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. The Parliament of Georgia passed a bill, which allows the Government to impose movement, labor, migration, economic and other restrictions without the declaration of a state of emergency. Travel restrictions remain in place until the end of July.

To date, Abkhazia, Georgia, reported 38 cases, with 36 recoveries and one death. A state of emergency was put in place on 28 March and was lifted as of 21 April. On 1 July, kindergartens were reopened, and the most social restrictions have eased. However, the Administrative Border Line and the border with Russia remain closed. The situation is to be re-assessed on 15 July.

HIGHLIGHTS

- UNICEF Representative and education team discussed with the Ministry of Education the strategy and practical steps for the safe reopening of schools.
- Under the framework of child rights protection and promotion, UNICEF organized seminars for religious leaders of Orthodox and Armenian Apostolic Churches to emphasize the role of religious leaders in upholding child rights, including during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- UNICEF, in partnership with the local representation of the Public Defender’s Office, conducted a workshop for community-based organizations of Akhalkalaki and Akhaltsikhe municipalities to improve the situation of children in difficult circumstances, including during the COVID-19-related crisis. Strategic actions were articulated to respond to emerging child rights issues and violations.
- Increased vulnerability of children to child labor due to COVID-19 was discussed in a workshop in Akhalkalaki with NGOs. UNICEF agreed with Public Defender's office and NGOs to conduct an assessment on child labor.
- UNICEF carried out a social media campaign to promote online consultations for pregnant women on COVID-19, involving a media release, an animated video, and a video address by the UNICEF Representative encouraging pregnant women to join the consultations. A webpage was created by NCDC dedicated to providing further support to the project.
- 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 around 610 cases to date, of which 415 already received assistance and were closed accordingly.

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

973
Confirmed cases
846
Recovered cases
15
Confirmed deaths
98
Confirmed cases among children (under 18 years)
4,851
Quarantined

UNICEF funding needs
US$ 4,415,399

UNICEF funding gap
US$ 1,841,399 (42%)

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. The Parliament of Georgia passed a bill, which allows the Government to impose movement, labor, migration, economic and other restrictions without the declaration of a state of emergency. Travel restrictions remain in place 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 continues risk communication and community engagement activities on COVID-19, targeting ethnic minority populations of Georgia. More than 45 COVID-19-related TV programs have aired through the partnership with the Association of Regional Media and local broadcasters on Marneuli TV, Parvana TV, and Tok TV.
• UNICEF is supporting NCDC to share COVID-19-related information in minority languages in Kvemo Kartli through religious leaders and women’s organizations in the region. Graphic animations, videos by religious leaders, and social media posters are under preparation.
• Through the technical assistance of UNICEF and WHO, the Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) working group produced a final version of the RCCE Strategy and the Plan of Action. The Strategy is a two-year country-tailored document on COVID-19 communication actions, and the Plan of Action is a detailed document that includes budgeted activities for 12 months to be carried out by the implementing agencies. The documents are to be submitted by NCDC to the Ministry of Labour, Health, and Social Protection for endorsement.
• UNICEF carried out a social media campaign to promote online consultations for pregnant women on COVID-19, involving a media release, an animated video, and a video address by the UNICEF Representative encouraging pregnant women to join the consultations. A webpage was created by NCDC dedicated to providing further support to the project.
• Advocacy on the reopening of schools continued with active media engagement. A press release, a video by the UNICEF Representative, and a social media post were released on the importance of school reopening, followed by the meeting with the Deputy Minister of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport of Georgia discussing the practical steps for the safe reopening of schools.
• A digital campaign for young people concluded its first phase, during which a Facebook group for youth was created comprising of 670 members aged 14-17. Important information about COVID-19 and other issues concerning adolescents, mostly using user-generated content, was shared within the group.
• During the reporting week, UNICEF Georgia reached 182,098 people and engaged 5,085 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 8,248 pregnant women, of which 36% participated in virtual medical consultations.
- Infection prevention and control (IPC) training was conducted for 15 primary healthcare nurses and assistants in the Gulriphi district of the Abkhazia region.
- 2,700 leaflets, 55 posters, and 2,000 brochures were produced on pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding within the context of COVID-19 and are being distributed to maternity hospitals and pediatric polyclinics throughout Abkhazia.

Adolescents/youth

- A total of 240 adolescents between 12 and 17 years of age from various regions of Georgia, including ethnic and religious minorities, participated in online interactive sessions organized by UNICEF’s partner organization Kant’s Academy. During the reporting week, the sessions covered the following topics: types of leadership, planning, and implementing business and stress management and relationships between parents and adolescents.
- An online survey to explore adolescents’ wellbeing, concerns, and challenges during COVID-19 lockdown is in progress.
- A total of 90 adolescents participated in a webinar led by the founder of the “We Make Change” global platform - James Sancto. The topic of the webinar was: social entrepreneurship and defining the goals for future life in the age of adolescence.
- UNICEF’s partner, Helping Hand, selected 150 volunteers for the youth volunteering project, facilitating their participation in training sessions, webinars, and volunteering events in their respective communities. A series of meetings and discussions were conducted with international partners and trainers on select training topics. The development of a volunteering web-platform is in progress.
- UNICEF’s partner, Global Initiative in Psychiatry, continues a series of online webinars for adolescents and their parents. During the reporting week, webinars covered the following topics: what should we know about adolescent mental and behavioral disorders, reaching 5,000 views; stress associated with upcoming exams, reaching 8,500 views; and what parents need to know about youth substance abuse, reaching 3,000 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 around 610 cases to date, of which 415 already received assistance and were closed accordingly.
- UNICEF’s partner, Initiative for Social Change, conducted online supervision meetings with over 210 statutory social workers, including 175 from the social protection system and 35 from the justice system. Some of the covered topics included: effective remote communication, existing services and resources map, working at home, stress and time management, guidelines on child protection during the pandemic, and preventing professional burnout.
- A Facebook page to support parents of children with disabilities, run by UNICEF’s partner organization, MAC Georgia, continues to provide practical information, one-to-one counseling with specialists, and chats for parents and caregivers. During the reporting week, activities focused on supporting parents to deal with children’s physical development, the proper use of wheelchairs, and support to children with sensory impairments.
- Through group and individual sessions, UNICEF partner’s - Children of Georgia provided online psychological support to 191 children and 119 caregivers in small group homes and foster care, in all regions of Georgia.
- With the support of UNICEF, the social services for children with disabilities resume working in a regular face-to-face modality. The preparatory work for the development of the remote service model for the Government of Georgia is underway.
- Under the framework of child rights protection and promotion, UNICEF organized seminars for religious leaders of Orthodox and Armenian Apostolic Churches on 8-11 July in Akhalkalaki. The seminars covered: UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Georgian Code on the Rights of the Child, stages of child development, violence against children, right to education, social norms that hinder the effective implementation of child rights, protection of children in difficult situations, vaccination, and youth-related topics. The emphasis was put on the role of religious leaders in upholding child rights, including during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- On 10 July, UNICEF, in partnership with the local representation of the Public Defender’s Office, conducted a workshop for community-based organizations of Akhalkalaki and Akhaltsikhe municipalities to improve the
situation of children in difficult circumstances, including the COVID19-related crisis. Strategic actions were articulated to respond to emerging child rights issues and violations.

- Increased vulnerability of children to child labor due to COVID-19 was discussed in a workshop in Akhalkalaki with NGOs. UNICEF agreed with Public Defender’s office and NGOs to conduct an assessment on child labor.

**Education**

- UNICEF Representative led a seminar with a partner organization - Kant’s Academy, on the role of UNICEF during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Representative of UNICEF Georgia and education team met with the Deputy Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia to discuss the strategy and practical steps for the safe reopening of schools.
- 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 of Georgia.
- UNICEF’s bi-weekly episodes of bedtime story-readings continue to be streamed on local media platforms in Abkhazia.
- UNICEF provided infrared thermometers, hygiene items, and universal surface disinfectants to 39 kindergartens in Abkhazia to facilitate safe reopening.

**Social Protection**

- Simulations of cash transfer programmes for the alleviation of the COVID-19 impact are complete, and its findings together with the social protection system readiness assessment report were shared with the National Security Council, Administration of the Government of Georgia, Economic Advisor to the Prime Minister, Advisor on Human Rights and Gender Equality, and Deputy Ministers for MOIDPLHSA2 further review and actions.
- UNICEF is starting the MICS+ real-time monitoring (RTM) survey which aims to monitor the situation of families to understand how they are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. 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.

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1 Education Management Information System
2 Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia
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>
<tr>
<td>Number of healthcare facilities staff and community health workers provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of healthcare facility staff and community health workers trained in infection prevention and control (IPC)</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children, parents and primary caregivers provided with community based mental health and psychosocial support</td>
<td>5,350</td>
<td>6,789</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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>300,000</td>
<td>282,100</td>
<td>17,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Development of teaching and learning resources for distance learning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Development of resources for parents for early learning and school readiness</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Child Protection</strong></td>
<td>514,000</td>
<td>260,650</td>
<td>253,350</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Development of resources to prevent violence against children</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Support to service providers within the child protection and justice systems to respond to COVID-19 and enable continued service provision</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Support continued programming for children with disabilities</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Support social workers in Abkhazia to provide services to vulnerable families</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health, Nutrition and WASH</strong></td>
<td>3,001,399</td>
<td>1,589,300</td>
<td>1,412,099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Procure essential supplies and equipment including COVID-19 test kits</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Support telemedicine to enable access to critical health services</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Training of health professionals through telehealth</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Development of regulations and standards in all health specialty areas for pregnant women, mothers, newborns and children</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Improving access to WASH in schools in Abkhazia</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Adolescent mental health and wellbeing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Social Policy</strong></td>
<td>400,000</td>
<td>241,950</td>
<td>158,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Conduct shock-responsive feasibility assessment of the social protection system</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Conduct assessment of vulnerable and at-risk groups of children</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Conduct a Real Time Monitoring survey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Risk Communication and Community Engagement</strong></td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Carry out a risk communication campaign</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
• Carry out #LearningatHome campaign to help parents in care and early learning opportunities of their children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grand Total</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Fundraising efforts ongoing to bridge the funding gap)</td>
<td>4,415,399</td>
<td>2,574,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next Situation Report: 17 July 2020

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