



West and Central Africa

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Situation Report

No. 8



Reporting Period: 03 October – 04 December 2020

Highlights

Although the number of active COVID-19 cases continues to decrease overall, the circulation of the virus is still active across WCAR with all 24 countries reporting cases of community transmission. As of 04 December 2020, 281,328 confirmed cases and 4,262 deaths (CFR: 1.51 percent), had been reported in the 24 countries of West and Central Africa Region (WCAR).

Situation Overview and Needs

A recent analysis of the trends has shown that the peak in WCAR was reached around mid-June followed by a sharp decrease until end of October. During the reporting period (3 October – 4 December 2020), the pandemic has shown a rapid increase in cases (16 percent) and in deaths (10 percent). Looking at the COVID-19 epidemiological data as of 4 December 2020, eight countries have reported in the reporting period the highest increase in confirmed cases and deaths:

- Cabo Verde (71 percent increase in cases; 69 percent in deaths)
- Togo (66 percent increase in cases; 35 percent increase in deaths)
- Mali (55 percent increase in cases; 24 percent increase in deaths)
- DRC (22 percent increase in cases; 24 percent increase in deaths)
- Chad (41 percent increase in cases; 20 percent increase in deaths)
- Burkina Faso (47 percent increase in cases; 17 percent in deaths)
- Guinea (23 percent increase in cases; 15 percent increase in deaths)
- Niger (37 percent increase in cases; 10 percent increase in deaths)

Coordination and Partnerships

In West and Central Africa, UNICEF continues to support governments in the development, fine tuning and implementation of their COVID-19 response plans. UNICEF's Regional Office and all UNICEF Country Offices have developed and are implementing dedicated response strategies that contribute to outbreak control as well as to mitigate secondary impacts of the pandemic. These include support to Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE), provision of critical WASH-Infection Prevention Control (IPC) materials and the continuity of essential health, socio-economic response and recovery for making sure children's rights and needs are well addressed, as well as the social services for children, adolescents, women and vulnerable populations. UNICEF is leading the coordination of regional partners' support on RCCE pillar, and co-leading on Operational Coordination, case management, WASH/IPC, and logistic & operational support.

Situation in Numbers



281, 328 confirmed cases in West and Central Africa
4, 262 deaths (CFR: 1.51 %)



128 million
Children and youth affected by COVID-19 school closures



US\$ 424 M funding required

UNICEF's COVID-19 response

Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

For the third consecutive round, the regional analysis conducted by the UNICEF-led RCCE Working Group reveals that the most common community feedback is the belief that the disease is over or does not exist anymore and therefore tend not to sustain the preventive measures. This is consistent with lower risk perception rates shown by research results in countries like Nigeria and DRC. Feedback showing COVID-19 fatigue is another main trend that persists since the last monthly analysis, as well as rumours around vaccination. To help addressing some of these issues, the regional RCCE group organized its fourth media webinar in English and French with journalists from the region to discuss their role addressing COVID-19-related treatment and vaccination. The UNICEF-WHO-IFRC RCCE collective service team has also provided support by reviewing the research tools and/or results recommendations from CAR, Senegal, Nigeria, Congo Brazza, and Cape Vert, assuring that vaccines risk perceptions and fatigue if not yet done, are included in the next research projects. In addition, one member of the collective service team participated in a simulation exercise conducted by the Emergency operation Center in Burkina Faso aiming to reinforce rapid interventions with a strong RCCE component to respond to public health emergencies in the context of COVID-19.

Medical and WASH supplies, Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)

In coherence with the UNICEF global WASH response framework, the Regional Office is supporting the country offices in four main areas: Support to Government-led WASH/IPC coordination, including through WASH clusters; Hygiene programming with a focus on handwashing; IPC in health care facilities, schools, communities and households; and analysis of the gains and impact of WASH response to ensure long lasting changes. 10.6 million people have been reached with critical WASH services out of 12.5 million people targeted (85 % progress), including an estimated 6 million people who are living in conflict/humanitarian settings. 190.000 healthcare facilities staff and community health workers were trained in infection prevention and control procedures (46 % progress), and 337,400 healthcare staff have been provided with personal protective equipment. The regional WASH/IPC response is funded up to 45 %, with 47 million USD received out-of 104 million USD needed.

Nutrition

The WCA Nutrition team continues to actively facilitate and support the regional coordination platforms, by leading the Regional Nutrition Working Group and its Nutrition-In-Emergency sub-group and participate the Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (FSNWG). Moreover, UNICEF RO team is leading technical discussion with partners on program adaptations for the management of acute malnutrition, and facilitation regional discussion on surge mechanisms for nutrition services.

The Regional Nutrition in Emergency Sub-group headed by UNICEF organized two regional Webinars during the reporting period. The first one organized by Save the Children, UNICEF Regional office and other partners, was held on 28-29 October, focused on the evolution of the Community Based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) surge model towards the Health Surge model. The second webinar held on 4 November, was on "Cash in Nutrition", aiming to present the available decision support tools for CASH in NUT programming, as well questioning how to better integrate the CASH modality into Nutrition programs. The Nutrition in Emergencies (Mie) regional sub-group is preparing a meeting for mid-December that will invite development and emergency donors to discuss further funding perspectives and strategies for wasting prevention and treatment in the Sahel Countries where a total of 1,107,346 children under-5 years old with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) , were admitted for treatment from January to September 2020. This represents an overall decrease of 7.3 percent if compared to the same period in 2019. While the SAM new admissions trends are downward in all the Sahel countries, SAM admissions curves for Senegal and Mauritania show an opposite trend with respective increases of 3.8percent and 5.8 percent compared to the same period in 2019. More in-depth-analysis are needed in order to better inform nutrition programming.

Education

As per early December 20 countries in the region open the schools for the 2020-2021 school-year, of which five countries during the months of November (Senegal, Guinea, Togo, Gabon and Mauritania). UNICEF WCARO organized a webinar on foundational literacy and numeracy skills, for 84 education staff from 17 countries as representatives from governments and partners. The webinar focused on in-school foundational literacy and numeracy pedagogies; supporting teachers; Out of School Learning; and the delivery and scaling up of education services.

Remaining critical challenges in West and Central Africa Region are the re-opening of all Early Childhood Education (ECE) centers. In November, WCARO organized an ECD webinar on Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Early Childhood Development in Emergencies (ECDiE), and during COVID-19 pandemic. The webinar was attended by ECD task team members from UNICEF, Save the Children and IRC; with participants representing CAR, Niger, Mali, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Benin, Guinea-Bissau, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, and Cote d'Ivoire.

Child protection

To ensure the protection of young children and early childhood development during COVID-19, UNICEF continues to strengthen the continuity of child protection systems and provide mental health and psychosocial support at the family and community level through adapted approaches, including door-to-door household visits and small groups. Support to families and young children includes messaging on prevention of violence during COVID-19 and parenting education. As of the end of November, over 1.3 million children and caregivers had been reached with mental health and psychosocial support (79% of target). In Ghana, over 761,595 people have been reached with community based psychosocial support services in the context of COVID-19 in over 1,000 communities across the country. Additionally, the *Ghanaians Against Child Abuse* (GACA) campaign continues to reach out to people with COVID-19 and child protection helplines and better parenting messages.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, since the beginning of the COVID-19 response, over 7,600 children victims of violence, such as neglect, mistreatment, domestic violence, violence against street children, and sexual and gender-based violence have received individualised support. Safe and accessible channels to report sexual exploitation and abuse have been made available to 36,000 people since the start of the COVID-19 response.

Adaptations to ongoing UNICEF programmes

Nutrition

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Education- Early Childhood Development (ECD)

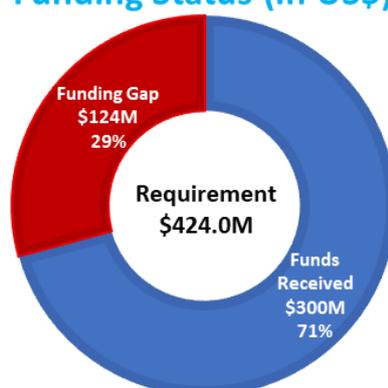
To support school reopening, UNICEF organized a webinar on foundational literacy and numeracy skills for 84 education staff from 17 countries. The webinar focused on in-school foundational literacy and numeracy pedagogies; supporting teachers; Out of School Learning; and the delivery and scaling up of education services.

This event brought to light the specificities of technical support needed for Early childhood Development in Emergencies (ECDiE) program response in the region, especially in terms of coordination, planning, data collection, fundraising, as well as good models/best practice of ECDiE relevant for the context. The 2021 work plans (UNICEF and SDG4 platform) will include this expressed need as priorities for temporary support in the region.

Funding Overview

UNICEF's West and Central Africa region has raised USD 300 million out of the required USD 424 million to respond to COVID-19. The funding gap against UNICEF's Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) in the region stands at 29 per cent.

Funding Status (In US\$)



External Media

West and Central Africa Regional Office (WCARO) continued to support regional and country efforts to mitigate and raise awareness on the impact of COVID-19 and insecurity on children and communities through various initiatives. On 6 November, WCARO issued a press release to raise alarm on the recent spike of school attacks in Cameroon and call on all parties to protect all children, at school or in their communities. The press release was republished by multiple regional and national media, including AllAfrica, CGTN Africa and more. On 9 November, WCARO launched a Call for Action on child nutrition as part of a broad regional "Nutrition Now" campaign to raise awareness on the scope and impact of child malnutrition in the Sahel in the context of COVID-19, as well as to engage and leverage partnerships for investments in nutrition, in support of UNICEF and partners' vision to Reimagine nutrition for all children. The Call for Action generated media stories in various languages and multiple international, regional and national media, such as BBC Afrique, Altinget (Denmark), Anadolu (Turkey), La Voz (Argentina), AllAfrica and more. On 20 November, World Children's Day, a WCARO expert took part in one of the RFI flagship programmes "Sept milliards de voisins" on the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on children and communities in the region, including on education and nutrition. On the same day, WCARO also published a World Children's Day page on its regional website to help amplify efforts deployed by UNICEF country offices in the region to celebrate children and make their voice better heard.

West and Central Africa COVID-19 information site: <https://www.unicef.org/wca/coronavirus>

UNICEF in action in West and Central Africa

Mauritania UN89A5387

End November 2020. Marie-Pierre Poirier, UNICEF Regional Director for West and Central Africa, during a school visit in Mauritania.



DRC UN0368517

Kinshasa. 30 October 2020. Jeny, choreographer and influencer, met with UNICEF Child Reporters to discuss their commitment and motivation. Every child is free to express opinions and has the right to express his or her views on matters that affect his or her social, economic, religious, cultural and political life.



Nigeria. UN0376749

27 October 2020. Gwadangaji, Kebbi State, Nigeria. Aisha Usman (L) looks on as her child, Maryam Aliyu birth registration is been conducted at the office of a traditional scribe in Gwadangaji, Kebbi. The Birth Registration Program (BRP) is led and implemented by the National Population Commission of Nigeria with UNICEF Nigeria offering technical supports.





October 2020. Girls attending class in Dori, in the North of Burkina Faso. In this by UNICEF supported college, young girls from different cultures and religion learn together.

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further
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