



Reporting Period: 16 August – 31 October 2020

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for every child

Central African Republic

Coronavirus (COVID-19)
Situation Report n°9

HIGHLIGHTS

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 epidemic in the Central African Republic (CAR) mid-March through 31 October 2020, the country has officially recorded 4,875 cases, including 62 deaths. Most cases have been reported in the capital Bangui's urban area. Schools officially and fully reopened on 19 October, following more than six months of partial or total closure.

In this reporting period results achieved by UNICEF and partners include:

- **169,262** people were reached with critical WASH supplies and services
- **98** schools equipped with handwashing stations to ensure safe back to school;
- **42,860** additional children following lessons on the radio;
- **53,242** children aged 6 months-10 years vaccinated against pneumonia also receiving soap
- **4,247** children aged 6-59 months admitted for treatment of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) across the country;
- **208** children without parental care provided with appropriate family-based care
- **11,560** children and community members received psychosocial support.

Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

Since the first case of COVID-19 was detected in the Central African Republic (CAR) in mid-March until 31 October 2020, 4,875 positive cases were registered, including 62 deaths. The seven health regions of the country have reported cases, with the capital Bangui and its urban area being the most affected by the pandemic. Overall, with an incidence rate of about 100 officially registered cases per 100,000 people, CAR is among the lesser affected countries, worldwide and in Africa (sources: Johns Hopkins University and Worldometers). However, relatively few tests are carried out in CAR – about 1,100 per month during the period covered by this report according to Ministry of Health and Population data – leaving the real extent of the pandemic in the country only partially known.

Situation in Numbers



4,875 COVID-19 confirmed cases*

62 COVID-19 deaths*

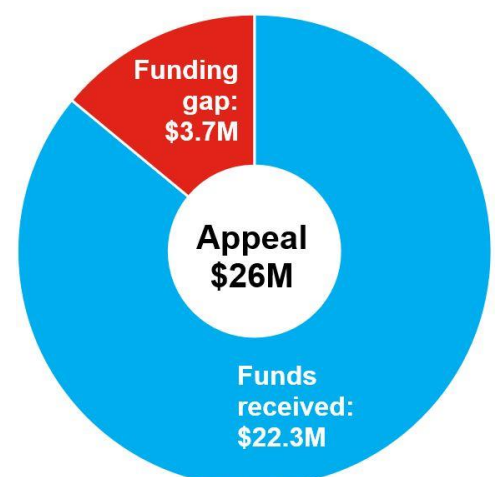
*WHO/MoHP, 31 October 2020



1.37 million

estimate number of children affected by school closures

UNICEF CAR's COVID-19 Appeal
US\$ 26 million



Still, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO), CAR is one of the least prepared countries to deal with COVID-19, with 2.3 million people already in need of health assistance and about 70% of health services provided by humanitarian organisations (OCHA). The country's healthcare system, already under severe stress before the pandemic, has been further put under pressure. Stocks of personal protective equipment for healthcare workers cover less than a third of estimated needs for the coming months. Only two respirators are currently available in CAR (OCHA). In this situation, responding to the pandemic while maintaining the functioning of essential services is challenging.

The schools, closed nationwide since 27 March, fully reopened on 19 October with considerable difficulty. According to the Education Cluster, around 1.4 million children left the school system due to the closure of schools. The risk is that a high percentage will not return to school, in a country where only 49 per cent of children manage to complete primary school.

Humanitarian Leadership, Coordination and Strategy

UNICEF, alongside WHO and other actors, has been supporting the CAR government since the outset of the crisis. Since early March, UNICEF technical staff, have participated in the different technical commissions working on the implementation of the national response plan. UNICEF management continues to be actively involved in the design of the overall strategy, participating in high-level mechanisms chaired by the President (Crisis Committee), the Prime Minister (Technical Committee), and the Health Minister (Strategy and Method Committee).

UNICEF CAR's COVID-19 response plan focuses on risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) and infection prevention and control (IPC), in particular water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) aspects, but also on ensuring continuous access to healthcare, nutrition services, education, child protection and gender-based violence (GBV) services. It also aims to mitigate COVID-19's socio-economic impact on the most vulnerable households through unconditional cash transfers. It is fully aligned with both the CAR Government's plan and UNICEF's global COVID-19 response plan.

UNICEF continues to lead the WASH, Nutrition, Education Clusters and the Child Protection Sub-Cluster thus ensuring that the needs of children and their mothers are fully considered in the broader CAR humanitarian community's COVID-19 strategy and response.

UNICEF's emergency and humanitarian response to the ongoing CAR crisis fully continues despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

Funding Overview & Partnerships

UNICEF CAR's COVID-19 response plan currently stands at 26 million USD (see Annex B for details). During the reporting period an additional contribution was received from the government of the Federal Republic of Germany through KfW to support school-age children and the gradual reopening of schools in safe learning conditions. To date, 86 per cent of the appeal target has been raised. Despite the generous contributions received until now, some gaps remain, notably for Health and Nutrition, and Cash Transfer response, when socio-economic consequences of the pandemic are exacerbating the current food insecurity in CAR.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE ACTIONS

Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

Since the beginning of the epidemic, UNICEF has launched a survey to assess knowledge, attitudes and behaviour related to COVID-19 through the country's three main mobile phone networks. The survey is contributing to the collection of social and anthropological data related to the COVID-19 epidemic and data is used by UNICEF to refine its RCCE strategy.

During the reporting period, 3,786 new people responded. The most relevant results show that 87% of respondents said they wear a mask, while 38% of those wearing it said they only do so in the presence of people; 43% of those who do not wear it stated that they do so because they cannot afford it.

To strengthen the dissemination of information about COVID-19 through mobile phones, UNICEF installed 72 booths along the Bangui-Cameroon corridor to allow the download of short information videos about COVID-19 on mobile phones. Meanwhile, 72 people have been trained to facilitate the use of these booths by the community

UNICEF continues to support coordination between partners through weekly RCCE meetings on how to collect feedbacks, how to process them and make them available through a database.

Infection Prevention & Control (IPC)

During this reporting period, a total of 169,262 people were reached with critical WASH supplies and services.

To ensure the continuity of water distribution in the capital Bangui, especially in the areas where water shortages are still acute, UNICEF in collaboration with Agence Nationale de l'Eau et de l'Assainissement (ANEA) and ACTED is supporting the running of seven emergency water systems serving an estimated 14,000 people and 48 public handwashing stations for an estimated 24,000 people. As exit strategy, the other eight existing emergency water systems were dismantled and equipped with a hand pump and are currently managed by the communities.

To promote handwashing as a prevention measure, UNICEF, ANEA, the Direction Générale des Ressources Hydrauliques (DGRH) and NGO partners installed 369 additional handwashing facilities in governmental offices and public places, in Bangui and Yaloke (Ombella Mpoko), Kaga Bandoro (Nana-Grébizi), Sibut (Kemo), Bouar, Baoro, Baboua (Nana-Mambéré), Bossangoa (Ouham) and Bambari (Ouaka) for an estimated 78,300 users per day. Users have been sensitized on the correct use of these devices. In addition, 5,160 vulnerable households have received handwashing devices and soap to prevent COVID-19 transmission and propagation.

During the measles and pneumonia vaccination campaign in the health district of Carnot (Mambéré-Kadéï), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) France, in collaboration with the health authorities and with UNICEF support, organized awareness and prevention campaigns against the transmission and spread of COVID-19 and distributed soaps to vaccinated children's parents. To date, 129,926 soaps have been distributed to the families of 53,242 children aged between 6 months and 10 years. In addition, in the same health district, MSF with the support of UNICEF, distributed to 3,013 vulnerable patients a kit containing 15 soaps, 2 masks and meal vouchers as part of a new protection strategy that aims to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 among patients already suffering from other pathologies.

In Kemo, Ouaka and Nana Mambéré prefectures, UNICEF continuous WASH support for 80 health centres has reached over 7,157 patients.

In partnership with ANEA, UNICEF carried out COVID-19 sensitizations reaching 43,850 people in Nana Mambere, Mamere Kadei, Sangha Mbaere, Kemo, Nana-Grébizi and Ouaka prefectures.

Continued access to essential Healthcare

During the reporting period, UNICEF and partners provided free essential care and prenatal consultations to 6,136 people.

Furthermore, 4,247 children aged 6 to 59 months suffering from Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) were admitted in 520 Outpatient Therapeutic Program (OTP) service points and in 47 Stabilization Canters. With a SAM cure rate of 93.51 percent, a death rate of 1.16 percent, a defaulter rate of 4.05 percent and a non-response rate of 1.28% percent, the quality of the response is largely above the SPHERE minimum standards.

In addition, UNICEF and partners sensitized over 62,365 mothers and caregivers on infant and young child feeding practices. These activities are funded under the regular HAC, but also reported here for coherence.

Access to continuous education, child protection and GBV services

Schools officially and fully reopened on 19 October, following partial reopening in August for classes with examinations. In order to ensure that the resumption of schooling complies with national COVID-19 guidelines, UNICEF supported 98 schools in the implementation of safe school protocols providing hand-washing devices and thermometers. UNICEF and partners also sensitized 1,713 households and 60 teachers in Bambari (Ouaka) and Kaga Bandoro (Nana-Grébizi) and 200 teachers in the capital Bangui on COVID-19 barrier measures.

In the meanwhile, to facilitate the continuity of education in the most vulnerable areas, UNICEF keeps on supporting learning through radio education programs, reaching 42,860 new children.

During the reporting period, UNICEF registered a significant increase in the number of unaccompanied and separated children identified, especially in the prefectures of Nana Mambere, Ouham, Nana-Grebizi and Ouaka. This has been made possible by the reopening of child-friendly spaces (CFS) which have facilitated contact with children without parental care, including unaccompanied and separated children. 208 children without parental care including 97 girls were provided with appropriate family-based care through placement in foster families or reunification with their parents and relatives. Follow-up is provided through UNICEF NGO partners to monitor their social integration, identify their individuals needs and support referral to services for support.

In addition, UNICEF continues to support its partners to ensure that the reopening of CFS meets minimum hygiene criteria to prevent the spread of the virus. 11, 560 children, including 4,843 girls, benefited from daily organized play and recreational activities through UNICEF supported CFS in Bossangoa, Paoua and Bozoum (Ouham), Boguila and Marcounda (Ouham Pende), Bouar, Baboua et Baoro (Nana Mambere), Bakala, Kouango et Bambari (Ouaka).

Given the increase of gender-based violence (GBV) incidents and the limited capacity of actors to address GBV in the context of COVID-19, UNICEF trained 17 staffs of NGOs on GBV prevention and response in Bossangoa (Ouham).

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UNICEF CAR: www.unicef.org/infobycountry/CAR.html

UNICEF CAR Facebook: www.facebook.com/UNICEFCAR

UNICEF CAR Twitter: <https://twitter.com/UNICEFCAR>

UNICEF CAR Humanitarian Action for Children Appeal: <http://www.unicef.org/appeals/car.htm>

Annex A: Summary of Response Result Results

	UNICEF and IPs		
	2020 Target (March – Dec20)	Total Results	Change since last report ▲ ▼
RISK COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (RCCE)			
Number of people reached on COVID-19 through messaging on prevention and access to services	2,000,000	2,000,000	
Number of people sharing their concerns and asking questions/clarifications for available support services to address their needs through established feedback mechanisms.	9,000	16,927	8,181
Number of people who participate in COVID-19 engagement actions	40,000	115,419	105,789
INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL (IPC)			
Number of people reached with critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items) and services	1,055,000	604,412	169,262
Number of healthcare facilities reached with (one or more) WASH services and IPC equipment	70	80	75
Number of healthcare facilities staff and community health workers provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	250	2,980	150
Number of healthcare facility staff and community health workers trained in Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)	1,000	380	208
CONTINUITY OF HEALTHCARE			
Number of children & women receiving essential healthcare services, including immunization, prenatal, postnatal, HIV & GBV care in UNICEF supported facilities	71,000	68,573	6,136
Number of primary caregivers of children aged 0-23 months who received IYCF counselling through facilities and community platforms*	138,000	132,554	62,365
ACCESS TO CONTINUOUS EDUCATION, CHILD PROTECTION & GBV SERVICES			
Number of children supported with distance/home-based learning	200,000	153,670	42,860
Number of schools implementing safe school protocols (COVID-19 prevention and control)	1,500	489	98
Number of children without parental or family care provided with appropriate alternative care arrangements	300	353	208
Number of children, parents and primary caregivers provided with community based mental health and psychosocial support	20,000	31,849	11,560
Number of UNICEF personnel & partners that have completed training on GBV risk mitigation & referrals for survivors, including for PSEA	300	243	17
SOCIAL PROTECTION			
Number of households (affected by COVID-19) receiving humanitarian multi-sector cash grant for basic needs	5,000	0	0

* These activities are funded under the pre-existing CAR Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC), and not included in UNICEF CAR's COVID-19 response plan.

Annex B: Funding Status

Sector	Requirements	Funds received/ reallocated/ Confirmed	Funding gap	
			\$	%
Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)	1,000,000	560,000	440,000	44%
Infection Prevention & Control (IPC)	11,550,000	8,067,000	3,483,000	34%
Health & Nutrition	3,600,000	2,320,806	1,279,194	35%
Education	5,800,000	8,270,000	-	-
Child Protection	1,550,000	765,651	784,349	50%
Humanitarian Cash Transfer	2,500,000	900,000	1,600,000	64%
Multisector	-	752,349	-	-
Total	26,000,000	22,335,806	8,586,543*	14%

*The funding gap of 8.58m USD does not consider the funding received for the education sector beyond the required funding. Instead, these funds are considered in the graph on page 1 (Funding gap 5.7M).