



On 22 March 2021, comedian Firas al-Ahmad, who dresses up as a clown to entertain children in camps for displaced Syrians in the northwest of the country © UNICEF/2021

Reporting Period: March 2021

Whole of Syria Humanitarian Situation Report

March 2021

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for every child

Highlights

- March marked the tenth year of the Syrian crisis. UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore, in her remarks to the Security Council, highlighted the dire situation of children in Syria, and called for continued access to North West Syria to provide lifesaving assistance, the cessation of attacks on children and vital civilian infrastructure, and for the safe, voluntary and dignified release, repatriation and reintegration of children in North East Syria.
- The number of reported COVID-19 cases, including among humanitarian workers, continued to rise considerably, though limited testing in all parts of the country makes the extent of the outbreak impossible to assess with certainty.
- Devaluation of the local currency against the US Dollar, and volatility in the informal exchange rate continued. Humanitarian partners project a likely further deterioration of the food security situation, with possible longer-term consequences, including an increase of acute and chronic malnutrition.
- The international community pledged US \$4.4 billion to support for the Syria crisis response in 2021 at the March Brussels V Conference, \$1.1 billion below what was pledged in 2020.

Situation in Numbers



4,800,000
children in need of
humanitarian assistance



11,100,000
people in need



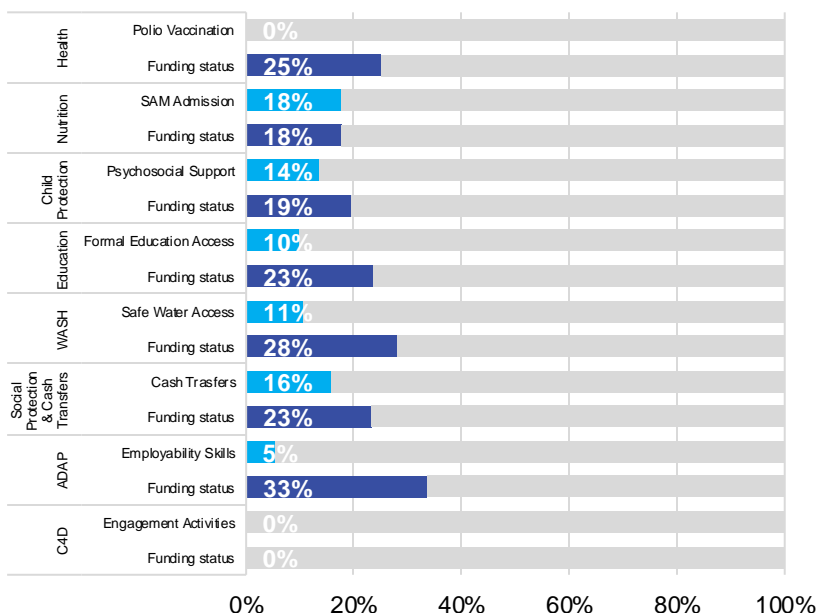
6,183,919
Internally displaced people
(IDPs)



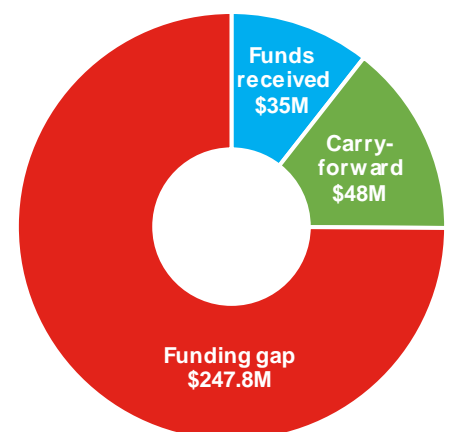
490,000
Children in need in hard-to-
reach areas

(source: OCHA, Humanitarian Response Plan, 2020)

UNICEF's Response and Funding Status



Funding Status Total Appeal: US\$ 330.8 million



Funding Overview and Partnerships

In 2021, UNICEF requires US\$330.8 million to provide lifesaving assistance to 9.1 million people (including 5.5 million children) across Syria according to the [Humanitarian Action for Children](#) (HAC). Of the total funding requirement, US \$83,039,794 are available, with a \$247,786,781 (75%) gap. The HAC is being reviewed as part of the Humanitarian Response Planning for 2021.

All programmes are considerably underfunded, while demand generation for COVID-19 vaccines, as well as risk communication, which need urgent attention, has not received much funding to date. Funding for the Nutrition programme remains despite a potential further deterioration of the food security situation, including an increase of acute and chronic malnutrition. Similarly, limited funding has been made available for a range of Child Protection interventions. Social Protection and Cash Assistance also require urgent funding, in a context where the socio-economic situation continues to deteriorate and where families, particularly families of children with severe disabilities, require immediate assistance to support their livelihoods and help them cope with the catastrophic economic situation.

As of January 2021, around 13.4 million people are estimated to require some form of humanitarian and protection assistance, including 6.08 million children.¹ This is a 25% increase in the estimated number of children as compared to 2020 (4.8 million). While there is an increase in humanitarian needs in Syria, overall funding pledges by the international community during the Brussels V Conference has seen a decrease, at \$4.4 billion for 2021, as compared to pledges totalling \$5.5 billion made during Brussels IV in 2020. UNICEF and humanitarian partners in Syria require sustained support to continue to provide critical life-saving services, especially amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

This year, the governments of Belgium, Canada, ECHO, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Norway, Russia, Spain Sweden, Switzerland, United States, as well as Syria Humanitarian Fund and UNICEF national committees have generously contributed to ongoing UNICEF humanitarian response across Syria. UNICEF expresses its sincere gratitude to all public and private partners for the contributions received.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

The month of March marked the tenth year of the Syrian crisis. On 29 March, UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore made remarks at the Security Council briefing on the humanitarian situation in Syria, highlighting the dire and deteriorating situation which children in Syria continue to face, and calling for continued access to North West (NW) Syria to provide lifesaving assistance, the cessation of attacks on children, hospitals, schools and other vital civilian infrastructure like water plants, and for the safe, voluntary and dignified release, repatriation and reintegration of children in North East (NE) Syria. The Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator underscored that 13.4 million people across the country continue to require humanitarian aid, 20 per cent more than in 2020. This includes over 6 million children (increase from 4.8 million estimated for Humanitarian Response Plan 2020) who are taking the hardest blow, compounded by the economic crisis and socio-economic impact of COVID-19.

March saw a considerable increase in the number of reported COVID-19 cases, equally affecting humanitarian workers though limited testing in all parts of the country makes the extent of the outbreak impossible to assess with certainty.

As of 29 March, the Ministry of Health (MoH) has recorded a total 18,638 cases of COVID-19 in government-controlled areas, along with 1,247 deaths. In NW Syria, there were a total of 21,289 confirmed cases, including a total of 637 related deaths. In NE Syria, 9,898 cases have been reported, with 375 deaths. WHO has reported an increase in the weekly trend of new cases across Syria, by 22%, 88%, and 44% in weeks 10, 11 and 12 of 2021, respectively. While the data is not comparable due to differences in the overall context and testing modalities, the reported case fatality rates in government-controlled areas, NW Syria and NE Syria, were 6.8%, 3%, and 3.7%, respectively.

The School Health Department in the Ministry of Education (MoE) reported that, since the school opening in September 2020, as of 25 March 2021, 2,534 cases have been identified in schools in government-controlled areas, of which 961 are students and 1,573 are teachers and other education staff. This means 195 newly reported cases (62 students and 133 teachers and staff) since the previous situation report. While officially reported numbers remain low, community transmission in Syria is thought to be widespread.

The preparation for the roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccinations from the global COVAX facility is well underway while the first shipment of vaccines is expected to arrive in April. This month, the Ministry of Health (MoH), with the support of WHO and UNICEF, has initiated a COVAX related training of trainers, followed by cascaded training for field staff at governorate level on microplanning, service delivery, communication, infection, prevention and control, as well as adverse events following immunization, and cold chain management. (Please see the subsequent "Summary Analysis of Programme Response" section for UNICEF response).

¹ Syrian Arab Republic: 2021 Needs and Response Summary (February 2021)

The security situation in the Al-Hol camp in NE Syria remains very tense. As a result of this deterioration of the security situation, on 28 March, Kurdish security forces (Asayish) announced the launching of a security campaign in the camp. During the campaign all non-resident staff, including security guards and watchmen, were requested to be outside the camp during the campaign which resulted in vandalism and damage to common areas and humanitarian facilities – including service centres and distribution sites. Among the vandalized facilities were also UNICEF supported education and child protection sites. However, the UNICEF supported Interim Care Centre continued to operate on a 24/7 basis and essential WASH services continued.

In NW Syria, hostilities continued to be recorded in March, adversely impacting humanitarian assistance and workers. On 18 March, a humanitarian worker was killed in a crossfire between armed individuals, and on the following day, another humanitarian worker was killed and five civilians were injured in an armed clash in the Idlib Governorate. On 20 March 2021, a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) was detonated in front of a warehouse that belongs to a local NGO, which resulted in the destruction of the warehouse which housed medical supplies. The incident killed and wounded around 10 civilians, three of which were NGO staff.

A significant shelling incidence took place on 21 March targeting the Atareb area close to the Turkish border. This caused significant damages to some NGO structures including a hospital near Bab Al Hawa and several warehouses. As a result, seven civilians were killed, including a 10-year old boy, his 12-year old cousin and five medical staff. Further, 13 other civilians and medical staff were injured. In addition, the facility went out of service due to the damage it sustained. The hospital had been providing a monthly average of 3,650 outpatient medical services and 177 surgeries, was rendered inoperable as a result of the damage.

As the humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate in the Rukban makeshift camp on the border with Jordan, OCHA reported some 38 spontaneous departures from the camp to Al-Waha in March. Based on MoH quarantine requirements, the IDPs are accommodated at a centre in Dweir for 14 days before proceeding to shelters in Homs. UNICEF, as part of a UN inter-agency team, continues to support the IDP response in Al-Waha and Dweir.

The UN continues to advocate for access to close to 12,000 people, mostly women and children, who are living in Rukban. A revision of an interagency operational plan to support the population in Rukban was finalised in March together with SARC. The last time the UN was able to access this location was in September 2019. However, UNICEF, through its collaboration with SARC, continues to support the spontaneous departures of women and children who require medical attention and leave the camp to Al-Waha transit site. This has been necessitated since the closure of the UN supported clinic on the Jordanian side in March 2020, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. In March, UNICEF supported two unaccompanied children, both under 12 years, who arrived in Al-Waha, seeking medical attention. UNICEF in Syria continues to coordinate such efforts with UNICEF in Jordan. The latter are directly communicating with the IDPs to ensure that these critical medical cases receive the required support.

The marking of ten years of the Syrian crisis spurred demonstrations and protests across northern Aleppo and Idlib governorates during the reporting period. On 11 and 12 March, several demonstrations were reportedly held by civilians across the Idlib Governorate, calling for the return of internally displaced people to their areas of origin and calling for international support to resolve the conflict.

Devaluation of the local currency against the US Dollar and volatility in the informal exchange rate continued. On 22 March, the Central Bank of Syria announced a new preferential exchange rate of SYP 2,500 to the US Dollar. This is a significant increase from the previous official rate of SYP 1,256, bringing the new rate closer to that in the informal market (over SYP 3,500). The new rate will allow UNICEF to increase the amount of the cash transfer, thus contributing to compensate the devastating impact of inflation on poor families benefiting from UNICEF cash transfer interventions. As reported in the previous Situation Report, the price of an average food basket saw the highest record last month, an increase of 241% in just 12 months. According to the Syrian Arab Republic COVID-19 Humanitarian Update, issued by OCHA and WHO, “current projections indicate a likely further deterioration of the food security situation ahead, with possible longer-term, entrenched consequences, including an increase of acute and chronic malnutrition.”

At the same time, March saw a continued shortage and increase in the price of fuel, making the already-dire situation even worse, and considerably impacting the cost of the humanitarian operation in Syria.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

Health

Preparation for the roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccinations, from the global vaccine sharing platform COVAX, continued in March. UNICEF and WHO supported local preparedness activities across governorates at the district level which will also help ensure an equitable distribution of the vaccines across the country, including in NE Syria and NW Syria.

While the vaccine delivery is expected in April, UNICEF supported COVAX related training activities, as well as the continued provision of personal protection and equipment (PPE), during the reporting period.

Following the training of trainers on Immunization Supply Chain Management Readiness, which was conducted in February, the training has been cascaded to 280 people in 13 governorates in March. Communication products have been developed for a media campaign which is ready to start once the vaccination arrives. Further, 30 master trainers from 14 governorates were trained for COVAX demand generation and communication, and a cascaded training has reached 550 health workers (including 250 females). An advocacy workshop was conducted with 35 journalists (including 10 female journalists) from diverse media outlets, to ensure that accurate information about the vaccines is provided to the general public. Also, in March, 570 healthcare facility staff and community health workers (310 females) were provided with PPEs, and 50 health workers (40 females) were trained on detecting, referral and appropriate management of COVID-19 cases.

UNICEF also supported MoH for Polio National Immunization Days, with the target to vaccinate over 2.5 million children under the age of five (91.8% of all children under five in 14 governorates).² UNICEF provided 5.2 million doses of oral polio vaccine, while supporting required cold chain equipment and demand-generation activities. In addition, the routine immunization has also reached during the reporting period 29,409 children under one year of age.

In NW Syria, a polio campaign reached a total of 780,443³ children under five (103% of target), while the campaign was able to cover accessible areas including seven districts in the Idlib Governorate and four districts in the Aleppo Governorate. The campaign in Afrin District was postponed, and efforts continue to remove administrative hurdles. Moreover, UNICEF support to the routine immunization programme reached 12,260 children under one year of age who received BCG, 12,333 received DTP1, 10,940 received DTP3, 12,325 received IPV1, 10,395 received IPV2 and 13,261 received first dose of MMR vaccine.

In March, 135,057 women and children benefited from free medical consultations through 68 fixed health points and 43 mobile teams in 14 governorates. Of these, 26,095 were in NE Syria (including 3,608 in Al-Hol camp) and 922 in accessible parts of Idlib Governorate. Since the beginning of the year, 845 health workers and community volunteers have been trained on newborn care topics (320 in March, including 260 females). Trained community volunteers conducted 1,559 home visits to 477 pregnant women and 269 newborns in their villages through the newborn care at home programme in 12 governorates during the reporting month.

In NW Syria, 28,470 people including 7,557 boys, 7,036 girls, 11,483 women and 2,394 men have been reached with primary health care outpatient consultations in March (80,243 since the start of the year). Furthermore, 52,240 females and 54,155 males were reached with health promotion including immunization services. The preparation for the roll-out of COVID vaccinations, through COVAX facility is underway, in coordination with Syria Immunization Group and WHO. UNICEF has the cold chain in place in safe locations.

Nutrition

Through UNICEF support, 148,464 children under the age of five and pregnant and lactating women were screened for acute malnutrition, out of whom 39,529 were provided with micronutrients. As a result of screening activities, 273 children (148 girls and 125 boys) were newly identified and admitted for treatment of severe acute malnutrition. Moreover, an additional 561 children (282 girls and 279 boys) who were previously identified, received follow up services. UNICEF also continued to support preventative nutrition interventions: 63,112 caregivers, including pregnant and lactating women, were reached with awareness on appropriate infant and young child feeding.

In NW Syria, a total of 128,388 people (47,698 boys, 46,411 girls, and 34,279 pregnant and lactating women) were screened for acute malnutrition (258,528 in 2021); out of which 9 boys and 15 girls were found to be severely malnourished and referred to appropriate treatment (602 boys and 888 girls in 2021). Further, 219 boys, 244 girls and 4,659 pregnant and lactating women were provided with age-appropriate micronutrient support to prevent acute malnutrition in March. During the reporting period, a total of 20,487 caregivers including pregnant and lactating mothers were also counselled on optimal infant feeding and caring practices.

Child Protection

In March, UNICEF reached 20,872 children (50%) with structured psychosocial support and 4,367 caregivers (75% female) with parental programmes, bringing the total reach for 2021 to 53,815 children (49% girls) and 7,689 caregivers (87% female). 49% of children indicated improvement in their psychosocial wellbeing as a result of the programme.

During the reporting month, 34,626 children in 11 governorates were reached with behaviour-change awareness messages and sessions, bringing a total number of children to 59,038 children (53% girls) and 9,065 caregivers (81% female) since the beginning of the year. UNICEF also reached 416 children (2,423 children since the beginning of 2021,

² No progress reported in the summary results table as the campaign is ongoing

³ The campaign is reaching children for follow-up doses thus no new beneficiaries are being reported in the summary results table

43% girls) with case management. The reported cases included violence against children, early marriage, gender-based violence, unaccompanied and separated children, street children and children with disabilities referred through cash assistance provided by UNICEF social protection programme.

Risk education remained a priority, promoting safe behaviours, knowledge and awareness, UNICEF provided lifesaving messages and face-to-face sessions to 183,298 children (88,243 boys, 95,055 girls) and 19,439 caregivers (14,247 female) in 12 governorates (Aleppo, Al-Hassakeh, Ar-Raqqa, Damascus, Dar'a, Deir-ez-Zor, Hama, Homs, Lattakia, Quneitra, Rural Damascus and Tartous) from the start of the year (47,612 people in March). As a response to emerging explosive ordnance casualties reported in Homs and Hama Governorates, UNICEF child protection and adolescent development and participation programmes supported a team of 40 people (21 females) with capacity building on risk education, with the aim to reach out to most contaminated areas with a special focus on rural areas.

In NE Syria, UNICEF-supported child protection services continued in the Al-Hol camp. In the UNICEF supported Interim Care Centre (ICC), 113 children (46 girls) received twenty-four-seven caregiving services alongside a package of support addressing their protection needs such as psychosocial support, case management services, education, and family tracing through local, specialized partners. In March, two additional unaccompanied minors (1 girl, 1 boy) were received in the ICC and a 17-year-old unaccompanied boy was reunified with his family in rural Deir-Ez-Zor. Voluntary departure of internally displaced people continued from Al-Hol camp to their places of origin in NE Syria; 134 families (524 people) have departed the camp in March to their places of Origin In Deir-Ez-Zour district, CP actors provided awareness on prevention of family separation in addition to ensuring that the children can be traced through providing them bracelets/necklaces that contain basic information for easy family reunification in case of any separation.

For NW Syria, grave violations against children remain a critical concern, aggregated by the impact of the COVID-19 crisis. Yet limited available financial resources have only allowed the continuation of previously established child protection services, provided through online, small groups and home-to-home visits.

Despite the pandemic limitations in NW Syria, partners provided child protection services to 8,759 affected people in IDP settings as well as in host communities, including 7,046 children (3,476 girls and 3,570 boys) and 1,713 caregivers (1,035 female and 678 male). Psychosocial support was delivered to approximately 798 children (447 girls and 351 boys), with the aim to strengthen their coping mechanisms and resilience. Similarly, parenting programmes reached 382 parents and primary caregivers (204 females and 178 males) to enhance their skills and knowledge to care for and protect their children given that available capacities in communities are severely overstretched.

In NW Syria, Explosive Ordinance Risk Education was provided to 6,731 people, including 5,598 children (2,710 girls and 2,888 boys), and 1,133 caregivers (657 females and 476 males). Also, protection awareness sessions were provided to 4,315 affected population (1,769 girls, 1,704 boys, 527 women and 315 men), covering the topics of concerns, including COVID-19 prevention, preparedness, stigma, as well as prevention of family separation and violence against children.

Case management continued to play a central role in facilitating individual child protection assessments, developing comprehensive care plans, monitoring of most severe cases and referral to specialized services. In March, child protection and gender-based violence case management services were provided to 30 girls and 23 boys.

Education

To improve access and the quality of learning in schools and learning spaces, UNICEF reached in March a total of 20,321 children (51% girls) with educational services and supplies in formal settings. The support included establishment of temporary learning spaces, providing schools with school furniture, desks, chairs and distribution of learning materials, stationery and textbooks. UNICEF continued with its key role to address the challenges of access to quality education and increase children's chance at having an equitable life, and 47,578 children (51% girls) in non-formal education settings benefited from education services. Of the children reached by UNICEF, 246 transited from non-formal to formal education through the Self-Learning Programme and 36,724 children and young people (5-24 years) participated in life skills and citizenship education programmes in both formal and non-formal settings.

To contribute to quality learning outcomes for children and skills development, investments were made in the training of education personnel and teachers. To strengthen the quality of learning, 773 teachers and education personnel were trained in various technical areas such as active learning and child-centred and protective pedagogy during the month of March. In addition, UNICEF, in coordination with the Ministry of Education (MoE), conducted a technical workshop on the development of new learning materials that aim to adequately respond to the education needs of out of school children and support them to return back to learning. Furthermore, UNICEF launched the preparations to support upcoming national exams and a response plans for the national exams is currently being developed in close coordination with the education sector and MoE.

Contributing to the future of children with disabilities, one of UNICEF key achievements in March was reaching 2,643 children with disabilities with education services, including life skills and citizenship education programmes in both formal and non-formal settings.

In NW Syria, education services were provided to 23,729 children and adults (11,883 girls and women). Further, 1,053 children (52% girls) were supported with educational services and supplies in formal settings. While 122 classrooms have been rehabilitated in non-formal settings, including 33 classes for girls, a total of 4,324 boys and girls benefited from rehabilitation and improvement of gender-sensitive WASH facilities. Further, 1,251 children (724 girls) were provided with learning material including stationary, pens, and notebooks. Additionally, 8,391 children and youth including 4,185 girls between 5-24 years received life skills and citizenship education in formal and non-formal settings. In non-formal settings, a total of 13,125 children (6,557 girls) benefited from services including catch-up, literacy and numeracy, remedial, Accelerated Learning Programme and Supportive/Self learning Programme. In addition, 1,709 children including 888 girls were provided with school bags, and a total of 4,369 boys, girls and adults were reached through Back to Learning Campaign during the reporting period. A total of 27,434 boys and girls were provided with school-based psychosocial support in formal and non-formal settings, and 61 boys and girls had been referred to child protection case management services. A total of 126 teachers and education personnel were trained on Education in Emergencies and national/INEE minimum standards this month.

WASH

UNICEF continued its humanitarian emergency response, as a top priority, to reach 260,704 people in Al-Hasakeh, Aleppo and Rural Damascus Governorates, as well as Al-Hol camp residents, through emergency water trucking. Some 7,000 internally displaced people in Al-Hol camp benefitted from disinfection of WASH facilities. During the reporting month, UNICEF reached 2,000 people through the rehabilitation of one well in Al-Hol in Al-Hasakeh Governorate. UNICEF continued to support the entire country's sodium hypochlorite needs to ensure proper chlorination of water distribution systems across Syria in all governorates, providing access to chlorinated water to around 13.6 million beneficiaries, which contributed to preventing any major waterborne disease outbreak.

In NW Syria, UNICEF responded to 639,938 people in need with the provision of WASH supplies and services during the reporting month. Additionally, 422,867 people in communities benefited from restored water stations, sanitation infrastructure, and solid waste management, including at least 33% internally displaced people. Drinking water safety using water disinfectants was provided to 121,430 people. Life-saving water supply and sanitation services were provided to 397,305 IDPs, and hygiene kits were supplied to 73,284 IDPs.

Additionally, UNICEF reached 117,714 people (51,851 children) in Aleppo, Al-Hasakeh (including Al-Hol and Areesha), and Dar'a Governorates, through the provision of soaps, baby hygiene kits, Aqua tabs and family hygiene kits. UNICEF reached 3,470 people (1,343 boys, 1,446 girls, 681 women) through conducting hygiene promotion interventions in Aleppo Governorate. UNICEF also reached around 90,000 people in Deir-ez-Zor City through the rehabilitation of two sewage systems in the city.

As per the WASH in schools, the total of 54,187 school children (49% girls) benefited from the provision of hygiene supplies in schools, water trucking in schools, rehabilitation of water and sanitation facilities inside 45 schools located in Aleppo and Hama, and Quneitra Governorates. Also, 7,122 people (5,825 children) in Aleppo and Hama Governorates benefited from the light rehabilitation of WASH facilities in 21 centres providing services for child protection and adolescent and youth programmes.

Adolescent Development and Participation (ADAP)

During the reporting period, UNICEF reached over 11,238 vulnerable adolescents and youth aged 10-24 years (6,114 girls) in 12 governorates with a package of services and opportunities including skills development, vocational training and social and civic engagement. This marks a total of 21,000 young people, including 11,138 girls since January.

In particular, in March, 8,678 young people (5,148 girls) benefited from online and offline skills development programme including life skills and citizenship education, entrepreneurship and vocational training.

Following participation in the skills-building programme, young people were provided with opportunities for engaging and participating positively within their communities through civic and social engagement programme focusing on the design and implementation of adolescent-led initiatives. In addition, 3,702 young people (1,875 girls) participated in different engagement opportunities. For instance, a team of 49 volunteers (27 females and 22 males) in Hama conducted a 16-day campaign for mine awareness, after receiving capacity development training on explosive ordnance risk education in Hama with local partners. They reached 6,082 children, adolescents, youth, and caregivers through outreach activities and awareness raising sessions.

On the occasion of International Women's Day, a number of youth-led initiatives took place across the country to advocate for woman and girls' rights. An interactive theatre on women's rights was planned and implemented by thirty young people to promote the importance of women's voice and rights. This was followed by a discussion with around 100 participants in the audience. A live painting exhibition of 19 young female painters was also organized in eastern Aleppo, whereby they painted themes from how they envision the power of women in their communities. In addition, twenty young girls between the ages of 13 to 24 were supported for the first time in Al-Hassakeh to open girls'

opportunities to practice bike riding and to advocate for girls' participation in sport for development activities. This took the form of a girls' bicycle marathon in the streets of Al-Hassakeh city.

Social Protection and Cash Transfers

During the reporting period, UNICEF has continued to support the delivery of results for children through two main humanitarian social protection interventions: (i) Integrated Social Protection Programme for Children with Disabilities; and (ii) the Basic Need Support Programme.

Integrated Social Protection Programme for Children with Disabilities combines regular and un-conditional cash transfers to families of children with severe disabilities, with case management services to facilitate the referral of children to available social services and increase their social inclusion. During the reporting period, UNICEF reached 2,975 children with disabilities with regular cash assistance and case management services in the governorates of Aleppo, Homs and Al Hassakeh. This brings the total number of reached children with disabilities to 7,169 (40% girls and 60% boys) since the beginning of the year in the governorates of Rural Damascus, Aleppo, Al-Hassakeh, Homs and Hama.

Basic Needs Support Programme supports families to respond to the essential needs of their children through two components: (i) cash assistance with the provision of one-time cash transfer to families of children 0-17 years old in poor urban and peri-urban areas with high level of displacement; and (ii) in-kind assistance with the provision of winter clothes for children 0-14 years of age in IDP camps, collective shelters and remote rural areas.

During the reporting period, UNICEF reached 1,360 households (3,212 children) with emergency, one-time cash transfer in Tartous and Lattakia Governorates. This brings the total number of households reached since the beginning of the year to 13,458 households (31,972 children, 47% girls and 53% boys) in Rural Damascus, Tartous and Lattakia Governorates. The displacement status of beneficiaries' households was as follows: 47% were from host community, 23% were internally displaced people, and 30% were returnees. In total, 280 children were living with disabilities. Preliminary findings from the Post-Distribution Monitoring Survey conducted in Rural Damascus in March indicates that 94 per cent of beneficiaries were very satisfied with the intervention. More than half of beneficiaries stated that the cash received helped them meet significantly or moderately their children's needs.

Also, during the reporting period, UNICEF provided winter clothes to 15,761 children in Al-Hol and Al-Roj camps in NE Syria, and in accessible areas of Idlib. This brings the total number of children reached with winter clothes since the beginning of the year to 65,468 children (51% girls, 49% boys), of whom 6% were from host community, 38% were from internally-displaced population and 56% were returnees, in Al-Hassakeh, Idlib and Rural Damascus.

In NW Syria, UNICEF provided winterization support, benefitting 118,245 children (59,905 girls) and their families, which included a provision of fuel for heating, heaters, and fuel tanks, restoration of education facilities including tents insulation, windows and doors, and Tent-classroom insulation.

Also in the NW, the UNICEF and WFP co-led a UN mission on cash assistance programming in the NW context, and has reviewed and is concluding the feasibility at scale, piloting options and strategic areas to invest in capacity building with clusters.

Communication for Development (C4D), Community Engagement and Accountability for Affected Populations (AAP)

UNICEF continued to lead Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) in Syria to contain the spread of COVID-19, and in March, accelerated efforts were made for Demand Generation and Communication in support of the COVAX roll-out and in preparation for the arrival of the COVID-19 vaccines. UNICEF, in coordination with WHO and MoH, has spearheaded (i) social and behavioural data/information to inform and guide interventions particularly on vaccine hesitancy, demand and uptake, (ii) training, and (iii) public information campaign with key messages and information education and communication materials.

At the same time, UNICEF has continued RCCE through mass communication, community-based activities, and messaging integrated into sectoral programming (Health, Nutrition, Water and Sanitation, Child Protection and Education) and preliminary results indicate the programme has reached 46,502 people, including 9,979 girls, 6,646 boys, 15,968 females and 7,261 males during the first three months of the year.

In NE Syria, a communication campaign was conducted in the Al-Hol camp to promote RCCE and to provide information about support available for people with disabilities. Twenty volunteers made tent-to-tent visits, engaged residents, while distributing hygiene kits, reaching a total of 19,120 children and their families. Also, UNICEF, with support from WHO, completed the community rapid assessment in the camp, focusing on signs and symptoms, health-seeking behaviours, as well as people's knowledge and practice to prevent COVID-19. Findings indicate low levels of knowledge and practice

of prevention and health-seeking behaviours due in large part to the curfew and its impact on support provisions. Findings are being integrated into the RCCE strategy and action plan for NE Syria.

In NW Syria, animated videos that promote positive behaviours and messaging were distributed through phones and social media, reaching 118,907 people.

Human Interest Stories and External Media

During the reporting period, UNICEF focused its communication products on marking a decade of Syria crisis, including a virtual field visit to [Aleppo](#), story of a [young girl](#) who continues to train and workout despite her hardships, and [articles](#) of [children](#) impacted by the long years of conflict.

UNICEF also has engaged with national committees through [interviews](#), and [press releases](#) have been issued to highlight its partnership with donors.

Annex A

Summary of Programme Results

Sector	Overall Needs	UNICEF and IPs response			Sector response		
		2021 target	Total results	Change since last report	2021 target	Total results ¹	Change since last report
Health							
# children aged 6 to 59 months vaccinated against polio	13.2M	3,200,000	0 ²⁴	0			
# children and women accessing primary health care in UNICEF-supported facilities		1,800,000	474,385	163,527			
# health care facility staff and community health workers trained on infection prevention and control		1,000	75	50			
Nutrition							
# children aged 6 to 59 months with severe acute malnutrition admitted for treatment	4.7M	13,500	2,388	297	17,447	1,923	839
# primary caregivers of children aged 0 to 23 months receiving infant and young child feeding counselling		1,450,000	237,316	83,599	915,063	258,865	136,042
# children and pregnant and lactating women receiving micronutrients		960,000	211,517	44,651	2,563,000	159,920	88,433
Child Protection, GBVIE & PESA							
# children and caregivers accessing mental health and psychosocial support	5.6M	415,000	56,828	21,670	880,000	48,007 ³	0
# women, girls and boys accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention or response interventions		120,500	18,471 ⁴	3,449			
# children accessing explosive weapons-related risk education and survivor assistance interventions		2,380,000	224,043	54,343			
Education							
# children supported with educational services and supplies in formal settings	5.7M	1,750,000	171,775	21,374	3,300,000	700,933	700,933
# children in non-formal education benefiting from education services		400,000	255,043	51,902	1,256,530	28,082	28,082
# teachers and education personnel trained		44,000	6,167	899	76,524	4,875	4,875
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene							

1 Sector results reflect progress up to February due to its reporting cycle being one month behind of UNICEF's cycle.

2 No progress reported for this cycle as the campaign is ongoing. For NW Syria, the campaign is reaching children for follow-up doses thus no new beneficiaries are being reported.

3 The data cleaning for 2021 February reporting cycle has not been finalized, therefore this indicates January result.

4 Implementation has been challenged due to shortage of funds.

# people accessing a sufficient quantity of safe water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene	15.7M	4,140,000	443,958 ⁵	2,000	8,000,000	1,353,382	(529,591) ⁶
# people reached with handwashing behaviour change programmes		550,000	143,984	105,749	5,500,000	736,387	209,483
# people have improved access to sanitation services		1,360,000	383,493	50,670	4,000,000	358,552	113,693
Social Protection & Cash Transfers							
# households reached with humanitarian cash transfers across sectors		86,000	13,458	(3,542) ⁷			
# girls and boys protected from extreme weather through the provision of non-food items		490,000	65,468	15,761			
Adolescents & Youth							
# adolescents and youth aged 10 to 24 years promoting social cohesion and civic engagement at the community level		200,000	9,410	3,702			
# affected adolescents and youth aged 10 to 24 years receiving life-skills and citizenship education and employability skills		300,000	16,015	8,678			
C4D, Community Engagement & AAP							
# people participating in engagement actions for social and behavioural change		1,002,500	0 ⁸	0			

5 Slow progress is reported this cycle while several ongoing projects will be completed in the near future and will lead to increase the progress.

6 WASH Sector had a data quality review and adjusted the reported figures to reflect the unique number of reached beneficiaries up to February 2021.

7 Data quality review has been conducted and adjustments have been made to the reported figures to reflect the accurate number of household reached up to March.

8 While programme is being implemented, no progress can be reported as data is being consolidated.

Annex B Funding Status

Section	Requirements	Funds available		Funding gap	
		Received Current Year	Carry-Over	\$	%
Health	\$38,819,971	\$3,604,775	\$6,095,740	\$29,119,455	75%
Nutrition	\$23,920,391	\$885,476	\$3,371,929	\$19,662,986	82%
Child Protection, GBVIE & PSEA	\$34,221,760	\$1,535,440	\$5,110,860	\$27,575,461	81%
Education	\$74,666,582	\$6,752,647	\$10,729,076	\$57,184,858	77%
WASH	\$98,314,219	\$14,721,697	\$12,680,355	\$70,912,168	72%
Social Protection & Cash Transfers	\$48,850,736	\$2,646,010	\$8,754,090	\$37,450,637	77%
Adolescents & Youth	\$10,912,957	\$2,360,830	\$1,288,323	\$7,263,794	67%
C4D, Community Engagement & AAP	\$1,119,960	\$0*	\$0	\$1,119,960	100%
Being allocated	\$0	\$2,502,537	\$0	(\$2,502,537)	
Total	\$330,826,575	\$35,009,421	\$48,030,372	\$247,786,781	75%

*Funding for COVAX demand generation has been made available as part of health, and C4D funds have also been integrated into relevant sector funds.

Next SitRep: 20 May 2021

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

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

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