

IMPACT

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for every child

ISSUE

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UNICEF's COVID-19 response results

1.6 million

Healthcare providers trained in detecting, referral and appropriate management of COVID-19

400,000

Healthcare staff provided with personal protective equipment (PPE)

64 countries

Received 7.2 million gloves, 2.6 million surgical masks, more than 828,000 respirators, almost 536,000 gowns and 112,240 face shields

21.3 million

People have been reached with critical water, sanitation and hygiene supplies

6.5 million

Caregivers reached with breastfeeding information in the context of COVID-19

ON THE COVER:

Winda and her 16-month-old daughter, Fariska, during a home visit from nutritionist Dessy (not pictured) in central Java, Indonesia. UNICEF is supporting nutritionists like Dessy by supplying essential protective equipment and developing procedures and guidelines for delivering care during the pandemic. © UNICEF/UNI329145/ljazah



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EDITORIAL

Tony Stuart, CEO

The coronavirus pandemic is causing significant loss of life, disrupting livelihoods and threatening years of progress in health, education and life opportunities for children. But what has become evidently clear during this uncertain period is that UNICEF is built for times like these.

By the time the coronavirus outbreak was declared a global health emergency, UNICEF had already rushed the first shipment of six metric tonnes of medical supplies to affected children and families.

We continue to fly personal protective equipment around the globe

for frontline health workers, to train healthcare providers and to reach billions of people with accurate prevention messaging while ensuring ongoing access to critical health, nutrition, education and social services supplies are available for children and families.

At home, the pandemic is the latest disruption for Aussie children who have faced several emergencies in 2020 – bushfires, flooding and prolonged drought. Since the onset of the crisis we have been listening to young Australians to understand how coronavirus is impacting them. We are raising their insights in Canberra and through the media so that they help shape Australia's recovery.

As well as listening to children, we have also been equipping parents and caregivers with resources they can use to support children in difficult times.

We have targeted our direct response to the crisis in Australia to where it is most needed. We have extended our support to students in bushfire and drought affected communities and are

working with local partners to make sure Aboriginal children in parts of the Northern Territory can continue to participate in early learning programs in a COVID-safe way.

At the same time as COVID-19 arrived, our neighbours in the Pacific were hit with Tropical Cyclone Harold. Despite the added challenge of border closures and travel restrictions, UNICEF was able to respond quickly, providing emergency water, sanitation, hygiene, health and educational supplies.

COVID-19 has brought us together in a way that we could have never anticipated. While uncertainty still lingers, what remains definite is our unwavering determination to ensure every child has a fair chance. We could not do this without our generous donors. From all of us at UNICEF Australia, thank you for your ongoing support.

Tony Stuart
Chief Executive

NEWS UPDATES

COVID-19 in Indonesia

On March 2, Indonesia detected its first case of COVID-19. Just six days later, more than 12,000 cases and almost 1,000 deaths had been reported across the country. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, Indonesia was facing a deadly crisis. Two million children under five in Indonesia are acutely malnourished, more than seven million children under five are stunted and more than two million children

under five suffer from severe wasting. These challenges are likely to be exacerbated by the pandemic. While Indonesia has concentrated its efforts on containing the spread of COVID-19, the need to continue providing nutrition support remains as pressing as ever. UNICEF is supporting health workers to continue essential services by developing procedures and guidelines as well as workshops for delivering care and counselling to children and women during the pandemic. We have also procured 34,000 items of personal protective equipment for health workers to safely visit and conduct health services at homes.

New Ebola Outbreak in DRC

A fresh outbreak of the Ebola virus has been detected in northwest Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) at a time when the country is dealing with both a measles epidemic as well as the coronavirus.

UNICEF is working alongside the Government of DRC and partners in response to the Ebola epidemic by providing essential equipment, deploying community mobilisers, providing water and sanitation services and supporting orphans and other affected children. UNICEF is also deploying additional staff to work with government partners, communities, psychologists and psychosocial workers to assist those infected and affected by Ebola and to raise awareness of good hygiene and behavioural practices to prevent the spread of disease. The resurfacing of Ebola comes just as DRC was approaching the end of the current outbreak in the eastern part of the country, which has killed 2,134 people and infected 3,317.



Image © UNICEF/UNI329168/ljazah

Protecting kids in the Pacific from COVID-19

Reaching for the stars to keep children protected

BY VIVIEN HARVEY-WONG, INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS OFFICER

UNICEF is built to respond to emergencies, but we are also there for children and their families before, during and after a crisis. What has become clear during the coronavirus pandemic is the importance of ensuring strong and equitable systems are in place to protect children and their families in times of crisis. By working on multiple levels with governments, local organisations and communities on the ground, we help build a safety net to support children.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought into sharp focus the impacts on children when those systems aren't in place. We know just how important it is to prepare communities for emergencies and to help in the recovery to rebuild stronger than before.

Our work over the past three years to strengthen water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure and practices in schools in the Pacific is helping to protect children during and in the aftermath of the coronavirus outbreak. With support from our donors as well as the Australian government, UNICEF has been improving WASH in Fiji through the Reach for the Stars Project, which began after Cyclone Winston wreaked havoc on schools in 2016. The project uses a UNICEF approach to rate schools from zero to three stars for their WASH infrastructure and positive hygiene practices, like handwashing. The project also incentivises schools and communities to make low-cost improvements to ensure children have safe learning environments.



ACHIEVEMENTS FROM THE UNICEF REACH FOR THE STARS PROGRAM IN FIJI

23,786

children, including 112 children with disabilities, with increased access to clean water

106

schools with improved access to handwashing facilities

10,608 girls

12,974 boys

educated on menstrual hygiene management



ABOVE

School girls and boys use a handwashing station at a school in Fiji which has taken part in the Reach for the Stars project. ©UNICEFAustralia/2018/Moore

LEFT

Community members from different islands of Vanuatu attend UNICEF handwashing demonstrations and COVID-19 information sessions in Tebaku community, a peri-urban settlement in Port Vila. UNICEF is supporting the Government's preparedness and response plan for hygiene promotion, including setting up handwashing stations in communities. ©UNICEF Pacific/2020/Toangwera



One of the schools which has improved from zero to two stars said that introducing handwashing practices and having WASH student prefects to monitor the cleanliness of facilities has allowed students to learn better in a safe and clean environment. Children have taken ownership of maintaining facilities and have said they want to stay in school longer because the environment feels 'homely'. The project has also educated girls, boys and their families on menstrual hygiene management which has had a huge impact on reducing absenteeism as girls now have the facilities and supplies to manage their menstruation. This data, as well as information around access to running water and toilets, is collected from the project and helps the government clearly map out WASH infrastructure. It allows them to quickly assess where the funding gaps are in order to target effective support. As we know here in Australia, positive hygiene practices like handwashing are paramount, and children in Fiji are now taking the practices they've learnt at school to protect themselves and their loved ones from COVID-19.

This behavioural change is not only crucial in responding to disease outbreak, but also to protect children in the aftermath of disasters. During the early stages of the pandemic, the Pacific was hit by Tropical Cyclone Harold which caused widespread

destruction in Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Fiji and Tonga. The cyclone left many without shelter and damaged roads, hospitals, schools and churches. As a result, there are now significant threats to child survival and wellbeing, including an increase in cases of diarrhoea and respiratory illnesses. In Fiji, 12,000 children, who were meant to return to school in mid-June, are unsure when they will be able to go back to the classroom due to the damages sustained. While emergency response has always been difficult in the Pacific, due to the region's remoteness, COVID-19 restrictions and border closures have made responding to the disaster even more challenging. Despite the challenges, UNICEF in the Pacific continue to reach children and families on the ground with access to clean water and hygiene supplies so that they can protect themselves from disease, as well as personal protective equipment (PPE), medicine, vaccines and education materials so that children can continue learning.

With 29 schools destroyed from the cyclone, the data available from our work with the Reach for the Stars program has allowed the government to rapidly assess where the need is greatest and how to build back better so that students can return to learning in a healthy environment. This not only reduces the risk of transmitting COVID-19, but also benefits generations of students for years to come.

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

Tropical Cyclone Harold:

433,000

people living in affected areas.
110,300 people living in the worst affected areas including
47,500 children and
9,200 people who were already vulnerable

Our response:

2,400

households in Fiji were provided with WASH and dignity kits

3,600

people in Fiji provided with soap, disinfectants, spray and hand sanitiser

2,105

people in Vanuatu received WASH supplies, including dignity kits, water filters and purification tablets

13

health facilities in Vanuatu received repairs to cold chain equipment to allow routine immunisations to continue

While crises are devastating, we are also presented with an opportunity to shape a new normal in rebuilding. Knowing how important strong systems are, we continue to work with governments and communities to help children and their families, making sure no one is left behind.

Understanding COVID-19's impact on Australia's youngest generations

BY BRINSLEY MARLAY,
EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

When the COVID-19 pandemic was declared in March our Young Ambassadors had already been hard at work talking with children and young people from across the country. These consultations were part of their research for the follow up to their 2019 report: A Climate for Change.

We knew this work - consulting with children and young people about living and growing up in Australia - would be impacted by the pandemic. Many had already been dealing with the effects of prolonged drought, flooding and bushfires. Now, they were having to wrestle with a new crisis with immediate and long-term impacts.

Despite the abundance of news and information about COVID-19, the voice of young people had been missing from many of the conversations. We felt that we had an obligation to understand the pandemic's impact on our youngest generations.

In April and May, UNICEF Australia surveyed more than 1,000 young people aged 13 to 17 years from across the country while our Young Ambassadors also conducted consultations with teenagers in regional NSW and Tasmania, Perth and Sydney.

Our findings from this initial period were startling. The proportion of our young people who felt they could cope well had almost halved from 81 per cent before the pandemic to 45 per cent. Among other things, seven in ten said the pandemic response had negatively impacted their social connectedness and just under half said it had negatively impacted their stress and anxiety levels. The repercussions of disruptions to their education was also weighing on the minds of over two thirds.

Many young people told powerful stories of working in the frontline in retail and service jobs, not only dealing with extremely difficult members of

the public but worrying that they could unknowingly catch the virus and transmit it to friends and older loved ones. A quarter felt that young people were not being viewed as equal stakeholders in the response in the same way that adult community members were. And, half felt there was not enough effort being made to communicate information to children and young people in a manner that is effective for them.

The perspectives of young people are essential in sharpening the focus on priorities for Australia's recovery, and they continue to inform our advocacy with governments. Some of the key actions that decision makers can take to support young people include promoting social connectedness and ensuring access to appropriate support for good mental health and wellbeing; addressing the inequities exacerbated by COVID-19, such as digital access; and creating opportunities for participation and engagement of young people throughout the recovery.

This research - the first of a three-phase study with similar surveys to be conducted mid-year and again towards the end of 2020 - is critical for understanding the myriad of ways the pandemic is impacting the lives of Australia's young people. It makes an important case for young people to be active participants in shaping our ongoing COVID-19 response and our post COVID-19 future.

Maita pictured with her brother Josh. Maita has helped supervise home learning for her brother Josh during the pandemic lockdown. ©The Sydney Morning Herald/DOMINIC LORRIMER





FIELD WORKER PROFILE

Victoria Clancy

UNICEF AUSTRALIA BUSHFIRE RESPONSE COORDINATOR

For almost a decade Victoria Clancy has worked in emergency response for UNICEF, ensuring vulnerable children in places like Uganda, Ethiopia and Syria are protected from violence and have access to psychosocial and mental health services.

Now, she has returned to Australia to head up our bushfire response programs. Working with partners, the program will provide mental health support to 25 fire-affected communities in New South Wales over the next 18 months, ensuring children have support to deal with the trauma they suffered.

"Many of the communities live in remote areas with limited access

to specialist mental health services, particularly for children," Victoria says.

"In February, we were hearing of young children nervous to go outside or having trouble sleeping. Now they've been impacted by COVID-19."

"They haven't been able to return to their normal routine; they can't go to school and see their friends and they're feeling very isolated."

We are also providing training for adults working with children, including workshops and follow-up support for educators to assist the school community.

"This is a similar approach to how UNICEF works globally," Victoria says. "Teachers and other service providers are trained to deliver support for children and refer those who may need further care."

In Uganda, Victoria managed psychosocial programs including support for unaccompanied and separated refugee children who had fled the ongoing violent conflict in South Sudan.

"At the UNICEF-supported centres, I would see children who were 11-years-old and who had walked from South Sudan by themselves, with no one to look after them."

"In emergencies children are particularly vulnerable. Around the world, UNICEF is there to ensure the resilience of children is supported and they have access to appropriate mental health services."

DONOR PROFILE

Alison's Story

ALISON HOOKWAY, UNICEF INSPIRED ADVENTURES PARTICIPANT



Image supplied by Alison

CYCLING IN VIETNAM FOR KIDS

A divorce can leave you feeling quite insignificant. I wanted to not only be a good role model for my kids, but also help myself to feel like a worthy person again.

I signed up for UNICEF Australia's Cycle for Kids Vietnam - a challenge to raise funds for children around the world in need. It kept me very busy - meaning less time to wallow in divorce rubbish. I was aware of some of UNICEF's great work and I wanted to be a part of it. I also wanted to challenge myself both physically and mentally.

To surround myself with like-minded people and to hear firsthand about all the incredible work and projects UNICEF is involved in, gave me a sense of pride. To know I had contributed to that and seeing where my money went was a huge incentive. Also, having a UNICEF representative on the trip, riding with us, answering our questions, and who had also reached their own fundraising target was an added bonus.

Every child should have equal access to health, nutrition, protection, clean water, sanitation, hygiene, and education. Giving all children a better chance in life is priceless and exposing my own kids to the project was something I'll be proud of for a long time. Vietnam was a bucket list destination and it was definitely the challenge I was looking for. It was such a positive and rewarding experience that I'd recommend to anyone. Keep up the good work UNICEF.



Long-term UNICEF Australia supporter Valerie, who has been supporting us since 1994, had to cancel her 90th birthday celebrations as a result of the COVID-19 restrictions. We didn't want Valerie to miss out on this momentous occasion, so the UNICEF Australia team organised this photo to make sure she felt the birthday love on her special day, despite not being able to celebrate in the traditional way. Image ©UNICEFAustralia/2020



Children learn a handwashing technique during the installation of a drinking water tank that will benefit 350 families in a community in the state of Zulia, Venezuela. © UNICEF/UNI332615/Acosta