Highlights

Peru is the country with the highest COVID-19 mortality rate in the world, is the second most affected in the region and has the sixth highest number of cases in the world, with 814,829 confirmed cases and 32,463 deaths, including 146 children and adolescents, as of 30 September. With a population of 32 million and only 1,703 ICU available beds nationwide, the health system is struggling to cope with the situation.

In response to the pandemic, on 16 March the Government of Peru declared a national state of emergency, extended to 31 October, closed borders until October, and imposed a mandatory national quarantine that has been gradually lifted as of July. These actions have been complemented by various health regulations, the “I Learn at Home” remote mass public education strategy, social protection measures and an economic stimulus package.

Nevertheless, the ILO reports a 10.5 per cent fall in the average actual income over the last year and predicts 1.5 million jobs lost by December, while the Central Reserve Bank of Peru predicts a 12.7 per cent GDP contraction for 2020. Government of Peru’s focus on the immediate socioeconomic response is not conducive to addressing structural challenges of the social protection system (UNICEF, September 2020), which increases the risks faced by the most vulnerable, especially women and girls, families living in poverty whose livelihoods have been impacted by the quarantine, indigenous communities with limited access to health services, and migrants and displaced people in overcrowded living conditions with limited local support networks.

UNICEF’s response strategy focuses on helping ensure children’s rights are fulfilled. Since the start of the emergency, main results include:

- On UNICEF social media, information and messages on COVID-19 had an average reach of 17,311,748, and 430,386 engagements.
- Primary health service reopening benefitted 8,067 women, 4,292 girls and 3,272 boys, including 181 migrants.
- Multimedia pieces promoting breastfeeding had a reach of 10,809,079, 196,792 interactions.
- National Migration Authority provided orientation to 2,646 migrant children and their families in a vulnerable situation, and 152 children received protective migration status.
- Self-care workshops benefitted 206 teachers (154 women, 52 men) and 5 principals.
- Psychosocial support and prevention of violence videos as a part of the “I Learn at Home” remote mass public education strategy have been viewed 170,176 times.
- Hygiene kits benefitted 35,538 people, including 17,916 children and adolescents.
- Technical support with UNESCO, WB and the IADB led to the formal proposal of a school reopening protocol proposal to the Ministry of Education (MoE), which would benefit 6.7 million students in the public education system.
- 400 migrant and refugee households with children and adolescents (around 1,530 people) received a second monthly cash transfer (US 217), as well as information on access to services and guidance to promote remote school attendance.
Funding overview and partners

Since the launch of the 2020 Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) appeal, the humanitarian needs and the original funding requirements of US$ 3,500,000 have changed and continue to do so every day. UNICEF estimates that its financial requirement will increase in relation to the March 2020 HAC appeal, and the revised figure will feed into the next Global HAC revision. In the meantime, UNICEF Peru has received generous donations from CERF, BPRM, DFID, SIDA, Republic of Korea, Orbia and COVID thematic funds, which have allowed for the timely implementation of immediate actions in UNICEF’s response plan.

Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

UNICEF’s response strategy focuses on supporting the national and local health, education, social protection and child protection systems through policy development and capacity-building, drawing upon strong local partnerships and networks, especially for the most vulnerable populations, including indigenous communities in the Amazon and Venezuelan migrants settled in the northern districts of Lima. UNICEF works closely with PAHO, which leads the inter-agency engagement with the MoH, and, with the MoE, UNICEF and PAHO coordinate engagement to provide a joint message. An inter-agency task force with WHO UNHCR, IOM, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF was set-up to review the UN system’s preparedness to manage COVID-19. Each agency has been advised to update and test their business continuity plans. As part of a joint framework, agencies are sharing information on their activities and achievements.

Within the Nacional Humanitarian Network, the cluster coordination mechanism between Government, civil society organizations and the United Nations System led by OCHA, UNICEF leads Education, Protection and WASH working groups, and actively participates on Health and Nutrition & Food Security working groups. These working groups developed COVID-19 specific gap and capacity analyses in case there is an activation requirement from the Government of Peru, following the network’s activation protocol.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

Risk communication and community engagement (RCCE)

Between 25 August and 21 September, UNICEF’s messages on Facebook had 361,056 impressions per post, 3,133 engagements per post and 287,278 video views.

UNICEF and the Peruvian Press Council’s #SigamosCuidándonos (“Let’s keep taking care of each other”) campaign ran through September. On UNICEF channels, the campaign promoting proper use of masks, handwashing and social distancing had a reach of almost 6 million, 81,704 engagements, 303,083 video views and 42,821 website visits, while web banners on media outlets generated 2.3 million impressions. UNICEF initiated a series of workshops with adolescents to co-design campaign to highlight COVID-19’s impacts on young people in Peru and how they reimagine their future. UNICEF also participated in the MoE’s campaign to prevent school dropout. UNICEF-supported "I learn at home" videos with national UNICEF ambassadors (distance learning, self-directed learning, student responsibilities, setting routines, online privacy, and supporting your children’s learning) aired on national and sub-national media.

UNICEF and Ministry of Health (MoH) multimedia pieces promoting breastfeeding had a reach of 10'809,079, with 196,792 interactions. UNICEF and the Ministry of Development and Social Inclusion (MIDIS) hosted the last of a series of webinars for behavior change on early childhood care during COVID-19, based on a Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) study called “Early childhood care: Reality and challenges for comprehensive and inclusive care. Knowledge, attitudes and practices of families of girls and boys under three years of age and of ECD service operators” (abbreviated version of the KAP study). Findings of this study include: parents have low overall knowledge of ECD, parents undervalue play as a form of learning, service providers undervalue cultural knowledge, late diagnosis of disabilities I and ECD services are poorly coordinated.

UNICEF continues its monitoring and accountability activities in indigenous communities in the Amazon for COVID-19 prevention, carrying out phone interviews to community leaders and UNICEF field team to receive their feedback. UNICEF provided technical assistance in the design of COVID-19 prevention messages for cash transfer beneficiaries.
Provision of critical medical and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) supplies and improving infection and prevention control (IPC)

UNICEF distributed 681 hygiene kits including key messages on the prevention of COVID-19 in 12 indigenous communities in Loreto benefitting 2,939 people, including 1,433 children. In addition, UNICEF and the Ministry of Housing, Construction and Sanitation (MVCS) continue to co-lead the WASH Sector Group. In September, the Group coordinated the distribution of PPE and chlorine for water disinfection, in prioritized urban and rural areas of Ucayali, Loreto, Pasco, Piura, La Libertad, Puno, Huánuco, Lambayeque and Ica.

Continuity of health care for women and children

UNICEF delivered 700 protection and care kits for pregnant women and newborns and 1,500 toy kits to improve child-parent interactions through play and communication, as part of the reactivation of ECD services in Loreto and northern Lima. Each kit includes an educational booklet on the care of the newborn and the care of children from 0 to 24 months, in the context of COVID-19 and are targeted for vulnerable families, including Venezuelan migrant families.

UNICEF concluded the webinar series organized with MIDIS entitled "Early Childhood Care: changing in attitudes and behaviors from service providers, local authorities and families". The sessions focused on the importance of protecting and caring for early childhood in the context of COVID-19, and participation included authorities from the health, education, social development and civil society sectors.

As part of the development of the online/telephone counselling, risk-identification and mental health care for adolescents and their families in the context of COVID-19, UNICEF is developing protocols for online adolescent mental health care. The MoH has agreed to provide technical input and use the protocols developed to guide and inform the procedures in place for Línea 113, the MoH hotline launched at the beginning of the pandemic for all health queries related to COVID-19.

Access to continuous education, child protection and GBV services

UNICEF continued technical assistance to the MoE on distance-based pedagogy. 58 schools began a course on distance education resources and the new role of the teacher, while 211 teachers and principals participated in self-care workshops to face COVID-19 and its effects. These actions will benefit 41,457 students. Together with UNESCO, the World Bank and the IADB, UNICEF and the MoE finished the strategic school reopening plan, which will guide the national reopening strategy. UNICEF and northern Lima education authorities began an active search plan for out-of-school children. In Child Protection, UNICEF continues its work with the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations (MIMP) to strengthen its family-based alternative care system and promote de-institutionalization of children. In August, the National Migration Authority provided orientation to 2,646 migrant children and their families in a vulnerable situation and 152 children have benefitted and received protective migration status.

Since the start of the pandemic and through September, UNICEF- and MoE-developed videos with tips and messages of psychosocial support for students and families, and information on access to services against bullying, have reached a total of 170,176 views.
Social protection

After the first round in August, the second round of four monthly cash transfers began implementation in September. There is one change in the total number of beneficiaries and their composition by gender and age because some households were replaced in the programme. The total number of 400 households supported by our cash-based intervention is maintained. One of the main challenges is to maintain communication with all the beneficiaries over the whole duration of the programme (particularly by phone).

Human Interest Stories and External Media

In September, through media engagement, UNICEF generated almost US$ 119,000 in free press to highlight COVID-19’s impact on children. UNICEF external media focused on preventing dropout rates estimated at 14% in the middle of scholar year (end of July), and an almost 20% dropout rate in grade 11 (5th year secondary school as per Peru’s education system), which is the final year of compulsory education in the country. UNICEF held a series of workshops for media on strengthening rights-based reporting on Venezuelan migrants during the pandemic, attended by close to 500 journalists.

For more on COVID-19’s impact on children in Peru, as well as UNICEF’s response, see these stories and videos:

In Peru’s Amazon, It Will Take More Than Soap And Water
Video: Delivery of hygiene kits to indigenous communities in Loreto, in the Peruvian Amazon
Getting oxygen to the heart of the Amazon
Video: Delivery of oxygen concentrators for indigenous communities in the Peruvian Amazon
Video: Providing education and psychosocial support kits to students in northern Lima
Solidarity and care in confinement in northern Lima
The challenge of virtual education in the Andes

Next SitRep: 31 October 2020

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