Before the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the Latin America and the Caribbean region was facing concurrent humanitarian crises, with 23 million people in need of assistance. The pandemic has led to rising unemployment and other impacts that could push millions into poverty, many of whom will rely on humanitarian assistance to survive.

In 21 countries and territories, UNICEF will protect the most vulnerable children, families and communities from exposure to COVID-19 and its impacts. At the regional level, UNICEF will provide technical assistance to country offices, building preparedness capacities at all levels and ensuring linkages between humanitarian and resilience efforts.

UNICEF is requesting US$48.9 million to address COVID-19-related humanitarian needs (US$36.5 million) and support overall emergency preparedness and response (US$12.4 million). Priorities include the safe return to school; the provision of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services; and support for health systems. Seventeen independent states and four territories are directly covered by this regional appeal.

IN NEED

- 700,000 children are at risk of severe acute malnutrition
- 5 million children need immunization services
- 60.9 million children have limited/no hygiene service at school
- 138 million children affected by school closures (COVID-19)

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

US$ 48.9 million

This map does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. The countries in light blue are embedded in this regional appeal. The countries in dark blue have corresponding standalone appeals or are covered under crisis appeals.
Protracted crises and rapid-onset emergencies, compounded by COVID-19, are impacting the well-being of millions of children across Latin America and the Caribbean. Prior to the pandemic, the region was already facing concurrent crises, including the socio-economic and political situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (7 million people in need of assistance); the Venezuelan migration crisis (6.2 million people in need of support); the economic, social and political crisis in Haiti (5.1 million people in need); and at least 5.2 million people in need of assistance in El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras due to poverty, climate shocks and violence. Between January and August 2020, over 733,000 people, including some 258,000 children, were affected by mid-/large-scale disasters in 13 countries, including the first tropical storms of the Caribbean hurricane season. Furthermore, 47.7 million people in the region live with hunger and 2.6 million children are facing crisis levels of food insecurity in Haiti and Central America. Nearly 21 million people lack access to basic drinking water and 83 million lack access to basic sanitation. Prior to COVID-19, 12 million children and adolescents were out of the education system. COVID-19 has exacerbated these ongoing situations, leading to greater needs and undermining national and local capacities. Due to border closures, some people are displaced within their countries, while many others have migrated through irregular borders. Thousands have been stranded in host countries, and are facing limited access to basic services and xenophobia. In a region with 14 countries among the 25 countries with the highest female circumcision rates globally and where one out of two children under 15 years is subject to corporal punishment at home, pre-existing gender inequalities and gender-based violence trends, coupled with confinement, have led to increased violence against children and women.

The UNICEF Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office will provide direct and remote support to country offices in the region to address the increasing number of complex crises affecting children. This support includes technical assistance, quality assurance and oversight to ensure timely and effective UNICEF humanitarian response in pursuit of the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs), including cross-cutting programming (i.e., on gender, early childhood development, adolescents and disabilities) in all country offices with an active humanitarian response to the impacts of COVID-19 and other humanitarian situations. The Regional Office will support country offices with human and financial resources in emergencies that may require an immediate response, but that are not large enough in scale to warrant a stand-alone country appeal. UNICEF will focus on ensuring solid capacities and resources for emergency preparedness at the regional and national levels — in compliance with UNICEF’s Minimum Preparedness Standards — to provide effective humanitarian coordination and collaboration with governments and other partners, mobilize surge capacity, supplies and partners, and implement cash-based interventions at the onset of an emergency. Emphasis will be placed on rolling out the revised CCCs. UNICEF will also invest in feedback, monitoring and reporting tools for partners and affected populations, and advocacy capacities at all levels. Across countries and sectors, UNICEF will work to ensure linkages between humanitarian action, development programming, climate change adaptation, risk management and resilience, including by developing UNICEF and partner capacities for disaster and climate risk assessments and risk-informed programming; supporting evidence generation to inform policies and advocacy; and fostering strategic positioning and partnerships. Grand Bargain commitments are mainstreamed across UNICEF’s strategies, including on localization, strengthening government and local actor capacities; reinforcing accountability to affected population mechanisms; and boosting the quality and impact of humanitarian cash transfers.

In Barbados, students are getting prepared for the hurricane season amidst COVID-19.

Having faced Hurricane Irma in 2017, 11-year-old Khorey is determined that his school and community will be better prepared this time around. But this year, Barbados is facing additional crises: displacement, infrastructure damage and service interruption caused by storms, particularly in coastal areas, could leave families more vulnerable to COVID-19 and its impacts.

“This year my family will have hurricane shutters…I’m going to make sure there are no projectiles that can fly, we will make sure to have food stocked up for the season,” he says.

Read more about this story here
COVID-19 REGIONAL RESPONSE

Argentina, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, the Eastern Caribbean Area (Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands), Jamaica, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Suriname and Uruguay

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION (COVID-19)

As of August 2020, Latin America and the Caribbean was the epicentre of the COVID-19 pandemic, surpassing 7.3 million confirmed cases, including over 665,000 cases and 16,000 deaths in the countries included in this appeal. Structural issues, including poverty, fragmented health systems, informal economies, gender inequalities, unequal access to water and sanitation, crowded urban settlements and underserved rural and indigenous communities, have increased the region's vulnerability.

The health emergency also threatens the well-being of families, including those not directly affected by the disease. Extended lockdowns, school closures, the suspension of essential services and the cessation of economic activities have had devastating humanitarian and socio-economic consequences for children. With unemployment reaching 13.5 per cent in the region, the crisis could push 118 million women into poverty, leaving many families to rely on humanitarian support to cover basic needs. Due to COVID-19, an estimated 13.7 million people in the region are severely food insecure and a significant increase in hunger and malnutrition is expected. Over 21.3 million learners in the countries covered in this appeal have been affected by school closures, and sustained support is needed for the safe reopening and operation of schools.

HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY (COVID-19)

The UNICEF Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office strategy, which is guided by the CCCs and the global guidance on COVID-19, focuses on protecting the most vulnerable children, families and communities from exposure to COVID-19 and its impacts. This will be achieved by supporting a public health response to prevention, care and treatment (including supplies), strengthening and complementing government and partner efforts to maintain/restore/scale-up essential services, including for health, nutrition, WASH, child protection, gender-based violence, education and social protection; establishing effective coordination and collaboration with governments and partners; disseminating key information to reduce disease transmission and its impact, and ensuring that materials and services are equally accessible for people with disabilities and available in local languages. UNICEF will invest in data collection, monitoring, including for accountability to affected populations, and evaluation, to support evidence-based advocacy. Response strategies will be linked to systems strengthening through long-term actions. The Regional Office will support country offices to establish adequate and robust preparedness and response measures. UNICEF's strategy is grounded in country-level response plans that will be adjusted over time as the pandemic situation and humanitarian needs evolve.

2021 PROGRAMME TARGETS

Nutrition
- 2,700 children aged 6 to 59 months with severe acute malnutrition admitted for treatment
- 52,200 primary caregivers of children aged 0 to 23 months receiving infant and young child feeding counselling

Health
- 1,973,517 children receiving the minimum set of vaccines
- 417,000 children and women accessing primary health care in UNICEF-supported facilities
- 34,000 health workers reached with personal protective equipment

Water, sanitation and hygiene
- 261,000 children accessing appropriate water, sanitation and hygiene facilities and hygiene services in learning facilities and safe spaces
- 1,334,500 people reached with critical water, sanitation and hygiene supplies (including hygiene items) and services

Child protection, GBViE and PSEA
- 172,670 children and caregivers accessing mental health and psychosocial support
- 8,120 unaccompanied and separated children accessing family-based care or a suitable alternative
- 374,450 children, adolescents and women receiving gender-based violence response services, including risk mitigation interventions and prevention

Education
- 1,711,700 children accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning
- 9,050 schools implementing safe school protocols (infection prevention and control)
- 2,096,400 children receiving learning materials

Social protection and cash transfers
- 91,500 households reached with cash transfers through an existing government system where UNICEF provided technical assistance and funding

C4D, community engagement and AAP
- 35,226,600 people reached with messages on access to services

Progress against the 2020 programme targets is available in the humanitarian situation reports: https://www.unicef.org/appeals/lac/situation-reports

This appeal is aligned with the revised Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, which are based on global standards and norms for humanitarian action. Programme targets are provisional and subject to change upon finalization of response plans.
FUNDING REQUIREMENTS IN 2021

UNICEF is requesting US$48.9 million to address urgent humanitarian needs resulting from COVID-19 in 21 countries and territories; support emergency preparedness and response; ensure linkages between humanitarian action and development programming; build shock-responsive social services; and keep the protection of children at the centre of humanitarian action. The 2021 appeal represents a 151 per cent increase over the 2020 request due to the additional COVID-19 requirement, which entails dedicated coordination and technical support at the regional level. Humanitarian funds channelled through the Regional Office will be strategically allocated to country offices based on gaps in the field.

In response to the needs emerging from COVID-19, and based on the progress made in 2020, country offices identified priority actions requiring sustained funding in 2021. To facilitate the safe return to schools, UNICEF will support the implementation of protocols and guidelines and, in countries such as Jamaica, Nicaragua and Suriname and in the Eastern Caribbean, provide essential WASH supplies for schools, rehabilitate infrastructure and promote hygiene practices. In Argentina, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the Dominican Republic and the Eastern Caribbean, UNICEF will continue to assist distance/blended learning modalities, support connectivity, distribute learning materials and train teachers. In Uruguay, UNICEF will focus on preventing school dropout. In Cuba and Nicaragua, funding is needed to reach communities at risk of COVID-19 with essential WASH supplies. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Cuba, UNICEF will support health care facilities to provide quality services for women and children. The provision of personal protective equipment for front-line workers remains critical in countries such as the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Suriname and Uruguay. In all countries, UNICEF will support undernutrition prevention, including through the provision of micronutrients and infant and young child feeding counseling. Funding will help UNICEF reach families impacted by the socio-economic crisis with cash-based interventions in the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Jamaica, Suriname, Uruguay and the Eastern Caribbean; and provide technical support to government-led cash initiatives in Paraguay and Suriname.

Given current and potential humanitarian scenarios (i.e. Caribbean hurricanes, violence, civil unrest, migration, internal displacement, health emergencies, extreme weather, food insecurity and other impacts of climate change), UNICEF requires flexible and multi-year resources to support priority preparedness initiatives at the country level that will improve response capacities. Without flexible funds, UNICEF will be unable to prepare for and immediately deploy support in rapid-onset emergencies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>2021 requirements (US$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional office requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency response</td>
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<td>Regional office technical capacity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency preparedness</td>
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<td>COVID-19 response requirements</td>
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<td>Nutrition</td>
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<td>Health</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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<td>C4D, community engagement and AAP</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>48,887,160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Who to contact for further information:

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This includes the number of people in need in El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and people affected by the Venezuelan migration crisis, based on data from humanitarian response plans and humanitarian needs overview documents from 2020.

The 17 independent states and 4 territories directly covered by this regional appeal are Argentina, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, the Eastern Caribbean Area (Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands), Jamaica, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Suriname and Uruguay.

The "in need" figures reflect pressing needs in the major sectors that UNICEF supports for all countries in the region.


This was estimated by UNICEF based on data from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) on the level of service disruption due to COVID-19, using a cohort of children born in affected countries.

Due to space constraints, the following acronyms appear in the appeal: GBViE (gender-based violence in emergencies); PSEA (prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse); C4D (communication for development); and AAP (accountability to affected populations).


8. WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene global database, 2017. For drinking water, this includes people with limited services, unimproved sources or surface water. For sanitation, this includes people with limited services, practicing open defecation or with unimproved sanitation facilities.


10. For 2021, six Humanitarian Action for Children appeals have been issued in the Latin America and the Caribbean region, including: three standalone appeals for (Brazil, Haiti and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela); two multi-country appeals (children on the move from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and children on the move in Central America); and a regional appeal. The current regional appeal comprises the COVID-19 response in countries that are not part of the previously listed appeals; regional technical capacity, emergency preparedness and response; and early action support in case of emergencies not covered by other appeals.


21. The Grand Bargain is a unique agreement between some of the largest donors and humanitarian organizations, who have committed to getting more means into the hands of people in need and improving the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action.

22. COVID-19 needs in other countries in the region are covered by other Humanitarian Action for Children appeals, including stand-alone and multi-country appeals.

23. Modelling by Johns Hopkins University shows that without urgent action to preserve the provision of and access to essential health services and food, an estimated additional 52,000 children and 4,000 mothers in the region might die.


27. Except for Nicaragua, where schools have not been closed.


30. This section reflects the consolidated targets of the countries included in the regional appeal only.

31. Due to space constraints, the following acronyms appear in the appeal: GBViE (gender-based violence in emergencies); PSEA (prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse); C4D (communication for development); and AAP (accountability to affected populations).

32. Regional Office requirements are spread across all multi-country appeals for the region (children on the move from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, children on the move in Central America and this regional appeal). The total Regional Office requirements include US$8 million for country office preparedness, resilience and early action response in case of new emergencies; and US$2.3 million for COVID-19-specific support.

33. This includes US$3.9 million for child protection and US$1.9 million for gender, gender-based violence in emergencies and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.