**Highlights**

- UNICEF continues to strengthen and expand programming with the Government of Albania (GoA) and NGO partners to provide age-appropriate activities and capacity building for partners in the humanitarian response.

- Since November 27, 2019, UNICEF has helped some 1,400 children to benefit from quality specialized child protection and education support.

- At the request of the GoA, UNICEF and the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth (MoESY) co-lead the work on a Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) for the Education Sector.

- UNICEF leads the Child Protection coordination working group in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MoHSP), which addresses the overall quality of emergency protection services and is developing mid- to long-term plans for the recovery phase.

**Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs**

Four weeks after the 6.4 magnitude earthquake,\(^1\) the impact and priority needs of the population are clearer, with initial sectoral response plans integrated into a wider overall strategy of the GoA in coordination with development partners. The ongoing PDNA exercise will further fine-tune the GoA overall response and recovery strategy.

The population of the three most affected regions (Durrës, Lezhë and Tiranë) is 1,293,050, among which 309,319 are

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\(^1\) Strong earthquake reported on November 26, 2019, with a magnitude of 6.4 on the Richter scale, 34 NW of Tirane, 10 km NW of Durrës, at 03:54hrs. 

Map of the worst affected areas. Disclaimer: This map does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. This map is provided without any warranty of any kind whatsoever, either express or implied.
children. Although the official number of the affected population is not assessed yet, it is estimated that about 30,000 people have been impacted by the earthquake. More than 14,000 people remain displaced, living in government-managed collective camps, hotels, spontaneous sites, and with host families in both urban and rural settings. Authorities are bringing the needed assistance to the official camps and hotels; however, the spontaneous sites, especially in rural areas, remain insufficiently attended and assessed.

Assessing the damage to buildings in the affected areas remains the GoA’s top priority. The EU Civil Protection Team, UN and UNDAC, in cooperation with representatives of the GoA, are engaged in the assessment. The extent of the structural damage has also increased. About 14,900 buildings have been inspected so far and almost 2,470 buildings have been identified as uninhabitable. According to the GoA, 36 schools and 24 health facilities have been severely damaged. It is considered that these are not the final numbers. The total economic damage (capital stock) is estimated at $820 million.

Humanitarian Strategy and Response

The GoA leads the overall emergency response and remains the largest provider of humanitarian aid to the affected population. Emergency intervention is being coordinated through the Crisis Response and Relief Center under the Prime Minister’s Office. Three Regional Crisis Response Centres have been established in Durrës, Lezhë, and Tiranë prefectures. UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) / EU Civil Protection Team (EUCPT) and the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) are supporting the technical secretariat with coordination, damage assessment and verification.

UNICEF’s primary partner in the humanitarian response is the GoA; and in the absence of a cluster system, UNICEF has relied on sector response and sectoral working groups (WG), with UNICEF co-leading the Education, Child Protection and Humanitarian Cash Transfers (HCT) WGs.

UNICEF continues to respond to the needs of children and women affected by the earthquake and is pursuing a two-pronged approach, which combines system strengthening through capacity-building, monitoring the situation of children, service provision and advocacy to ensure that all vulnerable children and women have access to protection and social services in a sustainable manner.

UNICEF Response

UNICEF’s emergency response in Albania is guided by the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action and implemented in partnership with the GoA and other partners. Over the last weeks, UNICEF has been engaged in updating its response plan that incorporates a multi-sector approach to address the specific needs in Protection and Education in relation to official camps and other accommodations. While UNICEF continues to respond to humanitarian needs, it has initiated steps to support recovery and resilience building.

Child Protection: Through UNICEF-supported child-friendly spaces (CFS), around 1,000 children, parents and community members have accessed psychosocial support, counselling and after school support.

UNICEF works closely with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and other partners to address the protection needs of children through strengthening the existing child protection system and work force. For this purpose, a dedicated WG, led by UNICEF, was established to coordinate the programmatic responses with particular focus on issues around abuse, exploitation and violence; to facilitate inter-organisational collaboration and to ensure that humanitarian actors working in Albania build on and support the local capacities, develop and maintain appropriate links with national and local authorities, state institutions, civil society organizations and other stakeholders.

UNICEF is also investing in building the capacity of national and local actors involved in the child protection response to improve their knowledge and skills in implementing and monitoring child protection standards,

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3 Albania Earthquake Global Rapid Post Disaster Damage Estimation (GRADE) Report, World Bank, December 2019
providing psychological first aid, and supporting child’s best interests’ assessment and determination. Over 50 frontline workers have been already trained and the process will continue.

**Education:** UNICEF currently supports the MoESY to run 4 Temporary Learning Spaces (TLS), which are serving 200 children. Dedicated support is being provided to the MoESY by UNICEF and its partners in order to identify gaps and needs in the education sector. UNICEF is currently providing technical assistance to the GoA to take stock of the damages and losses (PDNA) faced by the sector and provide estimates of the recovery and reconstruction needs using the principle of “building back better.” The assessment will cover the entire sector, which includes early childhood education and development, primary and secondary education, technical and vocational education and training, higher education, and non-formal education/life-long learning.

**Humanitarian Cash Transfer (HCT):** UNICEF and IFRC co-lead the HCT WG to define, coordinate, and implement HCT programme to respond and improve the situation of the affected population (families, boys, girls, men and women). A 4W exercise is currently being conducted to collect key information regarding HCT-related interventions in Albania. This information will be essential to coordinate HCT activities effectively and ensure that humanitarian needs are met without gaps or duplication. In the longer term, the HCT WG will be used to advocate for stronger links between humanitarian cash and social protection laying the ground for a shock-responsive social protection system in Albania, for which the technical support will be required.

**Media and Communication**

- *Alive and rising again* - A teacher, whose life was upended by the Albania earthquake, helps her community’s children (human story)
- **UNICEF Albania in action Video**
- UNICEF supported hundreds of children to catch-up on their education, UNICEF Education Specialist TV interview on **TVSH Education**
- UNICEF emergency earthquake response in **AlbaniaDailyNews**; UNICEF website; and **ATA**
- UNICEF Child Protection Specialist TV interview on psychosocial services for children on **A2 CNN**

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4 Two TLSs for pre-schools children and two TLSs for primary school children (grades 1-5)
Funding

As of December 20, 2019, UNICEF Albania has received **US 150,000** from USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID OFDA). This addresses only 5 percent of the required resources. The UNICEF requires an additional **US 850,000** to provide and sustain a response to address critical needs of children and their families affected by the earthquake in Albania.

An additional **US 2,000,000** will be needed for the early stages of recovery. Without additional flexible funding, particularly in the areas of education, child protection and HCT, it would be difficult to address major humanitarian needs of vulnerable children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Budget (US$)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emergency Response</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Child-Friendly Spaces and strengthening resilience</td>
<td>$ 500,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Temporary learning spaces (schools)</td>
<td>$ 250,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child Vulnerability Assessment</td>
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<td><strong>Early Recovery</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Humanitarian Cash Transfer Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
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