



Ammar, 3, holds his box of nutrition supplies provided by a UNICEF-supported health and nutrition mobile clinic in Ghawr Al-Assi village, in rural Hama, Syrian Arab Republic, in July 2024.

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Humanitarian Action for Children

Syrian Arab Republic

HIGHLIGHTS

- Over the past thirteen years, the ongoing crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic has significantly impacted the lives of children and their families, with 16.7 million¹ people requiring humanitarian assistance, including 7.5 million children and 7.24 million internally displaced persons.²
- Since 24 September 2024, an influx of more than 473,000 Syrians³ (58 per cent of them children) displaced from Lebanon,⁴ alongside Lebanese refugees, has heightened humanitarian needs across the country, worsening the existing crisis.
- Ongoing conflict, economic decline, infrastructure damage, limited humanitarian access and climate shocks have deepened the needs of already vulnerable communities.
- UNICEF requires \$488.3 million⁵ to support 7 million people, including 4.3 million children, with a holistic humanitarian response that combines early recovery and resilience efforts to address immediate needs and achieve lasting results for children. UNICEF will implement gender-responsive and disability-inclusive programmes, promote social inclusion, address vulnerabilities within communities, reinforce accountability to affected populations and work to protect populations from sexual exploitation and abuse.

KEY PLANNED TARGETS



1.7 million

children and women accessing primary health care



1.5 million

primary caregivers receiving infant and young child feeding counselling



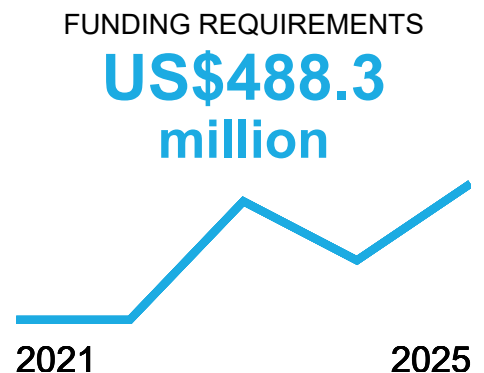
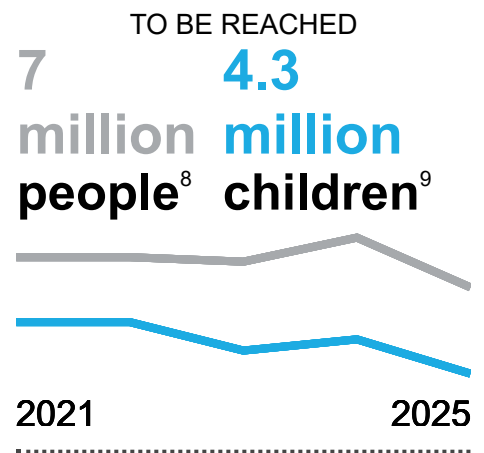
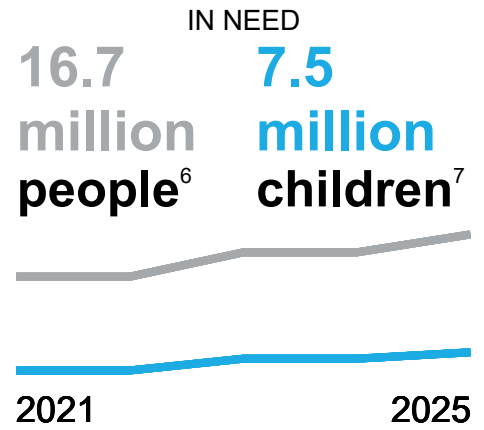
2.6 million

children supported with educational services and supplies in formal settings



3.9 million

people accessing a sufficient quantity and quality of water



Funding needs for the Whole-of-Syria response and the displacement from Lebanon will be re-assessed after the 2025 Inter-Agency planning process and needs assessments are concluded.

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION AND NEEDS

The complex emergency in the Syrian Arab Republic has had its worst impact on children. The prolonged conflict, coupled with public health emergencies, economic and climate-related shocks and widespread protracted displacements, has rendered 16.7 million¹⁰ people in need of humanitarian assistance, including 7.5 million¹¹ children.

The conflict escalation in Lebanon has led to a humanitarian crisis in neighbouring countries, particularly the Syrian Arab Republic. More than 473,000 Syrians displaced¹² from Lebanon, along with Lebanese refugees, have entered the country since 24 September 2024. This influx of people, 58 per cent¹³ of them children, puts further pressure on the already overstretched resources and services in the Syrian Arab Republic. Affected people require integrated life-saving interventions, early recovery efforts and protection measures across the country, including in the northwest and the northeast.

The 2023 earthquakes aggravated people's longstanding vulnerabilities. Despite a significant humanitarian response, access to services, adequate infrastructure and economic inclusion are still challenging.¹⁴ Some 7.2 million¹⁵ people are internally displaced, with 2 million of them living in mostly overcrowded camps and 5.2 million living outside of camps. Among those people who are internally displaced, 3.4 million¹⁶ are in the northwest.

Eighty-five percent of households struggle to make ends meet, increasing their reliance on aid and such negative coping mechanisms as child labour and suboptimal diets.¹⁷ Almost 40 per cent of hospitals and health facilities are either non-functional or only partially functional,¹⁸ while climate-induced shocks and power supply disruptions have intensified water scarcity and food insecurity. Nearly 13.6 million people require access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services; and 5.7 million people, including 3.7 million children, require nutritional assistance.¹⁹

Despite a notable reduction in the number of verified grave violations against children, from 2,483 in 2022 to 1,574 in 2023,²⁰ the harsh reality is that 6.4 million children are in urgent need of protection services.²¹ In the northeast, children and women face arbitrary arrest, extensive violence and forced relocation. Across the country, insecurity and economic hardship continue to contribute to human rights violations, fear and psychological distress, leading to gender-based violence, child marriage and the risk of sexual exploitation and abuse.²² Additionally, there is a significant threat from unexploded ordnance contamination.

With destruction or damage to 3,700 schools, 7.2 million children and education personnel require continuity of critical and sustained education services, including 3.3 million girls affected by poverty. More than 2.45 million children are out of school, and more than 1 million children, particularly those with disabilities, are at risk of dropping out of school.²³

SECTOR NEEDS²⁴



14.9 million
people in need of health assistance



5.7 million
people in need of nutrition assistance



6.4 million
children in need of child protection services



7.2 million
people in need of education support



13.6 million
people require access to WASH services

STORY FROM THE FIELD



Reem, 15, holds her cat at home in Madyara village, Rural Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic, in August 2024. A UNICEF-supported cash transfer enables her to receive physiotherapy and attend school.

Reem, 15, was born with a meningocele affecting her ability to walk. She underwent surgery at age 1 and began physiotherapy, but her treatment was interrupted due to the worsening security situation.

In 2023, her father was introduced to UNICEF's Integrated Social Protection Programme for Children with Disabilities, which provides regular and unconditional cash transfers, along with referral and case management services.

Reem was enrolled in the programme and received both cash assistance and case management services. With the cash she received, Reem was able to continue her physiotherapy and managed to resume her education as well.

[Read more about this story here](#)

HUMANITARIAN STRATEGY

Under the Whole of Syria approach, UNICEF will prioritize actions to address the most severe and protracted needs, leading inter-agency efforts for the nutrition, education and WASH sectors, as well as the Child Protection Area of Responsibility. UNICEF will continue to deliver its mandate with an equity-focused approach targeting all population groups, also including Syrians displaced from Lebanon and Lebanese refugees²⁵ in 2024, and other vulnerable groups. UNICEF will coordinate at national and subnational levels to unify strategies, improve communication and ensure efficient resource allocation.

UNICEF's programming prioritizes sustainable and community-based approaches underpinning strong social and economic integration and reintegration and the well-being of communities, in particular children and women. UNICEF will deliver beyond life-saving interventions, establishing linkages of humanitarian programmes with early recovery and long-term perspectives. UNICEF will invest in systems strengthening at national and subnational levels, promote localized actions and enhance community resilience and crisis preparedness. UNICEF's comprehensive multisectoral strategies, incorporating risk-informed, conflict-sensitive, gender-sensitive and disability-inclusive elements, will be executed through expanded partnerships to achieve transformative results at scale.

UNICEF and its partners will enhance children's well-being by improving access to quality preventive and curative nutrition services. The safe, equitable and sustainable access to health services will be ensured through outreach, community engagement and rebuilding of the local health systems, emphasizing prevention and response.

The WASH programme will transition into a cost-effective, community-building response, focusing on infrastructure rehabilitation and integrating solar components for sustainable WASH services in vulnerable areas. This shift ensures the most underserved and vulnerable populations receive support, though it may reduce overall beneficiaries.²⁶

Children and adolescents will continue to learn through inclusive, equitable and safe access to both formal and non-formal education, identifying multiple pathways to education and protection services, including early childhood development. Adolescents will play a pivotal role in community engagement through life skills and social cohesion programmes.

Specialized child protection services will safeguard children from violence, abuse and exploitation in homes, schools and communities through mental health support, gender-based violence response, positive parenting programmes and explosive ordnance risk education. UNICEF will increase humanitarian cash transfers to help vulnerable families support their children through shock-responsive social protection.

Integrating social and behavioural change into emergency response will help communities create tailored solutions and meaningful participation. UNICEF will reinforce its commitment to protecting populations from sexual exploitation and abuse. UNICEF will continue to collect and use equitable data to monitor and evaluate programmes for evidence-based emergency response.

Progress against the latest programme targets is available in the humanitarian situation reports: <https://www.unicef.org/appeals/syria/situation-reports>

2025 PROGRAMME TARGETS



Health (including public health emergencies)

- **1,734,300** children and women accessing primary health care in UNICEF-supported facilities
- **689,500** Number of children under 1 year reached with routine vaccination (DTP3 containing vaccine)
- **620,800** Number of caregivers reached with health promotion, including immunization messages



Nutrition

- **31,977** children 6-59 months with severe wasting admitted for treatment
- **1,510,300** primary caregivers of children 0-23 months receiving infant and young child feeding counselling
- **974,800** children 6-59 months receiving micronutrient powder



Child protection and GBViE²⁷

- **169,550** women, girls and boys accessing gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention and/or response interventions
- **17,800** children who have received individual case management
- **653,600** Children and caregivers provided with landmine or other explosive weapons prevention and/or survivor assistance interventions
- **254,500** Children accessing community-based mental health and psychosocial support



Education²⁸

- **2,614,570** children supported with educational services and supplies in formal settings
- **598,057** children in non-formal education benefiting from education services
- **19,020** teachers and education personnel trained



Water, sanitation and hygiene²⁹

- **3,920,000** people accessing a sufficient quantity and quality of water for drinking and domestic needs
- **1,896,000** people accessing appropriate sanitation services
- **400,000** people reached with handwashing behaviour-change programmes
- **1,580,000** people reached with critical WASH supplies



Social protection³⁰

- **25,000** Number of girls and boys with disabilities provided with regular cash transfers and case management services
- **188,000** people reached with UNICEF-funded humanitarian cash transfers



Cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCCE and AAP)³¹

- **500,000** people engaged in reflective dialogue through community platforms
- **7,000** people sharing their concerns and asking questions through established feedback mechanisms



PSEA

- **3,200,000** people who have access to a safe and accessible channel to report sexual exploitation and abuse by aid workers



Adolescents/youth

- **200,000** affected adolescents and youth (10-24 years) receiving life-skills and citizenship education and employability skills
- **300,000** adolescents and youth (10-24 years) promoting social cohesion and civic engagement at community level

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS IN 2025

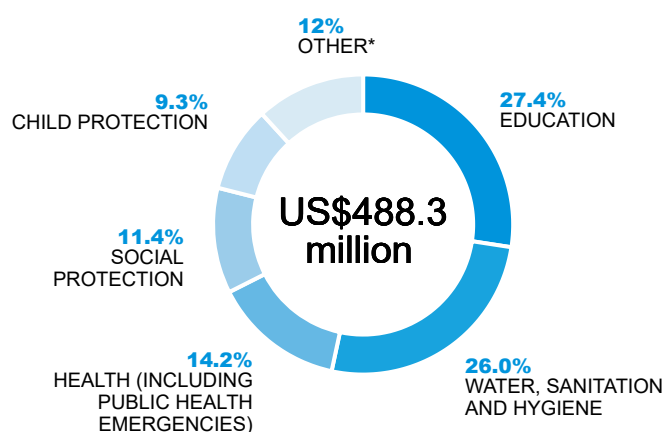
In 2025, UNICEF is seeking \$488.3 million³² to enact its humanitarian action through rapid, sustained and equitable response to meet the complex needs of children and families in the Syrian Arab Republic.

The request urgently seeks \$32.2 million to support the response to the influx of people displaced from Lebanon into the Syrian Arab Republic, addressing their critical needs for the first three months of 2025. The volatile and unpredictable situation in Lebanon may result in additional influx, requiring more resources for immediate emergency response and protracted humanitarian needs. This funding is crucial to support this vulnerable population, because current systems in the country are weak and resources are overstretched. Without this support, the humanitarian situation for Syrians displaced from Lebanon and Lebanese refugees could deteriorate significantly.

The total humanitarian funding requirement of \$488.3 million for the 2025 appeal is a 21 per cent increase compared with the revised 2024 appeal.

The context of the Syrian Arab Republic is marked by more than 13 years of crisis where far too many children have only known conflict. These children have grown up amid violence, displacement and deprivation, facing daily challenges that threaten their well-being and future. UNICEF's mission is to not only alleviate suffering and ensure children's survival, but also unlock their potential to thrive. This mission is a collective endeavor that requires the support and collaboration of all stakeholders. A lack of funding and/or earmarked funds will hinder UNICEF's ability to provide essential support for children. UNICEF urges all stakeholders to contribute, as insufficient resources may increase protection risks and prevent children from reaching their full potential. Children in crisis are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, abuse and neglect. Without adequate funding, UNICEF cannot ensure their safety or provide necessary support.

Furthermore, a shortage of funds will impede efforts to build resilient communities and investment to stop deterioration of existing services.



Sector	2025 requirements (US\$)
Health (including public health emergencies)	69,275,784
Nutrition	42,454,399
Child protection	45,235,385 ³³
Education	133,893,107 ³⁴
Water, sanitation and hygiene	126,735,233 ³⁵
Social protection	55,579,937 ³⁶
Cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCCE and AAP)	761,538
PSEA	685,385
Adolescents/youth	13,672,685
Total	488,293,453

*This includes costs from other sectors/interventions: Nutrition (8.7%), Adolescents/youth (2.8%), Cross-sectoral (HCT, SBC, RCCE and AAP) (<1%), PSEA (<1%).

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ENDNOTES

1. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024.
2. Ibid.
3. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNHCR Syria Short Brief, 24 September – 2 November 2024, 2 November 2024, published 3 November 2024.
4. According to the UNHCR Syria Short Brief, 3 November, 71 per cent are Syrians displaced from Lebanon and 29 per cent are Lebanese refugees. Moreover 58 per cent of displaced persons are children. Source: Syrian Arab Red Crescent, SARC Emergency Response for the influx from Lebanon to Syria Situation Overview: Reporting period: 24 September – 24 October 2024.
5. The funding request also includes \$32.2 million for humanitarian response to the influx of Syrians displaced from Lebanon and Lebanese refugees and Palestinian refugees who crossed into the Syrian Arab Republic due to conflict escalation in Lebanon since 23 September 2024.
6. The data source for 16.7 million people in need is the Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024. Additionally, according to the Inter-Agency Emergency Appeal for the Influx from Lebanon to Syria, published on 7 October 2024, 480,000 people need humanitarian assistance, including 400,000 Syrians displaced from Lebanon and Lebanese refugees who entered the Syrian Arab Republic after the escalation of the conflict situation in Lebanon, as well as 80,000 host community members. The 2025 appeal will target both vulnerable groups identified in the Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024 and the inter-agency appeal published on 7 October 2024. The people in need and targets will be updated in 2025 once the Humanitarian Needs Overview 2025 is revised and published, alongside a needs assessment of the caseload of people displaced to the Syrian Arab Republic due to the influx from Lebanon.
7. Ibid.
8. Overall, for the 2025 appeal, the total number of people to be reached was calculated considering several output indicators. The number of unique beneficiaries is estimated to minimize the overlap across age, gender and disabilities, ensuring the equitable distribution of aid. This appeal reflects the Whole of Syria approach. This approach, which consists of responses carried out by two offices (the Syrian Arab Republic Country Office and an office in Gaziantep, Türkiye), ensures no overlap in the planned beneficiaries for each indicator. This comprehensive planning reassures our stakeholders about the thoroughness of our approach. Below is the list and targets of indicators used to estimate various population groups and the total number of beneficiaries. Syrian Arab Republic Country Office targets: Boys: 289,492 under age 5 receive micronutrient powder; 1,099,776(5–17 years) benefit from formal education; boys WD – 60,000 under age 18 benefit from health consultations. Girls: 301,308 under age 5 receive micronutrient powders; 1,144,665 (5–17 years) benefit from formal education; girls WD – 78,500 under age 18 benefit from health consultations. Men (including w/disability): 520,000 benefit from water provision. Women including disability: 1,293,963 benefit from infant and young child feeding counselling. Gaziantep Cross Border Office targets: Boys: 68,313 under 1 benefit from MR2; 416,587 (6 months–5 years) benefit from MRV; 125,000 (5–17) benefit from formal education; boys WD – 3,595 under 1 benefit from MR; 115,395 benefit from water provision. Girls: 58,512 under age 1 benefit from MR2; 427,875 benefit from water provision; girls WD – 3,080 under age 1 benefit from MR2; 119,805 benefit from water provision. Men and women, including with disabilities: 844,800 benefit from water provision. The total number of people to be reached includes 400,000 Syrians displaced from Lebanon and Lebanese refugees.
9. Ibid.
10. OCHA, Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024.
11. Ibid.
12. UNHCR, UNHCR Syria Short Brief, 24 September – 2 November 2024, 3 November 2024.
13. Syrian Arab Red Crescent, SARC Emergency Response for the influx from Lebanon to Syria Situation Overview: Reporting period: 24 September – 24 October 2024.
14. OCHA, Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024. Throughout the Syrian Arab Republic, access and operational constraints, damaged and non-functional infrastructure, electricity outages and limited resource mobilization compound challenges and hinder the quality and continuity of multisectoral humanitarian action.
15. OCHA, Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024.
16. OCHA, North-West Syria Situation Report, last updated: 18 Oct 2024.
17. OCHA, Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024.
18. Whole of Syria Health Sector HeRAMS [Health Resources Availability Mapping System] Quarter 2, August 2023.
19. OCHA, Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024
20. United Nations, Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General, A/78/842–S/2024/384, New York, 3 June 2024.
21. OCHA, Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024.
22. Based on the 2022 protection assessment, an estimated 96 per cent of children live in communities where child labour is reported; 84 per cent of children live in communities where child marriage is an issue for girls aged 15–17 years; and 52 per cent of people live in communities where family separation is reported.
23. OCHA, Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024. Out-of-school children are particularly affected, especially adolescents who are exposed to protection and gender-based violence threats such as child labour (mainly for boys) and child marriage (mainly for girls).
24. All sector needs included here are from OCHA, Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Needs Overview 2024.
25. As per the Inter-Agency Emergency Appeal for the Influx from Lebanon to Syria published on 7 October 2024, 480,000 people need humanitarian assistance, including 400,000 Syrians displaced from Lebanon and Lebanese refugees who have entered the Syrian Arab Republic since 23 September 2024, alongside 80,000 host community members.
26. The focus of WASH response activities is to serve people in need who are living in remote, rural and hard-to-reach areas where facilities usually serve a lower number of people. This will entail a higher per capita cost because the response loses the economy of the scale achieved when serving more urban settings, where the number of people benefiting from a repaired facility is higher. Moreover, due to further deterioration in the electricity sector (on which WASH services are heavily dependent), providing solar power solutions where feasible leads to an increase in the per capita cost and the total cost.
27. There is a slight increase in the planned targets however, the funding needs have increased significantly due to a programmatic shift towards more structured and sustained service delivery, with a focus on the mental health and psychosocial support, prevention and response to gender-based violence, parenting and capacity building. For example, the shift to the structured mental health and psychosocial support has been aligned with the global framework in that area; new modules have been developed; and there are additional needs for capacity building. The light approach to mental health and psychosocial support of providing 1 or 2 sessions have been replaced with 16 sessions for the targeted caseload. Additionally, the people in need in this area for 2025 is provisional because the inter-agency planning process is ongoing. Therefore, the 2024 number of people in need has been used for planning the 2025 appeal. This 2025 appeal will be revised in March 2025 to reflect the the number of people and children in need for 2025.

28. Given that more than 70 per cent of people in need of education are classified as in high severity of need, and in alignment with UNICEF's commitment to assist the most vulnerable populations nationwide, this parameter is crucial for target design. Additionally, ongoing inflationary pressures have significantly affected the implementation of education programmes, particularly key interventions including rehabilitation. In 2024, inflation was 35 per cent and prices are expected to rise further in 2025. Similarly, the costs of printing materials, including the design of learning materials for out-of-school children, have increased by 35 per cent. The unit cost of school supplies, including furniture and stationery, has also risen by 15 per cent. Supporting children to sit for formal national exams, which involves crossing into areas under Syrian government control, requires transportation, accommodation and allowances for children and their chaperones. However, this short-term intervention has a significant impact on enrolling children in accredited education, allowing them to continue their education. In 2025, UNICEF aims to enhance the quality of the professional development programme for educational personnel. The new model will expand both the number of training topics and the duration of training days, promoting a comprehensive and integrated approach expected to achieve an impact increase of 80 per cent to 100 per cent. This revision aligns with the sector's approach to the Humanitarian Response Plan 2025, which will be finalized in early 2025. The target group will also include vulnerable Syrians and Lebanese displaced from Lebanon.

29. Given that over 90 per cent of people in need of WASH services are classified as in high severity of need, and in line with UNICEF's commitment to reach the most vulnerable populations and communities across the country. The focus of WASH response activities is to serve people in need who are living in remote, rural and hard-to-reach areas where facilities usually serve a lower number of people. This will entail a higher per capita cost because the response loses the economy of the scale achieved when serving more urban settings, where the number of people benefiting from a repaired facility is higher. Moreover, due to further deterioration in the electricity sector (on which WASH services are heavily dependent), providing solar power solutions where feasible leads to an increase in the per capita cost and the total cost. This revision is in line with the sector's approach for the Humanitarian Response Plan 2025, which will be finalized in early 2025.

30. Based on several programme reviews, the results of post-distribution monitoring in 2022 and 2023 and a comprehensive consultative and evaluative workshop in June 2023, UNICEF has documented valuable lessons learned and adopted several key recommendations to adjust its programme design for 2025 as follows: 1. One of the significant changes is the increase in the cash transfer value from \$60 to \$90, with the frequency of these payments increased from three to four cycles, with an extra top-up available during the winter season. This adjustment is based on findings from the post-distribution monitoring, which highlighted the need for more frequent and higher-value transfers to better support families. 2. UNICEF is also implementing integrated multi-sector interventions to address children's needs through comprehensive cash-plus support. The new programme design offers extended referral services throughout 2025, with a greater emphasis on linking families to livelihood activities. This includes anticipated cash top-ups for out-of-school children in targeted families to facilitate their access to formal education. Moreover, families will be registered to access health and nutrition services, and the cash platform will be used to identify children with chronic illnesses and those at risk of malnutrition. The overall beneficiary target for the cash transfer programme will decrease, focusing on vulnerable groups including female-headed households with children, families with children with chronic diseases and families with children with disabilities, who will continue to be enrolled in UNICEF's integrated social protection programme. The target group will also include vulnerable Syrians and Lebanese displaced from Lebanon. 3. In 2024, the UNICEF cash transfer programme was integrated into the Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) chapter of the Humanitarian Response Plan. As a result, many previous interventions under 'non-food items' will now be covered through MPCA.

31. The social and behaviour change component will be implemented within sectoral programmes.

32. The total requirement of \$488.3 million includes the funds required to support the most vulnerable Syrians displaced from Lebanon and Lebanese refugees. According to the inter-agency appeal published on 7 October 2024, 480,000 Syrians displaced from Lebanon and Lebanese refugees, as well as 80,000 people in host communities, require humanitarian support. The funding needs will be revised once the Humanitarian Response Plan is updated in 2025, and the planning figures for the current inter-agency appeal document are also revised.

33. See endnote 28.

34. See endnote 29.

35. See endnote 30.

36. See endnote 31.