

## Situation Overview and Humanitarian Needs

### Situation in Numbers



3375 COVID-19 confirmed cases

22 deaths



400,000 Children affected by COVID-19 school closures



US\$ 750,000 funding required



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As of June 10, Gabon's COVID-19 tally crossed the threshold of 3,000 infections with 1,000 new confirmed cases over the last two weeks, bringing the total caseload to 3,375. The number of recorded deaths stands at 22 and the recovery rate keeps improving. According to available projections, the peak of the pandemic in the Country is yet to be reached. According to the most up-to-date disaggregated data 60% are men, 40% women and 10% are children aged 0-18. The outbreak continues to spread geographically affecting new districts and provinces where active infections clusters are being reported. Up to 18.753 tests were already carried-out predominantly in the hard-stricken regions such as Libreville and Franceville. Despite the uplifting of testing capacities with 8 operational laboratories, they are largely still lagging the pandemic expansion and the actual needs. In some provinces no new samples were taken in the reporting period and shortages of reagents and critical items are reported. This is due, mainly to the global and regional supply chain shortfalls and disruption and the lack of domestic capacities.

Faced by increasing non-compliance to preventive measures, the Government issued more coercive statements advising the population to strictly abide by all the social distancing and hygiene guidelines. This further prompted the tightening of some of these measures mainly in Libreville without changing the overall set of restrictions.

The already dire pandemic situation is compounded by a measles outbreak reported in two health districts (Bitam and Mayoumba) with 10 reported cases. This measles outbreak is unfolding against the backdrop of a stalling routine immunization coverage mainly due to COVID-19 pandemic and to pervasive systemic bottlenecks. UNICEF has preempted this by convening a strategic meeting with the EPI and then with WHO to delineate urgent actions to shore up the cold chain and vaccine transport, to prevent a measles epidemic and to reinvigorate routine immunization.

The Country Office is expanding its comprehensive response and is delivering critical strategic and programmatic IPC, RCCE, WASH, education, child and social protection interventions, while leveraging resources and partnership near UN agencies and multilateral donors.

## UNICEF's COVID-19 response

### **Health and HIV/AIDS**

UNICEF has broadened the scope of its assistance in collaboration with WHO, UNFPA and UNAIDS to ensure adequate control infection, early detection, appropriate Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and for health and social workers.

Significant support to uplift the testing capacities is provided through the leveraging of resources and the procurement of additional tests towards meeting the growing needs as the pandemic continues to spread.

Facing the addition burden of the measles outbreak, the CO initiated a strategic reflection with the Management of the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) and WHO to lay out a comprehensive roadmap aiming at addressing the structural bottlenecks. This led to commitments and actions to strengthen the cold chain and vaccine transport equipment along the preparation of SIAs in low-coverage districts, and technical and financial support to the planned national immunization campaign.

### **WASH/IPC**

For the WASH/IPC component, UNICEF broadened its support in collaboration with the municipality of Libreville through providing an integrated handwashing, water supply, disinfection and anti-vectorial control, RCCE package. These interventions are spurring a leveraging effects and are expected to impact over 100,000 inhabitants in Libreville which is hard-hit by the pandemic. The contribution is targeting the suburban districts with high population density and insufficient water and sanitation infrastructures and services. It is furthermore covering major municipal health centers, libraries, early childhood and market facilities. Drawing on its response plan, the Country Office is closely working with the World Bank and the Ministry of Education to conclude a joint partnership for a multi-layer WASH in school strategy as an immediate response to COVID-19 and the post-pandemic recovery.

### **RCCE/C4D**

UNICEF is diversifying its RCCE interventions with an integrated national campaign with an overarching message “ # Let us mobilize against COVID-19, respect the barrier measures and protect our health. #For Every Child, Every Right”. To date, UNICEF COVID-19 RCCE response rests on a large coalition of media and local partners including Libreville Municipality, Gabonese Community and Educative Radios Network, Gabonese Red Cross, Gabon Radio and Television Office, Child Protection Group of NGOs.

UNICEF and partners are using a wide range of mass media digital platforms and tools with an integrated C4D approach. Tailored messages are conveyed to primary, secondary and tertiary participants mainly parents, caregivers, religious and traditional leaders, youth and adolescents to raise awareness around COVID-19 and the Essential Family Practices. As of date, up to 400,000 persons have been reached through these programmes and around 50 leaders, expert and community agents were involved in the RCCE response. 70 community leaders along 25 adolescents (volunteers and supervisors) were trained on communication skills, RCCE content and guidelines as well as U-Report and digital platforms. They are deployed in the Municipalities of Libreville, Owendo and Akanda to undertake the peer-education and community mobilization to promote safe behaviors, social distancing and COVID-19 preventive measures. In addition to COVID-19 preventive measures, a large set of messages and content on KRCs and Essential Family Practices on immunization, Prenatal Consultations, malaria prevention, birth registration, education, violence and abuse against children, sexual violence, corporal punishment and youth and adolescent engagement was disseminated through radios, TV programmes, youtube channels, facebook lives and other social media platforms.

U-Report platform is its final testing phase and will play a key role in youth engagement for fighting the pandemic..

### **Education**

UNICEF is providing significant support to ensure the right to education for every child is guaranteed during the pandemic and beyond. In collaboration with UNESCO and other partners, UNICEF contributed to the development of a national distance learning strategy. While not comprehensive, this strategy paved the ways for offering distance learning or home-based learning opportunities to children writing national examination. In addition to the strategy, UNICEF supported the production of digital content and curricula for children. A total 104,000 student have access to distance learning opportunities through educational TV and radio programmes, online learning platforms supported by multiple partners including UNICEF. Most importantly, and from an equity perspective, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education to expand learning opportunities to 18,000 children living in remote areas and with access to TV, Radio and online learning programmes..

To further contribute to the reduction of exposure risks to the pandemic, UNICEF is partnering with the Ministry of Education and the World Bank to support a safe reopening of schools through an integrated WASH and IPC package.

## **Child protection**

In the Child Protection area, important strides were made to shield vulnerable children from the pandemic threat with a collaborative work throughout the protection system chain. 650 children without parental or family care were provided with appropriate alternative care arrangements and over 250 children and adults had access to a safe and accessible channel to report sexual exploitation and abuse. A group of NGOs were supported to cater for their essential shelter, food, medicaments, education and protection needs. They are receiving psychosocial and mental health support along a thorough protection against COVID-19. The response is two-fold as it covers the pandemic interventions and the continuity of child protection services in its various dimensions of preventing Violence and abuse, combating child trafficking and child labour, delivering adequate juvenile justice and sustainable birth registration services.

A multi-digital platforms are disseminating compelling content on child protection and the ministry of Justice has set up on June 1st, 2020 with UNICEF support a new WhatsApp Platform of the guardians of the nine child prisons units of the country. The purpose is the monitoring of children's rights to health and to protection during the pandemic.

Significant progress is noted on the work on setting up the toll free system for combating Violence against children and Gender Based Violence. The upcoming celebration of the African Child Day on June 16, has prompted the programme component and partners to

focus on raising awareness and advocacy for improvement in the juvenile justice system. Actions to further protect and reduce the risk of exposure to the pandemic in prisons will consist in delivering a humanitarian kit to 375 children in detention. An increasing number of children, parents and caregivers are seeking and receiving psychosocial and mental health support through established mechanisms.

## **Social protection**

Significant work is being done in line with the area 4 of the "Agenda for Children" to pre-empt, analyse and address the COVID-19 fallout on children. UNICEF partnered with ILO in supporting the Government to strengthen and streamline the social protection integrated information system. This support is meant to curate, process, analyse and archive data collected through Government food distribution programme for the needy population. Through this collaboration, the Government will be able to avail a local registry of beneficiaries which could then be used as part of the overall social registry for future social protection, cash transfer, food distribution or other form of assistance to vulnerable people. As part of its work to protect people against vulnerability, UNICEF provided support to vulnerable single women head of household and disabled persons in the Libreville Municipality professional centre to acquire sewing equipment to produce masks for the needy population and to generate additional income.

## **Adaptations to ongoing UNICEF programmes**

UNICEF is constantly assessing the COVID-19 evolving pandemic and emerging stakes and priorities to adjust its programming to the immediate children humanitarian needs and to the Programme of Cooperation strategic results in a multi-pronged vision. In line with the continuity of the country programme beyond COVID-19, the child protection component has step up effort to accelerate the implementation of the UN Joint Programme on birth registration and access to social protection. A steering committee is being set up at provincial level and actions are underway to further identify children from the indigenous populations without birth certificate and access to social protection.

With consideration to the learning agenda, UNICEF is partnering other partners under the leadership of UNDP to assess the socio-economic impact of COVID-19. UNICEF is paying close attention to the economic consequences of COVID-19 on essential social Services such as education and health and their repercussions on multidimensional child poverty. The CO has also resumed consultations with Child Rights Committees in the Parliament to carry-out high-level advocacy in the COVID-19 context pertaining to social budgeting and legislative reforms.

## Funding Overview and Partnerships

During the reporting period, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the Global Thematic Funds for Education, and the Global Funds for Tuberculosis, Malaria and HIV-AIDS, contributed to UNICEF Gabon COVID-19 response plan. The requirements of the response plan amount to USD 750K, out of which USD 200K have available.

## External Media

UNICEF Country Office has rolled-out an external communication and outreach plan to document the COVID-19 response and to raise the overall UNICEF profile. A pertinent and steady content was produced and disseminated on various national medias and UNICEF and United Nations platforms. The CO response to COVID-19 was featured in ICON and UNICEF Gabon Website. A press briefing was held by the Community Radio Network to launch the RCCE Programme and get a wide media coverage. In addition, the interview of the UN Resident Coordinator on local media featured UNICEF 's contribution.

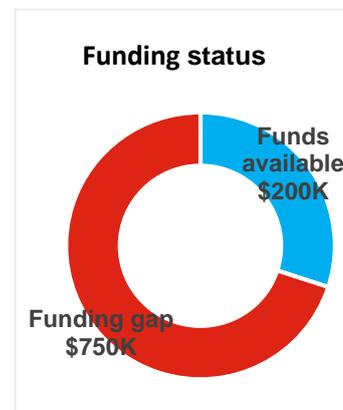
[link](#)

[UNICEF Gabon, repurposing Child-Friendly Cities Initiative for COVID-19](https://www.unicef.org/gabon/en/caring-most-vulnerable-children-amidst-covid-19)

<https://www.unicef.org/gabon/en/caring-most-vulnerable-children-amidst-covid-19>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Epejkjvhugo&t=1292s>

<https://www.facebook.com/1gabon/videos/562003857837169/?vh=e>



\* Funds available includes funding received against current appeal as well as carry-forward from previous year.

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## Summary of Programme Results

Sector	UNICEF and IPs Response	
	2020 target	Total results*
<b>Risk Communication and Community Engagement</b>		
Number of people reached on COVID-19 through messaging on prevention and access to services	700,000	400,00
Number of people engaged on COVID-19 through RCCE ACTIONS	420	216
Number of people sharing their concerns and asking questions/ clarifications for available support services to address their needs through established feedback mechanisms	5,000	5,206
<b>WASH and IPC</b>		
Number of people reached with critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items) and services	70,000	4,155
<b>Health</b>		
Number of healthcare workers within health facilities and communities provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	300	0
<b>Nutrition</b>		
-	-	-
<b>Education</b>		
Number of children supported with distance/home-based learning	104,836	76,739
Number of schools implementing safe school protocols (COVID-19 prevention and control)	600	0
<b>Child Protection and GBV</b>		
Number of children without parental or family care provided with appropriate alternative care arrangements	1,000	655
Number of children, parents and primary caregivers provided with community based mental health and psychosocial support <sup>3</sup>	10,000	5,210
Number of children and adults that have access to a safe and accessible channel to report sexual exploitation and abuse	300	250
Number of UNICEF personnel and partners that have completed training on GBV risk mitigation and referrals for survivors	60	60
<b>Social Protection</b>		
Number of households (affected by COVID-19) receiving humanitarian multi-sector cash grant for basic needs	-	-

## Annex B

### Funding Status\*

Sector	Funding requirements	Funds available	Funding gap \$	Gap %
C4D / RCCE	150,000	40,000	110,000	73%
WASH & IPC	100,000	10,000	90,000	90%
Health	70,000		70,000	100%
Child Protection	110,000	50,000	60,000	55%
Education	180,000	70,000	110,000	61%
HIV/AIDS	40,000	30,000	10,000	25%
Technical Support, Operational Cost, Coordination, M&E	100,000	-	-	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>750,000</b>	<b>200,000</b>	<b>550,000</b>	<b>73%</b>