

 **3,413** COVID-19 confirmed cases

46 deaths

3,185 recovered cases

 **468** children confirmed positive

 **US \$10M** funding required



One of the first babies of 2021 born in Benin was safely delivered at the National University Hospital Center in Cotonou at 00:37 on 1 January 2021 ©UNICEF

Situation overview

As of 11 January 2021, a total of 3,413 COVID-19 confirmed cases have been identified in Benin out of 402,795 tests conducted. A slight increase in infection rates has been observed, particularly in the Borgou department, with 398 new cases identified in the reporting period.

Three deaths were reported during the reporting period. The total number of deaths since the start of the pandemic is 46 people. Fatality rate stands at 1.3 per cent whilst the recovery rate is 95.1 per cent, with 3,245 recovered cases.

The majority of people infected by the virus are aged 15 to 45 years old. Number of children under 18 infected by the virus represent 13.7 per cent of all confirmed cases.

Highlights



4,489,297 million people informed through mass media



854,253 women and children received essential health services



925,144 people benefited from WASH services



48,543 children and adults received psychosocial support



A midwife takes care of a newborn at a UNICEF-supported hospital in Cotonou ©UNICEF

Key updates

- The most affected departments are all located in the former “cordon sanitaire”, namely, Littoral, Atlantique and Borgou;
- Compulsory wearing of face masks in public remain in place;
- In addition to mandatory tests upon arrival, the Government announced on 1 September that rapid and PCR tests were now required for all passengers departing from Cotonou International Airport. A fee of 50,000 FCFA (90 US\$) must be paid by all travelers.

UNICEF's COVID-19 response

Health and Nutrition

Awareness-raising efforts by Community Health Workers (CHW) and the reorganization of health services are increasing supply and demand services for children and mothers. The number of women and children receiving essential health services, including immunization, antenatal and postnatal care and HIV care, increased from 738,844 to 854,253. In addition, 4,256 trained CHW supported the identification and monitoring of suspected and contact cases and ensured screening and referral to health facilities for cases of malnutrition.

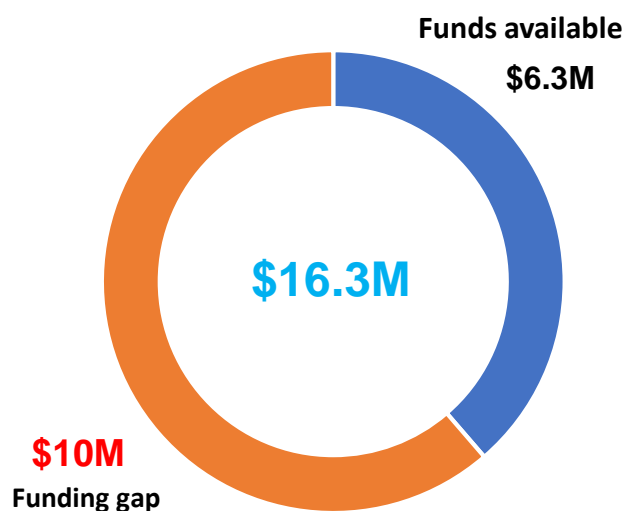
For comprehensive patient care, UNICEF supported the provision of meals for 50 hospitalized patients at the COVID-19 treatment center in Cotonou. The Country Office also supported rapid response teams by providing incentive bonus payments for 259 frontline agents involved in the COVID-19 response, through the contribution from the Netherlands in support of the Ministry of Health's national response plan.

The number of mothers and caregivers of children aged 0 to 23 months who received support, counselling and IYCF services increased from 34,604 to 36,400 during the reporting period. Among them, 26,418 mothers of children aged 6 to 23 months received support to strengthen good practices on breastfeeding, dietary diversification, and healthcare for children including in the COVID-19 context.

COVAX Initiative

In accordance with actions underway to make the vaccine against COVAX vaccine available by March 2021, UNICEF and WHO have been tasked with facilitating the introduction of the vaccine in Benin. As a result, an internal UNICEF COVAX committee has been set up and a technical committee with national authorities was established to facilitate the use and update of the VIRAT tool. A country preparation roadmap has been designed and a request for COVAX Technical Assistance has been submitted to support country preparedness in the areas of communication, vaccine and cold chain management, and logistics.

Funding Status



WASH

The reporting period was devoted to analyzing the effectiveness of the Country Office WASH response strategy to strengthen the COVID-19 response in 2021. Through multiple partnerships (NGOs, government, UN agencies), WASH services were provided to 665,545 people. 4,275 primary and 234 post-primary and secondary schools received handwashing devices and soap. Thanks to the disinfection of 11,783 wells, 166,290 people were provided with quality water.

To date, 925,144, people received WASH services. Community-led total sanitation interventions in the Zou department are being rolled out by five NGOs supported by UNICEF, including through the promotion of handwashing habits and barrier gestures. According to preliminary reports, 44,412 new households installed handwashing devices, amounting to a total of 70,022 handwashing devices set up, benefiting 259,599 people. These strategies will be reinforced in 2021 to strengthen community resilience to the COVID-19 pandemic.



A child in pre-school in Zakpota washes his hands before lunch ©UNICEF

RCCE

In December 2020, the Country office reached an additional 100,000 people through mass and social media in the last month. 916 additional community leaders (472 women) sensitized their communities about COVID-19. Home visits and group discussions by community agents (relay and volunteers) on COVID-19 protective measures and child protection messages reached an additional 10,057 people (5,168 children). In collaboration with health departments in Adjara, Avrankou, Akpro Missérété, Djidja, Abangnizoun and Abomey, 504 new community relays were trained and are conducting home visit and educational talks. To date, 1,094,409 people (parents, children, community leaders, traditional healers) participated in educational talks, home visits, face-to-face dialogue organized by 5,545 community relays and 350 youth volunteers and animators from NGOs partners. 2,595 people shared their concerns and asked questions/clarifications to community relays and volunteers about COVID-19 protective measures.

Through the ASUKA campaign, a youth-focused campaign aimed at mobilizing and engaging youth on COVID-19 prevention and response efforts, Sèmè City, UNFPA, VLISCO and UNICEF supported 20 youth associations in expanding sensitization activities at the community level. Through this public-private partnership, 150,000 people were reached in all 12 departments (37 localities).



Youth-led association "Saturday in the village" sensitizing young people with disabilities on COVID-19 prevention measures in Akassato ©Un Samedi au Village

Education

UNICEF and its partners provided Ministries of Education with handwashing equipment, sanitizers and sensitization materials to ensure all children could go back to school in a safe secure environment. Through the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), UNICEF, the Swiss Cooperation, Plan International, EDUCO and the World Bank supported the back-to-school campaign and provided school supplies to 214,071 children including 100,943 girls enrolled in primary schools and 32,672 adolescent girls in lower secondary schools. As part of the

GPE COVID-19 response programme, UNICEF signed an agreement with the Government of Benin to distribute school supplies and handwashing equipment, for a total of US \$ 2,9 million. As part of the programme, 78,555 children (50 per cent girls) received school kits in the nine targeted municipalities. UNICEF signed an agreement with Plan International to monitor the distribution of school's supplies and equipment and sensitize families and local communities on the importance of keeping girls and boys in school and on COVID-19 preventive measures.

UNICEF, the Government of Benin and TOMS provided shoes for 45,030 girls enrolled in middle and high school in the Borgou, Alibori and Zou departments to maintain girls in school and reduce the direct costs of education for families affected by the pandemic.



UNICEF Representative a.i Dr François Kampundu gives a pair of TOMS shoes to a middle school student in Bohicon to support her education ©UNICEF

Child protection

During the reporting period, 33 new social assistants, volunteers and civil society workers (12 women and 21 men) were trained on the management of child-friendly spaces and positive parenting to strengthen child protection in response to the pandemic. As a result, an additional 1,535 girls, 1,759 boys, and 781 adults received appropriate psychosocial support to cope with the impacts of COVID-19.

At the community level, 916 new community leaders (472 women) received information on COVID-19 prevention and protection measures. In turn, they reached out to 5,168 new children (2,437 girls) and 4,889 adults (1,670 women) to prevent and protect children from violence in the COVID-19 context. Through community surveillance mechanisms, 93 suspected and/or confirmed cases of persons infected with COVID-19 (12 children, 81 adults) were identified by child protection actors and referred to health centers.

UNICEF protection programme annual review was an opportunity for the Country Office to raise the awareness of 118 government and NGO partners on PSEA, including 94 government staff who now have access to a safe and accessible channel to report sexual exploitation and abuse.



A young girl plays at a UNICEF-supported child friendly spaces in Gogounou ©UNICEF

Social Protection

UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Social Affairs and CARE Benin-Togo to **implement a cash-based intervention for vulnerable families and children** focusing on preventing school drop out of adolescent girls impacted by school closures and at risk of child marriage. The cash transfer program named “Faaba-COVID” and funded by the Netherlands has been officially launched by the Minister of Social Affairs on 19 November. 26,000 girls (eq. 20,000 households) in eight targeted communes received cash transfers by the end of 2020.

Funding Overview and Partnerships

Based on the national plan and its assessment of priority needs, UNICEF Benin submitted a COVID-19 response proposal to its Regional Office amounting to US\$ 16,325,000 and which is integrated into UNICEF’s Humanitarian Action for Children Novel Coronavirus (COVID-2019) Global Response. Innovative partnerships are being established, including the “Innov Covid-19 Benin Taskforce”, a coalition of government, UN agencies, NGOs, CSOs, private sector companies and start-ups to develop emergency solutions to the crisis.

External Media



UNICEF National Ambassador Zeynab Abib exchanging with girls on the occasion of World Children’s Day in Tchaourou ©UNICEF

As part of the Faaba-COVID project to eradicate child marriage, 43 adolescent girls aged 9-15 were [trained on photography and vlogging techniques](#) to amplify their voices. [Three videos](#) produced by girls on education and COVID-19, climate change and access to schools were shared with the public. In cooperation with “7 Days for 1 film”, [12 young female directors teamed up](#) to create a film on gender-based violence as part of the 16 days of activism against GBV. UNICEF Benin participated in the yearly “Every Child Alive Campaign” by [capturing](#) the first moments of life of babies born on 1st January 2020. The Country Office published a [thank you video](#) to acknowledge community efforts to respond to the pandemic in Benin.



[Thanks to emergency cash transfers, Fasilath, 14, can go back to school](#)



[Djibril Cissé, Prefect of Borgou, leads the fight against child marriage](#)



[Reine travels to Northern Benin to support community radios](#)

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Summary of Programme Results

Sector	UNICEF and IPs Response	
	2021 target	Total results
Risk Communication and Community Engagement		
Number of people reached on COVID-19 through messaging on prevention and access to services	5,553,773	4,489,297
Number of people engaged on COVID-19 through RCCE actions	500,000	1,094,409
Number of people sharing their concerns and asking questions/clarifications for available support services to address their needs through established feedback mechanisms	30,000	31,453
WASH and IPC		
Number of people reached with critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items) and services	500,000	925,144
Number of healthcare facilities staff and community health workers provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	3,000	1,385
Number of healthcare facility staff and community health workers trained in Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)	6,750	5,379
Health		
Number of healthcare providers trained in detecting, referral and appropriate management of COVID-19 cases among children, pregnant and breastfeeding women	1,500	1,437
Number of children & women receiving essential healthcare services, including immunization, prenatal, postnatal, HIV & GBV care in UNICEF supported facilities	500,000	854,253
Number of primary caregivers of children aged 0-23 months who received IYCF counselling through facilities and community platforms.	20,000	36,400
Nutrition		
Number of children 6-59 months admitted for treatment of severe acute malnutrition (SAM)	15,000	18,474
Education		
Number of children supported with distance/home-based learning	2,000,000	1,708,617
Number of schools implementing safe school protocols (COVID-19 prevention and control)	15,811	11,342
Child Protection and GBV		
Number of children without parental or family care provided with appropriate alternative care arrangements	1,800	2,679
Number of children, parents and primary caregivers provided with community based mental health and psychosocial support	25,000	48,543
Number of UNICEF personnel & partners that have completed training on GBV risk mitigation & referrals for survivors, including for PSEA	800	759
Number of children and adults that have access to a safe and accessible channel to report sexual exploitation and abuse	400	769
Social Protection		
Number of households (affected by COVID-19) receiving humanitarian multi-sector cash grant for basic needs	20,000	7367

Funding Status

Sector	Funding requirements	Funds available	Funding gap \$	Gap %
C4D / RCCE	2,500,000	123,042	2,376,958	95
WASH & IPC	6,000,000	558,390	5,441,610	91
Health & Nutrition	165,000	718,157	0	0
Continued education, child protection, GBV services & social protection	6,300,000	4,903,316	1,396,684	22
Research	60,000	0	60,000	100
Coordination, technical & operational costs	1,300,000	24,700	1,275,300	98
Total	16,325,000	6,327,605	9,997,395	61