

NIGER: COVID-19 Situation Report – #14

24 November to 31 December 2020

unicef
for every child



Situation in Numbers



3,327 COVID-19 confirmed cases

104 deaths

3,12 % Lethality rate

(Ministère de la Santé Publique, December 31st, 2020)



3,800,000 Children affected by COVID-19 school reopening

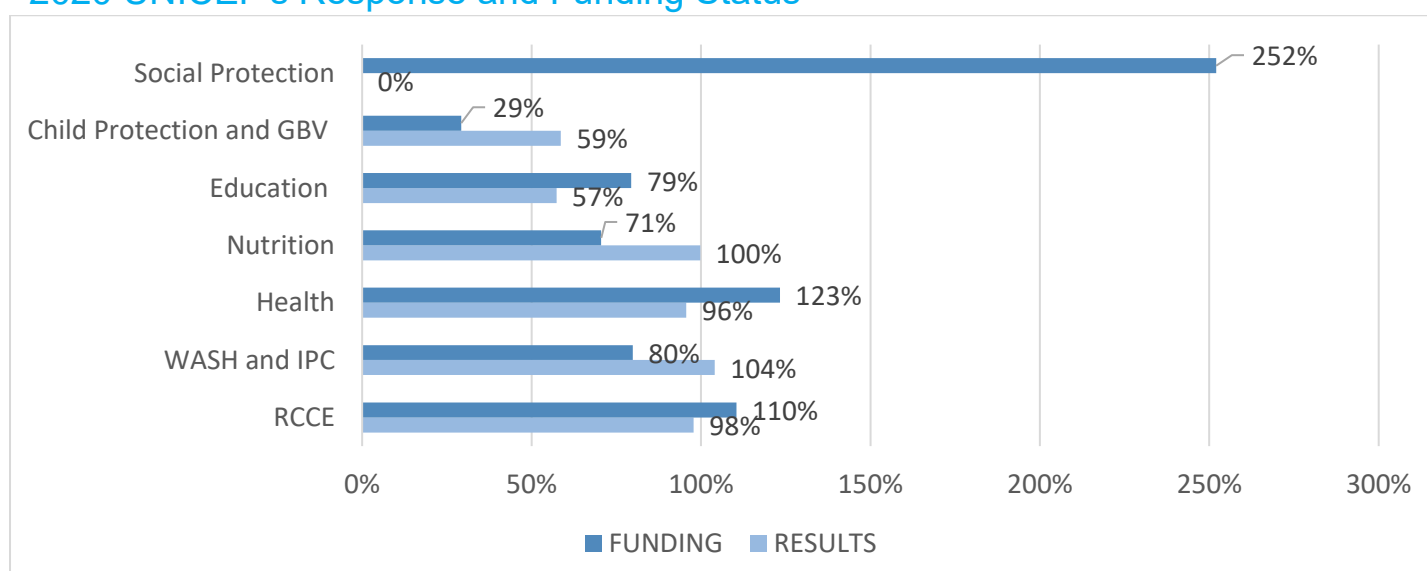


US\$ 25.8 M funding required

Situation Overview and Humanitarian Needs

As of the end of 2020, Niger registered 3,327 cases of COVID-19 over the 62,421 people tested, 1,825 patients healed and 104 deaths, with an increasing trend of cases since November 06 and a peak at the end of December. To address the deteriorating situation affecting the whole country, the Government adopted some measures to contain the spread of the disease, including the closure of all schools for a period of 2 weeks in December. UNICEF continues to work closely with the Government and its partners to respond to the ongoing outbreak in the country, which is already facing the consequences of multiple crisis (nutrition, conflicts, natural disasters). UNICEF assists particularly the Ministry of Health (MoH), in the field of risk communication/community engagement (RCCE), infection prevention and control (IPC), supply and logistics, epidemiological surveillance and healthcare provision and it is co-leading 3 of the 8 sub-committees established by the MoH (RCCE, IPC and logistics) at central and sub-national level. As part of the national COVID-19 response plan, UNICEF continues to provide technical and financial support to the government of Niger to ensure the continuity of access to social services as education, child protection, nutrition and to scale-up the national safety net program to mitigate the social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on the most vulnerable population, with a special focus on children and women needs. UNICEF is also participating to the UN COVID-19 crisis group and has been appointed UN supply and procurement coordinator for COVID-19 pandemic.

2020 UNICEF's Response and Funding Status*



* RRCE, WASH, Health and Nutrition sectors covered 100% of the targets, Education and Child protection almost 60% while Social Protection reports no results for 2020, because of the challenges in organizing and launching the Emergency COVID-19 Cash transfer program with the Government. The results will be reported in 2021.

2020 was a particularly challenging year for Niger with the combination of the COVID-19 pandemic, exceptionally heavy flooding, and an aggravated security situation. During the year, Niger experienced two waves of the COVID-19 pandemic, eventually reaching all regions albeit to different degrees. The first wave (March to July), with 1,135 cases and 69 deaths (6.08% lethality) for 10,809 people screened, recorded a higher lethality (delay in treatment) than the second (from September onwards), with 2,192 cases and 35 deaths (lethality of 1.60%) for 51,612 screenings. The continuous strengthening of screening services allowed for a five-fold increase in the number of people tested for COVID-19. Niamey region recorded 73% of the country's recorded cases and 52% of deaths. Children under 18 represent 267 cases or 8% (including 16 cases among those under 5). 18% of recorded cases were among health agents. Cumulatively, with 3,327 recorded positive COVID-19 cases (71% men and 29% women) and a total of 104 deaths (case fatality 3.12%), Niger has among the lowest number of recorded deaths from COVID-19, albeit among the highest specific case fatality ratios in sub-Saharan Africa (Africa CDC Dec 2020; WHO Afro Situation Report).

UNICEF's COVID-19 response

Health

UNICEF continues to support the fight against the pandemic, particularly at the sub-national level. Supervision and coordination meetings within the framework of the prevention and the fight against COVID-19 virus in health centres are carried out in Tahoua municipality with the support of UNICEF. The constructions of 9 triage centres in the Tahoua municipality and 3 Triage centres in Gaya (Dosso region) have started with UNICEF support. In the health district of Ayorou, Tillabery region, heavily affected by the pandemic, UNICEF supported the training of agents in surveillance and investigations, the supervision of border entry points with Mali, and the facilitation of coordination meetings, in addition to provide 2 tents to COOPI to establish a triage centre. 140 Oxygen Concentrators were purchased and distributed to 42 health structures as part of the support for the management of COVID-19 cases. At the national level, UNICEF is providing technical support to coordination meetings which were resumed since November 2020 responding to the second wave and resurgence of COVID-19 cases.

WASH

UNICEF continued to support the WASH/IPC (Infection Prevention and Control) response at national and sub-national level. During the reporting period, UNICEF supported the National IPC commission to undertake the evaluation of the compliance with IPC measures in 177 public and private healthcare facilities of six regions (Diffa, Dosso, Maradi, Tahoua, Tillabery and Zinder) and to draw relevant recommendations.

In addition, UNICEF supported the Regional Directorate of Water and Sanitation of Zinder with the construction of 20 latrines in 04 health facilities and purchased 10,000 WASH kits for vulnerable households. Moreover, a total of 36,112 people benefited from awareness raising activities on the COVID-19 pandemic and the prevention measures in Diffa, Zinder and Agadez regions with UNICEF support through its partners (the Nigerien Red Cross and the Regional Directorates of Public Health).

RCCE/C4D

During the reporting period, UNICEF is continuing to support RCCE efforts at national and sub-national levels. The consultant hired by UNICEF to support the Social and Behaviour Change Commission of the COVID-19 response in Niger is providing support to the strategic decisions and orientations in terms of communication. Recommendations on fighting the pandemic have been dispatched nationwide, following the release of the updates by the Government. About the reinforcement of local structures, 8 teams had been set to train again people from community radios, women leaders and communication officers from the Health sector in the 8 regions with the support of UNICEF. One good point to be highlighted is the waving of COVID-19 messages by community radios (233) at their own initiative, as their own contribution to the nationwide efforts to prevent the spread of the virus.

Nutrition

During the reporting period, UNICEF supported the Regional Directorates of Public Health of Niamey and Zinder (the epicenters of the COVID-19 pandemic in Niger) to develop an integrated response plan for Community-Based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) activities in the COVID-19 context. As part of this response plan, UNICEF strengthened early detection of acute malnutrition through door-to-door screening. As of the end of December, 395,563 under-five children suffering from SAM (representing 74.2% of the revised annual target), were admitted for treatment, including 53,668 cases with medical complications. UNICEF, in support to coordination, organized a meeting with partners to present and discuss the results of the 2020 national nutrition survey. In collaboration with partners, the Nutrition Technical Group (NTG), developed the sectoral response strategy for the 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan, which was informed by the results of the survey.

At national level, UNICEF ensured the continuation of nutrition services adapted to the Covid-19 context, by providing technical and financial support to the Government in the implementation of nutrition interventions for treatment of wasting and for the prevention of all forms of malnutrition. This support allowed for the extension of the mother mid-upper arm

circumference (MUAC) approach for early detection and referral of children with wasting, and capacity strengthening for the management of SAM and integration with WASH. In terms of preventative activities, UNICEF's support in 2020 included vitamin A supplementation and deworming (5,431,678 children 6-59 months countrywide were reached through one round of campaign and 835,222 children aged 6-23 months were reached through routine health service delivery), home fortification with Micronutrient Powders (MNP), iron folic acid supplementation for pregnant women and adolescent girls, and promotion of adequate Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices. In 2020, UNICEF supported training for 237 health workers in IYCF counselling and promotion, and 262,806 caregivers received counselling on adequate IYCF practices. The delivery of home fortification with MNPs was integrated within existing IYCF programs, and a total of 109,435 children aged 6-23 months benefited from home fortification with UNICEF support in 2020. Furthermore, UNICEF supported maternal nutrition interventions such as the provision of iron and folic acid, albendazole and suldoxine tablets to 187,872 pregnant women as part of antenatal care, and 89,713 adolescent girls aged 10-19 years received iron folic acid through community distribution platforms.

Education

The school year started on the 15th of October, for around 3.8 million children (across all levels). UNICEF has supported the ministries of Primary and Secondary Education to develop COVID-19 guides for the teachers, which include guidance on how to integrate COVID-19 related topics into lesson plans. More than 18,000 handwashing kits, with soap, have been procured for 3,400 primary and lower secondary schools with UNICEF support. The Back to School video messages, with a focus on COVID-19 pandemic, for secondary education have been finalized. The government closed schools for a two-week period in the month of December to mitigate the spread of the pandemic. They reopened on 04 January 2021.

Child Protection

UNICEF continues to provide technical support and guidance to the Regional Directorates for child

protection and the local NGOs to respond to the pandemic, and to advocate for the involvement of child protection actors in the response for vulnerable children, including talibés children living in the streets and children on the move in the regions.

Maradi & Zinder: UNICEF national NGO partner, with local NGOs, have identified and have followed 4,096 talibés children who have returned from Nigeria and have been reunified with their families in 23 municipalities. They all received psychosocial support and were sensitized on the COVID-19 pandemic and the respect of barrier measures. 62 child protection village committees were set up and/or reinforced by the UNICEF partners in the Maradi and Zinder regions. 3 580 persons, including 2,414 children, were sensitized in focus groups on the role and responsibilities of parents in respect to COVID-19 pandemic. 09 girls, gender-based violence survivors, received psychosocial support and alternative care in community centers in Maradi and Zinder under the management of the Regional Directorates in charge of Child protection (DRPE).

Agadez: The UNICEF partner, the Regional Directorate for Child Protection, identified 286 unaccompanied children and 93 separated and unaccompanied children (most of them aged between 6 and 14 years old) after being returned from Algerian authorities. All children were sensitized on barrier measures, received alternative care and psychosocial support in the transit center under the management of the Regional Directorate in charge of child protection (DRPE). Due to the COVID-19 situation in North Africa, more forced returns are to be expected up to the end of the year. Child protection capacities and training of social workers are being organized in order to offer an immediate response to the children expected to be returned.

Others

UNICEF continues to support the preparation for the scale-up of the national COVID-19 emergency cash transfer program, which will reach about 500,000 households in all 8 regions of Niger affected by the COVID-19 as part of the national COVID-19 response plan.

Adaptations to ongoing UNICEF programmes

UNICEF continues to work closely with the Government of Niger and partners to ensure the continuity of essential nutrition services at health facility and community level, while respecting measures to prevent COVID-19 transmission. UNICEF continues to support the Government of Niger and partners on the implementation of adapted modalities for curative and preventative nutrition interventions. In accordance with the second version of the NTG orientation guide, which is still being applied by Government counterparts and partners, UNICEF continues to support the government in strengthening community-level preventative activities while ensuring that infection prevention and control measures are respected. One of the lessons learned in the adaptation process of the implementation strategy for nutrition interventions is that diversification of community platforms is critical to ensure continuity in the promotion of IYCF practices at community level. Therefore, more detailed guidelines on modalities for community level interventions were developed by the NTG and partners and shared by the Directorate of Nutrition in August 2020 with Regional Health Directorates.

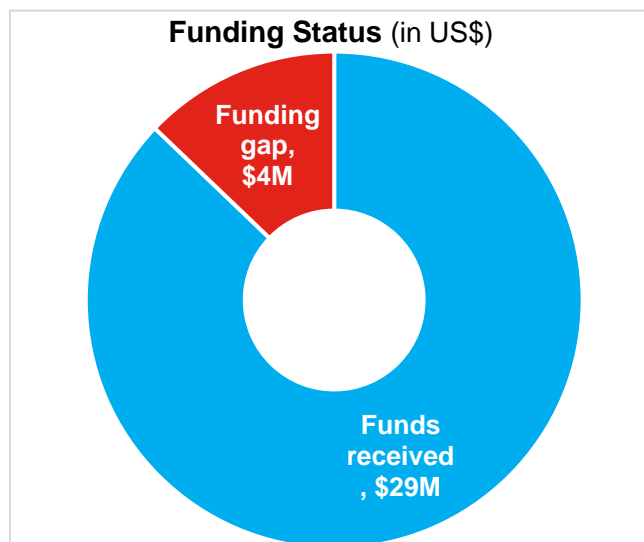
Taking in account the increase in the number of cases in the reporting period, Rapid response Mechanism (RRM) started to apply again the strictest version of the SOP to prevent the COVID-19 spread during the humanitarian response.

Funding Overview and Partnerships

Resource mobilization for the COVID-19 response plan has been successful for the sectors of C4D/RCCE, Health, and Social Protection. Coordination needs have equally been covered.

Nevertheless, an overall funding gap of US\$ 4.2 million remains. The remaining needs include a funding gap of 71% regarding COVID-10 specific Child Protection activities, as well as funding gaps (20 to 29%) in the sectors of WASH & IPC, Education, and Nutrition.

UNICEF Niger thanks the USA / BPRM for their generous support of a multisectoral COVID-19 response focusing on refugee populations; as well as the Spanish Development Cooperation AECID for their support allowing to address additional needs for the treatment of malnutrition due to COVID-19 pandemic. The Irish National Committee for UNICEF provided funds to accelerate the catch-up process in the education system.



External Media

During the reporting period, UNICEF continued to implement COVID-19 sensitization and communication initiatives to support the Government and partners to respond to the increase of new cases in the country. In addition, the UNICEF offices across Niger installed awareness elements about measures to stop the spread of the virus among the staff and visitors.

El Pais - Spanish newspaper

In the heart of the Sahel, millions of children have returned to school after months of closure due to covid-19. In the African country, the possibility of studying can change the destiny of an entire family.

https://elpais.com/elpais/2020/12/08/album/1607428743_654755.html

Photo essay - Children migrants affected by COVID-19

COVID-19 has deepened the crisis facing unaccompanied young people in sub-Saharan Africa.

Mounting attacks on civilians. Natural disasters. Health emergencies. Poverty. The issues prompting young people and their families to flee crisis-ridden areas of sub-Saharan Africa are numerous. But so are the challenges they face when they do: perilous journeys marked by the threat of detention, human trafficking, sexual exploitation, and discrimination.

<https://www.unicef.org/niger/stories/returning-home-isnt-option>

Risk Communication for Social Awareness

Support from USAID helped UNICEF provide effective support to the National Risk Communication and Community Engagement Commission.

<https://www.unicef.org/niger/stories/risk-communication-social-awareness-covid-19>

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Summary of Programme Results

| Sector | UNICEF and IPs Response | |
|---|-------------------------|---------------|
| | 2020 target | Total results |
| Risk Communication and Community Engagement | | |
| # of people reached on COVID-19 through messaging on prevention and access to services | 20,000,000 | 17,154,882 |
| # of people who participate in COVID-19 engagement actions | 5,000,000 | 4,209,343 |
| # of people sharing their concerns and asking questions/clarifications for available support services to address their needs through establishes feedback mechanisms. | 1,000,000 | 1,236,085 |
| WASH and IPC | | |
| # of people reached with critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items) and services | 300,000 | 449,787 |
| # of healthcare workers within health facilities and communities provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) | 2,500 | 1,867 |
| # of healthcare facility staff and community health workers trained in Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) | 1,500 | 1,313 |
| Health | | |
| # of healthcare providers trained in detecting, referral and appropriate management of COVID-19 cases | 2000 | 1,913 |
| # of coordination meetings held with the support of UNICEF (technical and / or financial); | 39 | 13 |
| # of health centres equipped as triage centres | 39 | 13 |
| Nutrition | | |
| # of children 6-59 months admitted for treatment of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) | 396,539 | 395,563 |
| Education | | |
| # of schools implementing SAFE SCHOOL PROTOCOLS (COVID-19 prevention and control). | 10,000 | 5,735 |
| Child Protection and GBV | | |
| # of children, parents and primary caregivers provided with community based mental health and psychosocial support | 21,000 | 12,318 |
| Social Protection | | |
| # of households benefitting from new or additional SOCIAL ASSISTANCE MEASURES provided by governments to respond to COVID-19 with UNICEF support | 431,000 | - |

Annex B

Funding Status

| Sector | Funding requirements | Funds available | Funding gap \$ | Gap % |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------|
| C4D / RCCE | 3,000,000 | 3,313,588 | 0 | 0% |
| WASH & IPC | 4,000,000 | 3,194,177 | 805,823 | 20% |
| Nutrition | 1,400,000 | 987,941 | 412,059 | 29% |
| Health | 3,000,000 | 3,699,493 | 0 | 0% |
| Child Protection | 1,638,257 | 479,029 | 1,159,228 | 71% |
| Education | 8,000,000 | 6,351,723 | 1,648,277 | 21% |
| Social Protection | 4,000,000 | 10,081,058 | 0 | 0% |
| Social Research | 200,000 | 0 | 200,000 | 100% |
| Coordination and support capacity | 550,000 | 560,099 | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 25,788,257 | 28,667,107 | 4,225,387 | 16% |