A father holds his son as they evacuate their flooded home after the area was inundated with flooding from Hurricane Harvey on August 27, 2017. © Joe Raedle/Getty Images

HURRICANE HARVEY

SEPTEMBER 2017
One of the largest disasters America has ever faced,”
- Governor of Texas, Greg Abbott

Overview
Hurricane Harvey, a Category 4 hurricane, made landfall in Texas on Friday, August 25, 2017. Maximum sustained winds in Harvey’s eye topped at 130 mph. In a four-day period, Houston and the surrounding areas experienced heavy flooding, with rainfall in some areas topping 50 inches, causing catastrophic flooding. An estimated 50 counties were flooded, at least 30,000 people are in shelters and 56,000 9-1-1 calls were placed within a 15 hour window. The death toll from Harvey has risen to at least 60 people. Texas Governor Greg Abbott declared a state of emergency in 55 counties on August 28, 2017. Harvey’s flooding has caused one of the worst weather disasters in U.S. history, with recovery costs estimated at billions of dollars.

Approximately 13 million people in both Texas and Louisiana have been affected by the Hurricane, of which close to three million are children in the hardest-hit areas. These children have literally seen their lives washed away – they have lost homes, schools, communities, and with that, their sense of security, normalcy and well-being. This includes children from poor, immigrant and/or families of color, which comprise a sizeable portion of the population in Houston and other affected areas.

UNICEF USA in Action
UNICEF USA (UUSA) is deeply concerned about the needs of all children affected by this natural disaster, especially the most vulnerable – which includes immigrants and/or families of color, refugees, displaced and unaccompanied children, in addition to families living in poverty. Nearly three million children have been affected by Hurricane Harvey, and UUSA is committed to putting children first.

UUSA will look to leverage its partnerships with local partners who are on the ground in Texas to provide access to resources, protection and assistance to the most vulnerable children.
The overall objectives of the response plan are to:

- Advocate with relevant authorities to address bottlenecks of access to school and services for the most vulnerable children
- Address psychosocial needs of the most vulnerable children in hurricane-affected areas
- Provide essential school supplies to approximately 80,000 of the most vulnerable children
- Assist 420 displaced classrooms with teacher kits to enable them to deliver lessons for their classrooms
- Provide school uniform vouchers to approximately 80,000 of the most vulnerable and economically disadvantaged children
- Empower children to transcend trauma and displacement by helping other children through a “kids helping kids” model

**Policy, Advocacy and Communications**

UUSA will work with local authorities to support policy and advocacy efforts to address the bottlenecks to access schools and services by most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. For example, confirmation is needed if during school registration, social security number or immigration documents are not required. At the moment, FEMA’s (Federal Emergency Management Agency) online registration form requires social security number which prevents undocumented migrants from accessing help/assistance.

In addition, UUSA will work with local partners to ensure resource documents are immediately available in multiple languages, particularly information regarding access to government assistance and schools. Languages include but are not limited to Spanish, English and Vietnamese. The materials will be available primarily through an electronic platform, but will be provided in other modes of communication as appropriate.

**Keep Kids Learning**

More than one million children in the Houston area need help removing barriers to resume their education. This means providing school supplies, uniforms and in some cases, psychosocial support and referrals.

Within the city of Houston, there are 18 school districts. The Houston Independent School District (HISD) is the largest in the state and the seventh-largest in the U.S., serving 215,000 students. All schools were forced to delay the start of the school year due to Harvey. HISD announced schools could possibly reopen by September 18. HISD also announced all students will receive three free meals per day during the 2017-2018 school year in the wake of Harvey.

UNICEF USA is prepared to support authorities’ efforts to get the most vulnerable children back to school in safe, healthy learning environments as quickly as possible through the following:

**PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT: TRAINING, SERVICES AND REFERRALS**

- Psycho-social support and training of teachers and students in priority areas using a “train the trainers” cascade approach, aimed at approximately 60 facilitators and 4,000 educators in 60 vulnerable, low-income schools, and/or schools hard-hit by Hurricane Harvey, serving approximately 50,000 students. Facilitators will train school educators, who will then conduct on-site training sessions of instructional and non-instructional staff, aiding them in self-care, group counseling and identification of symptoms that indicate additional referrals and treatment are needed.

- To ensure the continuum of care goes beyond symptom recognition by school staff, mobile mental health units will be scheduled to visit campuses based on student referrals and type of treatment
needed. This will require training of 30 clinicians on evidence-based trauma and grief counselling to serve students suffering from acute trauma and grief within 60 schools.

- **Training for teachers on mental health and trauma-informed teaching practices, using Kognito’s at-risk evidence-based mental health simulation**: this simulation software trains teachers through virtual avatars who have memory, emotion and personality in conversational role play, so that teachers learn how to identify students in distress, talk with them and connect them to support. We propose the development of a new module focused on trauma, plus use of existing general mental health modules. Modules will be made available to approximately 4,000 teachers in the 60 most vulnerable schools, plus other teachers from Hurricane-affected schools (approximately 50,000 in the greater Houston area) and can be used for future disaster scenarios.

- **Acquaintance of teachers and student councilors with Houston mobile clinic referral system** for children and teachers identified as suffering from acute trauma.

### EDUCATION SUPPLIES

- **Provide education supplies to support 80,000 vulnerable children in the affected areas.**
  - The cost per student is $40, and includes a backpack full of notebooks, folders, a ruler, scissors, pens, pencils, markers and a calculator. This will ensure these vulnerable children will have the supplies needed to continue their education.

- **Provide school uniform vouchers to approximately 80,000 vulnerable children**
  - Each school district will allot the vouchers in proportion to the percentage of students affected in their district. School districts will then work with priority schools to identify the number of vouchers needed for each school and distribute them accordingly.
  - The cost per student is $50.

- **Provide teacher kits for 420 displaced classrooms**
  - These teacher kits will provide teachers and students up to 10 priority items they have identified as needed to host a classroom. There are approximately 30 children per classroom.
  - This will help teachers and students adjust to a new space and the anxiety of that transition.

### UNICEF KID POWER: KIDS HELPING KIDS

- Children in distress need opportunities to heal. Establishing routines and counselling are important facilitators of healing. Additionally, it has been shown that by caring for others in the wake of a personal trauma, people can find strength and resilience in themselves, which can catalyze healing and recovery.

- **The UNICEF Kid Power program can help kids affected by Hurricane Harvey recognize themselves as survivors with the power to do good.** Kid Power is the world’s first Wearable-for-Good®. The program allows kids to get active and unlock funding for UNICEF to provide lifesaving therapeutic food packets for severely malnourished children around the world. To date, the hundreds of thousands of kids participating in Kid Power have walked over 100 billion steps to save the lives of over 50,000 malnourished children in other parts of the world.

- Kid Power includes a teacher-led classroom experience that leverages easy-to-use technology, project-based learning and 21st century skills. The technology includes UNICEF Kid Power Bands for students and classroom tablets for syncing and tracking progress. The curriculum includes lessons and games on communities across the globe suffering from the consequences of natural and man-made disasters, as well as malnutrition, inspiring students to become global citizens who are aware of and want to serve the world around them.

- **By participating in the program, children affected by Hurricane Harvey can transcend their own trauma and progress on a path to psychological recovery and healing by helping save the lives of other children around the world.**

- UNICEF USA will provide Kid Power bands, tablets and other program materials to implement the Kid Power program in Houston for up to 20,000 students, on top of the existing schools in Houston with whom we
already partner on Kid Power. Three schools in the target group of 60 schools hard-hit by Harvey are already Kid Power participating schools.

- Participating kids in Houston will receive UNICEF Kid Power Bands—touchscreen, Bluetooth enabled activity trackers—that measure physical activity. Kids’ activity unlocks Kid Power points, a virtual currency that is tracked online and converted by donors into funding. Funding allows UNICEF to procure and deliver ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) to children with severe acute malnutrition, and the impact is communicated back to participating kids via the Kid Power website and app.
- Teachers will be invited to apply for the Kid Power program to ensure demand and commitment to implement the program in the classroom. Assuming a standard 4-6 week ramp-up period, opening applications in early October, teachers could begin implementation of Kid Power in December.
- Target age groups are for grades 3-5, but the program can be implemented as young as Kindergarten and ages up to grade 8.
- The UNICEF Kid Power school program costs approximately $40 per student (about $1,000 to $1,200 per classroom for a year-round intervention.

![Image of a child wearing a UNICEF Kid Power Band]

**“Every time my UNICEF Kid Power Band vibrates, I feel like a superhero!”**

**Fifth Grade Student**

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**TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Activity</th>
<th>Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy, Advocacy and Communication Materials</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keep Kids Learning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Psychosocial training and support for 60 trainers and 4,000 educators</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Establish a referral system of advanced care for children with acute needs for six months</td>
<td>$3,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Create a new training simulation module for educators to address cases of trauma in Harvey and elsewhere</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Education supplies for 80,000 children</td>
<td>$3,200,000</td>
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<td>- Teacher kits for 420 displaced classrooms</td>
<td>$229,920</td>
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<tr>
<td>- School uniform vouchers for 80,000 children</td>
<td>$4,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>- UNICEF Kid Power program for up to 20,000 students in 90 priority schools</td>
<td>$800,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$12,279,920</strong></td>
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The Way Forward

The extraordinary nature of Hurricane Harvey demands that all of us play a role in responding. With UNICEF’s universal mandate to ensure the fundamental survival, protection and well-being of children, regardless of race, religion, geography, gender or politics, UNICEF USA plans to assist some of the hardest-hit schools with the most vulnerable children struggling to restart their education in the aftermath of the hurricane.

Ultimately, our goal is to ensure that vulnerable children who were impacted by Hurricane Harvey can regain a sense of normalcy as soon as possible, get back to learning, and recover from the destruction of the storm. UNICEF USA will contribute to the recovery effort by working with the local and regional partners that are providing direct relief services to ensure the most vulnerable children and their families have what they need to stay safe and protected in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey.

UNICEF USA pledges that 100 percent of any donations made for Hurricane Harvey relief will go directly to assist children.

Evacuees airlifted in a U.S. Coast Guard helicopter after flooding due to Hurricane Harvey in Houston.
© Petty Officer 3rd Class Johanna Strickland/U.S. Coast Guard/Reuters

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) works in more than 190 countries and territories to put children first. UNICEF has helped save more children’s lives than any other humanitarian organization by providing health care and immunizations, clean water and sanitation, nutrition, education, emergency relief and more. UNICEF USA supports UNICEF’s work through fundraising, advocacy and education in the United States. Together, we are working toward the day when no children die from preventable causes and every child has a safe and healthy childhood. For more information, visit unicefusa.org.