



Humanitarian Action for Children

unicef 

Democratic Republic of Congo - Ebola response

With over 3,300 confirmed cases, including more than 920 children, and over 2,200 deaths¹ the Ebola outbreak declared in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in August 2018 is the country's largest-ever. The outbreak is also the world's second-largest Ebola outbreak ever, the deadliest on record and the first in an active conflict zone. Eighteen months after the outbreak was declared and had spread to three provinces and beyond national borders, and despite the recent decline in the number of reported cases, ongoing conflict, insecurity and population mobility are undermining timely response and increasing the risk that the virus will experience a resurgence and spread to new provinces. Collective efforts are needed to definitively stop transmission in affected areas and minimize the risk of further spread into neighbouring provinces and countries. The outbreak has disproportionately affected women and children, who represent 56 per cent and 28 per cent of reported cases, respectively². Children are also affected by family separation and the loss of parents and caregivers. For families and children, the Ebola virus disease (EVD) has also undermined access to basic services such as health care and education. UNICEF is addressing these needs across its response, including through prevention efforts, treatment and psychological and social care.

Humanitarian strategy

UNICEF is mobilizing all available resources to control, reduce and eliminate Ebola in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This includes risk communication and community engagement to increase community awareness, acceptance, involvement and ownership in the response. As part of infection prevention and control, UNICEF is training health workers and improving assessments of health facilities, equipment and decontamination processes in households, health facilities and spaces with confirmed cases of EVD. Psychosocial support is being given to affected people, including contacts, survivors and separated and orphaned children. Patients, including children, are receiving case management (i.e., nursing, paediatric and nutritional care) in Ebola treatment and transit centres. Community-based projects designed to improve response effectiveness and promote community engagement and ownership are addressing priority needs and providing essential services where needed. UNICEF is supporting key services, including clean water and sanitation, education, and uninterrupted routine medical care, especially vaccinations, for crisis-affected children, including separated and orphaned children. It is also making small infrastructure improvements to restore the enabling environment for primary health care and improve community resilience to other epidemics. UNICEF is also strengthening the capacities of health zones and provincial divisions, and implementing preparedness programmes in at-risk areas.

Results from Dec. 2019

As of 31 December 2019, UNICEF was able to mobilize US\$ 79 million against the Ebola joint response (45 per cent funded). Through the risk communication and community engagement interventions, UNICEF engaged with influential leaders and groups and enhanced the dialogue and partnerships between the Ebola response teams and communities in affected areas, fostering community ownership and acceptance of the response and enabling real-time exchange of information. UNICEF worked to improve infection, prevention and control in affected communities, including by providing supplies and household decontamination around EVD cases. UNICEF provided psychosocial care, social support, and material assistance to EVD patients and survivors, families and contacts. Through the introduction of the social science analysis cells, UNICEF ran more than 50 quantitative and qualitative studies to better understand the context and population behaviours and concerns, and thereby inform improved interventions. Specific studies were conducted with particular targets such as pregnant and breastfeeding women, children, traditional healers and EVD survivors. In addition to direct implementation, UNICEF reinforced its partnerships with local and international non-governmental organizations for key Ebola response activities.

Total people in need

15.1 million³

Total children (<18) in need

8.1 million⁴

Total people to be reached

7.2 million⁵

Total children to be reached

3.9 million⁶

2020 programme targets

PILLAR 1 - Risk communication and community engagement

- 3,223,053 (target for January to June 2020) out of 37,006,364 people (total target since the beginning of the response) reached with EVD messages through community engagement and interpersonal communication⁷

PILLAR 1 - Infection prevention and control

- 63,000 (target for January to June 2020) out of 190,464 people (target for August 2018 to June 2020) reached with hygiene and prevention kits⁸
- 531 (target for January to June 2020) out of 4,264 health facilities (target for August 2018 to June 2020) provided with interpersonal communication and WASH supplies in at-risk areas⁹

PILLAR 1 - Psychosocial support

- 46,200 (target for January to June 2020) out of 161,394 affected people (total target for August 2018 to June 2020) received psychosocial support¹⁰

PILLAR 1 - Nutrition

- 566 (target for January to June 2020) out of 1,776 children under 6 months (target August 2018 to June 2020) who could not be breastfed received ready-to-use infant formula in Ebola treatment centres¹¹

PILLAR 1 - Education

- 392,486 (target for January to June 2020) out of 1,613,687 students (total target for August 2018 to June 2020) reached with Ebola prevention information in schools¹²

PILLAR 3 - WASH

- 700,000 people benefited from improved access to WASH in areas affected by Ebola or at risk

PILLAR 3 - Child protection

- 21,855 children vulnerable to/or affected by humanitarian emergencies in areas affected by EVD received group psychosocial support, including in child-friendly spaces

PILLAR 3 - Health

- 120 health facilities supported (training, rehabilitation, equipment) in areas affected by Ebola or at risk

PILLAR 3 - Education

- 426,900 school-age boys and girls (5 to 17 years of age) living in areas affected by EVD, or at risk of it, received learning materials

	UNICEF revised 2019 targets	UNICEF total results
Pillar 1: Strengthened public health response		
RISK COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT		
Members of influential leaders and groups reached through advocacy, community engagement and interpersonal communication activities (community animation committees, religious/traditional leaders, opinion leaders, educators, motorists, military personnel, journalists, indigenous group leaders, special populations and adolescents)	84,000	77,334
Frontline workers (interpersonal communication by community relays - Reco) in affected zones mobilized on Ebola response and approached to participatory community engagement	47,500	40,096
At-risk people reached through community engagement, advocacy, interpersonal communications, public animations, radio, door-to-door outreach, church meetings, schools, adolescent groups, administrative employees or armed forces	34,000,000	32,926,749
Households receiving personalized house visits to address serious misperceptions about Ebola, refusals to secure burials or resistance to vaccination	31,193	23,317
Listed people eligible for ring vaccination informed of the benefits of the vaccine and convinced to receive it within required protocols	259,654 ⁱ	257,607
WASH/INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION		
Health facilities in affected health zones provided with essential WASH services	3,884	3,402
Target schools in high-risk areas provided with handwashing facilities	3,800	2,744
Community sites (ports, market places, local restaurants, churches) with handwashing facilities in the affected areas	11,750	9,894
Households, health facilities and public places with reported cases decontaminated in 72 hours	100%	81%
Schools and public places located near confirmed cases where handwashing stations are installed and used	100%	100%
Households with confirmed cases, contacts and neighbours of confirmed cases that received hygiene and prevention kits with adequate messaging	36,437	18,878
PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT		
Children who are confirmed or suspected cases receiving psychosocial support inside transit centres and Ebola treatment centres	12,262 ⁱⁱ	11,104
Affected families with confirmed, suspected or probable cases that received psychosocial assistance and/or material assistance	22,939 ⁱⁱⁱ	17,425
Contact persons, including children, who received psychosocial support	4,678 ^{iv}	3,620
Separated children identified who received appropriate care and psychosocial support and material assistance	6,000	5,810
Orphans identified who received appropriate care and psychosocial support and material assistance	2,900	2,502
Psychologists and psychosocial agents trained and deployed to respond to the needs of affected children and families	1,300	1,112
HEALTH AND NUTRITION		
Caregivers of children under 23 months of age who received appropriate counselling on infant and young child feeding in emergencies	70,000	66,325
EVD patients who received nutrition support during treatment according to the guidance note	15,284	14,998
Children under 6 months of age who cannot be breastfed and who receive ready-to-use infant formula in Ebola treatment centres, nurseries, orphanages and communities	1,623	1,149
EDUCATION		
Students reached with Ebola prevention information in schools	1,458,000	1,218,738
Teachers briefed on Ebola prevention information in schools	47,000	46,780
Pillar 3: Humanitarian response to communities affected by Ebola		
RISK COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT		
Community animation committee members trained in communication techniques and essential family practices	47,304	24,531
Proportion of projects carried out by Pillar 3 resulting from community animation committees	60	0
WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE		
People who have improved access to WASH in areas affected by Ebola or at risk	700,000	14,000
Health facilities that have received a WASH package in areas affected by Ebola or at risk	300	0
Students (aged 5 to 17 years) in schools in areas affected by EVD who received a WASH intervention (disaggregated by gender)	60,000	600
People in cholera-endemic areas benefiting from a preventive or responsive WASH package in areas affected by Ebola or at risk	80,000	0
PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT AND CHILD PROTECTION		

Vulnerable children and/or children affected by emergencies in areas affected by Ebola, including displaced children, returned children, heads of household, children with disabilities and separated children, receiving group psychosocial support, including in child-friendly spaces	21,855	0
Vulnerable children and/or children affected by emergencies, including unaccompanied and separated children, children associated with armed forces and armed groups, victims of violence, including gender-based violence, identified and accessing referral services or individualized case management through a formal or informal protection network	3,318	0
HEALTH AND NUTRITION		
Children aged 0 to 59 months vaccinated during polio campaigns in areas affected by Ebola or at risk of it	826,123	764,106
Children aged 6 to 59 months vaccinated against measles in areas affected by Ebola or at risk of it	1,851,630 ^v	1,520,328
Health facilities supported (training, rehabilitation, equipment) in areas affected by Ebola at risk of it	120	11
Children treated for severe acute malnutrition in Intensive outpatient nutrition units and intensive therapeutic nutrition units in health zones affected by Ebola or at risk	20,000	50
Children aged 6 to 59 months who received vitamin A	743,075	680,760
Children aged 6 to 59 months who received deworming (from 12 to 59 months of age)	699,363	601,730
EDUCATION		
School-aged boys and girls (5 to 17 years of age) living in areas affected by Ebola, or at risk of it, and receiving learning materials	426,900	29,353
Teachers trained in key topics, including the guidance note, psychosocial support in the classroom and peacebuilding	8,538	68

ⁱ This figure indicates the number eligible from 8 August 2018 to 14 December 2019.

ⁱⁱ This figure has been adjusted to include the high number of people admitted daily to the transit centres and Ebola treatment centres as suspected cases. It includes support provided to families with suspected, probable or confirmed cases.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} This target is regularly updated according to the evolution of the epidemic.

^v The initial target referred to the measles vaccination campaigns in 6 health zones in Ituri and 16 health zones in North Kivu, all EVD hotspot and active zones. During follow-up campaigns and based on the EVD epidemic trend, UNICEF revised its target to include two additional health zones in Ituri and seven in North Kivu, as new hotspots or at-risk zones.

Funding requirements

While considerable progress has been made, significant funding is still required to implement the critical activities needed to stop the spread of Ebola. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, UNICEF funding requirements stand at US\$99.5 million to implement critical activities needed to stop the spread of the outbreak and support communities.¹³

Sector	2020 requirements (US\$)
Pillar 1	
Water sanitation and hygiene and infection prevention and control	14,726,917
Communication for Development – community engagement and communication for campaigns	11,316,745
Child protection and psychosocial support	2,784,657
Medical and nutritional care and counselling in Ebola treatment centres/ communities	1,875,813
Coordination and governance	4,662,300
Pillar 3	
Strengthened support to communities affected by Ebola	64,100,900
Total	99,467,332

¹ World Health Organization, 'Ebola Virus Disease: Democratic Republic of the Congo' no. 80, WHO, 18 February 2020.

² Ibid.

³ North Kivu and Ituri total population (estimates for 2020).

⁴ This number of children is estimated to represent 54 per cent of the total Nord Kivu and Ituri population (estimates for 2020), according to the official demographic estimates from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

⁵ Total population in the 29 health zones affected by Ebola (estimates for 2019).

⁶ Proportion of children (under the age of 18 years) in the total population of the 29 health zones affected by Ebola (estimates for 2019).

⁷ 3,223,053 people is the target for January through June 2020. 37,006,364 people is the cumulative target since the beginning of the outbreak (August 2018) through June 2020.

⁸ 63,000 people is the target for January through June 2020. 190,464 people is the cumulative target since the beginning of the outbreak (August 2018) through June 2020. This estimate is based on the epidemiological trend hypothesis of the Strategic Response Plan 4.1.

⁹ 531 health facilities is the target for January through June 2020. 4,264 health facilities is the cumulative target since the beginning of the outbreak (August 2018) through June 2020.

¹⁰ 46,200 people is the target for January through June 2020. 161,394 people is the cumulative target since the beginning of the outbreak (August 2018) through June 2020.

¹¹ 566 children is the target for January through June 2020. 1,776 children is the cumulative target since the beginning of the outbreak (August 2018) through June 2020.

¹² 392,486 students is the target for January through June 2020. 1,613,687 students is the cumulative target since the beginning of the outbreak (August 2018) through June 2020. This target represents the number of students briefed by their teachers on the guidance note on EVD prevention in schools, a protocol set up by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with UNICEF support.

¹³ 2020 DRC Ebola HAC appeal covers the period up to end of the year and is aligned with the joint national strategic response plan (SRP 4.1) against EVD in North Kivu and Ituri provinces developed by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with financial and technical partners such as the World Health Organization and UNICEF.

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