Highlights

- In education, UNICEF learning materials and messages for ECD to Gr. 9 through radio, television and radio broadcasts, online and app-based learning has reached more than 3.4 million children and more than 1.2 million parents.
- The Government approved a top-up of the cash grants reaching 13 million child-recipients. The assistance will cover a period of six month, from May to October. UNICEF was among the stakeholders who advocated for the top-up.
- UNICEF is collaborating with the Medical Research Council on a study of the effects of COVID 19 on children with underlying medical conditions such as TB and HIV, not previously described in African settings.

Situation Overview

The number of cases continues to rise, with confirmed infections totaling over **12,000** as at 13th May 2020, including 325 among health workers. So far, a total of 219 deaths have been reported (case fatality rate of 1.8%). The Western Cape recorded the highest increase of confirmed cases, **6713**, over **50%** of total cases in South Africa. South Africa’s infection rate is expected to peak between August and September 2020, but the government has yet to share its projections with the public.

Since 1st May, the country transitioned to **Level 4** of the Risk-Adjusted Strategy for Economic Activity. Under Level 4, high restrictions remain in force with only essential services mainly operational. After nearly 7 weeks of the nationwide lockdown, there are growing calls to lift lockdown measures to safeguard livelihoods and the economy.

Major concerns include food crisis at household level as seen by long queues at food parcel distribution points. The financial ability of families, especially the self-employed and those in the informal sector, to buy food and access essential health and other social services is compromised. Protests linked to food crisis have been reported in the media as families struggle to meet daily food needs.

Loss of income has seen the COVID-19 relief scheme of the Unemployment Insurance Fund pay out R11-billion to 2 million employees. As of 12th May, **3 million** people had applied for a special grant to provide short term support for unemployed South Africans, the so-called COVID Relief Grant.
While maternal and child health services are essential services, major disruptions were still experienced due to lack of public transport as a result of the COVID-19 lockdown and misconceptions about the terms of the lockdown. There are reports from UNICEF staff on the frontline noting significant delays in caregivers seeking care for children; caregivers being turned away from health care facilities (due to misplaced caution for COVID-19 infection); routine essential child health services being withdrawn or scaled down; physical and human resources being diverted from services for children to support adult COVID-19 care; and widespread differences in how provinces, districts and individual facilities are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. There had been a substantive decline in childhood vaccination programmes. The risk of vaccine preventable disease outbreaks is great unless extra efforts are made in bridging the immunity gaps in metro municipalities where immunization coverage is already sub-optimal.

**Continuity of health services** remains a key priority. South Africa has the highest number of people living with HIV/AIDS globally at more than 7.5 million. A large proportion of these may be particularly vulnerable to severe forms of COVID-19. These include some 2.5 million who are HIV-positive but not on antiretroviral (ARV) drugs, many of the 1.5 million people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) who are aged 50 years or older, and an estimated 500,000 people with low CD4 counts. South Africa carries a disproportionate burden of tuberculosis (TB) per capita and is listed in all three categories of priority countries by the World Health Organization (TB, TB/HIV and RR-MDR-TB). The estimated number of incident TB cases in SA for 2018 was **301 000** while the estimated number of deaths due to TB in the same year was 63 000. According to a recent study by the South Africa National Infectious Disease Center, “the COVID-19 level 5 restrictions has resulted in a ~ 48% average weekly decrease in TB Xpert testing volumes while, the number of TB positive declined by 33%.” These unintended consequences will have a negative impact on efforts to control TB which remains the leading infectious disease cause of death in South Africa currently.

In education, the focus is shifting increasingly to the reopening of schools on a phased basis. About **3500** schools have been identified as being in immediate need of water and sanitation facilities, and DBE is working with the Department of Water and Sanitation to fast track availability of these basics.

**Coordination**

UNICEF is part of coordination mechanisms with Government and the UN. Within the UN, UNICEF participates in RC-led coordination meetings. To support national planning and response, UNICEF takes part in the following coordination mechanisms:

- In health, UNICEF continues to provide technical assistance to the Gauteng and the Free State Provincial Command Centres to respond to the COVID pandemic.
  - In Gauteng, the team, which includes UNICEF, conducted assessments in quarantine sites to identify if adequate Infection Prevention and Control measures were in place, ascertain challenges and report the outcomes to the Gauteng Command Council. This has led to positive changes in quarantine sites, such as hiring of more staff, introducing shift systems for staff and introduction of environmental health practitioners.
  - In Free State, UNICEF’s support focused on risk assessments of facilities to assess the potential risk of exposure to SARS-CoV-2 virus; the current control measures or absence thereof; and to inform the management of the risk of potential exposure to SARS-CoV-2 virus and additional controls that might be required.

- Coordination of the education sector response is under the auspices of the Education Sector COVID-19 Interim Steering Team with a Secretariat at the National Education Collaboration Trust. UNICEF supported coordination structures with technical and financial support and used this platform to influence key response decisions.
- WASH is coordinated by the COVID-19 Water & Sanitation National Command Centre. Through this mechanism, local municipalities under the direction of the Department of Water are providing informal settlements with hand washing with soap (HWWS) facilities. UNICEF is a member of the WASH Technical team which reports to the National Command Center.
- The One UN Gender Task Group which includes UNICEF has conducted a situation analysis on gender-based violence (GBV) responses and built a database of societal actors working on the GBV and child protection response. This will be used to map access to service points for women or children at risk. The Protection Working Group has agreed to develop a strategic plan for the work using all surveys on GBV and databases on GBV and child protection already developed.
- The UN Communication Group Crisis Team, on which UNICEF is an active member, meets twice weekly to craft and support joint messaging, outreach, visibility and advocacy efforts of the UN in South Africa to mitigate the effects of the pandemic.
Response

Education

1. In the lead up to the schools reopening:
   - UNICEF is supporting the production of child and user-friendly versions of key messages on COVID-19 and prevention measures.
   - We are working with the DBE on standard operating procedures for schools reopening, we are doing a visual, easy-to-use and read version for printing and distribution by the DBE.
   - Support has been secured from the LEGO Foundation for repurposing up to USD 1 million for immediate response to the continuity of learning entailing: radio and TC broadcasts, online and app-based approaches, messaging and direct outreach to children and parents through community radio stations, direct outreach to teachers, strengthening sector coordination mechanisms as well as curriculum trimming and infusion of play-based approaches. In addition, Proctor and Gamble has provided 160,000 sanitary pads for distribution to schools through our implementing partner once schools reopen.

2. With UNICEF technical and financial support, work is ongoing in the national steering committee to define, shape and influence the national response strategy and activities. Radio and TV broadcasts are continuing and are being monitored before the close of phase one (end of May 2020). Radio and TV broadcasts, online, app-based and direct social media have reached an estimated 3.4 million learners.

3. Active Learning@Home (a partnership programme between the DBE, UNICEF South Africa and the LEGO Foundation) provides parents with easy activities to keep children from Grade R to 9 learning and developing while not in school during the lockdown. The fifth in the series has been published and distributed. The series has been shared by the DBE on social media and recently received endorsement from the British Council that will offer support through the 2Enable platform. Further ECD materials for parents in the ‘Let’s play, learn and grow together’ were produced in May 2020. These resources have been accessed by over 370,000 parents and children to date.

4. Content for the foundation phase (Gr. R – 3) that was lacking was developed and uploaded.

5. Working with our partners, the Children’s Radio Foundation, COVID-19 messaging has reached over 1.3 million parents, with broadcasts continuing to the end of June 2020.

6. At government’s request, the UN is developing a country needs assessment to respond to COVID-19, with UNICEF leading the education sector. The needs assessment is using data mainly from secondary sources. Emergency and response needs point mainly to supporting continuation of home learning through online platforms and TV and radio. Recovery needs include provision of infrastructure, water and hygiene and protective equipment. The draft has been submitted and next steps include sourcing the budget needs and reviewing all comments.

Social Policy and Child Protection

1. Advocacy and awareness-raising: UNICEF and other stakeholders (civil society organisations, academic institutions, government officials and the corporate sector) successfully advocated for a top-up of the Child Support Grant (CSG) for the 13 million child recipients of this assistance. During the first week of May, all grant recipients received an extra R300 per child. The South African government and civil society participated in one regional and two global webinars organized by UNICEF, on Childline, child protection, and with the Global Social Welfare Alliance on strengthening the social welfare workforce.

2. Vulnerability assessment: UNICEF is leading the social and child protection vulnerability assessment for the UN (UNDP, OCHCR, UNHCR, IOM, UN Women, and ILO) following the request by the Minister of Social Development. This entails an analysis of the response by government and partners and recommendations on the way forward to avoid exclusion errors and address the plight of all marginalised populations such as migrants and refugees, poor children and unemployed persons. The recommendations will be addressed through various fora including in the Protection Working Group which consists of IOM, UNHCR and Department of Justice and Constitutional Development.

3. UNICEF Social Policy is preparing a national budget brief to analyse the implications of the implementation of the National Disaster Management Act vs the Public Finance Act on financing services for children in order to advise GoSA how to keep children at the center of budget decisions. Work is ongoing to prepare a training for Members of Parliament to empower their role in oversight on children’s rights and Public Finance Management.
4. **Capacity development:** In partnership with the South African Council for Social Service Professions, UNICEF launched a Child and Youth Care Response to the COVID-19 pandemic to enable children and their families to be served safely during this time. Negotiations are ongoing with partners on rolling out MHPSS (spell out, please) and GBV training to social service professionals.

5. UNICEF and partners have provided mental health and psychosocial support to 75 children and 135 adults, relief support to 5,000 persons and completed a vulnerability mapping in the context of the National Inter-Agency Working Group (NIAWG).

   - Violence against women and children remains a national concern, with the GBV Command Centres receiving an estimated 25,000 calls since lockdown, mainly related to emotional abuse and physical violence. UNICEF supports Childline to provide psychosocial support to children during the lockdown. From 1 – 12 May, 10,428 calls were received. For March 2020, 17,592 calls were received compared to 14,555 in March 2019.

   - Childline South Africa has joined 22 African countries to ensure effective delivery of child protection services by adopting the harmonized ‘116’ number as from July 2020, making it easy for children moving across borders.

   - The President launched the National Strategic Plan to end GBV and Femicide, including Violence against Children, and has established a permanent committee on GBV and Femicide in the Presidency. UNICEF provides support through the One UN Gender Task Group to implement the NSP and conduct an ongoing situation analysis. As the levels of violence against women and children are at pandemic scale in SA, there is urgent need to scale up violence prevention & C4D activities and ensure solid referral pathways for victims of violence and abuse especially during lockdown.

**Health and Nutrition**

1. Massive screening by community health workers, nurses and doctors was conducted leading to a cumulative 9 million people screened 386,352 corona virus tests. The University of the Western Cape (UWC) and Stellenbosch University (SU) isolated South Africa’s first laboratory culture of SARS-CoV-2, a first in Africa. This opens doors for research such as experimentation on the live virus and observation on how the virus behaves in the lab.

2. UNICEF South Africa participates in the National Department of Health continuity of services Technical Working Group. We provided technical support on pregnancy screening, and screening and monitoring of nutritional status for children at community level using Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) to ensure that pregnant women and undernourished children are identified and referred for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH) and nutrition services during the pandemic.

3. To avoid fragmented responses by stakeholders due gaps in communication and coordination, we are supporting the NDOH to coordinate government and partners’ responses on maternal and child nutrition to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the nutritional status of the most vulnerable populations.

4. UNICEF, in collaboration with our partner Mothers2Mothers, is supporting a Virtual Mentor Mother Model to Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 by providing education and sharing life-saving information on the virus through mobile communication channels. The virtual support enabled peer mentors to discuss education on COVID-19, adherence support, clinic appointments and hygiene practices. As part of the essential services workforce, peer mentors are able to pre-screen their own clients on COVID-19 during routine interactions and provide them with information on prevention and transmission of the virus. They also continually educate their clients on safety and hygiene practices especially at home.

5. UNICEF is collaborating with the South African Medical Research Council (MRC) in a study examining the manifestation/expression of COVID-19 amongst children with chronic illnesses such as HIV and TB. The study will examine, among other things, the natural course of the disease for children hospitalized for COVID1-19. The characteristics of children with COVID-19 have not yet been described in African settings where HIV and/or TB prevalence is high. This study is expected to address a gap in knowledge gap of the experience of this vulnerable population.

6. UNICEF South Africa is providing technical assistance to the National Department of Health to develop a nutrition response plan to address child nutrition in the context of COVID-19 during and post-lockdown. The plan will be a blueprint for stakeholders, partners and provincial departments of health to implement their nutrition responses.
WASH
UNICEF continues to receive requests from high-risk locations from municipalities in six Provinces (GAU, NC, EC, KZN, FS, WC) for additional hand washing capacity to be installed through the hand washing with soap (HWWS) stations. Priority areas are currently being targeted and 19 units have been installed. Social distancing measures have been implemented at the units to encourage people to avoid crowding when queueing.

As part of a Joint UN response in South Africa, UN Agencies and the South African Government are developing an Emergency Needs Assessment. UNICEF is the lead agency on WASH. The assessment will focus on the state of the water sector before COVID-19, the impact that COVID-19 has and the emergency and recovery needs.

Implementation status of HWWS stations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Completed</th>
<th>Planned</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Cape</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free State</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gauteng</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Cape</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Communication, Communication for Development (C4D), Community Engagement & Accountability

Communication

1. The #Love2Learn campaign with TikTok resulted in over 20 million views, 433,676 ‘likes’ and 10,096 comments (engagement ratio of 9%). There were seven media engagements including two television interviews with UNICEF advocate Maps Maponyane, and a youth community radio interview in isiZulu with UNICEF volunteer, Neliswa Mbuyazi

2. SACO has successfully fundraised, through the Pledge programme, for the construction of 12 group handwashing stations in schools for children in under-resourced communities. Since the lockdown prevents children from being at school, we are helping to install handwashing stations in informal settlements. The ASU produced a video on this SACO-led initiative.

3. Working with Child Protection, the section supported the production of five podcasts titled “Children at Heart” which highlight life under COVID-19.

4. Our social media accounts are very active; Facebook engagements increased nearly 23-fold in April and we gained 16,000 more fans. This period focused on refugee and migrant children, International Child and Youth Care Week and progress with the building of handwashing stations. Posts also featured the donation by Proctor & Gamble, and Angelique Kidjo’s re-worked Pata Pata music video, in support of ESARO’s initiative.

5. The new UNICEF website has attracted the second highest ever number of users in April, more than double that of March. In total, 164 countries accessed the site, from an average of 131 countries in the first quarter. Referrals from our social media accounts have rocketed from only 69 in March to 2661 in April, mainly from Facebook.

6. A short video for the Executive Board featuring a mother receiving her Child Support Grant is being finalized by the section. In addition, photography assignments are underway with our partners, the National Association of Child Care Workers and Mothers2Mothers (M2M), on our joint support to children and adolescent mothers during COVID-19.

C4D

1. The WASH/RCCE rapid assessment is being designed to understand access to WASH, handwashing and key COVID 19 prevention practices in communities under consideration for the installation of handwashing stations. The ESARO SBC/ C4D country support team is assisting to strengthen survey tools and methodology for the Needs Assessments which are part of UN led assessments.
2. With our partner, the Children’s Radio Foundation (CRF), we developed a dipstick rapid WASH/RCCE assessment which was circulated to youth reporters from 18 community radio stations. ‘Handwashing at key moments’ was integrated into the CRF’s subsequent weekly fact sheet and online engagement platform. Responses will help inform the RCCE community engagement process.

3. RCCE coordination and alignment was strengthened:
   - **Internally** through U-Report polls on the rapid assessment; with Education on handwashing programmes in schools and the partnership with the CRF; and with Child Protection on integrating GBV VAC content in the WASH/RCCE community level interventions.
   - **Externally** with USAID support, by establishing a relationship with the Centre for Communication Impact (CCI), which sits on the National Department of Health’s National Technical RCCE Working Group. As a result, UNICEF will join CCI-led forums for RCCE partner coordination with
   - CDC, USAID and IFRC (among others): leverage CCI’s work with 55 community radio stations to support RCCE/WASH community level interventions; leverage our advocacy, media and social media platforms to advance the national RCCE agenda.

### Funding Overview and Partnerships

1. The Pledge campaign ‘Little Hands Matter’ was finalized, raising R272,000. A new campaign was launched on 11 May, ‘Care kits for vulnerable families’, providing hygiene kits, including a bucket with a tap attached, soap, sanitizer, masks and bleach.

2. We facilitated a virtual UNICEF CEO (Business) Network meeting on Friday 15th May to discuss the COVID-19 response. In total, 49 people from companies such as Discovery Vitality, Woolworths, PWC, MTN, P&G, Shoprite, Johnson & Johnson and Standard Bank attended the meeting.

3. We are facilitating discussions between UNICEF Ambassador Jo-Ann Strauss and the Lego Foundation on a campaign Lego Foundation Global is running to support UNICEF’s global HAC appeal.

4. Discussions are underway with UNICEF Ambassador Gavin Rajah’s “white light movement” non-profit company which trains women who have been victims of gender-based violence and mothers of children that are sexually abused to produce masks. We are exploring the potential of UNICEF’s pledge campaign, the CEO network members, and UN/UNICEF to purchase the produced masks.

### Challenges

- The fast pace of change due to the evolving epidemic impact of planning scenarios and necessitates frequent review of COVID 19 interventions. The initial UNICEF SACO COVID plan developed in March has been overtaken by events due to ongoing lockdown restrictions. Consequently, some of the activities planned during phase 1 (disaster phase) have to be adjusted or dropped as attention shifts to phase 2 of the epidemic (post-disaster or post lock down phase).

- In education, resource limitations and ineffective coordination remain key barriers. Fundraising efforts continue, including negotiating re-purposing of existing grants.

- Limited funds for child protection are hindering scale up of the response on the ground. There is an urgent need for more financial resources for social and child protection as hunger, violence and abuse against children intensifies.

- Shortage of Govt health supplies and pipeline for PPE for front line health workers.

### Who to contact for further information

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## Summary of Programme Results, UNICEF South Africa, May 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Target to 31 Dec 2020</th>
<th>Results as of 13 May 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of children – and parents - supported with distance/home-based learning [ECD, Primary, Secondary Ed]</td>
<td>7,200,000</td>
<td>2,550,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Policy and Child Protection</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children, parents and primary caregivers provided with community- based mental health and psychosocial support</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>15,428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of UNICEF personnel &amp; partners that have completed training on GBV risk mitigation &amp; referrals for survivors, including for PSEA</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of households (affected by COVID-19) receiving humanitarian multi-sector cash grant for basic needs</td>
<td>13,000,000</td>
<td>13,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health, Nutrition and WASH</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of people reached with critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items) and services</td>
<td>2,500,000</td>
<td>9,500(^2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children &amp; women receiving essential healthcare services, including immunization, prenatal, postnatal, HIV &amp; GBV care in UNICEF supported facilities (National and monthly)</td>
<td>Monthly: 171,858</td>
<td>As of March 2020: 179,915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(80,252 children and 91,606 women)</td>
<td>(85,047 children and 94,868 women)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of primary caregivers of children aged 0-23 months who received IYCF counselling through facilities and community platforms (through UNICEF supported Adolescent Girls and Young Women peer mentors project)</td>
<td>Monthly: 5,774</td>
<td>TBD/C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risk Communication</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of people reached on COVID-19 through messaging on prevention and access to services</td>
<td>7,000,000</td>
<td>5,100,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of people engaged on COVID-19 through RCCE actions</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>20,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of people sharing their concerns and asking questions/clarifications for available support services to address their needs through established feedback mechanisms</td>
<td>800,000</td>
<td>25,314</td>
</tr>
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### Annex B

**Funding Status, UNICEF South Africa, May 2020**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Requirements (US$)</th>
<th>Received and Reprogrammed$</th>
<th>Funding gap from HAC</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>HAC</td>
<td>Regular Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health and WASH</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Policy and Child Protection</td>
<td>1,550,000</td>
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<td>Education</td>
<td>5,090,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data collection and analysis of disease and secondary impact on women and children</td>
<td>60,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication for Development</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>150,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,000,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,000,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,000,000</strong></td>
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