



Reporting Period: 1 January to 30 June 2023

Highlights¹

- UNICEF reached over 6.8 million people during the first six months of 2023, including 1.9 million girls and 1.7 million boys. Families in the most severely affected and inaccessible areas were prioritized, with 100,000 people reached in difficult to access areas (20 per cent of this population) and 2.3 million in moderately accessible areas (33 per cent of this population).
- Multiple earthquakes and aftershocks hit parts of Syria and Türkiye on 6 and 20 February 2023. Approximately 6,000 people, including children, have reportedly been killed and more than 12,000 injured across Syria. The earthquakes caused extensive damage across northern Syria, exacerbated the situation of already vulnerable children and their families due to conflicts, and affected up to 8.8 million people, within a context where close to 70 per cent (15.3 million people) of the population required humanitarian assistance before the earthquakes. UNICEF reached 2.5 million people in earthquake-affected areas in Aleppo, Idlib and Latakia.
- Since the onset of the cholera outbreak declared in September 2022, 157,196 suspected cases, including 104 associated deaths, have been reported. Camp populations with limited access to clean drinking water remain particularly vulnerable to the disease. In February and June 2023, UNICEF supported Oral Cholera Vaccine campaigns for over one million people in north-west Syria (NW Syria), including for people affected by the earthquakes.
- In 2023, UNICEF requires US\$ 468.5 million to provide life-saving assistance to 7.8 million people (including 5 million children) across Syria according to the **Humanitarian Action for Children**.

Whole of Syria

Humanitarian Situation Report January – June 2023



Situation in Numbers

7,000,000

Children in need of humanitarian assistance

15,300,000

People in need

5,300,000

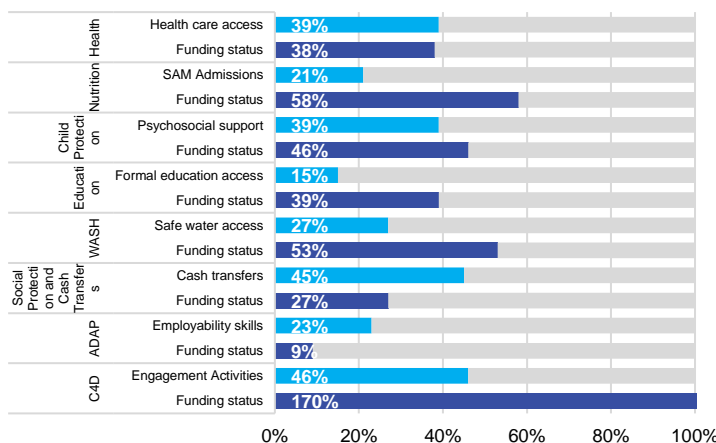
Internally displaced persons (IDPs)

2,730,000

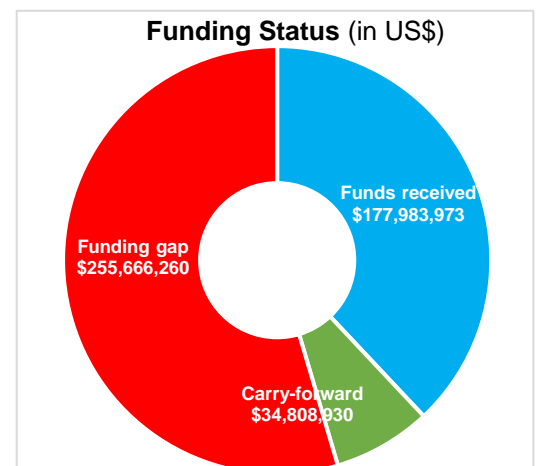
Children in difficult to access areas

(Source: OCHA, Syria Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023)

UNICEF Response and Funding Status*



UNICEF Appeal: \$468.5 million



¹ The targets in this Situation Report are aligned with the HAC Revision (January to December 2023) incorporating the regular programme, earthquake and cholera responses.

Funding Overview and Partnerships

In 2023, UNICEF requires US\$ 468,459,163 to provide lifesaving assistance to 7.8 million people (including 5 million children) across Syria according to the Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC)². Of the total funding requirements, US\$ 212,792,903 have been made available, leaving a US\$ 255,666,260 (55.6 per cent) gap. UNICEF expresses its sincere gratitude to partners who have provided support towards its humanitarian response in Syria this year, including the governments of Australia, Canada, Germany, Japan, Kuwait, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, New Zealand, and the United States, as well as GAVI, ECHO, 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, Education, Nutrition Sectors/Clusters and the Child Protection Area of Responsibility as well as the Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) Group and Risk Education Working Group. Further, 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 Syrian children, adolescents and young people, under the umbrella of the Syria Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

Children in the Syrian Arab Republic continue to face one of the most complex emergencies in the world. Over two thirds of the population require assistance because of a worsening economic crisis, continued localized hostilities, mass displacement, devastated public infrastructure and effects of the earthquakes. The 15.3 million people in need include 4.5 million women, 7 million children (3.2 million girls), 2.6 million people with disabilities and 5.3 million internally displaced people (IDPs).³ Over half of the displaced people are in NW Syria.⁴

Earthquake: The severity of humanitarian needs in Syria was further exacerbated by the multiple earthquakes that hit parts of Syria and Türkiye in February 2023. Approximately 6,000 people, including children, have reportedly been killed and more than 12,000 injured across Syria as a result of the earthquakes.⁵ The earthquakes caused extensive damage across northern Syria and affected up to 8.8 million people. The earthquakes also damaged essential service infrastructure and installations and exacerbated the situation of already vulnerable children and their families due to conflicts, leaving many people without food, water, shelter and in urgent need of emergency medical and psychosocial assistance. The estimated total value of disaster effects (damages and losses) caused by the earthquakes is US\$ 9 billion.⁶

UNICEF responded to immediate needs within hours of the disaster and rapidly scaled up its earthquake emergency response. This response continues to be integrated with UNICEF's early recovery programming with a focus on restoring essential services, building communities' resilience and improving social cohesion.

Cholera: Since the onset of the cholera outbreak declared in September 2022, 157,196 suspected cases including 104 associated deaths, have been reported between 25 August 2022 and 8 July 2023⁷. Over 50 per cent of the cases are children under 5. The cases are concentrated in Aleppo and Idlib as well as Deir-Ez-Zor and Ar-Raqqa Governorates which account for around 96 per cent of all cases. There is a significant increase in the number of newly reported cases as temperatures rise, with cases in May and June 2023 being four times higher than those reported in February and March 2023. Camp populations with limited access to clean drinking water remain particularly vulnerable to the disease. In NW Syria, UNICEF supported oral cholera vaccine campaigns for over one million people, included earthquake-affected families, in February and June 2023.

The outbreak is a result of the large-scale destruction of water and sanitation infrastructure, the economic crisis, electricity outages, prolonged drought and the limited knowledge on effective cholera preventive behaviour and practices. Up to 52 per cent of the population rely on unsafe alternative water supplies to meet or complement people's needs; one million fewer people using water networks than in 2021 due to decreased reliability and efficiency of water systems.⁸

Socio-economic situation: Ninety per cent of families live in poverty and 55 per cent are food insecure⁹. The national average price of WFP's standard reference food basket¹⁰ in May 2023 was 529,946 SYP (US\$ 81.13 at the official exchange rate of SYP 6,532¹¹) 68 per cent higher than in May 2022. The Syrian Pound continued to lose value against

² UNICEF Syria, Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) 2023 Revision 1, June 2023, <https://www.unicef.org/appeals/syria>.

³ OCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview: Syrian Arab Republic, Humanitarian Programme Cycle 2023, December 2022.

⁴ The displaced people account for 65 per cent of the total population in North-West Syria.

⁵ OCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview: Syrian Arab Republic, Humanitarian Programme Cycle 2023, December 2022.

⁶ Syria Earthquake Recovery Needs Assessment (SERNA) 2023.

⁷ Whole of Syria Cholera Outbreak Situation Report No.18, July 2023.

⁸ OCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview: Syrian Arab Republic, Humanitarian Programme Cycle 2023, December 2022.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ The standard 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 litres of vegetable oil.

¹¹ WFP Syria Market Price Watch Bulletin, May 2023.

the US Dollar with the informal market reaching 9,000 SYP in June 2023, up from 4,000 in June 2022. In addition, the Syria Earthquake Recovery Needs Assessment (SERNA) puts the total damage and losses at almost US\$ 9 billion, while the World Bank projects economic growth to reduce by two percentage points as a result of the earthquakes.¹²

North-west Syria: Following the earthquakes and the need to increase humanitarian aid to NW Syria, two additional border points were opened for transshipments for a three-month period in February and then extended until 13 August 2023. As a result, UN staff have been able to conduct one-day missions into NW Syria, visiting the most affected areas, consulting with people impacted by the earthquakes, and meeting with partners. UNICEF has completed 30 cross-border missions to accelerate its life-saving interventions in the areas of Health, Nutrition, WASH, Education and Child Protection. UNICEF has sent 214 trucks with lifesaving supplies into 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 camp: There are 48,864 IDPs living in Al-Hol (64 per cent children) and 2,500 in Al-Roj (65 per cent children) Camps. Of the 32,476 children living in these detention-like camps, 11,415 are Syrians, 14,522 are Iraqis and 6,539 are from 60 other countries. UNICEF continued its integrated Health and Nutrition, Education, WASH, Child Protection and Adolescent Development and Participation programming in Al-Hol. Independent third-party monitoring continued to check on 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. On 26 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. The station operated intermittently for 48 days in the second quarter of 2023. Since the end of 2019, 960,000 people in Hasakeh city and surrounding areas had been intermittently deprived of safe drinking water due to these interruptions despite ongoing advocacy efforts.

Ein El-Bayda water pumping station: The Ein El-Bayda water station stopped functioning in 2017, affecting access to water for 148,000 people in Al-Bab Sub-District. UNICEF provides operations and maintenance support for the 21 available low-yield boreholes. However, these boreholes supply only 35 litres of water per capita per day. Most families need to supplement their water through unsafe water trucking.

Rukban: An estimated 8,000 people still live in Rukban on the Syrian-Jordanian border. Despite ongoing advocacy efforts, the last crossline mission to Rukban was in 2019. In the first half of 2023, UNICEF continued to support families arriving from Rukban, both at the transit center and in the second destinations, with essential nutrition, education and child protection supplies and services.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

Health

Syria's fragile health system has been further disrupted by the February 2023 earthquakes and continued cholera outbreaks.

The SERNA findings indicate that as a result of the earthquake, 27 health facilities have been fully destroyed, while 214 health facilities have been partially destroyed, creating an additional burden on the already strained health sector. Even before the earthquakes, 37 per cent of primary health care facilities and 39 per cent of public hospitals were either partially or not functional¹³. This has been worsened by the ongoing socio-economic decline. Of the 4,788 UNICEF programme participants interviewed as part of the Child Well-Being Monitoring exercise conducted in the second half of 2022, 39 per cent could not afford health care for their children when they need it.

UNICEF and its 13 NGO partners operated 80 fixed clinics and 60 mobile teams to provide 949,456 free consultations (398,024 for boys, 399,087 for girls and 152,345 for women). Of these consultations, 91,613 were in NE Syria and 206,982 in NW Syria. As part of the earthquake response, health interventions were rapidly scaled up through re-deploying mobile health teams to earthquake-affected areas.

Satisfaction with health services provided by UNICEF through its partners was measured through third-party monitoring of all clinics and teams on a quarterly basis. Monitoring results from June 2023 showed that 98 per cent of programme participants were satisfied with the fixed centres and over 90 per cent with the mobile teams. In terms of accessibility, of the 61 fixed centres visited by third party monitors (TPM), 92 per cent were accessible to people with disabilities and children with disabilities. UNICEF continues to engage with partners to install ramps and other measures to increase accessibility.

So far in the first half of 2023, 71 per cent of children under 1 (98,528 boys and 97,701 girls) received their third dose of diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus (DTP 3) **vaccine**. To address the high number of unvaccinated and under vaccinated children, UNICEF and WHO supported the Ministry of Health with an integrated routine and COVID-19 **vaccination**

¹² World Bank Syria Earthquake 2023 - Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment, 2023.

¹³ WHO, Whole of Syria Health and Services Availability Monitoring System, 2022 Q3.

campaign in May 2023 through which approximately 104,702 children were vaccinated and 128,931 children under 5 received vitamin A.

Vaccination activities were also part of the immediate earthquake response where UNICEF reached 1,774 children under 5 with routine immunization in shelters and IDP camps in earthquake-affected areas in February. In addition, in response to a measles outbreak in February in 38 districts in nine governorates¹⁴, UNICEF supported a mop-up campaign in high-risk areas reaching 172,465 children (80 per cent of the targeted 215,000 children between 6 months and 5 years) through 148 mobile teams and 639 health workers.

Between January to June 2023, UNICEF has installed 45 pieces of cold chain equipment and began rehabilitating and solarizing 61 primary health care centres for the immunization programme as well as other essential maternal and child health services.

As part of its ongoing cholera preparedness efforts, UNICEF prepositioned 92 Acute Watery Diarrhea (AWD) kits (covering the needs of 92,000 people) in the most at-risk governorates in Aleppo and NE Syria.

Separately, in NW Syria UNICEF conducted vaccination campaigns for cholera, polio, and measles. Two cholera vaccine campaigns took place in Aleppo and Idlib and for all people over 1 year. The first reached 1,669,298 (95 per cent of the target group) people and the second cholera vaccine campaign reached 1,092,362 (98 per cent of the target number) people in areas affected by the earthquake. In April, 768,785 children (391,182 boys and 377,603 girls) were reached with the Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) and 668,056 children (339,928 boys and 328,128 girls) were reached with measles vaccines through an integrated campaign.

Newborn care training was extended to 771 health workers and community volunteers (105 males and 666 females). Two hundred community volunteers were trained on new-born care at home and conducted 11,414 visits to 2,755 pregnant women and 1,617 new-born (801 boys and 816 girls). The Every New-born Action Plan (ENAP) was extended from seven to ten hospitals (new hospitals joined in Homs and Rural Damascus). A survey of 3,182 mothers in eight ENAP hospitals showed immediate skin-to-skin contact in 75 per cent of births and breastfeeding initiated in the first hour in 55 per cent.

Nutrition

According to the Joint Nutrition and Food Security Assessment (JAN-FSA) 2022, the nutritional status of children under 5 and pregnant and lactating women is deteriorating. The stunting prevalence among children under 5 is 17.6 per cent while child wasting stood at 4.6 per cent (0.96 per cent for severe wasting). The 2022 SMART survey showed a 5 per cent global acute malnutrition (GAM) rate in NW Syria and a 12 per cent GAM rate in NE Syria. In addition, 48 per cent of people in Syria are iodine deficient.¹⁵ According to the 2019 SMART survey, there is a national anaemia prevalence of 30 per cent among children and pregnant and lactating women and 50 per cent among the same group in NE Syria. This alarming nutritional situation is further compounded by the deteriorating economic situation and rising costs of basic food items as well as the devastating impact of the earthquakes. As a result of the earthquakes, food insecurity is estimated to have risen by at least 10 per cent in affected areas, which already contained 8.7 million food insecure people.¹⁶

In order to address micronutrient deficiencies systematically, UNICEF and partners are supporting efforts to introduce a national wheat fortification programme in Syria. Given that bread is widely consumed in Syria, and this would be an effective channel to increase iron intake for children and women.

In the first half of 2023, UNICEF and partners reached 999,467 children under 5 and pregnant and lactating women (300,933 boys, 299,124 girls and 399,410 women) with essential nutrition services, including 339,630 (130,444 boys, 130,577 girls and 78,609 women) in NW Syria. This includes 1,394,281 children under 5 (698,491 boys and 695,790 girls; including 824,251 children in NW Syria) and 547,964 pregnant and lactating women (including 388,195 in NW Syria) who were screened for acute malnutrition. This screening identified 9,199 children 6-59 months (3,994 boys and 5,205 girls) who were then admitted and **treated for SAM**, including 6,049 children (2,448 boys and 3,601 girls) in NW Syria.

In order to address significant micronutrient deficiencies among children in Syria, UNICEF provided 573,026 children (287,718 boys and 285,308 girls) and 314,059 pregnant and lactating women with **multiple micronutrient supplementation**, including 260,509 children (130,254 boys and 130,255 girls) and 204,877 women in NW Syria. Through routine contacts and the routine immunization programme, 627,712 children 6-23 months of age were reached with vitamin A.



UNICEF supported mobile health clinics provide child and family health services as part of the earthquake response at a reception centre in Kafer Jalis in Idlib, North-west Syria. © Toby Fricker, UNICEF 2023.

¹⁴ Aleppo, Latakia, Rural Damascus, Raqqa, Hasakeh, Damascus, Deir-Ez-Zor, Hama and Homs.

¹⁵ Iodine Deficiency Disorders Survey 2023 (unpublished Ministry of Health report).

¹⁶ Syria Earthquake Recovery Needs Assessment (SERNA) 2023.

¹⁷ Nutrition screening activities are not included in the nutrition outcome calculation and are therefore higher than overall Nutrition reach.

As part of its preventive nutrition efforts, UNICEF reached 468,992 caregivers (13,354 boys, 14,310 girls, 43,614 men and 397,714 women) with **infant and young child feeding (IYCF)** counselling, including 81,914 caregivers (77,598 females) in NW Syria.

In NW Syria during the first half of 2023, the **Cash Plus Nutrition programme, UNICEF** reached 1,700 pregnant and lactating women and caregivers of children under 2 to improve access to and knowledge on adequate and nutritionally balanced diets. This caseload of 1,700 pregnant and lactating women had a household reach of 8,623 people (2,643 boys, 2,598 girls, 1,705 women and 1,677 men).

Given the potential negative impact of the earthquakes in terms of undermining efforts made for improving infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices, including as a result of women resorting to breastmilk substitutes in emergency situations, UNICEF trained 300 nutrition staff among its implementing partners on IYCF feeding practices in emergencies to build their capacity on skilled breastfeeding counselling and prescribing Ready to Use Infant Formula (RUIF) where breastfeeding is not possible.

Nutrition Sector

Under UNICEF leadership, the 45 Nutrition Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) Sector partners reached 968,129 people (309,528 boys, 276,075 girls and 382,526 women) between January and May 2023 with lifesaving preventive and curative nutrition services. The majority of the nutrition response (78 per cent) was delivered to areas classified as being under extreme or catastrophic conditions thus reaching the most vulnerable people. About 25 per cent of those reached (223,000 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.

This includes treating 14,349 children (6,475 boys and 7,874 girls) with MAM and 2,386 children (1,319 boys and 1,067 girls) with SAM and 8,904 women with MAM. 116,410 children under 5 (57,219 girls) and 41,146 pregnant and lactating women received multiple micronutrient supplementation while 158,300 children under 5 (77,567 girls) were reached with blanket supplementary food.

To prevent malnutrition, a total of 182,269 women were counselled on IYCF. Sector partners coordinated efforts on IYCF in the earthquake response, including through developing and training partners on monitoring tools and guidelines on the use of infant formula as not to undermine gains made on positive feeding practices, such as exclusive breastfeeding.

The 36 Nutrition Cluster Partners in NW Syria reached 775,552 people (194,541 boys, 196,299 girls and 379,748 women) between January and May 2023 with lifesaving preventive and curative nutrition services. In response to the earthquakes, UNICEF increased functional Nutrition Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) from 136 to 207 and set up an additional eight Outpatient Treatment Programmes (OTPs) to complement 122 pre-existing OTPs.

This includes treating 5,968 children (2,397 boys and 3,571 girls) under 5 with SAM and 16,274 children (6,697 boys and 9,577 girls) with MAM. In an effort to increase early screening and timely access to treatment for acute malnutrition, RRTs continued to train 66,138 caregivers to scale up the recently introduced Family Middle Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) approach in 2023.

To prevent malnutrition, 176,505 children (39,915 boys and 136,590 girls) and 282,448 pregnant and lactating women were reached with micronutrient supplements. In addition, 192,177 children (93,427 boys and 98,750 girls) received high-energy biscuits while 5,132 pregnant and lactating women obtained support through the nutrition cash-voucher assistance programme.

Child Protection

The earthquakes in February 2023 have exacerbated protection risks for children, which were already acute. Children have been living under significant stress with limited access to social services and exposure to different forms of violence. Negative coping strategies have led to practices harmful to children and adolescents, such as child labour and child marriage. In NW Syria, ongoing hostilities continue to pose significant protection risks for children.

Child protection services have been delivered in partnerships with NGOs, reaching 354,022 children (165,175 boys and 188,847 girls) in the first half of 2023, including those affected by the earthquake. Such services have been provided through mobile teams and community based static centres, with about four in five of them accessible to children with disability. UNICEF has also ensured that children and their families in the earthquake-affected governorates continue to receive services as they transition from collective shelters to communities.

Out of the overall reach, 192,787 children (87,467 boys and 105,320 girls) were reached with **mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS)** using the recently nationally approved manual to ensure a harmonized and streamlined approach across all partners. In NE Syria, child protection and education coordination enabled provision of MHPSS to students in 14 schools in Hasakeh and Qamishli cities of Hasakeh Governorate. In NW Syria, MHPSS was provided to 30,425 children (14,554 boys and 15,871 girls) in child friendly spaces and through community outreach. In the immediate

response to the earthquake, psychological first aid (PFA) was provided by trained frontline workers to children and their parents or caregivers so that they were able to cope with the aftermath due to psychological distress.

Pre and post assessments undertaken by implementing partners showed an increase in the overall psychosocial well-being among the children who regularly participated in the structured MHPSS sessions from 30 per cent before the sessions to 90 per cent of children after the sessions. Children showed increased levels of confidence, compassion and were able to express their emotions when feeling distressed, knowing when to seek help when experiencing violence and abuse, as well as learning the needed tools and approaches to solve conflicts through non-violent means.

Approximately, 70,642 people (343 boys, 470 girls, 20,138 men and 49,691 women), including 5,172 (30 boys, 35 girls, 2,367 men and 2,740 women in NW Syria, caregivers were provided with **parenting programmes**, acquainting them with skills and tools to interact with their children. Parents who attended the programme reported their improved communication and being able to manage behaviour of their children by a non-violent means. Fathers and male caregivers showed significantly less interest and commitment in participating. The approach is being adjusted to more proactively reach out in places of social gathering among men and in a more suitable time.

Scaling up of the unified case management system piloted in Rural Damascus by the key government counterparts was delayed due to immediate earthquake response priority. Nevertheless, UNICEF's implementing partners supported 26,077 children and women, including 14,139 boys and 11,730 girls who experience or were at a greater exposure to violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect with **individual case management** including referral to services and supports such as health and education services, legal assistance, MHPSS, social protection schemes. In NW Syria, following a survivor centred approach and best-interest determination, 4,339 people, including 2,143 boys, 1,998 girls and 198 women were supported with case management.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (MOSAL) disseminated a hotline number to shelters to report cases of **unaccompanied and separated children**. The children were supported with family tracing and reunification as well as alternative care. 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 included the child's full name, address, phone numbers of caregivers and relatives. Eight hundred children in schools in one of the most affected areas took part in the pilot.

In NE Syria, alternative care was provided to 45 unaccompanied and separated children (15 girls) in two interim care centers in the Al-Hol camp. Case management and family tracing support were provided to the 45 children with referral to different services including health services, MHPSS, and vocational training.

UNICEF continued **explosive ordnance risk education (EORE)** activities through partners, reaching 230,416 people (90,021 boys, 101,641 girls, 8,803 men and 29,951 women). This includes 20,143 boys, 20,388 girls, 1,955 men and 1,983 women in NW Syria.

Gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and empowerment activities reached 106,184 people, including 36,174 boys, 49,975 girls and 20,035 women. This includes 13,587 people (751 boys, 3,344 girls and 9,492 women) in NW Syria, where GBV interventions were primarily delivered to Women and Girls Safe Spaces.

UNICEF implementing partners also reached 437,400 people with **key child protection messages** through awareness raising sessions and other community edutainment events, including how to cope with the earthquake.

More than 1,400 child protection personnel of UNICEF's implementing partners and other non-government child protection actors were trained to ensure that they have the latest knowledge on child protection standards, gender-based violence, case management, MHPSS, EORE, and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). In response to concerns of implementing partners related to mental health of their frontline workers following many years of conflict and recently the earthquake response, UNICEF also provided 61 frontline workers (49 female and 12 male) with training of trainers who in turn will implement wellbeing activities for more than 1,000 frontline workers across the country in the coming months. Preventative mental health support is necessary to reduce the risk of professional burnout, stress, anxiety, and traumatic stress disorders, including secondary traumatization.

Despite their low-risk rating for **sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA)** among the implementing partners, UNICEF continued to invest in awareness raising, code of conduct training and signing and access to a channel to report sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian personnel. Independent monitoring between January and April 2023 through a third party showed that more than 90 per cent of staff implementing activities received a PSEA training. Posters with information on PSEA and reporting channels were visibly displayed in only about two third of the community centres, and this is one of the focus areas to reinforce in 2023. At the same time, more than 532,734 children and adults were directly reached by awareness raising sessions, dissemination of IEC materials and public media on PSEA, including 346,544 in NW Syria.

Child Protection Area of Responsibility (AOR)

The Child Protection Area of Responsibility (CP AOR) under UNICEF leadership provided strategic guidance to its 44 member organizations reaching 1,049,632 people (441,919 girls, 417,508 boys, 111,732 women, 78,473 men), of whom

19,870 were children with disability, during the first six months of 2023. This includes 405,246 people who were reached as part of the earthquake response in Aleppo, Hama and Latakia.

The CP AOR led rapid child protection assessment provided evidence for an effective response to the earthquake, noting an increased risk in unaccompanied and separated children, significantly increased level of psychological distress and possible reliance on harmful coping mechanisms such as child labour and child marriage. The CP AOR also provided child protection actors with strategic guidance on child protection response to the earthquake, including procedures in handling unaccompanied and separated children.

In NE Syria, CP AOR members continued to coordinate closely on the repatriation of unaccompanied and separated Iraqi children and overall protection risks in emergencies. A training was organized for 25 (9 female and 16 male) members of the Protection Committee and the Camp Management in the Areesha camp, equipping them with the knowledge on how to identify and refer children in need of protection.

In NW Syria, Child Protection AOR partners reached a total of 161,885 people, including 149,106 children (75,402 boys and 73,704 girls) and their 12,779 caregivers (7,523 women and 5,256 men) with child protection services.

Education

More than twelve years of crisis had a devastating impact on children's education in Syria. Even before the February 2023 earthquakes, around one in three schools remained out of service, close to 2.4 million children – one in three school age children – were out of school and around 1.6 million children were at risk of dropping out.¹⁸

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 SERNA estimates that the earthquakes caused the education sector US\$ 277 million in loss and damages, with 2,149 schools impacted and over 96,000 teachers affected by the disruption of education.

Within this context, UNICEF has continued to provide comprehensive support for children to learn and develop skills both in formal and non-formal settings while focusing on strengthening resilience and building back better.

During the first half of 2023, UNICEF has supported the provision of equitable access to quality education opportunities for 776,230 children (403,090 boys and 373,140 girls), including 205,338 children (104,986 boys and 100,352 girls) in NW Syria. This includes 398,139 children (206,332 boys and 191,807 girls) in the most earthquake affected areas.

To improve the learning environment and help restore the functionality of moderately and slightly damaged schools, UNICEF **rehabilitated** and undertook minor repairs of 63 schools, including those in earthquake-affected areas. This has served a total of 60,245 children (34,818 boys and 25,427 girls). UNICEF also provided gender-sensitive and disability-inclusive WASH facilities tailored to the needs of children with disabilities in rehabilitated schools. In areas where school rehabilitation was not sufficient to address the lack of adequate physical space for children, temporary learning spaces (prefabricated or tented classrooms) were installed. A total of 41 temporary learning spaces have been established in the governorates affected by the earthquake, while an additional 47 are being installed supporting 5,167 children (2,496 boys and 2,671 girls, including 28 children with disabilities.) In NW Syria, a total of 31,014 children (16,298 boys and 14,716 girls) have been attending classes in temporary learning spaces provided by UNICEF.

In addition, 436,687 children (222,906 boys and 213,781 girls), including 4,641 children with disabilities received education supplies, such as stationery kits in formal and non-formal settings. Out of these, 207,287 children are from NW Syria. The availability of textbooks remains a challenge for many students. In some communities, textbooks are being shared by several students. To address this challenge, UNICEF has initiated the printing of 1,242,000 national textbooks for the academic year 2023/2024.

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 a national team of 50 master trainers who will further train 5,000 teachers in the six earthquake-affected governorates. An additional 509 teachers (178 women and 331 men) were trained on PSS in NW Syria.

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 242,995 children (118,098 boys and 124,897 girls), including children with disabilities. This includes 115,994 children (57,178 boys and 58,816 girls) in NW Syria. Independent programme monitoring data from June 2023 shows that 86 per cent of the NFE community learning centers are accessible for children and adults with disabilities.

As part of the education sectors' **national examination support**, UNICEF, through implementing partners, supported the preparation of 19 accommodation centres in Rural Damascus, Aleppo and Raqqa governorates. In addition, UNICEF provided education preparation sessions for 1,108 children (558 boys and 550 girls) in accommodation centres in Raqqa,

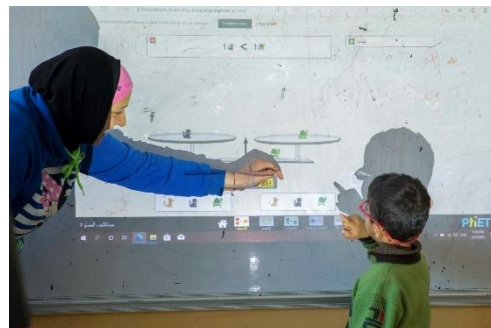
¹⁸ OCHA, Humanitarian Needs Overview: Syrian Arab Republic, Humanitarian Programme Cycle 2023, December 2022.

and 3,549 children (1,712 boys and 1,837 girls) in Aleppo. At the same time, all accommodation centres and national exam centres were supported through hygiene interventions to ensure a safe environment for children. Further, 6,311 children (3,303 boys and 3,008 girls) in Aleppo, and 36 children (26 boys and 10 girls) in Idlib received bursaries to support their transportation costs.

In the first half of 2023, UNICEF has achieved significant progress in adapting and implementing two **internationally recognized learning assessments tools**¹⁹ that will help teachers in formal and non-formal settings assess learning and adjust instruction as they teach and measure changes in learning of groups of students over time. The tools have been adapted to the local context and support teachers tailor their teaching to the specific and differentiated needs of children who might have missed learning time due to multiple crises. This will address the general lack of tools to measure learning and provide needs-based remedial support in a context where children's education is often disrupted and where there is a need to identify where children are at with their learning and helping them improve.

As part of the earthquake response, UNICEF has introduced **digital learning** to groups of learners in shelter locations via 'learning cinemas'. These cinemas have been used as a rapid and effective way to bridge the learning gap in the earthquake-affected areas by leveraging technology. Interactive content based on the national curriculum was designed for learners outside of school settings. In its pilot phase, this initiative has engaged with 539 children (320 girls and 219 boys, including 56 children with disabilities in Aleppo and Latakia). In addition, UNICEF extended its digital learning efforts by introducing blended classes in non-formal education centres located in Hama and Hasakeh, reaching 2,066 children (and 993 boys and 1,073 girls including 32 children with disabilities).

In NW Syria, UNICEF made use of innovative mobile teacher services to reach 601 displaced children (262 boys and 339 girls) who would otherwise not be accessing learning opportunities.



Ahmed, 6. He participated in a mathematics class as part of UNICEF's learning cinema at a school-turned-shelter in Alraml Aljanoubi neighbourhood, Latakia, Syria, on 7 March 2023. © Ameen Haddad, UNICEF.

Political fragmentation with different curricula continues to pose challenges both to children's access to accredited education and to obtaining reliable enrolment data. In NE Syria, where formal education is very limited, UNICEF continues to support children to access flexible alternative non-formal learning pathways through the Self-Learning Programme using learning materials that have been mapped and aligned with national curriculum standards. As of June 2023, a total of 20,000 children (8,600 boys and 11,400 girls) and were supported through this modality.

Education Sector

UNICEF acted as HCT Education Sector co-lead, coordinating 39 partners. Between January and May 2023, Education Sector Partners reached 660,000 children (5 – 17 years) with Education in Emergencies activities (336,600 boys and 323,400 girls). Out of these children, 602,422 (307,236 boys and 295,186 girls) were reached through formal education and 58,434 (49 per cent girls) through non-formal education and a total of 74 classrooms were rehabilitated (supporting 10,600 children, 48 per cent girls).

Education sector partners supported 24,017 children (12,499 boys and 11,518 girls) from hard-to-reach areas to sit for the **national exams** (grades 9 and 12) which took place between 7 and 26 June 2023. Out of these, 8,539 were supported to stay in 62 accommodation centres during the exam period. This represents a 66 per cent increase in total children taking exams and 13 per cent increase in students supported in accommodation centres compared to last year's examination. As part of the exam support, 17 education sector partners provided light rehabilitation, ready to eat food (RTE) and non-food items (NFI) such as mattresses and blankets, health services, protection services (especially child protection) to the centres to accommodate incoming students and chaperones and companions. Partners have also provided short-term remedial learning classes to these children to prepare them for the exams. This effort, in coordination with multiple government and non-government stakeholders, aimed at ensuring that children who have been outside the formal education system get an opportunity to obtain accreditation and certification so as to ensure progression to higher levels of education in Syria or any other country. A second round of exams will take place in August 2023 for those students who seek to improve their grades.



Futaim and Sara, who came together from Manbij, northeast of Aleppo to sit for Grade 9 national exams, study together in the yard of a school-turned-temporary-accommodation-centre in Aleppo city, Syria, on 6 June 2023. ©May Saad, UNICEF.

The Education Cluster in NW Syria conducted a post-earthquake rapid needs assessment on infrastructure and use of schools which showed that 822 school buildings were damaged and 64 of them completely collapsed or damaged by the earthquake.

¹⁹ Holistic Assessment for Learning (HAL) and the Holistic Assessment of Learning and Development Outcomes (HALDO).

During the first half of 2023, 44 Education Cluster partners in NW Syria implemented key education activities, including as part of the earthquake response in 371 communities, reaching 383,147 children (186,151 boys and 196,996 girls), most of whom (297,000) are in the highest severity of needs.

WASH

Even before the February 2023 earthquakes, there has been a prolonged deterioration of existing WASH systems in Syria as a result of infrastructural damage caused by years of conflict, relative absence of sustainable operations and preventive maintenance, reduced numbers of trained human resources, weak overall system management, poor water resource management, reduction in renewable water resources, reduced budgetary allocations into the sector coupled with the devaluation of the local currency as well as the impact of climate change and droughts. As a result, there is an increased need for WASH assistance in Syria, with approximately 13.6 million people requiring support in 2023.²⁰

The earthquakes had a compounding negative impact on critical infrastructure, leading to decreased efficiency and an increased risk of water contamination. The earthquake related damage to WASH infrastructure has been considerable, with 71 water reservoirs collapsing or requiring removal and a further 114 damaged and requiring rehabilitation. In addition, 220 water facilities have been either completely or partially destroyed and 40 km of water lines and 103 km of sewage lines need rehabilitation.²¹

Due to the damage to the sewage system, there is a heightened risk of waterborne disease outbreaks resulting from sewage from leaking sewer lines migrating into broken low-pressure water networks. A new public health threat, such as the rapid spread of infectious diseases, would be catastrophic, including for the large number of people living in camps and informal settlements.

During the first half of 2023, UNICEF focused on providing **emergency WASH services and supplies** to 1.8 million people, including those affected by the earthquake. This support included water trucking as well as providing hygiene supplies, such as family hygiene kits, soaps, aqua tabs, baby diapers, and dignity kits, all of which are necessary to prevent disease outbreaks. In NW Syria, in order to meet the increased needs of people affected by the earthquake, UNICEF rapidly scaled up its water trucking operations reach from 175,000 people to 732,000 people.

The earthquake response also included light rehabilitation and installation of WASH facilities in collective shelters for people who were displaced by the earthquake and other IDP settings. To mitigate gender-based violence (GBV) risks, UNICEF ensured that WASH facilities are sex segregated and the availability of adequate road and facility lighting for enhanced safety.

Between January to June 2023, 1,410,859 people (387,913 boys, 423,561 girls, 280,793 men and 318,592 women), including 604,221 people (168,786 boys, 181,216 girls, 119,790 men and 134,429 women) in NW Syria, had **access to safe water** as UNICEF rehabilitated wells, pumping stations, and water distribution networks. UNICEF has started the rehabilitation of over 60 water facilities (20 in NW Syria), including those damaged by the earthquakes. As part of the earthquake response, UNICEF also started to import 1,400 meters of drinking water pipes to replace damaged parts of the pipeline that provides around 67 per cent of the 1.6 million people in Aleppo city with safe drinking water.

Given the very limited electricity supply which impacts the functionality of water stations and the ability to generate and distribute water, UNICEF accelerated **solarization** of water stations, including through beginning to integrate solar power into 17 water pumping stations in Deir- ez-Zor, Aleppo, and Ar-Raqqa governorates which continue to see the highest numbers of suspected AWD/cholera cases.

In 2023, UNICEF continued to procure most of the country's **sodium hypochlorite** requirements, ensuring the availability of safe drinking water to 13.5 million people.

787,387 people (211,224 boys, 222,845 girls, 169,764 men and 183,554 women), had **access to sanitation**, including 757,389 people (203,346 boys, 214,053 girls, 163,658 men and 176,332 women), in NW Syria. Access to sanitation is expected to increase throughout the year as UNICEF recently started the rehabilitation of 29 sanitation systems and already completed the rehabilitation of sewerage networks in five communities in the Dara'a Governorate and repaired pipes in Latakia which were damaged by the earthquake. In NW Syria, emphasis was given to wastewater and solid waste management to counter the ongoing cholera epidemic.

In addition, UNICEF launched a nationwide hygiene awareness campaign focusing on issues related to handwashing and food hygiene to reduce the risk of cholera, reaching over a million people.



On 10 February 2023, children and families fill jerrycans with clean water at a distribution point in Almyassar neighbourhood, Aleppo city. © Muhannad Al-Asadi, UNICEF.

²⁰ UNICEF Syria, Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) 2023 Revision 1, June 2023. <https://www.unicef.org/appeals/syria>.

²¹ Syria Earthquake Recovery Needs Assessment (SERNA) 2023.

WASH Sector

From January to May 2023, 17 out of the 28 reporting WASH Sector HCT partners, led by UNICEF and co-led by the Syria Arab Red Crescent (SARC), reached 2,056,352, people (437,168 boys, 488,383 girls 514,138 men and 616,663 women) with WASH services and supplies, including as part of the WASH Sector coordinated earthquake response.

WASH Sector partners played a leading role in coordinating and implementing assessments for rapid and prioritized repairs of essential WASH infrastructure that was damaged by the earthquake.

From January to June 2023, WASH Cluster Partners coordinated by UNICEF in NW Syria reached a total of 2.2 million people (583,440 boys, 538,560 girls, 560,560 men and 517,440 women) with lifesaving WASH interventions. The response focused on addressing three major crises that affect more than 4 million people in NW Syria: cholera emergency and prevention activities in major hotspots, sanitation and safe water supply in IDPs camps and earthquake-affected areas, and hygiene promotion, including cholera prevention messages.

WASH Cluster partners further coordinated assessments of WASH infrastructure damaged by the earthquakes and prepared the NW Syria WASH earthquake response plan to coordinate the sector's response.

The Whole of Syria (WOS) WASH Cluster, led by UNICEF and co-lead by ACTED, continued to provide leadership and coordination, together with the WOS Health Cluster, for the AWD/cholera response within the Incident Management system which was activated at WOS level for the outbreak. As part of this, a joint WOS AWD/cholera response plan (January to June 2023) was developed to ensure coherence of the response across hubs and programmes and a joint intra action review of the response was held in May 2023.

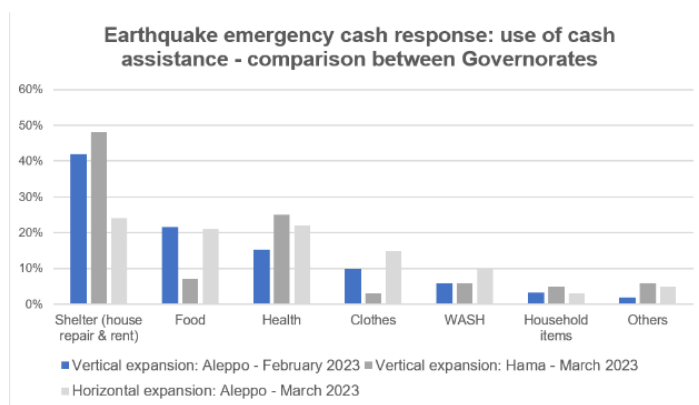
Social Protection and Cash Transfers

During the first half of the year, **211,969 highly vulnerable people (42,393 families), including 61,105 boys and 57,430 girls, were reached with cash assistance and social protection interventions in six 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 response to the earthquakes, **UNICEF adapted and used its two existing humanitarian social protection 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.** As part of this earthquake response, over 81,000 people (15,809 families) have received a first round of cash assistance in Aleppo, Hama and Latakia: 57,204 people (11,169 families) in Aleppo; 16,066 people (3,027 families) in Hama; and 8,065 people (1,613 families). This represents only 40 per cent of the overall target of reaching 40,000 earthquake-affected families with two rounds of cash assistance. This low achievement reflects the challenges encountered during implementation, with cash payments to families interrupted for most of the second quarter of the year.²²

Three rapid Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) surveys

were conducted to assess cash use and satisfaction among people using this assistance in March and April. Surveys confirmed the relevance of the cash assistance and a high level of satisfaction among participants. People indicated in the surveys that the earthquake further aggravated poverty and vulnerability among families caring for children with disabilities. Families used a large part of the cash assistance to address new humanitarian needs resulting from the earthquake, such as shelter needs (house repairs and rent). Families also spent a significant amount of cash on basic needs, especially for health, that existed prior to the earthquake. Surveys indicated that families used the cash assistance in less than one week. There was a high level of satisfaction among participants about the cash emergency response (over 85 per cent satisfaction across all three surveys).



Sources: [Aleppo April 2023 PDM](#); [Hama May 2023 PDM](#); [Aleppo June PDM](#)

Complaints and Feedback Mechanisms: The feedback-complaint mechanisms established in 2021 continued to be strengthened, with 2,585 calls received and responded to during the reporting period. Calls were related to the implementation of the Children with Disabilities programme, the 2022-2023 winter response, and the earthquake response. The **timeliness of responding to calls significantly improved with 95 per cent of calls closed within the**

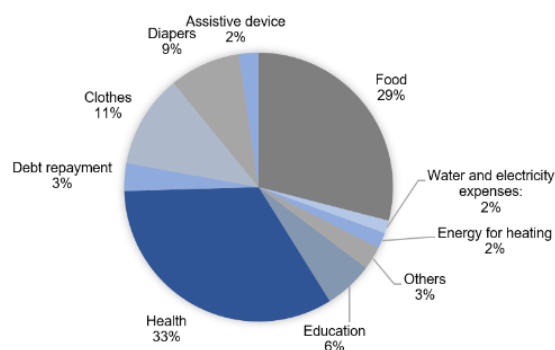
²² Since mid-April 2023, following the 10 April Central Bank instruction to Banks and financial service providers that payments lists should be stamped by the Crisis Room prior to authorizing payments, **payments to recipients have been halted due to the lack of pre-existing data sharing agreements.** UNICEF has been closely engaged with the UNCT and the Cash Working Group to identify practical solutions to address this situation and resume payments.

same day, and 5 per cent closed within five working days. Most people called to request information (95 per cent of calls). Five per cent were complaints, suggestions and reports of new humanitarian needs. **Most callers were female** (77 per cent). Calls received through the UNICEF service line were concentrated in two governorates, with 76 per cent coming from people in Aleppo and Hama.

As part of its **Integrated Social Protection Programme for Children with Disabilities, UNICEF and partners reached 8,016 children (3,415 girls and 4,601 boys) with regular cash assistance (SYP equivalent to US\$ 120 per quarter) and case management services in six governorates** (Hasakeh, Aleppo, Deir-ez-Zor, Hama, Homs, and Rural Damascus).

Cash assistance played a **critical role** to help families meet the basic needs of children, with most of the cash used to cover essential needs such as food, health, and clothes. In Hasakeh Governorate, the April 2023 PDM survey indicated that families spent over 80 per cent of the cash on health (33 per cent), food (29 per cent); and diapers and clothes (20 per cent). The survey also confirmed the positive impact of the combination of cash and case management services, with 27 per cent of children gaining a disability card through the referral of case managers and another 53 per cent receiving basic and specialized health care for the first time.

Use of cash assistance among families caring for children with disabilities: Al-Hasakeh (April 2023)



Source: UNICEF PDM – April 2023 – Not published yet

Several challenges continue to impede the effective delivery of the programme. These include (i) lack of resources (ii) limited availability of Financial Service Providers to deliver cash to communities in a timely manner; and (iii) loss of value for money due to the high difference between the formal and informal US\$/SYP exchange rate.

As part of the 2022-2023 winter response, UNICEF and its partners provided humanitarian cash assistance to 25,468 vulnerable families (or over 127,000 people) in urban and peri-urban slums in Aleppo, Homs, Hama and Rural Damascus governorates. This represents 85 per cent of the annual target for the 2022-2023 winter response. Based on lessons learned from the 2021-2022 winter response, the 2022/2023 winter response was redesigned, including more focused targeting to reach the most vulnerable families, in particular female-headed families, and increased amount and frequency of cash assistance.

From January to April, families received their second and third rounds of cash assistance (SYP equivalent to US\$ 60 per round – the first round of cash assistance was distributed in the period October-December 2022). Cash assistance was key to helping families cope with economic hardship and meeting children's essential needs during the harsh winter months. Monitoring surveys confirmed the relevance of the new design and targeting approach. Key findings of the January 2023 PDM survey in rural Damascus indicated that: i) **energy was the top expenditure**, accounting for one-third of the cash usage; ii) **the use of cash was closely related to the type of vulnerability affecting families**: Families with a member with chronic illness or disability spent five times more on health than other families; and iii) **the use of cash was extremely quick**: on average, families used the cash in **3.3 days**.

In NW Syria, the **UNICEF Cash Plus programme** for pregnant and lactating women was extended after the earthquakes to reach 32,265 people (8,201 boys, 7,570 girls, 8,974 women and 7,880 men,) affected by the earthquake in NW Syria with a one-off cash payment of US\$ 150. This payment was unconditional for households to support needs after the earthquake. The payment was targeted at recipients of the Cash Plus programme and families impacted by the earthquake. The earthquake cash programme was completed by the end of June and the Cash Plus Programme will conclude by the end of July.

Adolescent Development and Participation (ADAP)

Between January to June 2023, UNICEF supported 250,573 youth and adolescents (119,578 males and 130,995 females), including 8,428 (3,452 males and 4,976 females) young people with disabilities, in 14 governorates with skills building and engagement opportunities through adolescent friendly spaces and mobile teams. Third-party monitoring data from June 2023 shows that 94 per cent of the visited facilities are accessible for adolescents and youth with disabilities. Almost all of the adolescents were satisfied with the facilitator, the environment, the learning content, and the activities they engaged in, according to the data.

Young people also played a critical role in the **earthquake response**. UNICEF collaborated with 975 young (622 females) volunteers to strengthen the youth-led emergency response in Tartous and Latakia governorates. The volunteers were involved in various emergency response activities such as relief and shelter management, distributing food and non-food items, disseminating key messages, and providing psychosocial support to other children and adolescents. Seventy-four youth volunteers (35 females) also supported OCHA-led cross-sectoral needs assessments using the Syria Needs

Assessment Tool (SYNAT) in Tartous and Latakia. Additionally, six young researchers supported UNICEF in undertaking rapid assessment surveys in three earthquake-affected locations in Latakia and Tartous governorates,

Out of the total reach, 77,634 young people (35,411 males and 42,223 females), including 3,216 young people with disabilities (1,762 males and 1,454 females), participated in **skills-building initiatives**, including on life skills, citizenship education, technical and vocational education, and social entrepreneurship.

Community engagement activities reached 172,939 young people (84,167 males and 88,772 females), including 6,112 young people with disabilities (2,590 males and 3,522 females). These opportunities included youth-led initiatives, sports for development, youth clubs, and cultural activities with the aim to provide young people with opportunities to actively participate in society.

In NE Syria, UNICEF provided services to young people through seven Adolescent Friendly Spaces (AFSs), 18 mobile teams and the support of 280 youth volunteers, reaching 8,676 people including 4,619 young people living in camps in NE Syria.

Social and Behaviour Change (SBC), RCCE and Accountability for Affected Populations (AAP)

In the first half of the year, UNICEF reached 8,763,480 people (1,799,810 boys, 1,801,633 girls, 2,566,283 men, 2,579 women) through promoting protective practices and information on how to access to services and engaged 1,851,950 million people (121,349 boys, 130,706 girls, 629,126 men, 970,769 women) in social and behaviour change (SBC) activities through community dialogues, edutainment and engagement with influencers.

As part of its earthquake response, UNICEF adjusted its SBC strategy to fit the earthquake context and provided community engagement activities on general hygiene and self-protection, safe handling of water and food, home remedies in case of sickness, and guidance on when and where to seek medical advice and treatment.

Given the continued cholera outbreak in Syria, including in earthquake-affected areas and camps, Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) increased awareness of practical measures that can help people protect themselves. For instance, 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 Syria, UNICEF also provided training on key preventive messages for 688 community health workers, 143 social mobilizers as well as 135 camp managers.

Accountability for Affected Populations (AAP)

AAP remains a core principle guiding UNICEF's humanitarian action. UNICEF continued to integrate and strengthen its accountability to people impacted by the multiple crises affecting people in Syria.

As part of UNICEF's efforts to provide people with accessible ways to provide feedback on UNICEF partners' services, complaints and feedback mechanisms were scaled up, including for complaints related to SEA. The mechanism includes UNICEF's service line on which UNICEF responded to 3,143 calls during the first six months of 2023. Forty-five per cent of all calls were directly related to the earthquake, including about cash assistance and people seeking shelter. However, surveys carried out in 2023 in some earthquake-affected areas showed that 80 per cent of respondents did not know how to submit a complaint and other feedback, or make suggestions about assistance, which points to the need to increase awareness of available complaint mechanisms. However, 32 per cent of the answers articulated that the service line and 22 per cent of them articulated that the suggestion box were known mechanisms to make a complaint or provide feedback. UNICEF is ensuring and monitoring universal coverage of suggestion boxes in all its service facilities and is exploring the option of including leaflets in all distributed supplies to increase the awareness on available mechanisms.

UNICEF carried out 1,143 monitoring surveys in the earthquake-affected governorates Aleppo, Hama, Latakia and Idlib. Eighty-seven per cent of people surveyed said that both the supplies and services provided met their current needs. Almost all respondents were satisfied with the behaviour of the aid workers that provided the assistance.

In NW Syria, implementing partners provided information to crisis-affected communities in multiple formats and through face-to-face interactions on available services for earthquake-affected communities, on how people could protect themselves against further risks, and on ways to submit complaints and feedback. Implementing partners responded to and resolved complaints and feedback answered feedback and complaints they received and acted on them. The WAQTI ("My time" in Arabic) project was begun to support 113,520 individuals (at least 73,788 children participating in protection activities and 31,909 in education) affected by the earthquake in Idlib and Aleppo Governorates through educational, child protection and MHPSS programming. Parents and caregivers were engaged in project decision making through parent-teacher associations and face-to-face interactions among children, adults and project staff. WASH, health, nutrition, and other child protection and education projects engaged with communities by establishing community committees so people could help implement projects and make them sustainable, and by working with existing local councils, committees, and community leaders. With access enabled after the earthquake, UNICEF staff and partners conducted multiple focus group discussions and key informant interviews with WAQTI and other project participants to inject their concerns, priorities, and comments into UNICEF AAP policies, and to influence current and future programming. All UNICEF implementing

partners in NW Syria continued using multiple communication channels for people to comment on UNICEF and partners' performance. In May, UNICEF added dedicated AAP capacity for NW Syria and held a staff training to continue strengthening accountability.

Human Interest Stories and External Media

In **January**, the team marked the International Day of Education on social media and continued to document interventions on the ground, including the fight against cholera, education programmes, support to children with disabilities, and response to vulnerable children in need in crossline locations. In **February**, in less than 24 hours of the earthquakes, a statement was released to highlight the impact on children. Another press release followed one week after the earthquakes to underscore the immense needs of children affected and the ongoing UNICEF response. Messaging, including media interviews, continued to highlight the dire situation, the immense needs of children and their challenges, and UNICEF's response on the ground. Social media assets, videos and photos to mobilize support for children continued to be produced. In **March**, UNICEF Executive Director reflected on her visit to the earthquake-affected areas. The team also marked the grim milestone of 12 years of conflict in Syria with new content on the looming malnutrition crisis because of the conflict, compounded by the deadly earthquakes. This included a press release, a web story, video, and social media posts. In **April**, the team marked the World Immunization Week with web and social media content. More content was disseminated to showcase UNICEF's work on the ground and to thank donors for their support. In **May**, UNICEF marked 100 days after the deadly earthquakes with a press release, a signature video on Syria, web content and series of social media posts by UNICEF on country, regional and HQ levels. In **June**, UNICEF continued to highlight support for earthquake -affected children and families, moving gradually from immediate emergency response to early recovery. The team also amplified social media content on the Brussels pledging conference on Syria.

Next SitRep: 31 January 2024

UNICEF Syria Crisis: <https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/syrian-crisis>

UNICEF Syria Humanitarian Action for Children Appeal: <https://www.unicef.org/appeals/syria>

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Annex A

Summary of Programme Results

Sector	Overall Needs	UNICEF and IPs response				Sector response ²³		
		2023 Targets		Total results	Change since last report	2023 target	Total results	Change since last report
Health								
Number of children aged 6 to 59 months vaccinated against polio ²⁴	15.3M	1,043,200	Boys	-	0			
			Girls	-	0			
			Men	-	0			
			Women	-	0			
			Total	-	0			
Number of children and women accessing primary health care in UNICEF-supported facilities ²⁵		2,439,799	Boys	398,024	0			
			Girls	399,087	0			
			Men	-	0			
			Women	152,345	0			
			Total	949,456	0			
Number of children under 1 year reached with routine vaccination (DTP3 containing vaccine) ²⁶		742,880	Boys	98,528	0			
			Girls	97,701	0			
			Men	-	0			
			Women	-	0			
			Total	196,229	0			
Nutrition								
Number of children aged 6 to 59 months with severe acute malnutrition admitted for treatment ²⁷	5.9M	44,868	Boys	3,994	0	62,474	4,355	0
			Girls	5,205	0		5,526	0
			Men	-	0		-	0
			Women	-	0		-	0
			Total	9,199	0		9,881	0
Number of primary caregivers of children aged 0 to 23 months receiving IYCF counselling ²⁸		1,604,900	Boys	13,354	0	1,449,269	-	0
			Girls	14,310	0		-	0
			Men	43,614	0		-	0
			Women	397,714	0		542,442	0
			Total	468,992	0		542,442	0
Number of children and pregnant and lactating women receiving micronutrients		2,030,900	Boys	287,718	0	3,359,325	249,961	0
			Girls	285,308	0		246,390	0
			Men	-	0		-	0
			Women	314,059	0		292,532	0
			Total	887,085	0		788,883	0

²³ Clusters' reporting period is from January to May 2023, which is one month behind UNICEF's SitRep reporting period - January to June 2023.

²⁴ Syria Country Office is not implementing national immunization day against polio anymore. The oral polio vaccine campaign ran in April in NW Syria and the data is in collection phase for verification and reporting.

²⁵ The overall reach is marginally off track but with the ongoing consultation services provision, the target will be reached as planned.

²⁶ The routine immunization is ongoing covering new geographical areas and the target will be reached as planned.

²⁷ Low achievement is due to delays in getting approvals to access new communities. The target will be reached as planned.

²⁸ The activities and data collection are ongoing but there are delays in reporting from main stakeholders. The target will be reached as planned.

Child Protection, GBVIE & PESA								
Number of children accessing mental health and psychosocial support ²⁹	488,782	Boys	87,467	0	883,849	180,387	0	
		Girls	105,320	0		187,820	0	
		Men	-	0		-	0	
		Women	-	0		-	0	
		Total	192,787	0		368,207	0	
Number of girls, boys and women benefiting from case management for child protection and/or GBV ³⁰	5,800	Boys	14,139	0				
		Girls	11,730	0				
		Men	-	0				
		Women	208	0				
		Total	26,077	0				
Number of women, girls and boys accessing GBV risk mitigation, prevention or response interventions	131,494	Boys	36,174	0				
		Girls	49,975	0				
		Men	-	0				
		Women	20,035	0				
		Total	106,184	0				
Number of children and caregivers accessing explosive weapons-related risk education and survivor assistance interventions ³¹	1,451,579	Boys	90,021	0				
		Girls	101,641	0				
		Men	8,803	0				
		Women	29,951	0				
		Total	230,416	0				
Education ³²								
Number of children supported with educational services and supplies in formal settings ³³	2,614,570	Boys	213,552	0	2,874,701	-	0	
		Girls	185,996	0		-	0	
		Men	-	0		-	0	
		Women	-	0		-	0	
		Total	399,548	0		0	0	
Number of children in non-formal education benefiting from education services	536,466	Boys	118,098	0	946,864	-	0	
		Girls	124,897	0		-	0	
		Men	-	0		-	0	
		Women	-	0		-	0	
		Total	242,995	0		0	0	
Number of teachers and education personnel trained ³⁴	37,058	Boys	-	0	74,943	-	0	
		Girls	-	0		-	0	
		Men	487	0		-	0	
		Women	551	0		-	0	
		Total	1,038	0		0	0	
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene								
	13.6M	5,276,000	Boys	387,913	0	4,500,000	589,879	0

²⁹ The overall reach is marginally off track because the current response only includes the structured MHPSS for children and not the PFA activities which are being implemented recently and will be reported in the next round. The target will be reached as planned.

³⁰ The overreach is due to the revised target which is significantly scaled down comparing to the first half of the year response.

³¹ The low reach is due to limited funding which only allowed activities to be implemented by NGO implementing partners but no large-scale campaigns through government platforms.

³² Education sector is verifying the collected data and the response will be reported in the next round.

³³ Preparations are ongoing to ensure full distribution of textbooks and rehabilitation of learning spaces by the beginning of the academic year in September 2023. The target will be reached as planned.

³⁴ Large-scale training for teachers is planned during summer holidays (June to August 2023) to avoid interruptions during the school year. The target will be reached as planned.

Number of people accessing a sufficient quantity of safe water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene ³⁵			Girls	423,561	0		616,096	0
			Men	280,793	0		52,434	0
			Women	318,592	0		52,434	0
			Total	1,410,859	0		1,310,843	0
Number of people reached with handwashing behaviour change programmes ³⁶		330,000	Boys	29,186	0	3,700,000	435,456	0
			Girls	30,193	0		454,810	0
			Men	25,367	0		38,707	0
			Women	33,751	0		38,707	0
			Total	118,497	0		967,680	0
Number of people have improved access to sanitation services ³⁷		2,290,000	Boys	211,224	0	4,100,000	144,578	0
			Girls	222,845	0		151,003	0
			Men	169,764	0		12,851	0
			Women	183,554	0		12,851	0
			Total	787,387	0		321,283	0
Social Protection & Cash Transfers								
# People reached with UNICEF-funded humanitarian cash transfers		472,293	Boys	55,262	0			
			Girls	52,677	0			
			Men	50,309	0			
			Women	53,721	0			
			Total	211,969	0			
Number of girls and boys with disabilities provided with regular cash transfers		17,000	Boys	4,601	0			
			Girls	3,415	0			
			Men	-	0			
			Women	-	0			
			Total	8,016	0			
Adolescents & Youth								
Number of adolescents and youth aged 10 to 24 years promoting social cohesion and civic engagement at the community level		342,883	Boys	67,587	0			
			Girls	70,421	0			
			Men	16,580	0			
			Women	18,351	0			
			Total	172,939	0			
Number of affected adolescents and youth aged 10 to 24 years receiving life-skills and citizenship education and employability skills ³⁸		225,017	Boys	28,867	0			
			Girls	33,501	0			
			Men	6,544	0			
			Women	8,722	0			
			Total	77,634	0			
Cross-Sectoral (SBC, RCCE & AAP)								
Number of people reached through messaging on prevention and access to services		10,999,998	Boys	1,812,870	0			
			Girls	1,815,437	0			
			Men	2,581,866	0			
			Women	2,595,362	0			

³⁵ The engineering studies and assessments of water networks, and approval to start the implementation were delayed. The target will be reached as planned.

³⁶ The focus remained on the distribution of supplies as a part of earthquake response during the reporting period. The scope and focus will be expanded on hygiene awareness in the second half of the year. The target will be reached as planned.

³⁷ Progress against this result will accelerate in the second half of 2023 following the roll-out of a new sanitation strategy. The target will be reached as planned.

³⁸ The reach is slightly off track due to delays in implementation with main stakeholders.

			Total	8,805,535	0			
Number of people participating in engagement actions for social and behavioural change	4,200,001	Boys	152,430	0				
		Girls	162,086	0				
		Men	630,981	0				
		Women	972,615	0				
		Total	1,918,112	0				
Number of people sharing their concerns and asking questions through established feedback mechanisms	5,000	Boys	-	0				
		Girls	-	0				
		Men	-	0				
		Women	-	0				
		Total	3,143	0				

Annex B Funding Status

Section	Requirements	Funds available		Funding gap	
		Received in 2023	Carry-Over	\$	%
Health	\$100,343,826	\$28,915,048	\$8,768,235	\$62,660,543	62%
Nutrition	\$43,939,584	\$22,447,025	\$3,250,576	\$18,241,983	42%
Child Protection, GBVIE & PSEA	\$40,507,632	\$16,549,169	\$2,193,949	\$21,764,514	54%
Education	\$89,840,465	\$26,006,011	\$8,668,498	\$55,165,956	61%
WASH	\$115,637,760	\$54,057,841	\$7,369,746	\$54,210,173	47%
Social Protection & Cash Transfers	\$64,259,430	\$15,058,943	\$2,163,750	\$47,036,737	73%
Adolescents & Youth	\$12,409,826	\$524,527	\$629,303	\$11,255,996	91%
SBC, RCCE & AAP	\$1,520,640	\$823,417	\$1,764,873	(\$1,067,650)	170%
Coordination	NA	\$10,444,983	\$0	(\$10,444,983)	0%
Being allocated	NA	\$3,157,009	\$0	(\$3,157,009)	0%
Total	\$468,459,163	\$177,983,973	\$34,808,930	\$255,666,260	54.58%