



unicef 
for every child

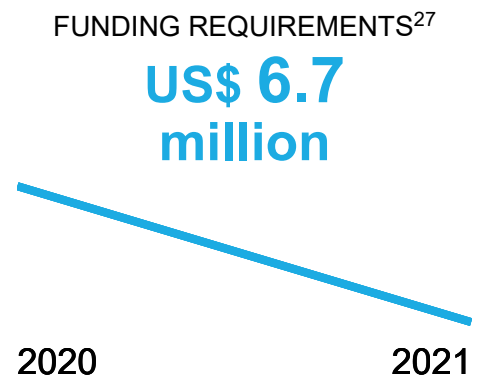
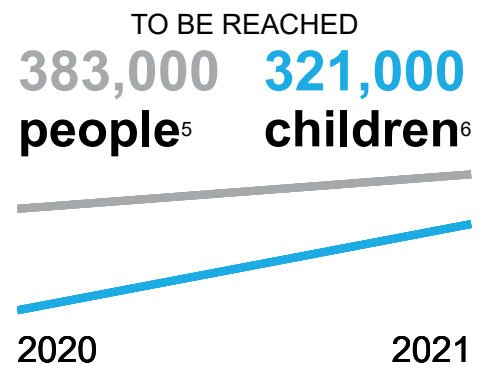
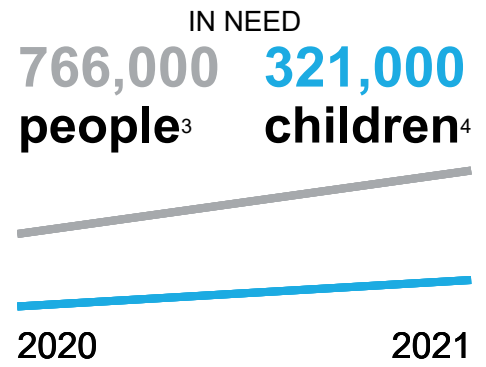
Humanitarian Action for Children

©UNICEF Lesotho/2019/NSamie-Jacobs
Twenty-year-old Mamathae Tseliso with her son after participating in a UNICEF-supported peer-to-peer counselling session for pregnant and lactating adolescents and young women.

Lesotho

HIGHLIGHTS

- Climatic shocks, declining economic growth and the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic have worsened the humanitarian situation in Lesotho. In 2021, projections indicate that Lesotho's gross domestic product growth will decelerate to negative 5.1 per cent; crop production will drop by 30 per cent; water insecurity will persist; access to education and social support systems will decline; and reports of gender-based violence will rise.¹ Overall, the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance has increased from 508,000 in 2019 to 766,000 in 2020.²
- UNICEF will support 383,000 people, including 321,000 children, in Lesotho by strengthening integrated community health systems, providing water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services, supporting accelerated and safe learning in schools and reaching vulnerable children with child grants.
- UNICEF is requesting US\$6.7 million to meet humanitarian needs in Lesotho, particularly WASH, education, child protection and social protection needs.



KEY PLANNED TARGETS



262,000

children and women accessing health care



321,000

children accessing water, sanitation and hygiene services in learning and safe spaces



75,000

women and children accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation/prevention/response



383,000

people reached through messaging on access to services

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION AND NEEDS

The humanitarian situation in Lesotho has deteriorated due to a series of climatic shocks, including three consecutive seasons of drought, declining economic growth and the COVID-19 pandemic. As of September, Lesotho had confirmed over 1,300 COVID-19 cases and 33 deaths.⁷

Economic growth has continued to decline in Lesotho in recent years. The gross domestic product growth rate was projected to decelerate from 1.4 per cent in 2019–2020 to 0.4 per cent in 2020–2021 before the global shutdown; and has since been revised downwards to negative 5.1 per cent for 2020–2021.⁸ The remittances of over 400,000 Basotho who were working in South Africa have declined as migrants return home due to job loss and COVID-19 lockdowns, increasing the vulnerability of households dependent on remittances (17 per cent of households).⁹

Access to health services remains limited, especially in rural areas, due to the long distances to facilities. COVID-19 has overstretched health systems and disrupted health service continuity. With the second highest HIV prevalence globally¹⁰ and in the absence of community HIV services due to COVID-19, Lesotho is facing heightened risks of HIV and unplanned pregnancies. Adolescents and young people could be more vulnerable to new HIV infections, gender-based violence, unwanted pregnancies and child marriage, increasing the need for mental health and psychosocial support.¹¹

Since March 2020, all 4,188 schools and early childhood development centres have been closed, affecting 511,000 learners, most of whom are in rural areas.¹² Access to formal and non-formal education has been greatly affected, and a significant number of children are at risk of dropping out permanently. Children's routines and social support systems have been severely disrupted.

Crop production has continued to decline for the third year in a row. A 30 per cent decline is projected for the 2019–2020 season,¹³ which will severely impact nutritional well-being. Lesotho experiences persistent water insecurity, and COVID-19 has further increased water and hygiene needs in schools, health facilities and communities.

Food insecurity is expected to increase the overall number of people in need of humanitarian assistance from 508,000 people in 2019 (433,000 rural and 75,000 urban) to 766,000 people between October 2020 and March 2021 (582,000 rural and 184,000 urban).¹⁴ This means that 40 per cent of the rural population and 27 per cent of the urban population will require humanitarian assistance.

SECTOR NEEDS



Health and nutrition

766,000 people need health and nutrition services¹⁵



Water, sanitation and hygiene

628,000 people need WASH services¹⁶



Child protection, GBViE and PSEA

160,000 children need child protection services^{17,18}



Social protection and cash transfers

321,000 children need social protection services¹⁹

STORY FROM THE FIELD



A 10-year-old girl benefiting from the UNICEF-supported radio programme washes her hands in her home-installed tippy in Mt. Moorosi, Quthing.

Every Saturday morning, a 30-minute radio programme provides children aged 6 to 13 years from all 10 national districts with the opportunity to phone in, ask questions about COVID-19, share experiences and learn prevention methods.

Anchored by Mr. Mabitso, affectionately called Malome (uncle) Bizo, the children recite poems and songs and have conversations with a local puppeteer who volunteers for the programme.

Each week, UNICEF Lesotho staff engage with the producers of the children's programme to design the content and presentation of the show, which is informed by the issues children raise when they call in.

[Read more about this story here](#)

HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY

UNICEF will support the Government of Lesotho to respond to the humanitarian needs of 383,000 people, including 321,000 children, affected by drought and COVID-19 through the implementation of life-saving nutrition, health, WASH, social and child protection, education and HIV and AIDS interventions. The remaining people in need will be reached by the Government and other agencies.

UNICEF will provide technical support for the treatment and prevention of acute malnutrition and other co-morbidities. In addition to providing supplies, UNICEF will strengthen community-based nutrition information, monitoring and referral systems and infant and young child feeding activities.

The WASH response will include the provision of life-saving access to drought-resilient and safe water and hygiene services in communities, health care facilities and schools. UNICEF's strategy will aim to enhance the resilience of communities and institutions to climate and health emergencies by strengthening community-based and institutional management systems.

The health and HIV response will focus on enhancing the continuity of essential health services, including sexual and reproductive health services, and supporting the provision of community-based integrated essential health services, prioritizing people living with or at risk of HIV, adolescent girls and young women, orphans and returning migrant populations. Given the high HIV prevalence in Lesotho,²⁰ UNICEF will support the immediate humanitarian needs of pregnant women and children at risk of or living with HIV.

In education, UNICEF will provide technical support for the development and implementation of guidelines for safe school operations, strategies for reopening schools, and accelerated and remedial learning programmes, to increase access to quality formal and non-formal education. UNICEF will target disadvantaged learners, particularly primary school students, with numeracy and literacy instruction, and adolescents transitioning from primary to secondary education, emphasizing rural boys.

In child protection, UNICEF will work to strengthen the knowledge and skills of teachers and other front-line workers, improve post-rape health and psychosocial support, enhance individual gender-based violence case management systems and referrals and strengthen information on protection services. UNICEF will help children access adequate alternative care arrangement and protection services and re-activate the Child Helpline for reporting cases and providing referrals.

Social safety nets will help the most affected children and their families cope with the drought and the impacts of COVID-19 using the Government's existing humanitarian cash transfer system to ensure that grants are given only to deserving children.

Communication for development approaches will be used across sectors to strengthen community engagement.

Progress against the 2020 programme targets is available in the humanitarian situation reports:

<https://www.unicef.org/appeals/lesotho/situation-reports>

2021 PROGRAMME TARGETS



Nutrition

- **2,500** children aged 6 to 59 months with severe acute malnutrition admitted for treatment²¹
- **10,000** primary caregivers of children aged 0 to 23 months receiving infant and young child feeding counselling



Health

- **12,600** children aged 6 to 59 months vaccinated against measles
- **262,000** children and women accessing primary health care in UNICEF-supported facilities



Water, sanitation and hygiene²²

- **85,000** people accessing a sufficient quantity of safe water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene
- **321,000** children accessing appropriate water, sanitation and hygiene facilities and hygiene services in learning facilities and safe spaces



Child protection, GBViE and PSEA

- **15,000** children and caregivers accessing mental health and psychosocial support
- **75,000** women, girls and boys accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention or response interventions



Education

- **184,000** children accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning



Social protection and cash transfers

- **50,000** households reached with cash transfers through an existing government system where UNICEF provided technical assistance and funding



HIV and AIDS

- **8,200** pregnant and lactating women living with HIV receiving antiretroviral therapy

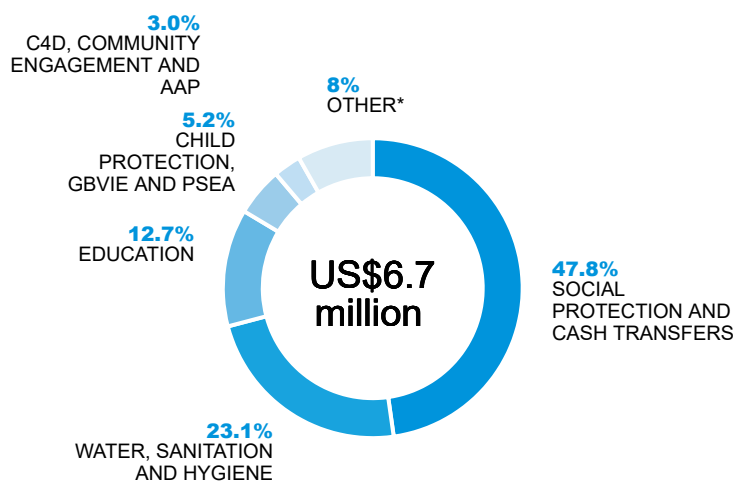


C4D, community engagement and AAP

- **383,000** people reached with messages on access to services²³
- **15,000** people who shared their concerns and asked questions/clarifications to address their needs through established feedback mechanisms

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS IN 2021

UNICEF is requesting US\$6.7 million to meet the humanitarian needs of children affected by and at risk due to drought and the impacts of COVID-19 in Lesotho. Interventions will focus on supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged women and children to withstand, adapt to and recover from the drought and COVID-19 crises. Significant underfunding in 2020 (only 10 per cent was received) left most sectors vulnerable. While the 2021 funding request is lower than the 2020 request by about US\$1 million, UNICEF is targeting more people and children (383,000 people in 2021, compared with 340,000 in 2020; and 321,000 children in 2021, compared with 143,000 in 2020). This is largely because UNICEF is refocusing its strategy on sectors that have been heavily impacted by COVID-19; reducing its request for social protection, which will be covered by the Government and other agencies; and refocusing the WASH response on hygiene, particularly for children in schools, which requires less investment than water supply systems. Without sufficient and timely funding, UNICEF will be unable to support the national response with critical health, HIV, nutrition, WASH, education, social and child protection services, and Lesotho will remain in crisis.



*This includes costs from other sectors/interventions : Nutrition (2.7%), Health (2.2%), HIV and AIDS (2.2%), Cluster coordination (1.0%).

Sector	2021 requirements (US\$)
Nutrition	180,000
Health	150,000
Water, sanitation and hygiene	1,550,000
Child protection, GBVIE and PSEA	350,000 ²⁵
Education	850,000
Social protection and cash transfers	3,200,000 ²⁴
HIV and AIDS	150,000
C4D, community engagement and AAP	200,000 ²⁶
Cluster coordination	70,000
Total	6,700,000

Who to contact for further information:

Anurita Bains
Representative, Lesotho
T 266 58855801
abains@unicef.org

Manuel Fontaine
Director, Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS)
T +1 212 326 7163
mfontaine@unicef.org

Carla Haddad Mardini
Director, Public Partnership Division (PPD)
T +1 212 326 7160
chaddadmardini@unicef.org

ENDNOTES

1. United Nations Development Programme, 'Assessment of the Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 on the Kingdom of Lesotho', UNDP, Maseru, June 2020.
2. Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, 'Lesotho: IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis July 2020-March 2021', IPC, August 2020; and Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee, August, 2020.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid. Calculated based on children representing 42 per cent of the population, as per the 2016 census.
5. This figure is based on the highest coverage programme targets for WASH emergency non-food items and hygiene messaging, including all children in need (62,000 adults, including 32,000 women, 30,000 men and 321,000 children, including 171,000 girls and 150,000 boys). Data on disabilities is not readily available. UNICEF is committed to needs-based targeting, which means covering the unmet needs of children; and will serve as the provider of last resort where it has cluster coordination responsibilities.
6. UNICEF will reach all children in need. This includes 171,000 girls and 150,000 boys. Data on disabilities is not readily available.
7. National COVID-19 Secretariat, 14 September 2020.
8. 'Assessment of the Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 on the Kingdom of Lesotho'.
9. Ibid.
10. Spectrum Modelling Estimates, 2020.
11. 'Assessment of the Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 on the Kingdom of Lesotho'.
12. While all schools are closed, some private schools in urban areas offer online classes. Education Management Information System enrolment data, 2019.
13. 'Lesotho: IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis July 2020-March 2021'; and Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee, August, 2020.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Lesotho Bureau of Statistics and United Nations Children's Fund, 'Lesotho Multiple Indicator Clustery Survey 2018', UNICEF, New York, 2019.
17. Due to space constraints, the following acronyms appear in the appeal: GBViE (gender-based violence in emergencies); PSEA (prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse); C4D (communication for development); and AAP (accountability to affected populations).
18. Based on Lesotho Ministry of Social Development, Lesotho Violence Against Children and Youth Survey, 2020.
19. 'Lesotho: IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis July 2020-March 2021'; Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee, August, 2020; and 2016 census data.
20. Spectrum Modelling Estimates, 2020.
21. Given the high number of nutrition stakeholders in Lesotho, caseloads will be covered by the Government and other United Nations agencies (the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)).
22. The focus of WASH interventions will be less on heavy water drilling and more on rehabilitation of systems and the provision of hygiene services and supplies.
23. The targeted population is the same as the total number of people to be reached because the target includes mass media outreach.
24. Each household will receive a top-up amount of US\$32 x two quarters = US\$3.2 million.
25. This includes US\$150,000 for child protection interventions; US\$150,000 for gender-based violence in emergencies interventions; and US\$50,000 for prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse interventions.
26. Other communication for development costs are factored into other sector funding needs.
27. While the number of people and children in need has increased, the funding requirements have slightly declined due to the lower number of households to be reached with social protection funds. The Government and other donors will cover other vulnerable households. For WASH, the focus will be less on heavy water drilling and more on rehabilitation of systems and the provision of hygiene services and supplies.