Highlights

- By the end of June 2021, UNICEF reached 7.4 million people, including 5.4 million children (2.7 million girls) across 14 governorates with health, nutrition, education, and protection services as well as safe water, sanitation, cash assistance and other social protection and adolescent participation interventions and supplies. This includes 1.85 million children (900,000 girls) in difficult to access areas.
- UNICEF strongly advocated for the extension of the Security Council Resolution for UN cross-border aid along with continued crossline support in the first half of 2021 to explore all modalities of aid to the affected population. UNICEF provided cross-border support to 2.05 million people, including 1.4 million children (690,000 girls) from January to June 2021.
- Drought conditions, reduced water levels in the Euphrates River and disruptions to the Alouk water station are all impacting the availability of water, as well as electricity, for 5.5 million people in northeast Syria. UNICEF and its WASH Sector partners are leading the advocacy and response to this worsening situation.
- In 2021, UNICEF requires $330.8 million to provide life-saving assistance to 9.1 million people (including 5.5 million children) across Syria according to the Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC). Of the total funding requirement, $115,764,897 is currently available, with a $215,061,678 (65 per cent) gap.

UNICEF’s Response and Funding Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Funding Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Polio vaccination</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAM admissions</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial support</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal education access</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe water access</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash transfers</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employability skills</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement activities</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Funding Status

UNICEF Appeal: $330.8 million

Note: on the C4D Indicator: Significant over-reach in the response is due to the target focusing only on the Health and Education programmes, while all programmes are undertaking relevant activities. The target will be modified during the mid-year HAC Review.
Funding Overview and Partnerships
In 2021, UNICEF requires $330.8 million to provide life-saving assistance to 9.1 million people (including 5.5 million children) across Syria according to the Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC). Of the total funding requirement, $115,764,897 is currently available, with a $215,061,678 (65 per cent) gap. The HAC is being reviewed as part of the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for 2021.

While funding levels for all programmes are inadequate, gaps for Nutrition and Social Protection programming are particularly acute at 75 and 74 per cent of requirements respectively. This is expected to compromise the ability of UNICEF to respond to the consequences of the ongoing socio-economic crisis and high levels of food insecurity, which are expected to exacerbate by the current drought conditions. Meanwhile, the 78 per cent gap in funding for Child Protection programming is limiting the reach of life-saving and protective interventions to prevent and respond to violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect, including care and case management and psychosocial support.

This year, the Governments of Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Norway, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United States as well as ECHO, the Syria Humanitarian Fund and UNICEF national committees have generously contributed to the ongoing UNICEF humanitarian response across Syria. UNICEF expresses its sincere gratitude to all public and private partners for the critical support received.

UNICEF continued to co-lead, together with World Vision International, the No Lost Generation Initiative, bringing together 39 UN and NGO partners to ensure the protection, education and development of Syrian children, adolescents and young people, within the umbrella of the Syria HRP and the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP).

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs
Advocacy for the extension of cross-border and crossline assistance: UNICEF strongly advocated for the extension of the Security Council Resolution for UN cross-border aid along with crossline support in the first half of 2021 to explore all modalities of aid to the affected population. This included a specific appeal on the potentially devastating impact on 1.7 million vulnerable children by the No Lost Generation Initiative: NLG statement. UNICEF provided cross-border support to 2.05 million people, including 1.4 million children (690,000 girls) in the first half of 2021.

COVID-19: From the start of the pandemic through 3 July 2021, there have been 69,903 cases of COVID-19 in Syria. This includes 18,532 cases, including 763 deaths in northeast Syria (NE Syria) and 25,752 cases, including 709 deaths in northwest Syria (NW Syria). While the number of confirmed cases remains low at the time of writing compared to that of the third wave in March and April, test positivity rates are over 50 per cent in As-Sweida, Tartous and Homs. Information on COVID-19 vaccinations is available in the Health section below.

Figure 1: Daily confirmed COVID-19 cases in government controlled areas, 2021

Source: WHO

Alouk water station ceased functioning on 23 June, the twenty-fourth such disruption since November 2019. Alouk had been operating at limited capacity since May due in part to reduced access for technicians to carry out essential maintenance and repairs. As few as five out of 21 boreholes and one of four horizontal pumps had been operational. The Alouk water station provides water directly for 460,000 people in NE Syria and up to one million people are impacted, including many of the most vulnerable families living in camps and informal settlements.

Drought conditions and reduced Euphrates River water flow levels in NE Syria: Water levels in the Euphrates River coming from Turkey into Syria have decreased from 500 to 214 m³ since the start of the year. 55 of the 73 water stations along the river have been affected. Combined with the current drought conditions (see Figure 2), this has meant:

• Reduced energy production capacity, resulting in power blackouts affecting three million people.
• Decreased access to drinking water for 5.5 million people, with implications on public health\(^2\).
• Poor agricultural production and loss of livelihoods and potential strain on social cohesion.

UNICEF, as the WASH Sector lead, worked intensively with the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator’s office to prepare the Syria Humanitarian Country Team paper on the water situation, and its potential humanitarian implications in NE Syria and Aleppo. This paper has formed the basis for sectoral costed operational response plans.

**Al-Hol Camp:** The first half of 2021 saw 40 adults and two children killed in violence in Al-Hol Camp. Partners report a deterioration of the security situation, including associated acts of vandalism on community-based service centres, though activities supported by UNICEF have been sustained throughout the year.

**Northwest Syria:** More than 2.7 million people remain displaced in NW Syria. The first quarter of the year was characterized by harsh winter conditions and flooding. According to local partners, heavy rainfall across western Aleppo and Idlib damaged and cut off access to 88 internally displaced person (IDP) sites.

The armed conflict in NW Syria continued in southern and eastern Idlib. Civilian casualties due to shelling, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and explosive remnants of war were reported. On 21 March, an attack on the Atareb area close to the Turkish border was reported to have resulted in significant damages to NGO structures, including a hospital near Bab al-Hawa. Reports detailed seven civilians killed, including two boys and five medical staff, with a further 13 civilians and medical staff injured. The hospital, which had been providing 3,650 outpatient consultations and 177 surgeries per month, was rendered inoperable.

May witnessed explosions in Afrin, Azaz, Jarablus, Al-Bab and other areas of northern Aleppo, with at least eight civilians wounded in IED incidents in Afrin and Azaz IDP Camp. On 19 and 24 May two IED incidents in Jarablus killed three civilians and injured at least two others. On 9 June, the shelling of Al-Abrar IDP Camp in Idlib destroyed four school tents. The IDP site, close to the frontlines, hosts 165 families. No casualties were reported.

On 12 June, artillery shelling and missiles hit Al-Shifaa Hospital in Afrin City. UNICEF (1, 2) joined the UN in condemning this attack, which killed 19 people, including three children and four humanitarian workers\(^3\). The hospital was heavily damaged, and its clinic and delivery rooms were destroyed. As one of the largest medical facilities in northern Syria, Al-Shifaa Hospital was providing 15,000 medical services a month, including deliveries\(^4\).

**Socioeconomic crisis:** According to WFP, food insecurity in Syria has hit its worst point since the start of the crisis, with 14.2 million Syrians at risk of food insecurity, up from 9.8 million in 2020\(^5\). This is rooted in currency depreciation, loss of purchasing power, increased food prices, large population displacements, lack of livelihood and income-generating options, losses in agricultural production, ongoing conflict and COVID-19. The national average price for the standard food basket\(^6\) was 247 per cent higher in April 2021 than April 2020.

---

6 A standard food basket is defined as: a group of dry goods providing 2,060 kcal a day for a family of five for a month (37 kg bread, 19 kg rice, 19 kg lentils, 5 kg sugar and 7L vegetable oil).
Summary Analysis of Programme Response

Health
A decade of crisis has devastated Syria’s healthcare system. Only 58 per cent of hospitals and 53 per cent of primary healthcare centres are fully functional. There are 12.4 million people in need of health care assistance, a number worsened by COVID-19 as well as the effects of food insecurity. To help meet these needs, in the first half of 2021, 930,112 free medical consultations (372,913 for boys, 372,642 for girls, 3,250 for men6 and 181,307 for women) were provided by UNICEF implementing partners through fixed centres and mobile teams in 14 governorates. This includes 200,705 consultations in NE Syria (29,678 in Al-Hol Camp) and 189,744 in NW Syria and represents 52 per cent of UNICEF’s annual target. The most common reasons for consultations among children were upper respiratory tract infections, gastroenteritis, and allergy-related diseases like asthma.

Since the beginning of the year, 1,410 health workers and community volunteers (1,387 women) have been trained in newborn care. Community volunteers conducted 7,464 home visits to 2,360 pregnant women and 1,880 newborns (959 girls) in their villages in 12 governorates, referring 41 women and 15 newborns for advanced medical care.

In terms of routine immunization, in the first half of the year in NW Syria, 57,782 children under 1 (28,773 girls) or 72 per cent of the annual target have received their third dose of DPT6 vaccine. UNICEF-supported social mobilizers reached 206,099 caregivers (104,712 women) in NW Syria with health promotion messages. This led to 66,032 children being brought in for routine vaccinations and contributed to the high level of coverage.

Meanwhile, 165,292 children under one year of age (82,929 girls) in the rest of the country received a third dose of DPT between January and May. Low coverage in the first half of the year (32 per cent of target) has been attributed to the holidays in the first half of the year, the third wave of COVID-19 renewing fears of visiting health facilities, major increases in the cost of transportation to visit vaccination centres, and the need for vaccine centres to support COVID-19 vaccination.

To bridge any existing immunity gaps, 3,415,489 children under five years of age (1,698,656 girls) were vaccinated against polio during National Immunization Days in the first half of the year. This is 107 per cent of the annual target with the over-reach due, in part, to IDP movements and insufficiently reliable population data.

In terms of COVID-19 vaccinations, 256,800 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine were received through the COVAX facility in May. Online registration is ongoing, prioritizing health workers along with people over the age of 55 years and/or with pre-existing chronic diseases. Initial national coverage reports show 100,321 individuals vaccinated using 98.6 per cent of the COVAX vaccines allocated for the first dose. This includes 18,150 people vaccinated in NE Syria. The Ministry of Health reports 126,620 doses (59,511 to women) administered, including vaccines from other donations, through 108 fixed and 61 mobile teams, including seven in IDP sites in NE Syria. In NW Syria, an additional 43,262 health and community workers and people above 60 years old have been vaccinated. Across Syria, UNICEF has supported the cold chain as well as demand generation (see the Communication for Development section below). Another 204,000 doses from the COVAX facility are expected to be received in August. Meanwhile, 4,800 separate doses of AstraZeneca were received by the UN for its staff and partners. So far, 1,543 UN and international NGO staff and dependents have been vaccinated using this allocation.

Nutrition
According to the 2021 HNO, 3.2 million children require nutrition assistance in Syria, including 90,000 children who are estimated to be suffering from acute malnutrition. As of 2019, the global acute malnutrition rate in Syria was 1.9 per cent, including 0.4 per cent of children estimated to be suffering from severe acute malnutrition (SAM). So far in 2021, 892,490 children under 5 years have been screened for acute malnutrition, including 411,273 in NW Syria. Of these

---

7 Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis.
8 Reporting for June is not yet available.
9 Due to the limited number of COVID-19 vaccines received in Syria so far, the Ministry of Health has decided to cover the first and second doses for same people insufficient additional doses are received to cover second dose requirements.
children, 5,190 (2,883 girls) were admitted for SAM treatment. This is 38 per cent of the annual target and includes 3,071 children admitted for treatment in NW Syria.

During the first half of the year, 89 per cent of children admitted for SAM treatment in government-controlled areas were discharged as cured, above the SPHERE Standard of over 75 per cent. Nine per cent of children defaulted, two per cent did not respond to treatment and zero per cent died.

UNICEF, the sole importer of ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) for the treatment of SAM in Syria, has provided partners with 2,352 cartons of RUTF so far this year. The importation of RUTF has been constrained due to differences with Syrian National Standards and efforts are ongoing to adjust the Syrian specifications to align with the international standards. UNICEF received 3,500 cartons of RUTF in June, to be added to the 1,000 cartons currently available in UNICEF warehouses. Similar challenges to import micronutrients for children and pregnant and lactating women were also addressed.

UNICEF preventive nutrition programming has a focus on improving Infant and Young Children Feeding (IYCF) practices. So far this year, 588,900 pregnant and lactating women and caregivers (45,135 men) received IYCF massages and counselling on exclusive breastfeeding and age-appropriate and timely complementary feeding. The figure includes 123,927 caregivers in NW Syria and is 41 per cent of the annual target. During the World Breastfeeding Week in August, partners will intensify counselling, with a particular focus on male caregivers.

**Nutrition Sector Response**
From January to May, the Nutrition Sector reached 1,143,025 children and women with life-saving and curative nutrition interventions. These children and women were reached in 57 out of 63 districts and include 258,733 people in areas of critical severity (13 per cent of those in need in critical areas). Sector partners admitted 11,534 children (8,547 girls) and 2,987 women for the treatment of acute malnutrition. Based on levels of screening by sector partners, the proxy incidence of moderate acute malnutrition and SAM were 1.39 and 0.5 per cent respectively. The Nutrition Sector activated two thematic working groups, one on Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) and the other on IYCF. Each has a term of references and mapping of services in place. Initial tasks for the groups include updating the CMAM protocols for Syria and preparing IYCF operational guidance.

Nutrition Cluster in NW Syria reached 428,405 children under five years of age and pregnant and lactating women in 36 subdistricts, including 538 communities and 118 camps through 110 rapid response teams. Through this support, 3,500 children were admitted for the treatment of SAM and 273,324 pregnant and lactating mothers received IYCF counselling as well as micronutrient tablets. Similarly, 210,000 children from 6 to 36 months received micronutrient support.

**Child Protection**
According to the 2021 HNO, 5.99 million people in Syria have acute protection needs, up from 4.65 million in 2020\(^\text{14}\). The triple threat of the COVID-19 pandemic, economic crisis and conflict has increased the risks of child marriage, child labour, abuse, exploitation, and violence\(^\text{15}\). In May alone, 26 people were killed or injured (including three children killed and two injured) by explosive ordnance in Aleppo, As-Sweida, Dar’a, Deir-ez-Zor, Hama and Rural Damascus. UNICEF and partners provide explosive ordnance risk education (EORE) to children and caregivers to prevent and respond to


\(^{15}\) Reports received from partners highlight GBV issues and levels of violence against children.
such threats. This year, 514,600 children (265,837 girls) and 85,446 caregivers, including 138,981 children and 18,136 caregivers in NE Syria and 39,556 children and 11,779 caregivers in NW Syria, have received lifesaving messages and face-to-face EORE sessions through UNICEF partners in schools and community centres in 14 governorates. UNICEF is evaluating its EORE programme through an external qualified institution.

In the first half of 2021, UNICEF supported 11 fixed facilities and 13 mobile teams to reach 103,556 children and caregivers (52,819 women) with critical child protection services in Deir-ez-Zor, including rural areas that were besieged and heavily affected by over two years of ISIL control. In Al-Hol Camp, UNICEF provided a package of 24/7 support to 112 children (45 girls) residing in two Interim Care Centres (ICCs). So far this year, 19 unaccompanied Syrian children from the ICC have been reunified with their families; 32 unaccompanied Russian children (30 from the ICC) returned to their country of origin; and 95 Iraqi households (159 men, 222 women, and 197 children) were repatriated to Iraq. Despite several incidents of violence in the camp, UNICEF and partners reached an average of 1,200 children a month with protection services.

During the first six months of 2021, UNICEF and partners reached 132,616 children (67,630 girls) and 529 caregivers (444 women) with structured and sustained child protection and psychosocial support services to help children cope with stress and regain a sense of normalcy. This is 32 per cent of the annual target and includes 57,504 children and caregivers in NE Syria and 15,015 children in NW Syria. A new, contextualized mental health and psychosocial support curriculum were launched to better address children’s needs and ensure the quality of programming. Post-assessments reveal that 49 per cent of participating children showed improvements in their well-being, including receiving moral support from their family; feeling loved and listened to, and having re-gained hope for the future.

Parenting programmes were provided for 21,922 parents and primary caregivers (18,131 women), including 8,889 in NE Syria and 1,930 in NW Syria to enhance their skills and knowledge to care for and protect their children. A new parenting curriculum is being developed to ensure its relevance to the Syrian context.

Child protection and gender-based violence (GBV) case management reached 6,275 children (2,788 girls) and 100 caregivers. Case management service providers facilitate individual protection assessments, develop comprehensive care plans, monitor the most severe cases, and refer individuals to specialized services. So far this year, 6,418 children (3,068 girls) and 1,235 caregivers (920 women), including 599 in NE Syria, have been reached with referrals to education, family tracing and GBV, health, legal and social protection services.

COVID-19 prevention measures have affected the provision of psychosocial support and case management. To ensure social distancing, implementing partners held smaller group activities in fewer shifts. Schools and child-friendly spaces were closed in March and April, during which time partners had to shift to online modalities. Funding has also constrained programming, especially in NW Syria, where UNICEF works with half as many partners as in 2020. In the coming months, UNICEF will expand its partnerships with local NGOs in rural Homs, rural Hama and newly accessible areas of Idlib to provide child protection interventions in severely affected but unserved areas.

In response to the increased prevalence of GBV in Syria, especially intimate partner and family violence, child and forced marriage, and sexual violence and exploitation, GBV awareness-raising was provided to 57,058 children (29,025 girls) and 14,551 caregivers (12,018 women), including 19,565 children and caregivers in NE Syria. GBV prevention and empowerment activities, such as life skills, were delivered by one implementing partner in NW Syria, reaching 3,861 beneficiaries including 1,544 boys, 1,003 girls, 923 women, and 391 men.

UNICEF trained 1,562 partner staff (1,048 women) on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) as well as child protection minimum standards and other topics. UNICEF undertook PSEA risk assessments of its 44 implementing partners, including 23 implementing partners in NWS. High-risk partners now have action plans to reduce their PSEA risk rating, with UNICEF following up on these plans. Capacity building, guidance and support is provided by UNICEF, the

16 Combining children and caregivers’ totals to 133,145 as reflected in the HPM table.
PSEA Senior Coordinator in NW Syria and the Interagency Network team. Partners were provided complaint boxes, along with posters and stickers, to expand community awareness on complaint mechanisms.

**Child Protection Area of Responsibility (AOR) Response**

From January to May 2021, Child Protection AOR partners reached 210,874 children and caregivers with psychosocial support. Special emphasis was placed on commemorating International Mine Action Day and International Women’s Day through fixed facilities and outdoor activities. An assessment will be launched by the Global Child Protection AOR in August to understand and develop a plan for partner capacity building on mental health and psychosocial support. A Cluster Coordination Performance Monitoring (CCPM) survey was conducted, and its results were used to draft a work plan for the AOR. The Sector will also work further on the prevention and response to violence against children with a focus on violence in schools and support the UNICEF Violence against Children study.

In NW Syria, Child Protection AOR partners reached 94,914 children and parents/caregivers. This is a decrease of 47 per cent compared to the same period in 2020. Consultations with child protection teams in the field about violence against children in IDP settings showed the need for increased attention on informal settlements where access is reduced. The coordination team supported a partner build its capacity, along with service mapping to improve child protection awareness in communities as well as reporting and referrals on violence against children. The CP AOR coordination team with the support of collaborators in the field has continued to monitor key child protection concerns in NW Syria. Outcomes of this monitoring can be viewed here.

**Education**

The education system in Syria is overstretched, underfunded, fragmented and unable to provide safe, equitable and sustained services to millions of children. There are 6.8 million children (50 per cent girls) in need of education assistance in Syria, an increase of 200,000 children from 2020. This includes 2.4 million out-of-school children, nearly 40 per cent of whom are girls. Since the beginning of 2021, UNICEF has supported 212,567 children (107,797 girls), including 20,609 in NW Syria, with educational services and supplies in formal settings. Support was also provided to 451,616 children (229,506 girls), including 42,274 in NW Syria, in non-formal settings. Together, 664,184 children have been supported across 14 governorates. Of these, 6,699 are children with disabilities (2,998 girls). Out of the total reached in the first half of the year, 414,194 children (211,239 girls) were in NE Syria. Since the beginning of 2021, 246 children (142 girls) in non-formal settings have transitioned to formal settings. UNICEF is developing learning assessment tools and frameworks to further understand the effectiveness of its non-formal education support.

To encourage parents, caregivers, and community leaders to send children back to school, UNICEF conducted Back-to-Learning campaigns reaching 117,173 people, including 10,030 in NW Syria. Meanwhile, 39,103 adolescents and youth (22,918 girls), including 1,251 in NW Syria, participated in life skills and citizenship education programmes in formal and non-formal settings.

Only a third of teachers in Syria have teaching certificates while 43 per cent have only one to three years of teaching experience. Teaching has become increasingly challenging due to mixed-aged, mixed-ability, over-crowded and under-resourced classrooms. To improve learning outcomes, UNICEF trained 8,316 teachers (6,705 women?), including 1,090 teachers in NW Syria, in child-centred and protective pedagogy and positive classroom management for education in emergencies.

To increase access to and improve the quality of learning environments, UNICEF rehabilitated 29 schools, reaching 13,925 children (7,102 girls). The rehabilitation of 12 schools has also started in Deir-ez-Zor Governorate; out of these, two are in Abu Kamal City. This is a key milestone as UNICEF is the first UN agency working in this area of eastern Deir-ez-Zor, which has experienced continued fighting.

UNICEF provided distance and/or home-based learning to ensure 69,071 children (35,505 girls) can continue learning during the intermittent school closures related to COVID-19. However, the reach of these interventions was constrained by a lack of electronic devices and connectivity and other restrictions, as well as difficulty in supporting and monitoring home learning.

---


18 Integrity. “Research to improve the quality of teaching and learning inside Syria” 2019

In NW Syria, psychosocial support remained one of the priorities within formal and non-formal education. UNICEF trained 598 teachers and education personnel (231 women) who have provided psychosocial support to 10,673 students (4,705 girls). To overcome the difficulties of learning during winter, UNICEF provided 404 schools hosting 102,002 children (61,559 girls) in NW Syria with diesel heaters, fuel tanks, fuel, and other support.

For the second half of 2021, UNICEF aims to make more investments in non-formal education with a focus on children with disabilities, including, training of teachers who work with children with disabilities in non-formal settings.

**Education Sector Response**

To achieve the 2021 Education HRP target of 2,977,290 children and teachers, Education Sector partners reached 1,406,376 children and 79,745 teachers and education personnel by the end of May. This includes 7,317 children with disabilities. The economic crisis in Syria is pushing many children, especially adolescent boys, to discontinue their education to support their families. In response, the Education Sector initiated a collaboration with the Cash Working Group and formed a Cash Voucher Assistance (CVA) in Education Task Force. The CVA in Education Task Force will develop guidance and tools, map existing CVA in Education interventions and actors and develop the capacities of Education Sector partners to initiate/expand CVA interventions. The Task Force has developed its terms of reference and work plan and conducted an orientation session with technical support from the CWG technical adviser.

As the cluster co-lead agency in NW Syria, UNICEF provides technical support to the Education Cluster and coordinates more than 100 cluster members. Based on feedback from the December 2020 CCPM, UNICEF, together with Save the Children, is strengthening the cluster’s advocacy and capacity building activities. In the first half of 2021, the Education Cluster published two advocacy letters to raise awareness on critical issues faced by the sector, including around critical funding gaps. Although this resulted in an increase in the Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF) allocation for Education, the sector is still struggling with a major funding gap. Training on child safeguarding, proposal writing, and reporting was also provided. The sector collaborates with other sectors on issues such as WASH in schools, protection in schools, schools being used as shelter and mental health and psychosocial support in schools.

The first round of the national certification exams for the 2020-2021 academic year were held for Grades 9 and 12 from 20 May to 22 June. Among the 518,670 children who registered for the exams, 16,507 were from areas outside of government control. 5,826 of them (4,507 Grade 9 and 1,319 Grade 12) travelled crossline and cross-border. These students were supported in 41 accommodation centres in five governorates, including Aleppo (4,632), Ar-Raqqaa (670), Dier-ez-Zor (137), Hama (137) and Rural Damascus (256). Additionally, 9,175 students travelled crossline daily to take the exams (55 from newly accessible areas of Idlib and 9,120 students from NE Syria).

The Education Sector, led by UNICEF, coordinated efforts by UNICEF and 22 partners\(^{20}\) to provide these students with food, hot meals and drinking water, non-food items, such as mattresses, blankets and ceiling fans, hygiene and sanitation supplies, including masks and hygiene kits, light rehabilitation of accommodation centres, transportation; bursaries; remedial classes; psychosocial support and case management; risk education; and COVID-19 PCR tests for students crossing the border from Lebanon. The government also supported these efforts, including providing mobile health teams and water trucking. The second round of exams for Grade 12 students will be held from 1 to 15 August.

A major concern for the Education Sector and UNICEF has been the 1,700 students who could not participate in the exams as they were not able to leave Idlib. The UNICEF Syria Representative and the Humanitarian Coordinator

---

\(^{20}\) Partners include: Albirr Idelb, ASSLS, AVSI, EIEA, ICDA, ICRC, NRC, Oxfam, PUI, RSRP, SARC, SFPA, SIF, Social Care, SSD, Syria Trust for Development, TGH, UNFPA, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and WHO.
proactively advocated for these students to have their fair chance and right to education. After extensive advocacy efforts, the Ministry of Education approved the participation of these children in the second round of exams in August and it is hoped that crossline entry will be facilitated.

**WASH**

There are 12.2 million people in need of WASH assistance in Syria, including over 7 million who are considered highly dependent on WASH assistance, 1.9 million of whom are living in IDP sites. 36 per cent of households are using unsafe water sources and 70 per cent of sewage is discharged untreated. UNICEF continued its **humanitarian emergency response** as a top priority in the first half of 2021, reaching 1,245,805 people in need (216,998 boys, 223,478 girls, 178,585 men and 216,711 women), including 410,033 in NW Syria. This includes monthly water trucking for 341,905 residents (79,889 boys, 80,010 girls, 86,056 men and 95,950 women) in IDP camps and collective shelters in NE Syria and rural Aleppo as well as returnees in Rural Damascus. In Al-Hol Camp, UNICEF provided WASH services for 49,000 out of 64,627 residents. The remainder of the population was reached by other organizations.

In the first half of 2021, UNICEF supported the rehabilitation and maintenance of **water supply** systems, ensuring safe drinking water for 1,221,603 people (320,481 boys, 311,059 girls, 285,556 men and 304,507 women) out of the target of 4,140,000. This includes 314,718 people (81,464 boys, 87,758 girls, 69,603 men and 75,893 women) in NW Syria. In 2021, the lack of electricity availability across the country (eight hours a day in urban areas and four in rural areas, or less, and worse in areas such as Al-Hassakeh) has limited the functionality of water networks. UNICEF has begun integrating solar systems into projects like the rehabilitation of six wells (out of a target of 20) in Dar’a. This solution is being rolled out broadly within the WASH Sector.

The lack of local production or importation of sodium hypochlorite in Syria poses major risks for the availability of safe water. UNICEF secures the majority of the local requirements for sodium hypochlorite to disinfect all water systems in the country, ensuring the provision of safe drinking water to around 13.6 million people across Syria. Drinking water is also disinfected with the support of UNICEF in NW Syria for 524,521 people. Water quality is regularly monitored, as is diarrhoea incidence, to ensure that the water remains safe for drinking.

In terms of **sanitation**, UNICEF completed the rehabilitation of sewerage systems in ten communities in major cities and rural areas, benefiting 984,739 people (273,783 boys, 263,703 girls, 213,331 men, 233,922 women). This figure includes 324,519 people (88,792 boys, 94,957 girls, 62,212 men and 78,558 women) in NW Syria.

Hygiene kits have been supplied to 162,090 IDPs (43,861 boys, 49,603 girls, 32,733 men and 35,893 women) in NW Syria this year. E-Vouchers were introduced as a pilot, allowing 10,230 IDPs in eight informal settlements/camps to procure hygiene items of their choice. Third-party monitors are currently monitoring the results of this pilot for potential scale-up. UNICEF also conducted **hygiene promotion** for 401,506 people, mostly children and women, including 279,000 people in NW Syria. This is 73 per cent of the annual target, with the over-reach related to intensified COVID-19 risk communication.

In terms of **WASH in schools**, UNICEF has supported 130,476 students (62,883 girls) so far this year, out of a target of 390,000 students. This includes the provision of hygiene supplies, water trucking in schools, conducting hygiene awareness-raising sessions in schools, and the rehabilitation of WASH facilities, which support access to gender-responsive and child-friendly WASH facilities that also address the needs of children with disabilities.

**WASH Sector Response**

From January to June 2021, the WASH Sector reached 4,545,648 beneficiaries, including 1,173,980 men, 1,350,326 women and 2,021,342 children. The sector reached 51 out of 63 districts and 151 out of 270 sub-districts. The total number of beneficiaries includes 249,976 people in areas of critical severity (65 per cent of those in need in critical areas). In terms of the sector’s first strategic objective to support water and sanitation systems, the sector has supported 3,329,290 people so far in 2021, including 2,393,384 as a result of rehabilitating water systems and 113,894 through water safety plans while 763,527 were reached with improved access sanitation services. In terms of the second objective to deliver humanitarian WASH supplies and services, the sector reached 1,805,979 people, including 776,040 people who were provided with WASH supplies, 213,070 with hygiene promotion and 570,805 people with access to water through services, such as water trucking.

---

WASH Sector partners have again activated emergency water trucking, delivering 3,380 m$^3$/day to an estimated 169,000 people in Al-Hasakeh City. While a necessary stop-gap measure, this covers only 20 per cent of daily water needs. An additional $2.5 million is urgently required to enable partners to increase water trucking to cover the needs of 460,000 people, and to install a further 12 reverse osmosis units across Al-Hasakeh Governorate.

UNICEF co-leads the WASH Cluster in NW Syria with IYD, coordinating 113 agencies. In the first half of 2021, there have been major challenges of constrained access to water, excessive water abstraction from wells, high temperatures in the summer season and an increase in the price of water by water trucking vendors. The WASH Cluster is working closely with the OCHA Access group to address these issues. The WASH Cluster received significant SCHF funding to prepare for the winter and flood seasons, as well as to expand water and sewage networks, connecting them to camps, thus providing a more durable solution. Connecting camps to water systems will reduce the need for expensive water trucking and costly pumping of water using diesel engines.

**Adolescent Development and Participation (ADAP)**

Young people in Syria face increased vulnerability and are more likely to miss out on formal education and opportunities for social and economic engagement, including access to skills development and technology, and transition to the workforce. The current economic hardship combined with the impact of COVID-19 has particularly affected young people living below the poverty line, girls, and young women, working adolescents and young people with disabilities.

UNICEF supports young people aged 10 to 24 years (75 per cent of whom are in the priority group of 10 to 18 years) to access alternative learning pathways, become positive agents of change in their communities and contribute to building social cohesion. During the first half of 2021, 161,881 young people (83,523 female) benefited from ADAP services in 13 governorates. One notable exception is Idlib, where insecurity and inaccessibility have continued to constrain UNICEF’s ability to engage young people. To improve the quality of ADAP programmes, UNICEF trained 291 (138 female) ADAP service providers and youth workers and supported 100 youth spaces, including 25 with local NGOs.

Out of the total reach, 49,239 young people (28,424 female) received life skills and citizenship education (covering topics such as critical thinking, communication, negotiation, collaboration, creativity, and leadership), basic literacy and employability skills. This is 16 per cent of the annual target, as programming is constrained by delayed approvals and a lack of flexible funds for life skills training. Out of those reached, 14,800 young people (8,830 female), including 39 with disabilities (21 female), undertook vocational training in areas, such as electrical maintenance, mobile maintenance, web design and physical therapy. In addition, 890 young people (491 female) participated in entrepreneurship training.

UNICEF and its implementing partners also promoted the social, civic, and digital engagement of 128,486 young people (64,311 female), including 1,914 (973 female) who designed and led their own initiatives. This is 64 per cent of the target for the year, over-reaching the target as social and civic engagement activities usually increase after the school year ends. Meanwhile, Sports for Development (basketball, football, Zumba, swimming etc.), cultural and social arts opportunities reached 19,960 young people (8,921 female).
In the second half of 2021, UNICEF and partners will work to ensure continued access to a package of services for the most vulnerable youth and employability and civic engagement opportunities, including in locations with high severity of need, such as Al-Hasakeh and Ar-Raqqa.

Social Protection and Cash Transfers

From January to June, UNICEF implemented three humanitarian social protection and cash transfer interventions: a) Integrated Social Protection Programme for Children with Disabilities, b) the Cash for Basic Needs Support Programme, and c) the provision of winter clothes for children.

So far this year, 8,605 children with severe disabilities (3,504 girls) have been supported in Al-Hasakeh, Aleppo, Hama, Homs, and Rural Damascus (see Figure 7 for geographic breakdown). Children enrolled in the Integrated Social Protection Programme received regular cash assistance together with case management to support their social inclusion and increase their access to education and health specialized services. The most common disabilities affecting children participating in the programme are cerebral palsy (24 per cent), quadriplegia/monoplegia (21 per cent), intellectual disabilities (21 per cent), and autism and down syndrome (18 per cent). 95 per cent of the beneficiaries were born with disabilities.

A baseline monitoring survey was conducted in February in Homs to establish a baseline of basic socio-economic characteristics of participating families. This will enable the evaluation of the programme’s impact as well as the collection of feedback about beneficiaries’ satisfaction after the first four months. Key highlights from the survey include:

- 80 per cent of participating children with disabilities were out of school. Only three per cent were benefitting from specialized education. Most were out of school for health-related reasons (61 per cent) or lack of accessibility (28 per cent).
- Only 45 per cent of households received any support from other organizations within the last six months.
- 51 per cent of households ranked health as the top expenditure for cash assistance while 41 per cent ranked food as their top expenditure.

Most families are not satisfied with the amount of cash assistance, which only “moderately” helped meet the needs of their children: 61 per cent of households reported they were ‘dissatisfied’ or ‘very dissatisfied’ with the amount.

The Cash for Basic Needs Support Programme provides a one-time unconditional cash transfer to families with children in urban and peri-urban slums. Between January and June, 21,042 households were reached (50,241 children, including 23,731 girls and 518 children with disabilities) in Homs, Lattakia, Rural Damascus and Tartous. Post-distribution monitoring in Rural Damascus in April found that the cash distributed was almost equal to their family’s average monthly income and that 42 per cent of beneficiaries prioritized food when using the cash, while 29 per cent prioritized clothing.

UNICEF also provided winter clothes to vulnerable girls and boys from 0 to 14 years of age to protect them from the harsh winter weather. Winter clothes were distributed to 84,525 children (43,463 girls and 943 with disabilities) in the first half of 2021, 45 per cent of whom are IDPs and 51 per cent returnees. This is only 17 per cent of the target for 2021. The following challenges were encountered with the winter response: a) late receipt of funds which delayed the procurement of winter clothes, b) depreciation of the Syrian currency, affecting the suppliers of winter clothing, and c)
COVID-19 containment measures which delayed distribution. In a post-distribution monitoring exercise in April/May in Rural Damascus, 62 per cent of those surveyed said the winter clothes were good quality and 67 per cent reported that the clothes met their children’s needs in terms of protection from the coldness of winter.

**Communication for Development (C4D), Community Engagement and Accountability for Affected Populations (AAP)**

Regarding demand generation for COVID-19 vaccination, while awaiting the first batch of vaccines to arrive in Syria, UNICEF focused on community engagement without raising vaccine demand. This included monitoring social insights around vaccine acceptance, strengthening networks of implementing partners, understanding capacity building needs of partners, mobilizing resources, building trust, and designing and preparing communication materials.

To roll out demand generation activities, UNICEF trained 28 healthcare workers (14 females) as master trainers. They were empowered to understand the drivers and barriers of vaccine acceptance and uptake and equipped with skills in crisis communication and micro-planning. Cascaded trainings then enabled 508 healthcare workers to support demand generation activities for the COVID-19 vaccine. In addition, in NE Syria, UNICEF reached 425 doctors with advocacy on the COVID-19 vaccine, and oriented 272 community workers and healthcare workers.

Following the receipt of the first batch of vaccines through the COVAX facility, UNICEF supported a nation-wide campaign in May and June, where the trained healthcare workers undertook communication activities to raise public awareness about the vaccine. They also helped with registering for the online platform as well as make the connection between vaccination teams and the public, focusing on elderly people living in nursing homes, shelters and camps. COVID-19 messaging, including on vaccination, reached 575,674 people (340,783 female) out of a target of 1,000,000 for the year. This included 142,471 people who received SMS messages or printed materials, while 393,331 people were engaged in two-way communications activities, including dialogues and house-to-house visits. The campaign was able to significantly raise the number of people registering on the online platform. Among the main insights collected from the field during this campaign was hesitancy toward the AstraZeneca vaccine and concerns about its link with blood clots, as well as practical difficulties in reaching vaccination centres in remote areas.

In support of routine immunization and anti-polio campaigns, UNICEF reached 1,521,323 individuals with social mobilization activities to promote demand for immunization, out of a target of 3,300,000. Experience from the campaign showed that economic hardships were among the main reasons for caregivers to not prioritize immunization for their children. A strategy will be developed to focus on increased use of digital media platforms, and a messaging strategy that is more tailored to the most recent contextual challenges.

**Human Interest Stories and External Media**

During the first half of 2021, UNICEF used its external media presence to highlight its winter appeal aimed at helping vulnerable children across the country to stay warm, including those displaced in makeshift camps, shelters and informal settlements in Idlib as well as children in rural Aleppo and Homs, Al-Hol Camp and rural Dar’a. UNICEF also highlighted priority interventions such as assistance for children with disabilities, ‘Curriculum B’ accelerated learning, support for national exams for crossline Grade 9 and 12 students, the national polio immunization campaign and support to children amid the economic downturn with its cash for basic needs. The rehabilitation of sewer networks was also highlighted.

UNICEF continued its advocacy, through statements, including ones calling for the protection of children during the conflict and the safe reintegration and repatriation of all children in Al-Hol Camp. In March, UNICEF marked 10 years of conflict in Syria with a virtual field visit to Aleppo and through multimedia packages and stories of children, including ones as old as the conflict. UNICEF also commemorated the International Day for Mine Awareness, Girls in ICT Day and World Day Against Child Labour. External media was used to announce the first shipment of COVID-19 vaccines through the COVAX facility in May, followed up with a look at the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines in Aleppo and NE Syria.

As No Lost Generation co-lead, UNICEF also engaged actively during the first half of the year, including the development of media materials for marking the 10th year of the crisis, the production of an NLG Advocacy Brief and the organization of a successful NLG Brussels V side-event with the active participation of young refugees.
### Annex A: Summary of Programme Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>UNICEF and IPs response</th>
<th>Sector response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall Needs(^{22})</td>
<td>2021 target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2021 target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health</strong></td>
<td>12.4M</td>
<td>3,200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># children aged 6 to 59 months vaccinated against polio</td>
<td>1,800,000</td>
<td>930,112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># children and women accessing primary health care in UNICEF-supported facilities</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># health care facility staff and community health workers trained on infection prevention and control</td>
<td>4.9M</td>
<td>13,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># primary caregivers of children aged 0 to 23 months receiving infant and young child feeding counselling</td>
<td>1,450,000</td>
<td>588,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># children and pregnant and lactating women receiving micronutrients</td>
<td>960,000</td>
<td>449,609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nutrition</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.9M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># children aged 6 to 59 months with severe acute malnutrition admitted for treatment</td>
<td>120,500</td>
<td>73,570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># children accessing explosive weapons-related risk education and survivor assistance interventions</td>
<td>2,380,000</td>
<td>600,046(^{27})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child Protection, GBVIE &amp; PESA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.9M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># women, girls and boys accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention or response interventions</td>
<td>120,500</td>
<td>73,570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># children accessing explosive weapons-related risk education and survivor assistance interventions</td>
<td>2,380,000</td>
<td>600,046(^{27})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td>6.9M</td>
<td>1,750,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># children supported with educational services and supplies in formal settings</td>
<td>400,000</td>
<td>451,616(^{29})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># children in non-formal education benefiting from education services</td>
<td>44,000</td>
<td>8,316(^{30})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># teachers and education personnel trained</td>
<td>4,140,000</td>
<td>1,221,603(^{31})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Water, Sanitation &amp; Hygiene</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>12.2M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># people accessing a sufficient quantity of safe water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene</td>
<td>1,360,000</td>
<td>984,739(^{32})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{22}\) Figures of the overall needs have been adjusted to match the published HNO 2021.

\(^{23}\) This is 107 per cent of the annual target with the over-reach due, in part, to IDP movements and insufficiently reliable population data.

\(^{24}\) Underachievement due to data gaps and fewer children identified with SAM during screening (noting that screening levels have not declined).

\(^{25}\) Underachievement in micronutrient provisions roots from Syrian National Standards import challenges.

\(^{26}\) Underachievement due to delayed approvals, however, programming is on-going and expected to reach target. In NW Syria, under-reach relates to critical funding gaps.

\(^{27}\) As explained within the narrative, the underachievement is linked difficulties in accessing informal.

\(^{28}\) Formal education is a seasonal indicator, with the response starting in September with the opening of the academic year.

\(^{29}\) The significant over-reach is due to Self-Learning Materials that were purchased late in 2020 and distributed in mid-2021. The target will be modified during the HAC Review.

\(^{30}\) Teacher training activities remain critically under-funded.

\(^{31}\) Slow progress as water system projects take on average four to five months to complete, at which point results will be reported.

\(^{32}\) Target will be modified during the HAC review, at which time the indicator will be on track.
Social Protection & Cash Transfers

| # households reached with humanitarian cash transfers across sectors | 86,000 | 21,042\textsuperscript{33} | 1,725 |
| # girls and boys protected from extreme weather through the provision of non-food items | 490,000 | 84,525 | 0 |

Adolescents & Youth

| # adolescents and youth aged 10 to 24 years promoting social cohesion and civic engagement at the community level | 200,000 | 128,486 | 38,235\textsuperscript{14} |
| # affected adolescents and youth aged 10 to 24 years receiving life-skills and citizenship education and employability skills | 300,000 | 49,239 | 5,600 |

C4D, Community Engagement & AAP

| # people participating in engagement actions for social and behavioural change | 1,002,500 | 1,480,066\textsuperscript{25} | (26,921)\textsuperscript{26} |

Annex B: Funding Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Funds available</th>
<th>Funding gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Received Current Year</td>
<td>Carry-Over</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>$38,819,971</td>
<td>$9,606,750</td>
<td>$6,095,740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>$23,920,391</td>
<td>$2,574,582</td>
<td>$3,371,929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Protection, GBVIE &amp; PSEA</td>
<td>$34,221,760</td>
<td>$2,491,034</td>
<td>$5,110,860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>$74,666,581</td>
<td>$22,436,424</td>
<td>$10,729,076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WASH</td>
<td>$98,314,219</td>
<td>$23,810,325</td>
<td>$12,680,355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Protection &amp; Cash Transfers</td>
<td>$48,850,736</td>
<td>$3,779,777</td>
<td>$8,754,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents &amp; Youth</td>
<td>$10,912,957</td>
<td>$2,794,037</td>
<td>$1,288,323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4D, Community Engagement &amp; AAP</td>
<td>$1,119,960</td>
<td>$247,394</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$330,826,575</td>
<td>$67,734,524</td>
<td>$48,030,372</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Funding for COVAX demand generation has been made available as part of health, and C4D funds have also been integrated into relevant sector funds.

Next SitRep: 20 August 2021

UNICEF Syria Crisis: [https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/syrian-crisis](https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/syrian-crisis)

Who to contact for further information:

- **Bo Viktor Nylund**
  Representative
  UNICEF Syria Country Office
  Tel: +963 (0) 993369456
  Email: bvnylund@unicef.org

- **Ghada Kachachi**
  Deputy Representative
  UNICEF Syria Country Office
  Tel: +963 (0) 11 6191300
  Email: gkachachi@unicef.org

- **Melinda Young**
  Senior Emergency Advisor
  UNICEF MENA Regional Office
  Tel: +962 (0) 7 9513 5290
  Email: meyoung@unicef.org

---

\textsuperscript{33} Underachievement due to delayed approvals and limited capacity of Financial Service Providers. UNICEF is developing agreements with additional providers.

\textsuperscript{34} Large increase as May and June reports were received together in June.

\textsuperscript{35} Due to the recent establishment of reporting mechanisms required for this indicator, it is being reported for the first time in this sitrep. Significant over-reach in the response is due to the fact that the placed target includes the caseload of Health and Education programmes only, while all other programmes are reporting now against it. The target will be modified during the HAC Review.

\textsuperscript{36} Decrease due to data cleaning and verification at field level.