



Julian Esquire assists his grandmother, Muriel Johannes, to register online for a COVID-19 vaccination. Kraaifontein, Cape Town | ©UNICEFSouthAfrica/2021

SOUTH AFRICA COVID-19

Situation Report No.16

01 – 31 May 2021



Situation in Numbers

Confirmed cases: 1,665,617

Recovered: 1,559,337

Deaths: 56,506

Tests Conducted: 11,631,239

Vaccine Reach: 970,488

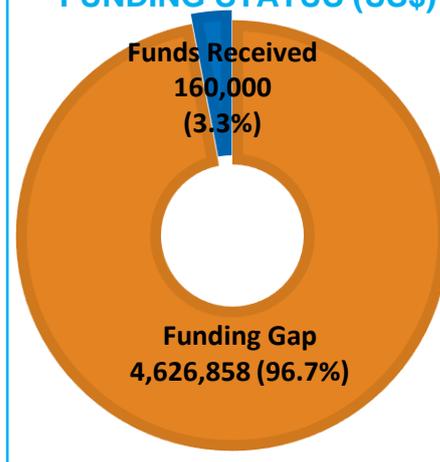
(As of 01 June 2021)

Reporting Period: 01 - 31 May 2021

Highlights

- UNICEF is supporting the COVID-19 vaccination roll-out through direct health and risk communication and community engagement support. Cold chain specialists are providing training, a COVID-19 vaccination field guide has been developed, as well as training of health care workers on the Med Safety Application – an electronic tool for reporting adverse events following immunization. Communication and community engagement work also continues on promoting vaccines, adherence to COVID-19 prevention measures and monitoring misinformation.
- UNICEF support to routine child immunization catch-up drives continued across all districts, with national immunization coverage for children under one year now at 79%, more than 4% below coverage last year. Six of the twelve priority districts reached the 90% coverage target during January to March 2021 compared to four districts during the last quarter of 2020.
- While schools remain open, rotational learning is the current model. UNICEF is supporting distance and home-based learning for children when they are not physically in class, with more than 539,522 children reached through the *ActiveLearning@Home* series, as well as the *2Enable* and *Tshwaragano ka Bana* series. UNICEF produced videos for grade R to grade 3 are also still accessible online.

FUNDING STATUS (US\$)



Situation Overview

- The President raised the country to COVID-19 Alert Level Two on 30 May, as COVID-19 infection rates continue to rise in certain provinces. Concerns of a 'third wave' remain, with 'COVID fatigue', the slow pace of the vaccination roll out and potential new variants contributing to fears of a wider spread.
- Phase Two of the COVID-19 vaccination programme started on 17 May for people older than 60 years. To date, nearly 960,000 South Africans have received a COVID-19 vaccine, with more than 67% of health workers having been vaccinated through the Sisonke trial period. Registering the elderly population, the accreditation of more healthcare facilities for the vaccine's rollout, and regular vaccine arrivals are being prioritized.
- The Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the Ministerial Advisory Committee decided that all primary schools will fully operate at 100% capacity from the third semester on 26 July 2021. The education sector, along with all partners, will need to ensure the risk adjusted strategy is adhered to so that schools are as safe as possible. This includes appointing youth through the Community Works Program (CWP) to assist with monitoring compliance and helping schools to maintain COVID-19 protocols at schools.

Summary of Preparedness and Response Actions

Education

1. UNICEF is providing technical support to the Department of Basic Education (DBE) through a UNICEF consultant embedded in the department to aid the coordination and planning of the education sectors COVID-19 emergency response.
2. Through a range of partnerships and in consultation with the DBE, UNICEF is developing content and distributing videos and posters promoting a safe learning environment for teachers and learners. This includes working with the DBE and Departments of Social Development (DSD) on the review and update of the standard operating procedures (SOP) for early childhood development programmes to mitigate the impact of a COVID-19 third wave.
3. The psychosocial support and WASH in schools programme continues as part of the wider sector implementation of the Care and Support in Teaching and Learning (CSTL) pillar. Through UNICEF's partnership with USAID and the Woolworths Foundation, 117 more handwashing stations in selected schools and orphan and vulnerable child (OVC) centers have been constructed.
4. UNICEF is supporting the provision of psychosocial support for learners through a partnership with Childline South Africa, with 28,951 children reached in April. The learners receive direct advice and support during the calls, with some referred to additional services as and when necessary.

Child and Social Protection

1. UNICEF supported the organization of child protection week on the back of continuing high levels of violence against children, with the opening on 30 May led by the Deputy Minister of Social Development. The event at a child protection center focused on children on the move and those in alternative care settings. COVID-19 and its knock-on effects have highlighted the importance of every child having a legal ID, to ensure access to health, education, and other critical services.
2. Partnerships for the 'EU Migration Programme', were signed with Future Families, Refugees Social Services, ACT, Scalabrini and SA Human Rights Commission to improve access to services for children on the move, including legal protection and psychosocial support by the end of 2022 for already vulnerable children who have been further impacted and are less likely to seek services due to fears over COVID-19.
3. UNICEF South Africa presided over a regional webinar on the use of cash grants and programming to share best case examples, including how the grants helped positive parenting, as well as the use of a real time monitoring tracking tool on the wellbeing of children and the integrated response by social and health workers to follow up on children who were hungry or had reported abuse. Child support grants have proved to be critical as COVID-19 has impacted on livelihoods across South Africa.
4. The 'Violence Prevention Forum' conducted a series of workshops with children on discussions around defining violence prevention work and strategies, as well as access to information on the availability of psychosocial support for children and reporting mechanisms. The participants attended two-day workshops and fed back to their peers as part of the process, designed to tackle what is widely referred to as the country's second pandemic, due to the high levels of gender-based violence, including violence against children.

Health and Nutrition

1. UNICEF is finalizing the recruitment of cold chain specialists to support the provincial health authorities on the COVID-19 roll-out in Kwa Zulu Natal, Western Cape, Northern Cape, Eastern Cape, North West Province and Gauteng.
2. UNICEF – as a member of the National Technical Working Group (NTWG) on COVID-19 Vaccines: Safety & Surveillance – participated in training health workers in the Med Safety Application, an electronic tool for reporting any adverse events following immunisation and adverse drug reactions. In addition, the COVID-19 vaccine field guide has been finalised and disseminated to provinces.
3. UNICEF is part of a working group established within the National Department of Health to develop and design National Nutrition Week 2021 resource materials. COVID-19 has again highlighted the importance of healthy living and the aim of the campaign is to influence the eating patterns of adolescents and adults, so they consume more healthy foods to improve their overall wellbeing.

4. UNICEF continues to support the continuity of prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) and pediatric HIV services, which have been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In collaboration with the South African National AIDS council (SANAC), UNICEF led the reestablishment of the SANAC children technical working group to refocus on pediatric HIV and ensure a coordinated effort to achieve the pediatric 90-90-90 targets.
5. UNICEF is supporting the revision of the Maternal and Child Health COVID-19 guidelines. The revised document will incorporate the latest evidence, data and clinical prevention and treatment for pregnant women, mothers and infants diagnosed with COVID-19.
6. UNICEF, as part of ensuring continuity of care during these COVID-19 days, supported the Gauteng and Kwa-Zulu Natal departments of health to conduct their annual prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV program reviews. The reviews track progress against plans, assessing the impact of COVID-19 on the uptake and quality of services, identifying gaps and developing actions to respond. UNICEF will support continuity of services with an emphasis on improving PCR tests uptake and training on pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to reduce HIV infections.
7. The impact of COVID-19 on access to primary healthcare services for children appears to be long-lasting, with one million fewer visits for children under five years recorded in January to March 2021 compared to last year. This implies that caregivers may not be using health facilities due to fear of COVID-19 and / or cost reasons.

WASH

1. UNICEF, with partners EnviroSan, WaterAid, World Vision, MIET and the NECT, have now installed 411 handwashing with soap stations in 9 provinces, including in vulnerable communities, schools and healthcare facilities. This included installation of 186 stations during 2021 to date that have improved access to handwashing for some 107,000 people. Social distancing markers, and stickers above each tap also encourage optimal handwashing practices during this time of COVID-19.
2. In partnership with World Vision, the second round of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) kit distributions continued in the Eastern Cape and Western Cape provinces, alongside risk communication and community engagement. An additional 3,478 WASH kits were distributed to vulnerable households in the Eastern Cape and Western Cape, benefiting an estimated 13,400 individuals.
3. WASH kits distributed in the Eastern and Western Cape included information on the importance of ventilation, along with handwashing and other COVID-19 preventive measures, as well as contact details to the emergency and vaccination registration hotline. Messaging is also focusing on encouraging people to access health facilities for routine child vaccination and chronic medical conditions where relevant.
4. In the Eastern Cape, 4,000 UNICEF and World Vision 'Tippy Tap' handwashing station guides are being distributed through the district education department. World Vision also finalized data collection on the use of handwashing stations and COVID-19 prevention measures. The findings will be available in early June and will inform RCCE and WASH programming.
5. An assessment to understand current knowledge levels, including barriers to handwashing and good hygiene has been conducted in 3 provinces (Eastern Cape, Limpopo and Mpumalanga). Data has been collected to inform the production of communication products, including videos, to encourage regular handwashing and hygiene practices that can reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread.
6. UNICEF partner, WaterAid, finalized the report on its community rapid assessment involving 180 Gauteng families. Only 28% of respondents reported that most of the community washed their hands with soap and water at critical times. Findings from the research will inform the development of radio scripts for 'WASH heroes', to encourage sustained hand hygiene practices. Radio jingles recorded to promote the need for sustaining good hand hygiene were broadcast over Jozi FM, reaching more than 640,000 listeners.

Communication, Risk Communication and Community Engagement & Partnerships

Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

1. 'The Truck' multimedia activation promoting COVID-19 prevention and vaccine demand messaging returned to Free State Province from 19-23 May due to the rising numbers of COVID-19 infections. UNICEF partners, the SA Red Cross Society, supported the production of multimedia content for this campaign in partnership with the Department of Health provincial team. COVID-19 information materials were shared, and health assessments conducted, such as screening and testing for HIV, TB, hypertension, diabetes and COVID.

2. Character-led video stories were produced in Western Cape, in preparation for the 'The Truck' community engagement intervention planned for early June. The individual stories focused on the impact of COVID-19 and encouraging community members to get vaccinated and to maintain protective measures, both of which are a key focus of the campaign.
3. UNICEF through the RCCE technical working group social listening and 'infodemic' team generated a weekly COVID-19 and vaccine social listening report, with related recommendations. Feedback is analyzed across online and offline communication channels, including search trends on social media platforms and online news. May reports highlighted some frustration and confusion with the Electronic Vaccination Data System (EVDS) and the need for regular updates on vaccine registration processes and roll out plans.
4. Data collection for round three of the national Community Rapid Assessment has been completed and findings have been shared. This is the last round of the series of assessments commissioned by UNICEF's Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) to help monitor shifts in behavioural and social drivers influencing adherence to COVID-19 prevention actions.
5. UNICEF has started activities to support the multi-country 'Children & Young People (CYP) Participatory Research and Communication for Change Initiative', to explore the impact of the major issues facing young people and to create a child and youth-centric model for future research engagement and communication. Through a partnership with the Children's Radio Foundation, young reporters aged 13-24 are already in the process of being recruited from underserved localities and marginalized populations to receive basic communication, research, journalistic and technical radio skills as part of the program.
6. At least 1,244 community members in three provinces have provided feedback on RCCE activities conducted through the UNICEF-South African Red Cross Society (SARCS) partnership between December 2020 and March 2021. The data was collected by SARCS volunteers through an electronic survey tool jointly developed with UNICEF to assess the relevance, quality and impact of the training, communication and engagement activities conducted. Data analysis will be completed in June and results used to inform the planned second phase of work through the SARCS partnership, and other RCCE programming.

Communication

1. The start of child protection week on 30 May was marked by strong media coverage through various TV and radio interviews, including SABC News and Newzroom Afrika.
2. UNICEF released a new powerful video telling the story of 17-year old Lebatho and how young people are now stepping up to help their elders to register online for the COVID-19 vaccine.
3. The applications for the Isu Elihle Journalism Awards closed, with more than 100 entries. The awards are part of a partnership with Media Monitoring Africa on supporting engaging, quality and ethical reporting on children who have been so impacted by COVID-19.
4. Media coverage on the uneven rates of child immunization coverage and the impact of COVID-19 on access to routine vaccinations continued with Newzroom Afrika and Mail and Guardian coverage.
5. The 'Let's Stop COVID-19' video series of powerful individual stories continues to expand, with new content from Free State Province.

Funding Overview and Partnerships

1. On 20 May UNICEF and the Cotton On Foundation launched a new initiative to help deliver 1 million COVID-19 vaccines to the world's most vulnerable communities. A global Press Release and coverage in the South African press, including Newzroom Afrika, gave the campaign a strong boost, with Cotton On stores promoting campaign content until early July.
2. UNICEF established a new partnership with the Youth Employment Service (YES) to expand opportunities for young people under the Generation Unlimited initiative.

Challenges

- The COVID-19 vaccine roll-out has started to gather pace, but the electronic vaccine data system (EVDS) process is a challenge for some elderly people who want to register, while the hold-up of some vaccines for safety checks has affected vaccine supply. UNICEF South Africa is now engaging its network of youth volunteers to play an active role in supporting their elders to register for COVID-19 vaccines. Communication continues to provide a simple step guide on how to sign up to the EVDS.

- A third COVID-19 wave is now hitting South Africa and overcoming COVID-19 fatigue will be critical to ensure that people continue to adhere to prevention measures as much as possible. UNICEF's communication work in collaboration with the Department of Health and all partners will continue to push the importance of non-pharmaceutical prevention measures.

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Annex A
2021 Response Plan Monitoring Framework, UNICEF South Africa

Indicators	Target (Jan - Jun 2021)	May 2021 Results
Education		
Number of children supported to continue their learning through distance/home-based learning/ mixed of school-based/home-based learning	2,400,000	539,522 (cumulative – Jan - May)
Child Protection		
Number of children without parental or family care provided with appropriate ALTERNATIVE CARE ARRANGEMENTS	5,000	668
Number of children, parents and primary caregivers provided with community based MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT	50,000	27,000
Number of UNICEF personnel & partners that have completed TRAINING ON GBV RISK MITIGATION & REFERRALS FOR SURVIVORS	250	80
Number of children and adults that have access to a SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE CHANNEL TO REPORT SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE	500,000	47,000
Social Protection		
Number of households (affected by COVID-19) receiving humanitarian MULTI-SECTOR CASH GRANT	7,200,000	
WASH		
Number of people reached with CRITICAL WASH SUPPLIES (INCLUDING HYGIENE ITEMS) AND SERVICES	135,000	130,696
Health and Nutrition		
Number of children and women receiving ESSENTIAL HEALTHCARE SERVICES in UNICEF supported facilities	1,050,000	172,195
Number of children 6-59 months admitted for TREATMENT OF SEVERE ACUTE MALNUTRITION (SAM)	10,000	804
Risk Communication & Community Engagement		
Number of people reached on COVID-19 through MESSAGING ON PREVENTION AND ACCESS TO SERVICES	4,840,000	645,941
Number of people engaged on COVID-19 through RCCE ACTIONS	100,000	4658
Number of people sharing their concerns and asking questions/clarifications for available support services to address their needs through established FEEDBACK MECHANISMS	50,000	1578

1. Number of children and women receiving ESSENTIAL HEALTHCARE SERVICES in UNICEF supported facilities- this data uses the DHIS data, which is two months behind, the annual target will only be reached in 2022 February
2. Number of people reached on COVID-19 through MESSAGING ON PREVENTION AND ACCESS TO SERVICES- this indicator is reported by two section (which are Education and RCCE); they each have their own target and result for each month. Which we combine to one.

Annex B
2021 Funding Requirement, UNICEF South Africa

Thematic Area	Required	Available	Gap
Coordination and leadership	395,858	0	0
Risk communication and community engagement	893,000	193,000	
COVID-19 vaccination support	610,000	0	0
Infection prevention and control through WASH	160,000	0	0
Continuity of essential services/mitigation of unintended consequences	1,887,000	0	0
Health, nutrition and HIV services	602,000	0	0
Child protection (incl. MHPSS, GBV & PSEA)	490,000	0	0
Social policy	50,000	0	0
Education	745,000	0	0
Logistics and Operations	841,000	0	0
SACO Programmable Total	4,786,858	193,000	4,626,858