



Tholisu Primary Grade 5 learners, KZN, read in class as part of the European Union supported REALS SA programme responding to the impact of COVID-19 on educations. ©UNICEF/2022/Moultrie

January – December 2022

Highlights

- UNICEF scaled up its COVID-19 vaccination roll-out response through technical cold chain support to the National and Provincial Departments of Health, as well as risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) work, reaching about 12.8 million people with lifesaving information about COVID-19 vaccinations and child health services. The country reached 50 per cent COVID-19 vaccine coverage among the adult population by June.
- Emergency education and early childhood development programmes provided about 470,000 children with improved access to quality education services to mitigate the long-term impact of COVID-19 learning disruptions and the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province floods in April 2022.
- Multi-purpose cash grants for 725 families and WASH programming were activated to alleviate the impact of the KZN floods on vulnerable households, while broader psychosocial support helped improve the mental wellbeing of about 230,250 children.

UNICEF Response and Funding Status

- In 2022, UNICEF received generous support for its COVID-19 response, including funds from the Governments of Germany and Japan to strengthen cold chain vaccine management and RCCE related work.
- European Union funds supported education recovery work following more than two years of learning disruptions and resources from Proctor and Gamble enabled the completion of school reconstruction following unrest the previous year.
- European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) generously contributed to UNICEF’s KZN flood response through multi-purpose cash and WASH related work and the Cotton On Foundation also provided resources.
- UNICEF expresses its sincere gratitude to all public and private donors for the contributions received to enable its emergency related response in 2022.

South Africa

Humanitarian Situation Report

for every child

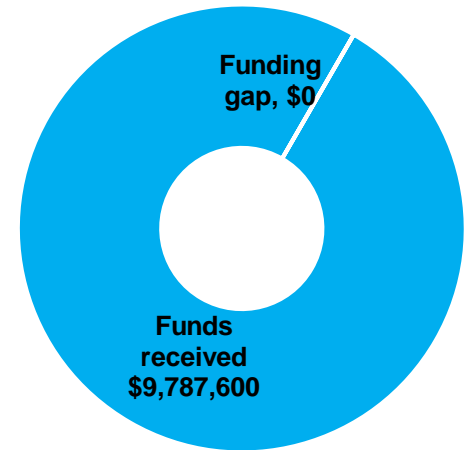
Situation in Numbers

- 4,800,000** children in need living below the poverty line
- 14,000,000** people in need living below the poverty line
- 1,700,000** children to be reached
- 5,000,000** people to be reached

UNICEF Funding Requirement

US\$ 3,800,000

Funding Status (US\$)



Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

South Africa has recorded 4 million COVID-19 cases and 102,000 deaths since the onset of the pandemic. In late May, the South African Government reported that the country had reached 50 per cent COVID-19 vaccination coverage of the adult population. Despite significant efforts, the COVID-19 vaccination rate appears to have plateaued, while the National Department of Health (NDoH) announced the end of remaining COVID-19 restrictions in late June.

The health and wellbeing of children remains at risk as the pandemic has been unfolding alongside a deepening energy crisis and now the fall out of the war in Ukraine, including food security issues and rising food prices. Half of households struggle to meet basic food needs and are vulnerable to malnutrition and negative long-term health and educational effects. A measles outbreak was declared in late 2022, as immunization rates in some areas failed to reach the 95 per cent coverage needed to stop community transmission, in part as a result of reduced vaccination rates due to COVID-19.

Education disruptions as a result of COVID-19 Pandemic have resulted in learners being around 75 per cent of a school year behind where they would otherwise have been. The mental wellbeing of young people has been seriously impacted by the pandemic amid an overriding sense of a future with fewer opportunities and hope. Based on 114,857 U-reporters 72 per cent (6,042) of young people reported feeling depressive symptoms since the onset of the pandemic. The impact of COVID-19 has led to increased levels of poverty, with higher number of children dropping out of school. As a result, South Africa experienced an increase in gender-based violence and poor access to contraceptives and termination of pregnancies which has led to a surge in pregnancies among young girls, aged between 10 and 19 years, from 130,000 in 2017-2018 to an estimated 160,200 in 2021 to 2022.

The KZN flooding in April killed at least 435 people and more than 17,00 people were directly affected. The cost of damage was an estimate ZAR 7 billion (US\$ 400 million) with more than 31,200 jobs affected, the majority in eThekweni district, Durban. The KZN floods hit on the back off the previous years unrest that affected many of the same districts in KZN province.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

Health

UNICEF focused on identifying gaps in and strengthening the national immunization system, to support COVID-19 and routine immunization work. Through technical support, this included an analysis of zero dose children and the reasons of vaccine stock out. The development of a 'reach every district strategy', as well as a national cold chain manual, and effective vaccine management training materials. In addition, over 6000 frontline health workers were trained, coached, and mentored on the new content.

New cold chain equipment was procured and the emergency response to the measles outbreak was supported in late 2022, as well as polio outbreak preparedness, which benefited more than 3,000 health workers.

UNICEF also supported the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) and the National Department of Health (NDOH) in convening country action planning meetings and updating the prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) guidelines to reduce stigma and prioritize children. More than 30,000 adolescent girls and young women and children accessed a peer mentor programme that resulted in a threefold increase in HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis initiation. Around 2 million adolescents were also reached through multimedia activities improving knowledge and skills on sexual and reproductive health, preventing and addressing harmful practices, and gender and social norms that drive violence against children and gender-based violence.

Nutrition

The COVID-19 pandemic, war in Ukraine and climate shocks have all impacted food security and child nutrition. In response, UNICEF trained 92 community health workers to accurately measure Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC). The health workers in-turn screened under five-year old children in 1,850 households and referred those who needed additional care in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal provinces.

UNICEF provided technical support for National Nutrition Week campaign, printing and distributing 179,400 infographics across all 9 provinces that highlighted the importance of a nutritious diet for overall wellbeing. In-person training was also provided to 339 UNICEF Volunteers on youth advocacy for nutrition and mental health to upskill and empower youth to raise awareness and prevent non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

UNICEF also supported the development of a 'Provincial Food and Nutrition Security Plan' to tackle food insecurity and malnutrition across two provinces, namely, KwaZulu-Natal and North West. UNICEF-led advocacy helped to ensure that evidence-based child nutrition interventions were included and prioritized in the plans and supported the establishment of a 'Food and Nutrition Security Council' to be chaired by the Deputy President.

Child Protection

UNICEF responded to the impact of COVID-19 and KZN floods on the protection of children, including high levels of violence against children. In partnership with the Department of Social Development, UNICEF monitored, identified and assisted 725 families affected by the KZN floods through a multi-purpose cash grant. Investments, through programming, advocacy, and capacity building in psychosocial support saw 230,250 children provided with mental health and psychosocial support while 33,000 children received further assistance through referral pathways. In addition, around 1,200 youth, women, and men were provided training on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) guidelines and approaches, including clear guidance on existing prevention of sexual exploitation referral pathways.

Child Protection also worked to promote social cohesion, including tackling and responding to incidents of xenophobia. This work included engaging in peace-building efforts with religious and community leaders through the Faith-based Child Protection Movement, Action for Conflict Transformation, and Refugee Social Services to promote social cohesion and help communities build safety networks.

Education

UNICEF provided early learning and emergency education support to around 470,000 children. This included supporting 39,500 parents through distance and home-based learning, as well as at early learning programs and in schools. Access to Early Childhood Development (ECD) centers for children under 4 years dropped to 24.2 per cent in 2020 but has recovered to 28.5 per cent. UNICEF reached 85,500 children up to 6 years old through the 'Tshwaragano Ka Bana' programme for parents and primary caregivers to support early learning at home. The Reading and Leadership Strengthening in South African Schools (REALS-SA) work with the European Union resulted in the distribution of 211,200 textbooks and 194,130 storybooks, improving literacy and reading skills for 292,500 learners in KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, and Eastern Cape. The refurbishment of 5 schools damaged by the 2021 unrest was finalized and improved learning facilities for 4,380 learners in KwaZulu-Natal.

As part of the KZN flood emergency response, an Information Communications Technology (ICT) needs analysis was conducted in 5 schools, with 1,016 School Management Team members being trained. At least 1,184 educators in 120 schools were reached through the provision of learning and teaching support materials. A total of 16,500 story books in isiZulu for Grades 1, 2 and 3 were selected, procured, and distributed to 91 primary schools with an additional 36,400 books provided to individual children. In response to the flood devastation in KZN, UNICEF advocated with the Department of Basic Education to ensure that information on the impact on ECD programmes and schools was included as part of the assessment. UNICEF contributed 582 textbooks to 16 affected schools and worked with partners to provide play-materials for the early learning and development of 600 young children through their parents in temporary shelters, as well as at ECD programmes who lost educational resources. The Care and Support in Teaching and Learning pillar included the construction of 29 handwashing stations in 26 schools benefitting 12,052 learners.

WASH

In 2022 UNICEF partnered with several government departments and other water sector partners to provide critical WASH supplies to tackle Covid in schools across Eastern Cape, Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, Northwest, and Gauteng provinces. The partnerships continued to further address the needs of people in Ethekwini and Ilembe districts shelters, due to KZN April floods. Through Covid and KZN Flood response interventions, a total of **144,316** persons were reached – where water storage tanks and handwashing stations were installed and mobile toilets, waste bins, water urns and hygiene supplies were distributed. The

sanitary towels were also distributed to women and adolescent girls to cater for their menstrual and hygiene needs. Feedback on the service provided through an end-user monitoring assessment in eight temporary shelters was positive, though challenges such as ensuring the regular re-filling of tanks need to be overcome for future work. In response to increasing climate shocks, 'The Climate Landscape Analysis for Children' (CLAC) was launched, focusing on the integration of education, child protection, and social protection perspectives.

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

In 2022, RCCE and SBC related work focused on intensifying the government's efforts in rolling out the COVID-19 vaccine and providing a more integrated health response after two years of disruptions. Around 12.8 million people were reached with lifesaving information about COVID-19 vaccinations and broader child health services, with a focus on the 13 districts with the lowest vaccination coverage. More than 55,000 people participated in RCCE activities, and 26 national NGOs and community-based organizations received training and guidance to improve their SBC programming capacity. This work included incorporating behaviour change approaches and principles within ECD centers, child-care networks, and on community radio.

The "Covered, Clean and Caring" programme for schools and centers for orphan and vulnerable children was expanded to include COVID-19 vaccinations for learners over 12-years reaching 124 sites country-wide. UNICEF also expanded its reach to engage digitally excluded young people with information and services. Through 24 community radio stations, 22 solar-powered film screening kits and trained facilitators, communities hosted dialogues and created new narratives around topics such as mental health, vaccination, and violence.

External Communication

UNICEF's profile as an authoritative voice and trusted source of information grew in 2022 through 250 media engagements, with many focusing on COVID-19 related impacts on child rights and wellbeing. National media engagement supported advocacy and fundraising efforts, while regional and community media coverage helped to engage youth, spread vital information and to showcase UNICEF's community impact. Multimedia and social media content focussed on powerful first-hand storytelling to communicate emergency related challenges but also a narrative of hope as the country continues its recovery from the pandemic. UNICEF also worked with the UN Communications Group, including on the KZN flood response and related media coverage. UNICEF Volunteers continued to advocate for and to provide information on COVID-19 vaccinations, whilst also engaging on issues exacerbated by the pandemic, such as mental health. UNICEF social media presence became source of information for journalists, who referenced posts in interviews and articles.

Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

UNICEF has played a lead role in the RCCE Technical Working Group on the COVID-19 response. This includes engaging with the Department of Health at a National and Provincial level to influence and support the scale-up of the response. As a result, UNICEF was well positioned as the National Department of Health set up related but new structures in response to the measles outbreak in late 2022.

During the KZN flood, the President declared a National State of Emergency to ensure a coordinated response across all departments. UNICEF, within the framework of United Nations, and in collaboration with its line Departments in Government and local partners on the ground, provided much needed support for the most vulnerable children, as well as coordinating, assessing, and monitoring impact, including the distribution of food and non-food essential items, multi-purpose cash, learning and play materials, water, sanitation, hygiene, and mental health and psychosocial support.

Human Interest Stories and External Media

Media: The following press releases were accompanied by significant media coverage on broadcast, print and online channels. The COVID-19 advocacy focus was to support the National Department of Health's 70 per cent vaccination target of all adults. Broader child rights advocacy focused on tackling high rates of violence against children, improving mental wellbeing and good nutrition outcomes. Funding for emergency related work was brought in thanks to the private sector, such as Cotton On, as well as generous resources from the Governments of Germany, Japan, UK, and the European Union.

- [UNICEF welcomes 50% COVID vaccination coverage in South Africa](#)

- [Measles outbreak hits four provinces and threatens the health of children across South Africa](#)
- [Government of Japan enhances support to vaccine cold chain management in the Eastern Cape](#)
- [Number of COVID-19 orphans nears 150,000 in South Africa](#)
- [European Union contributes EUROS 200,000 to UNICEF's ongoing response for children affected by KZN floods](#)
- [Germany contributes US\\$4.9 million to bolster UNICEF's support to COVID-19 vaccination roll out in South Africa](#)

Multimedia Content

- [Action! Behind the scenes of the Zwakala COVID-19 campaign](#)
- [Over 1,000 children affected by April floods receive play and learning materials](#)
- [Vaccine cold chain storage capacity strengthened](#)

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Annex A: Summary of Programme Results

	Cluster/Sector Response	
Sector Indicators	2022 Target	Total Results Jan – Dec 2022
Education		
Number of schools implementing safe school protocols (COVID-19 prevention and control)	26,000	Discontinued ¹
Child Protection		
Number of children without parental or family care provided with appropriate alternative care arrangements	3,000	3,759
Number of children, parents and primary caregivers provided with community based mental health and psychosocial support	100,000	105,458
Number of UNICEF personnel & partners that have completed training on GBV risk mitigation & referrals for survivors	500	781
Number of children and adults that have access to a safe and accessible channel to report sexual exploitation and abuse	500,000	290,000
WASH		
Number of people reached with critical wash supplies (including hygiene items) and services	100,000	144,316
Health and Nutrition		
Number of children 6 to 59 months admitted for treatment of severe acute malnutrition (SAM)	11,000	5,090
RCCE		
Number of people reached on COVID-19 through messaging on prevention and access to services	5,000,000	12,800,000
Number of people who participate in COVID-19/RCCE/SBC engagement	500,000	55,000

¹ UNICEF aligned with the government response mechanisms to ensure consideration toward the short-term and the recovery and development phases including on lifting of some of the COVID-19 control measures. With the lifting of necessitation of preventative measures by June 2022, this activity discontinued.

Annex B: Funding

Sector	Funding Requirements (USD)	Humanitarian resources received in 2022 (USD)	Funding gap	
			\$	%
Health & Nutrition	810,000	7,794,390*	0	0%
WASH	610,000	583,200	26,800	4%
Education	560,000	151,402	408,598	73%
Child Protection	860,000	258,768	651,232	76%
RCCE	960,000	1,000,000	0	0%
Total	3,800,000	9,787,760	1,086,630	0%

*Generous funding received from the Governments of Germany and Japan in response to the COVID-19 vaccination roll-out are also strengthening health systems more broadly. This includes cold chain management and broader vaccination system strengthening that in-turn builds capacity and supports routine immunization coverage for children.