

# COVID-19 key facts

The unprecedented strain the COVID-19 pandemic has put on global economic and health systems has caused existing vulnerabilities to be further exacerbated with low- and middle-income countries being most affected.

Not only does the World Bank estimate that we will see the first rise in global poverty since [1998](#) with an additional estimated [120 million](#) people pushed into extreme poverty in the first year of pandemic alone, but the UNDP's [Human Development Index](#) (a measure of achievement across key dimensions of health, education and standard of living) is expected to see its first ever [drop](#) since it was first measured in 1990. Decades of progress have been lost and with a widening of many deadly divides, reclaiming the gains will be a steep uphill battle.

Below are key facts of how the pandemic has impacted the issue areas that Results Canada works on:

## global health

- Without urgent and concerted action, COVID-19 will lead to widespread increases in malnutrition - hitting women, children, and other vulnerable groups the hardest. By 2022, COVID-19 could lead to an additional [13.6 million](#) wasted children and 3.6 million stunted children, 283,000 under-five child deaths due to poor nutrition, and 4.8 million women with anemia.
- Due to severe disruptions in essential health services, coverage of lifesaving health interventions for women, children and adolescents in [36 countries](#) where the Global Financing Facility for Women, Children, and Adolescents (GFF) operates dropped up to 25% in 2020 as compared to pre-pandemic levels. This means that 4 million pregnant women lost access to childbirth care.
- An estimated [12 million](#) women may have been unable to access family planning services, with disruption of supplies and services lasting an average of 3.6 months. As a result, as many as 1.4 million unintended pregnancies may have occurred before women were able to resume use of family planning services.
- Before COVID-19, tuberculosis (TB) was responsible for more annual deaths than any other infectious disease globally. In 2019, [10 million](#) people fell sick with TB and an estimated 1.4 million died. An additional estimated [525,000](#) TB deaths are expected to have occurred in 2020 due to TB service disruptions. The pandemic has caused a setback of more than 10 years of progress on TB, which is termed a 'disease of poverty' by the World Health Organization.

- A [59%](#) reduction in [TB referrals](#) was observed across Asia and Africa in 2020 compared to the previous year. These findings indicate that people suspected of having TB are not receiving the diagnosis and subsequent treatment needed to save lives and curb the spread of disease.
- [23 million](#) children missed out on childhood vaccines through routine health services in 2020 - the highest number since 2009.
- Even when available, people were unable to access services because of lockdown and transport disruptions or they were unwilling due to fear of contracting COVID-19. This has resulted in plummeting uptake of vaccination in many countries, falling to as low as [50%](#) in some countries.
- The [disruption](#) of routine immunization services could start secondary outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases and worsen the longstanding inequity in immunization coverage, especially in rapidly urbanizing cities.

## education

- The pandemic has created the most severe disruption to global education systems in history, forcing more than [1.6 billion](#) learners in more than 190 countries out of school at the peak of the crisis. It threatens the future of a generation with [24 million children and youth at risk of dropping out](#).
- Girls face greater barriers to education and are more vulnerable to abuse such as domestic and gender-based violence when not in school - it is estimated that an additional [20 million](#) girls may never return to school after the pandemic.
- Before the pandemic only [one in 10](#) children could read by the age of 10 in low-income countries, compared to nine in 10 in high-income countries, and with limited access to technology during the pandemic this number is expected to rise.
- Once schools reopen, without the proper responses, the pre-crisis level of out-of-school children is likely to worsen. This is particularly true for low-income countries, where the out-of-school rate for children, adolescents and youth of primary and secondary school age was already a staggering [32.4 percent](#) (compared to the 3.5 per cent in high income countries) in 2018.
- COVID-19 has forced national [education budgets](#) around the world to shrink causing out-of-school children to face increased levels of [gender violence](#) and exploitation and preventing them from accessing routine immunizations, food programs and social protections provided by schools.

## economic inclusion

- The International Labour Organization predicts that the pandemic triggered a 60 percent decline in earnings for 1.6 billion informal workers, while half of the world is trying to survive without any form of social protection.
- Data on working hours lost shows that the equivalent of 255 million jobs were lost during the pandemic, which is five times higher than during the 2008 financial crisis.
- Global employment recovery, projected to improve in the second half of 2021, will be uneven due to inequities in vaccine access, fiscal support, and social protection.
- According to World Bank Rapid Surveys at least two thirds of families in most low- and middle-income countries have experienced a drop in income since the beginning of the pandemic.

*Updated September 2021*