The first patient with COVID-19 was diagnosed in Georgia on 26 February 2020. Despite early actions of the Government, the number of confirmed and suspected cases continued to grow. The Government declared a state of emergency on 21 March, closing borders and airports, restricting movement inside the country, banning mass gatherings and maintaining closure of all schools, kindergartens and universities. The state of emergency ended on 23 May however, several restrictions remain in place. In addition, the Parliament of Georgia has passed a bill, which allows the government to impose movement, labor, migration, economic and other restrictions without the declaration of a state of emergency.

This week, the Government announced the extension of travel restrictions until the end of July.

To date, Abkhazia, Georgia, reported 38 cases, with 33 recoveries and one death. A state of emergency was put in place on 28 March and was lifted as of 21 April, however, restrictions on movement remain in place, and the Administrative Border Line and the border with Russia remain closed. The situation is to be re-assessed on 1 July.

HIGHLIGHTS

- In partnership with the Prime Minister’s Office, State Ministry of Reconciliation and Equity and local authorities, UNICEF distributed essential food/hygiene boxes to 50 vulnerable households in Akhalkalaki.
- The UNICEF Representative held meetings with religious leaders of Orthodox and Armenian Apostolic Churches in Samtskhe-Javakheti region to discuss the role of religious leaders in upholding children’s rights during Covid-19.
- The UNICEF Representative met with Public Defender’s Office in Samtskhe-Javakheti region to define strategic directions of cooperation during the COVID-19 crisis, including support in identification and response to child rights violations. Child labour was amongst the topics flagged out, since it may aggravate as a result of Covid-19 crisis.
- UNICEF’s virtual antenatal care programme reached 6,340 pregnant women, of which 39% participated in virtual medical consultations.
- In partnership with the Parliament and State Care Agency, the UNICEF-supported child hotline “111” continues to provide assistance to children and their families, supporting 584 cases to date, of which 388 already received assistance and were closed accordingly.
- UNICEF, in collaboration with the partner “Helping Hand”, initiated the development of a web-based platform to promote and encourage adolescent/youth volunteerism in Georgia.
- UNICEF is partnering with the “Global Initiative in Psychiatry” to provide online support to adolescents and their parents to manage the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on their mental health.
- UNICEF is supporting NCDC in carrying out risk communication and community engagement activities on COVID-19 in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe Javakheti regions, targeting the ethnic minority populations.

UNICEF Georgia COVID-19 Situation Report
26 June 2020

Situation Overview and Humanitarian Needs

The first patient with COVID-19 was diagnosed in Georgia on 26 February 2020. Despite early actions of the Government, the number of confirmed and suspected cases continued to grow. The Government declared a state of emergency on 21 March, closing borders and airports, restricting movement inside the country, banning mass gatherings and maintaining closure of all schools, kindergartens and universities. The state of emergency ended on 23 May however, several restrictions remain in place. In addition, the Parliament of Georgia has passed a bill, which allows the government to impose movement, labor, migration, economic and other restrictions without the declaration of a state of emergency. This week, the Government announced the extension of travel restrictions until the end of July.

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Humanitarian Strategy

UNICEF continues to work closely with the Government, WHO and other United Nations and humanitarian partners to provide technical guidance and support. In line with WHO’s COVID-19 Strategic Response Plan, UNICEF is focusing on limiting human-to-human transmission and mitigating the impact of the outbreak on the health system and communities.

UNICEF’s mix of response and preparedness activities include:
1. Facilitating risk communication as well as learning, play, and positive parenting communications;
2. Provisioning critical hygiene and medical supplies for healthcare;
3. Ensuring children, pregnant, and lactating women are supported with adequate healthcare despite the outbreak;
4. Mitigating secondary effects of the outbreak by facilitating continued access to education, child protection needs, including prevention of violence against children, and advocating for continued access to social protection programmes.

UNICEF’s Response

UNICEF is supporting COVID-19 coordination mechanisms nationally, and in regions, with technical expertise, planning, and communications, including participating in UN coordination groups for health procurement and socio-economic/early recovery and chairing the social protection and education group.

Communication for Social Change (C4SC) and External Communications

- UNICEF is supporting NCDC in carrying out risk communication and community engagement activities on COVID-19 in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe Javakheti regions, targeting ethnic minority populations. TV programmes continue airing through the partnership with the Association of Regional Media and local broadcasters: Marneuli TV, Parvana TV, and Tok TV. The TV programmes include news slots, in-depth interviews with NCDC representatives, and key experts on protection measures.
- A digital campaign for young people continued with renewed messages on how to live in the era of COVID-19, including the importance of social distancing and hygiene measures. The campaign involved TikTok influencers to amplify visibility, generating 41,000 views in the first 2 days after posting a video.
- The Facebook group for young people – Debates for Education – hosted its second virtual debate and follow up discussion on a topic selected by young people - whether or not it is advisable for Georgia to open its borders considering the threat of the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic.
- A campaign was launched to mobilize pregnant women for online consultations with physicians. The campaign includes interviews with pregnant women and doctors, as well as graphic animations, SMS notifications, public service announcements (PSAs) and media engagement.
- During the reporting week, UNICEF Georgia reached 174,733 people and engaged 3,472 people on topics about COVID-19.

Health, Nutrition and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

- UNICEF’s virtual antenatal care programme is expanding, increasing its reach to 6,340 pregnant women, of which 39% participated in virtual medical consultations.
- IPC training was conducted for 37 primary healthcare nurses and assistants in the Gulripshi district of the Abkhazia region.

Adolescents/youth

- An online survey to explore adolescents’ wellbeing, concerns and challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic is in progress.

Photo 3: Meeting with the PDO Representative of the Samtskhe-Javakheti region to discuss COVID-19 effects on children’s rights in the region.

Photo 4: Online consultation sessions are delivered to pregnant women about protective measures from COVID-19 during the antenatal period.
• 70 adolescents between 12 and 17 years of age, including adolescents from ethnic minority groups, participated in interactive sessions on stress and coaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as leadership, branding, and marketing, organized by UNICEF’s partner organization Kant’s Academy.
• UNICEF, in collaboration with the partner “Helping Hand”, initiated the development of the web-based platform to promote and encourage adolescent/youth volunteerism in Georgia, as well as the development of the training modules for the selected adolescent/youth volunteers.
• UNICEF is partnering with the “Global Initiative in Psychiatry” to provide online support to adolescents and their parents for managing the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic. The first webinar was delivered by field experts through a Facebook page, reaching 4,700 views.
• The “Global Initiative in Psychiatry” organized an online seminar for adolescents’ parents on the following topic: “How to Listen to be Understood and How to Talk to be Heard”, reaching 719 views.

Child Protection

• In partnership with the Parliament and State Care Agency, the UNICEF-supported child hotline “111” continues to provide assistance to children and their families, supporting 584 cases to date, of which 388 already received assistance and were closed accordingly.
• The UNICEF Representative held meetings with religious leaders of Orthodox and Armenian Apostolic Churches in Samtske-Javakheti region to discuss the protection and promotion of child rights, especially during emergencies.
• The UNICEF Representative met with the Public Defender’s Office (PDO) in Samtske-Javakheti region to define strategic directions of cooperation during the COVID-19 crisis, including support in identification and response to child rights violations.
• UNICEF partner, Initiative for Social Change, conducted online supervision meetings for more than 100 statutory social workers from the child protection and justice system during the reporting week. Some of the covered topics included: prevention of burn out, remote case management, and communication with beneficiaries.
• A Facebook page to support parents of children with disabilities continues to provide practical information, one-to-one counseling with specialists, and chats for parents and caregivers. During the reporting week, a special focus of the activities was support and education of children with language, speech and communication difficulties. The page has reached more than 60,000 people.
• Online psychological support was provided to 186 children and 115 caregivers in small group homes and foster care by UNICEF partner Children of Georgia. During the reporting week, the sessions covered the distress caused by COVID-19-related restrictions/isolation, the emotional state of children, altered daily routine contributing anxiety, conflict management, violence, and challenging behavior.
• Consultations and technical assistance were provided to service providers in daycare centres, (re)habilitation programmes, and home visitation services to gradually resume face-to-face service provision for children with disabilities.

Education

• UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia, EMIS1 and Georgian Coalition for Education for all (EFA) with the development of essential teaching and learning resources for online education of children during the COVID-19 pandemic.
• Interactive TV programmes for parents of young children, developed through the collaboration between UNICEF and Public Broadcasting TV Channel, continue to be shared on various web-platforms, including the educational resource web-page of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport (MoESCS) of Georgia.

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1 Education Management Information System
• Toolkits produced on early childhood development and school readiness are accessible for parents and caregivers at www.el.ge and are distributed through EFA social media, as well as through the media channels of MoESCS. These resources are also available on national minority languages.

• UNICEF’s bi-weekly episodes of bedtime story-readings continue to be streamed on local media platforms in Abkhazia.

Social Protection

• In partnership with the Prime Minister’s Office, State Ministry of Reconciliation and Equity and local authorities, UNICEF distributed essential food and hygiene items to 50 vulnerable households in Akhalkalaki.

• Simulations of cash transfer programmes for the alleviation of the COVID-19 impact are complete, and its findings were shared with the National Security Council for further review and actions.

• UNICEF is starting the MICS+ Real-Time Monitoring (RTM) Survey, which aims to monitor the situation of families in real-time, to understand how they are affected by the COVID-19. RTM is to be carried out through a high-frequency mobile phone based-survey using a sample of the population from MICS6.

Partnerships

UNICEF-

• is collaborating with the Prime Minister’s Office to provide needs-based support to the most vulnerable children and their families, including national minorities, and children with disabilities.

• developed and/or strengthened partnerships with public broadcasting and other TV and online channels to further amplify risk communication messages and enhance home-based learning and education.

• continues working with religious leaders to develop and implement COVID-19 response plans.

• continues its partnerships with the Education for All Coalition, an alliance of CSOs working on education, and a network of organizations working with children with disabilities and their families, contributing to distance learning efforts of the Government and provide needed support to families with children with disabilities.

• enhanced its partnership with the National Centre for Disease Control and Public Health (NCDC) on responding to COVID-19 pandemic through a Memorandum of Cooperation.

• partnered with UNHCR to improve the access to safe water and adequate hygiene for children and teachers in six schools in the Abkhazia region.

• is partnering with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) to reach selected schools in the Abkhazia region with hygiene materials.

• is discussing with the National Security Council areas for future cooperation.

• wishes to express its gratitude to donors supporting its response to COVID-19: Bulgaria, Estonia, the European Union, Korea, Norway, SIDA, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, UKAid, and USAID.

Human Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNICEF Personnel in Georgia CO</th>
<th>Tbilisi</th>
<th>Abkhazia</th>
<th>Total Staff Strength</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International Staff</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Staff</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Staff</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultants</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results to Date

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of people reached with critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items) and services</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>2,320</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Number of healthcare facilities staff and community health workers provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) | 800 | 550
---|---|---
Number of children supported with distance/home-based learning | 592,000 | 300,000
Number of children, parents and primary caregivers provided with community based mental health and psychosocial support | 5,350 | 6,789

**Funding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme Areas</th>
<th>Funding Needs</th>
<th>Funds Identified</th>
<th>Funding Gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Development of teaching and learning resources for distance learning</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>282,100</td>
<td>17,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Development of resources for parents for early learning and school readiness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Child Protection** | | | |
| • Development of resources to prevent violence against children | 514,000 | 260,650 | 253,350 |
| • Support to service providers within the child protection and justice systems to respond to COVID-19 and enable continued service provision | | | |
| • Support continued programming for children with disabilities | | | |
| • Support social workers in Abkhazia to provide services to vulnerable families | | | |

| **Health, Nutrition and WASH** | | | |
| • Procure essential supplies and equipment including COVID-19 test kits | 3,001,399 | 1,589,300 | 1,412,099 |
| • Support telemedicine to enable access to critical health services | | | |
| • Training of health professionals through telehealth | | | |
| • Development of regulations and standards in all health specialty areas for pregnant women, mothers, newborns and children | | | |
| • Improving access to WASH in schools in Abkhazia | | | |
| • Adolescent mental health and wellbeing | | | |

| **Social Policy** | | | |
| • Conduct shock-responsive feasibility assessment of the social protection system | 400,000 | 241,950 | 158,050 |
| • Conduct assessment of vulnerable and at-risk groups of children | | | |
| • Conduct a Real Time Monitoring survey | | | |

| **Risk Communication and Community Engagement** | | | |
| • Carry out a risk communication campaign | 200,000 | 200,000 | 0 |
| • Carry out #LearningatHome campaign to help parents in care and early learning opportunities of their children | | | |

**Grand Total**

| (Fundraising efforts ongoing to bridge the funding gap) | 4,415,399 | 2,574,000 | 1,841,399 |

Next Situation Report: 3 July 2020

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