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Reporting Period: October 30 – November 30, 2020

# UNICEF in South Asia

## COVID-19 Situation Report No.18



### Highlights

- With over 10.6 million confirmed cases and 155,000 deaths<sup>1</sup> the COVID-19 pandemic situation is not yet under control across South Asia region. The increase in number of cases in Nepal, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka combined with the onset of winter season has raised concerns for a potential second wave.
- While schools have started re-opening in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, across the region schools have been closed on average of 5 months due the pandemic which has negatively impacted on the learning of 434 million children.
- UNICEF continues to support governments to safely re-open schools while at the same time providing homebased and online learning opportunities. A total of 63.5million children (66% target) have been reached with homebased learning including 171,631 refugee children.
- An estimated 23 million people (95% of the target) benefitted from critical WASH supplies and services programme including 303,000 health workers (102% of target) equipped with personal protective equipment
- A total of 29 million women and children (66% of the target) including 100,698 Rohingya refugees with essential health care services including immunization, prenatal and postnatal care. This has helped to reverse the declining trend of service utilization observed at the beginning of the pandemic.
- Over 1.9 million children, parents and primary caregivers benefitted from community-based mental health and psychosocial support services including 20,000 children provided with alternative care arrangements.
- UNICEF is appealing for \$293.9 million to prevent and respond to COVID-19 pandemic impacts. For 2021, UNICEF South Asia is seeking \$492 million to prepare for COVAX vaccines, prevent the spread and mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on essential basic services such as health, education and child protection

### Situation in Numbers

**1,553,653**

No. of new cases over the reporting period (SAARC DMC Nov 30, 2020)

**10,607,189**

Total cases of COVID-19 (SAARC DMC Nov 30, 2020)

**1,000,000,000**

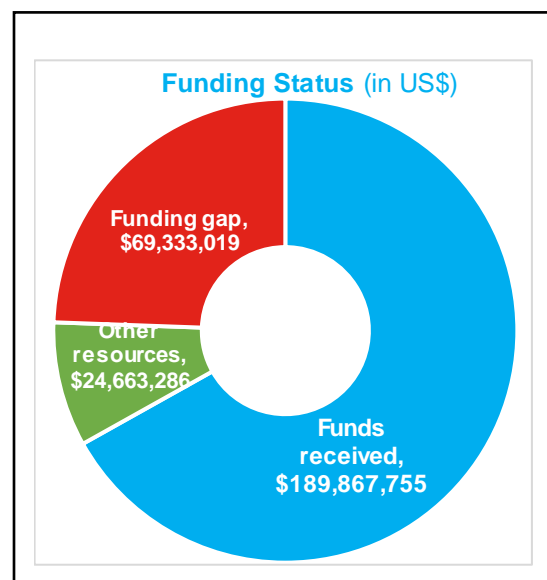
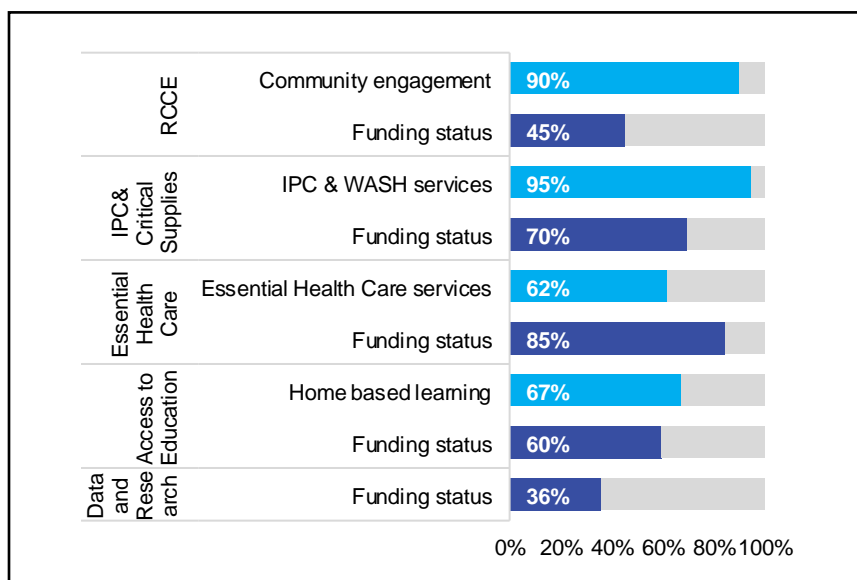
# of targeted population to be reached with risk messages by UNICEF response (ROSA Response Plan 2020)

**94,000,000**

# of targeted children to be reached with home learning (UNICEF 2020)

**UNICEF Appeal 2020**  
**For South Asia**  
**US\$ 293.95 million**

### UNICEF's Response Budget in South Asia

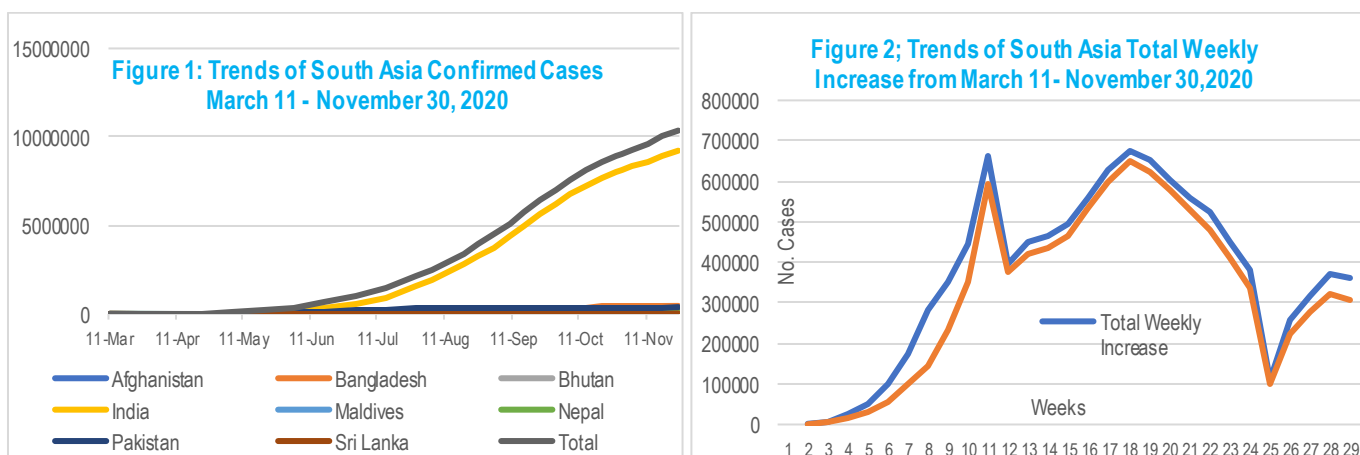


## Funding Overview and Partnerships

As part of a 2020 Global COVID-19 Appeal, UNICEF South Asia appeal stands at US\$ 293.95 million to support government efforts and interventions to prevent the spread of the virus and respond to those that have been affected through provision of critical supplies and ensuring continuous access to essential health services and responding to the social economic impacts of the disease. UNICEF South Asia has so far received \$214 million (73% of the target) from the Asia Development Bank, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, CERF, CIDA, DFAT, DFID, Facebook Foundation, Global Partnership for Education (GPE), Government of Denmark, Government of Finland, Government of Germany (KfW), Government of Japan, London Stock Exchange, World Bank, UN Solidarity Fund, Standard Chartered Bank, Government of Sweden (SIDA), Unilever and Government of USA (USAID). In this COVID-19 response, partnership with IFIs has substantially expanded, with all country offices in the region benefitting from the generous contribution of the Banks to support government responses. In view of the worsening situation in the region, UNICEF South Asia is seeking additional funding of \$492 million for the year 2021 to support government, communities and children to scale up intervention for COVAX vaccine preparedness and response to stop the spread of the virus and support government service delivery system and respond to social impacts of the pandemic which threaten to reverse development gains.

## Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

Over the past month, South Asia region recorded a total of 1,553,653 new cases bringing the cumulative total to 10,607,189 confirmed cases and 155,177 deaths. This represents a 17% increase compared to the previous reporting month when cases increased by 29%. Despite declining trend due early containment measures such as lockdown and travel restrictions, the overall situation remains fragile and not under control. With the onset of winter season, the increase in number of cases in Nepal, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have raised concerns for a potential second wave. Sri Lanka more than doubled its cases while recording the largest spike increase (140%) of confirmed cases. Although India recorded 1,342,840 new cases to bring the cumulative total to 9,431,691 cases, the monthly rate has significantly declined from 30% increase last month to 17% as shown in figure 1 and 2. Since last month, Nepal recorded 67,260 new cases (41% increase), Pakistan added 65,838 new cases (20% increase), Bangladesh added 57,647 new cases (14% increase), Afghanistan recorded 4,947 new cases (12% increase), Maldives reported 1378 new cases (12% increase), and Bhutan recorded 50 new cases (14% increase)<sup>1</sup>. While testing capacity has generally improved in some countries, it remains below the recommended WHO benchmark<sup>1</sup>. According to recent surveys based on testing random samples of the population for coronavirus antibodies, findings suggest that official numbers are grossly understating the actual spread of COVID-19. While schools have started re-opening in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, across the region schools have been closed on average of 5 months due the pandemic. These temporary closures have negatively impacted on the learning of 434 million children who are unable to attend schools and must rely on remote or home-based learning. The lack of access to the internet has exacerbated inequalities and the learning crisis particularly for poor and hard to reach populations. Due to long school closures, it is estimated that children in the region have experienced a learning loss of half a year of learning-adjusted years of schooling (LAYS). Similarly, it is projected that 5.5 million students could drop out from the education system adding to the existing 29 million children of primary and lower secondary age are out of school<sup>2</sup>. Poor girls are particularly vulnerable to losing out on learning and at greater risk of Gender Based Violence (GBV), and children with disabilities at risk of increased violence during lockdown.



Source: SAARC Disaster Management Centre<sup>3</sup>

## Summary Analysis of Programme Response

<sup>1</sup> SAARC COVID-19 Sitrep November 30, 2020; [http://www.covid19-sdmc.org/sites/default/files/situation\\_report\\_document/Situation-Report\\_30-11-2020.pdf](http://www.covid19-sdmc.org/sites/default/files/situation_report_document/Situation-Report_30-11-2020.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> World Bank; South Asia Economic Focus, Fall 2020; <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/34517/9781464816406.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.COVID-1919-sdmc.org/>

The Regional Office and Country Offices response plans have been developed in alignment with the 2020 WHO Global Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP), Humanitarian Response Plans (HRP) and the 2020 UNICEF COVID-19-2019 Humanitarian Action for Children Appeal. The key priority for the RO/CO response plans is on the immediate measures that must be undertaken to ensure preparedness and response actions to prevent and respond to the COVID-19 outbreak in each country focusing on the following areas; (1) risk communication and community engagement, (2) Improve Infection and Prevention Control (IPC) and provide critical medical and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) supplies, (3) Support the provision of continued access to essential health and nutrition services for women, children and vulnerable communities, including case management, (4) access to continuous education and child protection services, and promoting cash transfers to address the social impact of the epidemic. With schools re-opening across the region UNICEF has stepped its support to the governments to ensure that schools re-open safely in line with COVID-19 protocols.

In order to mitigate the impacts of long school closures UNICEF continue to provide extensive technical support for continuity of learning including alternative channels to reach all children, especially the most marginalised, and to enhance the quality of remote learning while at the same time ensuring the safe and sustainable re—opening of schools and building back better. Moreover, UNICEF has supported Ministries in the development of Continuity of Learning Frameworks, review of the education curriculum, orientation and training of teachers, parents and guardians on online and remote learning, and development of self-learning packages for pre-school and primary school children. Due to challenges of digital divides limiting the scale up of home based learning to reach a large proportion of children and youth, UNICEF is working with government and partners to develop regional and national strategies to accelerate technology for learning approaches and build capacity, as well as integration of technology for learning in education sector plans and strategies and costed scenarios of rollout.

### **Afghanistan Country Office;**

#### **Risk Communication and Community Engagement**

- With reports of Afghanistan entering the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic due to increasing number of cases<sup>4</sup>, WHO has warned that widespread complacency and failure to follow public health advice is creating grave risks in the community with people generally not observing physical distancing or mask wearing protocols. Consequently, UNICEF and partners continued to strengthen risk communication and community engagement. During the reporting period, UNICEF oriented 1187 members from Immunization Network, Child Protection Action Network, mobile health teams, nutrition counsellors, religious leader, and volunteers from informal settlements in Ghazni province on COVID-19, who then reached to 44,000 individuals so far. Cumulatively, UNICEF has engaged over 51,000 people (102% of the target) from different networks for risk communication and prevention
- Access to reliable sources of information and mass media remains a challenge in Afghanistan, particularly in rural communities and urban settlements. UNICEF, as a strategic partner of the Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) Task Force of the COVID-19 response, mobilized nearly 46,000 people for COVID-19 response and participatory community engagement approaches. Since April 2020, over 19 million people (137% of the target) were reached with targeted messages and information on COVID-19 through direct, media channels (182 TV and radio channels used). to conduct media campaigns reaching 7 million individuals.

#### **Improve Infection and Prevention Control (IPC) and provide critical medical and WASH supplies**

- In Afghanistan almost 9 per cent of the 46,215 confirmed COVID-19 cases are among healthcare staff. Health facilities across the country continue to report shortfalls in PPE, medical supplies and equipment, further limiting their capacity to treat COVID-19 patients. Therefore, over 1,800 people were reached with critical Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) equipment in health and educational facilities after training during the reporting period. Cumulatively, over 20,000 health personnel and community frontline workers (104% of the target) have been reached with PPEs.
- UNICEF continues to distribute hygiene supplies and sensitize communities with key messages on how to prevent transmission. The installation of hand washing facilities and stations remains a priority in Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) sites, health facilities and mosques. Since the beginning of the response UNICEF's interventions have contributed to reaching 858,000 people (143% of the target), through provision of critical WASH supplies and services such as handwashing stations.

#### **Support the provision of continued access to essential health and nutrition services for women and children**

- Due to existing weak capacities combined with increasing demand as cases continue to increase, health facilities are facing challenges to maintain or expand their facilities' capacity to treat patients with COVID-19, as well as maintaining

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<sup>4</sup> OCHA Afghanistan Strategic Situation Report, COVID-19 No.85, November 26, 2020

essential health services, especially in areas of active conflict. Consequently, the Ministry of Public Health has already observed a decrease in utilization of essential health services across RMNCH main indicators.

- Therefore, to reverse such declining trends, UNICEF in collaboration with the government and community health workers, supported fifty Mobile Health and Nutrition Teams (MHNTs) providing reproductive, maternal, newborn, adolescents health services in the most remote and hard-to reach communities. More than 24,000 healthcare providers were trained to identify and respond to community's healthcare needs in the COVID-19 context. The MHNT also provide other basic healthcare services, including immunization and nutrition screening. Cumulatively a total of 387, 877 children and women (157% of the target) were supported with the provision of essential health services, including antenatal and postnatal care, integrated management of childhood illnesses, nutrition counselling, and immunization services;
- In view of the worsening food insecurity across the country, UNICEF prepositioned adequate therapeutic supplies (RUTF, F75, F100, ReSoMal) required for the treatment of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) for the implementing partners in the winter affected provinces. The supply is for the entire winter period (Q4 2020 and Q1 2021), to ensure continuation of services during winter. Over 22,600 children aged 6-59 months were admitted for SAM treatment.
- UNICEF continues promoting practices of breastfeeding and consumption of nutrient-rich foods. Nutrition counselors also continue providing counseling along with COVID-19 related information to mothers and caregivers at health facilities. With the re-opening of schools, adolescent girls will re-start receiving critical iron folic acid (IFA) supplementation.

#### Access to continuous education, child protection and gender-based violence (GBV) services

- The pandemic has significantly impacted children and their families, forcing them to adapt a new way of living. Adjustments can trigger negative and unhealthy skills to cope with stress. To protect children from additional harm, UNICEF as a co-chair of the Case Management Task Force finalized the Case Management Standard Operating Procedures (SoP), to support the social workforce in providing adequate care for children. Continued emphasis is placed on the importance of gender integration and risk mitigation of GBV and sexual exploitation and abuse as part of the COVID-19 context. Interventions have focused mainly on awareness raising and reduction of girls' and women's vulnerability to GBV at household level.
- Nearly 300,000 women and children received psychosocial support through structured and semi-structured activities including door to door and helpline PSS provision.
- Child Protection community-based awareness raising on the protection of children and positive coping mechanisms in the COVID-19 situation was provided to 56,050 community members including 48,986 children (19,436 girls, 29,550 boys) and 7,064 adults (4,437 females, 2,627 male)
- Over 4,500 most vulnerable including unaccompanied separated children (UASC), girls at risk of child marriage, or repatriated children or at risk of unsafe migration and children survivors of violence have been identified and referred to social services including psychosocial support, medical, education, reunification of UASC with their families, provision of vocational training, income generation, cash transfer and other services based on their individual needs.

#### Social Protection/Humanitarian Cash Transfers

- Increased use of cash assistance as response modality for Covid-19. In addition to completed cash distribution in Herat (2010 households), SPEAR and Child Protection are working together with MoLSA to provide case management support and cash transfers to 1096 vulnerable households in Kabul (886 HH), Bamyán (70 HH) Maidan Wardak (70 HH) and Kapisa (70 HH), in response to increased vulnerability due to Covid-19. Two rounds of cash transfers will take place in December

#### Bangladesh Country Office;

##### Risk Communication and Community Engagement

- UNICEF supported the integration of an Advocacy, Communication and Demand Promotion Component into the national COVID-19 Vaccine Deployment Plan developed by the Government of Bangladesh. Support was also provided to the Directorate of Primary Education to draft a communication action plan to address information needs related to school reopening.
- An entertainment education drama on mask use has been produced and is now being disseminated. The findings of recent rapid assessments on mask use show a gap between knowledge and practice in wearing a mask, which are addressed in the drama.
- Social mobilization and community engagement initiatives including face-to-face interactions and small community dialogues are on-going at a limited scale. Alternative modalities are being used to improve engagement, such as interactive community radio that reached over three million people in the last month.

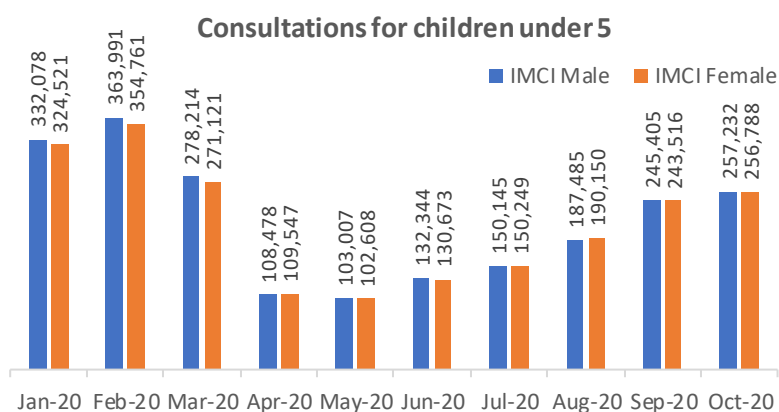
- UNICEF is calling for increased awareness about adolescent mental health during COVID-19. A [story](#) was published highlighting the increased risk of exposure of adolescents to online harm. Nearly 300,000 children to date have completed an online certification course provided in partnership with the Government. Additionally, an [online safety campaign](#) was launched with Grameenphone.
- Social media posts on COVID-19 were viewed over 329.4 million times by 30 million users during the reporting period. Children shared what they are looking forward to after they return to school in a [video](#) as part of the school reopening advocacy campaign (views: 6.2m). A [video report](#) on the risk of girls not returning to school post-COVID-19 was produced by a child journalist (views 1.5m). There was also continued focus on [handwashing](#) (reach: 6.6m), [safe immunization](#) (reach: 6m), [safe breastfeeding](#) (reach: 6.2m) and [maternal health during COVID-19](#) (reach: 5.5m).
- In coordination with district government officials, communication and community engagement interventions reinforcing the appropriate use of face masks were conducted in Pekua Upazilla, reached 180,000 people through courtyard sessions, consultations, advocacy meetings and loudspeaker messaging in media dark areas.
- Overall, RCCE interventions have reached 54 million people living in 45,404 communities with preventive messages such as a call to action to use mask, hygiene practices and maintaining social distance.

### Improve Infection and Prevention Control (IPC) and provide critical medical and WASH supplies

- UNICEF has been importing supplies to fill the gap required by government health workers since the beginning of the pandemic. Recently UNICEF delivered 76,960 gowns, 379 oxygen concentrators and 432 flow splitters. UNICEF is currently negotiating with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW) for the installation of Liquid Medical Oxygen in 30 secondary and tertiary-level hospitals which will significantly improve hypoxemia case management.
- As part of IPC, UNICEF provided 102 foot-operated handwashing devices to 50 health care facilities, 22 para centres<sup>5</sup> in Chittagong Hill Tracts and 30 religious schools benefitting 37,500 people in November 2020.
- The 103 beds UNICEF-supported severe acute respiratory infection isolation and treatment centre (SARI ITC) is now operating 24 hours a day. As of 15 November, 1,628 patients have received services from the SARI-ITC, while 754 COVID-19 samples have been taken, among which 24 were positive and 67 reports are pending. Forty-seven patients (27 men, 20 women, no children under 5) have been admitted so far, among them 40 patients have been discharged, 5 referred to a higher level of care and 2 are currently admitted. A transformer is required to ensure a permanent power supply to operationalize the full 200 beds; this is expected to be in place by December.
- UNICEF and partners celebrated World Toilet Day on 19 November, maintaining COVID-19 precaution and safety measures. A total of 87,000 people participated in the camps and 60,000 in the host community. There is currently 1 latrine for every 17 people in the UNICEF-supported camps (better than the 1:20 standard), with 85 per cent functionality as of Quarter 3 of 2020.
- UNICEF, in partnership with DPHE, NGOs and Local Government Institutes reached 59,127 people during the reporting period through the installation of public and private handwashing devices, construction and rehabilitation of latrines and disinfection of water points. In total, 8.9 million people (87% of the target) have been supported since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Support the provision of continued access to essential health and nutrition services for women and children

- Utilization of maternal, neonatal and child health services continues to increase after steep decline in April and May 2020. The numbers of normal deliveries in facilities increased from 24,066 in May to 38,058 in October while facility-based treatment of complicated obstetric cases increased from 53,415 to 101,535. Positive trends were also seen in primary health care consultations for children (see graph) while 9,128 sick newborns received care in Special Care Newborn Units in October. Adequate IPC in the facilities and promoting awareness of the families and communities to seek care remain challenging.



- Uptake of routine immunization activities is also continuing a positive trend. An additional 245,107 children above the target received BCG vaccination from June to October, meaning the majority of the 282,718 children who missed their BCG vaccination in April and May 2020 have likely been reached. Similarly, 215,692 additional children were vaccinated with their first dose of MR from June to October 2020. Based on 285,787 children missed, the MR catch up rate is 75

<sup>5</sup> UNICEF delivers basic services to children and women through its 5,000 para centres in the three Chittagong Hill Tract districts.

per cent. A special catchup campaign was conducted by preparing a list of missed or dropped out children from the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Vaccination rates in the Rohingya camps and host communities are now exceeding their monthly targets. Many children who missed doses in previous months are now catching up with 2,146 sessions held in the camps (89 per cent of planned) and 1,675 sessions in host communities (100 per cent of planned). The number of children receiving their third dose of pentavalent vaccine increased from 81 to 107 per cent of targeted children in camps, a key proxy indicator for complete routine immunization. Community health workers are working to identify all children under 2 who have missed doses
- In October, the delivery of nutrition services also continued to increase. The number of children admitted for treatment of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) increased by 23 per cent compared to September. A total of 964 children with SAM were admitted in October compared to 778 children in September. These numbers are three times the average number of children admitted before the pandemic; having SAM Units fully supplied and detailed follow ups have contributed to this increase. In upcoming weeks. Since the beginning of the year, 5,712 Rohingya refugee children (3,591 girls, 23 with disabilities) were admitted for SAM treatment, 95 per cent of the annual target. Among those discharged in October, 93 per cent were cured (SPHERE standard >75 per cent) with a default rate of 0.1 per cent

#### [Access to continuous education, social protection, child protection and gender-based violence \(GBV\) services](#)

- While the Government of Bangladesh has extended the closure of all educational institutions throughout the country until 19 December, UNICEF continue to engage and advocate for safe re-opening of schools using evidence-based experiences and results. Also as part of its advocacy efforts for operational planning towards the safe reopening of schools, a [Policy Dialogue](#) on school reopening was held with the State Minister for Education, key stakeholders and leading news outlet Prothom Alo.
- UNICEF field offices are supporting district authorities/schools to prepare their reopening plans based on the [MOPME Circular](#) to use School Level Improvement Plan funds for safe reopening related costs. UNICEF will support the model safe reopening of 1,210 schools and 1,000 early child development/para centres covering 453,500 students (50 per cent girls).
- As a first step to implement the 'Back to Learning' guideline amongst the Rohingya children, UNICEF and partners reviewed the learning competency framework and approach (LCFA) and prioritized competencies to cover once learning centres (LCs) are reopened. Accordingly, the lesson plans for all subjects have been updated to guide the delivery of teaching and learning in face-to-face sessions and caregiver-led learning at home which has been ongoing since LCs were closed in March.
- UNICEF supported the Department of Social Services (DSS) and General Hospital of Chattogram to organize a Health Campaign for children with disabilities. The activities cover 41 wards of the City Corporation and will follow proper COVID-19 guidelines. This included health check-ups for 50 children with disabilities (50 per cent girls) in November 2020. As this group of children have less access to services, the project plans to support 150 children over a six-month period. Challenges so far include bringing the children to the service centre. The project has ensured participating children have received "smart-cards" through which they will be able to get government support including cash and health benefits.
- All 18 safe spaces for women and girls (SSWGs) and 104 multipurpose centres MPCs in camps and host communities are operational and conducting case management (in-person and remote), psychosocial support, referrals and limited skills development activities. In the reporting period, these facilities supported 732 children and adolescents (58 per cent female) through these services. Additionally, 4,496 children (2,127 female) are receiving family-based alternative care.

#### [Bhutan Country Office;](#)

##### [Risk Communication and Community Engagement](#)

- To date, over 70% of the population (700,000 people) have been reached with lifesaving messages on COVID-19 prevention and access to services through digital media (268,970) such as Facebook and UNICEF's website and through community engagement (488,000). Over 18,200 influential persons and volunteers were mobilized for community engagement at various levels. In addition, 7,617 families and children (4,276 female) in 20 districts were reached with lifesaving messages and access to services including support to younger children in their school lessons and learning through engagement of 3,811 scout volunteers as community communicators on COVID-19.
- About 54,000 children in schools and institutes reached with lifesaving messages and access to services including mental health, GBV and child protection through engagement of more than 500 COVID-19 focal persons.
- Since the campaign #COVID19STORIES was launched on April 9, the CO has posted more than 498 stories from children as young as six years old, young people and adults. The campaign has received about 520 stories and videos from young people from across the country and abroad out of which about 250 stories were received from children (18

and below). The campaign provides an opportunity for children and young people to advocate for and share prevention messages on COVID-19.

#### Improve Infection and Prevention Control (IPC) and provide critical medical and WASH supplies

- UNICEF procured on behalf of the government of Bhutan critical supplies for infection prevention of COVID-19 for a total value of US\$332,678 worth of critical medical and WASH supplies as well as communication materials, benefitting 147,071 people. US\$36,943 were utilized for the installation of handwashing stations in select locations for the prevention of COVID-19. As a result, more than 88,000 people were reached with the WASH services and other supplies, including 21,650 people who benefitted from handwashing facilities and safe drinking water installed in 17 public places, and 51,352 school children and 13,458 (1,290 nuns) children in monastic institutions who were reached with soaps and hygiene posters soaps, along with WASH services. About 8,685 people (6,222 health workers and 2,463 people visiting primary healthcare centers) benefited from infection prevention and control supplies such as pedal operated waste bins, buckets with taps and healthcare awareness hygiene materials, while 200 health care providers benefited from provision of personal protective equipment.
- 5,285 health workers across the country have been reached with handwashing communication packages and 7,015 children (6,571 monks and 444 nuns) received soaps in 90 monastic institutions.
- World Toilet Day was observed on 19 November during a high-level event with the participation of the Minister of Health and district government officials. 10 sub-districts have now been declared as open defecation free (ODF) in 2020 and received a recognition certification award from the Minister. Around 13,020 more people now live in newly certified ODF communities, equivalent to 50 per cent of the total population.

#### Support the provision of continued access to essential health and nutrition services for women and children

- Influenza vaccines for health workers and high-risk population were procured and delivered. The vaccination sessions were undertaken and completed with the financial support of UNICEF (the vaccines were procured with Government funds through UNICEF Supply Division).
- Country readiness tool for COVAX facility was finalized in preparation of the introduction of the vaccine.
- The EPI manual has been revised incorporating the new antigens with updated information on cold chain supply management, components on contingency plan for management of vaccines during emergencies and organization of outreach sessions for immunization services; and a separate chapter on management of dry store for immunization was introduced.
- The National Nutrition strategy and Action Plan was developed by the Ministry of Health in consultation with the Ministries of Agriculture and Education, academia, CSOs and UN agencies and is currently being reviewed.
- Due to IPC measures and technical support provided to the ministry of health, 15,251 children and women received essential healthcare prenatal, delivery and postnatal care, essential newborn care, immunization, treatment of childhood illnesses and nutrition services

#### Access to continuous education, social protection, child protection and gender-based violence (GBV) services

- Schools remain closed and will be reopened in February 2021, following COVID safety protocols.
- The National Education Assessment Framework was launched on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and will be used for the assessment in March 2021. UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Education (MoE) in the impact assessment of Self-Instructional Materials (SIM). The main purpose of the assessment is to gauge results and document lessons learned from the use of SIM as well as to better understand SIM effectiveness and improve future strategies for remote learning.
- 40 participants (18 female), comprising MoE ECCD officers, District Education Officials and ECCD facilitators from 17 districts attended the *ECCD Covid-19 Response Review* workshops. The purpose of the workshops was to reflect on the initiatives taken by ECCD practitioners and ECCD stakeholders during COVID-19 to ensure learning continuity and discuss issues related to ECCD in emergency. The main findings from the workshop were the potential of expanding home-based ECCD support through provision of ECCD home learning kits, which have already been initiated with UNICEF support, as well as the need to provide psychosocial support for ECCD practitioners.
- 1,777 children (831 girls) and 457 adults (188 female) have been referred to counsellors in their respective districts and provided with counselling services and psychosocial support through the *Sherig* Counselling online platform set up in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, since the reopening of schools for Class X and XII students from July 1st and class IX and XI from 21st September 2020, 19,950 children (9,994 girls) have been reached through counselling classes.
- 3,047 children (1,677 girls) have benefitted from online and face-to-face PSS sessions (where allowed). The session will continue to run until end of December in 117 schools.
- To understand the impact of COVID-19 on young people and promote their participation in decision-making processes during the crisis, UNICEF Bhutan and UNICEF ROSA supported the Youth Development Fund, an NGO, to train over

100 adolescents (57 females) in 11 districts to map COVID-19 triggered social issues using an appreciative enquiry toolkit.

- The training of front liners and specialized service providers on the SOP for GBV, has been completed in 4 districts. With the completion of this training, 70 front liners (34 female) and specialized service providers are now equipped to handle and safely refer survivors of violence.
- Mapping of GBV services and procedures in these 4 districts has been completed which will ensure the survivors are provided with appropriate services in a timely manner.

## India Country Office;

### Risk Communication and Community Engagement

- UNICEF supports Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in development of communication strategy, operational plan and tools to address the COVID-19 vaccine introduction, including vaccine eagerness, vaccine hesitancy alongside strengthening COVID-19 appropriate behaviours. During the reporting period social media reach was 270 million with five million engagements and 7.5 million video views.
- UNICEF alongside other partners to the Government of India continues to support RCCE interventions and the Jan Andolan to promote three key practices (wearing masks, maintain hygiene practices, maintain physical distance) with focus on festivals and the upcoming winter season in 14 states. To accelerate action the repository of RCCE materials and products enriched to enable state governments to reach and empower communities with awareness and knowledge. In addition, over 100 communication materials of 11 different mediums have been developed and disseminated through digital and electronic media supporting the Stigma & Discrimination interventions carried out in Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Assam, MP, Maharashtra and Telangana.
- UNICEF scaled up community engagement interventions with an innovative RCCE approach in partnership with CSOs. Currently the interventions reached 1,961,594 people with life-saving information through its 600 Communication Information Digital Resource Centres in 61 districts of 16 states. UNICEF reached 3.7 million adolescent girls and boys reached with targeted messages and information on prevention to COVID-19.
- UNICEF strengthened its evidence-based approach with data collection to understand levels of stigma and discrimination related to COVID-19 among general population and to provide insights to the implementation of communication strategy in Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, MP, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and UP. On the request of the state governments (Delhi and Mumbai), UNICEF India Country Office in close collaboration with Center for Development Studies and Actives (CDSA), Pune and Doctors For You (DFY) completed collection of viewpoints of people living in slum areas and in informal settlements in Delhi through established Community Feedback Mechanisms.

### Improve Infection and Prevention Control (IPC) and provide critical medical and WASH supplies

- UNICEF is collaborating with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, State authorities and UNDP to install oxygen generating plants in 31 facilities in four north eastern states. The investments in oxygen equipment and systems will strengthen the treatment of COVID-19 patients who are in moderate, severe and critical category. In the long term, the systems will be deployed for management of children with pneumonia, neonatal sepsis, neonatal meningitis, children requiring intensive care etc.
- The world toilet day was a major highlight in November. Twenty districts received award from Government of India for their performance in Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM) and COVID-19 response. UNICEF is technical partner to state governments and continues to work closely with all other line departments.
- UNICEF also provided support to Ministry of Education (MOE) in developing IEC materials which comprised of posters, digital content, wall writing designs and animation films for schools which got launched and disseminated to all states. MOE also acknowledged the support of UNICEF over an official tweet from Minister.

### Support the provision of continued access to essential health and nutrition services for women and children

- During the month of November, UNICEF actively supported in launch of (i) SAANS campaign on 12 November 2020 on the World Pneumonia Day and (ii) the National Newborn Week on 20 November 2020. The support to the MoHFW included development of guidelines, state progress cards, awareness generation materials, and the support organizing of multiple advocacy events, that included academia, UN agencies, civil society partners, professional associations and government, across the country.
- UNICEF procured and delivered mannikins for training on newborn care and pneumonia management to five states, and 15 states will be receiving in the coming weeks. States have started using the mannikins for training.
- The Ministry of Women and Child Development issued the operational guidance on 11th November 2020 with the directive on national restoration of Anganwadi Services. This followed the continuous efforts from UNICEF and other development partners. Recognizing the importance of nutritional services, national and state level guidelines have been released by the government to resume operations in a safe manner.



- UNICEF supported restoration of vitamin A supplementation round in 11 of the 12 states. In 2020, five states will undertake two Vitamin A rounds. Initial reporting suggests that during the rounds, over 80% of eligible children were covered.
- Due to continued advocacy, training of health workers on IPC and provision of critical supplies, 19.7 million children and women receiving essential health services including prenatal, delivery and postnatal care, essential newborn care, immunization, treatment of childhood illnesses

#### Access to continuous education, social protection, child protection and gender-based violence (GBV) services

- Through UNICEF's continued technical support to 17 state governments and partners, 57 million children (49% girls) aged 3-18 were reached with digital and non-digital remote learning opportunities. Multiple pathways and innovative interventions have been initiated to support holistic development of children and in reaching children from the disadvantaged/marginalized communities. For example, in Maharashtra, UNICEF in collaboration with Government and Pratham Books launched a reading campaign to promote the joy of reading among children reaching approximately 1.5 million children in the state. In Jharkhand, psycho-social support has been integrated into remote learning programmes for the holistic development of students through 'Digi-SATH (digital initiative using the social media platform) reaching approximately 1.2 million children in the state.
- Efforts to increase Mental Health and Psychosocial (MHPSS) support continues in 17 States, reaching over 360,000 children and caregivers. In Jammu and Kashmir, 219 teachers (123 males and 96 females) were oriented on MHPSS during COVID-19, and in West Bengal, 20 Juvenile Justice Boards and Special Court Judges were trained by National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS). UNICEF has managed to leverage National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM) Foundation support to automate the case management system for CHILDLINE Helpline to ensure efficient response services.
- Through UNICEF support, 9,316 children have been provided with family based alternative care in 17 states to date. In Jammu and Kashmir and Karnataka, capacity building of 638 district level child protection functionaries on community-based child protection mechanisms with a focus on preventing family separation and promoting family based alternative care was conducted.
- 3,544 (88% boys) child labourers rescued and rehabilitated so far and 54 trafficked children repatriated through the inter-country repatriation process across Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal. 831 seasonal migrant families were reached for enabling kinship care options in Maharashtra, and advocacy with the Government resulted in accelerating release of US\$ 768,000 for family assistance for child-care to over 12,000 families.

#### Maldives Country Office;

##### Risk Communication and Community Engagement

- During the reporting period, daily case number are seen to fluctuate with a relatively higher number of cases as well as lower numbers. The higher numbers were observed due to COVID-19 clusters that developed mostly in resort construction islands. Consistent engagement based on evidence from social listening has ensured that misinformation, disinformation as well as messages that promote stigmatization of certain groups of people are picked up early and addressed with correct information that the public requires. A revision of the RCCE plan and engagement strategy is currently being worked on to address the current changes to the national context regarding the spread of COVID-19 including an improved focus on reaching out to vulnerable groups such as migrants and people with disabilities. Focus group discussions are planned to understand public perceptions on the effectiveness of messaging, tonality, and other areas vital to engagement on upkeep on key lifesaving behaviours.
- As UNICEF and HEOC prepare to engage the public on COVID-19 vaccines; preliminary assessment of sentiments on social media as well as through focus group discussions (FGDs) on public sentiments around the vaccines and general discussions around immunization, is being acquired to ensure public messaging and call for action would yield the best results.
- During the reporting period, based on the UNICEF methodology to calculate reach on social media, 94,584.76 average impressions per post (29 posts in total) were achieved through engagement with the public on UNICEF Facebook account. The World Children's Day 2020, Kids Takeover of the COVID-19 press briefing (video) which UNICEF did with HEOC, had one of the highest reach recorded in 2020, with 389,914 impressions as well as 4,382 engagements received. Furthermore, 29,648 people were able to seek assistance from the government through the emergency hotline 1676 and email address.

#### Access to continuous education, social protection, child protection and gender-based violence (GBV) services

- Currently, all schools except preschools and primary grades in schools of Male' have reopened. Students in these grades continue to learn through online and televised lessons. Schools across the country will be closed for annual school holidays from 3 Dec 2020 to 8 January 2021. UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education to monitor the continuity of learning, access, and engagement in learning through a survey. The survey is currently underway.

- UNICEF jointly with the MoE has monitored the implementation of safe school protocols in the schools and found that 100 per cent of the schools implement the safe school's protocols, 100 per cent of the schools have adequate handwashing arrangements in the schools and 92 per cent of schools reported to have classroom soap/hand sanitizers for use in every session for students.
- With UNICEF's support, a total of 3,874 (2637 females and 1240 males) teachers have been certified in G-suite to date, which equipped teachers with skills for online teaching. The Google Suite certified teachers were able to reach a total of 38,392 students through online learning. Televised lessons reached a total of 46,366 students (most of the students accessed both modalities hence if the two numbers are combined there would double counting)
- UNICEF and the Ministry of Social Services are working with other partners on a nationwide campaign to combat sexual violence against children and women. As part of this campaign, work is underway to develop a communication strategy, conduct consultations with key partners, develop public awareness materials and develop a baseline study on the situation of violence against women and children across the country.
- UNICEF through a partnership with the NGO Advocating the Rights of Children (ARC), published 34 social media posts covering messages to address mental health and prevention of violence against children. A total of 328,484 people were reached through Facebook, 17,374 persons were reached through Instagram, and 111,434 were reached through Twitter.

## Nepal Country Office;

### Risk Communication and Community Engagement

- UNICEF in partnership with Ministry of Health and Population and NCELL telecommunication partners reached more than 15 million population with public health safety messages (use of face mask, 2 meters distancing and handwashing) through radio, television, call back tone, online platforms and print media.
- More than 27,000 people (60 per cent male 40 per cent female) were involved in COVID 19 community engagement actions disseminating messages on COVID 19 prevention and control through community-based platforms reaching around 1,000,000 people across the country. Proper use of mask and maintaining 2 meters distancing, avoiding crowded areas, safer festival celebrations and travel messages were disseminated through door-to-door visits and megaphone announcements.
- 732 community support groups from 53 urban and rural municipalities addressed COVID 19 related concerns, confusions, issues, questions of 77,541 people (44 per cent female) through door-to-door visits and community discussions.
- UNICEF conducted a qualitative study to identify behavioural barriers and enablers for adopting the public health safety measures at public places and stigma and discriminations related to the COVID-19. Low risk perception, generalisation of the disease, fatigue with the practices and messages were identified as some of the barriers in using face mask and maintaining 2 meters distancing among the population.
- School reopening messages and guidelines discussed and disseminated through national television channels reaching more than 300,000 viewers across the country

### Improve Infection and Prevention Control (IPC) and provide critical medical and WASH supplies

- UNICEF-supported key medical supplies and equipment includes 85,000 protective coveralls; 2,000 protective goggles; 1,095 IR thermometers; 842 blankets; 2,394 bed nets; and 7 medical tents to support designated COVID-19 facilities. To ensure provision of essential health service (EHS), UNICEF further equipped 11,590 health workers with critical personal protective supplies such as 347,700 surgical masks, 277,010 surgical gloves; and 34,406 bottles of hand sanitizer.
- UNICEF oriented 285 front-line health workers (113 males, 172 females) on COVID-19 and WASH. 113 service providers who manage wastes including FSM and provide tanker water were also oriented. Over 70 WASH practitioners oriented on disinfection in schools and non-school settings using chlorine.
- UNICEF provided WASH support at five point of entries (POEs), these included provisions of bottled water together with food assistance to 71,347 people, repairing existing toilets, installation of emergency/mobile toilets and hand washing stations and drinking water supply.
- A total of 76,650 people benefitted from installation of 388 contactless handwashing stations at point of entry (14), community centers (61), Health Care Facilities (168), quarantine/isolation centers (114) and schools (31).
- Further, 26 faecal sludge operators, 13 private tanker operators, 15 solid water collectors, 14 sanitation workers and 102 UNICEF partners were oriented on WASH COVID-19 response which covered enhancing knowledge on various aspects, protective measures during work, and prioritization of services under overall WASH packages.

### Support the provision of continued access to essential health and nutrition services for women and children

- During the reporting period, 19 new health facilities from Lumbini province were assessed, where 2,056 beneficiaries utilised maternal and child health services. To date, a total of 414 health facilities across all provinces (183 in Province 2; 14 in Bagmati; 36 in Gandaki; 99 in Lumbini; and 82 across Karnali and Sudurpaschim provinces) were assessed for their EHS functionality. A total of 154,748 women and children utilized EHS, including 24,906 women were reached with antenatal care (ANC) services; 14,157 women delivered in health facilities; and 115,685 children were immunized (49 per cent boys and 51 per cent girls).
- UNICEF handed over 100 Oxygen Concentrator and 50 Pulse Oximeter to the Management Division and supported to deliver the items in COVID-19 designated hospitals inside the Kathmandu valley to support the treatment and management of COVID-19 cases.
- UNICEF provided technical and coordination support to MoHP to treat 5,815 children under five for severe wasting using ready to use therapeutic food (RUTF) through 620 outpatient therapeutic centres (OTCs) and 18 nutrition rehabilitation homes (NRH). In the past month, 672 cases were admitted to outpatient treatment programmes.
- Through UNICEF's coordination and facilitation, nutrition cluster partners provided telephone counselling to 897,347 pregnant and lactating women (47,190 in the past month).
- A total of 182,665 children aged 6-23 months received Supercereal in the most food insecure areas of Karnali Province, Province Two and Province one (14,012 in the past month). Similarly, 286,180 pregnant and lactating women in five districts of Karnali Province and four districts of Province Two received Supercereal (22,057 received in past month).

### Access to continuous education, social protection, child protection and gender-based violence (GBV) services

- UNICEF supported the Government to develop the School Reopening Framework which was issued by Government on 5 November 2020. UNICEF is working to launch National Campaign for Learning Continuity in partnership with Center for Education and Human Resource Development, School Management Committee Federation and Confederation of Nepalese Teachers. The campaign will align with government campaign to promote implementation of emergency action plan on school education to ensure that children can continue to learn despite of school closures. The campaign would include three pillars interlinked with each other, namely: 1) Assistance to local governments, 2) Mobilization of teachers in telephone-based teaching, and 3) Parenting education.
- To ensure the safe reopening of the schools UNICEF supported the cleaning and disinfection of 306 schools used as quarantine/isolation/holding centers out of about 5,000 such schools.
- To ensure the learning continuity of children during the school closure, UNICEF distributed self-learning packs to 35,614 pre-school and primary level children (53 per cent girls) exceeding the target of 34,000 children from the schools that were used as quarantine centres. In addition, UNICEF supported the radio schooling for grades 4-10 reaching 58,000 children (49 per cent girls).
- A total of 5,454 unaccompanied, separated or other vulnerable children (2,889 boys, 2,565 girls) were supported with appropriate care arrangements (family reintegration, placement in interim/transit care) and/or other emergency support and relief; out of which a total of 118 children were referred to different services such as health, security, justice, etc.
- A total of 496 children (10 girls) who were deprived of liberty in eight child correction homes all over the country have been handed over to their guardians following court order. Out of the total caseload, 133 children were released after completion of the sentences.
- A total of 2,520 people (1,306 males, 1,168 females and 46 third gender) were reached with individual psychosocial counselling service through existing helplines, online platforms and one to one counselling. Concerns over health and increasing feelings of fear, anxiety and stress from various causes, including exposure to discrimination and violence are the reasons the support were sought. Out of 2,520 people who were provided with counselling service, 101 people with suicidal thoughts and 148 people experiencing gender-based violence were supported and regularly followed up.
- In partnership with CWIN, UNICEF has been supporting the organization of on-line mental health wellbeing sessions targeting children, adolescents and parents/caregivers. As of now, trained mental health workers conducted 1,291 sessions and reached a total of 26,475 people (7888 girls, 7,452 boys and 11,135 parents/caregivers).
- So far, an estimated 29,075 people have been reached with psychosocial support through UNICEF's contribution to achieve the cluster target which has exceed the target set by the cluster. Out of 29,075 total people supported nearly 33 per cent are children under 18 years.

### Social Protection/Humanitarian Cash Transfers

- An innovative cash transfer is being rolled out by UNICEF through mobile wallets, benefitting some 10,000 children. Besides providing relief to some of the most vulnerable families and children, this intervention provides new horizons

for adaptation and improvement of social protection systems in Nepal. HQ has already provided its approval and now in final contracting process It is expected to deliver the cash to families by mid-December.

## Pakistan Country Office;

### Risk Communication and Community Engagement

- Through existing polio alliances and the health programme 410,881 (81,887 new) religious leaders have been engaged and mobilized to promote the risk perception of the Corona virus, emphasize the importance of handwashing, use of mask and physical distancing as well as convincing other religious leaders on risk perception. The religious leaders use the information provided to talk to their followers during the Friday sermons and to make announcements in mosques with key preventive messages on COVID-19. During the reporting period a total of 410,881 mosque announcements were made. The religious leaders have been engaged in increasing risk perception related to COVID-19 and to promote both the polio campaigns and Essential Immunization (EI).
- Community feedback is showing that despite varying levels of literacy and income, families continue to report a decline in preventive behaviors. Wearing a mask in public places (always or sometimes) has dropped from 78 to 69% between August and October, and practicing social distancing also dropped from 77% to 65% in the same period. Since mid-October, positive cases have been on the rise, triggering a fear from decision makers of yet another national surge of COVID-19 infections. Social and news media reveal an escalation in warnings and actions from public authorities regarding new outbreaks across the country. Mini-smart lockdowns have been imposed in Karachi and Islamabad, where large gatherings have been restricted.

### Improve Infection and Prevention Control (IPC) and provide critical medical and WASH supplies

- UNICEF is supporting WASH/IPC interventions in 20 out of 27 high burden districts. To date, UNICEF has rehabilitated and installed WASH facilities which include Ultraviolet (UV) water filters, toilets and handwashing stations in 578 (9 new) Healthcare Facilities (HCFs, Sindh: 38, KP: 94, Punjab: 373 and Balochistan: 73). More than 1.9 million people (200,000 new) have gained access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities in these HCFs contributing towards reducing the risk of COVID-19 infection among the healthcare workers. Over 8.6 million people (241,819 new) have been supported with hygiene promotion services including COVID-19 prevention and control information. Over 4.7 million (200,000 new) people have used the 1,776 (101 new) handwashing stations at communal points in affected areas. To date, UNICEF supported the training of 6,099 (196 new) frontline sanitary workers to enhance the capacity of sanitary and frontline health workers on WASH/IPC in HCFs and high-risk communities.
- To contribute to the safe school return for children, UNICEF is supporting WASH-IPC initiatives in 1,152 schools (Balochistan 232, Punjab 500, Sindh 120, KP 300) and to date 579 (151 new) schools have been reached (KP: 211, Punjab: 53, Balochistan: 90, Sindh: 225) with WASH – IPC services.

### Support the provision of continued access to essential health and nutrition services for women and children

- UNICEF is supporting the Provincial and Regional health departments to ensure continuation of essential primary health care services including immunization, Ante-Natal Care (ANC), Post-Natal Care (PNC), delivery services, childcare and curative care for adults in 136 targeted health facilities reaching 394,580 people in the reporting period (Balochistan:12,934; Sindh:169,009; KP: 1958; Punjab: 210,679 ) with a total reach of 2,458,736 since the onset of COVID-19. Measles immunization reached a total of 8,182 children (under 1 year) (Balochistan: 398; KP: 305; Sindh: 2,466; Punjab: 5013) during the reporting period with a total of 59,413 children vaccinated against measles in the 136 UNICEF supported health facilities. UNICEF has provided basic PPEs (gloves, sanitizers and masks) to 23,115 frontline health workers during the reporting period (Balochistan: 9200; Punjab: 7,215; Sindh: 6,000; and KP: 700) and reached a total of 119,987 frontline workers.
- During the reporting period, across Pakistan, a total of 2,743 UNICEF supported health sites provided nutrition services, an increase of 91 sites compared to previous report. Eighty-eight new Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) treatment sites were opened in Sindh with UNICEF support during the reporting period, 40 new Outpatient Therapeutic Programme (OTPs) in Hyderabad and 48 new sites in Shaheed Benazirabad). A total of 111,227 SAM children have been admitted for treatment with 23,611 children (12,723 girls and 10,888 boys) during the reporting period (Balochistan 2,685; Sindh 12,707; KP 3,752 and Punjab 4,467). Training on simplified Infant Young Child Feeding (IYCF) and Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) guidelines was provided to a total of 1,267 health care providers (457 in Sindh and 810 in Balochistan).

### Access to continuous education, social protection, child protection and gender-based violence (GBV) services

- UNICEF has been supporting the Education departments in all the four provinces with safe return to schools and ensuring adherence to the SoPs. Following the phased school reopening, focus is now on monitoring of safe operation of schools through district monitoring committees that are continuously monitoring the implementation of safe school

reopening at the school level. Safe school reopening guidelines have also been distributed to 14,668 schools across all the provinces.

- Over 1.7 million School Management Committees (SMCs) members, teachers and education personnel have been reached with COVID-19 prevention messages via SMS, robocall and social media, including 140,000 during this reporting period. A total of 1,785 SMC members have been trained on safe school reopening, including 735 SMC members during this reporting period. Training on psychosocial support and safe reopening of schools has reached 19,085 teachers, including 1,532 teachers during this reporting period.
- To date, a total of 5,411 social workforce professionals (2,933 women and 2,478 men) have been trained in psychosocial support and stigma prevention in all provinces through package developed by UNICEF, including 1,072 trained during the reporting period (728 females and 344 males in Punjab, Balochistan and KP).
- A total of 62,217 parents, caregivers, children and individuals (3,794 girls, 4,959 boys, 27,535 women, 25,929 men) received Psychosocial Support and Services (PSS) by trained social workforce professionals in Punjab, KP, Sindh, Balochistan and GB with 5,834 reached within the reporting period (Punjab: 2,782, KP: 1,120, Sindh: 771, Balochistan: 31 and GB: 1,130). This includes 1,135 Individuals (72 Girls, 33 Boys, 636 women and 394 men) who received specialized counselling sessions in Punjab, KP and Balochistan.

### Sri Lanka Country Office;

#### Risk Communication and Community Engagement

- After 9 months of COVID-19 pandemic and related lockdown measures, many families are burdened with negative economic and social impacts and are resorting to negative coping mechanisms such as using savings, taking loans or pawning possessions to meet essential costs; reducing their food consumption, in particular proteins. Given that prior to the crisis around 39 per cent of children did not consume any iron-rich foods, the impacts of COVID-19 on child wellbeing and nutrition could be devastating. Therefore, UNICEF used World Children's Day (WCD) 2020 to drive our Universal Child Benefit (UCB) advocacy agenda. UCB is a cash payment given to families with children to help them meet their needs. UCB is critical in the fight against child poverty, malnutrition and inequality and could address many of the challenges exacerbated by COVID-19. Through the WCD 2020 platform, UNICEF called on the Government to expand and scale up their investments in cash benefits – including a UCB and other 'child-sensitive' social protection programmes for children, to avoid failing an entire generation

#### Improve Infection and Prevention Control (IPC) and provide critical medical and WASH supplies

- COVID-19 clusters are spreading across the Western Province in all 3 districts, particularly in relation to public markets and urban poor settlement areas. Hence the Provincial Directorate of Health in the Western Province revised the prioritization list of the hospitals. There already exists one COVID-19 designated hospital (Base hospital in Minuwangoda) in Gampaha district. Two hospitals in Gampaha District, one hospital in Colombo District and Five hospitals in Kalutara District were included in the new plan to be improved and designated as COVID-19 treatment centers.
- With the increased spread of the disease, the healthcare workers and frontline community workers are constantly at risk of exposure to high-risk populations. The requirement of PPE, hand sanitizers among the healthcare workers in the hospital setting and in the public health setting are constantly increasing. Through ADB and World Bank funding, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health to procure 150,000 PPE and 250,000 surgical face masks. Through this, the essential IPC needs of the health care workers were addressed, and they could carry out their tasks safely.
- UNICEF constructed hand washing stations in 2,112 schools and 4,446 pre-schools in six provinces in high risk areas, benefiting approximately 766,980 children (51% girls). In addition, UNICEF provided WASH supplies, hygiene and protective items for cleaning staff and schoolteachers for selected schools in vulnerable areas while procurement of 736 thermometers to be used in schools is ongoing.

#### Support the provision of continued access to essential health and nutrition services for women and children

- UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health to procure 30,000 PCR test kits and 30,000 viral transport media in order to increase the PCR testing capacity of the Ministry of Health.
- Rising levels of poverty, food insecurity in urban and rural sectors are pushing children in to states of malnutrition. Already high wasting rates in the country are further exacerbated. In the routine child nutrition programme, multiple micronutrients are provided to children under 5 to overcome micronutrient deficiencies. Routinely MMN is procured through UNICEF procurement services using government funds. However, following the COVID-19 outbreak, government has many other competing issues to address. UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health in procuring 135,000 packs of MMN powder with UNICEF funding (27% of the total requirement). This enabled the Ministry of Health to use the available scarce resource for more prioritized health needs arising due to the pandemic.

## Access to continuous education, social protection, child protection and gender-based violence (GBV) services

- UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education to develop and distribute the Instruction Manual of “Preparedness of schools and other Educational Institutes to prevent the spread of COVID 19” among all schools and other education institutions (20,000 copies) which is attached to the government circular on Preparing institutions to prevent of spreading COVID – 19<sup>6</sup>. Further the Guidelines for COVID-19 Infection and Prevention and Control Measures in Early Childhood Education and Care services in English, Tamil and Sinhala (two local languages), has been developed and distributed among all Childhood Development Centers (19,000) Jointly with the Ministry of Women and Child Affaires and Social Security. A brochure for parents describing what to expect and what to do when sending their children to a preschool during the pandemic and an instructional video on IPC measures for preschool teachers were developed including relevant key hygiene massages and infection prevention measures and distributed among all ECCDs.
- UNICEF supported the MoE on the ‘Back-to-School’ communication campaign, that included: 1) Two video clips, one on motivating parents and the other on awareness creation on the IPC messages in local languages that were aired on TV channels by the MoE. 2) Posters showing key IPC messages to all schools. 3) Installation of panels with key IPC messages in 410 schools selected by the MOE that have more than 500 students. 4) A comic book for primary students, with key hygiene messages.
- UNICEF is continuously supporting the Government and Civil society organization on provision of psychosocial support through financial and technical expertise. To date around 5,116 people including children were benefitted through UNICEF supported psychosocial interventions. Around 58 childcare institutions staff's capacity built on psychosocial first aid, referral and selfcare as a means of ensuring adequate access to psychosocial services by children in institutions. In addition, UNICEF in partnership with the DPCCS is in the process of finalizing a family recreational kits for children in lockdown areas to provide entertaining opportunities to ease psychosocial impact of lockdown

## Funding Status

Sector	Requirements (\$)	Funds available		Funding gap	
		Humanitarian resources received (\$)	Other Resources (\$)	\$	%
Afghanistan	81,430,000	63,016,665	1,024,000	17,389,335	21
Bangladesh	87,972,506	35,389,260	11,497,090	41,086,156	47
Bhutan	2,616,000	2,680,866	223,400	-288,266	0
India	40,000,000	37,172,083	5,160,000	-2,332,083	0
Maldives	10,281,375	3,460,501		6,820,874	66
Nepal	14,355,000	8,278,395	1,120,600	4,956,005	35
Pakistan	50,200,000	32,684,535	5,608,196	11,907,269	24
Sri Lanka	4,600,000	4,067,105	30,000	502,895	11
Regional Office	2,500,000	3,118,344	-	-618,344	-25
<b>Total</b>	<b>293,954,881</b>	<b>189,867,755</b>	<b>24,663,286</b>	<b>79,423,841</b>	<b>27</b>

## Next SitRep: 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021

UNICEF continues to monitor the situation very closely and situation reports will be issued on regular basis as the developments unfold.

## Internal and External Media

[Accelerated Learning Programme Inspiring Girls in Afghanistan](#)

[Accelerated Learning Bridging the Education Gap](#)

[Education continues for Tribal Children in Madhya Pradesh despite the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

[Learning Cannot Wait in Kalikot Nepal](#)

<sup>6</sup> Circular No. 15/2020, available in the website of Ministry of Education: <https://moe.gov.lk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/1589277734-2020-15s.pdf>

Maldives Schools navigate online learning with UNICEF support; [https://unicef-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/personal/myasir\\_unicef\\_org/\\_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7BDD0CAAAB-35F0-47B7-B47B-94768C8A506D%7D&file=Schools%20navigate%20online%20learning%20with%20UNICEF%20support.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true](https://unicef-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/personal/myasir_unicef_org/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7BDD0CAAAB-35F0-47B7-B47B-94768C8A506D%7D&file=Schools%20navigate%20online%20learning%20with%20UNICEF%20support.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true)

Prioritizing Responsive Parenting to Ensure Continuous Learning of Young Children at Home During the Pandemic; [https://unicef-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sahuja\\_unicef\\_org/\\_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B1836E3F5-9A7D-45E8-A97E-FA69E2814E21%7D&file=Continuity%20of%20learning%20for%20young%20children%20-%20maharashtra%20.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true&CT=1606975061588&OR=ItemsView](https://unicef-my.sharepoint.com/personal/sahuja_unicef_org/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B1836E3F5-9A7D-45E8-A97E-FA69E2814E21%7D&file=Continuity%20of%20learning%20for%20young%20children%20-%20maharashtra%20.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true&CT=1606975061588&OR=ItemsView)

Ghare Ghare Arunima; An Initiative for Home-based Early Childhood Development reaching 1.6 million children in Odisha; [https://unicef-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/personal/sahuja\\_unicef\\_org/\\_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7BD9AC8A56-6682-49C3-8F20-40E63F64D721%7D&file=Ghare%20Ghare%20Arunima%20.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true](https://unicef-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/personal/sahuja_unicef_org/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7BD9AC8A56-6682-49C3-8F20-40E63F64D721%7D&file=Ghare%20Ghare%20Arunima%20.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true)

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<sup>i</sup> The benchmark range for adequate testing set by the World Health Organization (WHO) is between 10 and 30 per confirmed case. In South Asia, only Bhutan and Sri Lanka, which have very few cases per capita, have tested far above that range since March