



On 20 February 2023, adolescent girls participate in a life-skills building session through a UNICEF-supported child protection mobile team in a shelter in Aleppo city, as part of the earthquake response.

Reporting Period: 1 January to 31 December 2023

# Whole of Syria

## Humanitarian Situation Report January – December 2023



### Situation in Numbers

**7,000,000**  
Children in need of humanitarian assistance

**15,300,000**  
People in need

**5,300,000**  
Internally displaced persons

**2,730,000**  
Children in difficult to access areas

(Source: OCHA, Syria Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023)

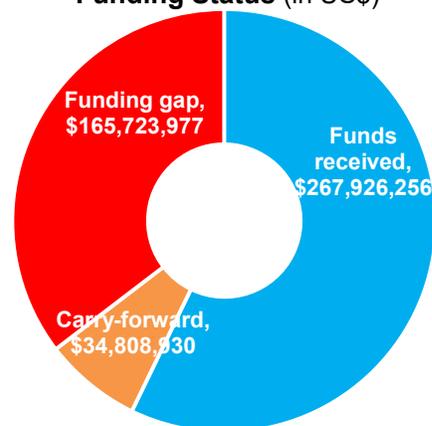
- Together with partners, UNICEF reached over 15.8 million people during 2023,<sup>1</sup> including 10 million children, 8.6 million women and girls and 262,563 people and children with disabilities. Families in the most severely affected and inaccessible areas were prioritized, with 181,079 people reached in difficult to access areas and 4.3 million in moderately accessible areas.
- The earthquakes that hit Syria in early February 2023 affected more than 8.8 million people within a context where close to 70 per cent of the population already required humanitarian assistance. UNICEF and its implementing partners reached around 5.8 million people in earthquake-affected areas with assistance, including 3.2 million children, 4.8 million women and girls, and 163,000 people and children with disabilities, including 84,659 women and girls with disabilities.
- Since the onset of the cholera outbreak declared in September 2022, 221,836 suspected cases have been reported. Camp populations with limited access to clean drinking water remain particularly vulnerable to the disease. In 2023, UNICEF supported two oral cholera vaccine campaigns in northwest (NW) Syria for nearly 1.6 million and 1.1 million children respectively.
- In 2023, UNICEF required US\$468.5 million to provide lifesaving assistance to 7.8 million people, including 5 million children, across Syria according to the Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) appeal.

### UNICEF Response and Funding Status

Health	Health care access	133%
	Funding status	49%
Nutrition	SAM Admissions	54%
	Funding status	73%
CP	Psychosocial support	114%
	Funding status	71%
Edu	Formal education access	88%
	Funding status	62%
WASH	Safe water access	84%
	Funding status	74%
SP	Cash transfer	71%
	Funding status	48%
ADAP	Employability skills	105%
	Funding status	27%
SBC	Engagement activities	111%
	Funding status	375%

### UNICEF Appeal: \$468.5 million

#### Funding Status (in US\$)



<sup>1</sup> UNICEF successfully reached beneficiaries beyond those in need of humanitarian assistance through specific interventions, such as raising awareness for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) across the country.

## FUNDING OVERVIEW AND PARTNERSHIPS

In 2023, UNICEF required US\$468.5 million to provide lifesaving assistance to 7.8 million people, including 5 million children, across Syria according to the HAC appeal.<sup>2</sup> Of the total funding requirements, US\$302.7 million have been made available, leaving a gap of US\$165.7 million (35 per cent). UNICEF expresses its sincere gratitude to partners who have provided support towards its humanitarian response in Syria this year, including the governments of Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UAE, and the United States, as well as GAVI, GPE, ECHO, KS Relief, and the Syria Humanitarian Fund; and extends special thanks in addition to the governments of Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom, UNICEF national committees as well as private sector partners for contributing flexible resources.

UNICEF continued to lead the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Education, Nutrition Clusters/Sectors, and the Child Protection Area of Responsibility (AoR) as well as the Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) Group and Risk Education Working Group. Furthermore, UNICEF also co-leads, together with the World Vision International, the No Lost Generation Initiative, bringing together 39 UN and NGO partners to advocate for the protection, education and development of children, adolescents and young people in Syria, under the umbrella of the Syria Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan.

## SITUATION OVERVIEW AND HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

Children in Syria are experiencing the impact of nearly 13 years of sustained conflict, continued displacements, unprecedented economic crisis, climate-related shocks, and disease outbreaks. As a result, 15.3 million people require humanitarian assistance,<sup>3</sup> including 7 million children,<sup>4</sup> 7.7 million women and girls, and 2.6 million people and children with disabilities.<sup>5</sup> Of the country's 6.8 million internally displaced people (IDPs), 5.3 million need humanitarian support, accounting for 35 per cent of the humanitarian needs, with over half of the displaced people living in NW Syria.<sup>6</sup>

**Earthquake:** When the deadly earthquakes struck, approximately 5,900 people, including children, in Syria, were killed and more than 12,800 injured.<sup>7</sup> An estimated 8.8 million people were affected, including 3.7 million children,<sup>8</sup> the majority of whom urgently needed food, water, shelter, and emergency medical and psychosocial assistance. The infrastructure already weakened by the conflict was severely damaged and the damages and losses, caused by the earthquakes, were estimated at a total value of US\$9 billion.<sup>9</sup>

**Socio-economic situation:** Eighty-five per cent of households struggle to make ends meet and seven in ten families in Syria are food insecure.<sup>10</sup> The cost of the food basket stood at SYP 915,503<sup>11</sup> in December 2023, more than doubling compared to the previous calendar year. It represented five times the value of the minimum wage, pegged at SYP 185,940.<sup>12</sup> In the parallel market, the SYP continued to lose its value against the US dollar (reaching SYP 14,343 in December 2023), losing nearly 60 per cent of its value in 2023, and 75 per cent over two years.<sup>13</sup> The World Bank projects economic growth to reduce by two percentage points as a result of the earthquakes.<sup>14</sup>

**Cholera:** Since the beginning of the cholera outbreak on 25 August 2022 and as of 31 October 2023, a total of 221,836 cumulative cases have been reported across all 14 governorates of Syria, with a cumulative death count of 1,051 and the latest cholera-related death being reported in July 2023.<sup>15</sup> The outbreak is associated with the large-scale destruction of water and sanitation infrastructure, the economic crisis, electricity outages, prolonged drought, and the limited knowledge of effective cholera preventive behaviour and practices. Only 54 per cent of the population in Syria has access to an

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<sup>2</sup> UNICEF Syria, Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) 2023 Revision 1, June 2023.

<sup>3</sup> The total number of people in need of humanitarian assistance includes 11.2 million people with severe needs, 4 million people with extreme needs and 100,000 people with catastrophic needs. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023.

<sup>4</sup> The total number of children in need includes 3.2 million girls and 2.73 million children in difficult-to-access areas. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Whole of Syria Humanitarian Situation Report January – June 2023, UNICEF, August 2023.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023.

<sup>6</sup> The displaced people account for 65 per cent of the total population in NW Syria.

<sup>7</sup> Syria Earthquake Recovery Needs Assessment (SERNA), 2023

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023.

<sup>11</sup> The standard WFP food basket is a group of essential food commodities. In Syria, the food basket is set at a group of dry goods providing 2,060 kcal a day for a family of five during a month. The basket includes 37 kg bread, 19 kg rice, 19 kg lentils, 5 kg of sugar, and 7 liters of vegetable oil.

<sup>12</sup> World Food Programme (WFP), Syria Market Price Watch Bulletin, December 2023.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> World Bank, Syria Earthquake 2023 Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment, 18 March 2023.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

improved water source,<sup>16</sup> forcing families to revert to unsafe and often expensive alternative water sources to meet or complement their water needs.

**NW Syria:** Following the earthquakes and the need to increase humanitarian aid to NW Syria, two additional border points were opened for transshipments for three months in February and then extended until August 2023. As a result, UN staff have been able to conduct one-day missions into NW Syria, visiting the most affected areas, supporting people impacted by the earthquakes, and engaging with partners. UNICEF completed 44 cross-border missions to accelerate its lifesaving interventions in the areas of health, nutrition, WASH, education, and child protection, and sent 349 trucks with lifesaving supplies to NW Syria through the crossing points of Bab Al Hawa and Bab Al Salam. UNICEF also conducted technical capacity-building activities for implementing partners.

**Al-Hol and Roj camps:** Approximately 45,000 people are living in Al-Hol and Roj camps, nearly 60 per cent of whom are children. Of the total camp populations, nearly half are Iraqi, approximately 35 per cent are Syrian, and the remainder are from roughly 60 other countries. UNICEF continued its integrated health and nutrition, education, WASH, child protection (including support for the care and protection of unaccompanied children), adolescent development, and participation (ADAP) and social behaviour change (SBC) programming in Al-Hol. Independent third-party monitoring continued to check the quality of programming, including from community perspectives, despite the unstable security situation.

**Alouk water station:** Alouk water station was out of service for most of the first six months of 2023. In February 2023, an assessment mission was conducted involving UNICEF and five other UN organizations. Following the mission, UNICEF provided technical support to operate the Alouk station and it operated intermittently in the third quarter of 2023. However, due to damages in the feeding power plant, the water station has been non-functional since the beginning of October 2023. Consequently, and despite ongoing advocacy, 610,000 people in Hasakeh city and surrounding areas have been deprived of safe drinking water due to these interruptions, forcing people to rely on water trucking and other highly costly, and sometimes unsafe alternative water sources.

**Gaza conflict:** The humanitarian situation in the State of Palestine continues to deteriorate, with significant humanitarian needs and large-scale internal displacement across the Gaza Strip. The situation in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and South Lebanon, remains tense. The escalating conflict is having a regional impact and casting its shadow on the Syrian context. This escalation has increased security risks for humanitarian actors. In this context, as part of regional preparedness efforts, UNICEF developed a contingency response plan to ensure a minimum readiness to respond in the event of an escalation of the Gaza conflict with severe implications on the Syrian context.

## SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF PROGRAMME RESPONSE

### 1. Health Programme

In 2023, an estimated 6.8 million children were in dire need of lifesaving health assistance.<sup>17</sup> Only 59 per cent of hospitals, 57 per cent of primary health care facilities, and 63 per cent of specialized centres are fully functioning.<sup>18</sup> The impact of disease outbreaks, the earthquakes, and the economic crisis put further pressure on the already fragile health system. Of the 3,249 UNICEF programme participants interviewed as part of the Child Well-Being Monitoring exercise conducted in the second half of 2023, 24 per cent could not afford health care for their children when they needed it.

In 2023, UNICEF and partners, including the Ministry of Health (MoH) supported 6.3 million people in need, including 840,751 people in the earthquake-affected areas, with health services and supplies. UNICEF and its partners provided 3,255,294 **free health care consultations**. Of these consultations, 1,214,364 were in NW Syria. Health interventions were rapidly scaled up through re-deploying mobile health teams to earthquake-affected areas.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, 4,718,312 people (2,617,593 women and girls, and 17,312 people and children with disabilities) were reached with **health promotion messages** through different platforms, including 3,208,069 people reached in NW Syria.

An estimated 506,405 children (251,535 girls) received their third dose of DTP3 vaccine and the **immunization** coverage for children under one increased to 80 per cent in 2023 compared to 68 per cent in 2022. UNICEF and World Health Organization (WHO) supported the MoH with a routine vaccination campaign and during it, 2,186,355 children were vaccinated (1,090,219 girls). UNICEF identified zero-dose children in the high-risk districts, reaching 506,405 children (251,535 girls) with the first DPT vaccine, reducing the percentage of zero-dose children to 20 per cent in 2023. Of those, 124,302 children (60,613 girls) were vaccinated in NW Syria. Through **measles vaccination** campaigns, 1,082,111 children (540,780 girls) were vaccinated, including 639,250 children (319,905 girls) in NW Syria.

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<sup>16</sup> The most affected governorates to date are Aleppo, Idlib, Deir-ez-Zor, and Ar-Raqqa, and governorates which account for 98 per cent of all the cases in October 2023. 2023 MSNA and experts' consultation in HCT response area, WoS WASH Cluster.

<sup>17</sup> OCHA, Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> In Aleppo, Latakia and Hama.

UNICEF and WHO supported the MoH to vaccinate 190,750 adults against COVID-19. UNICEF procured 12,492,000 doses of vaccines (with funding from Gavi and others) to ensure uninterrupted immunization services and enable the MoH to conduct vaccination campaigns and administer vaccines routinely.

UNICEF supported **health systems strengthening** through the rehabilitation and solarization of 16 primary health care facilities, the procurement and instalment of 18 modern autoclaves for environment-friendly health and immunization waste management, and the instalment of 53 pieces of energy-efficient cold chain equipment. UNICEF assisted the MoH in the implementation of the Inventory Gap Analysis (IGA) tool<sup>20</sup> and the capacity-building of 7 trainers and 161 expanded programme on immunization health workers.

In NW Syria, as part of **cholera preparedness**, UNICEF and WHO conducted two oral cholera vaccine (OCV) campaigns for children, reaching 1,669,298 children (817,956 girls) and 1,119,799 children (548,702 girls) respectively. UNICEF also supported one cholera treatment centre and four oral rehydration points. UNICEF and partners in NW Syria reached 768,381 children under five (377,413 girls) with oral **polio immunization**.



Ateka, 24, with her baby Ghassan, chats with a health worker and a UNICEF staff member during her visit to a UNICEF-supported clinic in Deir-ez-Zor city, Syria, on 17 January 2023. © UNICEF/UN0824871/Nader

**Newborn care** training was extended to 1,636 health workers and community volunteers (1,531 women). In addition, some 400 community volunteers were trained on newborn care at home and conducted 24,805 visits to 17,687 pregnant women and 14,474 newborns (7,210 girls) in 13 governorates. The Every New-born Action Plan (ENAP) was extended from seven to ten hospitals. A total of 9,904 mothers and 9,929 newborns were provided with quality maternal and neonatal care. In the third quarter, a survey of 2,213 mothers in 10 hospitals showed immediate skin-to-skin contact in 66 per cent of births and breastfeeding initiated in the first hour in 54 per cent.

UNICEF and its partners advanced the child-friendly health centres initiative, reaching 10,010 children under five (4,995 girls) with an integrated package of health services for **early childhood development (ECD)**. Of these, 765 children (378 girls) were detected with developmental delay and supported through counselling and referral.

## 2. Nutrition Programme

In Syria 5.9 million people urgently need nutritional assistance, including 4.3 million women and girls and 3.8 million children.<sup>21</sup> The impact of earthquakes and the increased erosion of the services interconnected with nutrition needs – specifically water and sanitation, health, and social protection systems – have heightened vulnerabilities.

In 2023, under UNICEF leadership and with support from partners, the MoH launched the Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) across 14 governorates, and also conducted a SMART for Manager Training (ToT) for 25 participants who led the survey at their respective governorates.<sup>22</sup> The preliminary results indicate a threefold increase in the prevalence of Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) across Syria over the past five years, increasing the GAM rate from 1.7 per cent in 2019 to 4.8 per cent in 2023.<sup>23</sup>

UNICEF and its partners reached 3,145,314 people (2,249,223 women and girls and 11,744 people and children with disabilities) with **essential nutrition services**. Of these, 902,009 people (671,436 women and girls) were reached in NW Syria, including 449,246 people in the earthquake-affected areas.



On 10 February 2023, Hamzeh, 4.5, is screened for malnutrition by Hiba, a UNICEF-supported mobile health team leader, using a mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) tape, in Alsalheen neighbourhood, Aleppo city, north Syria. © UNICEF/UN0781272/Al-Asadi

During the year, UNICEF and partners **screened** 2,878,271 children aged 6-59 months (1,442,431 girls) **for severe wasting**, including 1,707,012 children in NW Syria. Among these,

<sup>20</sup> A tool which provides a real-time status of cold chain equipment in health facilities and shows gaps in this cold chain system.

<sup>21</sup> OCHA, Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023.

<sup>22</sup> The SMART survey results will be officially launched by the MoH by the end of February 2024.

<sup>23</sup> Across all governorates, there has been an almost twofold increase in GAM prevalence, with four governorates (Rural Damascus, Idleb, Ar-Raqqa, and Quneitra) surpassing acceptable stress levels. Latakia Governorate reported an emergency-level GAM prevalence of 10 per cent.

24,329 children across Syria (14,048 girls) were **admitted for treatment**, including 14,621 children (8,859 girls) in NW Syria. To address significant micronutrient deficiencies faced by children, UNICEF expanded its blanket supplementary feeding programme, distributing 24,007 cartons of lipid-based nutrient supplement in coordination with World Food Programme (WFP), reaching 80,562 children aged 6-23 months in earthquake-affected governorates<sup>24</sup> and in northeast (NE) Syria. UNICEF and partners provided multiple **micronutrient supplementation** (MMS) to 1,014,728 children and adolescents (506,457 girls) and 548,328 pregnant and lactating women. This included 443,634 children (222,116 girls) and 329,442 women in NW Syria. Through the routine immunization programme, 407,594 children aged 6-23 months (204,334 girls) received **vitamin A supplementation**.

As part of its preventive nutrition initiatives, UNICEF and partners engaged with 1,587,487 caregivers (1,301,702 women) through **infant and young child feeding (IYCF) counselling**. This included 241,936 caregivers (233,015 women) in NW Syria. In response to the earthquake, UNICEF collaborated with the MoH and the Nutrition Cluster/Sector partners to raise awareness among key stakeholders about the risks associated with the unrestricted random distribution of breastmilk substitutes (BMS). UNICEF also enhanced the capacity of over 250 frontline workers in IYCF-E counselling and assessment of BMS eligibility. Additionally, as a corrective measure, UNICEF distributed 906,000 units of ready-to-use infant formula (RUIF), benefiting 1,564 children aged 0-5 months.<sup>25</sup>

In NW Syria, UNICEF collaborated with an international NGO to provide **cash voucher assistance** to specific households in 40 at-risk camps.<sup>26</sup> Through the cash voucher assistance programme, 1,700 pregnant and lactating women and their households, as well as mothers and caregivers of children admitted to nutrition stabilization centres, received a US\$50 cash grant per month for 12 months, reaching a total of 45,551 people (13,335 women). Moreover, as part of the winter project and immediately after the earthquake, 6,134 households with vulnerable members received immediate relief in the form of a one-time US\$150 cash grant, reaching 44,084 people.

### a) Nutrition Cluster/Sector

Under UNICEF's leadership, the 112 cluster/sector partners across the Whole of Syria scaled up the nutrition response, notably during the earthquake response, leading to an expansion of service accessibility, particularly in NW Syria. Overall, the sector reached 2,653,840 people (1,933,270 women and girls and 28,018 people and children with disabilities) with lifesaving preventive and curative nutrition services, including 1,084,360 people in NW Syria. Most of the nutrition response (82.5 per cent) was delivered to areas classified as being under extreme or catastrophic conditions, reaching the most vulnerable people. About 9 per cent of those reached (237,667 people) were from the 445 earthquake-affected communities, where sector partners also conducted multiple rounds of rapid nutrition assessments in collective shelters hosting people displaced by the earthquakes.

Some key results achieved by the sector include treating 105,346 children (62,290 girls) suffering from moderate wasting, including 50,713 children (29,982 girls) in NW Syria, and 35,266 children with severe wasting, including 20,901 children (12,538 girls) in NW Syria. In addition, 82,104 PLW received treatment for moderate wasting, of whom 51,583 were in NW Syria.

The maternal, infant and young child feeding nutrition (MIYCN) services were expanded to prevent malnutrition and prioritized during the earthquake response. Overall, 568,327 women were reached with awareness of optimal IYCF practices. Additionally, 109,994 PLW received cash voucher assistance to improve nutrition outcomes for children and women. In addition, 665,143 PLW (including 10,112 adolescent girls) were reached with micronutrient supplementation, and 1,085,770 children received micronutrient powder (535,854 girls).

## 3. Child Protection Programme

In a context where 6.3 million children<sup>27</sup> require child protection services, the earthquakes intensified negative coping mechanisms – such as child marriage and child labour – and risks of exposure to various forms of violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect. Indiscriminate attacks and limited livelihood opportunities further undermine parents' and caregivers' ability to protect their children. As of September 2023, the UN Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) verified over 1,300 grave violations against children. In NW Syria, persistent hostilities, limited livelihood opportunities, weak governance, and the presence of explosive contamination, continue to pose significant protection risks for children.

A total of 1,720,258 people (956,993 women and girls and 34,910 people and children with disabilities), including 534,326 people (294,470 women and girls and 29,039 people and children with disabilities) in NW Syria, benefitted from different **child protection services and interventions** in districts and sub-districts with high severity needs, including 596,237 people in the earthquake-affected areas. The services were provided through mobile teams and community-based static centres implemented by the trained child protection workforce of UNICEF's implementing partners. Four in five static

<sup>24</sup> Aleppo, Latakia, and Hama.

<sup>25</sup> Aleppo, Latakia, and Hama.

<sup>26</sup> These camps were chosen based on the analysis and mapping done by WFP out of the 112 camps they support.

<sup>27</sup> OCHA, Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023.

centres are accessible to children with disabilities, and most of the children and their caregivers expressed their satisfaction with the facilitators and the activities provided at the centres. The earthquake-related needs were met through UNICEF's quick capacity to mobilize resources and expertise to ensure a rapid response, while subsequently transitioning into early recovery.

To enhance the response and effectiveness in addressing the severe needs of children following the earthquakes, the UNICEF child protection, education, and WASH programme sections jointly launched the WAQTI initiative ("My time" in Arabic), which constitutes a multisectoral and targeted response to the most affected communities. The initiative successfully established 112 WAQTI centres that provided a range of child protection services, including mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), family tracing and reunification, case management, as well as education, hygiene promotion, and sanitation services, reaching over 200,000 children, adolescents, and parents and caregivers across 56 communities in NW Syria.

Across Syria, 559,352 children (295,391 girls and 20,618 children with disabilities) were reached with **MHPSS** activities, within the framework of the national MHPSS manual. This includes 204,615 children (114,280 girls) in NW Syria. The pre and post assessment of 49,500 children who completed the MHPSS sessions demonstrated that their state of mental health and psychosocial wellbeing has significantly improved, including being able to express their feelings and emotions, improved skills in communication with peers and parents, being able to identify protection risks and knowing where and how to seek help. In the immediate response to the earthquake, **psychological first aid (PFA)** was provided by trained frontline workers to children and families to be able to cope with the psychological distress.

UNICEF and partners developed a harmonized national parenting manual and reached 80,618 parents and caregivers (64,991 women) with **parenting programmes**, including 8,284 parents and caregivers (4,489 women) in NW, equipping them with essential skills and tools for improved interaction with their children. Parents who attended the programme reported improved communication and increased capacity to manage their children through non-violent means. However, the programme continued to encounter challenges in attracting fathers and male caregivers.

**Case management** systems were strengthened, and the Government agreed to adopt the Primero Information Management System.<sup>28</sup> A total of 28,934 children and women (14,208 women and girls and 6,098 women and children with disabilities), who experienced or were at a higher risk of abuse, violence, exploitation, and neglect, were reached with individual case management and referral to services and support, such as health and education services, legal assistance, MHPSS, and social protection schemes. In NW Syria, individual case management services were provided to 12,467 people (6,325 women and girls) including referral to specialized services.

Additionally, 1,234 **unaccompanied and separated children** (600 girls) were supported with child protection services, family tracing and reunification and alternative care. In earthquake-affected locations, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (MoSAL) disseminated a hotline number in shelters to report cases of unaccompanied and separated children. A good practice was seen in Aleppo where a "protection necklace" was introduced to prevent separation of children. The necklace has a QR code that includes the child's full name, address, and phone numbers of caregivers and relatives. Some 800 children in schools took part in the pilot. In NE Syria, alternative care and family tracing reunification was provided to 45 unaccompanied and separated children (15 girls) in two interim care centres in the Al-Hol camp, of whom 18 (7 girls) were reunified with their relatives.

UNICEF and partners reached 883,089 people (including 472,283 women and girls and 14,949 people and children with disabilities) with **explosive ordnance risk education (EORE)** through the dissemination of critical risk education messages, encompassing face-to-face sessions in schools, health facilities, child-friendly spaces, and via mobile teams and immunization campaigns. This includes EORE delivered to 213,129 people (105,039 women and girls) in NW, with a focus on IDPs and host communities in schools, IDP camps, sites, and communities. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MoE), MoH, and implementing partners, UNICEF trained 7,640 professionals (4,533 women) working with children and caregivers on child protection minimum standards in humanitarian action.

**Gender-based violence (GBV)** prevention and empowerment activities reached 257,478 people (171,888 women and girls). This includes 36,308 people (34,272 women and girls) in NW Syria. UNICEF and implementing partners also reached 841,599 people (469,503 women and girls), including 204,788 people (102,989 women and girls) in NW Syria, with key **child protection messages** through awareness raising sessions and other community edutainment events, involving how to cope with the earthquake, and prevention of family separation, exploitation, and violence against children. Also,



On 17 May 2023, displaced children take part in psychological first aid and recreational activities provided by UNICEF-supported volunteers, in Fares Al Shahem camp, Jableh city, Latakia Governorate, Syria.  
© UNICEF/UNI419677/lssa

<sup>28</sup> Primero is an open-source software platform for humanitarian protection and social welfare workers.

257,478 people (171,188 women and girls) were reached specifically with messages on GBV prevention.

During the earthquake response, the **Frontliners Wellbeing Package** was rolled out to enhance the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of frontline workers and service providers. Capacity-building initiatives were launched ensuring frontline workers' ability to implement high-quality activities for vulnerable children and caregivers.

### a) Child Protection AOR

Under UNICEF's leadership, the Child Protection AoR provided strategic guidance and technical support to over 125 child protection partners operating across 14 governorates and trained them on preparedness, response, and prevention approaches to child protection concerns, reaching 2,652,296 people (1,468,826 women and girls and 405,869 people and children with disabilities) with child protection prevention and response services. This includes 877,410 people (472,346 women and girls and 181,980 people and children with disabilities) reached as part of the earthquake response.

Overall, 746,174 children and caregivers (384,275 women and girls and 172,970 people and children with disabilities) received MHPSS services – including 370,743 children in NW – and 1,718,969 people were reached with awareness raising interventions (957,646 women and girls). Parenting programmes were provided to 103,273 people (84,215 women and girls), while 71,153 children (34,826 girls) received multisectoral case management, including 33,048 children in NW.

As part of the earthquake response, the Child Protection AoR conducted a post-earthquake rapid needs assessment across 411 communities in 38 sub-districts, and ensured additional human resources were placed in Aleppo and Lattakia, reaching 492,205 people (265,413 women and girls) with a comprehensive package of child protection services ranging from preventive measures to mitigate family separations, MHPSS, EORE awareness, and prevent further abuse, exploitation and violence against children.

Additional achievements include building the capacity of 8,738 frontline workers and partners (2,621 women) on the provision of PFA, MHPSS and parenting programmes, contributing to improving the delivery of quality services and self-care, especially during the earthquake response. The Child Protection AoR and other partners, trained over 40 senior child protection officers on case management, and 40 additional child protection frontliners on MHPSS.

## 4. Education Programme

The earthquakes exacerbated the country's education crisis by further damaging school infrastructure, disrupting the education of millions of children, and adding to the distress and trauma suffered by children, teachers and families. The earthquakes caused the education sector an estimated US\$277 million in loss and damages, with 2,149 schools impacted and over 96,000 teachers affected by the disruption of education.<sup>29</sup>



On 10 June 2023, students benefit from UNICEF-supported remedial classes at a school in Soukari neighbourhood, Aleppo city, Syria. © UNICEF/UNI421852/Janji

In 2023, UNICEF supported the provision of **equitable access to quality education** opportunities for 3,005,953 children and education personnel (1,476,572 women and girls and 19,400 people and children with disabilities), including 584,226 children (290,000 girls) in the earthquake-affected areas. In NW Syria, UNICEF capitalized on its long investment and experience in providing education in emergency (EIE) response to severely affected populations through the establishment of a rapid response mechanism (RRM) and prepositioning of education supplies in warehouses in Aleppo and Idlib to be delivered to vulnerable girls and boys. In NW Syria, a total of 326,391 children and education personnel (160,865 women and girls and 8,945 people and children with disabilities) – from both the internally displaced and host communities and in high-severity areas – benefitted from education services.

Across Syria, 2,299,853 children (1,105,198 girls, and 2,648 children with disabilities) were supported with **education in formal settings**, including 80,264 children (38,543 girls) in NW Syria. UNICEF rehabilitated and undertook minor repairs of 210 schools, also those in earthquake-affected areas, and ensured provision of gender-sensitive and disability-inclusive WASH facilities in the rehabilitated schools. This effort improved the learning environment and helped restore the functionality of moderately and slightly damaged schools to serve 300,725 children (156,780 girls and 3,195 children with disabilities), including 1,263 children (650 girls) benefitting from early childhood education. In areas where school rehabilitation was not sufficient to address the lack of adequate physical space for children, 104 temporary learning spaces were installed, supporting 128,179 children (59,977 girls). In addressing the persistent challenge of textbook availability, –

<sup>29</sup> United Nations Syrian Arab Republic, Syria Earthquake Recovery Needs Assessment (SERNA), 2023.

where sharing among several students is common in certain communities – UNICEF distributed national textbooks to 1,804,623 children (867,828 girls).

In response to the impact of the earthquake on children's well-being, UNICEF supported the review of national manuals on psychosocial support (PSS) and trained 6,716 teachers (5,028 women) accordingly. In NW Syria, UNICEF, through its implementing partners, provided 37,666 children (20,376 girls) with **school-based psychosocial support programmes** in both formal and non-formal educational settings. Through the WAQTI project, 30,479 children at risk of drop out were reached with catch-up classes to improve foundational learning skills, 3,047 children with NFE were reached through mobile learning/mobile teachers, and 964 teachers with training on PSS and EiE.

To reach the most vulnerable children who are out of school or at risk of dropping out, UNICEF provided learning opportunities through **non-formal education** (NFE) to 508,304 children (260,581 girls and 12,850 children with disabilities), including 200,130 children (99,781 girls) in NW Syria. To raise the awareness of caregivers and children on learning opportunities in NW Syria, UNICEF reached 214,773 caregivers and children with **back to learning (BTL)**<sup>30</sup> **interventions**. Additionally, 102 schools and learning centres hosting NFE programmes were rehabilitated and maintained ensuring gender and disability inclusion, benefitting 22,512 children (11,333 girls). The provision of gender-sensitive washrooms facilitated the retention and enrolment of more girls who could attend regularly even during the monthly menstrual days, reducing absenteeism.

UNICEF also contributed to improving learning outcomes by implementing two **internationally recognized learning assessments tools**. These tools – tailored to the local context – aim to assist teachers in formal and NFE settings in assessing learning, making needed adjustments, and measuring changes in learning of groups of students over time, empowering them to customize their instruction to address the specific and varied needs of children who may have experienced learning gaps.

Through the **Learning Passport**, which was expanded across 14 governorates in 2023, UNICEF reached 6,501 children (3,528 girls) with digitized self-learning materials (SLM) in addition to 1,400 interactive assessments to support children education in SLM. Following the earthquake, **Learning Cinema** – an innovative education approach entailing the provision of interactive digital content through low power consumption technology – was rolled out in the accommodation centres, supporting the continuation of learning for 1,577 children (959 girls).

The fragmentation of the education system with different curricula being taught continued to pose challenges in both children's access to accredited education and collection of reliable enrolment data. In NE Syria, where formal education is very limited, UNICEF supported children's access to flexible alternative NFE pathways through the **Self-Learning Programme**, which consists of using learning materials that have been mapped and aligned with national curriculum standards, reaching 31,747 children (16,191 girls) through this modality.

### a) Education Cluster/Sector

Under the co-leadership of UNICEF and the contribution of 205 partners, the Education Cluster/Sector provided critical assistance to meet the pressing educational needs of both educators and students, reaching 2,676,794 children (1,204,577 girls and 267,589 children with disabilities) and 35,870 education personnel (16,141 women) with essential educational support, including 512,963 children (230,833 girls) and 29,870 education personnel in NW Syria.

This includes 149,071 children (67,081 girls) who benefited from the rehabilitation of classrooms – including 35,35 children (15,907 girls) in NW Syria – ensuring safe and conducive learning environments, 17,365 students (7,814 girls) who received critical catch-up and accelerated learning support from sector partners – including 38,311 students (16,965 girls) in NW Syria –, and 38,311 children (16,965 girls) who received learning materials. Moreover, 13,376 young children aged 3-5 years (6,019 girls and 442 children with disabilities) benefited from early childhood care and development (ECCD) kits and similar resources, establishing a strong educational foundation, including 6,360 young children (2,862 girls) in NW Syria. Also, 298,221 children and adolescents (155,074 girls) benefited from school-based psychosocial support programmes in formal and non-formal settings.

Furthermore, 30,237 teachers and educational personnel (13,696 women) underwent training in various areas – including technical and vocational education and training (TVET), parenting programs, pedagogical skills, positive discipline, remote teaching, EiE, national/inter-agency network for education in emergencies (INEE) minimum standards, anti-bullying, mine risk education, etc. – while 12,326 teachers and educational personnel (5,546 women) received essential teaching kits, significantly enhancing the quality of education for children.

UNICEF and the sector partners supported 24,017 children (11,518 girls) from hard-to-reach areas to take the national exams (grades 9 and 12). Out of these, 15,478 students travelled daily and 8,628 (4,309 girls) were supported to stay in

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<sup>30</sup> Back-to-learning campaigns (BTL) encompass social media and community outreach activities aimed at identifying out-of-school children and conducting awareness sessions for children, parents, and caregivers, emphasizing the importance of education. These campaigns also provide detailed information about school enrolment processes and available services in selected schools, with the goal of facilitating children's return to either formal or non-formal education.

62 accommodation centres during the exam period. This represents a 66 per cent increase in children taking the exams and 13 per cent increase in students supported in accommodation centres (compared to last year's examination).

## 5. WASH Programme

During 2023, people in Syria continue to endure the severe lack of basic WASH services, with 13.6 million people in dire need of WASH support,<sup>31</sup> reflecting a 2.6 per cent increase from 2022. The protracted conflict, insufficient routine maintenance, a shortage of experienced staff, drought and scarce water resources, the absence of integrated water resources management, inflation, and the impact of the earthquake have collectively contributed to the decline in access to essential WASH services.

The earthquakes had a compounding negative impact on critical infrastructure, resulting in decreased efficiency and an increased risk of water contamination. The earthquake-related damage to WASH infrastructure has been substantial, with 71 water reservoirs collapsing or needing removal and an additional 114 being damaged and requiring rehabilitation. Moreover, 220 water facilities have been either completely or partially destroyed, and 40 km of water lines and 103 km of sewage lines require rehabilitation.<sup>32</sup> The damage to the sewage system has increased the risk of waterborne disease outbreaks, as sewage from leaking sewer lines may infiltrate broken low-pressure water networks.

In 2023, UNICEF and partners reached 8,893,764 people (4,653,965 women and girls and 171,255 people with disabilities) with **WASH services and supplies**, including 3,676,320 people (1,909,550 women and girls) in NW Syria through the cross-border response. Despite the efforts of UNICEF and its partners to prevent the collapse of the WASH sector, the aid strategy should shift from spot interventions to more comprehensive, strategic, and early recovery initiatives.

UNICEF's continued efforts to **rehabilitate the water infrastructure** – including 18 wells, 53 pumping stations and water distribution networks – and reinstate basic capacity for delivering safe drinking water, reached 4,418,351 people (2,286,315 women and girls) affected by service deterioration, earthquakes, and cholera outbreaks. In NW Syria, cross-border resilient measures such as the restoration of water services, support for operation and maintenance of water stations, and related institutional capacity development, positively impacted 1,518,805 people (790,422 women and girls).

UNICEF prioritized mitigating the earthquake's impact by implementing multiple reconstruction projects, including replacing 1,400 meters of damaged balanced pipeline, ensuring safe drinking water for about 67 per cent of the 1.6 million residents in Aleppo city. Emergency repairs of severely damaged water networks were conducted in Aleppo and Lattakia cities, providing access to **safe drinking water** for approximately 521,000 people. UNICEF is actively engaged in reconstructing ten elevated tanks destroyed by the earthquake, enhancing the engineering designs for increased seismic resistance.

Energy shortages remained a key factor affecting the efficiency of the water sector. To tackle the declining electricity supply and fuel crisis, UNICEF shifted towards **renewable energy solutions**, particularly solar power where applicable, including initiating the provision of solar systems to ensure the functionality of 45 water facilities.<sup>33</sup>

UNICEF procured most of the country's **sodium hypochlorite** needs – critical for disinfecting water systems –, which ensured the availability of **safe drinking water** to a staggering 17,498,734 people (9,000,000 women and girls) throughout the country. Of those, 2,392,760 people (1,251,703 women and girls) are in NW Syria.

UNICEF and implementing partners reached 2,865,292 people (1,489,065 women and girls) with improved access to **sanitation services**, including 1,418,290 people (730,089 women and girls) in NW Syria. This included the rehabilitation of 36 sewage systems in various governorates. UNICEF also repaired earthquake-damaged pipelines in Aleppo and Lattakia cities, ensuing 227,237 people accessed clean water without the risk of contamination.

UNICEF and partners also delivered **emergency WASH services** to 2,086,466 IDPs (1,100,842 women and girls) and **essential supplies** to ensure their basic needs were met. To curb the spread of diseases, UNICEF provided support services such as water trucking and distribution of hygiene supplies, including family hygiene kits, soaps, aqua tabs, baby diapers, and dignity kits. In NW Syria, in response to the cholera outbreak, the increased emphasis on wastewater disposal and treatment benefitted 658,807 people. The WASH interventions in 570 schools reached 172,000 children and in 113 health care facilities benefitted at least 109,307 people.

UNICEF also conducted light rehabilitations and installed WASH facilities in collective shelters and other IDP settings that were affected by the earthquake. To ensure the safety and well-being of the displaced population, UNICEF took proactive measures to mitigate GBV risks while providing WASH facilities. This was achieved by ensuring that all WASH facilities were sex-segregated and by providing adequate road and facility lighting to enhance safety. In response to the cholera outbreak, UNICEF continued the critical hygiene awareness campaign in the affected governorates in partnership with

<sup>31</sup> OCHA, Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023.

<sup>32</sup> United Nations Syrian Arab Republic, Syria Earthquake Recovery Needs Assessment (SERNA), 2023.

<sup>33</sup> In Deir-ez-Zor, Ar-Raqqa, Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh, Hama, and Homs governorates.

the Syrian Arab Red Cross. The campaign aimed to educate communities, especially children and caregivers, on the importance of handwashing, water management at the household level, and food handling practices to prevent the spread of WASH-related diseases such as cholera.

### a) WASH Cluster/Sector

The WASH Cluster/Sector led by UNICEF and with its more than 120 partners, continued to support service delivery, including in response to the earthquakes, the cholera outbreak and the recent escalation of hostilities in northern Syria, as well as to assist hubs coordination teams with strategic and technical support, reaching 12,943,459 people (6,537,612 women and girls and 2,213,682 people and children with disabilities) with WASH services. This includes 4,946,056 people reached in NW Syria across 1,412 IDP camps, 62 collective centres and 477 communities, across 37 subdistricts.

A total of 4,614,877 people (2,330,928 women and girls and 789,269 people and children with disabilities) were provided with emergency safe water, and 2,640,938 people (1,333,912 women and girls and 451,672 people and children with disabilities) accessed emergency sanitation services. Additionally, 7,303,122 people (3,688,734 women and girls and 1,249,032 people and children with disabilities) benefited from improved access to water services through improved infrastructure. Also, 1,239,417 people (626,017 women and girls and 211,974 people and children with disabilities) accessed improved WASH services in schools, healthcare facilities and child-friendly spaces, including 789,000 people in NW Syria.

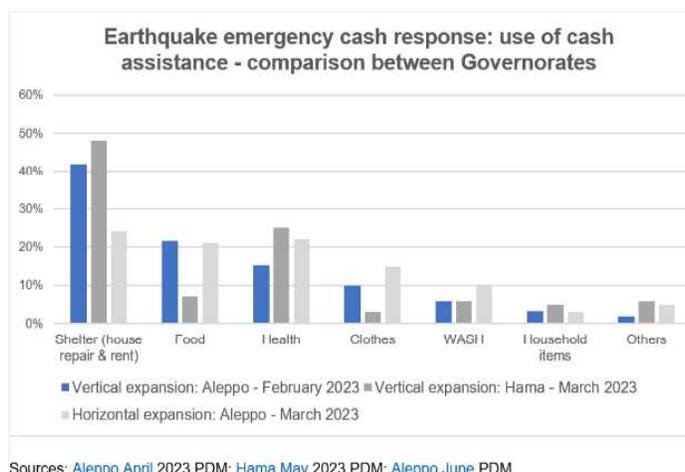
In response to the earthquakes in NW Syria, the WASH Cluster reached 488,964 people – including 279,922 people with access to safe drinking water (including through emergency water trucking) and 153,147 people with hygiene promotion and awareness raising activities. The cluster also supported the provision of emergency latrines, desludging, and solid waste collection in collective shelters. WASH non-food items were distributed to affected households in collective centres, informal settlements, and host families. Essential emergency repairs and small-scale rehabilitation of water and sanitation infrastructures were also undertaken.

In parallel to the earthquake response, the cluster played a key role in the ongoing cholera outbreak in Syria, by continuing to co-lead the coordination of the response with the Health Cluster and by focusing on controlling the risk of transmission, reaching 1,270,953 people with a safe water supply in high-risk areas.

## 6. Social Protection and Cash Transfers

Eighty-five per cent of households struggle to make ends meet,<sup>34</sup> which increases the reliance on humanitarian aid and negative coping mechanisms – such as child labour and consumption of suboptimal diets – and further limits their access to basic services.

Throughout 2023, 346,667 highly vulnerable people (74,285 families), including 172,134 women and girls, were reached with **cash assistance and social protection interventions** in seven governorates across Syria. Cash assistance was provided to the most socially and economically vulnerable families, including families caring for children with disabilities, female-headed families, and families caring for orphan children and children with chronic illness in addition to those most affected by the earthquake.



<sup>34</sup> OCHA, Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023.

In response to the earthquakes, UNICEF adapted and used its two existing programmes to deliver **emergency cash assistance** to earthquake-affected families. The pre-existence and shock-responsiveness of these programmes meant that UNICEF and partners were able to provide cash assistance within 96 hours of the earthquake. Out of the planned 40,000 families to receive the cash assistance, 184,657 people (36,471 families) received a first round of cash assistance, including 105,699 people (20,868 families) in Aleppo, 49,311 people (9,676 families) in Hama, and 29,647 people (5,927 families) in Lattakia, while 35,195 people (7,039 families) have received the second round in these three governorates.



Ahmad, 15, sits with his five siblings and their father at their home in Hawija Sakr in Deir-ez-Zor, Syria, in August 2023. UNICEF supports Ahmad and his family with regular cash assistance and case management through its integrated social protection programme for children with disabilities. © UNICEF/UNI441338/Al-Kheder

Through the **Integrated Social Protection Programme for Children with Disabilities**, 10,391 children with disabilities (4,365 girls) and their families were provided with regular quarterly cash assistance (SYP equivalent to US\$120 per quarter) and case management services in six governorates.<sup>35</sup> The programme was expanded to Lattakia in December 2023, with payments starting in the first quarter of 2024.<sup>36</sup> To respond to the educational needs of children with disabilities enrolled in the programme, seven MoSAL-managed educational centres for disabilities in three governorates<sup>37</sup> have been identified and assessed for rehabilitation. Through the social policy and education programmes, UNICEF has supported the rehabilitation of five specialized services centres for children with disabilities, improving their access to education services.

As part of the **Cash Transfer for Basic Needs** programme for winter and earthquake response, UNICEF and its partners reached 336,276 people (167,769 women and girls) with

humanitarian cash transfers for basic needs including 12,127 people (7,807 women and girls) in NW Syria.

Rapid post-distribution monitoring surveys were conducted throughout the year on the cash use and satisfaction. Participants noted the earthquake exacerbated poverty and vulnerability, especially for families caring for children with disabilities. The cash was primarily used for new humanitarian needs like shelter (repairs and rent) and pre-existing basic needs such as health. Survey findings showed that families utilized the cash assistance within a week, with over 85 per cent satisfaction across all three surveys in the emergency response.

## 7. Adolescent Development and Participation (ADAP)

In 2023, UNICEF supported 556,877 disadvantaged young people aged 10-24 years (296,071 young women and adolescent girls and 24,924 young people with disabilities), with **skills-building and engagement opportunities** across 14 governorates through adolescent friendly spaces and mobile teams working closely with its local partners. Of these, 235,436 young people (129,020 young women and adolescent girls and 15,303 young people with disabilities) benefitted from **life-skills and citizenship education (LSCE), TVET, social entrepreneurship, and employability skills**. Moreover, 495,786 young people (259,942 young women and adolescent girls and 22,080 young people with disabilities) participated in positive **engagement opportunities to promote social cohesion and civic engagement** through the implementation of sports for development and cultural activities, youth-clubs, cross-sectoral youth-led initiatives, and awareness-raising campaigns.

UNICEF and partners' earthquake response was strengthened by harnessing the support of 6,125 young volunteers, including 3,151 adolescent girls and young women, who despite being affected by the earthquakes themselves, were eager to get involved in helping earthquake-affected children, peers and families. These young volunteers supported the initial cross-sectoral emergency response including relief and shelter management, distribution of non-food items, as well as disseminating key messages in collective shelters and affected communities.<sup>38</sup> UNICEF and partners provided additional training for the young people and equipped them to engage in and lead social and digital engagement activities, including developing youth-led initiatives, leading recreational activities, disseminating SBC messages, and conducting assessments. Notably, 425 trained young volunteers (190 young women) participated in conducting data collection among their peers and affected communities,<sup>39</sup> like the Syria Needs Assessment Tool (SYNAT) to assess the needs of earthquake-affected families. Overall, UNICEF supported 63,861 earthquake-affected young people with **skills-building and participation opportunities**.

<sup>35</sup> Aleppo, Al Hassakeh, Deir-ez-Zor, Hama, Homs and Rural Damascus.

<sup>36</sup> For example, as reported in the PDM in July 2023, in Deir-ez-Zor, 40 per cent of the cash was used for food, while 46 per cent was spent on health, clothes, and WASH.

<sup>37</sup> Homs, Aleppo and Rural Damascus.

<sup>38</sup> Aleppo, Latakia, Hama, and Tartous.

<sup>39</sup> Aleppo, Latakia, and Tartous.

In NE Syria, UNICEF provided services to young people through seven **adolescent friendly spaces**, 18 mobile teams and the support of 280 youth volunteers, reaching 71,777 young people, including 4,619 young people living in camps. More than 2,000 young girls participated in **sports activities**, breaking the social stereotype of girls in sports in NE Syria.

Through the UN Joint Programme in collaboration with other six UN agencies, UNICEF successfully reached 11,982 young people (7,693 young women and adolescent girls)<sup>40</sup> by implementing a **comprehensive package of integrated interventions focusing on resilience and recovery for communities**, including social cohesion activities, TVET, employability skills, and various engagement opportunities.

UNICEF and partners continued to advance **youth engagement activities on climate change**. For instance, UNICEF supported two youth-led Local Conferences of Youth (LCOYs),<sup>41</sup> which hosted 320 youths and contributed to the global youth statement for the Conference of Parties (COP28) on climate change.

UNICEF also provided **capacity-building opportunities** to 3,001 partners' technical officers, projects' staff and potential youth leaders (1,685 women) to ensure quality of the services provided to the young people. Additionally, 7,231 service providers and young volunteers (4,005 women) received PSEA information and relevant messages.

## 8. Social and Behaviour Change (SBC), Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) and Accountability for Affected Populations (AAP)

In 2023, UNICEF and partners reached 20,543,611 people (10,376,371 women and girls) through the promotion of protective practices and information on how to access to services, and through the scale-up of community engagement efforts – ensuring equal participation from both women and men –, engaged 4,661,079 people (2,786,073 women and girls). Of the 15.3 million people in high need of humanitarian assistance, UNICEF reached 97 per cent with SBC programmes through community dialogues, edutainment and engagement with influencers.

As part of the earthquake response and after the completion of the community assessment, relevant critical protective practices were formulated in simple messages and delivered across different internet platforms in Syria, reaching 862,972 people (446,382 women and girls). Community workers of local NGOs were deployed to engage with families in shelters and host communities on the importance of maintaining cleanliness of WASH facilities, saving water and health caring for children, including MHPSS, reaching 853,297 people (539,402 women and girls).

Specifically, communities were reached and engaged in key preventive practices such as handwashing, water handling, food preparation and storage as well as waste management. Altogether, 11,045,373 people were reached (5,613,007 women and girls), and 1,882,433 people were engaged in the cholera response (1,133,467 women and girls). Concretely, in community dialogue sessions people discussed the use of Aquatabs to ensure safe water at household level and the role of oral rehydration solution (ORS), including homemade ORS, to prevent dehydration. In NW, UNICEF also provided training on key preventive messages for 688 community health workers, 143 social mobilizers as well as 135 camp managers.

Given the ongoing risks associated with cholera outbreaks in 2023, especially in earthquake-affected areas and camps, cholera interventions were implemented according to a national evidence-based strategy drafted by UNICEF and led by MoH. The action plan specifically targeted high-risk rural areas, including those near the Pharate River, where the risk of waterborne diseases is elevated. These communities were reached and engaged in key preventive



Young volunteers pack school supplies for children at risk of dropping at a UNICEF-supported child friendly centre in Altal city, Rural Damascus, Syria, on 21 October 2023. © UNICEF/UNI482349/



In October 2023, community engagement and RCCE teams with Al-Hasakeh Department of Health teams provide mothers and information about the importance of children's vaccines and commitment to schedules as well as ways of handling any side effects. © UNICEF/UNI465183/

<sup>40</sup> In Deir-ez-Zor and Dara'a.

<sup>41</sup> In Lattakia and Tartous.

practices such as handwashing, water handling, food preparation and storage as well as waste management. Altogether, 11,045,373 people (5,613,007 women and girls) were reached and 1,882,433 people (1,133,467 women and girls) actively participated in the cholera response. In NW Syria, UNICEF also provided training to 688 community health workers, 143 social mobilizers, and 135 camp managers on key preventive messages to protect at-risk populations from disease outbreaks.

The RCCE Coordination Group, established and co-led by UNICEF comprising multiple UN agencies and INGOs actively operating on the ground, which serves as a mechanism to synergize and harmonize RCCE efforts while facilitating effective communication with government counterparts, played a pivotal role in the earthquake response. This collaborative platform has not only facilitated the efficient sharing of resources and expertise but has also provided UNICEF and its partners with valuable insights from the field, enhancing the overall effectiveness of the earthquake response efforts in Syria.

### **a) Accountability for Affected Populations (AAP)**

UNICEF continued to integrate and strengthen its accountability to people impacted by the multiple crises in Syria, involving the scale-up of complaints and feedback mechanisms to ensure people had accessible ways to provide feedback on UNICEF and its implementing partners' services, and to report complaints, including those related to SEA. The mechanism is complemented by a service line, through which UNICEF responded to 5,331 cases in 2023. Among these, 77 per cent were requests for information and 17 per cent involved raising new needs. Of the total, 206 cases were related to dissatisfaction, complaints, mistreatment, or discrimination, all of which were resolved in coordination with UNICEF programme teams. Additionally, 79 per cent of the received calls were from earthquake-affected governorates.<sup>42</sup> Around 81 per cent of the callers expressed satisfaction with their service line. To further promote the beneficiaries' feedback, UNICEF distributed around 150 suggestion boxes for installation in UNICEF-supported facilities across 10 governorates.<sup>43</sup> Also, UNICEF piloted the distribution of leaflets along with WASH and dignity kits to increase awareness of available feedback and complaint mechanisms.

UNICEF surveyed 2,102 beneficiaries in UNICEF-supported facilities across all the governorates. The results showed that only 26 per cent of respondents knew how to submit a complaint, provide feedback, or make suggestions about assistance, proving the need to increase awareness of available safe and confidential complaint mechanisms. Additionally, only 6 per cent of the respondents made a suggestion or complaint regarding received services. Another 1,143 monitoring surveys were collected in the earthquake-affected governorates.<sup>44</sup> Eighty-seven per cent of people surveyed stated that both the supplies and services provided met their current needs. Almost all respondents expressed satisfaction with the behaviour of the aid workers who helped them.

In NW Syria, UNICEF-supported programming received more than 8,500 feedback and complaint submissions,<sup>45</sup> with 97 per cent of those resolved by the end of the year. Through the launch of the unique localization-and-feedback project, UNICEF worked with marginalized populations and local NGOs to co-create and lead a sustainable face-to-face community feedback-complaint system. UNICEF continued to play a leading role in inter-agency AAP for NW Syria, including helping with the expansion of the PSEA hotline into a more robust AAP hotline that people can use to submit all types of feedback and complaints. The 2024-2025 UNICEF AAP Strategy for the cross-border response in NW Syria has been completed, addressing gaps identified in an AAP review and building on strengths. The strategy incorporates standard AAP activities for implementing partners to integrate into programmes starting in 2024, along with associated indicators for UNICEF to measure accountability progress.

### **b) Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA)**

UNICEF strengthened PSEA programming by ensuring adherence to PSEA standards by UNICEF staff and partners. This included assessing the PSEA capacity of 99 per cent of UNICEF implementing partners. UNICEF continued to invest in awareness raising, SEA risk identification and mitigation, code of conduct trainings and the establishment and availability of SEA reporting mechanisms. Independent monitoring conducted by a third party showed that more than 95 per cent of staff implementing activities received a PSEA training, while 18 out of the 19 partners in NW Syria have up-to-date full capacity for PSEA programming. A total of 160 implementing partners staff were trained on SEA prevention, risk mitigation, and SEA reporting mechanisms.

As part of the PSEA scale-up plan and support to the earthquake-affected population, UNICEF and partners procured and distributed 13,300 dignity kits in Hama, Aleppo, and Latakia. Also, PSEA awareness was scaled up by integrating PSEA and accountability to affected populations (AAP) flyers into the dignity kit distributions.

Furthermore, 2,029,328 people (1,186,466 women and girls) were provided with safe and accessible channels to report SEA

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<sup>42</sup> Aleppo, Hama, Latakia, and Tartous.

<sup>43</sup> Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh, Damascus, Dar'a, Deir-ez-Zor, Hama, Homs, Latakia, Rural Damascus, Tartous

<sup>44</sup> Aleppo, Hama, Latakia, and Idlib.

<sup>45</sup> Through all feedback-complaint channels, including face-to-face, hotlines, suggestions boxes, etc.

by personnel who assist affected populations, including 1,582,664 people (875,233 women and girls) in NW Syria. Posters with information on PSEA and reporting channels were visibly displayed in only about two-thirds of the community centres, and this is one of the focus areas to reinforce in 2024. Additionally, 640 PSEA information, education and communication (IEC) materials were printed and distributed to UNICEF field offices and partners. Awareness of SEA reporting mechanisms was mainstreamed in selected partner interventions and child-friendly spaces, increasing outreach to affected populations, especially children, women, and girls.

## HUMAN INTEREST STORIES AND EXTERNAL MEDIA

In **January**, UNICEF continued to document its interventions on the ground, including the [fight](#) against [cholera](#), support to [children with disabilities](#), and response to vulnerable people's needs in [crossline](#) locations. In **February**, in less than 24 hours of the earthquake, a global [statement](#) was released to highlight impact on children. A global [press release](#) followed one week after the earthquake to underscore the [immense needs](#) of [children affected](#) and ongoing UNICEF [response](#). [Media interviews](#) highlighted the dire situation of the children. Social media [assets](#), videos and photos to mobilize private and international support for children were produced. In **March**, UNICEF [Executive Director](#) reflected about her visit to earthquake-affected areas. Also, UNICEF [marked](#) the grim milestone of 12 years of crisis in Syria with new [communication content](#) about a looming malnutrition crisis because of the crisis, compounded by the [deadly earthquakes](#). In **April**, SCO marked [World Immunization Week](#) with web and [social media](#) content. More content was disseminated across platforms to showcase UNICEF's [work](#) across earthquake- [affected areas](#) and to [thank donors](#) for their support. In **May**, UNICEF [marked 100 days](#) since the [earthquakes](#) hit the country. In **June**, UNICEF continued to highlight its [support](#) for [earthquake -affected children](#) and families, starting to move from [immediate emergency response](#) to [early recovery efforts](#) for communities. UNICEF also amplified social media [content](#) around the Brussels [Conference](#) on Syria. In **July**, [UNICEF documented](#) its [continued earthquake response](#). It also shed light on the support to [children crossing crisis lines](#) to sit for the [national exams](#). UNICEF highlighted the visits of the new Representative to [Latakia](#) and [Al-Hasakeh](#). In **August**, UNICEF [marked World Breastfeeding Week](#) and [World Humanitarian Day](#), and [6 months](#) from the earthquakes. UNICEF continued to [highlight](#) the [work](#) on the ground in [support](#) of the [affected communities](#). In **September**, UNICEF marked the [International Day of Peace](#), continued to [shed light](#) on its [earthquake response](#) seven months after the events. UNICEF also documented its regular programme, [including education](#) and [social protection](#) of children with disabilities. In **October**, UNICEF marked [World Mental Health](#) day, and the [Day of the Girl Child](#). UNICEF underlined its support to [children's immunization](#) through a nationwide campaign and marked [World Polio Day](#). In **November**, UNICEF marked [World Children's Day](#) reiterating the significance of upholding children's rights especially amid a protracted crisis. UNICEF also continued underlining its programmes including in [WASH](#), [education](#) and [health](#), reaching children even in [remote locations](#). UNICEF launched its [winter](#) appeal and the related 2024-2023 response plan [report](#). In **December**, UNICEF marked the [International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#), publishing relevant posts on [social media](#). UNICEF also launched its [Humanitarian Action for Children](#) appeal to support the children in most need. It was a part of the global [appeal](#).

## HAC APPEALS AND SITREPS

UNICEF Whole of Syria Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) appeals: <https://www.unicef.org/appeals/syria>  
UNICEF Whole of Syria Situation Reports (SitReps): <https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/syrian-crisis>

## NEXT SITREP: 31 July 2024

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## ANNEX A - SUMMARY OF PROGRAMME RESULTS

Sector	Overall needs	UNICEF and IPs response				Sector response <sup>46</sup>		
		Target 2023		Total results	Change since last report	Target 2023	Total results	Change since last report
<b>Health</b>								
Number of children aged 6 to 59 months vaccinated against polio		1,043,200	Boys	390,968	390,968			
			Girls	377,413	377,413			
			Men	-	-			
			Women	-	-			
			<b>Total</b>	<b>768,381</b>	<b>768,381</b>			
Number of children and women accessing primary health care in UNICEF-supported facilities	15.3M	2,439,799	Boys	1,258,966	860,942			
			Girls	1,257,613	858,526			
			Men	-	-			
			Women	738,715	586,370			
			<b>Total</b>	<b>3,255,294</b>	<b>2,305,838</b>			
Number of children under 1 year reached with routine vaccination (DTP3 containing vaccine)		742,880	Boys	254,870	156,342			
			Girls	251,535	153,834			
			Men	-	-			
			Women	-	-			
			<b>Total</b>	<b>506,405</b>	<b>310,176</b>			
<b>Nutrition</b>								
Number of children aged 6 to 59 months with severe acute malnutrition admitted for treatment		44,868	Boys	10,281	6,287	56,795	39,852	29,971
			Girls	14,048	8,843			
			Men	-	-			
			Women	-	-			
			<b>Total</b>	<b>24,329</b>	<b>15,130</b>			
Number of primary caregivers of children aged 0 to 23 months receiving IYCF counselling	5.9M	1,604,900	Boys	39,391	26,037	1,449,270	568,327	25,885
			Girls	40,365	26,055			
			Men	206,029	162,415			
			Women	1,301,702	903,988			
			<b>Total</b>	<b>1,587,487</b>	<b>1,118,495</b>			
Number of children and pregnant and lactating women receiving micronutrients		2,030,900	Boys	508,271	220,553	2,762,363	1,750,913	-962,030
			Girls	506,457	221,149			
			Men	-	-			
			Women	548,328	234,269			
			<b>Total</b>	<b>1,563,056</b>	<b>675,971</b>			
<b>Child Protection, GBVIE and PESA</b>								
Number of children accessing mental health and psychosocial support	6.3M	488,782	Boys	263,961	176,494	883,849	722,604	354,397
			Girls	295,391	190,071			
			Men	-	-			
			Women	-	-			
			<b>Total</b>	<b>559,352</b>	<b>366,565</b>			

<sup>46</sup> Sectors' reporting period is from January to November 2023, which is one month behind UNICEF's SitRep reporting period, full 2023 results expected to be finished in February 2024.

Number of girls, boys and women benefiting from case management for child protection and/or GBV	5,800	Boys	14,726	587			
		Girls	13,886	2,156			
		Men	-	-			
		Women	322	114			
		<b>Total</b>	<b>28,934</b>	<b>2,857</b>			
Number of women, girls and boys accessing GBV risk mitigation, prevention or response interventions	131,494	Boys	85,590	49,416			
		Girls	108,829	58,854			
		Men	-	-			
		Women	63,059	43,024			
		<b>Total</b>	<b>257,478</b>	<b>151,294</b>			
Number of children and caregivers accessing explosive weapons-related risk education and survivor assistance interventions	1,451,579	Boys	353,344	263,323			
		Girls	363,461	261,820			
		Men	57,462	48,659			
		Women	108,822	78,871			
		<b>Total</b>	<b>883,089</b>	<b>652,673</b>			

### Education

Number of children supported with educational services and supplies in formal settings	2,614,570	Boys	1,194,655	981,103	2,874,701	1,848,575	1,848,575	
		Girls	1,105,198	919,202				
		Men	-	-				
		Women	-	-				
		<b>Total</b>	<b>2,299,853</b>	<b>1,900,305</b>				
Number of children in non-formal education benefiting from education services	6.9M	536,466	Boys	247,723	129,625	946,864	792,247	792,247
			Girls	260,581	135,684			
			Men	-	-			
			Women	-	-			
			<b>Total</b>	<b>508,304</b>	<b>265,309</b>			
Number of teachers and education personnel trained	37,058	Boys	-	-	74,943			
		Girls	-	-				
		Men	3,975	3,488				
		Women	7,367	6,816				
		<b>Total</b>	<b>11,342</b>	<b>10,304</b>				
						35,870	35,870	

### Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Number of people accessing a sufficient quantity of safe water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene	5,276,000	Boys	1,166,475	778,562	8,000,000	7,003,119	5,692,276	
		Girls	1,212,691	789,130				
		Men	965,561	684,768				
		Women	1,073,624	755,032				
		<b>Total</b>	<b>4,418,351</b>	<b>3,007,492</b>				
Number of people reached with handwashing behaviour change programmes	13.6M	330,000	Boys	251,786	222,600	3,700,000	2,415,196	1,447,516
			Girls	266,981	236,788			
			Men	209,114	183,747			
			Women	277,239	243,488			
			<b>Total</b>	<b>1,005,120</b>	<b>886,623</b>			
Number of people have improved access to sanitation services	2,290,000	Boys	753,997	542,773	4,100,000	2,640,938	2,319,655	
		Girls	805,506	582,661				
		Men	622,230	452,466				

			Women	683,559	500,005			
			<b>Total</b>	<b>2,865,292</b>	<b>2,077,905</b>			
<b>Social Protection and Cash Transfers</b>								
Number of people reached with UNICEF-funded humanitarian cash transfers		472,293	Boys	86,926	31,664			
			Girls	82,763	30,086			
			Men	81,581	31,272			
			Women	85,006	31,285			
			<b>Total</b>	<b>336,276</b>	<b>124,307</b>			
Number of girls and boys with disabilities provided with regular cash transfers		17,000	Boys	6,026	1,425			
			Girls	4,365	950			
			Men	-	-			
			Women	-	-			
			<b>Total</b>	<b>10,391</b>	<b>2,375</b>			
<b>Adolescents and Youth</b>								
Number of adolescents and youth aged 10 to 24 years promoting social cohesion and civic engagement at the community level		342,883	Boys	210,096	142,509			
			Girls	230,730	160,309			
			Men	25,748	9,168			
			Women	29,212	10,861			
			<b>Total</b>	<b>495,786</b>	<b>322,847</b>			
Number of affected adolescents and youth aged 10 to 24 years receiving life-skills and citizenship education and employability skills		225,017	Boys	96,365	67,498			
			Girls	114,985	81,484			
			Men	10,051	3,507			
			Women	14,035	5,313			
			<b>Total</b>	<b>235,436</b>	<b>157,802</b>			
<b>Cross-Sectoral (SBC, RCCE &amp; AAP)</b>								
Number of people reached through messaging on prevention and access to services		10,999,998	Boys	4,254,524	2,441,654			
			Girls	3,890,013	2,074,576			
			Men	5,912,716	3,330,850			
			Women	6,486,358	3,890,996			
			<b>Total</b>	<b>20,543,611</b>	<b>11,738,076</b>			
Number of people participating in engagement actions for social and behavioural change		4,200,001	Boys	449,725	297,295			
			Girls	497,820	335,734			
			Men	1,425,281	794,300			
			Women	2,288,253	1,315,638			
			<b>Total</b>	<b>4,661,079</b>	<b>2,742,967</b>			
Number of people sharing their concerns and asking questions through established feedback mechanisms		5,000	Boys					
			Girls					
			Men	-	-			
			Women					
			<b>Total</b>	<b>4,563</b>	<b>5331</b>			

## ANNEX B – FUNDING STATUS

Section	Requirements	Funds available		Funding gap	
		Received in 2023	Carryover	\$	%
Health	\$100,343,826	\$40,397,475	\$8,768,235	\$51,178,116	51%
Nutrition	\$43,939,584	\$28,631,507	\$3,250,576	\$12,057,502	27%
Child Protection, GBViE & PSEA	\$40,507,632	\$26,365,838	\$2,193,949	\$11,947,845	29%
Education	\$89,840,465	\$46,998,424	\$8,668,498	\$34,173,543	38%
WASH	\$115,637,760	\$77,979,252	\$7,369,746	\$30,288,762	26%
Social Protection & Cash Transfers	\$64,259,430	\$28,710,876	\$2,163,750	\$33,384,804	52%
Adolescents & Youth	\$12,409,826	\$2,775,033	\$629,303	\$9,005,489	73%
SBC, RCCE & AAP	\$1,520,640	\$3,932,991	\$1,764,873	-	0%
Coordination	-	\$12,134,859	-	-	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>468,459,163</b>	<b>\$267,926,255</b>	<b>34,808,930</b>	<b>165,723,978</b>	<b>35%</b>