 million or 93.5% of the funding available against the education sector. Additional contributions were received from the Government of Switzerland, the UNICEF National Committee in Germany, and pooled Global Thematic Humanitarian funds. The response to urgent humanitarian needs of refugee children and families fleeing from Ukraine continued to be supported under the Pillar 2 of the [2023 HAC Ukraine and Refugee Response Appeal](#), aligned with the Inter-agency Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP), and related results are reported under the [Ukraine Refugee Response situation reports](#).

Flexible, timely resources remain critical to enable UNICEF to address immediate needs and mitigate longer-term impacts on vulnerable refugee and migrant children in Europe. While generous contributions were carried over, funding was not equal among countries. Funding gaps remained particularly high in Serbia (85 per cent), Bosnia and Herzegovina (81 per cent), and Italy (59 per cent), which significantly limited capacity to respond to existing needs.

UNICEF continued to work with national and local authorities, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and other United Nations agencies, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), community-based organisations, and religious leaders to ensure the rights of children and families on the move were protected. Inter-agency coordination enabled effective emergency response, relocation of vulnerable children and families, and country-specific initiatives to ensure access to protection and basic services for populations in need.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

Between January and March 2023, an estimated 50,233 refugees and migrants, arrived in Greece, Italy, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, mainly from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, and North Africa.^{iv} This presented a significant increase in arrivals of 80 per cent compared to the same period in 2022, pursuing the upward trend of the past four years and representing the highest number of arrivals in the first quarter of the year since the peak in 2016. The first three months also saw 551 people, including girls, boys and women, die or go missing at sea.^v At the end of March, at least 19,300 children, the vast majority of whom (approximately 17,000) unaccompanied and separated children, were estimated to be present in the five countries,^{vi} in addition to the significant number of refugees from Ukraine who remain present in the region.^{vii}

The number of refugees and migrants coming to the region through the Mediterranean and Western Balkan routes increased significantly due to a variety of root causes, including conflict and instability, impacts of climate change, and food insecurity. The high number of Ukrainian refugees, who were displaced by war and remain across the region, continued to rely on national systems in hosting countries, stretching capacities of governments to sustain equal access to quality services for refugee and migrant as well as host communities. In addition, across the Schengen zone, stricter border security and restricting policies in many countries were observed, with continued pushbacks being reported across the Western Balkans route, impacting the ability of refugees and migrants to move safely and access essential services. Critical gaps included overcrowded and inadequate reception facilities – especially for unaccompanied and separated children, women, and girls. Additional challenges were gaps in capacities to provide adequate sanitation and hygiene facilities, sufficient access to health and protection services and learning opportunities for children and families as well as insufficient measures to prevent and address gender-based violence (GBV) risk for women and girls. Insufficient mechanisms for identification and protection, case management and best interest determination of the child as well as limited availability of alternative care and legal guardianship services, exacerbated the vulnerability of children, especially those who were unaccompanied and separated.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

GREECE

Between January and February 2023, 2,505 refugee and migrant arrivals, including an estimated 550 children, were recorded.^{viii} This presented an increase of 177 per cent compared to the same period in 2022. As of the end of February, over 4,400 refugees and migrants remained in Reception and Identification Centres (RICs) on the Greek islands – almost

ⁱⁱⁱ Against US\$ 20.8 million carryover from 2022, US\$15.7 million is funding received from EU under education programme for Greece.

^{iv} Estimations of arrivals are based on UNHCR, IOM, Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum, Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum, Greek Special Secretariat for Unaccompanied Minors, Italian Ministry of Interior, Italian Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, Bulgarian Ministry of Interior and State Agency for Refugees, Serbian Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The figures do not include Ukrainian refugees who arrived in the region.

^v UNHCR Data Portal as of May, <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean>

^{vi} Number of children not available for Italy and Bulgaria, number of unaccompanied and separated children not available for Bulgaria.

^{vii} The response for the Ukrainian refugee populations continued to be provisioned for and reported under the 2023 Ukraine and Refugee Response HAC.

^{viii} Ministry of Migration and Asylum. Estimation of children is based on latest trends.

2,000 of them on Lesbos. March marked the end of the voluntary relocation scheme for unaccompanied and separated children to other European Union countries, with over 1,368 children relocated since the beginning of the project in April 2020. At the end of March, 2,219 unaccompanied and separated children remained in Greece, mainly from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Syria.

Health and Nutrition: UNICEF, in partnership with GIVMED, coordinated the donation of health products to organizations supporting refugee and migrant children and their families, reaching more than 560 girls, boys, women and men during the reporting period. In Mother and Child Spaces, UNICEF reached 356 mothers with infant and young child feeding (IYCF) and counselling and 154 children with health and nutrition services.



Joy and Ki are holding their Greek language certificate at the ELIX Education Center.

Child Protection, Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies (GBViE) and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA): UNICEF reached 2,533 children with structured mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) in designated Mother and Child Spaces at the regional Asylum Service in Athens and Thessaloniki and, upon government request, at the Serres open accommodation center in safe spaces.

To help survivors of GBV and children exposed to violence, UNICEF offered crucial interpretation services to state authorities (police departments, public prosecutors' office, etc.) and non-state service providers, such as NGOs and other survivors' support associations. UNICEF also adapted and launched the [GBV pocket guide](#) to the Greek context, using it to build the capacity of more than 200 frontline workers on handling GBV disclosure and safe referrals, including members of the UNHCR GBV Working Group, the Reception and Identification Service (RIS) and the Network of the Counselling Centers and Women's Shelters.

UNICEF and RIS agreed on a set of actions to strengthen child protection standards across 22 open accommodation sites, including the development of a child safeguarding policy, capacity building for frontline professions and trainings to involve children in safety exercises. UNICEF also provided technical expertise to government efforts in drafting the monitoring framework regarding the new guardianship scheme for unaccompanied children.

Education and Skills Building: Through the "All Children in Education" program (ACE), over 4,600 refugee and migrant children, including unaccompanied children and children with disabilities,^{ix} were supported with their homework at ACE Homework and Creative Activities Centres and/or with their enrolment in formal education. ACE partners organized information sessions to encourage refugees and migrants to enrol their children in formal education.

Moreover, to facilitate the inclusion of children in schools, 1,200 formal schoolteachers benefitted from training on intercultural learning, Greek as a foreign language, child rights education and differentiated learning. The Accelerated Learning Program offered material based on the needs of refugee and migrant students in secondary education across six subjects and was piloted in schools. The Akelius Language Learning Course was used in 39 schools to support refugees and migrants with their language learning and digital skills. In addition, 31 schools benefitted from interpretation services in different languages. UNICEF, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, also organized two workshops on how to welcome refugee and migrant children in school classes, on Lesbos Island and in the city of Ioannina.

Child Rights Monitoring: UNICEF continued to support the development of the National Action Plan (NAP) on Child Rights for the period 2024-2027, in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice. UNICEF's technical support included the development of a costed NAP with specific budgetary allocations for children as well as a monitoring framework with targets for children focusing on the most vulnerable, including refugee and migrant children. To inform the NAP, one consultation was conducted with 331 children and youth (18 percent with migration background) and another with 18 actors working with unaccompanied and separated children to inform the relevant priorities and policy measures, focus on good practices and consider main challenges.

Adolescent Development and Participation (ADAP): To empower young refugees and locals, UNICEF launched the new [FunDoo tool](#) to help them develop 21st Century Skills and obtain professional experience with seminars, job counselling and skills matching. The tool is available in English and Greek.

Social and Behavior Change (SBC), Community Engagement and Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP): Using theatre as a means to enhance social cohesion, UNICEF, in partnership with the Young Peoples' Stage of the National Theatre of Greece, delivered a series of theatre workshops, offering a platform for 27 refugee adolescents (10-19 years) to

^{ix} The ACE programme is funded with contributions from DG HOME and other resources from the Refugee and Migrant HAC for Greece and is inclusive of all refugee and migrant children, including those from Ukraine.

engage with local peers. Participants worked with professional actors to produce a performance that will explore the effects of war on young people and raise awareness about peace and inclusivity.

ITALY

In the first three months of 2023, 29,450 refugee and migrants arrived in Italy, including 4,910 children and 2,641 unaccompanied and separated children.^x This presents an increase of over 220 percent compared to the same period in 2022, with the most significant increases recorded along the central Mediterranean route. The number of arrivals from the Balkan route exceeded the number of refugee arrivals from Ukraine, with a strong presence of unaccompanied and separated children (66 percent, mainly from Afghanistan), many of them under 14 years old. As of February, 14,603 unaccompanied and separated children were present in reception facilities, mainly from Egypt, Tunisia, Albania, and Pakistan.

In Lampedusa (Sicily), the arrival facility with a capacity of 380 is regularly overwhelmed with arrivals of up to 3,000 people within a few days. Substantial shortcomings were thus faced in reception conditions, including limited health services, lack of drinking water, food and clothes, alarming water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) conditions and insufficient protection mechanisms, requiring immediate interventions on health, WASH and protection. In late February, a boat carrying refugees and migrants sank amidst harsh weather conditions in Calabria, resulting in the death of at least 92 people, including many children, and the survival of 79 persons, with many missing people still to be accounted for.

Child Protection, GBVIE and PSEA: In border areas (Friuli, Sicily, including Lampedusa, Calabria and Ventimiglia), 2,949 people (167 girls, 2,493 boys and 289 caregivers) were reached with information, psychosocial support and case management. Moreover, 173 frontline workers were trained on child protection and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) standards, while 173 boys and girls were reached through community-based care interventions, including foster care for unaccompanied and separated children and mentoring for young migrants and refugees. Additionally, UNICEF scaled up its first response interventions in Calabria, where serious protection risks for children were reported.



Young people with migration background work with UNICEF staff in preparation for the Activate Talk on prejudices and discrimination.

UNICEF and partners reached 1,477 refugees and migrants with GBV risk mitigation, prevention and response activities, mostly targeting women and girls, and also engaging men and boys through awareness-raising activities. Among these interventions, in collaboration with Save the Children and Centro Penc, 714 GBV survivors and individuals at risk accessed case management and psychosocial support, received in-person information and were referred to specialized services. Moreover, UNICEF continued to expand and contextualize the model of Women and Girls Safe Spaces as a critical alternative pathway for contributing to migrant and refugee women and girls' agency, participation and empowerment. UNICEF and partners enhanced the capacity of 74 frontline workers through the e-learning course based on the inter-agency pocket guide *'How to support survivors of gender-based violence when a GBV actor is not available in your area'*.

UNICEF continued to support the prevention from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) activities with implementing partners operating in different areas of Italy. In collaboration with UNHCR, a PSEA monitoring tool was adapted and introduced to implementing partners.

Education: The Akelius digital platform supported language learning of 466 students in Italian and English, including students with a migration background and other special educational needs. 33 public schools newly joined the programme and adopted the Akelius Italian course for students who recently arrived in the country. A total of 131 new teachers were trained on the Akelius blended learning and teaching approach and 46 tablets were distributed to students and teachers.

Across five Italian regions, a total of 218 young refugees and migrants (70 percent unaccompanied and separated) received skills building and job orientation in 16 reception facilities and the multilingual UNICEF Handbook for Job Orientation. Participants were mostly from Egypt (26 per cent), Tunisia (18 per cent) and Pakistan (12 per cent). For almost 88 percent of the participants, the training was helpful to think about their job aspirations and understand their soft and hard skills better. 74 percent of the social workers, educators and cultural mediators perceived the workshops as very relevant for the group.

Child Rights Monitoring: UNICEF continued to monitor the situation in Lampedusa and in other critical frontline reception centers, and, in coordination with UNHCR, Save the Children and other actors, channelled the findings and recommended courses of action to the central and local authorities of the Ministry of Interior. Considering the increase of arrivals on the

^x Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Labour and Social Policies

Balkan route in Friuli Venezia Giulia, UNICEF and Save the Children finalized a needs assessment and action plan to inform the scale up of protection interventions and to strengthen coordination and provision of technical support to local institutions and CSOs.

ADAP: Three partners were trained on a translated and adapted version of the UNICEF Adolescent Toolkit of Expression and Innovation, and as a result were able to support the participation of 108 boys and girls in MHPSS activities in three locations. Moreover, the online service provision of legal counselling and MHPSS (Here4U integrated in U-Report), in partnership with ARCI, supported 61 cases.

Under the *OPS!* Campaign, 150 secondary school students (68 girls, 82 boys), including students with a migration background and other special education needs, received a comprehensive training on how to identify and counter intersectional prejudices and discrimination. Another 32 young people (including 12 unaccompanied and separated youth) completed a 6-months online training for youth activation against intersectional discrimination.

In social mobilization sessions in several reception centres, 345 young refugees and migrants (255 unaccompanied and separated) registered on the U-Report On The Move platform. The total number of U-Reporters is now 9,370.

SBC, Community Engagement and AAP: On International Women's Day, targeted messaging on online safety reached 763 U-reporters (52 boys, 238 girls, 85 women, 388 men). Moreover, life-saving information material focused on access to services, legal support, awareness raising on discrimination, intersectionality, and GBV was disseminated via Facebook and Instagram, reaching an average of 985 U-Report followers in multiple languages. The online activities were also shared with 335 reception centres frontline workers via bi-monthly newsletters.

A poll on discrimination on the International Day for the Elimination of Discrimination engaged 323 U-Reporters. 43 percent thought that news on social media and TV contribute to reinforcing prejudices against migrants and refugees and 89 percent felt sad, lonely, angry or scared. Moreover, 112 secondary school students were engaged in the organization of two school exhibitions to raise awareness about unconscious bias and intersectional discrimination. In the same period, nine young activists, trained by UNICEF, and three young influencers partnered with UNICEF to launch awareness-raising contents on unconscious bias on Instagram and TikTok (total reach >344,000; engagement: 29,545).

BULGARIA

Between January - March 2023, 3,338 asylum-seekers were registered, including 824 children (655 boys, 169 girls) and 467 unaccompanied and separated children (458 boys, 9 girls), mainly from Afghanistan, Syria, and Morocco. Key challenges remain in relation to the reception conditions, lack of protection and services for unaccompanied and separated children, organized activities for children in reception centers, need to strengthen the Best Interest Determination (BID) procedures, and the establishment of adequate alternative services and care.

Child Protection, GBViE and PSEA: UNICEF, together with its partners Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, Bulgarian Red Cross, Foundation Centre Najda, Foundation Mission Wings and Council of Refugee Women in Bulgaria, reached 2,439 persons, including 270 girls and 1,341 boys, with quality child protection support (MHPSS, legal counselling and case management). This includes 140 unaccompanied and separated children who were identified in detention and assisted in claiming their asylum rights. 349 unaccompanied and separated children were informed on family reunification procedures and 100 children in reception centres shared their concerns through feedback mechanisms.

Moreover, 143 representatives of social services, including frontline workers (80 percent women), were trained on violence against children, GBV, and working with refugees and migrants through nine trainings conducted by UNICEF and the Animus Association.

UNICEF signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the State Agency for Refugees at the Council of Ministers and initiated the development of an agreement to support the establishment of a safe zone for unaccompanied and separated children in the largest reception facility in Harmanli. The grant agreement will also support the strengthening of BID for unaccompanied and separated children in reception centres.

SERBIA

In January and February 2023, 9,739 refugees and migrants arrived in Serbia, which represents a 66 percent increase compared to the same period in 2022. At the end of March, 2,428 refugees and migrants, including 2,161 men, 122 women, 107 boys, 38 girls and 49 unaccompanied and separated children, were present in the country. Main countries of origin are



UNICEF partner Council of Refugee Women in Bulgaria distributed clothing kits to refugee and migrant children.

Afghanistan, Syria, and Morocco.^{xi} Most refugees transit through Serbia and cross the border into Bosnia and Herzegovina. As increasing numbers of people crossed the border from Bulgaria into Serbia, gaps in services in the south (Pirót) intensified, including identification and accommodation of unaccompanied and separated children and child protection services. Civil society partners engaged in protection monitoring reported continued pushbacks, most intensively at the Serbian-Romanian border.

Health and Nutrition: Six parents/caregivers of children under 5 years received parenting support on the care and development of their children, while 15 infants and small children received health and nutrition services. An analysis of access to health services for the migrant and refugee population was completed and will be presented to the Ministry of Health and Commissariat for Refugees and Migration.

Child Protection, GBViE and PSEA: UNICEF, together with Info Park and Danish Refugee Council, reached 73 children (58 boys and 15 girls), including 28 unaccompanied and separated children, with outreach and information dissemination, recreational activities, MHPSS, and identification and referral to specialized services for the most vulnerable children and adolescents. The activities target, among others, children in the asylum centre in Belgrade, reception centre in Sid and children and women outside of centres. Additionally, 16 caregivers received MHPSS.

UNICEF ensured access to safe, survivor-centred GBV prevention and response services for 107 women and girls who were survivors or at risk in asylum/reception centres in Belgrade/Krnjaca and Sid, working together with Info Park and Danish Refugee Council. Activities included workshops and information sessions on available services, hotline support, access to safe space, referrals and case management, and distribution of dignity kits to women and girls for GBV risk mitigation.

Education, ECD and Skills Building: UNICEF, in partnership with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), developed and rolled out the ECD Emergency Training Package for 26 frontline workers, service providers and CSOs who support refugees and migrants. The procurement procedure of play and learning packages for children and families was established.

Moreover, UNICEF supported system strengthening to enable further rapid and unconditional enrolment of all refugee and migrant children in formal education, ensuring quality and inclusive education. In cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Indigo and Center for Educational Policy, UNICEF kicked-off the capacity development and learning support program in 16 elementary and high schools, implementing the concept of Learning Clubs, providing learning support and integration. During this quartal, 293 (184 female, 109 male) children participated in the activities, including 74 (37 female, 37 male) refugee and migrant children. 78 teachers were supported through capacity-building interventions (orientation, training, mentoring, etc.).

Through non-formal education, 26 (14 female, 12 male) refugee and migrant children completed online English courses provided by student-volunteers. Additionally parental engagement program (counselling sessions and workshops on school enrolment and participation in formal education) was developed and initiated in three asylum and reception centres.

WASH and Basic Needs: During the reporting period, three girls and 104 women received dignity/hygiene kits from UNICEF.

Humanitarian Cash Transfers (HCTs): UNICEF enrolled 50 new refugee and migrant households (which included 70 children – 47 boys, 23 girls) in the HCT programme. Each beneficiary household was assisted with 3,500 Serbian dinars per child per month, in line with the Serbian social welfare benefits for children. UNICEF will continue to provide HCTs to affected refugee and migrant households with children until August 2023.

SBC, Community Engagement and AAP: To improve the engagement of affected populations and ensure that they are at the centre of our work, UNICEF monitors partners' dialogue with and feedback from the affected population. 23 beneficiaries shared their concerns and asked questions around their issues of concern and about the services provided to them through established feedback mechanisms which were addressed accordingly by the implementing partner DRC and informed adjustments to their activities.

BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA

Between January and March 2023, 5,201 refugee and migrant arrivals were reported, including 256 children and 96 unaccompanied and separated children. This represented an increase of 112 per cent compared to the same period in



Parents and children are participating in ECD activities in Serbia, organized jointly by UNICEF and DRC.

^{xi} Commissariat for Refugees and Migration/UNHCR

2022. Main countries of origin were Afghanistan, Morocco, and Pakistan.^{xii} By the end of March, around 1,445 refugees and migrants were present (1,325 in reception centres, private and NGO accommodation and an estimated 130-150 in informal settlements), including 152 children and 97 unaccompanied and separated children.

Health and Nutrition: UNICEF continued to support the provision of IYCF counselling as well as health and nutrition services in reception centers through two Mother and Baby Corners for 64 children (36 girls, 28 boys) under five, 48 mothers, and 12 pregnant women. UNICEF ensured private space for breastfeeding, safe space for women, and information on the benefits of breastfeeding, IYCF counselling, and access to MHPSS.

Child Protection, GBViE and PSEA: UNICEF and partners World Vision and Center for Social Welfare continued to provide 24/7 protection and services for children, including unaccompanied and separated children, such as MHPSS, legal guardianship and access to Child Friendly Space (CFS) in two Temporary Reception Centers (TRCs) in Sarajevo and Una-Sana Canton. In total, 969 children (108 girls and 861 boys) benefited from child protection support, including 701 unaccompanied and separated children. In particular, 470 children were reached with case management, 237 children (108 girls and 129 boys) benefited from CFS activities, and 526 children, 419 of whom unaccompanied and separated, were provided with MHPSS.

UNICEF responded to the needs of unaccompanied children who were returned from Croatia to Bosnia and Herzegovina, advocating with the relevant institutions for their rights and protection. In cooperation with the UNICEF Croatia team, identification of unaccompanied children, the assignment of guardians and accommodation conditions and service provision were addressed in both countries, in accordance with international standards.

Moreover, UNICEF continued to support capacity building of Centers for Social Welfare and Service for Foreigners' Affairs and organized trainings for 32 frontline workers in child safeguarding, prevention and response.

WASH: 663 children (114 girls and 549 boys) benefited from winter assistance in the two temporary reception centres Usivak and Borici, including the distributions of much needed winter clothes, blankets, baby suits, socks, and underwear.



UNICEF and partners are providing 24/7 support to children in the Temporary Reception Center Borici.

Education and Skills Building: UNICEF, in partnership with World Vision, continued to provide support to education authorities by engaging cultural mediators, teachers and assistants who provided daily non-formal education activities in reception centres, including Bosnian classes, creative and sports activities. In partnership with Save the Children, UNICEF supported children on the move and local children in accessing the Akelius Digital Language course in local primary schools in Una-Sana Canton, reaching 291 children (62 girls) with English and German language classes. The Akelius Digital Language courses were implemented in eight primary schools and, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, the Faculty of Pedagogy and Save the Children, the capacities of 43 teachers were strengthened in digital competencies, blended learning approaches, and the use of the Akelius Digital Language course.

UNICEF also supported the inclusion of 27 children (12 girls) in two local primary schools in Canton Sarajevo and procured 154 school backpacks and learning/teaching supplies. 23 secondary school aged children, mainly unaccompanied and separated, were supported by UNICEF to access vocational training courses.

Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

To protect and support refugees and migrants along the Mediterranean and Western Balkan routes, UNICEF emphasized strengthening national capacities and systems through partnerships with national, subnational and municipal governments. UNICEF cooperated closely with United Nations agencies, NGOs, and CSOs to improve reception conditions and access to services in health, nutrition, WASH, education, child protection, GBV prevention and response, adolescent engagement, and social behaviour change. Furthermore, UNICEF delivered technical assistance and expertise to enhance child protection systems and safeguard the rights of refugee and migrant children. UNICEF generated evidence to inform policies and planning, continued advocacy and support to governments in aligning national policies with international norms, and improved best interest determination of the child and age assessment procedures. Cross-sectoral approaches in gender, adolescent development, disability, and overall accountability to the affected population were at the core of UNICEF's response.

^{xii} Information based on Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, IOM, UNHCR, and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC).

UNICEF's response prioritized the protection of children and women, prevention of child immigration detention, promotion of family unity, unhindered access to services for all refugees and migrants as well as the fight against xenophobia and discrimination, in line with the Global Programme Framework on Children on the Move. In close cooperation with UNHCR and IOM, under the joint Strategic Collaboration Framework, the response complemented the Global Compact on Migration and Refugees, promoted effective scale-up models, and enhanced linkages between humanitarian and development programmes.

At regional level, UNICEF supported emergency preparedness and contingency planning as well as scale up coordination given the increasing numbers of arrivals. The Regional Office continued to provide technical assistance, surge support on protection services, with a focus on unaccompanied and separated children, and promoted intraregional learning and exchange of good practices and lessons learned. UNICEF's response provides services and access to all refugee and migrant children and families across Europe, complementing the [Ukraine refugee response](#). Additionally, UNICEF's system strengthening approach in host countries benefited all refugees and migrants equally and prepared systems to cater for new arrivals.

Human Interest Stories and External Media

- UNICEF Greece Article: [Akelius: the e-learning platform that supports refugee children in Greek schools](#)
- UNICEF Greece Article: [From Gaza to Samos, education keeps hope alive for refugee children](#)
- UNICEF Greece Article: ["The ideal school should be like a community, like a small village!"](#)
- UNICEF Italy: [UNICEF Emergency Response in Italy](#)
- UNICEF Serbia Report: [Mother and Baby Corner Operations Manual](#)
- UNICEF BiH Article: [Heart song](#)
- UNICEF BiH Article: [Akelius Digital Language course](#)

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Annex A - SUMMARY OF PROGRAMME RESULTS (1 January – 31 March 2023)

Areas of Response	2023 Target	Total UNICEF Results	% Achieved
Health & Nutrition			
# children benefitting from increased access to general health checks and referrals, incl. access to life-saving vaccines	2,040	568	28%
# of infants, children and mothers accessing health and nutrition services, including in mother and baby care centres	5,620	649	12%
# of parents/caregivers of children under 5 receiving ECD counselling and/or parenting support	110	6	5%
WASH			
# of children receiving culturally appropriate basic supplies, including clothes, baby hygiene items, dignity kits	8,700	770	9%
Child Protection			
# of children reached with quality child protection support (MHPSS, legal counselling and case management) and protection standards	45,000	9,159	20%
# of frontline workers and caregivers with improved knowledge and skills on child protection	3,468	221	6%
# of unaccompanied and separated children accessing family-based care or a suitable alternative	8,520	887	10%
Gender-Based Violence			
# women, girls and boys accessing GBV risk mitigation, prevention or response intervention	46,440	2,021	4%
# of frontline workers with improved knowledge and skills on GBV prevention and response	1,548	391	25%
Education			
# children accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning	32,020	19,984	62%*
# of formal school teachers trained on at least one key theme on inclusion of refugee and migrant children	4,620	1,389	30%
# children receiving individual learning materials	1,680	165	10%
Adolescent Development and Participation			
# of adolescent boys and girls benefitting from enhanced participation, social inclusion and empowerment	10,260	685	7%
SBC, Community Engagement & AAP			
# of people reached through messaging on access to services	862,500	22,002	3%
# people participating in engagement actions (for social and behavioural change)	243,600	30,483	13%
# of people sharing their concerns and asking questions through established feedback mechanisms (online and offline, refugee and host community)	1,020	100	10%

*High achievements in Greece due to EU-funded ACE programme and number of children enrolled in schools which stays stable over the year.

Annex B - FUNDING STATUS (as of 31 March 2023)

Funding Status by Country

Countries	Requirements	Funds available			Funding gap	
		Humanitarian resources received in 2023	Other resources used in 2023	Resources available from 2022 (Carry-over)	US\$	%
Greece ^{xiii}	15,938,000	190,850	0	15,825,651	-	-
Italy	12,212,280	750,000	337,227	3,961,960	7,163,093	59%
Bulgaria ^{xiv}	1,476,000	572,000	0	728,000	176,000	12%
Bosnia-Herzegovina	2,640,000	0	394,282	117,594	2,128,124	81%
Serbia	1,154,000	0	0	168,600	985,400	85%
Regional Support	3,600,000	0	0	0	3,600,000	100%
Total	37,020,280	1,512,850	731,509	20,801,804	13,974,117	38%

Funding Status by Sector

Sector	Requirements	Humanitarian resources received in 2023	Other resources used in 2023	Resources available from 2022 (Carry-over)	Funding gaps	
Health & Nutrition	722,000	0	23,405	54,141	644,454	89%
WASH	528,000	0	0	0	528,000	100%
Child Protection, GBViE and PSEA	12,652,200	1,117,271	337,227	3,604,079	7,593,623	60%
Education	16,718,120	245,579	370,877	16,163,887	-	-
SBC and AAP	1,027,440	100,000	0	87,613	839,827	82%
Adolescents/Youth	1,772,520	50,000	0	892,085	830,436	47%
RO Support	3,600,000	0	0	0	3,600,000	100%
TOTAL	37,020,280	1,512,850	731,509	20,801,804	13,974,117	38%

Note on funding: Only US\$1.5 million has been received as new funding in 2023. From the substantial carryover of US\$ 20.8 million, US\$15.7 million are committed to the ACE education programme for Greece. Without immediate, continued support, UNICEF will not be able to sustain critical support to vulnerable children and their families in the coming year, nor respond to new needs arising from additional refugee movements.

^{xiii} The funding status in Greece is high due to the carryover of a generous EU contribution for the ACE education programme. However, other sectors are still underfunded as follows: SBC 100%, ADAP 91%, child protection 87%, health and nutrition 85%.

^{xiv} The funding status in Bulgaria is high due to a generous contribution from the Government of Switzerland of USD 1.3 million, of which USD 1.2 million are committed to constructing a safe zone for unaccompanied and separated children. Health and nutrition, WASH, education, SBC, and ADAP remain with funding gaps of 100%.