Highlights

- Senegal was one of the first countries to receive COVID-19 vaccines through the COVAX initiative: 324,000 doses procured by UNICEF arrived on 3 March 2021. Of the COVAX vaccines delivered, 99.2 per cent have been administered.
- UNICEF’s support to 16 COVID-19 treatment centres enabled management of more than 5,000 critical cases.
- UNICEF supplied over 3,200 schools with essential hygiene and handwashing materials to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and ensured respect of sanitation protocols for 648,800 children.

Situation Overview and Humanitarian Needs

Senegal has been one of the hardest hit countries by COVID-19 in West Africa. A second wave of the pandemic began in December 2020 with a sharp rise in cases and peaked in mid-February 2021 with over 460 daily confirmed cases. Confirmed cases have more than doubled since 1 January 2021 and, as of 27 April 2021, stand at 40,193, with 1,106 deaths (a 2.75 percent case fatality rate).

In response to rising cases, Senegal imposed a curfew (lifted on 19 March 2021) and other preventative measures. Measures designed to contain the pandemic compounded existing vulnerabilities by limiting access to essential services. The greatest impact has been on women and children, especially those living in the most deprived communities. UNICEF’s support to Senegal’s COVID-19 response has been decisive in the prevention and control of infection, as well as in ensuring the continuity of essential health, nutrition, water and sanitation, education and child protection services for the most vulnerable.

On 3 March 2021, one year after its first confirmed COVID-19 case, Senegal received a first batch of 324,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine via the COVAX initiative, with UNICEF support. The COVAX initiative is an international solidarity mechanism that aims to provide nations with affordable access to safe and effective vaccines against COVID-19. Senegal was one of the first countries to receive vaccines through COVAX, which aims to cover 20 per cent of the most vulnerable population. As of 26 April, over 406,000 vaccine doses have been administered (with vaccines procured both through COVAX and other channels).

Between January and March 2021, three children have been paralysed by circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2) with 11 cVDPV2 cases detected among their contacts. Two positive cases were also reported at environmental surveillance sites. In total, there were 15 cVDPV2 detections from January to March. On 16 April, the Government of Senegal declared a national polio outbreak. UNICEF and partners are supporting the Ministry of Health to deploy a high-quality vaccine response to stop circulation of the virus. They also encourage strengthening routine immunization, in the face of people’s fears over the spread of COVID-19.
Funding Overview and Partnerships
The impact of COVID-19 still threatens to undo the major development gains made in recent years and undermine the realization of children’s rights. UNICEF Senegal released the Humanitarian Action for Children Appeal for 2021 to accelerate our efforts to reach the most vulnerable and build back better. UNICEF is appealing for USD$16.2 million from donors to continue to provide additional timely support to maintain life-saving and basic social services for children and vulnerable people. To date, USD$4.4 million has been received (27 per cent of requested funds).

UNICEF is grateful to all partners, including the Governments of China, the US (USAID), Japan, Canada, Korea (KOICA) and the UK (FCDO), as well as the World Bank, the Global Partnership for Education, French Development Agency and UNICEF’s national committees of Canada, France, Finland, Spain and the US who have supported our COVID-19 response, by providing flexible funding and trusting UNICEF to make the right interventions, with maximum impact for children. UNICEF Senegal has fostered engagements with the private sector as well as civil society and youth-led NGOs such MasterCard foundation, Sanofi, Rovio and the Senegalese Red Cross to advance the agenda of children's rights in these difficult times.

UNICEF’s COVID-19 Response

Health
UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health to plan the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out, together with WHO, Gavi and the World Bank. UNICEF supported the procurement of the first 324,000 AstraZeneca vaccine doses, which arrived on 3 March via the COVAX initiative. Additional batches of doses will be delivered as soon as possible through 2021 and beyond, with the overall aim of covering 20 per cent of the population. In preparation for vaccine arrival, UNICEF provided syringes and safety boxes. These essential supplies enabled the vaccination campaign to start, targeting priority populations (front-line health workers, people over 60, and people with co-morbidities). As of 26 April, over 406,700 doses have been administered (with vaccines procured through COVAX and other channels). There are 88,000 vaccine doses available in the country.

While the vaccination campaign is making good progress, some gaps remain in the response. A cold chain assessment showed that most health facilities have been provided with cold chain equipment and can store vaccines at the right temperature, but there is a shortage of cold boxes and vaccine carriers.

As part of the COVID-19 response, UNICEF provided the Government with medical equipment and hygiene products for 16 COVID-19 treatment centres (11 health centres and 5 hospitals) in 10 regions, where an estimated 5,000 cases have been managed to date. UNICEF also provided technical support to develop training modules on home care for COVID-19 cases and funding to train 80 trainers on home care across the country. Through SPRINT initiative, UNICEF expanded access to innovative pneumonia treatment at all healthcare levels in five target districts in Kolda, Thies and Dakar. SPRINT distributed Amoxicillin dispersible tablets to 157 health facilities, equipped 64 health facilities with new oxygen equipment, and provided training for 425 healthcare workers. By the end of March 2021, SPRINT had delivered life-saving oxygen treatment to 379 patients, including over 90 COVID-19 patients.

COVID-19 has affected all aspects of Senegal’s health system, including delivery of routine reproductive, maternal, child and infant health services. Making sure routine services continue is a priority, and UNICEF conducted local and mass communication campaigns to encourage service usage and promoted key family practices to 100,000 families through 20,000 integrated home visits to ensure the continuity of reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health services.

UNICEF is also committed to supporting the Government in its Ebola preparedness efforts and polio outbreak response. In total, there were 15 cVDPV2 detections from January to March and on 16 April, the Government of Senegal declared a national polio outbreak. UNICEF, as a member of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, will provide support to ensure...
an adequate and swift response, aiming to bring efficient and integrated activities, building on recent achievements and the Covid-19 experience.

**Nutrition**

The socioeconomic impact of the pandemic has had a knock-on effect on nutritional conditions in Senegal. UNICEF continued supporting the Government to provide life-saving Ready-to-use Therapeutic Food - a critical supply to care for children with severe wasting, a condition which if left untreated increases the odds of death among children by up to 10 times. Between 1 January and 31 March 2021, 6,179 children under five suffering from severe wasting, were admitted for treatment, including 388 cases with medical complications. This is 7.3 per cent more than the same period of 2020, when 5,757 children were being treated for severe wasting.

UNICEF also supports provision of vitamin A supplements for children aged 6-59 months across the country. Within the context of COVID-19, there has been a reduction in demand for nutrition services, and UNICEF and its partners have advocated intensified efforts by district health authorities to ensure continuation of this routine service across the country.

**Water, Hygiene and Sanitation**

UNICEF supported the National Hygiene Service to carry out its infection prevention and control response across the country, through training of hygiene workers, distribution of supplies and provision of information on COVID-19 prevention measures. Key achievements include:

- Training for 120 hygiene officers, 300 hygiene volunteers and 238 healthcare providers in hygiene and prevention measures.
- Installation of 974 large-size public handwashing stands with soap in health structures, isolation centres and other high-risk places, accompanied by demonstrations of their use and proper handwashing methods with soap.
- Distribution of 4,018 small-size handwashing kits in plastic to households with positive cases/contact cases, alongside awareness-raising sessions for recipient households.
- Disinfection of 12,617 houses, 3,037 health structures, isolation centres and other public places, and 3,497 Quranic and public schools.
- In total, 336,237 persons received information on prevention measures.

**Child Protection**

The COVID-19 crisis has put children facing neglect, violence, abuse and exploitation at even greater risk. UNICEF is supporting the Government to improve protection of children in street and unsanitary settings, particularly those deprived of parental care. Since the start of the crisis, UNICEF has supported social welfare services and transit centres to detect at-risk children, provide child protection services and temporary care for 6,731 children (the majority talibe and street children). UNICEF has also been supporting many of these children to make preliminary contact with their families, with the view to future reunification. Since January 2021, 438 children without parental care and 184 child victims of domestic violence (71 girls and 19 boys) have received social, legal and health care services with UNICEF support. Of these, 438 boys and 24 girls also received psychosocial support.

The COVID-19 context is having a heavy psychosocial toll on children and families, as they are forced to adapt to the socio-economic impact of the pandemic and sometimes resort to negative coping mechanisms. UNICEF ensured psychosocial support to over 200 children and 283 families affected by COVID-19, in partnership with the national Red-Cross Society. Since January, 51 social workers have been trained to provide psychosocial support in 28 departments (an additional cohort will be trained in the next quarter to
Training included modules on a broad spectrum of child protection social services, referrals to health and justice sectors, and coordination of prevention field interventions. Guidelines and tools have been widely disseminated to support work with children and families at local level. Logistic support (vehicles, motorbikes and office supplies) has been provided to the Directorate of Social Welfare to facilitate social service work on the ground. Social service workers are now better equipped to detect cases of violence and abuse, and to respond by providing quality child protection care services.

With UNICEF support, communities have been reached across the country through radio programmes and key messages to raise parents’ awareness on risks of violence which increase during crises and giving practical tips on how to deal with stressful situations without resorting to violence against children. Messages also included the importance of nurturing affectionate and positive attitude towards children, constructive dialogue, child participation in family matters and in their own protection and the essentials of COVID-19 prevention.

Risk Communication and Community Engagement

Children and their families often do not receive accurate or reliable information on how to protect themselves and others from the virus. Limited access to information on disease prevention measures, combined with fear and misinformation about the pandemic, exacerbates the consequences for livelihoods, education, protection and access to basic services. UNICEF support to the Government and partners on Risk Communication and Community Engagement has helped to mitigate this and contributed to slowing the spread of COVID-19. Since January 2021, in partnership with the Senegalese Red Cross, 460 volunteers were trained in risk communication and community engagement in 23 departments. Youth volunteers made 5,520 safe home visits and supplied 1,000 families with hand-washing kits. The volunteers were equipped with personal protective equipment such as masks, antiseptic gel and gloves for the home visits. These visits enabled them to facilitate 230 community dialogues. These activities reached 47,893 people (16,574 men, 17,957 women and 13,362 youth). In total, since the outbreak of COVID-19, UNICEF has reached 1,247,893 people across the country through its work on risk communication and community engagement.

In Senegal, people generally accept vaccination. However, the introduction of the COVID-19 vaccine shows instances of reluctance and mistrust. Misinformation surrounding the vaccines (rumours about harmful side effects) and mistrust due to the speed at which vaccines were developed may hamper their roll out. The country has a fairly dense communication system to combat misinformation. UNICEF has supported development of a communication plan to create a favorable environment for vaccine roll-out and mitigate contradictory messages. Strategies and activities are being developed to minimize the possible risks of misinformation for COVID-19 vaccinations as well as for routine immunizations.

To reduce the spread of rumours and false information, and to take into account the opinion of the communities during the COVID-19 response, 23 departmental committees have been set up for the follow-up and management of community feedback.

Education

All schools reopened in Senegal at the start of the academic year on 12 November 2020. UNICEF supported the Government and public schools to promote and apply health and safe-reopening protocols in schools. From January to April 2021, UNICEF supplied essential infection prevention and control materials, including hand-washing units and hygiene kits, to 3,244 public elementary and lower secondary schools to benefit 648,800 pupils (350,352 girls). Since the start of the crisis 9,198 schools have received such support (5,954 educational institutions (public schools from pre-primary to secondary level, as well as Quranic schools) received similar supplies in 2020). UNICEF also supported the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health to promote safe schooling, reaching pupils by producing a video clip, with
In rural and under-served communities, 50,000 children (the majority girls) received school kits with essential school supplies through UNICEF (in Kedougou, Tambacounda, Sedhiou, Kolda, Ziguinchor, Kaffrine, and Matam regions). School kits ensure children in under-resourced settings can go to school with the right tools for learning.

UNICEF is also supporting the Ministry of Education to monitor the impact of the COVID-19 situation on school drop-outs and learning outcomes. Initial reports suggest that about 1 in 3 learners in primary schools did not meet the minimum competency standards in literacy and numeracy at the beginning of the new academic year, throughout all grades of the primary cycle. UNICEF is supporting the Ministry to develop tailored responses to catch up on learning loss. Most distance learning solutions deployed with UNICEF’s support in 2020 during school closures are also still in place to supplement school-based learning, notably a radio-based learning programme which is broadcast countrywide, in partnership with national and community radio operators.

**Social Protection**

The pandemic has negatively impacted coverage of basic social services and threatens progress made in recent years. UNICEF has set up a real-time mechanism to monitor the demand for basic social services, through successive online surveys conducted by the National Agency of Statistics. The first round of data has been collected, covering education (continuity of education during school closures, and the willingness of households to send children back to school after re-opening), social protection during the COVID response, birth registration, and violence against children. The findings will inform decision-making in child-relevant sectors and shape UNICEF and Government response.

UNICEF also supported the Social Protection Delegation and the Bureau of Statistics to update the social registry in Kedougou region, in complement to World Bank support covering the rest of the country.

On 22 April, UNICEF represented development partners at the Presidential Advisory Council on Youth Employment and Socio-Economic Integration. In the context of COVID-19, this initiative is particularly urgent, as the African economy is in recession for the first time in 25 years. In the face of a young and growing population (76 per cent of the population are under-35), there is an urgent need to ensure that youth receive education and training that correspond to the needs of the market, with the institutional framework to support the youth.

**Coordination**

Together with WHO, Gavi and the World Bank, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health to introduce the COVID-19 vaccine under the COVAX initiative, within in the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator framework. UNICEF is a partner of the Expanded Programme on Immunisation in Senegal and is involved in all activities related to immunisation, with a focus on logistics, procurement and communication. Through its participation in relevant coordination mechanisms and technical working groups, UNICEF has provided technical support to design and implement immunization strategies, including in supervision, staff training, design and update of management tools, resource mobilization, and monitoring and evaluation.

UNICEF continues to support national coordination mechanisms in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. **UNICEF leads on the risk communication and community engagement commission**, co-leads the coordination commission with the World Health Organization (WHO) and co-leads the logistics commission with the World Food Programme (WFP). UNICEF is also the main partner supporting infection prevention and control activities and assumes lead and co-lead functions for several sector coordination platforms engaging with the Government and development partners, e.g. through the Basic Education Thematic Working Group. UNICEF also continued to coordinate closely with UN agencies. In collaboration with other partners (government counterparts, UN agencies and NGOs), UNICEF supported the national review of the COVID-19 Response Plan and for development of Phase II of the contingency plan (Sep. 2020 – Feb. 2021) recently approved.
External Media

The UNICEF representative took part in a major programme on public television channel RTS on the COVAX initiative. This program was a great communication opportunity to explain the role of UNICEF in the delivery of vaccines and the mobilization of partners around this initiative.

PRESS RELEASES

A press release was published and widely covered in the media on UNICEF’s role in bringing the first batch of COVID-19 vaccines into Senegal through the COVAX initiative.

Press releases were also published on the partnerships forged by UNICEF with Japan, China and the MasterCard Foundation. These partnerships have also been prominent across digital platforms.

PRESS STORIES

Kolda: The regional hospital receives a neonatal Unit
Reception of the neonatology Unit of Kolda
UNICEF and Senegalese Red Cross partnership: raising awareness on vaccination in Pikine
A SPRINT during the pandemic to stop pneumonia
Japan and UNICEF partner to support Senegal in its COVID-19 Response

VIDEOS

Aristide Le Dantec Hospital, Covid Treatment Center
Kolda_Neonatology_Unit

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

A series of visuals were developed and posted on UNICEF's social media networks. These are some of the Facebook and twitter posts:

UNICEF and MasterCard Foundation partnership
Arrival of 324,000 doses of AstraZeneca vaccine in Senegal
Senegal receives its 324,000 doses of vaccine through the COVAX initiative
UNICEF Senegal meets with DECLIC youth
Ceremony to hand over COVID-19 medical equipment to the Epidemiology Treatment Centre in the presence of the Japanese Ambassador to Senegal
Zero Children in street initiative: Bignona’s achievement

Words of thanks

We want to express our gratitude to all private and public partners, as well as the Civil Society and the Youth who have engaged with UNICEF with the joint objective of strengthening our work for the children in Senegal in these challenging times.

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<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>UNICEF and IPs Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2021 target</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nutrition</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of children 6-59 months admitted for treatment of severe acute malnutrition (SAM).</td>
<td>45,847</td>
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<tr>
<td>children 6-59 months receiving vitamin A supplementation every six months</td>
<td>714,458</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Health</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>children under one year old vaccinated against measles</td>
<td>130,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>mothers and newborns receive early routine postnatal care within two days</td>
<td>157,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Water, Sanitation and Hygiene</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>people accessing a sufficient quantity of safe water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene</td>
<td>165,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>children accessing appropriate WASH facilities and hygiene services in learning facilities and safe spaces</td>
<td>156,150</td>
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<tr>
<td>healthcare facility staff and community health workers trained in infection prevention and control (IPC)</td>
<td>1,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Child protection, GBViE and PSEA</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>women, girls and boys accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention or response interventions</td>
<td>100,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>children without parental care provided with alternative care arrangement</td>
<td>2,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>children and caregivers accessing mental health and psychosocial support</td>
<td>25,000</td>
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<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>children accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning</td>
<td>858,000</td>
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<td>children receiving individual learning materials</td>
<td>80,000</td>
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<td>schools implementing safe school protocols (infection prevention and control)</td>
<td>1,707</td>
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<td>school-aged children and learners from poorest households, including majority of girls, receiving financial incentive to enroll and pursue their education</td>
<td>100,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Social protection</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>households reached with humanitarian cash transfers across sectors</td>
<td>3,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>C4D, Community engagement and AAP</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>people reached through messaging on access to services</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>People participating in engagement actions (for social and behavioural change)</td>
<td>50,000</td>
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