HIGHLIGHTS

- The armed conflict in eastern Ukraine enters its eighth year and continues to take a heavy toll on civilians: ceasefire violations significantly intensified damaging homes, schools, water facilities and social infrastructure. Mine contamination remains a major source of threat to the life and safety of children. Limited access to basic services continues to threaten the mental and physical well-being of children. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose serious challenges for healthcare services and to increase child poverty.

- In 2022, UNICEF will continue to safeguard children’s rights to safety, health, education, psychosocial support, protection and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services and address the needs of over 780,000 people. The response will address the impact of the armed conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic.

- UNICEF requires US$15.1 million to provide access to basic services including WASH, immunization and health care, schooling and learning, psychosocial support and emergency cash assistance for children and families.

KEY PLANNED TARGETS

- 780,000 people accessing a sufficient quantity of safe water
- 25,000 women and children accessing gender-based violence mitigation, prevention, response
- 10,000 households reached with UNICEF funded multi-purpose humanitarian cash transfers
- 50,000 people engaged in risk communication and community engagement actions

Figures are provisional and subject to change upon finalization of the inter-agency planning documents.
Ukraine continues to face the unprecedented dual challenge of coping with the effects of an eight-year armed conflict in the east and the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite efforts to find a peaceful resolution to the conflict, the situation remains difficult for the 3.4 million people, including 510,000 children, living in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

In this context of protracted conflict, civilians bear the brunt of the crisis. Water and education infrastructure is frequently targeted, threatening children's access to safe water and schooling. Particularly in the non-government-controlled areas, access to learning is imperilled by weak teaching capacities and run-down infrastructure. Children and their families require continuous psychosocial support and protection services, including addressing gender-based violence (GBV) and assistance for victims of accidents related to explosive remnants of war, as well as mine risk education. Access to quality health services, especially for the most vulnerable, remains a daily challenge, exacerbated by the exodus of specialists.

In one of the world's most mine-contaminated areas, the risk of stepping on a landmine remains a stark reality. Due to the conflict-related incidents in 2021, four children were killed, and four children and 13 women were injured.

The health system, including emergency medical services, which was already weak, has continued to be severely challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite efforts by the Government and partners, there remains low awareness among medical professionals. Pervasive vaccine hesitancy led Ukraine to record one of the lowest COVID-19 vaccination rates in Eastern Europe despite the surplus of vaccine supplies. Slow vaccination rates and relaxed quarantine measures have led to two big waves of exponential growth in new confirmed cases.

Despite robust progress in recent years, Ukraine experiences low child immunization rates, putting a large cohort of children at additional risk. Over 270,000 children under 5 years of age and their mothers need critical health support, including immunization.

As of September 2021, following lockdown decisions in eastern Ukraine, some 140,000 children were affected by school closures. While a distance education programme has been launched, many vulnerable children have been excluded due to limited connectivity and lack of information technology.

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit vulnerable groups particularly hard and exacerbated pre-existing inequalities. According to a recent study, child poverty in Ukraine has increased to 65.7 per cent in the Donetsk Oblast. Children and adolescents with HIV/AIDS in the conflict area continue to face serious challenges in accessing quality care and support.

**SECTOR NEEDS**

- 195,000 children in need of quality life-saving services
- 1.7 million people lack access to safe water
- 290,000 children need protection services
- 10,000 people in need of income support
- 250,000 children need education support

**STORY FROM THE FIELD**

As the conflict in eastern Ukraine reaches the seven-year mark, one young girl prepares to go to school for the first time.

In September, Vika turned seven years old – her seventh birthday since the conflict broke out in eastern Ukraine.

"Mom, do you hear the shooting again?" she asks her mother, Anna.

"Yes. It's just like Winnie the Pooh," Anna replies. "Boo! Are you scared?"

"No," says Vika. "Because you are next to me!"

This is the only life she has ever known – one filled with shooting, landmines and explosions.
HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY

In 2022, UNICEF’s strategy in Ukraine will continue to focus on protecting children and realizing child rights on both sides of the contact line, in government-controlled and non-government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk, while responding to the vulnerabilities caused by the dual crises of conflict and COVID-19.26 To respond to the urgent needs of 780,000 people and children, UNICEF will strengthen social services and child protection, psychosocial support; and health, education and WASH services. The capacities of local professionals, authorities and civil society actors will be enhanced to strengthen preparedness and accountability to affected children, in line with the Grand Bargain commitments.27 UNICEF will improve access to quality, inclusive, age- and gender-sensitive social services to increase families’ resilience to protection-related risks. UNICEF will work with humanitarian partners to target the most vulnerable, while also strengthening education, social welfare, health and other community-based services. As the lead agency for the WASH cluster and the child protection sub-cluster, UNICEF will continue to advocate with parties to the conflict to comply with international humanitarian law and child rights standards. This includes advocacy and technical support to the Government to implement the national action plan of the Safe Schools Declaration.28 The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted safe access to all services, including immunization and primary health care, schools and social care institutions, necessitating specific protective measures for institutions and professionals. To address this, UNICEF will continue to strengthen the capacities of the local authorities and service provision facilities in infection prevention and control to ensure a safe environment at the facility level.

To reduce the transmission of COVID-19, UNICEF will continue risk communication activities to raise awareness and increase knowledge on COVID-19 prevention measures through multimedia channels and community outreach activities, targeting care providers, parents/caregivers and the public. UNICEF and its partners will also increase access to hygiene supplies and drinking water.

UNICEF will engage with pre-school and school-aged children with edutainment activities for healthy practices on nutrition, hygiene and social skills development. Advocacy will be conducted at the national and local levels, including in government-controlled and non-government-controlled areas to facilitate the provision of essential and quality services for children and women.

UNICEF will continue supporting community-level services and GBV services while increasing advocacy to strengthen public services. These actions will directly contribute to improving linkages between humanitarian action and development programmes in order to support durable solutions.

In response to the notable increase in child poverty rates in Ukraine, UNICEF will introduce an emergency cash assistance programme supporting the most vulnerable children.

2022 PROGRAMME TARGETS29

Health30
- 40,000 health care facility staff and community health workers trained in infection prevention and control
- 50,000 mothers and children under 5 years benefiting from direct health service provision
- 20,000 health care providers trained on detection, referral and appropriate management of COVID-19 cases

Water, sanitation and hygiene
- 780,000 people accessing a sufficient quantity of safe water for drinking and domestic needs
- 145,000 people reached with critical WASH supplies31
- 24,500 people provided with improved access to appropriate sanitation

Child protection, GBViE and PSEA
- 20,000 children and parents/caregivers accessing mental health and psychosocial support
- 25,000 women, girls and boys accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention and/or response interventions
- 40,000 children accessing explosive weapons-related risk education and survivor assistance interventions

Education
- 300 schools implementing safe school protocols (infection prevention and control)
- 18,500 girls and boys benefiting from education and early learning supplies and rehabilitated inclusive schools and kindergartens
- 8,000 girls and boys benefiting from conflict-sensitive, risk-informed and life skills-based education delivered by trained teachers

Social protection
- 10,000 households reached with UNICEF funded multi-purpose humanitarian cash transfers

HIV and AIDS
- 600 children affected by HIV provided with continuous care and support services

Cross-sectoral (HCT, C4D, RCCE and AAP)
- 50,000 people engaged in risk communication and community engagement actions

Progress against the latest programme targets is available in the humanitarian situation reports: https://www.unicef.org/appeals/ukraine/situation-reports

This appeal is aligned with the revised Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, which are based on global standards and norms for humanitarian action.

Programme targets are provisional and subject to change upon finalization of the inter-agency planning documents.
UNICEF requires US$15.1 million to meet the humanitarian needs of children, adolescents, women and families affected by the double crises of the armed conflict and COVID-19 pandemic and provide critical services for affected populations in eastern Ukraine. The 2022 funding ask for eastern Ukraine has slightly increased, as UNICEF intends to introduce an emergency cash assistance programme in response to significantly high levels of child poverty and to support the shock-responsive social protection system. The funding appeal will also enable UNICEF to build the capacities of the health system to better respond to the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and implement critical WASH interventions to address gaps in hygiene and infection control. UNICEF will continue supporting immunization coverage in the non-government-controlled areas, expand education coverage and increase access to social services for vulnerable families and their children, including mental health and psychosocial support, gender-based violence services and services for children with disabilities. The appeal for health includes additional funding needed to support awareness-raising activities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. UNICEF’s appeal requirement is aligned with Ukraine’s 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan. Without sufficient and timely funding, UNICEF will be unable to support the response to the country’s continuous crisis.

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UNICEF’s public health and socio-economic COVID-19 response, including programme targets and funding requirements, is integrated into the standalone country, multi-country and regional Humanitarian Action for Children appeals. All interventions related to accelerating equitable access to COVID-19 tests, treatments and vaccines fall under the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) global appeal. This funding appeal is for the humanitarian response programme targeting the conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic in eastern Ukraine only. UNICEF’s COVID-19 funding appeal for the rest of Ukraine is included in its regional COVID-19 appeal for Europe and Central Asia.

For some programme targets, there is a slight change, decrease or increase; these changes were made after careful review of the needs and adjustments to the COVID-19 related response one year on from the start of the pandemic. In other cases, UNICEF will increase its focus on the needs in non-government-controlled areas, such as in education.

4. While there is increased financing from the Government to institutions responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is an increased vulnerability among households in accessing WASH supplies, in particular hygiene supplies.

5. This includes US$500 thousand to support UNICEF’s risk communication activities to raise awareness and increase knowledge on COVID-19 prevention measures through multimedia channels and community outreach activities, targeting care providers, parents/caregivers and the public.