



Reporting period: 9 July – 12 August 2020

Mongolia Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

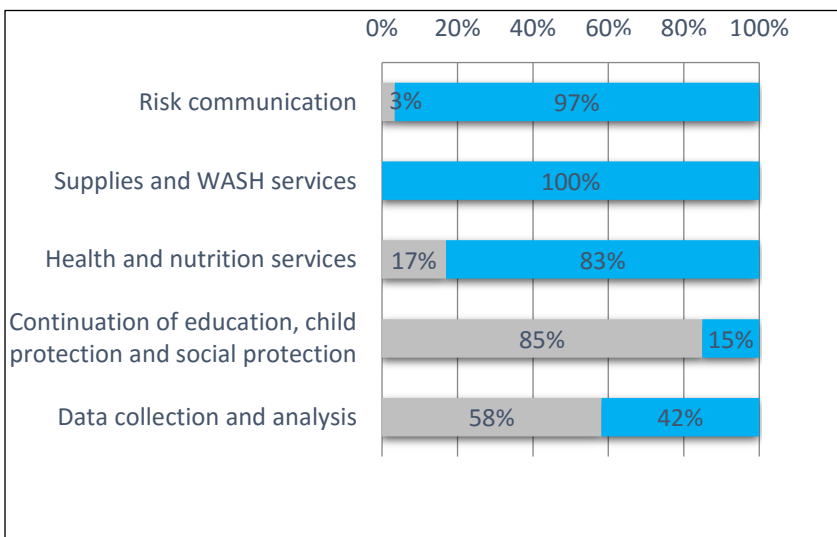
Situation Report No.4



Highlights

- In partnership with the Ministry of Health, the National Centre for Public Health and local health departments, UNICEF is organizing child feeding programmes in target areas covering 604 children with moderate acute malnutrition, iron deficiency and rickets.
- Nutrition screening and counselling services reached 5,209 children under age 5.
- UNICEF procured enough nutrition essential supplies – including therapeutic milk, therapeutic spread, ready-to-use therapeutic food (biscuits) – to treat 2,200 children with severe acute malnutrition.
- UNICEF provided hygiene supplies including hand soaps, hand sanitizers and disinfectant materials to 67 quarantine centers and 11 border entry points operating across Mongolia.
- UNICEF-supported COVID-19 prevention messages for children, adolescents and their parents reached over 1.8 million people over the last two months.
- A United Nations joint effort to support the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Sports (MECSS) to establish an e-learning portal for pre-primary and basic education is in progress to develop 104 pieces of interactive content as a supplement to TV-based learning.

UNICEF's funding status



Mongolia: situation in numbers



293
Laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases



269
COVID-19 recovered

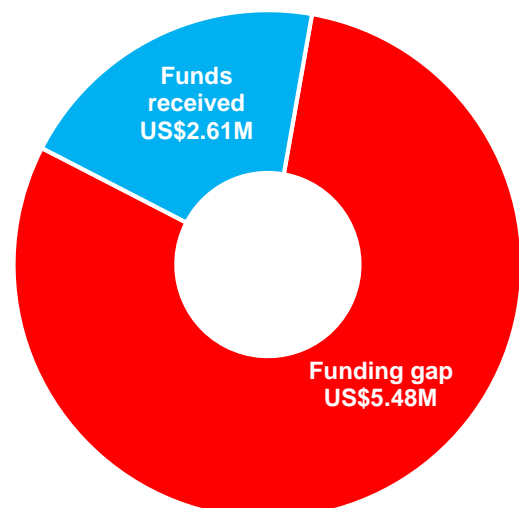
16 Children infected with COVID-19 (ages 5–18)



40 per cent of households are worried about their finances in the next month



23 per cent have concerns about food security in the next week and 64 per cent of households reported increases in the price of major food items



Situation overview and humanitarian needs

The Government of Mongolia (GoM) has extended the period of high alert preparedness until 31 August 2020 and international borders remain closed.

Schools and kindergartens (KGs) will reopen from 1 September. As prevention and precautionary measures, the following requirements will be followed:

1. The number of children in each classroom in both kindergartens and schools should not be more than 20. This means some already overloaded classes will be conducted in shifts.
2. Blended learning for schools in Ulaanbaatar and province centers: three days of in-classroom teaching and two days online. Classroom learning for schools in soum and bagh areas: five days of in-classroom learning. Private schools can organize five days of in-classroom teaching if they can accommodate all students with requirement of 20-25 children per class.
3. Due to the restriction on the number of children per classroom, kindergartens in Ulaanbaatar will prioritize 4–5-year-old children due to school preparedness issues. In the provinces, depending on availability of space, 3-year-olds may also be enrolled. Two-year-olds will not be enrolled.

Vocational training centers will be open starting from 14 September and universities and colleges from 5 October 2020. The schools will have a two-month winter break. According to MECSS, in the school year of 2020/21, it is estimated that more than 305,000 children will be enrolled in KGs, 682,000 children in schools and 150,000 students in universities.

According to a joint COVID-19 Household Response Phone Survey (National Statistics Office and World Bank, 2020), 16 per cent of self-employed workers received zero income and 73 per cent have experienced income losses since the end of January due to fewer customers, business place closures and logistics disruptions caused by COVID-19.

An online discussion #COVID-19 VS YOUTH (Caritas Czech Republic, Center for Citizenship Education and the Mongolian Youth Council, 2020) revealed that 68 per cent of young people's (122 survey participants) income and businesses are negatively affected by COVID-19 restrictions and more than half of survey respondents are facing employment problems due to COVID-19.

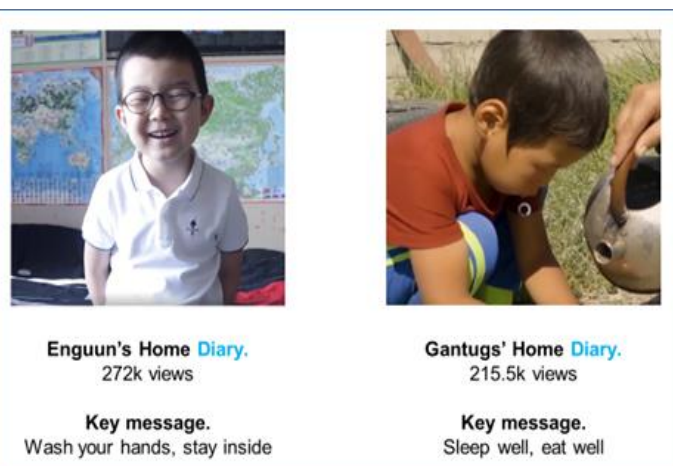
An early recovery assessment (World Vision International Mongolia, 2020) indicates that 63.3 per cent of 658 respondents worry about impacts on livelihoods for the next 4–6 months even though there are several supports offered by both Government (child money) and other stakeholders. In response to a lack of income, the most commonly adopted coping mechanisms are mostly related to reducing consumption, including reduced food consumption (11 per cent); reduced medical expenditure (39 per cent); doing casual work (19 per cent); and borrowing money (5.4 per cent). Several other coping strategies that affect children's well-being such as child labour (10 per cent), sending children to relatives (8 per cent) and begging (1 per cent) were also mentioned.

Summary of UNICEF response actions in the country

Risk communication and community engagement

In the reporting period, the main channel used for risk communication activities was social media. UNICEF worked with VMLY&R company and the Institute of Applied Psychology to provide mental health advice for teenagers and their parents during the COVID-19 restrictions. A social media campaign with a series of 11 videos and eight posters reached 340,000 views between May and the end of July.

A new Campaign called COVID STORIES started recently and is becoming very popular. The campaign shares 'human interest' stories of how people's lives are changing during the COVID-19 and each story has a particular message. The latest story posted just a week ago – a Home Diary of Gantugs, a 6-year-old boy, had 215,500 views on Facebook.



The youth content, TemuDay Comic story page is on Facebook. On 24 July, season two started covering the life of a teenager during the COVID-19 lockdown. During May–July, TemuDay stories reached 500,000 people. Page subscriptions increased by 50 per cent in the last month, reaching 6,400.



A UNICEF-supported chatbot on COVID-19 information and messages operating on both UNICEF and Ministry of Health platforms engaged 10,644 users through 73,565 messages. UNICEF Mongolia is considering an update of the chatbot, adding a new algorithm to cope with the changing nature of questions received through hotlines. With a wealth of information on COVID transmission and prevention provided through various channels, fewer people are now using the chatbot and hotlines. Inquiries and complaints were mostly about bringing back Mongolian citizens stuck abroad, quarantine conditions after arrival in the country and current restriction policies.

The Mongolian Association of Sign Language Interpreters translated five videos with 5,170 views.

Critical supply and logistics, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services

UNICEF is continuing to support the nationwide Hygiene Campaign, including handwashing with soap. Within this initiative a series of hygiene (handwashing) communication materials were produced and disseminated through national television and social media, reaching over 900,000 people. As part of its COVID-19 response, UNICEF Mongolia is working together with the Mongolian Red Cross Society, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to support health facilities staff and other frontline workers with provision of much-needed essential hygiene supplies. Starting from April 2020, hygiene supplies including hand soaps, hand sanitizers and disinfectant materials were provided to 67 quarantine centers operating across Mongolia, in which around 9,500 people were quarantined upon their arrival in Mongolia by Government-operated charter flights.



A coordination meeting on a National Hygiene Campaign for COVID-19 prevention, led by the National Center for Public Health with technical and financial support from UNICEF and USAID.

In addition, WASH supplies including hand soaps, hand sanitizers, disinfectant materials and rain boots were provided to around 100 frontline staff working at 11 border entry points in eight provinces of Mongolia. Between 8 and 29 June, 10 passengers entering the country through these border posts tested positive for COVID-19, showing the high risk of infection for frontline workers at border posts.



Samples of hygiene and handwashing promotion posters disseminated with the Hygiene Campaign

UNICEF has supported the COVID-19 call centre – 119, which is operational at the National Center for Public Health – to improve responses for those seeking information. To date, over 8,000 calls have been received.

Provision of healthcare and nutrition services

Two-day on-the-job coaching on practical skills is being conducted following the Infant and Young Child Feeding and Wasting Management online trainings in six districts of Ulaanbaatar, Zavkhan, Gobi-Altai, Bayankhongor and Khuvsgul provinces. In partnership with the Ministry of Health, the National Centre for Public Health and local health departments, UNICEF is organizing child feeding programmes in target areas covering 604 children with moderate acute malnutrition, iron deficiency and rickets. In addition, nutrition screening and counselling services reached 5,209 children under age 5. By mid-July, the first batch of Nutrition supplies – including 696 cartons of F-75 and F-100 therapeutic milk, 454 cartons of therapeutic spread and 305 cartons of ready-to-use therapeutic food (biscuits) – had arrived, for the treatment of 2,200 children with severe acute malnutrition.

UNICEF, in close consultation with WHO and the Gavi Secretariat in Geneva, is providing coordination support to GoM in its application to participate in the COVAX facility. On 30 July 2020, Mongolia was approved for Gavi support during a Gavi Board meeting. The Ministry of Health has finalized a vaccine deployment plan, with estimated needs for cold chain capacity and other resources.

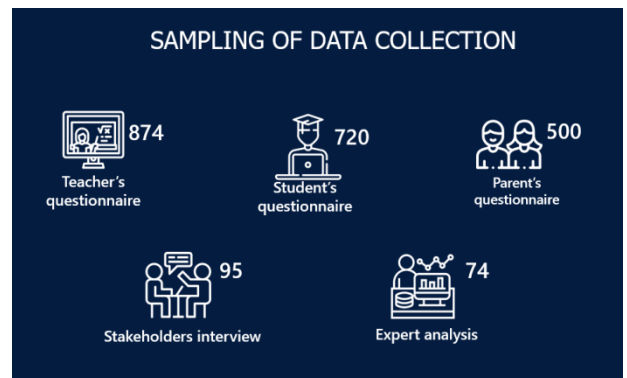
In support of continued service provision, the Country Office provided targeted assistance to its programme provinces, where routine home visits have been a challenge after primary service providers exhausted their fuel allowances during the harsh winter.

Access to continuous education, child protection and social protection services

Education

On 9 July 2020, the findings of a UNICEF-supported study, 'Assessment of the effectiveness of TV lessons' was disseminated to MECSS and development partners as well as representatives from civil society organizations/NGOs. The study was conducted over two months, covered 10 provinces and three districts, and targeted key stakeholders including students, parents and teachers.

In terms of accessibility, the study findings concluded that about 16 per cent of sampled students were not able to watch TV lessons properly. In particular, children from herder families, children from socioeconomically disadvantaged families as well as school students who were already lagging behind are at higher risk of being left behind in terms of learning. A TV set and mobile phone were the most common and popular tools to access TV lessons among students. For instance, while 59 per cent of students in Ulaanbaatar used mobile phones, the percentage went up to 77 per cent in *soum* areas. The results also demonstrate that about 6 per cent of total sampled students do not have a TV, computer or mobile phone, underlining the likelihood of these children not being able to learn through TV lessons. Therefore, there is a critical need to explore an alternative educational service delivery modality, including provision of printed learning materials and/or technological solutions that work in offline modes.



The 'Assessment of the effectiveness of TV lessons' dissemination seminar

The assessment also implies that the quality of TV lessons may be lower than face-to-face teaching in classrooms. For instance, 36.9 per cent of students surveyed found that teachers conducting TV lessons were less skilled than their class teachers. In addition, 57 per cent of the students assessed the teaching pace and clarity of TV lessons as 'moderate' or 'poor'. While teachers' clarity of speech and introduction of the objectives of each lesson received the most positive feedback, the evaluation found that students' opportunity to engage and practice their knowledge was very limited. One of the key recommendations is the need to develop an online learning system for school students with more interactive and engaging content to promote self-learning and development.

The study findings reaffirm the importance of the joint United Nations effort to support MECSS in establishing an e-learning portal for pre-primary and basic education levels. As part of this initiative, and as a supplement to TV-based learning, 104 pieces of age-appropriate and interactive learning content will be developed by December 2020.

Child protection

In collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), a guideline on 'Violence Against Women and Children, Response to COVID-19 for Front-liners' was developed. The guideline was distributed to One-Stop Service Centers and shelters in 19 provinces along with 510 dignity kits for women/adolescents and children.

Mental health and psychosocial support has been delivered nationwide through remote means, mainly online. Two batches of the Parenting Lifelong Tips reached 431,000 people through UNICEF social media platforms. With UNICEF funding, the National Center for Mental Health reached 359,340 parents through different media platforms.

With continued UNICEF support, 178 child monks participated in a two-week youth rehabilitation programme. This programme was essential for these young people who waited three months to return home from India and underwent three weeks of quarantine upon their repatriation. At the end of 10 different youth development programmes, the child monks prepared presentations on Mongolian history and culture, and showcased their new hobbies such as cycling, pottery, handcrafting, dancing and singing. Adolescent monks also attended sexual health education and online safety training. Their educational and social services needs were evaluated. The Authority for Family, Children and Youth Development supervised the safe return of the children to their home towns.



A child monk speaking at closing event

Data collection, analysis and research

The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey Plus (MICS Plus) is applying Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) to collect regularly representative data. A pilot survey will start on August 15. Three waves of the survey are planned to be conducted by the end of 2020. The MICS Plus First Wave focuses on children's distance learning and households in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

UNICEF is supporting the Government on monitoring of the Child Money Programme, which was vertically expanded until the end of the year with an increase from a pre-COVID 20,000 tugrug benefit per month to 100,000 tugrug per month, reaching 1.2 million children.

Funding

The UNICEF Mongolia response plan is 32 per cent funded: of the US\$8,098,300 needed, US\$2,608,134 had been received/pledged by 12 August 2020. The contributions are from bilateral donors (Governments of Japan and Australia, USAID, and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation), multilateral donors (Asian Development Bank, Global Partnership for Education, the United Nations Response and Recovery Fund) and philanthropists (Child Fund Korea). UNICEF Mongolia is also very grateful to bilateral donors who provide flexible contributions to UNICEF globally.

Internal and external media

Website: unicef.mn

Twitter: @UNICEF_Mongolia

Facebook: UNICEF Mongolia

- [Home Diary of a 6-year-old boy, Gantugs](#)
- Mongolian Association of Sign Language Interpreters translated videos to deliver COVID-19 prevention messages to people with disabilities
 - [Enguun's diary in sign language](#), posted on 10 July
 - [Tips for parents - How to talk to Teenage children](#) posted on 10 July
 - [Tips for Parents - Importance of friendship](#) posted on 8 July
 - [Advice on planning your day](#) posted on 8 July
 - [Tips for parents - How to talk to stressed children](#) posted on 8 July
- [Series of video advice provided by mental health professionals to help parents and adolescent children during COVID-related restrictions](#)
- [The Nationwide Hygiene Campaign page](#)
- [Dedicated page on COVID-19 on the UNICEF Mongolia website](#)

Next situation report: 15 September 2020

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Annex A: Summary of selected programme results

Areas of response	2020 UNICEF target	UNICEF results to date
Risk communication and community engagement		
Number of people reached on COVID-19 through messaging on prevention and access to services*	2,000,000	795,466
Number of people engaged on COVID-19 through risk communication and community engagement actions	300,000	106,201
Number of people sharing their concerns and asking questions/ requesting clarifications from available support services to address their needs through established feedback mechanisms	100,000	25,853
Critical supply and logistics and WASH services		
Number of children reached with targeted messages and information on COVID-19 on personal hygiene and improved sanitary practices (specific to schools and early childhood development centres)	900,000	900,000
Number of people reached with critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items) and services	120,000	87,296
Provision of health-care and nutrition services		
Number of health-care facility staff provided with personal protective equipment	500	500
Number of health-care facility staff and community health workers trained in detection, referral and management of suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases	1,000	1,095
Number of health-care facility staff and community health workers trained in infection prevention and control	1,000	1,095
Number of women and children that have continued access to obstetric, neonatal, postnatal and child health care, including immunization services	137,000	110,131
Number of people reached with nutrition messages in the context of COVID-19	360,000	255,209
Number of children that have access to essential nutrition services during the COVID-19 pandemic period	280,000	309,166
Access to continuous education and child protection services		
Number of children supported with distance/home-based learning	605,967	100,000, including 19,000 children from ethnic minorities
Number of children without parental or family care provided with appropriate alternative care arrangements	2,000	1,559
Number of children, parents and primary caregivers provided with community-based mental health and psychosocial support	105,000	105,000
Number of UNICEF personnel and partners that have completed training on gender-based violence risk mitigation and referrals for survivors	150	85

*As the same person might be reached through several channels more than once, targets and results have factored in the possibility of double counting.

Annex B: Funding status

Sector	Requirements	Funds received	Funding gap	
			\$	%
Risk communication	\$250,000	\$241,602	\$8,398	3
Supplies and WASH services	\$678,300	\$862,302	(\$184,002)	0
Health and nutrition services	\$520,000	\$431,717	\$88,283	17
Continuation of education, child protection and social protection	\$6,400,000	\$967,915	\$5,432,085	85
Data collection and analysis	\$250,000	\$104,598	\$145,402	58
Total	\$8,098,300	\$2,608,134	\$5,490,166	68%