



Children take part in a UNICEF-led handwashing demonstration at Al Khader Primary School in Jordan.

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Humanitarian Action for Children

Middle East and North Africa

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Middle East and North Africa region is facing significant challenges. Some 32 million children, including 5.8 million refugee children and 6.8 million internally displaced children, are affected by conflict, protracted emergencies and the climate crisis.¹
- The UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office will continue to support the most vulnerable children and families with humanitarian assistance. In the context of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, UNICEF will reach 47 million people with risk communication messages and 2.8 million children with back-to-learning activities in Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Morocco, Oman and Tunisia.
- The humanitarian response will also improve accountability to crisis-affected communities, localize emergency response, prevent sexual exploitation and abuse and prioritize protection. Building shock-responsive systems and strengthening the resilience of vulnerable communities will remain critical.
- UNICEF is requesting US\$42.1 million to address humanitarian and COVID-19-specific needs in the region.

IN NEED²



16 million people need nutrition services³



49 million people need WASH services⁴



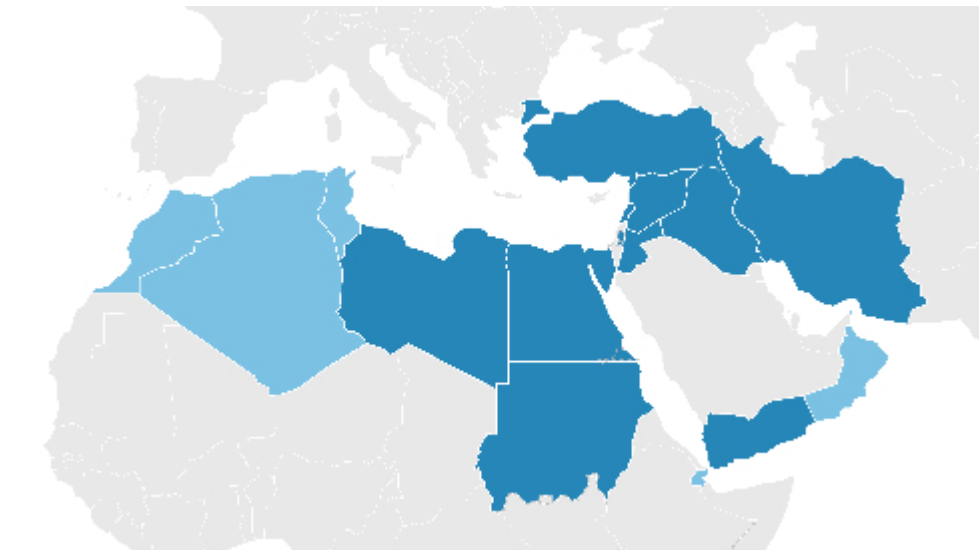
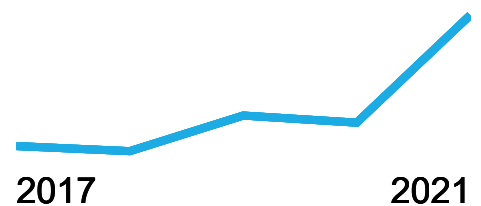
24 million children need protection services⁵



110 million children need access to school⁶

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

US\$ 42.1 million



This map does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. The countries in light blue are embedded in this regional appeal. The countries in dark blue have corresponding standalone appeals or are covered under crisis appeals.

Figures are provisional and subject to change upon finalization of the inter-agency planning documents.

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

The Middle East and North Africa region is experiencing some of the most desperate situations in the world, with more than 32 million children in need of humanitarian assistance.⁷ In 2021, the region will account for one third of the very high severity crisis countries globally.⁸

Conflict remains the main driver of humanitarian needs in the region and is exacerbating the needs of children and women.⁹ The scale, severity and complexity of humanitarian needs in the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen remain extensive after nine and five years of conflict, respectively. The deteriorating security situation in Libya and instability in Iraq, Sudan and the State of Palestine have exposed children, particularly girls, to inordinate violence. The humanitarian situation in the region is further compounded by growing gender inequality and gender-based violence.

Humanitarian emergencies and extreme poverty are driving waves of internal and external displacement, with 5.8 million refugee children and 6.8 million internally displaced children in the region.¹⁰ Extreme poverty and violence push children to undertake dangerous journeys in pursuit of better educations and economic prospects. Sudan has one of the largest migrant populations in the subregion at over 1.2 million. Second to Sudan is Libya, with over 800,000 migrants.¹¹ In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has fueled civil unrest and accelerated economic deterioration in Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia. The number of children living in monetary poverty is expected to grow by 7 million over the course of the year.¹²

The Middle East and North Africa region is also confronting natural disasters, such as extreme flooding in Djibouti, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq and Sudan, as well as infectious disease outbreaks, including cholera outbreaks in Yemen. Climate change is fueling the spread of disease and the scale and frequency of natural disasters. The situation is further aggravated by significant water scarcity.

HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY

Humanitarian action is at the core of the UNICEF mandate to realize the rights of every child. In 2021, the UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Office will support the most vulnerable people, including women, children and persons with disabilities, with the assistance they need most during emergencies, while improving accountability to crisis-affected communities, localizing emergency response and promoting the centrality of protection.

In 2021, UNICEF will invest in building capacities to reach the most vulnerable and marginalized children by strengthening humanitarian coordination and efforts to analyse and prioritize humanitarian needs. Country offices will be supported to conduct sharper risk analysis and horizon scanning for better emergency preparedness.

UNICEF will review its humanitarian action to foster principled access and leadership, maximize equitable coverage and the quality of response in complex emergencies and roll out the revised Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action. Stronger collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) will support the integration of refugee children into national systems and facilitate more systematic cluster coordination, with improved performance and more timely deployment.

Continued investment in strategic partnerships with local actors will improve the efficiency and appropriateness of humanitarian action, particularly in protracted emergencies. Better quality programming will be achieved through systematic consultations with communities and the integration of cross-cutting themes such as social and gender inclusion and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. Building on the existing COVID-19 response, UNICEF will identify opportunities for building shock-responsive systems, strengthening the resilience of vulnerable communities, and better linking humanitarian action and development programmes. UNICEF will also work with donors to demonstrate and document the benefits of flexible, multi-year humanitarian funding. Urgent but less visible needs will be addressed in Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Morocco, Oman

STORY FROM THE FIELD



People experience the impacts of war differently. Sometimes the impact is losing all support — their salary and their ability to feed their children and meet family needs.

To ease the burden of the crisis caused by over five years of conflict in Yemen, UNICEF launched the Cash Plus Initiative. The initiative combines cash transfers with complementary support to maximize the positive impacts of cash transfers. It is designed to support the beneficiaries of the Social Welfare Fund and their family members across Sana'a governorates to ensure access to integrated social services, including health, nutrition, birth registration and education.

[Read more about this story here](#)

© UNICEF/YEMEN/2020/Al-Obeidy
“We managed to issue birth certificates for my children through the support of the Cash Plus programme,” says Muhammed Al-Maswary, pictured with his family in Amanat Al-Asima, Sana'a, Yemen.

COVID-19 REGIONAL RESPONSE

Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Morocco, Oman and Tunisia

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION (COVID-19)

As of 3 September 2020, 20 countries in the Middle East and North Africa have registered nearly 1.7 million confirmed cases of COVID-19 and over 45,000 associated deaths. The pandemic has generated a broad range of socio-economic impacts and is exacerbating existing vulnerabilities. The region is projected to experience negative economic growth of 5.7 per cent in 2020, with conflict-affected countries facing projections as high as 13 per cent.¹³ This economic downturn will push more people into poverty and increase the likelihood that children will succumb to negative household coping strategies such as child labour, early marriage and dropping out of school. Countries continue to struggle to ensure continuous learning for students, and are reporting disruptions to essential health and nutrition services. For example, immunization campaigns have slowed, putting nearly 15 million children at risk of missing life-saving vaccines.¹⁴ Measures restricting movement have increased the isolation of women and children in homes, thereby raising their risk of exposure to domestic and gender-based violence, and negatively impacting children's mental health.

HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY (COVID-19)

UNICEF and partners are launching new risk communication and community engagement messages to disseminate reliable information, promote hygiene practices for infection prevention and dispel misinformation. UNICEF will support the continuity of primary health care by providing a jump-start package designed to rebuild trust in the health system and address fears of infection. Strategic emphasis will remain on infection prevention and control activities, as well as the provision of essential personal protective equipment and WASH supplies. UNICEF will support education partners to develop blended learning approaches for back-to-learning initiatives, prioritizing continued learning for girls and adolescents. Guidelines on how to return to school safely have been developed to support school reopening and operation. UNICEF will promote access to protection services by strengthening the capacities of social service workers to provide mental health and psychosocial support. The rollout of parental guidance will contribute to child protection and efforts to safeguard children's well-being. UNICEF will provide technical support on public finance to help the Government navigate the challenging socio-economic situation while building shock-responsive systems, including cash-based programmes and social protection.

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

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

2021 PROGRAMME TARGETS¹⁵



Nutrition

- **2,500** children aged 6 to 59 months with severe acute malnutrition admitted for treatment
- **365,759** primary caregivers of children aged 0 to 23 months receiving infant and young child feeding counselling



Health

- **1,100,000** children and women accessing primary health care in UNICEF-supported facilities
- **51,109** health care workers within health facilities and communities provided with personal protective equipment¹⁶



Water, sanitation and hygiene

- **100,000** people accessing a sufficient quantity of safe water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene
- **1,888,645** people reached with critical water, sanitation and hygiene supplies (including hygiene items) and services



Child protection, GBViE and PSEA¹⁷

- **180,000** children and caregivers accessing mental health and psychosocial support
- **2,000** girls and boys who have experienced violence reached by health, social work or justice/law enforcement services
- **1,003,500** women, girls and boys accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention or response interventions



Education

- **2,807,812** children accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning
- **75,000** schools implementing safe school protocols (infection prevention and control)



Social protection and cash transfers

- **1,000** households reached with humanitarian cash transfers across sectors
- **438,818** households benefiting from new or additional emergency social cash assistance measures provided by governments with UNICEF support



C4D, community engagement and AAP

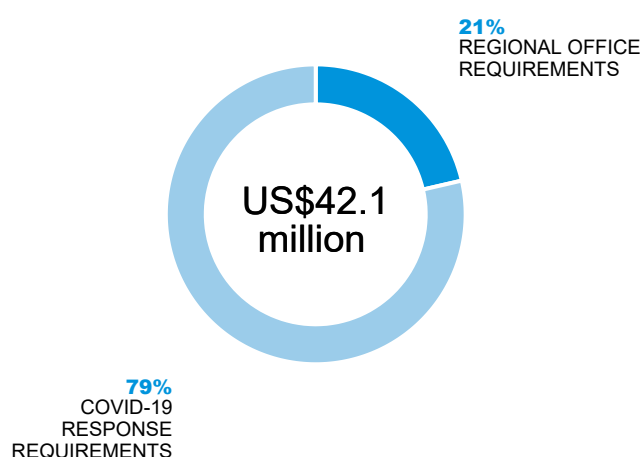
- **47,140,000** people reached with messages on access to services
- **2,065,000** people participating in engagement actions for social and behavioural change
- **1,505,000** people who shared their concerns and asked questions/clarifications to address their needs through established feedback mechanisms

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS IN 2021

UNICEF is requesting US\$42.1 million to: (a) cover COVID-19 response requirements in countries without stand-alone 2021 appeals (Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Morocco, Oman and Tunisia); (b) respond to small- or medium-size sudden-onset emergencies (e.g., natural disasters, disease outbreaks, displacement, civil unrest and financial instability) that are not benefiting from inter-agency appeals; and (c) support all countries in the region, including Level 3 emergencies, with multi-sectoral technical support, strengthen coordination and ensure adequate capacities to prepare for and launch emergency responses.

This funding will also allow UNICEF to continue to support host governments and vulnerable populations with risk communication and community engagement, infection prevention control and essential health, nutrition, education, child protection and social protection services. Funding requirements for health activities have increased in line with growing needs due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Across the region, UNICEF is focusing on preventing new infections through public health education and outreach; supporting health systems to boost supplies of key equipment; and addressing misinformation and false information that could have harmful consequences for children. Affected countries need to manage people's fears, address health risks and provide credible and timely information and services to isolate and contain the virus. This will be essential before the economic and social impacts — including loss of livelihoods and limited access to health and basic services — worsen conditions for children.

UNICEF acknowledges the generous support of donors in 2020, which was essential to protecting children in the Middle East and North Africa from the multifaceted impacts of the pandemic. Continued and flexible funding support will be instrumental to implementing the 2021 regional strategy and addressing the pressing humanitarian needs of vulnerable children and women.



Sector	2021 requirements (US\$)
Regional office requirements	9,000,000
Regional office technical capacity	2,455,000
Emergency response	4,145,000
Preparedness and disaster reduction	2,400,000
COVID-19 response requirements	33,080,000
Health and nutrition	8,240,000
Water, sanitation and hygiene	5,049,000
Child protection, GBViE and PSEA	3,631,000 ¹⁸
Education	7,160,000
Social protection and cash transfers	5,297,000
C4D, community engagement and AAP	3,703,000
Total	42,080,000

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ENDNOTES

1. These figures represent all humanitarian needs across the Middle East and North Africa region, including all Humanitarian Action for Children/Humanitarian Response Plan countries. This regional appeal includes COVID-19-specific targets in six countries only (Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Morocco, Oman and Tunisia), as well regional requirements to ensure technical support to all countries in the region (i.e., country appeals and the Syrian refugee appeal). Other humanitarian needs are directly addressed through the country-specific appeals for the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, the State of Palestine, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen and the Syrian refugee appeal covering Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey.
2. The "in need" figures reflect pressing needs in the major sectors that UNICEF supports for all countries in the region.
3. The target groups are children and pregnant and lactating women. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Libya: 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan', OCHA, February 2020; Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'OPT: 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan', OCHA, January 2020; Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Sudan: 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan', OCHA, January 2020; Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Syrian Arab Republic: 2020 Humanitarian Needs Overview', OCHA, 2020; Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Yemen: 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan Extension', OCHA, June 2020.
4. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Iraq: 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan', OCHA, January 2020; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 'Iraq Country Chapter: 3RP Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2020-2021 in Response to the Syria Crisis', UNHCR, February 2020; 'Libya: 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan'; Government of Lebanon and United Nations, 'Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020 (2020 update)', UN, January 2020; 'OPT: 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan'; 'Sudan: 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan'; 'Syrian Arab Republic: 2020 Humanitarian Needs Overview'; 'Yemen: 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan Extension'.
5. 'Iraq: 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan'; 'Iraq Country Chapter: 3RP Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2020-2021 in Response to the Syria Crisis'; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 'Egypt Country Chapter: 3RP Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2019-2020 in Response to the Syria Crisis', UNHCR, May 2019; 'Libya: 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan'; 'Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2020 (2020 update)'; 'OPT: 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan'; 'Sudan: 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan'; 'Syrian Arab Republic: 2020 Humanitarian Needs Overview'; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and United Nations Development Programme, 'Turkey Country Chapter: 3RP Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2020-2021 in Response to the Syria Crisis', UNHCR and UNDP, February 2020; 'Yemen: 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan Extension'.
6. United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute of Statistics, 2019; and United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 'Education: From disruption to recovery', UNESCO, <<https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>>, accessed 25 September 2020.
7. The number of people in need, including children, was calculated based on 2019 UNICEF Humanitarian Action for Children appeals. Out of the global UNICEF humanitarian caseload in 2019, the Middle East and North Africa comprises about 42 per cent of the people to be reached and 48 per cent of the children to be reached.
8. Data from INFORM, a collaboration of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on Risk, Early Warning and Preparedness and the European Commission. European Commission, INFORM, <<https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index>>, accessed 25 September 2020.
9. Almost 16 million children and pregnant and lactating women require nutrition support, and 24 million children need child protection services. Approximately 110 million children require various forms of education support.
10. There are approximately 15.3 million internally displaced persons (including 6.8 million children) and 14.1 million refugees (including 5.8 million children). Several countries are simultaneously overwhelmed by multiples crises and hosting large numbers of refugees, migrants and displaced people. Figures are based on 2019 humanitarian needs overview documents for Middle East and North Africa countries and International Organization for Migration (IOM) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) data as of August 2019.
11. International Organization for Migration, 'World Migration Report 2020', IOM, Geneva, 2019.
12. According to global estimates produced by UNICEF and Save the Children in 2020, the number of children living in monetary poverty in the region is expected to grow by 7 million, from 41 to 48 million children
13. United Nations, 'Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on the Arab Region: An opportunity to build back better', UN, July 2020.
14. Calculated based on UNICEF Middle East and North Africa COVID-19 situation reports.
15. This section reflects the consolidated targets of the countries included in the regional appeal only.
16. The indicator is cross-sectoral in nature and includes the provision of personal protective equipment to caregivers and front-line professionals, including health care workers, social workers and teachers.
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. This includes US\$1.25 million dedicated to gender-based violence and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse activities.