



Displaced children participate in recreational activities provided by UNICEF-supported volunteers at a collective shelter in rural Lattakia, northwest Syria.

Earthquake Response in Syria

Humanitarian Situation Report No. 7

unicef 
for every child

Reporting Period: 22-28 March 2023

Highlights

- Ongoing displacement continues to raise child protection and gender-based violence concerns, including sexual exploitation and abuse. Over-crowding, lack of privacy and insufficient quality and quantity of gender and age- appropriate facilities, including WASH, represent significant risks for women and girls in particular.
- UNICEF WASH interventions include age and gender considerations throughout the design, implementation and monitoring phases. In northwest (NW) Syria, UNICEF is prioritising the involvement of women, girls, men and boys in WASH programming, including improving safe access to facilities (such as reducing walking distances to water points) and designing facilities that respond to specific age and gender needs, including menstrual hygiene management.
- UNICEF and partners supported 101,975 children (50,157 girls, 51,818 boys) to access formal or non-formal education, including early learning, self-learning and remedial classes. In NW Syria, UNICEF partners also reached 7,186 children (4,080 girls, 3,106 boys) with school-based psychosocial supported programmes in non-formal settings.
- UNICEF reached 19,484 children (including 49 children with disabilities) in Aleppo, Lattakia and Hama with clothing, blankets and recreational material and ensured they have access to play material throughout their stay in collective shelters.
- As of 28 March, 67,277 highly vulnerable people in affected areas of Aleppo and Hama received emergency cash assistance to support their basic needs and mitigate the economic shock created by the earthquakes. In addition, UNICEF supported 1,752 pregnant and lactating women and caregivers of children under two years old in NW Syria. The cash response is being scaled up through ongoing registration and identification of another 140,000 affected families in Aleppo, Lattakia and Hama.

Situation in Numbers

 **3,700,000***
children affected

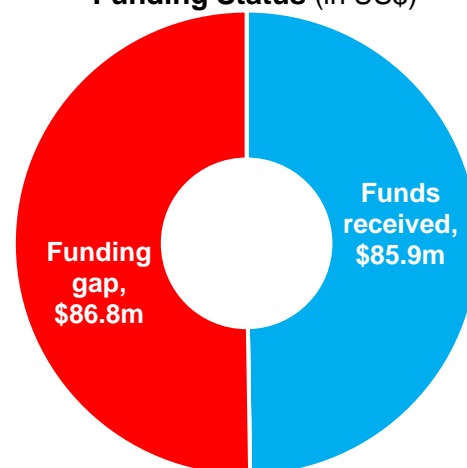
 **8,800,000****
people affected

 **2,600,000***
children to be reached

 **5,400,000***
people to be reached

UNICEF Appeal US\$172.7 million

Funding Status (in US\$)



*UNICEF, Earthquake Response for the Children of the Syrian Arab Republic, Immediate Response Plan, February-May 2023

**OCHA, Syria Earthquake Needs and Response Overview, 15 March 2023

Funding Overview and Partnerships

To meet the life-saving needs of nearly 3 million earthquake-affected children in Syria, UNICEF is appealing for **US\$172.7 million** to implement its [Immediate Response Plan](#), which is part of the [Inter-Agency Flash Appeal](#) and will inform the revision of the 2023 Syria Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC).¹

The **Immediate Response Plan is 50 per cent funded**, with US\$85.9 million received. Nutrition and health remain significantly underfunded. There is a need for additional flexible and unearmarked contributions to enable UNICEF and its partners to deliver services for children across Syria, regardless of their location.

Of the funds received, US\$60.2 million (70 per cent) are from UNICEF core resources, UNICEF National Committees, UNICEF country offices with structured private sector fundraising activities and UNICEF's global giving online platform. The remaining US\$25.7 million funding received is from public sector partners including the governments of Australia, Japan and Slovakia, the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) Rapid Response, USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) Accelerated Funding Grant and the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO).

Other public and private sector partners have pledged additional support, including the Government of the State of Kuwait, the CERF Underfunded Emergencies grant and UNICEF National Committees. UNICEF expresses its sincere gratitude to all private and public sector partners for their critical support to the earthquake response.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

According to local and government sources, approximately 6,000 people have reportedly been killed and more than 12,000 injured across Syria as a result of the multiple earthquakes that hit parts of Syria and Türkiye on 6 February.² More than 8.8 million people in Syria, including 3.7 million children and pregnant and lactating women, have been affected and many are now in urgent need of water, shelter, food and emergency medical and psychosocial assistance.³ Due to pre-existing gender inequalities, women and girls face additional risks which requires specific attention in the humanitarian response.

Since the first earthquake on 6 February, 97,400 households have been displaced in Syria.⁴ Movements of affected populations remain highly fluid. The Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster estimates that there are now over 2.6 million people who are internally displaced in northwest (NW) Syria, which includes those who were displaced prior to the earthquake as well as those who have been newly displaced.⁵

Meanwhile, the number of damaged and flooded sites in NW Syria increased to more than 30 after heavy rains and storms during the weekend of 17 March, with 600 tents reported as destroyed and 897 damaged. Most of the sites which were impacted were sites established in response to the earthquake.

WASH

The already fragile water and sanitation infrastructure was extensively affected by the earthquakes, with reports of damage to and collapse of water reservoirs, water towers, water stations and sanitation network facilities. This had a significant impact on cholera response operations by affecting overall access to services, reducing partner capacity, diverting already limited funds and not least, negatively affecting the mental health of the workforce.

Initial assessments by partners in earthquake-affected areas in Aleppo, Idlib, Damascus, Deir-ez-Zor, Hama, Homs, Tartous and parts of southern Idlib indicate restoration of WASH sector status to pre-earthquake levels will require an estimated US\$75-80 million. Meanwhile, in NW Syria, the impact of the earthquakes has resulted in an additional service delivery requirement in new locations. This will increase the existing target (1.1 million people) by an estimated 500,000 people, bringing the population in need of WASH services to 1.6 million.

Health

At least 116 health facilities reported damages (including at least seven hospitals) in Aleppo, Hama, Latakia and Tartous.⁶ In NW Syria, Access to health care remains precarious, with the health cluster reporting 67 health facilities fully or partially damaged as of the 20 March, and 10 health facilities suspended post-earthquake. This is within a context where cholera cases continue to increase, with 60,279 suspected cases as of the 25 March, with an attack rate of 1.30 per cent. The cholera fatality rate remains below the WHO acceptable threshold of 1 per cent, at 0.04 per cent.

As of 27 March, UNICEF partners operating in shelters in Hama and Latakia reported 1,249 acute watery diarrhoea cases, 4,799 influenza cases, 4,417 lice cases, 718 cases of scabies and confirmed 40 Hepatitis A cases. One case of chickenpox (Varicella) was reported in addition to one case of impetigo (streptococcal disease) and one case of cutaneous Leishmaniasis.

¹ Prior to the earthquake, UNICEF appealed for US\$328.5 million for its 2023 Syria Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC), which includes response activities for NW Syria. The severity of humanitarian needs in Syria was further exacerbated by the earthquake, especially since people across the country were already suffering from a deteriorating socio-economic condition, a recent cholera outbreak, shortages of electricity, water and fuel and 12 years of protracted crisis.

² OCHA Syrian Arab Republic: Earthquakes, Whole of Syria Situation Updates, 1 March 2023

³ OCHA Syria Earthquake Flash Appeal, 14 February

⁴ OCHA Earthquake Needs and Response Overview, Syrian Arab Republic, 15 March 2023

⁵ CCCM Cluster, Earthquake Displacement Update published 20 March 2023

⁶ WHO Syria Earthquake Situation Report, 15 February

In Aleppo, out of 55 highly suspected measles cases, 34 cases were confirmed to be measles. The cases are located across Aleppo city and in the rural areas, including two cases in collective shelters. In general, routine vaccination coverage among children, which was already alarmingly low pre-earthquake, remains a key concern, particularly considering the country's large number of over 150,000 'zero dose children'.⁷

Nutrition

The earthquakes impacted 3.7 million children and pregnant and lactating women and may exacerbate the nutrition situation of vulnerable children and women that was already alarming. A trend analysis from the Joint Food Security and Nutrition Assessment 2022 shows that the level of acute malnutrition among children and women has been steadily rising in the country since 2019. Stunting, micro-nutrient deficiencies and uptake of infant and young child feeding, and care practices remain concerning.⁸ It is too early to see a significant increase in acute malnutrition following the earthquakes. However, the nutrition cluster in Syria is anticipating an increased severe acute malnourished caseload of just over 14,000 cases associated with the earthquake. Furthermore, the admission trends of malnourished children and pregnant and lactating women in February 2023 reflected an almost double admission trend in comparison with the same time period over the past three years.⁹

Education

The earthquakes damaged a total of 2,947 schools, including 2,513 schools in Aleppo, Lattakia, Tartous, Hama, Homs and Idleb as well as 434 schools in NW Syria. Of these, 2,299 lightly damaged schools have reopened in Aleppo, Lattakia, Tartous, Hama, Homs and Idleb. The Ministry of Education and education partners report that a total of 110 schools (including 20 in NW Syria) are currently being used as shelters – a reduction from 171 as some families have left shelters and authorities merged a few shelters together to free schools to resume education.

Attendance rates in schools that have reopened have increased to over 95 per cent average, but some families are still worried about the safety of their children due to the conditions of schools.¹⁰ Fear for children's safety and continued tremors have led to some caregivers not sending their children back to school, even if schools are being re-opened. In Aleppo, Lattakia, Tartous, Hama, Homs and Idleb, an estimated 141,000 students are still lacking access to schools because these are out of service or being used as shelter. The Department of Education in Lattakia has given order to evacuate all schools utilized as shelter, to allow children resuming with schooling. The situation in NW Syria also remains challenging, with the education cluster estimating an additional 200,000 children may be out of school due to the earthquakes, bringing the total number of school aged children out of school in NW Syria to 1 million.

Child Protection

The Child Protection Area of Responsibility observed an increased risk in separated and unaccompanied children, significantly increased levels of psychological distress (both for the affected populations and humanitarian actors) as well as possible reliance on harmful coping mechanisms (child labour and early marriage) and increases in other forms of gender-based violence such as domestic violence, exploitation and trafficking.¹¹ Some of the most affected groups include women (pregnant and lactating, single women and/or heads of household), unaccompanied and separated children, older persons, people with chronic illnesses, persons (including children) with disabilities, especially those with intersectional vulnerabilities, child and youngster-headed households, single parent headed households, homeless persons and those without civil documentation. In NW Syria in particular, destitute older persons have been identified as one of the most affected and vulnerable groups.¹²

Living conditions within collective shelters continue to place women, girls and boys at risk, with an increase in reported cases of gender-based violence and harassment against women and girls. This is mainly due to overcrowded rooms, lack of privacy, absence of adequate WASH facilities and lack of proper reporting mechanisms that ensure accountability towards perpetrators. The lack of adequate lighting in several collective shelters has also been highlighted as a priority concern, especially by girls and women. During the reporting period, some parents and caregivers refused to allow their children to attend the psychosocial support interventions given the spreading of scabies and lice due to deteriorated hygiene conditions. UNICEF partners also reported that both children and parents in collective shelters continue to show signs of severe panic attacks, distress, insomnia and disorientation. Children are still showing symptoms of fear and stuttering after the earthquakes, highlighting the continued need for long-term mental health and psychosocial support. In a recent child protection rapid assessment in Aleppo, Lattakia and Hama, seven per cent of respondents reported that they were aware of children who were separated from their parents or usual caregivers, reiterating the need for family tracing and reunification as well as appropriate alternative care support.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

UNICEF's Immediate Response Plan aims to reach 5.4 million people, including 2.6 million children, in the first three-months of the response (February to May 2023). UNICEF is meeting the immediate life-saving and urgent humanitarian needs of girls, boys, adolescents, and families through an integrated and gender-responsive approach, prioritizing highly affected areas and areas of large displacement. UNICEF is leveraging the established system for accountability to affected populations (AAP) and the protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and gender-based violence

⁷ As per 2022 Ministry of Health data, the number of unimmunized children in Syria is 152,515

⁸ Joint Food Security and Nutrition Assessment 2022

⁹ Syria Nutrition Cluster Bulletin (GZT-Türkiye XB Nutrition Cluster), March 2023 #1

¹⁰ Ministry of Education data

¹¹ Syria Earthquake Protection Briefing Note for Donors, Humanitarian Leadership and Humanitarian Actors 16 March 2023

¹² Ibid

(GBV) in close collaboration with UNHCR, UNFPA and other partners. In line with UNICEF's Core Commitments for Children in humanitarian action, priority will be given to restoring essential health and WASH, psychosocial support, family separations, protection case management, provision of cash and winter items where possible.

WASH

UNICEF continues providing **life-saving WASH services**, reaching an additional 84,596 people during the reporting period and 484,602 people to date (133,223 girls, 120,866 boys, 118,813 women, 111,700 men) with a sufficient quantity and quality of water for drinking and domestic needs. An additional 63,732 people were reached with appropriate sanitation services during the reporting period, 201,237 to date (54,538 girls, 51,457 boys, 48,012 women, 47,230 men). Hygiene promotion continued to be provided in informal settlements, reception centres, and host communities.

During the reporting period, UNICEF delivered **WASH supplies** to 25 collective shelters in Aleppo city, Lattakia, Tartous and Hama. These supplies include items such as family hygiene kits, soaps, aqua tabs, jerry cans, women's sanitary napkins, and baby diapers, reaching 6,952 internally displaced people (IDP). A further 23,280 additional people were provided WASH non-food item (NFI) kits in informal settlements, reception centres, and host communities in NW Syria.

In recognition of the increased GBV and protection risks UNICEF is taking concrete actions in WASH interventions including **considerations of age and gender** in design, implementation, and monitoring. Whilst reports of insufficient quality and quantity of gender segregated, well-lit and lockable toilet facilities continue in collective shelters, UNICEF has made strong progress in NW Syria through providing user friendly facilities, reducing walking distances to water points and designing facilities that address the specific needs of women, men, girls and boys.

Health

UNICEF and partners, including WHO, have so far provided 141,587 children and women (62,210 girls, 60,201 boys, 19,176 women) with **access to primary healthcare** through medical consultations in UNICEF supported facilities. In partnership with local NGOs, UNICEF is also providing maternal and child health services in the affected areas through mobile medical teams that include paediatricians, midwives, and female nurses.

Meanwhile, UNICEF is supporting the Aleppo Department of Health's multiantigen **National Immunization Days** (NIDs), which will also help in containing the measles outbreak, concentrating the campaign on most affected neighbourhoods. A **measles-rubella - oral polio vaccine (MR-OPV) campaign** will begin in NW Syria on 8 April. The MR vaccine will target more than 700,000 children (aged 6-59 months), while the OPV will target more than 800,000 children (0-59 months).

Following the successful completion of phase I of the door-to-door **oral cholera vaccine (OCV) campaign**, which reached 1,669,298 people over one year old (95 per cent coverage), the international coordinating group on vaccine provision approved phase II of the OCV campaign. Phase II aims to administer 1,119,799 doses of OCV in NW Syria, prioritizing people in reception centres and IDPs.

Furthermore, a total of 4,658 children were vaccinated to date through **routine immunization**, while 1,212 women were vaccinated with tetanus and diphtheria vaccine in Aleppo, Homs, Hama, Idleb and Lattakia. UNICEF is working with local partners and youth volunteers and engage communities to ensure vaccination coverage of all children.

Nutrition

To date, 122,434 children (61,446 girls, 60,988 boys) aged 6-59 months were **screened for acute malnutrition**, including 68,873 children in Aleppo, Hama, Idleb, Lattakia and Tartous as well as 53,561 children in NW Syria. In addition, 19,257 pregnant and lactating women were also screened for acute malnutrition in Aleppo, Hama, Idleb, Lattakia and Tartous, as well as 42,045 pregnant and lactating women in NW Syria.

In collaboration with WFP, UNICEF and partners reached a total of 69,195 children under-five with **micro-nutrient powder (MNP)** to date, including 50,123 in Aleppo, Hama, Idleb, Lattakia and Tartous, and 19,072 children in NW Syria. UNICEF also provided **high-energy biscuits** to 2,153 children in Aleppo, Hama, Idleb, Lattakia, and Tartous as well as 2,408 children in NW Syria.

Meanwhile, UNICEF and partners provided messages on appropriate **infant and young child feeding (IYCF)** practices in emergencies for 74,819 primary caregivers in Aleppo, Hama, Idleb, Lattakia and Tartous as well as 18,468 in NW Syria.

Education

UNICEF and partners supported 101,975 children (50,157 girls, 51,818 boys) to access to **formal or non-formal education**, including early learning, self-learning and remedial classes. In addition, UNICEF provided education supplies and recreational kits for schools and shelters, covering the immediate needs of approximately 65,000 children (including 19,720 children in shelters) in Aleppo, Lattakia, Tartous and Hama.

In NW Syria, back-to-learning interventions, including awareness raising activities and community mobilization, reached 225 children (105 girls, 120 boys) during the reporting period. UNICEF partners also reached 10,334 children (47 per cent girls) with life skills and citizenship education programs in formal and non-formal settings. Furthermore, UNICEF partners reached 7,186 children (4,080 girls, 3,106 boys) with school-based psychosocial supported programmes in non-formal settings, with an aim of promoting resilience and psychosocial well-being of children.

Meanwhile, debris removal, minor repairs and **light rehabilitation** is ongoing in 42 schools in Aleppo, Lattakia, Hama and Homs. Preparations are ongoing to rehabilitate more than 388 schools and is closely coordinated with the WASH

sector to ensure children can return and resume their education in a safe environment with adequate gender and disability sensitive WASH facilities. In Lattakia, five schools requiring light rehabilitation have been completed and 500 students can now benefit from formal education.

In Lattakia, 17 **prefabs** have been set up in overcrowded schools to benefit approximately 850 students with formal education. Another eight prefabs have been installed in a common shelter to provide 300 students with non-formal education. UNICEF also installed 11 **temporary learning spaces** in four collective shelters in Aleppo and started providing learning and recreational activities to over 440 children. An additional 24 temporary learning spaces have been installed in Hama and Homs, serving an average of 1,680 children through double shifts.

To date, UNICEF established eight **digital learning centres** (“Learning Cinemas”) in shelter locations in Aleppo and Lattakia and trained 53 facilitators and teachers on digital learning. Laptops and tablets pre-loaded with digital learning materials and interactive educational games along with projectors and batteries were provided to each centre; 2,040 children are benefitting from the Learning Cinemas.

Child Protection

Child protection and GBV case management plays a central role in facilitating individual assessments, monitoring of cases and referral to specialized services, following a survivor centred approach and the best interest of the child. With seven implementing partners in Aleppo, Lattakia and Hama, UNICEF is supporting 19 community base centres/child friendly spaces to resume activities, and 32 mobile teams to provide case management, psychosocial support, and referrals to other multi-sectoral services. Three other centres/ child friendly spaces in Aleppo existing before the earthquake are considered not safe to resume activities. UNICEF is prioritising working with local organisations, including women’s organisations, to ensure a community-based approach and engagement to respond to and mitigate emerging needs, including the protection risks identified in collective shelters.

Together with partners, UNICEF reached an additional 85,717 children, adolescents and caregivers with **psychological first aid, mental health and psychosocial support**, recreational activities and parenting support programmes during the reporting period –130,870 children, adolescents and caregivers to date (50,504 girls, 38,672 boys, 12,773 women, 5,569 men).

Where it is safe, **community-based centres/child friendly spaces** also resumed their activities in Aleppo, Lattakia and Hama. These sessions and interventions aim at decreasing levels of stress and provide children, adolescents and caregivers with tools and skills that can enable them to better cope with the challenges that they are facing. Parents report that children attending UNICEF supported activities are showing signs of improvement in their psychosocial wellbeing, including being more social and having increased appetite.

In NW Syria, to empower children and enhance their psychosocial wellbeing, 185 children (90 girls, 95 boys) were newly registered and participated in both **structured and non-structured psychosocial support** activities. In addition, women also participated in the face-to-face psychosocial support sessions for caregivers and men and women from communities took part in **parenting sessions** to support and strengthen existing parenting skills. To reduce stress and support a healthy recovery, communities were reached during psychological first aid sessions.

In Aleppo, Lattakia and Hama, UNICEF and partners continue to reach girls and boys severely affected by the earthquakes with case management – through which 2,423 children have been referred to services. Out of these, 189 unaccompanied and separated children have been supported with **family tracing, family reunification and alternative care arrangements** with extended family in most cases, as well as referral to specialized services. Of these, UNICEF partners are facing a challenge in placing 15 unaccompanied children in extended families and finding suitable alternative care option.

Protection of girls and boys against harm, injury and disability has strategically continued to be strengthened by **explosive ordnance risk education (EORE)** interventions in displaced communities, health centres, camps, and markets. Since February, 13,511 children and parents/caregivers (6,663 girls, 6,644 boys, 556 women and 553 men) received EORE, including 13,307 children and parents/caregivers NW Syria.

In addition, UNICEF reached 19,484 children (including 49 children with disabilities) in Aleppo, Lattakia and Hama with clothing, blankets, and recreational material to ensure that children have access to play material throughout their stay in collective shelters.

UNICEF’s Child Protection section serves the rest of UNICEF programmes in ensuring **PSEA safeguards** and obligations under the UN Implementing Partners Protocol are met, in line with the SG Bulletin (ST/SGB/2003/13) and related IASC Commitments. UNICEF partners provide awareness raising sessions, targeting all communities where UNICEF delivers programmes. PSEA awareness raising sessions take place in either dedicated sessions or as part of other sessions structured by partners where other related topics are also discussed. Since the beginning of the earthquake response, 30,783 children and adults participated in awareness sessions (10,188 girls, 10,575 boys, 6,929 women, 3,091 men).

Cash Relief Response

UNICEF continues delivering **emergency cash assistance** to the most marginalised earthquake-affected families, reaching 69,029 people to date, including 67,277 highly vulnerable people in Aleppo and Hama as well as 1,752 pregnant and lactating women and caregivers of children under two years old in NW Syria.

To reach the most marginalized in Aleppo, Hama and Lattakia, UNICEF is vertically and horizontally expanding two Humanitarian Cash Transfer (HCT) programmes:

- [Cash for Basic Needs Support Programme](#) (CBNSP): The programme provides unconditional and unrestricted cash assistance to help vulnerable families cover their basic needs during winter. The programme targets highly vulnerable families in urban and peri-urban slums, including those (i) headed by females and (ii) with persons with disabilities, chronic illnesses and/or orphans.
- [Integrated Social Protection Programme for Children with Disabilities](#) (ISPP - CWD): The programme provides unconditional and unrestricted cash assistance to families caring for children with severe mental and/or physical disabilities.

As of 28 March, 67,277 highly vulnerable people (13,122 families) in affected areas of Aleppo and Hama received emergency cash assistance to support their basic needs and mitigate the economic shock created by the earthquakes. The majority of families were female-headed families and families caring for children with disabilities or children with chronic illness.

In Lattakia, the registration process of all families with children 0-17 years in six communities was initiated. In addition, highly vulnerable families caring for children with disabilities who have been affected by the earthquakes are being identified and registered throughout the governorate. As of 28 March, 3,680 people (736 families) have been identified and registered. As soon as the registration process is completed, all families will receive their first round of cash assistance. The target is to reach 30,000 people (6,000 families) in Lattakia.

In Aleppo and Hama, in addition to the vertical expansion of the programme to families who have been directly [affected by the earthquake](#) (about 12,500 families or 70 per cent of HCT caseload), the registration process of beneficiaries was initiated with the aim of reaching 110,000 people (17,000 families in Aleppo and 5,000 families in Hama). As of 31 March, over 3,500 people have already received their first cash transfer as part of the programme's horizontal expansion. In Aleppo, children with disabilities who have been affected by the earthquake have also received complementary assistance, including 1,000 children with disabilities who received diapers. Case management of affected families continues through referral to services and psychosocial support.

In addition, UNICEF supported 1,752 pregnant and lactating women and caregivers of children under two years old in NW Syria with a one-off cash grant of US\$150.

Adolescents Development and Participation (ADAP)

UNICEF and partners supported 1,741 adolescents and young people (1,021 in Lattakia and 720 male) to engage in or lead social and civic engagement activities through **youth-led initiatives**, recreational activities and sport, awareness raising sessions and disseminating the relevant messages, relief and humanitarian support and volunteering initiatives.

In Aleppo and Hama, 11 adolescents and youth centres (4 in Aleppo and 7 in Hama) are active and providing ADAP services on **skills-building and youth participation and engagement** in affected governorates. A total of 489 youth and adolescents participated in sessions on life skills in emergency and 104 youth and adolescents participated in technical vocational education and training (TVET) workshops and awareness sessions on dealing with diversity, stress management, and communication skills.

Meanwhile, 35 **young volunteers** from the "Youth Power in Emergencies" volunteering platform implemented two youth-led initiatives which supported earthquake affected children, adolescents and families in two shelters in rural Lattakia, including designing and distributing hygiene kits for 70 families and distributing colouring books and pens for 140 children.

Social and Behavioural Change (SBC) / Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

In Lattakia, Aleppo and Hama, community-based dialogues and household visits were conducted, reaching 7,598 people (5,345 females, 2,253 males) with **lifesaving messages** about the earthquake, promoting hygiene practices to mitigate water- and food-borne diseases, and advocating for IYCF practices. To accelerate cholera preparedness, the latest available data was reviewed to identify behavioural barriers and knowledge gaps and identify urgent messages for updating materials, and intervention plans as well as training content.

Moreover, in impacted governorates, **edutainment activities** were conducted encouraging self-hygiene and cholera-prevention practices, engaging with 2,231 children (1,274 girls, 957 boys), within and outside of shelters. Almost 3,000 people were reached through flyers and other print materials carrying key messages on cholera and protection from the earthquake.

IN NW Syria, RCCE partners continued their integrated messages on earthquake, cholera, COVID-19, and the risks of other diseases in the context of the earthquake. During the reporting period, 31 districts were covered through the mobilization of 253 community health workers and other mobile teams focusing on face-to-face visits in 29 reception centres, households/tents, in addition to public announcements raising awareness about cholera and communicable diseases to the people affected by the earthquake. During their engagement, community health workers referred 50 suspected cholera cases to the nearest cholera treatment centres. The use of audio-visuals and projectors was very well received by the communities during these sessions.

Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

As part of UN Humanitarian Country Team, UNICEF is scaling up its presence across the earthquake-affected governorates of Aleppo, Hama, Homs, Idleb, Latakia and Tartous. Furthermore, UNICEF has been supporting OCHA for the Governorate-level Syria Needs Assessment Tool (SYNAT) by mobilising UNICEF community volunteers as enumerators to capture needs of the affected population outside shelters. Also, UNICEF is expanding service delivery in the areas where there are critical gaps, in close coordination with local partners by strengthening their capacities. Furthermore, UNICEF is committed to supporting the leadership and coordination of humanitarian response through its leadership or co-leadership of cluster/sector **coordination for the WASH, nutrition and education clusters/sectors and the child protection area of responsibility**.¹³

To respond to the urgent needs of children, UNICEF mobilized a total of 84 staff with managerial, technical and senior cluster/sector coordination and information management capacity are being surged both into Damascus/ field office locations and into Gaziantep. This includes 31 surge staff from outside Syria and 53 internal surge staff from within Syria. As part of this scale-up, UNICEF has also significantly increased capacity for cluster/sector coordination at national and sub-national levels across the whole of Syria, including additional international surge capacity for national and sub-national level WASH, education, nutrition and child protection cluster/sector coordination in UNICEF field offices in Aleppo, Latakia, Homs and dedicated high-level cluster coordination for NW Syria.

UNICEF will ensure affected persons are reached through messaging on prevention and access to services, and existing complaints and feedback mechanisms (including sexual exploitation and abuse) will be scaled up with special attention to gender elements across all programmes and interventions. **PSEA key messages**, including messages specifically tailored for children, have been disseminated through the UNICEF and UNHCR led interagency PSEA network.

As part of UNICEF's **accountability to affected populations (AAP)**, UNICEF has increased the operating hours of its service line to accommodate the increased number of calls during weekends. An agreement has been reached with UN Agencies on how to refer and manage cases to address the diverse needs of the affected population, in the areas, including but not limited to, shelter, non-food items, health, gender-based violence, legal documentation, and reunification with families. At the same time, agencies have agreed to share their respective services in the affected areas so the callers can be immediately referred to and provide with necessary support. Since the earthquakes, the UNICEF service line has responded to more than 700 cases from the affected governorates of Aleppo, Hama and Latakia.

In addition to the community engagement and social and behaviour change support mainstreamed across all programmes, UNICEF is leading the coordination across UN and non-UN organizations for a relevant response in this area. At the national level, partners are convening under the RCCE platform to coordinate earthquake-related activities. An intervention tracker has been established with active mapping tools using GIS to reflect RCCE activities at subnational levels and differentiated approach used to address various needs. Furthermore, UNICEF is leading strategic activities catered to building resilience of children and their families affected by the earthquakes and strengthening partners' emergency preparedness as well as early recovery and resilience building following the humanitarian programme cycle.

External Media

On 22 March, to mark World Water Day and underscore the importance of providing all children in Syria access to clean and safe water, [new communication content](#) was published on the social media platforms. More social media content was also disseminated across the platforms to bolster efforts to mobilise resources to respond to the need of vulnerable children particularly in the earthquake affected areas across the country.

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¹³ All cluster coordinators costs are included into sectoral programme budgets

Summary of Programme Results

Sector Indicator	UNICEF and Implementing Partners Response		
	Target	Total Results	Change* ▲ ▼
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene			
Number of people accessing a sufficient quantity and quality of water for drinking and domestic needs	3,375,000	484,602 ¹⁴	▲ 84,596
Number of people accessing appropriate sanitation services	2,650,000	201,237 ¹⁵	▲ 63,732
Health			
Number of children and women accessing primary healthcare in UNICEF supported facilities	1,200,000	141,587 ¹⁶	▲ 13,794
Nutrition			
Number of children aged 6-59 months screened for wasting	433,000	122,434	▲ 5,237
Number of boys and girls (6-59 months) who received MNPs	371,250	69,195	-
Number of primary caregivers of children 0-23 months receiving IYCF counselling	339,000	93,287	-
Education			
Number of children accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning	305,000	101,975	▲ 18,145
Child Protection, GBVIE & PSEA			
Number of children, adolescents and caregivers accessing community based MHPSS	335,000	130,870 ¹⁷	▲ 85,717
Number of children provided with landmine or other explosive weapons prevention and/or survivor assistance interventions	545,000	13,511	▲ 442
Number of people with safe and accessible channels to report sexual exploitation and abuse by personnel who provide assistance to affected populations	3,750,000	30,783 ¹⁸	▲ 26,544
Social Protection & Cash Transfers			
Number of people reached with UNICEF-funded humanitarian cash transfers	333,000	69,029	▲ 2,418
Adolescents & Youth			
Number of adolescents and young people who participate in or lead civic engagement initiatives through UNICEF-supported programmes	10,000	1,741	-
Cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCCE and AAP)			
Number of people participating in engagement actions for social and behavioural change	105,410	59,357	▲ 6,154
Number of people reached through messaging on prevention and access to services	1,850,000	55,600 ¹⁹	▲ 16,795

*Change since last report

¹⁴ Rehabilitation work is ongoing. Beneficiary figures will increase significantly once this work is complete.

¹⁵ Rehabilitation work is ongoing. Beneficiary figures will increase significantly once this work is complete.

¹⁶ Data is still being processed and results are expected to increase in the next sitrep

¹⁷ Progress towards the MHPSS indicator was low in the previous reporting period because the calculation method of this indicator in the information management system did not include 'psychological first aid for children and parents and caregivers' and 'parenting support programme' activities. As of the current reporting period, these activities are now calculated towards this indicator

¹⁸ Current reporting includes those newly and directly reached to share information on safe, accessible reporting channels, but does not include indirect outreach or calculation of the population who already have access. This will be updated in the next report.

¹⁹ SBC achievement of the target for engagement is on track with almost 60 per cent achieved. However, for the reach indicator, the underachievement at 22 per cent has been due to only focusing on interpersonal communication inside the shelter – once social and mass media interventions start the reach estimates will double.

Annex B

Funding Status*

Section	Requirements (USD)	Funds received (USD)	Funding gap	
			USD	%
WASH	\$47,800,008	\$25,060,910	\$22,739,098	48%
Health	\$29,265,371	\$10,453,916	\$18,811,455	64%
Nutrition	\$18,361,542	\$4,733,953	\$13,627,589	74%
Education	\$31,300,000	\$13,449,085	\$17,850,915	57%
Child Protection, GBViE & PSEA	\$19,950,000	\$11,650,914	\$8,299,086	42%
Cash transfers and social protection	\$23,623,079	\$10,617,699	\$13,005,380	55%
Cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCCE, AAP, Evaluation, RO technical support)	\$2,400,000	\$215,130	\$2,184,870	91%
Being allocated		\$9,751,834**		
Total	\$172,700,000	\$85,933,441	\$86,766,559**	50%

* As defined in UNICEF Immediate Response Plan for Syria (Earthquake), 16 February 2023, for a period of three months.

** New flexible funds received over the past week which are still to be allocated to specific sectors; these funds are already considered within the overall funding gap.