

RISING FROM DESTRUCTION

100 days of UNICEF's response to the Beirut explosions and the road ahead for children and families.

UNICEF LEBANON - NOVEMBER 2020

The human spirit, while undeniably resilient, cannot be reconstructed in 100 days. The explosions that tore through Beirut on August 4 were felt across the country, exacerbating an already dire situation. Much of Beirut's public infrastructure and thousands of homes were heavily damaged or destroyed. Immediate assessments revealed more than 300,000 people were affected, including 100,000 children.

It was in this context that UNICEF urgently appealed for US\$50 million to respond to the needs of children and families severely affected by the Beirut explosions. Three months on, UNICEF has received just 33 percent of the total appeal.

While surface scars may have healed thanks to extraordinary efforts on the ground, the deep wounds – visible and invisible – of children and families in a country experiencing multiple emergencies will require sustained solidarity, commitment and support by UNICEF and partners. This report offers a look at what the support of donors – large and small – has made possible, and highlights what we must still do to ensure every child survives and thrives.



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Yukie Mokuo with 10-year-old Hayat, in Karantina municipal garden, where UNICEF partners provide psychosocial support to children affected by the explosions.

Message from Yukie Mokuo, UNICEF Representative in Lebanon

On August 4, two explosions tore through Beirut, shocking the world, taking 200 lives and injuring more than 6,500 people. Mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, daughters, sons, friends, and CHILDREN among them.

UNICEF's response over the past 100 days has been lifesaving, swift and essential. It is also very much continuing. UNICEF and partners have supported thousands of children and families affected by the blast, but the needs are acute and the damage in the human spirit across Lebanon is far from fixed.

UNICEF continues to work around the clock with 70 partners on the ground. We provide humanitarian assistance, including health and nutrition supplies, psychosocial support to children and access to water, sanitation and hygiene.

Our response also involves the reconstruction of damaged schools and health facilities, e-learning plans, emergency cash assistance for the most vulnerable, and income generation opportunities for young people who support affected families.

This is the kind of support that we are able to provide thanks to the generous contributions of our donors. We thank our donors – individuals, governments, businesses – from the bottom of our hearts. Their efforts and commitment help us stand with Lebanon's children, youths and families.

The wounds of the explosions exacerbated the impact of an unprecedented economic crisis and the severe rise in COVID-19 cases, deep vulnerabilities that children and families are living with every day. And the wounds are deep, causing sorrow and hopelessness across the affected communities.

Please stand with UNICEF, for every child in Lebanon.

UNICEF 100-day response with partners



- **Over 22,000 people** coping with the psychological impact of the explosions have received support through a range of interventions.
- **More than 7,200 children, parents and primary caregivers** have been reached with mental health and psychosocial support services through child-friendly spaces established in affected areas and peer to peer sessions.
- **1,571 girls and women** have been provided with psycho-social first aid, psycho-social support and information on gender-based violence risks.
- **7,500 girls and women** received sanitary pads or mini hygiene kits, which included COVID-19 prevention items and information on sexual and gender-based violence referral pathway.



- **1.7 million doses of vaccines** were saved from the Central Supply Warehouse in Karantina. Part of them are being used currently in the national measles campaign.
- **Over 22,000 children** under 5 were provided with essential nutrition supplements including Vitamin A, high energy biscuits and emergency food rations.
- Rehabilitation work of 3 Primary Health Care Centers has been initiated and health staff recruited.
- **10,026 counselling sessions** on prenatal, breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding
- Practices were conducted.



- Critical humanitarian supplies and COVID-19 protection and hygiene items worth **US\$3.7 million were distributed to partners**. Around 80 percent of the supplies were procured locally.



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- Rehabilitation of 4 public and 3 private schools supported by UNICEF.
- Furniture and equipment for **90 public schools** is being provided.
- Assessment of 20 Technical and Vocational Training schools and General Directorate buildings completed.



- **Up to 80,000 vulnerable children and individuals** will receive emergency cash transfers over the coming month, registration is closing.



- **18,692 people** received hot meals prepared and distributed by 398 youth as part of the UNICEF cash for work programme.
- **1,800 youths** were engaged in a community-based response focusing on cleaning, minor rehabilitation of households, and preparation and distribution of meals for vulnerable families.
- **182 youths** were provided with material and equipment to support minor rehabilitation for 557 damaged households.



- Assessment of **13,000 buildings** was completed.
- Water supply connection was reestablished in **1,060 buildings, reaching 20,765 people in 4,080 households.**
- **4,882 water tanks** were installed, including 111 in three heavily affected hospitals in Karantina, Wardiya and Geitaoui.
- **6,455 hygiene kits, 843 baby kits and 1,858 infection prevention control kits** have been distributed.

Hussein:
***“The colour is
back in my life again”***



Hussein's story is one of many examples of progress and renewed hope emerging from the city of Beirut where UNICEF has, since August 4, supported thousands of children, parents and caregivers following the port explosions.

Beirut's August 4 port explosion touched the life of every one of the city's residents. For many, in particular children, the impact has been profound. While some lost family members, others saw their parents severely injured. Even where such devastating events were somehow avoided, the sound of the blast and its devastating effects on their homes and neighbourhoods were impossible to escape. In the immediate aftermath of the explosions, UNICEF put into action an integrated emergency response plan to ensure the health and safety of thousands of affected families and their children.

For 12-year-old Hussein, a resident of Karantina – a Beirut suburb close to the port and home to many of the city's most vulnerable families – this tragedy changed his life dramatically.

We first met Hussein in mid-August within the confines of the UNICEF-supported safe space in Karantina's municipal park. An outwardly typical fun-loving boy who's keen on drawing and an athletic footballer, it was only when he showed us his latest artworks that the change within this young boy became apparent.

The set of drawings he held so tightly highlighted a life divided. His pictures set before August 4 are bright, happy, and full of colour. All those reflecting images of his life since that evening are dark, gloomy, and monochromatic. Some represent the moment of the explosion's impact on his home, his family, his life.

"I stopped using colour on my drawings that show my life because everything changed on that day", Hussein explains. "after the explosion, my world has no colour. The explosion made all the colours in my life disappear. Everything changed".

Ten weeks later, and we meet Hussein again. As energetic as before, although less on

visited the park every day since he last saw us. Throughout that time, he's spent many hours with members of a highly trained UNICEF-funded psychosocial support team. Ask Hussein though, and he's been coming here only to meet his friends and to play.

In truth, and through play, he and his friends have started to heal their psychological wounds. Hussein is happy to talk about his life today. The biggest sign that he is making progress is in the pictures he's brought to show us.



In August, Karantina's municipal park was crowded with children in silence and no smiles on their faces. Today, 100 days after the explosions, there is joy, noise, and hope. **"The colour is back in my life again", professes a smiling Hussein.**

The invisible wounds



- **Over 33,000 people** have received psycho-social support through a range of interventions.
- **1,571 girls and women** reached through gender-based violence services.
- **More than 7,200 children, parents and primary caregivers** reached with mental health and psychosocial support.



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The psychological impact of the explosions within this already precarious context has been deeply felt by children and caregivers and will continue to do so long after flesh wounds have healed. If left unaddressed, these scars could evolve and position mental health as Lebanon's next unwanted crisis. Providing psychosocial support continues to be a top priority.

UNICEF and partners have reached more than 33,000 people through provision of psychological first aid, psychosocial support activities to children and caregivers, support to those at risk of sexual and gender-based violence and other protection risks following the explosions. Key interventions were focused on the provision of support to parents/caregivers to better cope and in turn support their children overcoming the shock of this disaster and restore a sense of normalcy.

More than 7,200 children, parents and primary caregivers were reached with mental health and psychosocial support services

through child-friendly spaces established in affected areas and peer to peer sessions. Additionally, 479 girls and boys have received specialized mental health psychosocial support and focused non-specialized psychosocial support.

Services related to prevention of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) reached 1,571 girls and women, and UNICEF and its partners distributed 5,000 packs of sanitary pads and 2,500 mini hygiene kits. Kits included COVID-19 prevention items and updated information on SGBV referral pathway.

Reaching more girls, boys, women and caregivers – while at the same time healing their deepest wounds – will require sustained solidarity and dedication. Although UNICEF and partners are committed to continuing to provide these services, an increase in funding would allow UNICEF to become even more effective in addressing some of the escalating child protection challenges across the country.



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Ten-year-old Abdulkarim was on the balcony of his home, in the Beirut suburb of Karantina adjacent to the port. His home was damaged, and his father injured. The city was in shock, its people too. Abdulkarim has spent most of the past one-hundred days within a UNICEF-supported safe space in Karantina municipal gardens receiving psychosocial support through activities with specialised counsellors.

“I can feel things are getting better again. I’m able to do activities here, and I can see that people around me are less upset and less angry than they were three months ago. For me, as well as for my friends, having this park to come to has made a big difference to our lives. It’s a special space for us – it makes us feel someone cares. That’s enough to help me start to feel happy again!”



Restoring the essentials



- **1.7 million doses of vaccines** saved from the Central Supply Warehouse in Karantina



- **Over 22,000 children under 5** provided with essential nutrition supplements.



- **20,675 people in 4,080 households** given access to water.
- **4,882 water tanks installed, including 111 in three major hospitals** –Karantina, Wardiya, and Geitaoui.



- **Rehabilitation of 4 public and 3 private schools** is supported by UNICEF.
- Furniture and equipment for **90 public schools** is being provided.



For Beirut to recover it is essential that its public healthcare network and basic services to children are immediately restored. UNICEF supports the reconstruction efforts. We distributed critical health and nutrition supplies. We reconnected the water supply to households. We distributed hygiene and baby care kits. We helped save Lebanon's supply of vaccines.

The Central Supply Warehouse in Karantina was devastated. Damage to the warehouse put the entire stock at risk due to the destruction of refrigeration units vital for the safe storage of these vaccines. UNICEF, with the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and partners, swiftly relocated the vaccines –significantly 1,748,660 doses—preserving and ensuring their later distribution. These are currently being used in the National Measles Campaign, the first immunization campaign to be launched in Lebanon during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Of crucial importance to the future health security of the country, UNICEF is currently

supporting effective vaccine management in order that it be ready for the introduction of the new COVID-19 vaccine.

UNICEF has initiated the rehabilitation work of three Primary Health Care Centers (PHCC) and has recruited medical advisors and health staff for the three of them. Reconstruction support is being provided to Karantina hospital's paediatric unit too.

Critical health and nutrition supplies have been distributed to partners and PHCC, including COVID-19 supplies and nutrition supplies – micronutrients, vitamin A, high energy biscuits, emergency food rations. 10,026 counselling sessions on prenatal, breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding practices were conducted.

With more people facing challenges surrounding covering the increasing cost of health services, UNICEF will require funding to subsidize essential services for vulnerable groups that cannot afford to meet those expenses themselves.



**6,278 hygiene kits and
700 baby kits distributed**



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Arez Manukian, mother of Alex (6) and David (2):

“The day after the blast I received a call from a UNICEF partner checking on us. I was able to reassure them that we were all unhurt and said they should look after other families who needed urgent help. It is enough that they thought of us – not for me, but for my children. Today’s hygiene and baby kits are the first assistance I’ve received”

Lucy Hagopian, mother of Charbel (16) and Narain (15):

“Our home in Bourj Hummoud was damaged and it’s a miracle that no one was hurt. This was a big disaster on top of so many other disasters for Lebanon. My husband is unable to find work now, and my two sons don’t know when they will be able to return to full-time education. What UNICEF is doing for the people of the city is a great help – it sends a positive message and gives us strength to start our lives again”



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Through a specialised water, sanitation and hygiene programme, UNICEF activated an immediate response to restore water – essence of life and a basic human right – to damaged households.

UNICEF with partners re-established water supply connection in 1,060 buildings, reaching 20,765 people in 4,080 households. 4,882 tanks were installed, including 111 in the three heavily affected hospitals Karantina, Wardiya, and Geitaoui.

UNICEF supported Beirut and Mont Lebanon Water Establishment in the detection and repair of more than 100 leakages along the public water network, securing regular access to safe water for the people living in the affected area.

UNICEF needs increased support from donors to help improve household water systems for vulnerable families within the affected areas, as well as to upgrade the public water network.



Karm El Zeitoun resident George Saroyan was two hundred metres from his home when the explosion occurred. Running home, his only thoughts were of his wife and newborn baby. Finding his home's front door blown off its hinges, he was relieved to find mother and child unhurt.



"Our water supply was cut – and with a new baby, we knew we needed help. We don't have another home to go to, and we don't have the money to pay for repairs. UNICEF came to our door to check on us, and seven days after the explosion, we had water restored to our home".

Fadi Hankach, long-time resident of Pharoun Street, Mar Mikhael



"This building is home to my wife and children and much of my extended family too. With many here at the time of the explosion, it is a miracle that only six of us were injured – all with nothing more than minor cuts from flying glass. The team from UNICEF were the first people we saw after the explosion. Along with the guys from DPNA, within a couple of days they re-established a flow of water to the building."



The explosions damaged schools in Beirut, affecting around 85,000 school-aged children, adolescents and young people enrolled in public and private schools as well as TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) schools. UNICEF is supporting the rehabilitation of seven primary schools – four public and three private. In addition, UNICEF is supporting replacement of damaged furniture and laboratory equipment for approximately 90 of the 93 public schools affected by the explosions. UNICEF also supported a detailed damage assessment of 20 TVET schools and the TVET General Directorate buildings.

UNICEF's COVID-19 response has also benefitted all blast-affected schools. UNICEF, in collaboration with Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) and education partners, supported development of a solid back-to-learning plan under a blended learning modality that combines classroom and distance learning components. UNICEF also worked closely with MEHE and key education and health partners to develop safe school operational guidelines and supported procurement and distribution of Coronavirus preventive supplies to all public schools throughout the country.

UNICEF and partners still require funds to replace damaged furniture and educational equipment for approximately 100 private schools, as well as to support the rehabilitation of three public schools and approximately 12 private schools. According to the recent damage assessment of 20 TVET schools, to complete rehabilitation work required funding levels remain substantially high.



The power of choice



- **Up to 80,000 vulnerable children** and individuals will receive emergency cash transfers
- **Up to US\$360 paid** directly to families in the poorest blast-affected areas



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Hitting a city already reeling from the effects of an ongoing economic crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, many in Beirut have found themselves in an increasingly dire financial situation. Families have lost homes, possessions and livelihoods; children and other vulnerable individuals are today at great risk. UNICEF's cash grant plays a vital role in supporting families with children and other vulnerable individuals.

UNICEF's Emergency Cash Grant is provided directly to all individuals in the vulnerable groups living in the priority areas as a one-time cash transfer up to US\$360 per household (\$120 per eligible recipient up to a maximum of three).

Lebanon does not yet have a national cash assistance programme in place, one that could have been scaled up following the blasts. UNICEF's cash grant provides families with the opportunity of choosing how to address the immediate needs surrounding the wellbeing of their families.

Annie, single mother of two, Bourj Hammoud:

"Right now, everything is a challenge for ordinary people like me. I've never experienced a time in my life when everything has been so hard – the economy, the virus, the explosion. My priority, and the reason I'm here today, is to have enough money to feed my children".

Rafik, unmarried, lives alone with his 84-year-old father:

"I work twelve hours a day and earn just \$100 per month. I need the money to buy medication for my father who is paralyzed. Yes, after the explosion we received a box of food items from the army, but what we need most of all is cash to provide for my father's health and care. The cost of everything has increased so much over past months – we simply can no longer buy essentials".

Muna, unemployed, her husband is 83 years old:

"Until now, I've received no support. I can do a lot of things with this grant...but then again, I have a lot of things I need to pay – my rent, municipal and water fees – they won't wait any longer"

Hope



- Thanks to UNICEF's strong youth network, **1,800 youth** were mobilized to help with the cleaning, minor rehabilitation of households, and preparation and distribution of meals for 18,692 vulnerable people.
- **182 youths** were provided with material and equipment to support minor rehabilitation for 557 damaged households.



With the promise that young people will be in charge in future, they provide us with hope that things will be better tomorrow if things are done right today. With their schools damaged, homes destroyed, jobs lost, Beirut's youth were massively affected by the explosions and UNICEF recognised the importance of supporting them with their community's rehabilitation.

Working with partners, we mobilized 1,026 youth volunteers, who cleaned 583 streets, houses and sites. We provided young people who were previously trained in rehabilitation and construction as part of UNICEF's vocational training courses,

with material and equipment to support minor rehabilitation in households.

Families affected by the blast received hot meals prepared and distributed by 398 youth as part of the UNICEF cash for work programme. This programme involves youths previously graduated from UNICEF's vocational course on cooking and is an income generation opportunity for them, while supporting their communities. Youth trained in sewing produced and distributed 23,154 cloth masks to affected families and frontline workers.



Imagine what our world could look like if every young person were supported and empowered to fulfil their potential while supporting their communities. UNICEF needs increased support from donors to enroll more youths in vocational training courses and facilitate their employment to rehabilitate more damaged houses. This would also help alleviate the impact of the economic crisis on themselves and their families. There's never been a more important time to empower youth and to let them have their say and contribute towards the rebuilding and reshaping of their city.



Taher Jassam:

"Now I have technical know-how that allows me to work. I have a job for life now. I have a goal I want to reach now. This training empowered me. I've love it - that's why I focused on learning it."

Mhamad Haswi:

"I learned a lot through on-the-job training. Now I am supporting families by installing water tanks and supporting myself by learning a trade that has now given me a job. Before this, I had no idea about this kind of work... but we learned everything."



Siham Assaf:

"I'm learning very interesting things. I'm cooking food, preparing desserts. Many families here are hungry as well as have other needs. Now we're cooking and distributing meals to them."

Amina Jaffal:

"We're very happy while we're working because we're supporting our communities and protecting people. My experience here has empowered me a lot, and will enable me to find secure employment in the future."

The rubble has been cleared, the life-saving support provided, and provisional solutions are set in place. Now, together with UN, government and civil society partners, we must enhance the reconstruction effort. To this end, and through the support of our donors and partners, UNICEF will continue to champion integrated approaches to ensure efficiency and long-lasting solutions.



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“The people of Lebanon have endured more than anyone should be asked. There is only so much a country can take. UNICEF’s work with partners in the last 100 days providing psychological and other life-improving support has clearly shown that the explosions were undoubtably a tipping point for children and families. Therefore, our response to the country’s multiple and interrelated crises – COVID-19 pandemic, financial crisis and the explosions – is and must be holistic, integrated across partners and efficient. Rebuilding Beirut and lifting its spirit is a long-term commitment. I invite supporters worldwide to stand together with every child in Lebanon.”

Yukie Mokuo, UNICEF Representative in Lebanon

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