



Migrant children participate in activities in a child-friendly space.

unicef 
for every child

Humanitarian Situation Report No. 1

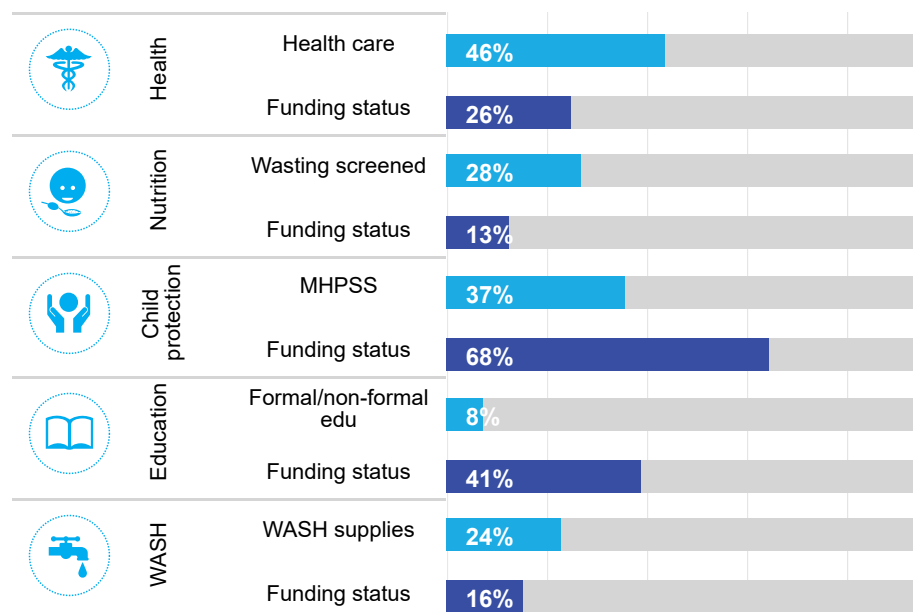
Reporting Period
1 January to 30 June
2024

Mexico and Central America: Children on the move and other crises

HIGHLIGHTS

- The flow of children on the move continued increasing throughout Central America and Mexico. The number of migrants crossing the Darien border (Panama) reached high figures in the first semester of 2024, with more than 201,000 entries (20 per cent children).
- UNICEF's efforts reached more than 78,000 children and women with access to primary health care services; over 580,000 people with access to safe water, nearly 111,400 children and caregivers received mental health and psychosocial support; more than 31,000 children received education support; over 81,000 children were screened for malnutrition. Additionally, more than 112,000 children and women accessed gender-based violence prevention and response interventions.
- UNICEF's appeal is currently 67 per cent underfunded. Urgent support is needed to maintain and scale-up field humanitarian operations, particularly in response to the needs of children and families on the move, and to assist vulnerable communities affected by violence, climate related disasters and food insecurity.

UNICEF RESPONSE AND FUNDING STATUS*



* UNICEF response % is only for the indicator, the funding status is for the entire sector.

SITUATION IN NUMBERS



4,100,000
Children in need of humanitarian assistance¹



11,000,000
People in need of humanitarian assistance

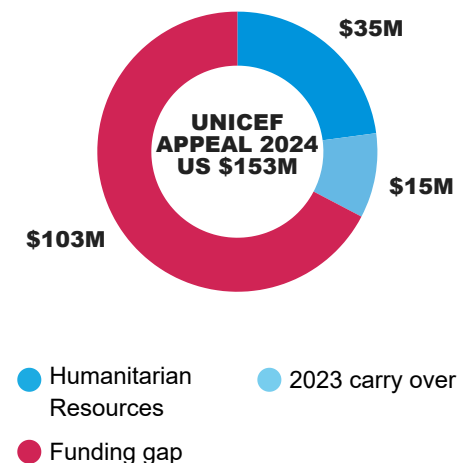


2,100,000
People to be reached



709,998
Children to be reached

FUNDING STATUS (IN US\$)**



** Funding available includes: funds received in the current year; carry-over from the previous year; and repurposed funds with agreement from donors

FUNDING OVERVIEW AND PARTNERSHIPS

In 2024 UNICEF appealed for US\$153 million to address the needs of 2.1 million people, including nearly 710,000 children. As of July 2024, UNICEF had US\$ 49,9 million available (33% of required funding); including US\$14,9 million carry – forward from 2023 and US\$35,02 million received in 2024.

Generous contributions were received from the Government of France; the Republic of Korea; European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO); allocations from OCHA; United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF); The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA); the Swedish Committee for UNICEF; UNICEF USA; The Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM); Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA); and UNICEF's Global Humanitarian Thematic Funds. This support has allowed UNICEF Country Offices (COs) to address humanitarian needs of children on the move and other vulnerable communities in 2024. UNICEF LACRO expresses its gratitude to all its partners for the contributions received over the course of this year.

Urgent gaps remain, particularly to cover the needs of the growing number children and families on the move, in transit or return, and those vulnerable in host communities. Funds are urgently needed – including for protection services, health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), social protection and education. In communities still recovering from the impacts of El Niño-induced drought conditions, UNICEF focus on restore essential services and infrastructure (including health and water), ensuring that these are resilient and better prepared to face climate shocks and extreme events (intense hurricanes, wildfires, flooding).

SITUATION OVERVIEW AND HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

The flow of children on the move increased throughout Central America and Mexico during 2023 and 2024. The number of migrants crossing through the Darien border to Panama hit record-high figures in 2023, with more than 520.000 entries between January and December 2023, making a 110 per cent increase compared to the same period in 2022. In the first semester of 2024, more than 201.000 migrants crossed the Darien region, including 42.382 children (20 per cent of the total).⁴ Nearly 2,000 of them were unaccompanied or separated from their families.² One in every five migrants walking through the Darien jungle were children, being the fastest growing group among people on the move through this border.³

From January to June 2024, nearly 60,000 people (approximately 12 per cent children) from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua were returned, mainly from Mexico and the United States. At the same time, 65,951 Mexican nationals were repatriated from the United States, of whom 7,708 were children and adolescents (60 per cent were unaccompanied). Meanwhile, the number of asylum applications in Mexico remained high with a total of 36,860 people applying for refugee status. Among them, 9,767 were children, making up 26.4 per cent of the applicants, with 317 (3.2 per cent) being unaccompanied. Between October 2023 and June 2024, more than 90,000 encounters with unaccompanied children were recorded by authorities at the southwestern border of the United States.⁵

The dynamics of migration across the sub-region are multidirectional and interconnected; –mixed flows of migrants, refugees and returnees; including different nationalities to which different policies and mechanisms apply and complex migratory patterns. Children who undertake these journeys face multiple risks and high degrees

of vulnerability, especially women and girls. As per interviews conducted, three in five people had experienced mistreatment or abuse while crossing the Darien Gap. Additionally, 38 per cent reported being victim of threats, intimidation, and attacks.⁶ At least 336 people on the move have been reported missing across the sub-region in the first quarter of 2024, including 18 children and 16 women.⁷ 10 people drowned trying to cross into Panama through the Darien Gap.⁸

The increased number of vulnerable migrant children and families add pressure to existing services, often already scarce or non-existing in remote communities or transit hotspots and overwhelm local authorities in transit and destination countries. These conditions place children on the move at risk of violence and gender-based violence. Additionally, instability, structural inequity, food insecurity and climate related disasters, uprooted migrant children with their families and IDP's from their own countries and communities. To safeguard the rights of children on the move and other vulnerable groups, UNICEF's response is focused on ensuring children have access to health care, nutrition support, protection, education, safe water, hygiene and sanitation, social protection, and mental health and psychosocial support.

Adding to the migration crisis and the long-standing vulnerabilities in Central America, UNICEF reported that 1.7 million people were at risk of facing humanitarian needs due to the extreme impacts of El Niño phenomenon that lasted until May 2024 (drought, dry conditions and extreme temperature).^{9 10} In the climatic sub-region referred to as the Dry Corridor (Corredor Seco) - shared by Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua- people are exposed to severe disruptions in access to water, food production and livelihoods, and increased levels of food insecurity and malnutrition for children. All this is occurring in countries where more than 5.6 million people, including 1.9 million children, are already facing significant levels of acute food insecurity (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Phase 3 or above) and urgently require assistance.¹¹ To protect children and families from the worst impacts of climate related events, UNICEF focuses on strengthening preparation, anticipatory actions and response for the upcoming cyclone season as well as adapting critical services (water, sanitation and hygiene systems; education and health services) and delivering essential supplies to vulnerable and remote communities.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF PROGRAMME RESPONSE BY COUNTRY

BELIZE

Belize is currently experiencing three major migration challenges: the flow of migrants in transit; the emergence of migrant settlements in urban and rural communities including border communities; and an increase in deportees into the country.

Families on the move in Belize continue to experience family separation, institutionalization¹² and detention with no significant improvement in the country's human rights situation, according to the Belize Human Rights Report (2023). By the end of 2023, the government reported arresting 1,578 migrants for immigration violations, resulting in 394 convictions, 240 deportation, 1 expulsion, 656 orders to leave and 287 denials of entry. The government maintains a punitive approach to irregular migrants who enter through unregulated border crossings. Current Immigration Laws criminalize illegal entry, resulting in the detention and investigation of migrants found without proper documentation, followed by criminal charges, despite International Protection laws. Nevertheless, Belize continues to register a notable influx of migrants from Brazil, Ecuador, China, and Jamaica, as well as refugees and asylum

seekers from neighbouring countries like Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. This includes accompanied, unaccompanied, and separated children entering through unregulated border crossing. The immediate needs of people of the move assessed by UNICEF, and confirmed by authorities, included food, potable water, hygiene and dignity kits and financial assistance.

Settled migrants face various levels of deprivation depending on their location and community acceptance. Shared challenges include limited or no access to social assistance programs and shock-sensitive social protection, inadequate housing, poor water sources and sanitation. These deprivations are often linked to migrant's legal status, as demonstrated by 2021-2022 Amnesty outreach. The Belize Amnesty Program¹³ aimed to regularize migrants with strong ties to Belize, offering permanent resident status to those met one of the eight qualifying criteria. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) Belize office, in partnership with UNICEF and the Amnesty Registration Centre, hosted over 61 Amnesty mobile events, providing 6,620 consultations and resulting in 5,681 completed Amnesty applications. Furthermore, to support settled migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, UNICEF and IOM, launched a series of Identity and Integration Hubs in six districts, providing access to identity and support services, such as social security and employment fairs, through Mobile Hub events. These hubs aim to improve coordination between service providers, nationals, and migrant beneficiaries. In 2024, the government announced the approval of 1,832 files for permanent residence status.

Future priorities include reviewing Belize's immigration laws to align with International Protection laws and training vital statistics staff to ensure that mothers are aware of their child's right to an identity: common barriers to birth registration include cultural beliefs, social norms and practices related to birth registration.

The 2023 El Nino event caused an intensive and prolonged heat wave, resulting in poor air quality, drought, and severe wildfires. In May 2024, the Government of Belize declared a state of public emergency in the Toledo District due to the rapidly widespread wildfires. The disaster directly affected 300 families (over 800 people) including 463 farmers, and indirectly threatened the livelihoods of 36,000 people. Immediate humanitarian needs included water, food and hygiene items.

In response to the wildfires, the National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO) established the National Fire Response Taskforce to conduct a damage and needs assessments. The data revealed more than US\$12.3 million in agricultural losses, with up to 800 acres crops destroyed. The resulting poor air quality led to the closure of all schools in the Toledo district. Food insecurities due to the crop losses and water contamination from the wildfires remains a major concern for the disaster managers and community members. The UN Emergency Technical Team (UNETT) has been activated to consolidate the humanitarian responses in support of the affected population.

HEALTH

Access to primary health care services was improved through support to health facilities and mobile clinics, particularly in migrant and hard to reach communities. UNICEF supported health facilities and mobile clinics, 3,643 children and women received primary healthcare services; 2,069 children were fully vaccinated or received a minimum set of vaccines and 1,584 pregnant women had skilled birth deliveries in the reporting period.

NUTRITION

Access to primary health care remains a challenge for migrant and host communities due to lack of transportation issues and legal

status barriers. This is further compounded by the lack of livelihood, minimal or no access to social assistance and limited awareness on the importance of primary health care. Through UNICEF supported health facilities and mobile clinics, 2,335 primary caregivers received counselling on Infant and Child Feeding (IYCF) to improve optimal feeding practices and nutritional outcomes. A total of 3,352 children under five were screened for malnutrition, with 42 (1.3 per cent) found to be underweight and 157 (4.6 per cent) found to be stunted. These children and their families received optimal feeding practices through IYCF, cooking demonstration, and other interventions in health facilities and communities. In addition, 3,378 children aged 6-59 months received Vitamin A supplementation through health facilities and mobile clinics.¹⁴

CHILD PROTECTION, GBVIE AND PSEA

UNICEF supported in-transit migrant shelter for children. 56 migrant children received care and case management services through the Department of Human Services. UNICEF also supported the Government strengthening case management, referral, and support services.

In Belize, 65 per cent of children experience violence within their homes. To address this, UNICEF and CDF conducted community-based knowledge-sharing sessions with 191 individuals (161 women, 30 men) from migrant communities in Southern Belize covering family violence, bullying and gender norms that promote abuse and exploitation. In addition, RET International facilitated sessions on Child Protection, abuse identification, referral, intervention, and reporting mechanisms. A Gender-Based Violence Directory, with 38 new service providers, was submitted in June 2024, and a Child Friendly Services Directory will soon be handed over to the Ministry of Human Development Families and Indigenous Peoples' Affairs and to the Ministry of Youth.

EDUCATION

Access to and integration into the education system remains a systematic barrier for foreign-born children, although migrant children are enrolled on an ad hoc basis. UNICEF piloted a new preschool curriculum in all public preschools to benefit both migrant and national children and to promote social cohesion. This play-based curriculum includes principles of basic social-emotional skills for early learners that support peacebuilding and strengthen psychosocial support for students affected by trauma, violence and separation.

The new curriculum units are available to all teachers on the 501 Academy platform provided by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology. In addition, UNICEF provided early grades teaching materials in the most vulnerable communities, to support with quality learning, English as a Second Language (ESL) and remedial literacy. UNICEF supported 18,030 children.¹⁵ This includes non-formal education for children aged 0-3 through community-based early stimulation and responsive care interventions. Primary school students gain knowledge through the ESL instructional material, receive psychosocial support and benefit from remedial interventions to catch up on learning at their specific levels. The goal is to address disruptions in learning continuity caused by frequent moves and lack of access to early childhood development in unregulated human settlements in Toledo and border areas.

WASH

The 2022 Census showed that while 91 per cent of children live in homes with improved drinking water, access to adequate WASH services remains a critical gap in rural communities, especially among irregular migrants, the poor, minorities and marginalized

groups. The prolonged drought exacerbated by the El Nino event, led to water contamination and scarcity in emerging migrant settlements due to inadequate water system. In response, UNICEF, with funding from BPRM (Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration) and the Republic of Korea, provided improved climate-resilient water systems to 12 migrant communities in Toledo District. Implemented by the Belize Red Cross, a Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Training (PHAST) programme benefitted more than 10,000 people.

The improved water system supported primary health care interventions to address child mortality related to poor WASH conditions, such as acute respiratory infections and diarrhoea diseases. A humanitarian-development nexus approach was implemented through capacity building initiative for school management committees, teachers, administrators and water committee members. These initiatives focused on integrating WASH lessons into curriculum and promoting behaviour change for sustainability. Approximately 6,000 migrant and host children received hand hygiene education. In addition, the Ministry of Rural Transformation fostered connection to national water systems through community-based linkages.

SOCIAL PROTECTION

UNICEF implemented the first-ever-nutrition-sensitive cash transfer programme in 12 villages in Toledo District, benefiting 454 people (402 children under five and 52 pregnant women).¹⁶ This district has the highest prevalence of stunting at 33 per cent. The program aimed to improve maternal and child nutrition by addressing immediate determinants (nutrition and care), underlying determinants (food, practices, and services), and enabling determinants (resources, norms, and cultural beliefs) through the social protection, health, and nutrition systems. The cash provision was completed in March 2024 with a focus on community hygiene and sanitation. The program resulted in improved access to essential food items, increased knowledge of early childhood development, healthy hygiene and sanitation practices, and appropriate feeding practices among the migrant settlements and host communities. During the program, 12 community coordinators managed community feedback through various channels for timely action.

SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE (SBC) AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR AFFECTED POPULATIONS (AAP)

UNICEF ensured Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) by engaging key stakeholders through focus group discussions and community participation before and after program design and implementation. In the recent nutrition cash transfer program, 12 community members were recruited as coordinators to record feedback and complaints. These coordinators were informed about the program and trained in PSEA (Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse), and they are part of a WhatsApp group with key stakeholders, including UNICEF, the financial service provider, and ministry counterparts. This feedback structure has been crucial in reducing exclusion errors and helping to enrol families who were initially missed.

HUMANITARIAN LEADERSHIP AND COORDINATION

Through the 3rd UN Joint Program, UNICEF, IOM and UNHCR are advocating with the government to move from punitive measures to human rights-based approach in line with the Core Commitment for Children and the International Protection law. This includes providing advocacy and technical support for the design and establishment of

a reception centre. Given the increase in regional mobility, strengthening legal and policy frameworks and enhancing institutional capacity are crucial to creating a safe environment for migrant women, men, boys, and girls.

Water contamination from prolonged drought, wildfires and recent flooding has affected 9,000 people in low-lying rural communities and migrant settlements in Toledo and Cayo districts. UNICEF, in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Wellness, has revitalized the Multi-Sectoral WASH Body (MSWB) committee to harmonize WASH policies across different sectors, including health, community development, infrastructure, emergency and education, and promote a unified approach to WASH challenges. UNICEF interventions included developing a WASH emergency response plan, strengthening rudimentary water systems through solarization, ensuring access to safe drinking water, and conducting participatory hygiene and sanitation training at the community level.

COSTA RICA

In the first semester 2024, Costa Rica's migration context saw a continue influx of migrant families, with 30 per cent being children and adolescents, facing immediate humanitarian needs. The departure of Doctors Without Borders from Panama, an INGO that provides care to people in need, reduced the availability of health services for migrants in Costa Rica, especially for cases of violence, including gender-based violence. At the Nicaragua border, where access to basic services is scarce, there has been a shift in the behaviour of migrants/families on the move, with in-transit migrants extending their stay in Costa Rica by an average of over a week. Government resources remain limited. There has been an increase in tensions between migrants and local communities along the border.

HEALTH

To address the critical health needs of migrant children and their families, UNICEF partnered with the NGO CADENA. More than 3,000 people, including 600 girls and 650 boys received medical care, mainly for infectious, respiratory, and gastrointestinal diseases. Screening, triage protocols and referral mechanisms between NGOs and the government have been strengthened. This has improved the coordination of health services and ensured a rapid response. Medical supplies, including gauze, manual resuscitators and equipment such as oximeters and thermometers, as well as cleaning and disinfection materials, have been provided to ensure the necessary medical care.

NUTRITION

UNICEF recognises that the treatment and follow-up of malnourished children remains a key challenge. To address this, UNICEF worked with UNFPA to systematically promote breastfeeding, reduce the use of breastmilk substitutes in EMISUR and provide nutritional information.

Reports from the Ministry of Health indicate that the migratory flow includes mainly family groups with children. UNICEF's response, in close coordination with UNFPA, is targeting critical support to pregnant women, 3 per cent of whom have benefited from medical referrals and breastfeeding mothers, according to the Costa Rican Ministry of Health, UNICEF's role is to promote the provision of nutritional counselling to women, their partners and families on the health and psycho-emotional importance of breastfeeding, including the importance of immune health and stress reduction in breastfeeding infants and mothers. On the Southern border, this strategy has enabled the establishment of a breastfeeding room to provide a safe and appropriate place for mothers to receive support

and information, benefiting 456 women and 23 men with their babies and 14 pregnant women from April to June.¹⁷

EDUCATION

UNICEF conducted learning diagnostic assessments in the metropolitan area and provided tailor-made educational materials at both borders to support migrant children and adolescents. This included specialized sessions for parents and caretakers to emphasize the importance of maintaining their children's educational continuity and equipping them with the necessary resources and kits, including for children on the move. In addition, schools in host communities were provided with educational kits to facilitate the educational integration of migrant children. A total of 3,483 children and adolescents benefited from these educational and early stimulation kits: 1,254 educational kits for in-transit migrant children, 1,557 educational and 672 early stimulation kits for in childcare centres located in migrant host communities.¹⁸ Approximately 80 per cent of families at the UNICEF child friendly space in San José reported that they planned to stay in Costa Rica for the long term. In response, UNICEF's case management strategy supported the enrolment of children and adolescents in school, promoting their integration into the educational community.

WASH

Through targeted rehabilitation, construction, and essential maintenance of WASH facilities on both borders and in the metropolitan area, UNICEF provided safe, 24-hour access to WASH for 218,048 migrant children and their families. These services included safe drinking water, sanitation services and showers. In addition, 5,314 children and adolescents received essential hygiene kits from UNICEF, including soap, menstrual hygiene products for women and adolescent girls, toilet paper, and hygiene items.

UNICEF continued to play a key role in overseeing the humanitarian response in the WASH sector on both borders. Notably, the Ministry of Health co-leads the WASH sector's humanitarian response coordination mechanism at the Southern border, strengthening the participation of key local and national institutions including the Directorate General of Migration (DGME) and municipal representatives from Corredores, improving the sectoral response and its overall coordination.

CHILD PROTECTION, GBVIE AND PSEA

In collaboration with Costa Rica's Child Welfare Agency-PANI, UNICEF provided comprehensive services in five child-friendly spaces, four at the border and one in the metropolitan area, including case analysis and referral to national institutions for medical treatment or special protection services, reaching a total of 34,702 migrants in transit. 10,450 children and adolescents received mental health and psychological assistance, including 5,698 boys and 4,752 girls.

UNICEF prioritized strengthening sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) reporting mechanisms and service referrals through a multipronged services strategy in the border areas (EMISUR/CATEM, southern border and Los Chiles, northern border). UNICEF deployed PSEA specialists to the border communities of Los Chiles (north) and Corredores (south) to integrate efforts with community leaders, government, and civil society. A total of 4,901 people received assistance (2,129 boys, 1,741 girls, 350 men, 680 women), including 123 pregnant women and 169 people with disabilities. As part of the intervention, UNICEF PSEA focal points provided parents and caregivers with essential information on the warning signs and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. 2,471 (1,631 female and 840 male) parents and/or caregivers benefited from these PSEA awareness raising and Q&A sessions in

the two border communities. Specialised child-friendly methodologies are being used to support the delivery of PSEA information through workshop that benefited 1,803 (991 boys and 812 girls) children in-transit. In addition, 24 institutional and civil society partners received in-depth PSEA capacity building training and support to develop their PSEA plans. In line with these efforts, 16 contractors received in-depth PSEA training prior to starting their work in EMISUR facilities and in the northern border community of Los Chiles.

HUMANITARIAN LEADERSHIP AND COORDINATION

In coordination with the Directorate general for Migration and Foreigners (DGME), UNICEF is working with IOM, UNHCR and UNFPA to implement an interagency contingency and action plan focusing on mixed migration flows to respond to the increasing humanitarian needs of migrants in transit. The Government and the UN system have established a working group to jointly assess the changing conditions and provide humanitarian assistance to migrants.

Government-led discussions on the establishment of a new Migration Station on the northern border with Nicaragua are ongoing, both at the strategic level of the central government and at the technical levels of local authorities. In this context, UNICEF, together with other agencies of the United Nation's system and local NGOs, supported local institutions with technical expertise and advice as needed or requested.

As the sector leader in WASH, UNICEF continued to fulfil its mandate to coordinate the WASH sector humanitarian response at the Centre for the Temporary Attention of Migrant Persons (CATEM), ensuring the participation of the DGME and the Municipality of Corredores. UNICEF successfully advocated for the local office of the Ministry of Health to co-lead the WASH sector humanitarian response. The positive institutional response translated into effective coordination and co-responsibility.

EL SALVADOR

El Salvador remains a migration route towards the United States. According to the DMGE (The General Directorate of Migration and Immigration), from January to mid-May 2024, a total of 90,300 migrants arrived at the Salvadoran borders, mainly from Ecuador (54,541), Brazil (13,761), and the Dominican Republic (13,312), continuing the trend observed in 2023 of land migration from South America and the Caribbean through the Darien region. The number of returnees reached 6,598, an increase of 63.9 per cent compared to 2023, including 956 accompanied children (14.5 per cent) and 203 unaccompanied children (3.1 per cent). Recent procedural changes for Ecuadorians travelling to Guatemala have led to increased detentions at the border. Strengthening border facilities and improving local shelters are essential to ensure access to quality services during migrant's transit or return journeys.

In addition, UNICEF is responding to two emerging crises. First, in El Salvador, some 170,000 children are affected by parental absence due to imprisonment, as a result of a nationwide state of emergency that has been extended several times since March 2022 aimed at curbing gang-related violence and migration. Children face vulnerabilities such as poverty, malnutrition, school dropout, teenage pregnancy, child labour and exploitation and mental health problems. UNICEF supported them with education initiatives to improve access to formal and non-formal education. Second, the transition from El Niño to La Niña caused severe storms in June, displacing nearly 5,000 people, including 1,200 children, damaging infrastructure and disrupting essential services. UNICEF provided WASH items to

affected children and families. However, limited resources are hampering a comprehensive and multi-sectoral response to these ongoing challenges.

HEALTH

In partnership with the MOH and FOSLAUD, UNICEF has strengthened the national integrated health system by equipping 8 international health offices and 49 health facilities near border posts and seaports. This initiative improves early detection and referral of migrant health issues, effectively mitigating risks. The programme, which initially focused on units close to the border, has been expanded in response to the discussions with the Minister of Health, which highlighted the need for stronger service networks at land and sea borders. Continued support is essential to improve mental health, vaccination services, and health monitoring across border regions, ensuring sustained improvements in healthcare delivery.

NUTRITION

UNICEF trained 443 health promoters and 46 migration officers on nutrition and complementary feeding, reaching 1,994 parents and caregivers of migrant children. Projections indicate that each promoter will be able to counsel 30 parents or caregivers of migrant children aged under the age of two, on infant and young child feeding (IYCF) in 2024. In addition, UNICEF has set up four breastfeeding rooms at border crossings, providing 1,329 pregnant and breastfeeding women with dignified spaces to support child nutrition.

CHILD PROTECTION, GBVIE AND PSEA

UNICEF and its partners referred 1,323 children, adolescents, and families to protection services, including gender-sensitive psychosocial support, and facilitated access to gender-based violence interventions for 1,595 women, girls and boys. In collaboration with DGME, PNC, CONAPINA and municipal authorities, UNICEF carried out registration and referrals to address urgent needs. The strengthening of identification systems for migrants in transit is expected to meet annual targets in the next semester. With additional support from partners, UNICEF trained 2,659 government staff, community leaders and humanitarian workers on legal and psychosocial assistance, PSEA and international protection standards. This improved community responses and exceeded the annual goal.

The State of Emergency created an additional crisis. Since March 2022, more than 3,000 children and adolescents have been detained and between 69,000 and 100,000 others have been left without adequate parental care. Together with children affected by new waves of migration, around 170,000 children (almost 9.7 per cent of the child population) now face limited parental care. These children are vulnerable to poverty, malnutrition, mental health problems, stigma, school failure, teenage pregnancy, child labour, exploitation and abuse. Furthermore, they are at risk of being exploited by criminal elements or falling into poverty, which could lead to future social tensions.

EDUCATION

UNICEF prioritised the continuity of education for 751 children and adolescents on the move through non-formal education interventions, of which 609 were disaggregated by AGD. They distributed 119 education kits to children and adolescents on the move, 358 kits to parents at border points, and 200 QR code cards with digital resources at bus terminals. It is expected that additional supplies will be distributed to partners to progress toward the annual targets. In collaboration with CAIPEM, PGR and CODER, UNICEF

conducted learning recovery and parenting sessions for 100 children on the move and 84 parents. In addition, 42 volunteers trained in Catch-Up methodology set up numeracy and literacy clubs in 10 host communities, benefiting 199 children. A further 317 received educational materials to help sustain learning and reduce dropping out.

Multiple crises in El Salvador have hampered access to education and increased dropout rates and learning loss. In response, UNICEF promoted access to and retention in formal and non-formal education in the districts of Santa Ana and San Miguel. As a result, 500 out-of-school adolescents were enrolled in flexible education, and 291 children and adolescents received non-formal education to regain writing, and numerical skills. In addition, 548 vulnerable children received psychosocial support, 471 teachers improved their skills in teaching life skills to students and 2,837 children and adolescents received educational kits to ensure continuity in their education.

WASH

Improving WASH services is pivotal to enhancing the living conditions of migrants, who often lack designated shelter and rely on schools, healthcare facilities and childcare centre for essential needs. During the reporting period, UNICEF and its partners significantly boosted WASH access for 2,069 migrant children and families. These efforts included upgrading water systems, toilets, showers and hand-washing facilities at strategic border locations. Water quality and waste management improvement were also implemented at five border health units and seven international health offices. The distribution of hygiene kits, containing menstrual hygiene products and childcare items directly benefited 1,071 migrants in transit, and supplies are available on an ongoing basis at care facilities.

The WASH sector initiated a critical pre-positioning and capacity mapping initiative, aligned with the 2024-2025 contingency plan, to prepare for anticipated heavy rains in late 2024. Essential supplies secured include 60 hygiene kits for children under two years of age and 60 family hygiene kits supporting 240 people. These kits were delivered to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for immediate emergency relief. In addition, 605 non-migrant individuals received hygiene kits in 15 host communities near border areas benefiting a total of 905 children and their families. Despite these efforts, securing funding for the 2024 Humanitarian Response Plan for WASH remains a major challenge.

SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE (SBC) AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR AFFECTED POPULATIONS (AAP)

UNICEF and its partners have developed a Social and Behavioural Change (SBC) strategy for migrant populations in transit, focusing on providing essential information about the migration journey, risks, access to protection services, parenting tips, and stress coping mechanisms. The strategy aims to effectively measure its impact on behaviour change among different target groups. Implementing partners evaluated and improved tools for monitoring migrant populations and collecting data. This process led to the development of new, unified monitoring and feedback mechanisms, designed with migrant and host community members to better meet their specific needs and improve adaptation to their circumstances.

HUMANITARIAN LEADERSHIP AND COORDINATION

In response to El Niño, UNICEF's nutrition team worked with HCT, OCHA and inter-cluster partners to develop an emergency

preparedness assessment tool to improve preparedness for hydrometeorological challenges. During the transition from El Niño to La Niña, UNICEF led efforts in the Nutrition, Education, and WASH sectors and co-led efforts in the Protection/Child Protection and Health sectors. The cluster coordination focused on emergency protocols, promoting breastfeeding in shelters and discouraged donations of breastmilk substitutes. In the aftermath of the tropical storm Pilar, UNICEF in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, worked on arbovirus prevention and initiated feedback mechanisms with affected populations through OCHA and HCT. In addition, in accordance with the regional memorandum with UNHCR and WFP, UNICEF strengthened protection monitoring at the Salvadoran borders to identify needs and responses.

GUATEMALA

Guatemala is a country of origin, return and transit for people on the move. According to the U.S. Border Patrol, between October 2023 and April 2024, 157,399 Guatemalans were detected at the southern border of the United States of America, including 84,647 children (22,403 unaccompanied and 62,244 part of family units), representing 40 per cent of the total, an average of 403 per day.

From January to May 2024, the Guatemalan Migration Institute (IGM) and the Social Welfare Secretariat of the Presidency (SBS) reported 39,212 returned Guatemalans, including 3,940 children (1,305 unaccompanied and 2,635 part of family units). Children made up for 10 % of the returnees, 44% of whom were girls and female adolescents and 60 per cent of whom identified as of indigenous (Mayan). The main departments of origin are Huehuetenango, San Marcos, Quiché, Alta Verapaz, and Quetzaltenango. Since 2022, migratory flows through Guatemala have closely mirrored the regional migration trends. From January to April 2024, Guatemala recorded approximately 67,431 migrants' movements, 16 per cent of which were children. This represents a decreased compared to 2023, due to increased patrols along the Mexico–Guatemala border and increased insecurity within the country. Over half of the migrants are from Venezuela (72 cent).

According to OCHA, 3 million people in Guatemala are in need of protection due to the increased displacement and the impacts of violence and organised crime. Many children and adolescents on the move face deprivation, barriers, constant stress and interrupted studies, emphasizing the need to ensure educational opportunities to contribute to their development and reduce the risk of violence.

The El Niño phenomenon continued to severely impact the livelihoods and quality of life of people living in the Guatemala's dry corridor, resulting in crop losses and a significant increase in acute malnutrition. The situation is particularly dire for children under 5 years of age with a 22 per cent rise in acute malnutrition cases compared to the previous year. From May 19 to 25, 2024 a total of 12,290 cases were registered nationwide, 22 per cent of which (2,683 cases) were severe cases.

Emergency contexts also pose a great challenge to providing quality education in safe and dignified spaces. Over 5,386 educational centres lack of water supply and 10,484 require repair to their water systems.

In addition, sexual violence against children and adolescents is a pressing issue, often hidden to stigma and silence, violent social norms, and gender inequality. Currently, 17 cases of sexual violence against children and adolescents are reported daily. In 2023, and continuing into 2024, the most frequent sexual crimes were rape, sexual assault, and aggravated rape, with the latter often involving a family member as a perpetrator. The total number of child and adolescent victims of sexual violence was 6,261 children, including 4,197 girls and 2,064 boys.

HEALTH

In the first semester of 2024, primary health care was provided to 3,369 people on the move, of whom 37 per cent were children and adolescents and 32 per cent were women. The main needs of people on the move are acute respiratory infections, acute gastrointestinal diseases, and infectious skin diseases. The lack of access to food during the journey, drinking water and other hydrating drinks during the journey results in dehydration and acute malnutrition, especially in children, which affects their physical and emotional health. In addition, health staff have been trained in ultrasound diagnosis so that pregnant women can receive better care. One of the strategies that has helped the migrant population, and the host community is that the health centre, with the support of UNICEF, is now open for medical attention from 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

Dengue continues to be a public health emergency that has increased in the country over the past year. As a result, UNICEF Guatemala has supported the Ministry of Health in the production of promotional materials for its prevention.

NUTRITION

In Esquipulas, comprehensive nutritional services were provided to vulnerable groups at risk of acute malnutrition. These services were offered at key points such as the Bus Terminal and the Migrant House, in coordination with the Ministry of Health which provided nutritional assessment, multiple micronutrient supplementation for children under the age of 5; iron, and folic acid supplementation for women of childbearing age, with emphasis on adolescents, pregnant and lactating women; and deworming such as zinc therapeutic for diarrhoea, dietary advice, and caloric supplementation for the general population.

Between March and May 2024, 832 children under the age of 5 were screened, with 2 per cent identified as moderately acute malnourished, 94 per cent of whom received treatment with Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Foods (ATLU). In addition, 93% of children aged 6 to 11 months received vitamin A supplements and 96 per cent of children aged 6 months to 5 years received powdered vitamin and mineral supplements. A total of 1,980 children were evaluated: of the 939 children aged 5 to 10 years, 6 per cent were underweight and 9.1 per cent as overweight or obese; and of the 1,041 adolescents aged 10 to 18 years, 6 per cent were underweight and 13.7 per cent were overweight or obese.¹⁹ Of these groups studied, 95 per cent received deworming and 81 per cent received micronutrient supplementation.

Furthermore, 4,862 adults over 18 years of age were screened with 99 per cent of women received micronutrient supplements and 95 per cent of the adult population dewormed. Nutritional assessment revealed that 3.7 per cent were underweight, more commonly among men, while 50% were overweight or obese, among women. Among 98 lactating women and 81 pregnant women evaluated, 7 per cent of breastfeeding women were underweight (7 women) and 33 per cent were overweight or obese (32 women). Alarmingly, 15 per cent of pregnant women were underweight for their gestational age, risking their health and that of their babies, while 54 per cent were overweight or obese. Finally, 93 per cent of breastfeeding or pregnant women received micronutrient supplements.

CHILD PROTECTION, GBVIE AND PSEA

In the first half of 2024, 42,667 migrants received humanitarian service, 40% were children and adolescents. Of these, 40,119 received psychosocial care. Psychosocial care was provided at three levels: transit migrant services were provided in Guatemala's border areas with Honduras and Mexico, specifically in Chiquimula, Izabal,

and Petén. This included Care Centres for Migrants and Refugees (CAPMIR), where UNICEF offered child friendly spaces and psychosocial care for children through fixed structures set up near border points, and mobile CAPMIRs units, information and psychosocial support was also provided in the civil society shelters "Casas del Migrante" Unaccompanied Minors. In reception centres and government shelters (Casas Nuestras Raíces), UNICEF supported professional care, especially psychosocial and health professionals, standardised procedures by updating and drafting safety protocols, and developed technological tools, so-called "Technological Corners", to inform child and adolescents, through content friendly and age appropriate about their rights and the risks of irregular migration. Regarding family reintegration, UNICEF supported Social Welfare Secretariat -SBS- in four priority departments (San Marcos, Huehuetenango, Quiché, Quetzaltenango) focusing on psychosocial care and linking families with local services. In addition, UNICEF strengthened the capacities of government and civil society officials through training, constant support and development of materials.

UNICEF has facilitated access to more than 51,000 women and children to measures to mitigate, prevent, or respond to GBV (Gender Based Violence). UNICEF's intervention focused on three levels: primary prevention targeting the general population through a communication strategy for social and behavioural change. This involved educating communities on social norms to prevent sexual violence against children and adolescents; secondary prevention services providing specific assistance to at-risk children and adolescents and their families; and thirdly, offering recovery services to individual victims. This includes those referred by the protection, health, education and justice systems. In addition, efforts have been made to strengthen institutional capacities by training psychosocial professionals on children sexual prevention of sexual violence, early warning mechanisms, identification and detection of cases, methods of therapeutic approach to victims, case management methodology, among other topics.

EDUCATION

By 2023, 2.7 million children and adolescents of school age were out of the school system. The Out-of-School Education Programme hopes to alleviate this emergency as it currently hosts 57,308 students and provides an opportunity to accommodate returnee students, although it does not cover all the needs. UNICEF currently has 10 ECHO-funded CEEX, hosting 427 students, 36 per cent of whom are male and 64 per cent female. In addition, UNICEF is supporting 28 CEEX in the department of Alta Verapaz, in the municipalities of Cobán and San Pedro Carchá, which have been attached to the Ministry of Education, with science teaching materials.

WASH

The situation in the WASH sector highlights the urgent need for humanitarian assistance for children, adolescents, and adult women on the move. Priority has been given to access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene at border points along the migration route to North America. Activities included the provision of gender and age-differentiated hygiene kits and the improvement of reception facilities. Climate projections indicated a more active hurricane season in 2024, exacerbating this situation and increasing the risks for this vulnerable population, making these interventions essential to meet their immediate needs.

From January to June 2024, UNICEF Guatemala provided critical water, sanitation, and hygiene kits, to a total of 36,252. This action has reached 13,515 men, 10,241 women, 6,838 boys, and 5,658 girls, specifically in the context of human mobility in border areas and

along the migratory route.

SOCIAL PROTECTION

In the first semester of 2024, UNICEF continued its efforts to integrate social protection cash transfers in collaboration with civil society partners and the government. An analysis of the normative framework for cash transfers in Guatemala was conducted with the participation of key institutions, including the Ministry of Social Development and the Executive Secretariat of the National Coordinator for Disaster Risk Reduction. This analysis has facilitated the development of future programmes and improved overall disaster risk management in the country. In addition, BHA funding will be available next month to support MIDES in maintaining the social register of households, which will provide a baseline for responding to adverse events in Guatemala.

SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE (SBC) AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR AFFECTED POPULATIONS (AAP)

From March to May 2024, activities focused on Accountability to the Affected Population (AAP) were conducted to address nutrition needs based on feedback from mothers, fathers, and caregivers of children in transit in Esquipulas. Communication and information spaces were set up according to the identified needs. This including designing, producing, and disseminating a catalogue of essential messages on nutrition and health, emphasizing the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. Key institutions involved were Municipality, Health Centre and Mobile Nutrition Teams. An update service directory of Esquipulas, Chiquimula was also carried out to inform mobile population of accessible services.

Suggestions and complaints of affected population were collected through a mailbox located at the Bus Terminal. A total of 344 people, including 138 women and 206 men, provided their feedback: 114 used the suggestion box and 240 participated in interviews. The feedback included appreciations (58 per cent), comments (34 per cent) and suggestions (7 per cent).

HUMANITARIAN LEADERSHIP AND COORDINATION

UNICEF, through the HAC-CAMEX Humanitarian Country team, has been coordinating with the national, departmental and municipal governments and other organisations actions in the affected communities. The coordination resulted in the launch of the Humanitarian Response Plan (HPR) for 2024 in the areas of Nutrition, Education, WASH and Child Protection.

Similarly, in response to the migratory dynamics, the Council for Attention and Protection -CAP-, an inter-institutional governmental space for the attention of migrants created by the Migration Code, continues to coordinate efforts to address the increased migration flows. The working group includes different United Nations agencies, among them UNICEF, which emphasizes the need for a child protection approach for children and adolescents in transit and aims to enhance coordination between migration agencies and child protection institutions.

In 2024, UNICEF Guatemala assumed leadership of the GEMIG (United Nations Migration Working Group), coordinating efforts to address the humanitarian needs of the migrant population. In addition, UNICEF currently leads the Nutrition, Education and WASH Sectors and the Child Protection Cluster. It has been established work plans, regular and extraordinary coordination mechanisms, emphasizing protection and accountability to affected populations. This leadership has resulted in more efficient and effective response

to the humanitarian situations, facilitating precise and timely decisions

HONDURAS

In Honduras, mixed migration flows continued to increase significantly, representing one of the most challenging humanitarian crises in the country. On the one hand, according to the National Migration Institute (INM), a total of 18,709 people (13 per cent girls; 18 per cent boys; 20 per cent women) returned (mostly forcibly) to Honduras in the first semester of 2024. According to the study “Honduras Migration Profile”²⁰ the most common reasons that force people to migrate include lack of access to basic services, high rates of violence that pose an immediate risk to life, and family reunification. Although there are no data on returnee children and families who begin the migration process again, it is well known that a significant percentage of families seek to migrate again because the situations that caused them to migrate have not changed or even worsened, including protection related risks (extortion, child recruitment, sexual exploitation) and lack of access to education, health, and social protection. On the other hand, the INM has also reported that more than 248,035 people (11 per cent girls; 14 per cent boys; 26 per cent women) transited through Honduras, which represents an increase of 157 per cent in the number of children transiting the country compared to the same period in 2023,²¹ even higher than the influxes of the general population, which increased by 83 per cent. In addition, the INMs data showed that May 2024 was the ninth consecutive month in which the influx of migrants in Honduras exceeded the influxes in Panama through El Darien, due to the increasing numbers of migrant people entering Honduras directly through Nicaragua to begin their migration process. A recent protection needs assessment of migrant children in the department of El Paraíso (2024)²² shows that children continue to face significant risks, including SGBV violence, extortion, family separation and malnutrition. Almost a third of the children interviewed confirmed that they had slept on the streets, while another significant percentage reported that they had been forced to beg for money and food on the streets during their migratory journey. Children’s key needs include Mental Health and Psychological Support (MHPSS), nutrition, health, as well as access to shelter, food, safe water, and flexible learning opportunities.

In 2024, Honduras continued to face elevated levels of violence. Official figures show that the primary spaces of protection for children, such as communities and homes, are significantly affected by violence. They have become the source of abuse and violence against children. According to the 2019 Characterization Study of Internal Displacement by Violence, a total of 247,090 Hondurans were affected by displacement, 43 per cent of them were children, most of whom reported being at risk or victims of sexual violence, extortion, death threats and forced recruitment. It is also estimated that 8.4 per cent of forced displacements was due to the forced recruitment of children by gangs for criminal activities such as extortion, murders, and drug trafficking.

In addition, while the impact of El Niño did not affect the country as initially predicted due to the early onset of La Niña, uncertainty regarding national production and the augmented price of the basic food basket affected the most vulnerable communities by increasing food insecurity levels and the risks of malnutrition. Furthermore, the second half of 2024 is expected to be heavily affected by the hurricane season. This combined with already alarming levels of violence, will not only accelerate environmental degradation, and increase disasters risks, but also exacerbate the humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable families for essential services.

HEALTH

UNICEF’s role in providing primary health care for children and women has been key to saving lives, given the challenging conditions along the migration route and the increasing needs of people on the move. More than 11,000 children and 4,552 women received primary health care in the southern and western borders. In addition, 277 children (127 boys; 150 girls) were vaccinated against disease outbreaks in their destination countries, when vaccination schedules were incomplete. Mobile health services coordinated with other organisations to avoid duplication and to provide health services in areas of high migration flows to ensure that no one is left behind.

UNICEF has strengthened health services for families living in areas of high violence where health professionals cannot move freely. By deploying health teams to three municipalities in the country with communities considered to be under gang controls, a total of 6,131 people (2,092 boys; 2,255 girls; 1,784 pregnant women) benefitted from health services. In addition, 21,398 people (30 per cent boys; 32 per cent girls; 20 per cent women; 18 per cent men) in the same communities received health education to prevent early pregnancy, promote HPV vaccination, use contraceptive methods, menstrual hygiene, and physiological changes during adolescence. In addition, to address the low immunisation coverage crisis in Honduras, UNICEF supported the vaccination of 138,434 children in four priority health regions.

NUTRITION

UNICEF focused its response on preventing malnutrition among children under five and pregnant women. In the southern and western borders of Honduras, 5,297 children (2,645 boys; 2,652 girls) were screened for acute malnutrition, of which 2 per cent were identified as acute malnourished and received therapeutic foods to treat and reduce the risk of death. Moreover, 31,376 children under five received micronutrients to reduce the risk of anaemia, and a further 1,940 primary caregivers (1,825 women; 115 men) received counselling on healthy eating and breastfeeding. Despite efforts to track and monitor migrant children identified as acute malnourished, gaps remain due to the characteristics of the context, including communication with families and uncertainty about the migratory route.

UNICEF implemented nutritional interventions in communities affected by food insecurity, violence, and climate change, including severe drought. Due to low immunisation coverage and the dengue emergency, health staff were instructed to work exclusively on immunisation and dengue activities, resulting in a reduction in the identification of children with acute malnutrition. As a result, UNICEF developed an agreement with MoH regional offices to include malnutrition screening alongside immunisation brigades and through home visits. A total of 61,410 children (30,748 girls; 30,662 boys) were screened for acute malnutrition and 66 children (31 boys; 35 girls) identified as malnourished were treated by community health professional trained in the simplified protocol for acute malnutrition management.

CHILD PROTECTION, GBVIE, AND PSEA

Psychosocial support in child - friendly spaces was provided to 4,407 migrant people (1,349 girls; 1,225 boys; 1,363 women; 470 men). In addition, 20,672 migrant people (6,388 girls; 5,728 boys; 6,456 women; 2,100 men) had access to safe and accessible channels to report or seek protection in case of sexual exploitation abuse, and 2,805 children and women had access to gender-based violence risk reduction intervention. As part of UNICEF’s response, at least 12,088 children, adolescents and parents received protection in shelters,

where they provided with additional multi-sectoral services and psychosocial support. In addition, migrants received brief inductions to PSEA and protection messages to reduce risks and prevent gender-based violence as part of the shelter guidelines. UNICEF reached 7,038 children, adolescents and caregivers (2,154 girls; 1,957 boys; 2,177 women; 750 men) affected by violence with psychosocial support activities, including 2,797 children in child-friendly spaces.²³ In addition, 1,026 children (582 girls; 444 boys) were identified and referred to health, social welfare, or judicial services. A total of 138,926 people were informed about safety and access to SEA reporting channels through the dissemination of key messages in public places (posters, mailboxes, QR codes) and a campaign for the protection and gender equality of children and adolescents.

EDUCATION

UNICEF provided 2,514 migrant children and adolescents (1,243 girls; 1,271 boys) in vulnerable situations with access to flexible learning methodologies through safe and child friendly learning spaces in Danlí, El Paraíso. In addition, 2,802 educational kits (1,412 girls; 1,390 boys) were delivered to promote access to education for children and adolescents on the move.

According to data from the Ministry of Education (MoE), 2,478 children and adolescents (49 per cent girls; 51 per cent boys) accessed learning platforms, including the Learning Passport methodology, during their stay in the country. The data also shows that 1 in 5 children and adolescents continues to use the Learning Passport along the migration route.

In the Central District, 4,922 children and adolescents (2,433 girls; 2,489 boys) affected by violence, internal displacement, and at risk of dropping out of school had access to formal education in 15 centres. Moreover, 4,496 educational kits (2,266 girls; 2,230 boys) were distributed to the most vulnerable children in 11 education centres in the most marginalized areas. The project also supported 500 teachers, providing them with teaching materials and training in flexible and alternative education, including the implementation of educational bridges methodology.

To restore learning, 1,000 children and adolescents received educational levelling to prevent school backwardness or low academic performance and to prevent school dropout; In addition, a total of 3,962 people (1,545 girls and 773 women) have accessed to psycho-emotional support.

WASH

In 2024, UNICEF reached 127,861 migrant people with safe water (50,096 men; 39,586 women; 20,688 boys; 17,491 girls) representing 76 per cent of the WASH Cluster's target (178,475 attentions as per cluster's reports). However, humanitarian gaps remain as the funding received through the HNRP2024 represents only 29 per cent of the requested funding.

Activities included the installation of four hand-washing stations and eight toilets separated by gender and with menstrual hygiene features, in El Pescadero, next to the INM office where emergency actors provide humanitarian responses. Sanitary facilities have also been adapted with a diaper changing table and the availability of hygiene products. In addition, in the Machuca sector of Ocotepeque, UNICEF installed a mobile sanitation module with two showers, two toilets, two sinks and a urinal. Furthermore, with the support of partners, four additional rental toilets and 4 hand-washing stations were installed. These actions have contributed to the reduction of open defecation in migration hotspots, thereby decreasing the incidence of water-borne diseases, providing a safer and more dignified environment for migrant children.

In schools without access to safe water and handwashing soap, 1,500 children (735 boys; 765 girls) learned about healthy WASH habits and received soap for regular handwashing with safe water. In addition, the CANVAX initiative provided 76 staff members (57 women; 19 men) at 10 healthcare facilities with access to a permanent water supply and proper waste disposal management. Furthermore, 5,958 people (1,672 women, 1,186 men, 1,240 boys and 1,860 girls) in violence-affected households gained access to safe water. In communities affected by malnutrition, critical WASH supplies were provided to promote healthy WASH practices, reaching 4,109 people (1,194 women; 787 men; 853 boys; 1,275 girls).

SOCIAL PROTECTION

UNICEF provided cash transfers to 402 migrant families, benefitting a total of 1,402 people, including 324 children under five, 404 children aged between 5 and 18 years and 674 adults.²⁴ The financial support enabled families to meet immediate and critical needs, such as food, shelter, and access to basic health care, reducing the risk of malnutrition and serious illness. These transfers provided vital assistance, particularly to pregnant and lactating women, children with severe malnutrition, large families affected by violence including SGBV, people with disabilities and people with chronic medical conditions. The majority of beneficiary families were predominantly from Venezuela (85 per cent), followed by Colombia (8 per cent), Ecuador (4 per cent), Haiti (1 per cent), Peru (1 per cent) and Chile (0.3 per cent).

In response to the ongoing violence, UNICEF provided cash transfers to 22 families (benefiting 134 people: 39 girls; 36 boys; 59 adults), including 15 families affected by anxiety, extreme fear, sleep disorders, and school exclusion and a further 7 families with children affected by domestic violence and severe psychosocial distress. In addition, multipurpose cash transfers were provided to 27 families with malnourished children, including 15 with moderate acute malnutrition, 5 with severe acute malnutrition, and 7 at risk of malnutrition.

It is worth highlighting that humanitarian cash interventions have been crucial in alleviating the suffering of most affected populations and saving children's life by promoting access to life-saving services, including the nutritional recovery of children with life-threatening malnutrition.

SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE (SBC) AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR AFFECTED POPULATIONS (AAP)

To address the challenges associated with migration, the UNICEF country offices of Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Mexico have developed an SBC Child and Adolescent Migrant Protection Strategy, that aims to address the four moments of migration: departure, transit, arrival, and return. In order to implement the Strategy effectively, an SBC Migration Cluster has been established within country offices, and supported by the Regional Office to share experiences, review lessons learned and highlight best practices and work together towards evidence-based solutions. The strategy proposes a series of actions to support migrants throughout their journey, including the implementation of the U-Report on the Move, recently launched in Honduras as a tool to collect information on the needs of migrant children and adolescents.

In addition, UNICEF continued to promote collective AAP mechanisms to ensure the inclusion of affected population's perspectives in programmatic decision-making and to promote people's access to life-saving information. To this purpose, UNICEF has been appointed by the Humanitarian Country Team to set up

and lead the first collective AAP mechanism in Honduras which aims to enhance the role and voice of the most vulnerable in the humanitarian program cycle and to improve the quality and relevance of humanitarian response in Honduras. The goals include strengthening the accountability of humanitarian actors, building trust of affected population towards humanitarian assistance and empowering agencies to promote informed decision-making.

HUMANITARIAN LEADERSHIP AND COORDINATION

During the semester, UNICEF focused on strengthening preparedness and response for the cyclone season. Actions included pre-positioning stocks of most essential items, establishing stand-by agreements with emergency partners and strengthening minimum standards for humanitarian response through UNICEF-led clusters. For instance, critical pre-positioned supplies include protection kits, emotional recovery toolboxes, family and individual hygiene kits, education kits, micronutrients for children and pregnant women, school and shelter cleaning kits and multipurpose tents.

In addition, UNICEF continued to ensure humanitarian coordination through the WASH and Education Clusters, the Child Protection AoR and Nutrition Working Group, which aim to strengthen humanitarian response standards and preparedness actions for upcoming cyclone season. UNICEF-led clusters are developing strengthening capacity strategies with local actors and government counterparts to ensure residual capacity and adequate humanitarian coordination after the transition period.

MEXICO

According to the Migration Policy Unit, from January to April 2024, the National Migration Institute identified 481,025 irregular migrants in transit through Mexico, an increase of 336,313 people compared to the same period in 2023. Of these, 59,041 (12.3 per cent) were children and adolescents, and 2,855 (4.8 per cent) were unaccompanied. Most of these children came from Venezuela (21,607), followed by Ecuador (6,610), Honduras (6,555), Colombia (5,090) and Guatemala (4,730). Data on migratory flows of children and adolescents show an increase of 135 per cent compared to the same period in 2023. In the same period, Mexican immigration authorities returned 2,065 children and adolescents to their countries of origin, of whom 88 per cent (1,822) were of Honduran and Guatemalan nationality and 1,245 (60% of the total) were unaccompanied. At the same time, 65,951 Mexican nationals were repatriated from the United States, of whom 7,708 were children and adolescents and 4,651 (60.3 per cent) were unaccompanied. In 2024, the Mexican government reported a high number of asylum applications. From January to May 2024, a total of 36,860 people applied for refugee status. Among them, 9,767 were children, making up 26.4 per cent of the applicants, with 317 (3.2 per cent) being unaccompanied. The majority of these children came from Honduras (5,679), Cuba (944), El Salvador (720), Guatemala (677) and Venezuela (392).

During their transit, children face risks such as detention, family separation, deportation, physical and psychological harm, marginalisation, discrimination, and sexual and economic exploitation. Furthermore, children and their families have limited access to basic health, nutrition, education, water hygiene and sanitation, appropriate care alternatives, and protection services. Children on the move are also at risk of exploitation or trafficking during their displacement. UNICEF Mexico is working with the Government of Mexico, State governments and other partners to address these priority humanitarian needs.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

From January to June 2024, UNICEF supported facilities provided primary health care to 34,636 children and women. This included medical consultations for 8,069 children, 286 pregnant women, 207 lactating women, and 18 male caregivers; nutrition assessments for 2,342 children, 267 pregnant women, 583 lactating women, and 32 male caregivers; psychosocial support for 2,974 individuals; and health and nutrition workshops for 16,386 participants.²⁵ The most frequent diseases were respiratory and intestinal infections. In addition, 286 pregnant women received medical consultations.

From January to June 2024, 24,486 primary caregivers of children and adolescents aged 0 to 18 years received counselling on Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF).²⁶ Two children under 5 years old were diagnosed with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and 30 with moderate acute malnutrition (MAM). 830 children and adolescents were screened for anaemia, resulting in 482 positives (58 per cent). In addition, out of 541 pregnant women screened for anaemia, 140 (26 per cent) were diagnosed positive. Furthermore, UNICEF is working with partners to debunk myths and develop Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) materials to help families understand the importance of medical care.

CHILD PROTECTION, GBVIE, AND PSEA

During the reporting period, UNICEF reached 39,120 people on the move through child protection interventions. Among them, 11,016 children and 1,079 caregivers benefited from mental health and psychosocial support services. In addition, 6,288 people received direct psychosocial counselling sessions, including 2,422 children on the move, 3,866 caregivers, 13 LGBTI people and 17 children with disabilities. From January to June 2024, 11,358 children on the move received child protection case management services, a significant increase from 13,026 children reached in all of 2023.²⁷ Furthermore, 1,379 people benefited from GBV risk mitigation, prevention, or response interventions; while U-Report on the Move reached 8,000 users, who accessed information on protection services.

UNICEF and other UN Agencies have conducted high-level advocacy with the Mexican government for developing binational mechanisms to protect children on the move. As a result, in April 2024, the Governments of Guatemala and Mexico signed a Letter of Intent to strengthen safeguarding, care and safe return processes for children on the move. UNICEF offices in Mexico and Honduras are collaborating to enhance consular networks' capacity for protecting children on the move rights. From June to August 2024, The Mexican diplomatic academy is delivering a virtual course on children's rights with 30 officials from the Honduran Consular Network in Spain, Mexico, the United States of America, and Guatemala UNICEF continued supporting a national care reform roadmap, focusing on the National Care Model for Children and Adolescents on the Move. In April 2024, 1,153 people, including public officers from CPAs and shelter workers, were trained on the care model. In May 2024, the SNDIF (Welfare Agency) and UNICEF presented Guidelines for Family and Community Reunification and Integration,²⁸ providing standards for case management aimed at reunifying or integrating children and adolescents into family environments. The Villa Albatros model, launched in collaboration with DIF Baja California and Resilis, promotes progressive autonomy and independent living for adolescents on the move benefited 19 adolescents.

In March 2024, with UNICEF's support, the Federal CPA of Mexico launched the National Child Protection Measures Administrative Registry. For the first time, comprehensive administrative data, will be collected across the 32 states, on the provision of case management services provided by CPAs, including for children on

the move. This system is inclusive and introduces technical solutions to ensure interoperability between the administrative registries that make up the national child protection information system.

Throughout the year, technical assistance on PSEA has been provided to implementing partners, with recommendations to strengthen their PSEA policies based on programmatic visits to work sites (shelters, camps, offices, etc.).

EDUCATION

In the first semester of 2024, UNICEF continued to support the education of children and adolescents in Baja California, Chiapas, Chihuahua and Sonora, through non-formal education activities at the early childhood and basic education levels, reaching 101 children (47 boys and 54 girls) aged 0 - 5 years, and 97 caregivers (12 men and 85 female) with early childhood activities in 5 shelters. In addition, 24 teachers (9 men and 15 women) were trained and 4,255 children and adolescents (2,374 boys and 1,881 girls) between the age of 6 and 17 years were reached in 8 schools, 2 community centres and 28 shelters with basic education to improve their basic literacy, numeracy, English and digital skills.

WASH

In the first half of 2024, 6,000 hygiene kits were distributed to children and their families in migrant shelters in Monterrey, Reynosa, and Matamoros. More than 8,500 people on the move (6,852 children) received essential hygiene and cleaning items. Through implementing partners, UNICEF's child friendly 'hygiene-dignity corner' in shelters reached 20,000 boys, girls and adult men and women with health and hygiene messages, while more than 12,000 people received critical WASH items.

Construction of WASH infrastructure was completed in 32 shelters and other sites hosting migrants in Tijuana, Juarez, Matamoros, Reynosa, Mexico City, Tuxtla and Tapachula. More than 32,000 people benefited from access to new or rehabilitated sanitation and hygiene infrastructure such as toilets, showers, hand-washing stations, septic tanks and sinks. Hygiene campaigns through talks and theatre, were carried out in 78 shelters and temporary camps, reaching more than 12,000 children and adults on the move.

Finally, UNICEF finalised the construction of four mobile WASH units to support the basic WASH needs of people on the move. These units were handed over to the authorities in Hermosillo (Sonora) and Mexico City.

SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE (SBC) AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR AFFECTED POPULATIONS (AAP)

From January to June, UNICEF reached 1,377 children through social and behavioural change interventions to strengthen the social inclusion of migrant children, in partnership with CONECULTA (Chiapas State Council for Culture and the Arts) and local authorities. In addition, 30,142 children and 7,737 adults in host communities received information on the rights of migrants, the prevention of discrimination and xenophobia, and the importance of social inclusion.²⁹ This included feedback mechanisms to document the experiences of the participating communities. A total of 256 migrant children in shelters received reliable information on access to education, prevention of violence, health and nutrition, and disease prevention. In addition, cross-sectoral key messages were disseminated through puppet shows developed with implementing partners, reaching 1,445 people (590 children, 266 adults).

HUMANITARIAN LEADERSHIP AND COORDINATION

During the reporting period, UNICEF has continued to lead the National Subgroup for the Protection of Children in Human Mobility, a group consisting of 25 organisations (UN agencies, international NGOs, national NGOs and local organisations). As part of the activities of the work plan, the participation of officials from various federal government institutions was coordinated, and meetings were held to strengthen the coordination of organisations in the implementation of the Comprehensive Protection Route for Children and Adolescents in Mobility and the Registration System for Children and Adolescents in the Context of Human Mobility. A space for the exchange of good practices was also created with the Cluster for the Protection of Children of Honduras and with the Subgroup on Gender-Based Violence in Mexico. During the reporting period, media publications focused on presenting UNICEF's work in the field, such as education and menstrual health. Many messages also focused on migrant children and their needs, how they are perceived, and their situation as refugees. A key moment was the participation of Karla Gallo, migration specialist, in one of the most listened podcasts in Latin America, to talk about migration.

NICARAGUA

Nicaragua is the only country in Central America that exempts citizens from several nations in the Caribbean, Africa and Asia from the visa requirement. It has historically served as a launching point for migrants seeking to get to the United States by land. At the same time, monitoring migration trends in Nicaragua remains complex due to the limited presence of civil society organisations in border communities to assist people on the move. There is a regular migratory flow of Nicaraguans to the United States, within the framework of the Humanitarian Parole. The Ministry of the Family is working on protection measures for unaccompanied children, support for their communities of origin, and the provision of kits and psychosocial support through the 133 helpline. The Ministry of Education applies the protocol for the care of children affected by migration and ensures that there are no barriers to the entry of children into the education system. This applies in particular to internal migration, repatriates, and children of other nationalities whose families decide to settle in Nicaragua.

The Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) highlights significant climate threats to Nicaragua's 153 municipalities. According to the report, 21 municipalities face hurricanes threats, 48 are vulnerable to droughts, 33 are at risk of flooding and nine are threatened by rising sea level. Projections for the latter half of 2024 indicate that over 25 storms could impact the country, with an estimated 4 to 7 potentially escalating to hurricane category.

CHILD PROTECTION, GBVIE AND PSEA

From January to May 2024, Nicaragua recorded the following statistics on children in mobility situations: (i) Unaccompanied children and adolescents cared for and returned to their country of origin, 547 people from Venezuela, Haiti, Peru, Uruguay, Ecuador, Cuba, Panama. (ii) 813 children and adolescents returned to Nicaragua. (iii) Families in transit receiving psychosocial support and information in Nicaragua, 9,231 people in transit and 3,047 using the 133 helpline.

In collaboration with the Nidia White Women's Movement, 500 adolescents and young people were trained to enhance their knowledge of violence prevention in emergency situations. To strengthen the community support network that provides assistance

in shelters and psychosocial care, UNICEF's provided training on violence prevention and child protection, reaching 2,000 community members. In addition, 30 community judges (whistas) and promoters received training to enhance their understanding of preventing and addressing violence against girls, boys, adolescents and women, including survivors of sexual abuse and gender-based violence in humanitarian contexts. A total of 2,530 people were trained on PSEA and provided with information material to facilitate appropriate reporting.³⁰

EDUCATION

Efforts are underway to identify a minimum Education in Emergency package for children on the move. In this context, the "Ruta Educativa" project from Save the Children, the "Learning passport" of UNICEF and the CECC-SICA policy on studies accreditation, along with the emergency curriculum designed during the COVID pandemic, have been reviewed and considered. In addition, a visit to El Paraiso, a hotspot on the Honduran border with Nicaragua, provided valuable insights into the needs of people and children on the move and helped identify viable strategies for assistance.

As a part of the emergency response to Hurricane Julia in 2022, UNICEF supported the installation of temporary learning spaces (TLS) in six rural communities last year. As the construction of the new schools has not yet taken place, children will continue to use the TLS until at least for the 2024 school year. At the start of the 2024 school year, UNICEF provided 15 ludic and pedagogic kits, benefiting 150 students in the preschool and multigrade learning modalities.

WASH

In the first semester, UNICEF Nicaragua has recently signed agreement with the National Water Authority (ANA) to implement activities that will allow to enhance access to WASH services in migrant communities.

In preparation for significant flooding in vulnerable communities along the Coco River, WASH conditions were improved at a shelter in Waspam commune. The shelter, with can accommodate 650 children and their families from the Auhya Pura, Raya Pura, Kiwastara, and Boom communities in the municipality, was upgraded to be gender-sensitive, accessible, inclusive of persons with disabilities and resilient to the effects of climate change. A two-day workshop on the use, care, maintenance of WASH services was held at the Koom shelter. The workshop was attended by communities' representatives and technicians from the Municipal Unit for Integrated Risk Management (UMGIR).

SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE (SBC) AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR AFFECTED POPULATIONS (AAP)

During the first semester of 2024, 2,530 people participated in thematic/sectoral training and were informed about the feedback mechanisms, through two main channels: mailboxes and community facilitators of the Nidia White women's network, who promote dialogue on the issue with the population.³¹

PANAMA

In the first semester of 2024, 201,063 migrants crossed the Darien region, including 42,382 children (20 per cent of the total).³² This represents an increase of 2 per cent compared to the same period last year. Venezuelan nationals account for 65% of the total, followed by Ecuador (7 per cent), Colombia (6 per cent), and China (6 per

cent). Importantly, 13 per cent of migrants using this route are extra-continental, from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East (e.g., Sudan, Afghanistan, Angola, Somalia, Ghana, and Nepal, among other nationalities).

UNICEF provided life-saving services at four hotspots (two Temporary Migratory Reception Stations or TMRS, and two host communities) from Monday to Sunday. These services included WASH, maternal and child health, psychosocial support to children and caregivers, case management services for unaccompanied and separated children, safe spaces for women, and protective environments for indigenous children in 10 migration-affected communities in the Embera- Wounaan Indigenous territory.

Key events required UNICEF's humanitarian response to children on the move to adapt during the first half of the year: (I) The San Vicente Reception Centre was temporarily closed due to a fire on 2nd of March that caused infrastructure damage, reducing the capacity to provide basic services to migrants and led to overcrowding in the Lajas Blancas Reception Centre. (II) At the beginning of March, the Panamanian government revoked the authorization of Doctors Without Borders (MSF) to operate in Panama. As MSF was a key health service provider in health in the emergency response, its departure from Darien affected life-saving medical care for migrants and refugees in Bajo Chiquito and the Lajas Blancas Migration Station. In response, the Ministry of Health increased its presence on the ground by deploying additional medical staff, although there are still significant gaps in meeting the needs. (III) Increased number of reported cases of violence and assault (including sexual violence against women and girls) in the first quarter of 2024. According to survivors, sexual violence has become more frequent and severe. A new national government was elected in May and took office on 1st of July. On the first day, the new president announced plans to curb illegal migration, including a repatriation programme for migrants entering through the Darien Gap. These new measures are still under discussion with the governments of the United States, Colombia, and Costa Rica.

HEALTH

In the first half of 2024, UNICEF provided health services to 19,226 people (73 per cent of whom were children) in Bajo Chiquito, Canaan Membrillo and the Lajas Blancas and San Vicente Reception Centres. In addition, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health in the procurement of medicines, PEP kits for survivors of sexual violence and wound dressing material. UNICEF also supported infrastructure arrangements and provided technical assistance and training to increase the availability of local health services.

NUTRITION

In the first half of 2024, UNICEF provided nutritional screening to 8,152 children aged 6 to 59 months old in the Temporary Migration Reception Centres and host communities of Bajo Chiquito and Canaan Membrillo. Children identified as being at risk of malnutrition or suffering from acute malnutrition received supplementary vitamins and were referred to the health centre for treatment. UNICEF continued to provide technical assistance and training to the Ministry of Health staff on emergency nutrition protocols. Thanks to UNICEF's support, a Nutrition Standards of Care guidelines for children aged 0 to 8 years were approved by National Decree in June. This protocol includes a component on nutrition in emergencies and adopts the MUAC tape as a diagnostic tool in emergency settings.

CHILD PROTECTION, GBVIE AND PSEA

Children are exposed to multiple risks along the route, requiring

preventive and protective services. UNICEF provided psychosocial support through child friendly spaces to 28,196 children, parents and caregivers in Temporary Migrant Reception Stations (TMRS) and host communities in the Darien province.

During the reporting period, 1,459 children and families participated in community-based preventive activities in the host communities of Bajo Chiquito, Canaan Membrillo, and in eight other communities affected by migration in the Embera Wounaan indigenous territory. In the first semester, UNICEF provided direct case management to 2,814 children at risk of statelessness, survivors of sexual violence, unaccompanied and/or separated. Of these, 97 per cent were unaccompanied and/or separated children. In the TMRS, 15,762 women and girls received GBV risk mitigation and response services through Safe Spaces.³³ Women and girls participated in activities and guided sessions that promoted self-care, listening and sharing of information and tools to cope with the impact of crossing the dangerous jungle. UNICEF leads the PSEA inter-agency mechanism on the ground, which has developed protocols and conducted capacity-building activities for partners, as well as the establishment of a complaint's mechanism available at the Migration Stations.

WASH

The UNICEF's WASH strategy primarily focused on improving infrastructure to manage sudden increases of migration flow, despite overcoming challenges for identifying construction companies operating in rural areas, recruiting qualified personnel and securing land permissions in the local communities. UNICEF also coordinated the WASH Cluster in the Province of Darien and is actively supporting the National Migration Service and the Ministry of Health in implementing Water and Sanitation services at the Migration Centres.

In the first half of 2024, UNICEF continues to ensure safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene services to people on the move and to host communities affected by migration. This included the construction, maintenance and repair of essential of WASH infrastructure, such as latrines, showers, installation of hand and foot washing and hydration facilities points, which benefited 139,814 beneficiaries. UNICEF also provided technical and operational support to the Rural Water Committees in 12 migration affected communities, including 10 in Comarca Emberá-Wounaan and 2 in Chiriquí Province. In addition, hygiene kits for babies, children, adolescents, and women were distributed in the San Vicente, Lajas Blancas, and Los Planes de Gualaca Migration Reception Centres reaching over 16,123 people. Critical hygiene supplies were also delivered to women and survivors of sexual violence.

SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE (SBC) AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR AFFECTED POPULATIONS (AAP)

Under UNICEF's AAP strategy, 10,142 people (child-friendly spaces, protective environment actions and safe spaces) had access to established accountability mechanisms through participation in feedback surveys, mailboxes, and micro-surveys at various points of intervention. 95 per cent of these participants rated the services as excellent. Field teams from different sectors have received extensive training to develop surveys, conduct focus groups and use other methodologies. This rigorous preparation demonstrates the commitment of these teams to promoting beneficiary participation and improving services.

UNICEF is currently conducting an independent evaluation of its response to children on the move. Findings and recommendations, including the views of beneficiaries, will be available in August.

HUMANITARIAN LEADERSHIP AND COORDINATION

In Panama, UNICEF's humanitarian response supports the government's response. The Country Office coordinates closely with the National Border Service (SENAFRONT), the National Migration Service (SNM), the National Secretariat for Children, Adolescents and the Family (SENNIAF), Civil Protection (SINAPROC) and the Ministry of Health (MINSa). In coordination with the United Nations Human Mobility Group and NGOs, UNICEF is providing services through its implementing partners RET Internacional, Global Brigades, the Panamanian Red Cross, and Organización de Ayuda Integral para el Desarrollo (ODAID). On the ground, UNICEF is working closely with Doctor of the World, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the Pan American Development Foundation and other humanitarian actors. UNICEF continues to lead the coordination of the WASH and Protection sub-groups under the local coordination mechanism led by the UN Human Mobility Group.

REGIONAL HUMANITARIAN LEADERSHIP, COORDINATION, RESPONSE AND SUPPORT TO COUNTRY OFFICES

UNICEF's Latin American and Caribbean Regional Office (LACRO) provides direct support to country offices' efforts in maintaining and further scaling-up their emergency response to the humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable migrants and refugees, as well as people affected by violence and displacement, including women and children, particularly unaccompanied and separated children, children with disabilities and those from indigenous groups. LACRO ensures that capacities are in place, including human resources, tools and mechanisms, to support joint analysis, information sharing, exchange of good practices and lessons learned, regional partnerships and advocacy initiatives, regional and sub-regional coordination, and ensure technical assistance and quality assurance of the humanitarian response. Additionally, LACRO closely monitored the situation through continuous communication with teams in the field, deployed significant expertise and carried out several field visits to support the critical humanitarian response.

The Child Protection section has developed with UNHCR, World Vision, Save the Children within the framework of the Regional Subgroup for Child Protection in Emergency and the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, a regional training on the minimum standards for child protection in humanitarian action in Panama with the participation of 38 people from different organizations. Likewise, UNICEF LACRO was the host organization of the global meeting of the Alliance for the Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, which had the participation of nearly 200 people from all over the world, taking place for the first time in the region. On the other hand, together with the Regional Subgroup for Child Protection in Emergency and the Alliance, LACRO developed a regional dialogue on the impacts of armed violence, climate change and human mobility on children and humanitarian responses in the region. During this reporting period, technical assistance has been provided to country offices in development of tools, advocacy and knowledge management initiatives and coordination support related to children and families on the move and separated children; transitory care; improve psychosocial interventions; prevention, and mitigation risk of violence.

UNICEF LACRO continues to lead the education sector at the Regional Education Working Group (GRE-LAC) together with Save the Children. The Coordination Mechanisms meeting was held in Panama City on March 19-20 with sectoral leaders from 17

countries. Participants identified challenges, achievements, and opportunities for better coordination, extracted lessons learned, and created a work plan in five key areas to ensure educational continuity. Also, on March 18, a meeting on Educational Response to Children in Transit in Central America and Mexico took place in Panama. Participants identified good practices, challenges, and opportunities, and agreed on a common agenda to improve educational responses for children in transit. A work plan was developed to implement a subregional strategy for children in transit. The Resilient Schools and Disaster Risk Reduction Education online course was launched on May 7 to enhance disaster preparedness and response in the education sector, it follows the Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSS) on eight modules and currently 625 participants are enrolled.

In addition, UNICEF LACRO continues as regional co-lead of the WASHLAC Group, providing operational and technical support on coordination and information management to COs responding to migration crisis, as well as capacity building activities such as, the Humanitarian Programme Cycle WASH Clinics with the Global WASH cluster for Cluster Coordinators and IMs from El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala starting from June to November. UNICEF LACRO continued promoting the exchange of knowledge between WASH national coordination platforms, in March the first WASHLAC regional plenary meeting was held, which included sessions on Menstrual Hygiene in migration experiences from Panama and Mexico, and the promotion of Honduras WASH Cluster Advocacy notes. On the other hand, UNICEF is supporting the development of a high-level in person side event on Water and Sanitation in Emergencies organized by PAHO, a specific session of WASH Migration response will be presented, showcasing best practices of migration response and coordination in the LAC region.

UNICEF LACRO continues to provide technical support to country offices in the design, implementation, scale-up, and monitoring of cash transfers for refugees and migrants. In alignment with CCC principles to strengthen national systems, UNICEF LACRO promotes the integration of social protection and humanitarian cash transfers, thereby enhancing preparedness and the capacity of national and local actors, thus strengthening the responsiveness of systems to shocks and ensuring the long-term sustainability of cash interventions. In 2024, UNICEF LACRO provided technical support to countries in the region in advocacy efforts aimed at promoting the social inclusion of migrants and refugees. A systematization of best practices and lessons learned on the integration of migrants and refugees is being planned for the next semester. UNICEF Social Policy Unit, together with Comms, has also provided technical guidance to Country Offices on managing queries on misleading information on cash and voucher assistance to people on the move.

UNICEF LACRO supports country offices in improving their AAP action plans and strengthening capacities. As part of this effort, the "Accelerating AAP in the LAC Region" online seminar series was launched, with the first session focusing on the use of digital technologies to provide timely and helpful information, establish two-way communication, and collect feedback and complaints. The regional online seminar was coordinated with the AAP global team and included presentations on the AAP global digital strategy and tools available for country offices dealing with humanitarian responses, such as migration. As part of this effort the regional online seminar "Integrating AAP into the planning, monitoring, and reporting process" was developed to orientate the COs to better integrate AAP pillars/benchmarks as part of their humanitarian response plans, including migration. A regional online seminar was carried out for AAP focal points, emergency officers, and PSEA focal points, to share the critical elements of the technical note "Leveraging and Linking Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) for a

community-focused approach". A total of 75 people participated in this online seminar. LACRO conducted a field visit to support UNICEF CO in Honduras in enhancing AAP strategic actions for the migration response. Training sessions were held for five implementing partners and the national Humanitarian Network, focusing on strengthening synergies between AAP and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) efforts. A total of 55 professionals were trained. As a result, a set of action-oriented recommendations was shared. Additionally, LACRO provided support to refine the CO interagency AAP CERF proposal (USD 400,000), which is currently under revision. The health and nutrition IPs and UNICEF team in Mexico was trained to ensure AAP pillars are well integrated into the "Vamos Juntos" project to attend migrants' families with health services.

UNICEF LACRO collaborated with the Gender Working Group of the Global Nutrition Cluster to develop an online training program on Gender and Nutrition specifically tailored for humanitarian settings, including those related to migration. The goal of this training was to equip Nutrition sector coordinators and UNICEF staff focusing on Nutrition and Gender, in Mexico and Central American countries, with tools and methodologies to integrate a gender perspective into their humanitarian strategies and programs. The training took place in May 2024, with an average of 40 participants during all four 2-hour sessions. Additionally, with GAIC Gender Associations International Consulting GmbH, organized an online training on Gender and Education in humanitarian settings, including migration contexts. This training aimed to strengthen technical capacities related to Gender and Education in humanitarian action and migration contexts. The five 2-hour training sessions were open to UNICEF Education and Gender focal points, including Mexico and Central America, with 46 participants attending 80 per cent of the sessions. The Gender section provided technical assistance to country offices, focusing on strengthening migration programming from a gender perspective. This support was intensified to México, Costa Rica and Panama through cross-border coordination and knowledge exchange within the framework of Safe Spaces and GBV referral pathways.

UNICEF has completed the development of two new guides aimed at enhancing service provision in contexts of human mobility, including in Mexico and Central America: a guide on social inclusion of refugee and migrant girls and adolescent girls; and a guide on the care of LGBTQI+ adolescent survivors of GBV in mobility contexts.

UNICEF at the regional level continued to advocate for migrant children's rights, placing them on the public agenda to develop child-sensitive mid - and long - term solutions in countries of origin, transit, and destination. As part of these efforts, UNICEF issued a press release in May 2024 (Child migration through the Darien Gap up 40 per cent so far this year) to highlight the increase in the number of children migrating through the Darien Gap, the dangers that they face during the journey and the humanitarian support required to address children needs.

HUMAN INTEREST STORIES AND EXTERNAL MEDIA

HUMAN INTEREST STORIES

- [Costa Rica] Víctor and Yeri have travelled to 6 countries with their children
<https://www.facebook.com/UNICEFCostaRica/videos/269219509444331/?mibextid=WC7FNe&rdid=4IIQrNSYUHRUffus>
- [Costa Rica] A Venezuelan family, with 5 boys and girls
<https://www.facebook.com/UNICEFCostaRica/videos/409241704998709/?mibextid=WC7FNe&rdid=74U4Vw9r1W1WaUsK>
- [El Salvador] Humanitarian Action for Children on the Move Initiative delivers digital education
<https://www.unicef.org/elsalvador/historias/kit-educativo-digital>
- [Guatemala] Child protection and psychological care
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T-6qggg_Pt4
- [Honduras] Migración con un recién nacido
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZiqf1SGgY&t=11s>
- [Honduras] Josué, 15 años. Reintegración Familiar
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NZL1DHHgeaU&t=6s>
- [Panama] Lifesaving services in Darien
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGsBfJu2qk8>
- [Panama] Adolescents' nutrition attention
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBFZjHiE_ps&t=27s

PRESS RELEASES

- [Honduras] Conmemoración de un año de acción humanitaria articulada | UNICEF
<https://www.unicef.org/honduras/historias/conmemoraci%C3%B3n-de-un-a%C3%B1o-de-acci%C3%B3n-humanitaria-articulada>
- [Nicaragua] The long-awaited return to school
<https://www.unicef.org/nicaragua/historias/el-anhelado-regreso-la-escuela>
- [Nicaragua] A Comprehensive Care Protocol for Victims of Sexual Violence
<https://www.unicef.org/nicaragua/comunicados-prensa/organizaciones-centradas-en-ni%C3%B1ez-afianzan-conocimientos-sobre-el-protocolo-de>
- [Nicaragua] Volunteering promotes climate and environmental innovation, amid climate crisis
<https://www.unicef.org/nicaragua/historias/voluntariado-promueve-innovaci%C3%B3n-clim%C3%A1tica-y-ambiental>

- [UNICEF LACRO] Child migration through the Darien Gap
<https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/press-releases/child-migration-darien-gap-panama-forty-per-cent-increase-so-far-this-year>

SOCIAL MEDIA

- [Costa Rica] Health care services
https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=878035477693316&id=100064606157270&mibextid=WC7FNe&rdid=b5bCVvPOJhOOsiVx
- [Costa Rica] Marbelis Alejandra Rodríguez, a teenager who is passing through Costa Rica.
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?mibextid=WC7FNe&v=911080640412635&rdid=ZXvYSntmgybRNUMG>
- [Costa Rica] Our commitment is that migrant children recover soon
<https://www.facebook.com/reel/154793954392135>
- [Costa Rica]: Safe spaces
<https://vimeo.com/afpservices/review/917600039/f02715ca01>
- [Costa Rica] UNICEF supports migrant families with basic humanitarian services
<https://www.facebook.com/UNICEFCostaRica/videos/336561812113883/?mibextid=7J6EjN&rdid=gmSh5B70mi5bfcA5>
- [Honduras] Consorcio Life – Atención a población migrante
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=718238337023814&rdid=ZGxB0xretYqzUnit>
- [Honduras] Pasaaporte de Aprendizaje plataforma de UNICEF Honduras y la Secretaría de Educación
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETZNhXFiuH0&list=PLSjUCI3M_s1LPEIeRhNMRfgb1AO3s1b-n
- [Mexico] Karla Gallo, migration specialist
<https://www.instagram.com/reel/Cw6UKqMO33b/>
- [Mexico] Viajo por necesidad
<https://www.instagram.com/p/C5Bc863s2-E/>
- [Panama] Ted Chaiban - Deputy Executive Director, HA and Supply Operations field visit
https://x.com/UNICEF/status/1790770583975628806?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwtterm%5E1790770583975628806%7Ctwtgr%5E00dfd4cda2770059aae815ac3489616824de1487%7Ctwcon%5Es1&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fnews.un.org%2Fen%2Fstory%2F2024%2F05%2F1149806

MULTIMEDIA

- [Belize] Video - Restore Belize EHS Partnership. Our Lady of Bella Vista School
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RjzyMYZA5UI>
- [Belize] Video - Light of the Valley Baptist School
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJM0tsrIPvc>
- [Costa Rica] Video - Safe spaces
<https://vimeo.com/afpservices/review/917600039/f02715ca01>
- [Guatemala] Video - Adolescents and young people Sergio resume their studies
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2NK6xuR0yvY>
- [Guatemala] Video - Migration Guatemala. February 2024
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOlR0h-JyO0>

EXTERNAL MEDIA

- [Costa Rica] A space for care and reception for migrants
<https://radios.ucr.ac.cr/2024/06/radio-870/emisur-migrantes/>
- [Honduras] La mejor inversión es la educación
<https://www.laprensa.hn/opinion/columnas/la-mejor-inversion-es-la-educacion-HG20043361>
- [Honduras] La educación hondureña puede acelerar
<https://www.elheraldo.hn/opinion/columnas/la-educacion-hondurena-puede-acelerar-FJ19101747>

HAC APPEALS AND SITREPS

- Children on the move in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean Appeals
<https://www.unicef.org/appeals/mexico-and-central-america>
- Children on the move in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean Situation Reports
<https://www.unicef.org/appeals/mexico-and-central-america/situation-reports>
- All Humanitarian Action for Children Appeals
<https://www.unicef.org/appeals>
- All Situation Reports
<https://www.unicef.org/appeals/situation-reports>

NEXT SITREP: 15 FEBRUARY 2025

ANNEX A - PROGRAMME RESULTS

Consolidated Programme Results

Sector			UNICEF and IPs response		
Indicator	Disaggregation	Total needs	2024 targets	Total results	Progress*
Health					
Children and women accessing primary healthcare in UNICEF-supported facilities	Total	-	171,000	78,322	▲ 46%
	Belize	-	20,000	3,643	▲ 18%
	Costa Rica	-	15,000	3,050	▲ 20%
	Guatemala	-	15,000	3,369	▲ 22%
	Honduras	-	29,500	15,641	▲ 53%
	Mexico	-	50,000	33,393	▲ 67%
	Nicaragua	-	5,500	-	0%
	Panama	-	36,000	19,226	▲ 53%
Children receiving the minimum set of vaccines	Total	-	79,132	140,503	▲ 178%
	Belize	-	5,000	2,069	▲ 41%
	El Salvador	-	36,500	-	0%
	Guatemala	-	732	-	0%
	Honduras	-	30,700	138,434	▲ 451%
	Nicaragua	-	6,200	-	0%
Nutrition					
Primary caregivers of children 0-23 months receiving infant and young child feeding counselling	Total	-	465,371	26,353	▲ 6%
	Belize	-	25,000	2,335	▲ 9%
	Costa Rica	-	4,000	479	▲ 12%
	El Salvador	-	37,081	1,994	▲ 5%
	Guatemala	-	347,590	256	0%
	Honduras	-	16,000	18,551	▲ 116%
	Mexico	-	30,000	2,738	▲ 9%
	Nicaragua	-	5,700	-	0%
Children 6-59 months receiving micronutrient powder	Total	-	46,773	31,376	▲ 67%
	Costa Rica	-	473	-	0%

	Honduras	-	45,000	31,376	▲ 70%
	Nicaragua	-	1,300	-	0%
Children 6-59 months screened for wasting	Total	-	289,269	81,385	▲ 28%
	Belize	-	7,500	3,352	▲ 45%
	Costa Rica	-	500	-	0%
	El Salvador	-	30,000	-	0%
	Guatemala	-	180,000	832	0%
	Honduras	-	47,000	66,707	▲ 142%
	Mexico	-	5,000	2,342	▲ 47%
	Nicaragua	-	3,050	-	0%
	Panama	-	16,246	8,152	▲ 50%
Child protection, GBViE and PSEA					
Children, adolescents and caregivers accessing community-based mental health and psychosocial support	Total	-	297,845	111,394	▲ 37%
	Belize	-	15,000	-	0%
	Costa Rica	-	33,800	11,604	▲ 34%
	El Salvador	-	16,000	1,323	▲ 8%
	Guatemala	-	40,000	40,119	▲ 100%
	Honduras	-	80,000	11,445	▲ 14%
	Mexico	-	20,000	18,383	▲ 92%
	Nicaragua	-	45,660	324	▲ 1%
	Panama	-	47,385	28,196	▲ 60%
Women, girls and boys accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention and/or response interventions	Total	-	471,590	112,894	▲ 24%
	Belize	-	15,000	-	0%
	Costa Rica	-	33,800	39,781 ³⁴	▲ 118%
	El Salvador	-	2,500	1,595	▲ 64%
	Guatemala	-	33,500	51,630	▲ 154%
	Honduras	-	210,000	2,805	▲ 1%
	Mexico	-	8,000	1,321	▲ 17%
	Nicaragua	-	154,500	-	0%

	Panama	-	14,290	15,762	▲ 110%
People with safe and accessible channels to report sexual exploitation and abuse by personnel who provide assistance to affected populations	Total	-	532,731	173,053	▲ 32%
	Belize	-	6,500	-	0%
	Guatemala	-	11,000	-	0%
	Honduras	-	340,000	138,926	▲ 41%
	Mexico	-	60,000	34,127	▲ 57%
	Nicaragua	-	110,157	-	0%
	Panama	-	5,074	-	0%
Unaccompanied and separated children provided with alternative care and/or reunified	Total	-	30,625	27,957	▲ 91%
	Belize	-	5,000	-	0%
	Guatemala	-	2,750	1,670	▲ 61%
	Mexico	-	20,000	26,128	▲ 131%
	Nicaragua	-	1,575	-	0%
	Panama	-	1,300	159	▲ 12%
Education					
Children accessing formal or non-formal education, including early learning	Total	-	195,892	14,716	▲ 8%
	Belize	-	25,000	-	0%
	Costa Rica	-	67,692	635	▲ 1%
	El Salvador	-	8,970	1,400	▲ 16%
	Guatemala	-	2,230	739	▲ 33%
	Honduras	-	50,000	7,436 ³⁵	▲ 15%
	Mexico	-	15,000	4,356	▲ 29%
	Nicaragua	-	27,000	150	▲ 1%
Children receiving individual learning materials	Total	-	117,618	14,996	▲ 13%
	Costa Rica	-	12,404	3,483	▲ 28%
	El Salvador	-	13,470	3,446	▲ 26%
	Guatemala	-	14,744	739	▲ 5%
	Honduras	-	50,000	7,298	▲ 15%

	Nicaragua	-	27,000	-	0%
Children and adolescents accessing skills development programmes	Total	-	144,000	1,776	▲ 1%
	Belize	-	1,000	-	0%
	El Salvador	-	2,000	548	▲ 27%
	Honduras	-	140,000	1,100	▲ 1%
	Mexico	-	1,000	128	▲ 13%
Teachers trained on EiE including psychosocial support, education preparedness and response	Total	-	16,860	971	▲ 6%
	Belize	-	500	-	0%
	El Salvador	-	150	471	▲ 314%
	Guatemala	-	6,190	-	0%
	Honduras	-	8,000	500	▲ 6%
	Nicaragua	-	2,020	-	0%
Water, sanitation and hygiene					
People accessing a sufficient quantity and quality of water for drinking and domestic needs	Total	-	1 million	580,964	▲ 56%
	Belize	-	30,000	10,000	▲ 33%
	Costa Rica	-	225,641	218,048	▲ 97%
	El Salvador	-	20,700	2,069	▲ 10%
	Guatemala	-	107,598	-	0%
	Honduras	-	271,017	127,861	▲ 47%
	Mexico	-	140,000	83,172 ³⁶	▲ 59%
	Nicaragua	-	13,000	-	0%
	Panama	-	225,641	139,814	▲ 62%
Children using safe and appropriate WASH facilities and hygiene services in learning facilities and safe spaces	Total	-	107,596	27,965	▲ 26%
	Belize	-	25,000	-	0%
	Costa Rica	-	67,692	27,364 ³⁷	▲ 40%
	El Salvador	-	4,000	601	▲ 15%
	Guatemala	-	7,704	-	0%
	Nicaragua	-	3,200	-	0%
People reached with hand-washing behaviour-change programmes	Total	-	264,557	25,540	▲ 10%

	Belize	-	25,000	6,000	▲ 24%
	Guatemala	-	208,057	-	0%
	Mexico	-	18,500	19,540	▲ 106%
	Nicaragua	-	13,000	-	0%
People reached with critical WASH supplies	Total	-	532,386	128,666	▲ 24%
	Belize	-	5,000	-	0%
	Costa Rica	-	30,000	5,314	▲ 18%
	El Salvador	-	16,500	1,976	▲ 12%
	Guatemala	-	232,257	36,252	▲ 16%
	Honduras	-	149,629	35,118 ³⁸	▲ 23%
	Mexico	-	43,000	33,883	▲ 79%
	Nicaragua	-	13,000	-	0%
	Panama	-	43,000	16,123	▲ 37%
Social protection					
Households reached with UNICEF-funded humanitarian cash transfers	Total	-	13,647	451	▲ 3%
	Belize	-	500	-	0%
	Guatemala	-	8,747	-	0%
	Honduras	-	4,400	451	▲ 10%
Households benefitting from new or additional social assistance (cash/in kind) measures from governments with UNICEF-technical assistance support	Total	-	5,400	-	0%
	El Salvador	-	1,000	-	0%
	Honduras	-	4,400	-	0%
Cross-sectoral (HCT, C4D, RCCE and AAP)					
Affected people (children, caregivers, community members) reached with timely and life saving information on how and where to access available services	Total	-	3 million	48,945	▲ 2%
-	Costa Rica	-	315,000	4,901	▲ 2%
	Guatemala	-	1.7 million	42,667	▲ 3%
	Mexico	-	22,000	1,377	▲ 6%
	Nicaragua	-	1 million	-	0%
	Panama	-	11,200	-	0%

People with access to established accountability mechanisms and interagency reporting platforms	Total	-	375,080	12,957	▲ 3%
-	Belize	-	7,500	-	0%
	Costa Rica	-	180,512	2,471	▲ 1%
	Guatemala	-	159,720	344	0%
	Mexico	-	2,200	-	0%
	Nicaragua	-	15,000	-	0%
	Panama	-	10,148	10,142	▲ 100%

*Progress in the reporting period 1 January to 30 June 2024

ANNEX B — FUNDING STATUS

Consolidated funding by sector

		Funding available		Funding gap	
Sector	Requirements	Humanitarian resources received in 2024	Resources available from 2023 (carry over)	Funding gap (US\$)	Funding gap (%)
Health	15,122,252	2,967,409	1,018,704	11,136,139	74%
Nutrition	28,728,680	2,615,535	996,579	25,116,566	87%
Child protection	39,527,690	18,015,819	8,682,552	12,829,319	32%
Education	15,382,590	3,893,007	2,367,198	9,122,385	59%
WASH	38,142,321	5,192,574	1,067,755	31,881,992	84%
Social protection	3,845,226	947,112	134,694	2,763,420	72%
Cross-sectoral	8,574,640	144,751	-	8,429,889	98%
Regional Support ³⁹	3,696,000	1,248,513	706,778	1,740,709	47%
Total	153,019,399	35,024,720	14,974,260	103,020,419	67%

Consolidated funding by office

		Funding available		Funding gap	
Office ⁴⁰	Requirements	Humanitarian resources received in 2024	Resources available from 2023 (carry over)	Funding gap (US\$)	Funding gap (%)
Belize	4,353,219	900,000	44,355	3,408,864	78%
Costa Rica	4,093,576	2,125,000	1,274,464	694,112	17%
El Salvador	13,434,535	930,000	1,260,433	11,244,102	84%
Guatemala	35,683,337	6,530,638	1,921,808	27,230,891	76%
Honduras	50,529,925	8,308,162	495,807	41,725,956	83%
Mexico	27,313,650	8,750,000	6,722,976	11,840,674	43%
Nicaragua	6,278,007	1,100,000	1,785	5,176,222	82%
Panama	7,637,150	5,023,612	2,502,819	110,719	1%
Regional support	3,696,000	1,357,308	749,813	1,588,879	43%
Total	153,019,399	35,024,720	14,974,260	103,020,419	67%

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ENDNOTES

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12. Children on the move can be forced to be separated from their families, placing them in prolonged institutionalization against their will or being held in detention centres because of their migration status. These situations put children's health and wellbeing at risk.
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24. Idem.
25. Idem.
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27. Idem.
28. Guidelines for Family and Community Reunification and Integration. 2024. <<https://www.gob.mx/difnacional/documentos/reunificacion-e-integracion-familiar-y-comunitaria-de-ninas-ninos-y-adolescentes>>
29. These results will be shown in the next HPM (February 2025).
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32. Migración Panamá, Estadísticas - Tránsito Irregular por Darién 2023 – 2024, <<https://www.migracion.gob.pa/inicio/estadisticas>>.
33. Results have exceeded initial planned targets due to the increased flow of migrants receiving services and information in safe spaces.
34. A more descriptive account of the results achieved for this indicator will be provided in the next SitRep (February 2025).
35. Idem.
36. Idem.
37. Idem.
38. Idem.
39. Regional Office requirements cover regional-level resources and initiatives directly impacting UNICEF's response to the situation in Mexico and Central America, including: high-level advocacy, technical assistance, coordination support, information management, evidence generation, capacity building and support for scaling up responses to the sudden deterioration of humanitarian situations at the country level.
40. Sectoral amounts include costs related to advocacy, communication, coordination, planning, monitoring, evaluation, reporting, operations and security.