

© UNICEF/UN093561/AlJumaa

A Grade 3 student writes during an Arabic language lesson at a UNICEF-rehabilitated school in Dahiet Al-Sham, Rural Damascus, Syria, 30 September 2026.

unicef for every child

Humanitarian Situation Report No. 3

Reporting Period
1 July to 30 September 2026

Syrian Arab Republic

HIGHLIGHTS

- During July–September 2026, humanitarian needs remained high amid displacement, returns, sporadic localized insecurity and military operations in southern governorates.
- More than 5 million people[2] remained internally displaced. While returns continued, the pace slowed during 2026; between July and September, close to 160,000 IDPs and refugees returned, bringing cumulative returns since late 2024 to more than 3.8 million people, including approximately 2 million IDP and 1.8 million refugee returnees.[3] [4]
- Explosive ordnance continued to pose a serious threat to children. During Q3, 71 child casualties were recorded, including 22 children killed and 49 injured, highlighting continued risks to children and people accessing agricultural and grazing land.[1]
- In Q3, UNICEF reached 2.6 million people, including 1.7 million children, bringing the cumulative reach to 5.7 million, including 3.6 million children (1.8 million girls).
- UNICEF's 2026 HAC remained 31 per cent funded, constraining the scale and continuity of essential services.

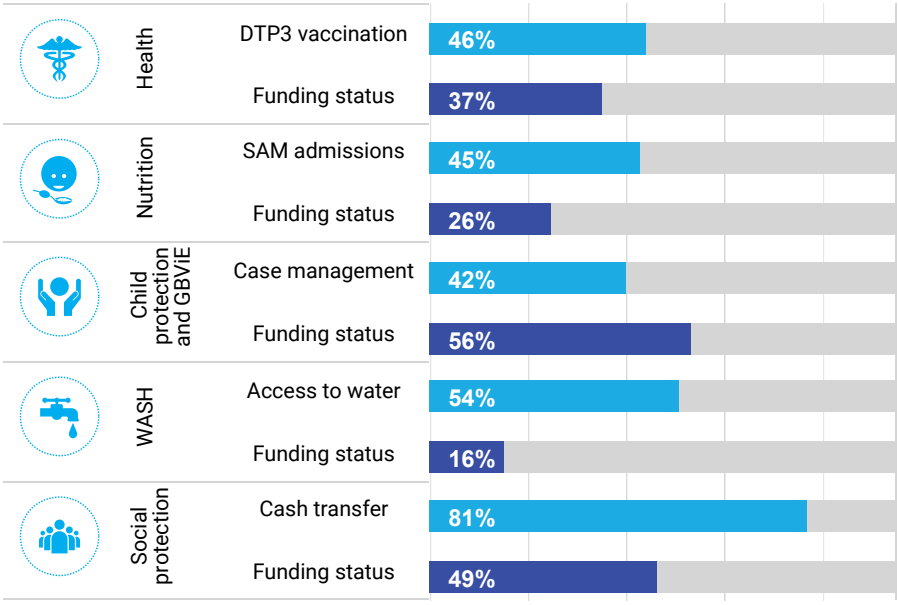
SITUATION IN NUMBERS

7,200,000
Children in need of humanitarian assistance[5]

15,600,000
People in need of humanitarian assistance[6]

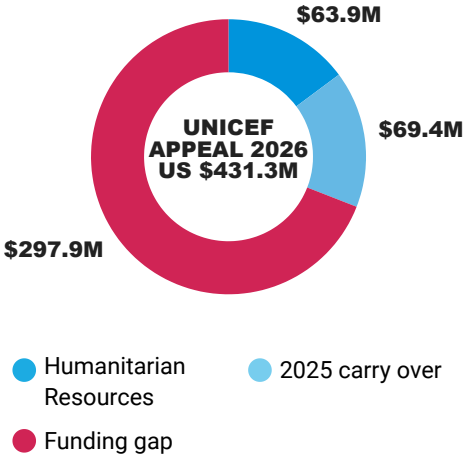
3,838,634
IDP and Refugee returnees since 27 November 2024 [7]

UNICEF RESPONSE AND FUNDING STATUS*



* UNICEF response % is only for the indicator, the funding status is for the entire sector.

FUNDING STATUS (IN US$)**



** Funding available includes: funds received in the current year; carry-over from the previous year; and repurposed funds with agreement from donors

FUNDING OVERVIEW AND PARTNERSHIPS

In 2026, UNICEF continues to deliver an integrated, equity-focused and resilience-oriented response under a unified country-wide approach, prioritizing the most vulnerable children and families affected by prolonged displacement, return movements, socioeconomic deterioration, climate-related shocks and protection risks. UNICEF's response combines life-saving assistance with investments in system strengthening and community resilience, with a particular focus on newly accessible, returnee and hard-to-reach areas.

To sustain this response, UNICEF is appealing for US$431.3 million in 2026 to reach 6.9 million people, including 4 million children, with essential health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, education, child protection and social protection services. UNICEF remains grateful to its partners whose flexible and timely contributions have enabled the continuation of critical services for children and families across Syria, including the Governments of Austria, Belgium, Italy, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, the United States, the European Union (ECHO), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Arab Gulf Programme for Development (AGFUND UNICEF National Committees and private-sector donors.

Despite continued humanitarian needs, funding levels remain critically low. As of 30 September 2026, UNICEF Syria's Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) appeal was only 31 per cent funded, significantly constraining the organization's ability to sustain and expand essential services. At a time when increasing numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons are returning to areas where basic services remain fragile, underfunding risks reversing progress made in restoring access to health, nutrition, education, water and protection services. Additional flexible and predictable funding is urgently required to sustain life-saving assistance, support the reintegration of returnee populations, address emerging needs in newly accessible areas and strengthen the resilience of national and community systems. Without additional resources, the scale and continuity of critical interventions for vulnerable children and families will be increasingly at risk.

SITUATION OVERVIEW AND HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

Humanitarian needs remained severe through September 2026, despite signs of stabilization in political and governance arrangements. An estimated 15.6 million people, including 7.2 million children, continued to require humanitarian assistance driven by prolonged displacement, economic vulnerability, damaged infrastructure, climate-related shocks and localized insecurity in southern governorates.[9] The economy remains fragile after 14 years of conflict, with nearly one in five Syrians living in extreme poverty, while almost half of the population lives below the lower-middle-income poverty line.[8] Through September, inflation, unemployment, liquidity constraints and exchange-rate fluctuations continued to undermine household purchasing power and limit access to essential goods and services.[10]

During the third quarter (Q3) of 2026, humanitarian conditions continued to be shaped by ongoing large-scale population movements, growing pressure on basic services in areas of return and persistent protection risks for children and women. Seasonal flooding and other climate-related shocks continued to affect vulnerable communities in northern Syria. Communities along the Euphrates remained exposed following the late-May and early-June floods in Aleppo, Ar-Raqqa and Deir-ez-Zor, which disrupted water services, livelihoods and humanitarian movement. Although no comparable large-scale flooding or displacement was reported in Q3, elevated river levels continued to threaten critical infrastructure. As of 28 September, 34 water treatment plants in Deir-ez-Zor were affected or at risk of flooding, including 11 that were out of service and 23 at risk of becoming non-operational;[11] flood protection works were completed at six plants. Improved early warning and a slower rise in river levels supported better preparedness than during the earlier flooding.

Population movements remained a defining feature of the humanitarian context during the quarter. More than 5 million people remained displaced, including around 800,000 people living in 1,085 IDP sites; most displaced people continued to live outside camps, often in dire conditions.[12] Returns continued, albeit at a slower pace than the large-scale movements recorded following the political transition in December 2024 and throughout 2025. Between July and September 2026, cumulative figures indicate approximately 98,000 additional refugee returns and 60,000 additional IDP returns.[13] While these returns signal growing confidence, they also placed considerable pressure on already overstretched health, education, protection and water services in areas of return, compounded by social cohesion challenges. At the same time, refugees and internally displaced people continued to face significant barriers to return, including damaged housing, limited livelihood opportunities, inadequate access to basic services, and persistent protection concerns.

The humanitarian situation in As-Sweida and other southern governorates remained concerning throughout the July–September quarter. More than a year after the July 2025 escalation in As-Sweida, the vast majority of the 187,000 displaced people remained unable to achieve durable solutions.[14] Humanitarian access across much of As-Sweida remained severely constrained despite persistent needs. Communities across Quneitra, Dar'a and parts of Rural Damascus continued to face movement restrictions, insecurity, livelihood disruptions and reduced access to basic services amid ongoing Israeli military operations.

Protection concerns remained widespread, including the detention of children and adults by the Israeli army in the southern governorates, damage to local infrastructure and access constraints.

Explosive ordnance contamination is one of the most serious threats, disproportionately affecting children. In 2026, more than 550 explosive ordnance-related incidents resulted in 887 casualties, including 98 children killed and 211 injured.[15] During Q3, 71 child casualties were recorded, including 22 children killed and 49 injured, highlighting continued risks to children and people accessing agricultural and grazing land.[16] Most incidents occurred on agricultural and grazing land, highlighting the link between economic pressure and protection risks as families relied on farming, herding and the collection of natural resources to restore their livelihoods.

These broader trends continued to drive humanitarian needs across sectors. Access to health and nutrition services remained constrained by damaged infrastructure, shortages of medicines and health personnel, and growing demand in areas of return. Only 57 per cent of hospitals and 30 per cent of primary health-care centres were fully operational, while an estimated 587,000 children required treatment for acute malnutrition, including approximately 97,000 children with severe wasting.[17]

Water, sanitation and hygiene needs also remained extensive throughout the quarter, with approximately 10 million people unable to meet their basic water needs.[18] Flooding, water scarcity, electricity shortages and ageing infrastructure continued to disrupt access to safe water and increase the risk of waterborne diseases. Returnee population placed further pressure on already fragile water systems

in several governorates.

Education and child protection needs are substantial. Approximately 2.7 million children remained out of school and around 8,000 schools were non-functional, while 6.2 million children required child protection services.[19] Economic hardship, displacement, overcrowded living conditions and limited access to services continued to heighten the risks of child labour, psychosocial distress and other protection concerns. Returns to areas with damaged infrastructure and limited services continue to create additional challenges for children's reintegration into education and community support systems.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF PROGRAMME RESPONSE

Health (including public health emergencies)



© UNICEF/UN0914860/Shahan

Mayar, 3, receives a dose of Vitamin A supplementation at a health centre in Sheikh Miskine city, during the vaccination campaign in rural Dar'a, Syria on 28 July 2026.

During Q3 2026, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health (MoH) to strengthen health system resilience while sustaining access to essential health and immunization services for vulnerable populations. Support focused on strengthening primary health care, community-based health systems, maternal and newborn health, and immunization services.

UNICEF supported interventions enabled 641,773 people (207,462 women), including 434,311 children (224,662 girls), to access primary health care services through fixed facilities and mobile outreach teams across Syria. Prioritization of underserved and hard-to-reach areas helped maintain access to essential services in displacement and returnee-affected locations. Efforts to institutionalize a national Community Health Worker (CHW) programme under MoH leadership strengthened community-level service delivery, health promotion and referral pathways. During the quarter, community health workers reached 54,717 individuals, including 6,835 children under 5 years of age and 1,446 pregnant women, and facilitated referrals for 1,230 children requiring primary health care services.

UNICEF continued supporting health system strengthening through the expansion of the Every Newborn Action Plan (ENAP), including additional hospitals, to contribute to improved quality of maternal and newborn care. Integration of Early Childhood Development (ECD) services within primary health care facilities further strengthened early identification and referral mechanisms for vulnerable children. During the quarter, 45,839 children under 5 years of age (22,468 girls) accessed integrated developmental screening, nurturing care and nutrition services, while 220 children (84 girls) were referred for specialized support.

To reduce the risk of vaccine-preventable diseases and respond to the ongoing measles outbreak, UNICEF supported routine and supplementary immunization activities. In response to measles outbreaks in high-risk districts, two measles campaigns were implemented in Q3, with 468,941 children aged 7–59 months (234,471 girls) reached with measles and rubella (MR) vaccination and vitamin A supplementation, and 309,290 children under 5 years of age (154,645 girls), reached with oral polio vaccine (OPV).

Nutrition

During Q3, UNICEF interventions contributed to strengthening nutrition systems while delivering life-saving services for vulnerable children and women across Syria through a countrywide platform of 368 fixed health and nutrition facilities and 46 integrated mobile teams, implemented in partnership with the MoH, Directorates of Health (DoH) and 14 non-governmental organizations. The integrated approach supported the prevention, early detection and treatment of malnutrition, particularly in underserved, displacement-affected and hard-to-reach areas.

UNICEF-supported nutrition services reached 305,337 children aged 6–59 months (156,247 girls) with wasting screening and 88,207 pregnant and lactating women with malnutrition screening, strengthening early identification and referral of vulnerable children and women. Nearly 89 per cent of the national wasting screening reach was concentrated in As-Sweida, Deir-ez-Zor, Idlib, Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh and Ar-Raqqa, where 271,619 children (138,625 girls) were screened, reflecting the prioritization of areas facing high humanitarian needs, displacement and return pressures. A total of 2,499 children with severe wasting (1,410 girls) received treatment through UNICEF-supported programmes. Preventive interventions reached 71,485 children aged 6–23 months (35,762 girls) with lipid-based nutrient supplements, helping reduce the risk of malnutrition among vulnerable young children.

To address micronutrient deficiencies and promote optimal infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices, UNICEF-supported services reached 194,806 individuals, including 143,393 children and adolescents (75,457 girls), with micronutrient supplementation. In addition, 90,521 individuals (85,730 women), received IYCF counselling and awareness support. UNICEF also provided nutrition-sensitive cash assistance to 1,870 vulnerable families, helping reduce financial barriers to adequate nutrition.

Water, sanitation and hygiene

During July–September 2026, UNICEF sustained access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene services across Syria, prioritizing vulnerable communities in return areas while combining emergency assistance with rehabilitation and sustainable solutions.

At national level, UNICEF supported interventions enabled 660,709 people (173,895 women), including 319,912 children (154,393 girls), to access sufficient safe water and 280,468 people (68,542 women), including 153,688 children (76,227 girls), to access appropriate sanitation services. A further 89,151 people (17,773 women), including 53,894 children (26,843 girls), received essential WASH supplies, while 73,850 people (41,568 women), including 17,519 children (9,065 girls), participated in hygiene promotion activities. UNICEF supported drinking-water disinfection through water-treatment supplies, benefiting an estimated 5.16 million people. UNICEF continued strengthening critical water and sanitation infrastructure to improve service reliability and sustainability. UNICEF-supported systems sustained safe water services for approximately 2.68 million people in Aleppo and Idlib. Across Syria,

UNICEF supported the rehabilitation and upgrading of water and sanitation infrastructure, including water stations, networks, boreholes, pumping stations and sewerage systems. Key results included improved water access for 55,950 people in Al-Hasakeh and Ar-Raqqa; emergency water network repairs serving over 70,000 people in Homs and Hama; sewerage rehabilitation benefiting approximately 175,000 people in Al-Mayadin; and completed pumping and treatment infrastructure benefiting over 56,500 people in Lattakia.

Overall, Q3 implementation reflected UNICEF's continued shift from recurrent emergency assistance towards more sustainable and resilient WASH systems, while maintaining emergency services where required. Funding shortages, rising operational costs, access constraints and limited technical capacity continued to affect implementation and service sustainability.

Education



© UNICEF/UN0928355/Bashour

Grade 6 students take part in a sport session in UNICEF-rehabilitated Bunat Al-Hadara school in Jaramana, Rural Damascus, Syria on 8 September 2026.

During Q3 of 2026, UNICEF sustained access to safe, inclusive and quality learning opportunities for crisis-affected children across Syria through emergency response and early recovery interventions. Efforts focused on restoring learning, supporting children at risk of dropping out, facilitating the reintegration of returnee children and strengthening the capacity of the education system to respond to evolving humanitarian needs.

During the reporting period, UNICEF reached 633,773 children (309,412 girls) with education support. Access to safe learning environments was strengthened for 12,887 children (5,679 girls) through the rehabilitation and improvement of learning facilities, while 531,260 children (254,239 girls) received essential learning materials and school supplies. UNICEF also expanded non-formal education opportunities to 60,145 children (31,564 girls) through self-learning, remedial and bridging education, early childhood education, life skills and digital learning programmes. Targeted support helped returnee children reintegrate into formal education through accelerated learning and Arabic-language support, while children with disabilities benefited from tailored assistance through a strengthened multisectoral approach.

In northern Syria, UNICEF supported winter school readiness in Al-Hasakeh governorate and strengthened access to education for returnee children through non-formal education and education supplies, including in Aq Burhan Camp and Al-Hol return areas. In As-Sweida, UNICEF enabled 130 Grade 9 and Grade 12 students to sit the exceptional national examinations from 29 August to 9 September. Support included transporting desks, urgently rehabilitating WASH facilities in 29 schools and examination centres, providing three education tents and mobilizing partners to supply water and snacks.

To strengthen education quality and system resilience, UNICEF supported 12,162 education personnel (8,159 women) with capacity development in inclusive education, active learning, digital learning and safe school approaches. In Homs, UNICEF also supported the Directorate of Education to pilot an innovative artificial intelligence-enabled approach to Arabic language learning, helping address learning gaps among Syrian returnee children.

Child protection and GBViE

During Q3 2026, UNICEF and partners delivered integrated child protection services to children and caregivers affected by displacement, returns, insecurity, explosive ordnance and socio-economic vulnerabilities, while strengthening community-based protection, referral pathways and frontline capacities.

In this period, UNICEF and partners reached 449,592 children and caregivers, including 281,784 children (154,330 girls), with child protection interventions. Community-based mental health and psychosocial support services reached 14,546 children (7,840 girls), while emergency psychosocial support reached 3,504 children and caregivers, including 2,994 children (1,548 girls). Positive parenting programmes reached 8,556 caregivers (7,729 women), strengthening family-based care and protective environments for children affected by displacement, return and economic hardship. UNICEF also provided specialized case management services to 5,794 vulnerable children (4,694 girls), facilitating access to protection, health, education and other essential services through established referral pathways.

To mitigate the continued risks associated with explosive ordnance, UNICEF and partners reached 276,605 children and caregivers, including 75,124 girls, with life-saving explosive ordnance risk education and survivor assistance interventions. Community-based prevention and awareness activities reached 61,462 individuals, including 49,130 children (21,222 girls), with information on child protection risks and positive protective practices, contributing to strengthened community awareness and protective behaviours.

UNICEF further strengthened protection systems through gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention and response services reaching 39,076 women, and 34,136 children. In addition, 38,787 individuals, including 31,879 children (14,131 girls) and 6,125 women, received information on safe and accessible reporting channels for sexual exploitation and abuse. To strengthen service quality and sustainability, 1,262 frontline professionals (847 women) enhanced their capacities to deliver child protection services and support community-based protection mechanisms.

Social protection

UNICEF's multipurpose Cash+ programme (MPCP) continued supporting vulnerable families with children facing severe poverty, nutrition and health needs, and heightened child protection risks. The MPCP targets households with young children (6–23 months), female-headed households with children, and families caring for children with disabilities or chronic illnesses.

Between July and September 2026, the programme reached 45,772 people, including 28,463 children, from 9,725 households across 7 governorates, bringing the 2026 total for the period between January and September to 121,767 people, including 70,296 children, from 25,096 households across 11 governorates. Nearly 65 per cent of Q3 beneficiaries were IDPs who had returned to their place of origin.

The programme links cash assistance to essential services through referrals to nutrition and child protection interventions. In Q3, 1,870 households with children aged 6–23 months received cash and

nutrition support (5,721 since January), and 7,855 vulnerable households received cash assistance combined with child protection case management (19,375 since January).

Cash transfers were delivered through financial service providers, with the support of community-based partners and facilities. The programme also served as a shock-responsive mechanism: during emergencies in Aleppo and Idlib, it reached 55 households living in camps in Q3, and 4,492 since January.

Adolescent Development and Participation

During Q3 of 2026, UNICEF continued to support adolescents and young people as agents of positive change. Interventions focused on strengthening resilience, social cohesion, civic engagement, employability and protection, particularly in vulnerable and displacement-affected communities.

Overall, 715 adolescents and young people aged 10–24 years (456 girls and young women) were reached through Adolescent Development and Participation (ADAP) programmes. Of these, 485 adolescents and young people (316 girls and young women) participated in social cohesion and civic engagement initiatives, strengthening leadership and positive community participation. In addition, 230 adolescents and young people (140 girls and young women) accessed life skills, citizenship and employability opportunities, enhancing their readiness for education, livelihoods and future economic participation.

Northern Syria remained a key focus of programming, with 547 adolescents and young people (384 girls and young women) reached across Aleppo and Idlib governorates, including in displacement-affected communities. Interventions strengthened psychosocial well-being, life skills, leadership and employability while facilitating access to specialized protection services through referral mechanisms. Continued engagement with adolescents also supported the identification and referral of protection concerns, including bullying, child marriage and harmful coping practices, contributing to safer and more protective environments.

UNICEF advanced youth leadership through youth-led initiatives promoting health awareness, social cohesion and community engagement. This included menstrual health and first-aid awareness activities for adolescent girls in Ak Burhan Camp and an International Youth Day dialogue attended by 150 young people from Aleppo and Idlib.

Social and Behaviour Change (SBC)



© UNICEF/UN0937629/Al Daher

Iman, a social and behaviour change volunteer, leads a session for mothers on nutrition at a UNICEF-supported health and nutrition centre in Kashkash Al-Zayanat, Al-Hasakeh, Syria, on 20 September.

During Q3, UNICEF and partners implemented integrated Social and Behaviour Change and Community Engagement interventions to strengthen service uptake, promote positive behaviours, enhance community participation and support social cohesion, particularly among vulnerable and displacement-affected populations. The approach combined community engagement, interpersonal communication and behaviour-focused messaging to strengthen trust, accountability and community resilience.

During the reporting period, UNICEF and partners reached over 877,000 people through integrated social and behaviour change and community engagement interventions, including 323,650 caregivers through health promotion activities, 239,168 individuals with behaviour-focused messages, 90,521 caregivers (85,730 women) through infant and young child feeding counselling and 73,850 individuals through hygiene promotion interventions. These efforts supported informed decision-making, adoption of positive practices and improved uptake of essential services among children, caregivers and communities.

Community engagement platforms continued to foster social cohesion and inclusive participation. Through reflective dialogue and collective action initiatives, 5,691 community members (2,995 women and girls) were engaged in promoting inclusive social norms, strengthening trust and supporting peaceful coexistence in displacement-affected and vulnerable communities.

Field-level initiatives further supported positive behaviour change and community engagement. In Deir-ez-Zor, community outreach promoted water safety and drowning prevention awareness, while in Aleppo, community mobilization efforts supported measles vaccination, breastfeeding promotion and back-to-learning campaigns. In Tartous, community structures strengthened local ownership of social cohesion initiatives, contributing to more inclusive and resilient communities.

Accountability to Affected Populations

During Q3, UNICEF maintained its approach to Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP), combining community engagement, feedback and complaint mechanisms, and the integration of accountability principles across programmes and partnerships.

To strengthen institutional and partner capacities, 131 individuals (67 women), including AAP focal points from UNICEF, implementing partners, third-party monitoring organizations and inter-agency partners, were supported to strengthen community consultation approaches and the integration of AAP principles, including child-friendly accountability mechanisms, across humanitarian interventions.

UNICEF further strengthened two-way communication with affected populations through community consultations, digital communication channels and systematic monitoring of beneficiary feedback. Under the Social Policy programme, 5,646 families in Aleppo, Idlib, Hama and Latakia received tailored SMS messages on programme entitlements and key accountability messages. In addition, 1,130 families were contacted to confirm receipt of assistance, while 478 families were reached through post-distribution monitoring to assess beneficiary experiences and programme performance.

In coordination with 13 United Nations agencies, international non-governmental organizations and national non-governmental organizations, UNICEF-supported 93 community consultation sessions across 12 governorates, ensuring that community perspectives informed humanitarian programming and service delivery.

UNICEF's service line remained a key feedback and accountability channel, receiving 3,557 calls during the quarter. Of these, 2,022 inquiries and cases were registered and 701 follow-up calls were

conducted, resulting in a 99 per cent resolution rate for cases received. The majority of contacts related to information on UNICEF-supported services, while requests outside UNICEF's mandate, including cash assistance for returnees and food assistance, were referred to the appropriate service providers. Complaints represented 4 per cent of all cases received.

Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

During July–September 2026, UNICEF strengthened the integration of prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and safeguarding across programmes through field monitoring, partner capacity strengthening, community awareness and engagement with government counterparts. In Aleppo, 18 young volunteers (11 women) from Adolescent Development and Participation programmes were trained on PSEA, safeguarding and ethical programme monitoring, complemented by a joint monitoring checklist to strengthen the identification and follow-up of safeguarding risks.

Community access to PSEA information and reporting channels was strengthened through the distribution of 2,000 PSEA awareness materials to implementing partners in Ar-Raqqa. In parallel, UNICEF field-tested the child-friendly Safety Journey PSEA activity book across 11 camp and non-camp locations in Al-Hasakeh and Ar-Raqqa governorates, generating lessons to inform its wider use. Participant numbers and sex disaggregation were not available from the field-testing exercise.

During the quarter, UNICEF assessed or reassessed 10 prospective and existing implementing partners against the eight PSEA core standards. Two partners assessed as having medium capacity were supported to develop time-bound capacity improvement plans. At the institutional level, UNICEF continued engagement with the Ministry of Emergency and Disaster Management, including preparations for PSEA training of trainers targeting 70 people in coordination with the Inter-Agency PSEA Network.

HUMANITARIAN LEADERSHIP, COORDINATION AND STRATEGY

During the third quarter (Q3) of 2026, UNICEF continued to support sector coordination for WASH, Education and Nutrition, as well as the Child Protection thematic area under Protection Sector, under Syria's unified national coordination architecture. In close collaboration with government counterparts, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), coordination mechanisms strengthened evidence-based planning, information management, service mapping and response monitoring to support coherent and accountable humanitarian action.

Under the leadership of the Syrian authorities, sector coordination structures and technical working groups continued to strengthen harmonized standards, technical guidance and national ownership of the response, while enhancing linkages between humanitarian action, early recovery and resilience-building efforts.

As **Nutrition Sector** Lead Agency, UNICEF strengthened national and subnational coordination to support a coherent, evidence-based and accountable nutrition response across Syria. Through regular coordination mechanisms, partner reporting, service mapping and collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Directorates of Health and humanitarian partners, the Nutrition Sector enhanced response planning, gap analysis and monitoring of service coverage across all 14 governorates.

To strengthen advocacy and resource mobilization, the Nutrition Sector published a Call to Action in September advocating for increased investment in malnutrition prevention, timely access to care and the expansion of integrated nutrition services through primary health care. The Sector also contributed to the 2026 Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) by strengthening nutrition-related evidence and analysis to inform humanitarian planning, prioritization and coordinated response efforts.

From January to August 2026, Nutrition Sector partners reached 1.13 million individuals with nutrition services and screened 1.32 million children aged 6–59 months for acute malnutrition. Sector monitoring and analysis helped identify gaps in referral pathways, treatment coverage and sex- and age-disaggregated reporting, informing actions to strengthen service quality, accountability and access to care.

As technical lead of the **Child Protection thematic area** , UNICEF continued to support coordinated child protection planning, analysis and response across Syria. Working closely with government counterparts, United Nations agencies and NGOs, the Child Protection thematic area strengthened the integration of child protection considerations into return and area-based planning, including access to case management, mental health and psychosocial support, family tracing and reunification, prevention services and safe referral pathways.

In preparation for the winter season, the Child Protection thematic area supported intersectoral planning and prioritization to address heightened protection risks facing vulnerable children and families in displacement and return settings. The winter response analysis identified 480,543 people in need of protection assistance, reinforcing the importance of coordinated action and timely protection interventions. UNICEF and partners continue to strengthen preparedness, service continuity and access to protection services for vulnerable children and caregivers.

The **WASH Sector** strengthened strategic planning and emergency preparedness through national vulnerability mapping, development of technical standards and capacity building at national and subnational levels. The sector also contributed to the 2026 Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA), strengthening the evidence base for the 2027 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP). Between January and September 2026, more than 90 partners delivered over 2,670 WASH interventions across 250 subdistricts, reaching more than 7.7 million people. In collaboration with the Ministry of Emergency and Disaster Management and Ministry of Energy, the sector also advanced governorate-level contingency planning to strengthen coordinated preparedness and response.

During July–September 2026, UNICEF and **Education Sector** partners supported continued access to quality learning opportunities for vulnerable children through learning materials, non-formal education programmes, improvements to learning environments and teacher capacity development. Efforts focused on reducing barriers to education, supporting learning continuity and strengthening the capacity of education systems to respond to the needs of children affected by displacement, return and other shocks.

Beyond service delivery, the Ministry of Education and UNICEF strengthened sector preparedness and coordination through the validation of the draft National Contingency Plan for Anticipatory Action and Rapid Education in Emergencies Response. The plan establishes a common framework for coordinated emergency response, with capacity mapping and response costing underway to support its operationalization and strengthen sector readiness for future emergencies.

During Q3, UNICEF and Education Sector partners reached 663,391 people including 658,747 children (358,292 girls) , bringing cumulative reach in 2026 to nearly 1.5 million people. More than 430,000 children benefited from learning materials, non-formal

education and improved learning environments. In addition, more than 11,000 children accessed rehabilitated classrooms and school furniture, while 2,597 teachers and education personnel received training on Education in Emergencies, child-centred pedagogy, curriculum orientation and classroom management, helping improve the quality, inclusiveness and safety of learning opportunities.

HUMAN INTEREST STORIES AND EXTERNAL MEDIA

Between July and September 2026, UNICEF Syria published eight human-interest stories and photo essays on external website to highlight the impact of humanitarian and early recovery interventions for children and families in Syria. The stories documented support for returning and displaced families, essential health and nutrition services, breastfeeding counselling, immunization, rehabilitation of water infrastructure and the creation of safer and more inclusive learning environments. The stories amplified the experiences of children, mothers, caregivers, frontline workers and communities while demonstrating how UNICEF and its partners are meeting immediate humanitarian needs and supporting longer-term recovery.

A lifeline for returning families in Yarmouk Camp

As families gradually return to the heavily damaged Yarmouk Camp in Damascus, a UNICEF-supported centre is providing integrated health and nutrition services for children, pregnant women and new mothers.

Restoring safe water access for children and families in Rural Damascus

With funding from the Syria Humanitarian Fund, UNICEF is rehabilitating damaged water networks in Babila, Beit Sahm and Adleiyeh, where ageing infrastructure, leakage and low water pressure have reduced families' access to safe drinking water. The initiative is expected to provide more than 100,000 people with safer and more reliable water within five months, while reducing water losses and the risk of contamination and waterborne disease.

A journey shaped by motherhood and breastfeeding

The story follows Leen, a physician and health educator whose own experience of motherhood deepened her understanding of the challenges women face while breastfeeding.

Reaching every child: Bringing life-saving vaccines closer to families

The story documents the first phase of the measles vaccination campaign launched by the Ministry of Health with support from UNICEF, Gavi and WHO in eight high-risk districts across five governorates. More than 260 mobile and fixed teams were deployed to reach over 290,000 children aged six months to five years with measles-rubella vaccine and vitamin A supplementation, including children in vulnerable and remote communities.

During the reporting period, UNICEF provided several interviews to national and international media on different areas of humanitarian action. As the co-lead of Education Sector in Syria, UNICEF provided response on behalf of the United Nations in Syria: Syria in transition

During high-level visit of the Executive Director of UNICEF in September 2026, Reuters interviewed Catherine Russell. Reuters story on UNICEF's humanitarian response in Syria .

Syria's national news channel Sana reported on different aspects of UNICEF's humanitarian response in Syria, including the Executive Director's appeal for humanitarian aid for children of Syria. Executive Director's appeal for humanitarian aid for children of Syria.

- A mother's determination, a baby's healthy start
- Restoring safe water for families and children in Dar'a
- Supporting essential health and nutrition services in underserved communities

HAC APPEALS AND SITREPS

- Syrian Arab Republic Appeals
  https://www.unicef.org/appeals/syria
- Syrian Arab Republic Situation Reports
  https://www.unicef.org/appeals/syria/situation-reports
- All Humanitarian Action for Children Appeals
  https://www.unicef.org/appeals
- All Situation Reports
  https://www.unicef.org/appeals/situation-reports

NEXT SITREP: 20 JANUARY 2027

ANNEX A - PROGRAMME RESULTS

Consolidated Programme Results

Sector			UNICEF and IPs response		
Indicator	Disaggregation	Total needs	2026 targets	Total results	Progress*
Health (including public health emergencies)					
Children under 1 year reached with routine vaccination (DTP3 containing vaccine)	Total	-	691,895	320,230	20 ▲ 23%
Caregivers reached with health promotion, including immunization messages	Total	-	2.9 million	1.1 million	▲ 11%
Children and women accessing primary health care in UNICEF supported-facilities	Total	-	2.5 million	997,418	▲ 20%
Nutrition					
Children 6-59 months with severe wasting admitted for treatment	Total	-	25,000	11,286	21 ▲ 31%
Primary caregivers of children 0-23 months receiving infant and young child feeding counselling	Total	-	1.5 million	458,229	▲ 6%
Children 6-59 months receiving micronutrient powder	Total	-	828,000	345,129	▲ 19%
Child protection and GBViE					
Women, girls and boys accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention and/or response interventions	Total	-	200,000	75,166	22 ▲ 19%
Children who have received individual case management	Total	-	18,000	7,581	23 ▲ 32%
Children accessing community-based mental health and psychosocial support	Total	-	125,000	37,022	▲ 12%
Children and caregivers provided with landmine or other explosive weapons prevention and/or survivor assistance interventions	Total	-	900,000	414,678	▲ 31%
Education					
Children in non-formal education benefiting from education services	Total	-	598,057	195,777	24 ▲ 10%
Teachers and education personnel trained	Total	-	26,556	18,948	▲ 41%
Children supported with educational services and supplies in formal settings	Total	-	2.6 million	433,932	▲ 3%
Water, sanitation and hygiene					
People reached with handwashing behaviour-change programmes	Total	-	625,000	112,807	25 ▲ 12%
People reached with critical WASH supplies	Total	-	785,000	163,542	▲ 15%
People accessing a sufficient quantity and quality of water for drinking and domestic needs	Total	-	4.4 million	2.3 million	▲ 17%
People accessing appropriate sanitation services	Total	-	1.9 million	448,968	▲ 15%
Social protection					

Sector			UNICEF and IPs response		
Indicator	Disaggregation	Total needs	2026 targets	Total results	Progress*
Individual reached through UNICEF social assistance (cash-based)	Total	-	150,000	121,767	▲ 34% [26]
Cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCCE and AAP)[27]					
People engaged in reflective dialogue through community platforms	Total	-	500,000	1.6 million	▲ 203%
People sharing their concerns and asking questions through established feedback mechanisms	Total	-	7,439	3,748	▲ 19%
People who have access to a safe and accessible channel to report sexual exploitation and abuse by aid workers	Total	-	3.5 million	487,195	▲ 4%
Adolescents/youth					
Affected adolescents and youth (10-24 years) receiving life-skills and citizenship education and employability skills	Total	-	200,000	17,731	0% [28]
Adolescents and youth (10-24 years) promoting social cohesion and civic engagement at community level	Total	-	300,000	18,673	0%

**Progress in the reporting period 1 July to 30 September 2026*

ANNEX B — FUNDING STATUS

Consolidated funding by sector

		Funding available		Funding gap	
Sector	Requirements	Humanitarian resources received in 2026	Resources available from 2025 (carry over)	Funding gap (US$)	Funding gap (%)
Nutrition	49,846,155[29]	6,012,601	7,083,513	36,750,041	74%
Child protection	40,400,308	10,684,791	11,870,217	17,845,300	44%
Education	92,000,689[30]	16,982,147	14,341,773	60,676,769	66%
Social protection	33,011,834[31]	8,574,217	7,508,095	16,929,522	51%
Adolescents/youth	19,852,957[32]	1,225,070	1,658,037	16,969,850	85%
Cross-sectoral (AAP, SBC, and PSEA)	2,990,769	375,514	2,070,585	544,670	18%
Health	68,538,462	11,067,315	14,432,498	43,038,649	63%
WASH	124,615,386	9,003,463	10,484,997	105,126,926	84%
Total	**431,256,560**	**63,925,118**	**69,449,715**	**297,881,727**	**69%**

Funding available - funding available in the current appeal year to respond in line with the current HAC appeal.
Humanitarian resources– humanitarian funding commitments received from donors in the current appeal year.
Resources available from 2025 (carry over)– funding received in the previous appeal year that is available to respond in line with the current HAC appeal

Who to contact for further information:

Meritxell Relaño Arana
Representative - UNICEF Syria Country Office
T +963 (0) 938 887 755
mrelano@unicef.org

Zeinab Adam
Deputy Representative - UNICEF Syria Country Office
T +963 (0) 989 712 918
zeadam@unicef.org

Julie Pharand
Chief Field Operations and Emergency (a.i) - UNICEF Syria Country Office
T +963 (0) 930 336 344
jpharand@unicef.org

ENDNOTES

1. International NGO Safety Organization (INSO), Explosive Ordnance (EO) incident data as of September 2026, shared through the Mine Action thematic area under Protection Sub-Sector. Data covers period from 24 June to 29 September 2026.

2. UNHCR, Comprehensive Overview of IDPs and IDP Returns Dashboard, Syrian Arab Republic, as of 24 September 2026.

3. Ibid.

4. UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic, Comprehensive Overview of Refugee Returns Dashboard as of 24 September 2026.

5. Based on the OCHA population dataset (August 2025), children are estimated to represent 46 per cent of the total population, compared with UNICEF's previous estimate of 44 per cent. Earlier SitReps therefore reported 6.9 million children in need, rather than the updated estimate of 7.2 million. The figures have since been revised using the latest population data and aligned with the 15.6 million people in need identified in the 2026 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP). The proportion of children also varies across population groups, with children estimated to account for 57 per cent of IDPs and refugee returnees. Based on these updated demographic assumptions and UNICEF's programme priorities, the overall estimate of children in need was revised in June 2026.

6. OCHA, Syrian Arab Republic: Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP) 2026, April 2026.

7. UNHCR, Comprehensive Overview of IDPs and IDP Returns Dashboard, Syrian Arab Republic, as of 24 September 2026.

8. World Bank, 2026. Macro Poverty Outlook, April 2026. Available at: https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099603508062611308/pdf/Bulk-98ca8904-ede6-470a-a631-afdf511411ac.pdf

9. OCHA (2026), Syrian Arab Republic, Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2026.

10. Ibid.

11. Status update provided by the General Water and Sanitation Company in Deir-ez-Zor on 28 September 2026.

12. UNHCR, Syrian Arab Republic, Comprehensive Overview of IDPs and IDP Returns Dashboard as of 24 September 2026.

13. Derived from UNHCR IDP and Refugee Dashboard data published in late June and late September 2026.

14. OCHA (2025), Flash Update No. 9: Escalation of Hostilities in As-Sweida Governorate, 28 August 2025

15. International NGO Safety Organization (INSO), Explosive Ordnance (EO) incident data as of September 2026, shared through the Mine Action thematic area under Protection Sub-Sector.

16. International NGO Safety Organization (INSO), Explosive Ordnance (EO) incident data as of September 2026, shared through the Mine Action thematic area under Protection Sub-Sector. Data covers period between 24 June to 29 September.

17. OCHA (2026), Syrian Arab Republic, Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2026.

18. Ibid.

19. OCHA (2026), Syrian Arab Republic, Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2026.

20. Changes in the operational environment and the time required to complete the necessary administrative and procedural arrangements for NGO-led programmes affected the pace of implementation of some activities during the first half of the year. Consequently, service delivery progressed more slowly than initially anticipated, resulting in lower beneficiary reach across most of the indicators. With most arrangements now in place, implementation has gained momentum, and UNICEF and its partners are working closely together to further accelerate programme delivery, strengthen coverage and maximize results for children and their families during the remainder of the year.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. The underachievement of the case management indicator is linked to the indicator itself, which relies on protection assessment results. Since there is no fixed or predictable percentage of children identified as needing case management support, the target can fluctuate and may not always be reached.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

27. The cross-sectoral interventions include SBC, AAP, and PSEA.

28. Ibid.

29. The increase in the nutrition requirement is due to the need to sustain and expand life-saving nutrition support in areas of the country where children and women continue to face acute humanitarian risks linked to conflict, displacement, economic hardship and climate-related shocks. The dedicated investment in capacity building, governance and coordination will help strengthen government-led nutrition systems so they can better anticipate, absorb and respond to recurrent emergencies while maintaining continuity of essential services in vulnerable and underserved areas. In 2026, UNICEF plans to support an additional 92 centres for community management of acute malnutrition, expanding the network from 175 centres in 2025 to 267, because the SMART survey flagged many geographic areas where nutrition interventions needed to be scaled up. This will bring critical treatment and prevention services closer to at-risk children and women, particularly in hard-to-reach and shock-affected communities. It will improve timely detection, referral and management of acute malnutrition. The increased nutrition requirement also supports the scale-up of nutrition-sensitive cash assistance for vulnerable households, with a specific focus on the 85 subdistricts at severity scale 4. This will help families meet immediate needs, reduce negative coping mechanisms and address key drivers of malnutrition, while strengthening their ability to withstand future shocks. Overall, the investment positions UNICEF to transition to early recovery and deliver a more equitable, timely and shock-responsive nutrition response in the Syrian Arab Republic.

30. Funding requirements for the education programme have been reduced primarily due to lower targets for non-formal education activities. The UNICEF response is shifting towards more sustainable, early recovery-focused interventions that strengthen and restore the education system.

31. The increase in funding requirements for the humanitarian cash transfer programme in the revised 2026 HAC reflects the need to sustain critical assistance to the most vulnerable households while strengthening pathways towards more resilient social protection. UNICEF has prioritized 85 subdistricts, primarily those classified at severity level 4 under the 2026 HNRP, including high-severity locations in the southern governorates affected by continued insecurity and localized conflict. Areas hosting high numbers of returnees will also be prioritized, given elevated vulnerabilities, limited coping capacities and increased pressure on basic services. With families facing compounding pressures from economic hardship, displacement, declining purchasing power and recurrent shocks, humanitarian cash transfers remain critical to meeting immediate needs, protecting children and mitigating negative coping mechanisms. At the same time, increased investment in cash support will help bridge humanitarian assistance and longer-term social protection by supporting a gradual transition towards nationally owned and shock-responsive systems, enabling vulnerable families to better withstand future shocks and pursue more sustainable pathways out of poverty.

32. The overall target for adolescent development and participation has not changed substantially in the revised 2026 HAC. However, the increased budget of the revised 2026 HAC appeal compared with the original appeal issued in December 2025 reflects UNICEF's twin-track approach: integrating humanitarian interventions into early recovery, sustaining direct humanitarian support while investing in systems strengthening and institutional capacity at subnational, national and community levels. Additional resources are required for technical assistance, coordination, policy engagement, strengthening systems and building resilience to future humanitarian and environmental shocks.