



## UNICEF Europe & Central Asia Region (ECAR)

### Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

#### Situation Report No. 4



15 – 21 April 2020

#### Highlights

UNICEF works for children and adolescents in 22 countries and territories<sup>1</sup> in Europe and Central Asia Region (ECAR). UNICEF is also present in Italy, supporting refugee and migrant populations.

- All but two countries (Tajikistan and Turkmenistan) have reported COVID-19 cases. This week, Turkey, Romania, Serbia, Ukraine and Belarus reported the highest numbers of confirmed cases. While most countries are still experiencing increases, Montenegro has cautiously reported a levelling off. Armenia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan are introducing steps to gradually resume economic and social life.
- On 16 April, UNICEF's Executive Director declared the activation of a Global Level 3 Scale-Up of the Corporate Emergency for the COVID-19 pandemic. The activation confirms UNICEF's commitment to addressing the pandemic and accordingly, UNICEF in ECAR has mobilised the entirety of its expertise, leadership, staff and resources to strengthen the timely, effective and predictable delivery of support to children and families in the region.
- Wide-scale lockdowns, social distancing, and the sudden diversion of resources to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic have seriously interrupted routine health, education and social services for children and families. This week, newly operationalized and ongoing alternate modes of service delivery exemplify innovation and flexibility in programme design and partnerships. UNICEF's technical expertise was essential in supporting the:
  - Dissemination of advice to parents on child health and nutrition via social media channels, including livestreams with medical experts (Albania, Azerbaijan, Croatia, Georgia, Kosovo\*, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, North Macedonia, Turkey).
  - Capacity building of home-visiting nurses and others so they can continue providing essential support to vulnerable children and families by phone and digital means (Greece, Kosovo\*, Serbia).
  - Mobilization of over 12,000 Syrian volunteer education personnel in Turkey, using Rapid-Pro to disseminate COVID-19 information and messages on distance learning within the refugee community – which includes 680,000 Syrian children enrolled in public school.
  - Launch of the "Learning Passport" initiative in collaboration with Microsoft, Cambridge University and the Ministry of Education. Kosovo\* is one of the first three offices rolling out its online curriculum through the Learning Passport.
  - Launch of a tele-medicine platform giving medical support to non-COVID-19 patients (Montenegro).



**130,017 COVID-19 cases** in 22 countries\*\*



**3,248 COVID-19 deaths** in 22 countries\*\*



**50.1 million children** affected by COVID-19-related school and learning centre closure



**US \$38 million** funding requirement for ECAR response

<sup>1</sup> Albania, Armenia, Armenia, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Greece, Kazakhstan, Kosovo\* (References to Kosovo are in line with UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR 1244), Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan

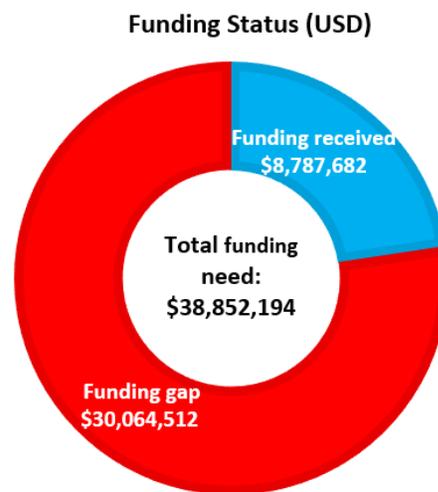
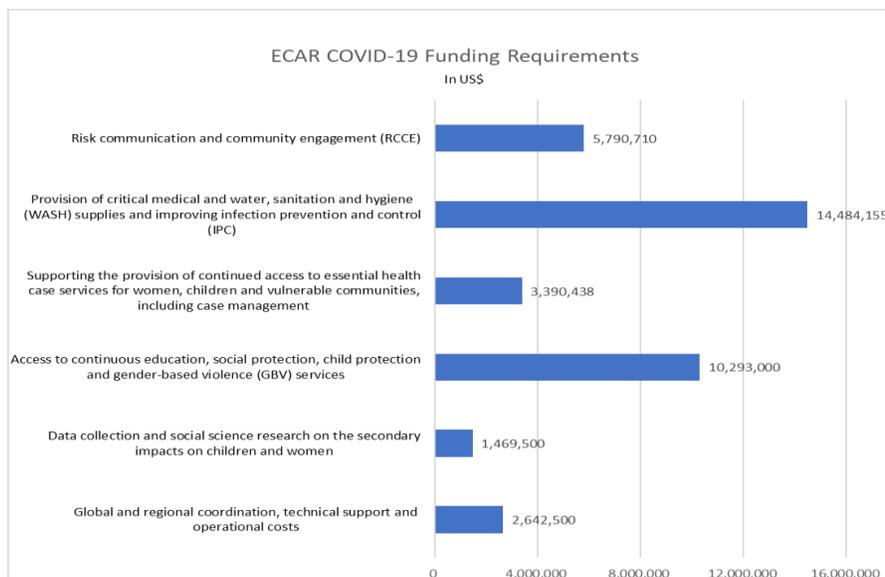
\*\* Source: World Health Organization (WHO) 6 April 2020. Figures do not include Italy.

## Funding Overview and Partnerships

Under UNICEF’s Global Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) for the COVID-19 response, Europe and Central Asia is appealing for a little over **\$38 million**. Against this target, the Region has raised nearly **\$8.8 million<sup>2</sup>** or **22.6%** of required funding.

Around 86% of contributions received to date by UNICEF in ECAR are from public sector donors, including Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Important discussions continue with several others at country and regional level, including the European Union, Luxembourg and Portugal. Critical support has also been leveraged from intergovernmental agencies including The Global Partnership for Education, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA). International financial institutions (IFIs) continue to represent an important partner, with the Asian Development Bank standing out as an early, significant supporter for COVID-19 response in Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Discussions are ongoing with the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the European Investment Bank (EIB), the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), and the World Bank (WB) on COVID-19 economic resilience and health preparedness partnerships with Governments and support to social assistance and social protection programmes for vulnerable communities.

Support from individuals and private sector companies is particularly important in a region where countries are typically upper middle - income or high-income economies. Private sector partners that have expressed timely support, include: ABInBev, Armeria Bank, Bonjormi, the Botnar Foundation, Citibank, Facebook, J&T investment bank, itransition, MEGOGO TV, Microsoft, Nordeus, Tele2, Unilever, Wargaming, and others. Chambers of Commerce members, institutional business partnerships and Business Advisory Council members are also serving as peer influencers and champions in UNICEF’s COVID-19 private sector appeal in Belarus, Bulgaria, and Serbia. This week, UNICEF also continued to work closely with UNICEF National Committees in Denmark, Italy, Sweden, and the US. UNICEF efforts in Serbia to tap into the diaspora in the UK and US, could serve as a model for fundraising efforts in other countries.



## Situation Overview and Humanitarian Needs

Most countries in ECAR are reporting increasing rates of confirmed COVID-19 cases, and for some, the trend is exacting a heavy toll on the health system, in terms of increased infection rates among workers and in the diversion of health resources towards fighting the pandemic. Some countries have intensified their response to spikes in infection rates by imposing stricter quarantine measures on the most affected areas, at times generating additional hardship. For example, in Bulgaria as more COVID-19 cases were identified in Roma neighbourhoods, additional measures to restrict the movement of people and disproportionately negative media coverage, has fuelled discrimination and fear.

In contrast, the situation seems to be stabilizing in some countries. Montenegro has the highest rate of testing per capita in the Region, and very strict lockdown measures which were observed even over the Orthodox Easter weekend. As infection

<sup>2</sup> List of donors available on request

rates ease, the Government is discussing the possibility to soften some of the restrictive measures. Kazakhstan and Serbia identified types of shops and businesses that could resume operations in the week of 20 April, with established sanitary and epidemiological measures in place. In Belarus, where social distancing remains an issue, schools reopened on 20 April after a three-week break. Parents are given the opportunity to choose whether they allow their children to participate in school. The Ministry of Education is reviewing options to address these on-going issues. Alongside business and social services, Armenia is planning to restart schools, and UNICEF is facilitating coordination meetings on their gradual reopening.

Tajikistan has tested around 2,000 people, with negative results. While there are still no reported cases, the impact of travel restrictions has been felt, for example, in the rising cost of food. UNICEF continues to support activities in preparation for an outbreak, including to through the EU to meet education and health needs that may be impacted by COVID-19. While Turkmenistan also has no reported cases, strict testing procedures are in place for travellers with relatively fast turnaround times and certification. Services such as routine immunization are reported to be carried out as normal.

Economic slowdowns, social distancing and confinement measures pose serious threats to children's health, wellbeing and protection. COVID-19 has revealed the risk of abuse, exploitation and violence, that children and women are exposed to. UNICEF is particularly concerned about children living in conflict-affected areas, and in overcrowded conditions in refugee reception centres, or institutions, where, without the needed support to parents and childcare staff, children's vulnerabilities multiply.

Among the refugee and migrant population accommodated offshore in Greece, three sites continued to be quarantined. At one of these, tensions have escalated to a point that the Hellenic National Public Health Organization (EODY) cannot enter. Over the past days, as testing was scaled up in a refugee and migrant accommodation site where 148 asylum seekers tested positive<sup>3</sup>, the number of confirmed cases in the refugee and migrant community has increased from 42 to 162. An interagency SMS questionnaire revealed that refugees and migrants most feared an increase in domestic violence and child abuse and stigmatization of the sick. Severe overcrowding, lack of mobility, lack of PPE, and quarantine measures hinder delivery of services to children and families among the refugee and migrant population. In Italy several cases of COVID-19 have also been reported at reception centres, informal settlements and among new arrivals. A lockdown decree has been imposed on all locations.

Turkey hosts the world's largest refugee population, which includes 680,000 Syrian children enrolled in public school. Turkey has, in total, 19 million children whose learning has been interrupted as a result of temporary school closures. The extraordinary scale of Turkey's school-going child population generated a nationally coordinated response, reinforced by targeted interventions drawn from the refugee community. The Ministry of National Education's adaptation the Education Information Network for learners in Turkey has ensured continuous distance learning via television or digital platform. Over 12,000 Syrian volunteer education personnel were mobilized through Rapid-Pro to disseminate COVID-19 information and to the refugee community on accessing distance learning. Approximately 4,500 Syrian and Turkish families in Southeast Turkey are contacted daily (via phone or WhatsApp) by one of more than 200 teachers or early childhood education (ECE) practitioners who give advice and guidance on activities parents can do with their children during the lockdown. UNICEF and its partners are working to ensure the continuation of community-based child protection services for 70,000 refugee and migrant children as well as for children from vulnerable Turkish families, via virtual counselling and case management through email, text messaging, online chat, or mobile phone.

In Kosovo\*, the impact of the pandemic has been exacerbated by political tensions which saw the Government of the Prime Minister losing a no-confidence vote brought by one of its own coalition. Many people have expressed disappointment and anger that parties and leaders have failed to unite to address COVID-19. In the meantime, poor families most affected by the sudden and steep economic downturn have found social benefits are not keeping up with the rapidly increasing price of food.

**Partnerships & Coordination:** In many ECAR countries, the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) is taking a leadership role in activating sector coordination mechanisms and ensuring a concerted approach between the UN, Government, key partners and donors. In some countries, UNICEF leads UN coordination on the response (e.g., Bulgaria, Romania, Turkmenistan). UNICEF is an active participant in UN coordination mechanisms and is providing inputs into COVID-19 national-level preparedness and response plans, and related discussions on reducing longer-term socio-economic impacts.

Across ECA Region, UNICEF is leading, co-leading or supporting sector specific COVID-19 task forces or working groups, including: Child Protection, including children with disabilities (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Romania, Serbia, Turkey); Education (Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova,

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<sup>3</sup> 497 people were reportedly tested at a hotel accommodating 470 asylum seekers. 148 asylum-seekers tested positive for COVID-19, all of them asymptomatic

Tajikistan, Turkey, Uzbekistan); Food Security and Logistics (Kyrgyzstan); Gender and gender-based violence (GBV) (Armenia, Moldova, Serbia); Health/ Nutrition (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan); Infection, Prevention and Control Capacity (Serbia); Health Procurement (Moldova, Uzbekistan); Psychosocial Support (Armenia); Risk Communication (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Montenegro, Kazakhstan, Romania, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Uzbekistan); Socio-economic impact, e.g., cash transfer, social protection (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo\*, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan); and WASH (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan).

UNICEF co-leads or supports task force and working groups in partnership with IOM, WHO, IFRC, UNDP, UNHCR, UNESCO, UN Women, among others. Over the reporting period, partnerships have emerged with religious leaders, for example, in Georgia, where UNICEF is working on COVID-19 response plans with the Patriarchate of the Orthodox Church and the Administration of All Muslims of Georgia. New or strengthened partnerships are focusing on three areas of where UNICEF's technical expertise is supporting Governments and leveraging the strengths of implementing partners on the ground and coordination with donors and other partners.

In Turkey within existing Regional Refugee and Resilience (3RP) response coordination, UNICEF and other are prioritizing 3RP activities to limit impact of COVID-19 on refugee and migrant population and vulnerable host communities, as well as on implementation of planned 3RP activities. In Ukraine, overall coordination for nationwide COVID response is led by the Resident Coordinator (RC) and WHO, with the complimentary support of UNOCHA who is coordinating the COVID-19 related activities in conflict affected Eastern Ukraine. UNICEF actively participates in both.

## Summary of UNICEF's ECA Region Preparedness and Response Actions

**Supplies:** Supply chains, especially for personal protective equipment (PPE) have been severely disrupted as a result of global stock outs, and suspension of most international flights. While some supplies were delivered this week, updates on the arrival of the processing of offshore procurement orders already placed are pending.

This week, UNICEF delivered: PPE (including aprons, boot covers, coveralls, gloves, masks, protective) to children and staff in residential institutions, emergency-services workers, health workers, NGO volunteers, police and probation officers, penitentiary staff, social workers, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Croatia, Kosovo\*, and Kyrgyzstan; hygiene items (including disinfectant, hygiene kits, sanitizers, kits, soap) to children and staff in residential institutions, health workers, hospital patients, police and probation officers, penitentiary staff, social workers, and vulnerable families in Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Croatia, Italy, Kosovo\*, Moldova, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey; IT equipment (tablets, mobile phones) to mental health workers, providing community-level remote children and families in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**Provision of Healthcare and Nutrition Services:** Monday marked the launch of UNICEF-WHO European Immunization Week (EIW) aimed at promoting use of vaccines to protect people of all ages against disease. The pandemic has revealed the vulnerability of public health everywhere, and the vital importance that routine immunization programmes continue during this crisis, while adequately protecting health workers and individuals receiving vaccinations. UNICEF remains focused on ensuring health and nutrition services assure children's health equally covers antenatal care, newborns and early childhood development.

- In Albania, UNICEF, WHO and the Institute of Public Health (IPH), are monitoring the impact of COVID-19 on immunization coverage and planning for adequate vaccine supply for re-start and catch up of immunization when movement is allowed. UNICEF is working with national partners and UN Agencies on a technical note that would facilitate financial and in-kind contributions from the food and beverage companies.
- In Azerbaijan, distribution of key messages on immunization and other aspects of child health (breast feeding, child nutrition, pregnancy) developed with UNICEF's support, were widely distributed via print and social media channels. UNICEF supported Regional Development Public Union launching parenting health counselling and education on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). Live online sessions with ECD professionals covered topics including Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) during the COVID-19 emergency.
- In Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNICEF translated and shared FAQ on immunization with relevant partners as part of European immunization week activities. UNICEF distributed translated guidance on breastfeeding, immunization and mother and newborn child health to relevant Ministries of Health. UNICEF is supporting a modified continuation of nutrition and breastfeeding services for children and families living in refugee and migrant temporary reception centres.
- In Kazakhstan, UNICEF conducted an online preparatory meeting with Astana Medical University to develop online trainings on child illness including pneumonia, infection control, and oxygen therapy. UNICEF is also supporting a technical working group to draft an algorithm on perinatal care in the COVID-19 context.

- In Kosovo\*, UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Health and IPH to identify options to resume regular immunization.
- In Moldova, UNICEF is helping to reach parents with messages related to breastfeeding and IYCF in context of COVID-19 through a livestream organized jointly with WHO, Institute of Mother and Child Health and breastfeeding counsellors.
- In Montenegro, guidance on continuation of routine immunization services, on IYCF and on accepting food donations was shared with the MoH and IPH with a call for continuing some routine services, especially immunization. UNICEF also supported the Clinical Centre of Montenegro to launch a new telemedicine platform and a call centre that now provides medical support to patients on health issues not related to COVID-19.
- In Romania, UNICEF launched and distributed a national position paper on breastfeeding in the COVID-19 context and is currently developing materials related to the protection and care of children with disabilities, pregnant women and for the continuity of health services by general practitioners.
- In Serbia, UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Health and the Association of Roma Health Mediators, to intensify their contacts with families through proactive phone calls and by providing information about COVID-19 prevention. Technical support has been provided to home-visiting nurses and early childhood interventions teams, so they can continue their critical work in reaching out to children and families, newborns and children with disabilities.
- In Tajikistan, UNICEF, WHO and WFP have been providing technical assistance in adaptation of management of child wasting programme in the context of COVID-19.
- In Uzbekistan, the Republican Perinatal Center is closed for quarantine after detection of COVID-19 in a patient.

#### **Infection, Protection and Control (IPC)/WASH Services:**

- In Albania, UNICEF in collaboration with IPH completed a [booklet on key hygiene practices](#). These were distributed to vulnerable families who had received hygiene kits this week .
- In Armenia, UNICEF supported the Government in planning and organizing the safe return to school after the restrictions are lifted. The Minister of Health released an order and guidance (translated by UNICEF) for schools and preschools on COVID-19 preventive disinfection measures of all facilities.
- In Moldova, UNICEF launched consultations with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research (MECR), the Ministry of Justice and managers of health facilities, placement centres and CSOs on rapid identification of needs in hygiene and WASH supply.
- In Turkey, UNICEF provided hygiene items (soap, sanitary pads, wet wipes, paper tissues) to Edirne provincial directorate of AFAD for 50 women and children accommodated in two Ministry of Youth and Sport centers for 14 days quarantine, following return from abroad and relocation from makeshift settlement at the Turkish border with Greece at Pazarkule.
- In Turkmenistan, UNICEF is supporting a hand-washing campaign together with Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) aimed at school children and the wider population. UNICEF is exploring low technology options to improve the WASH situation in schools in deprived areas with no access to running water.

**Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE):** UNICEF is transmitting behavioural messages to children, young people, parents, teachers on a range of topics (COVID-19 prevention, health, hygiene, immunization, mental health, coping mechanisms, positive parenting, early childhood education, nutrition, learning), in diverse language, through posters, mass media (television, radio) social media (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok) and websites.

During this reporting period, UNICEF-supported activities RCCE activities were strengthened with the announcement of new or re-launched partnerships, including: in Armenia with UNDP SDG Lab initiative in partnership with the Deputy Prime Minister's Office; in Azerbaijan with the Regional Development Public Union; in Georgia with public broadcasting and other TV channels; in Kazakhstan in coordination with USAID and International Federation of the Red Cross/Red Crescent (IFRC); in Turkmenistan with the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry (MoHMI) the State Committee on TV, Radio Broadcasting and Cinematography and Women's Union. UNICEF continues to support Ministries of Health and Public Health Centre's with informational materials on COVID-19 and content development for government communication channels.

- In Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Uzbekistan UNICEF translated and contextualized global content of COVID-19 updates and information, producing and disseminating well-received local content.
- In Albania, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia,

Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine UNICEF continued engage tens of thousands of parents and children participating in [#LearnAtHome](#), [#StayAtHomes](#), [#FunAtHome](#) campaigns via social media. UNICEF deployed several strategies to sustain and attract interest in the campaign, for example, engaging celebrities and influencers to interact with target audiences, like in Turkey where a live Instagram discussion was conducted with UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Tuba Büyüküstün on UNICEF Turkey Instagram providing tips on how to spend time with children at home during COVID-19.

- In Turkey, UNICEF supported a wide range of RCCE, targeting children, youth and adolescents and their families (parents and caregivers) as well as refugee and migrant groups with information on protection from COVID-19 infection, coping with effects of self-isolation at home, protecting and promoting mental health and wellbeing as well as better adapting to distance learning during the time of nation-wide school closure. Over 900,000 people, including refugees, were reached via social media channels with a wide range of COVID-19 prevention messages to help children and families mitigate the effects of the virus on health, learning, and psycho-social wellbeing.
- In Ukraine, as part of solidarity campaign [#ThankDoctors](#), UNICEF prepared a video statement where Ukrainian doctors and nurses are calling Ukrainians to celebrate Orthodox Easter at home. With Ministry of Health, UNICEF launched [chatbot Ivan Mask](#) Facebook, Telegram and Viber to answer the most popular questions on COVID-19 and provide daily updates.

**Engaging Adolescents and Young People:** UNICEF develops youth-specific initiatives that acknowledge young people's challenges within the COVID-19 pandemic, including isolation and an uncertain future and aim to empower young people and ensure their voices for positive change are heard.

- In Albania, Italy, Moldova, Serbia, Ukraine Uzbekistan polls launched via U-Report continued to be widely used with more young people becoming U-Reporters expressing opinions on issues that matter to them.
- In Armenia, UNICEF mobilized adolescents at home, representing a range of geographic regions, ethnic backgrounds, and talents, to share stories that help build resilience and solidarity. Jointly with UNDP, UWC and a local partner UNICEF will deliver the GENU-Youth Challenge mostly online.
- In Azerbaijan, 60 adolescents from four districts enrolled in a real-time messaging-based Basic Life Skills session, acquiring skills in problem solving and decision-making around concerns over isolation from friends and disruption of educational and social environment
- In Bosnia and Herzegovina, based on U-Report poll on information resources on COVID-19, 86% of surveyed population think they are adequately informed on COVID-19.
- In Belarus, a webinar for volunteers, adolescents and medical students on COVID-19 and mental health issues for peer-to-peer counselling process was conducted.
- In Bulgaria, in response to negative online trends like cyberbullying, UNICEF launched an online Knowledge, Attitudes, Beliefs and Practices (KABP) survey to evaluate how isolation affects adolescents and informs new programmatic and communication actions. The study highlighted positive trends such as digital activism and volunteering.
- In Croatia, the activation of an online design thinking workshop on COVID-19 is underway for UNICEF's 109 junior advisors.
- In Kazakhstan, 160 young people participated in webinars on identifying myths, combating spread of COVID-19 misinformation.
- In Kosovo\* (UNSCR 1244), the [#StayConnected](#) social media campaign focusing on young people engagement reached over 10,000 people.
- In Moldova, 600 young people participated in a webinar on "How to Identify Fake News" conducted with media experts in partnership with the National Press Council and [StopFals](#) portal and the National Youth Councils of Moldova.
- In Montenegro, the Association of Scouts continued their programme "Start an Adventure in your own Home" with six weeks of activities for young people (competition, an online quiz, live chat with scout members and professionals). Under the UNICEF-supported UPSHIFT programme, the Youth Innovation Lab will launch its study-support programme [#StudyBuddy](#) which will match adolescents with younger peers to help them with homework and study.
- In North Macedonia, UNICEF kicked off an online workshop for volunteer UNICEF Youth Reporters, engaging 18 volunteers to develop stories on how young people are coping with COVID-19.
- In Romania, UNICEF hosted a Facebook livestream with the Country Representative to find out more about the challenges and solutions identified by young people during COVID-19.

- In Serbia, UNICEF launched an online [peer-volunteer platform](#) to help adolescents and young people cope with the pandemic, with 317 volunteers applying in one week. Through the platform, young people are engaging as peer volunteers.
- In Ukraine, UNICEF-supported online communities like UPSHIFT continued to engage young people in pandemic response, promoting opportunities for young people to meaningfully engage (Reboot Health and Wellbeing Challenge), stay resilient ([#CopewithCOVID](#) webinars), and share positive experiences through blogging (media literacy practices).
- In Tajikistan, adolescents attending the UNICEF Innovation Lab at the Centres of Additional Education initiated production of multi-use masks for children, teachers and vulnerable groups of community.
- In Turkey, with Ministry of Youth and Sports, UNICEF developed a ‘youth package’ that includes learning resources, a “Mahalle” (community) support mechanism concept for youth volunteers to support peers and communities to respond to the pandemic.

**Access to Continuous Learning:** support to alternative forms of learning where classrooms are no longer an option continues to be at the centre of UNICEF advocacy and action to ensure all children have equal access to distance learning. Several initiatives aim to enable parents to support children, including pre-schoolers, with no options but home learning.

- In Albania, UNICEF will support Akedemi.al, the only open source digital platform working under agreement with the Ministry of Education (MoE), to better reach the most vulnerable children, comply with accessibility digital standards, expand to include pre-schoolers and prepare students for yearend exams. Albania is holding back to school discussions with MoE on elements covering school sanitization, academic achievement and catch up and psychosocial support.
- In Armenia, UNICEF continues to support the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports to improve the online learning system, and has partnered with the National Centre for Education Technologies to accelerate production of video-lessons being broadcasted on national and local TV and digital skills of teachers.
- In Azerbaijan, the parenting education [portal](#) and cell phone app for parents, [ilk5il](#), joint initiatives between the MoE, the Institute of Education and UNICEF, completed the first week of operation, providing information on early development, education and child wellbeing accessed by an estimated 1,000 parents and family members.
- In Belarus, UNICEF has observed that not all children could benefit from remote learning as only 78% of children have computers. The reopening of schools on 20 April (up until May 30) has however attracted mounting public opposition.
- In Bulgaria, UNICEF published a [video on e-learning](#) and 12 principles for participating in a digital classroom.
- In Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNICEF is supporting MoE to ensure continuous learning for all children including living in poverty and with disabilities who do not have access to adequate ICT, and to improve quality of online learning by enabling monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and implementing professional development programmes for teachers.
- In Croatia 55 pre-school children with communication disabilities and their parents were included in the piloting of UNICEF supported Augmentative and Alternative Communication to enable access to ECI professionals by mail and/or telephone.
- In Greece, UNICEF partners supported MoE to register children in camps to the online public education platform. UNICEF is working to enhance virtual capacities to ensure children’s continuous access to education, particularly for the quarantined sites of Malakasa and Ritsona. UNICEF supported partner NGOs to organize online lessons for children, while updating parents about their children’s progress. Educational podcasts continue in nearly all sites where UNICEF is present.
- In Kazakhstan, UNICEF coordinated remotely with MoE, UNESCO and trainers to arrange school safety workshops for multi-graded schools (mainly in remote and/or rural areas). Trainers are selected and content defined to conduct a series of on-line sessions for education specialists, psychologists and school management on COVID-19, role of medical nurses in schools, key sanitary requirements for school administrators and advice to parents and students.
- In Kosovo\* (UNSCR 1244), UNICEF launched the Learning Passport Initiative in collaboration with Microsoft, University of Cambridge and MoE. Kosovo\*, Ukraine and Timor-Leste are the three pioneering offices rolling out online curriculum through the Learning Passport. With UNICEF support, 28 pre-school educators were trained on good nutrition practice for children aged 0-6. UNICEF is partnering with local NGOs to provide ECD to marginalized rural children in Mitrovica Region.
- In Montenegro, UNICEF is cooperating with MoE to support the Red Cross to help Roma children access education materials and bring school routines in their households through inclusive distance/home-based learning.
- In North Macedonia, UNICEF helped establish the “Eduino” learning platform which disseminated several hundred education videos (developed by the Ministry for Education and Science) to pre-school and primary school-aged children.

- In Romania, in response to a survey in which parents revealed they were spending nearly 37% more time with their children due to confinement, and with a third interested in receiving parenting information to help them cope, UNICEF has partnered with Holtis Association and Step by Step Association to deliver a parenting support plan.
- In Serbia, with UNICEF's support, a 15-member distance learning support team for teachers is being established within the Institute for the Improvement of Education. The team will be helping teachers improve their online learning practices.
- In Tajikistan, while schools were never closed, UNICEF is helping Government to review financial impact on the education sector and budget. The National Education Preparedness Response Plan was finalized and shared by Ministry of Education and Science with the Prime Minister as a guiding document for education response by the National Interagency Task Force.
- In Turkey, UNICEF is providing financial and technical support to Ministry of National Education to ensure that the technical capacity and infrastructure of the national distance learning program is adequate to meet the increased demand for online learning opportunities targeting 19 million learners in Turkey, including over 680,000 Syrian refugee children enrolled in the public education system. UNICEF's supported the Arabic translation of messages and videos produced on the national distance learning programme for refugee children and parents. All existing UNICEF ECE programs have been converted into distance learning modalities. Strong synergies have also been established with the Child Protection Working Group for the dissemination of ECE parental support materials.
- In Ukraine, UNICEF started collaborating on the All-Ukrainian TV School on distance learning launched by the government of Ukraine. UNICEF supports the production of lessons and videos for preschool and primary school children and is working on adaptations for children with visual impairments.

**Access to Child Protection and Preventing Violence:** UNICEF continues to provide support around child protection and preventing violence, with a focus on the most vulnerable, including children in institutions, children without parental care, and children in the justice system.

- In Albania, UNICEF developed technical guidance for educational authorities to incorporate child protection considerations before, during and after establishment of e-learning platforms. UNICEF is supporting institutions to take precautions to prevent spread of COVID-19, particularly those working with most vulnerable children, including in juvenile detention.
- In Armenia, UNICEF is cooperating with MoLSA, Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports, Police to identify and address protection and education needs of children vulnerable due to COVID-19 pandemic, including children in residential care institutions and detention facilities, and those left without parental care and requiring alternative care arrangements, including through advocacy to strengthen the emergency foster care system.
- In Azerbaijan, a UNICEF-supported pilot in three districts on integrated community-based social services successfully reached the most vulnerable families through face to face contact, with 39 children and seven adults receiving counselling services through audio or video call, messaging and Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) services. Psychological support covered stress management, and prevention of aggression and violence.
- In Bulgaria, UNICEF is ensuring Child Advocacy Centres providing integrated legislative, medical, psychological, therapeutic, and social services for child victims of violence, and Family Community Support Centres follow emergency measures, develop appropriate protocols and guidelines and provide additional support related to the COVID-19 situation. This week, in five municipalities, 93 children and 80 parents were provided with support. UNICEF is also working with partners to provide support to the most vulnerable refugee and migrant persons who live outside of reception centres, including 456 GBV survivors and individuals at-risk who were able to access GBV services and information.
- In Croatia, UNICEF is cooperating with line ministries to conduct webinars for front line social workers on case management and support to families at risk. The ministry is carrying out a rapid needs assessment to ensure relevant, tailored webinars according to priority need related to mental health and psychosocial services and violence against children.
- In Georgia, UNICEF through the NGO Children of Georgia, is enabling psychological support to children and their caregivers in small group homes, foster care and state institutions; with "Initiative for Social Change" is developing COVID-19 guidelines for social workers representing child protection and justice systems and with MAC Foundation is working with national TV broadcaster to produce a TV show supporting children with disabilities and their parents.
- In Greece, UNICEF established an emergency accommodation facility for unaccompanied children in Moria Reception Identification Center (RIC) in Lesvos, where this week, seven children were placed. UNICEF, through its partner NGO, is providing on-site support (3 days a week) to 12 out of 14 communities in Open Sites and UAC outside Safe Zones, and remote support to quarantined sites of Malakasa and Ritsona.

- In Italy, UNICEF continued to work with partners to remotely deliver critical activities impacted by COVID-19. In partnership with Coordinamento Nazionale Comunità di Accoglienza (CNCA), remote support was provided to 40 foster families, while in Sicily, 150 volunteer guardians received information on COVID-19 prevention and response and advice on accessing legal and other services. UNICEF published a [Facebook article](#) documenting the impact of the pandemic on migrant and refugee women and girls, promoting the national hotline number and app dedicated to GBV survivors, in five languages.
- In Kazakhstan, UNICEF is supporting community-based child protection for children affected by migration in two regions with dense migrant population and undertaking advocacy with key stakeholders, particularly on monitoring children in closed residential institutions. A [website](#) providing COVID-19 mental health information, support and counselling continues had over 6,000 visits during the reporting week, mainly through smartphones
- In Kosovo\*, UNICEF continued engaging communities in [#WhileAtHome](#) campaign focusing on children in foster families. A high level meeting with Ombudsman, Minister of Labour and Social Policy and Minister of Education and Science raised concerns on possible neglect, abuse and deterioration of socio-economic conditions in these families and proposed emergency actions, like state support to social services and child protection professionals to ensure access to assessment and support. With advocacy through UNICEF partner Kosovo\* Disability Forum, the Ministry of Finance had accepted to support all children with permanent disabilities with additional 100 Euros for the next three months.
- In Kyrgyzstan, two UNICEF-supported TV programmes on positive parenting were aired watched by at least one million viewers. UNICEF is supporting several important initiatives, including with Ministry of Labour and Social Development, a child hotline staffed by psychologists and a needs assessment of residential institutions.
- In Moldova, UNICEF continued collaboration with Ministry of Health Labour and Social Protection collecting data on child protection needs and sharing [Child Protection-related instruments](#) with their Child Protection staff. UNICEF is working with CSOs to collect field information documenting challenges faced by social workers.
- In Montenegro, UNICEF is partnering with Red Cross to train its staff and volunteers to recognize threats for child safety and wellbeing, including mistreatment, GBV, exploitation, social exclusion and threats of separation from caregivers and refer cases to responsible authorities and services. Through UNICEF, Association of Youth with Disabilities NGO continued outreach to youth with disabilities and their families in cooperation with Day Cares and partner NGOs. The programme provides psychosocial support, legal aid and assistance for working with children and youth with disabilities, through a platform providing over 200 visits per week from which 700 children/youth with disabilities and their families will benefit.
- In North Macedonia, UNICEF supported access to psychosocial support by parents, children and adolescents, including parents of children with disabilities, through help lines operated by the University Clinic for Psychiatry. UNICEF supported the clinic to produce a [video](#) on wellbeing for children during COVID-19, and promoted it on UNICEF Website. With UNICEF support, training of operators of a national help line for counselling of parents and caregivers on positive parenting practices was conducted, focusing on the current situation with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In Romania, in addition to ensuring the most vulnerable children and families have access to psychosocial support, UNICEF is supporting the social services workforce to continue delivery of quality services to children in need, by providing them with PPE. UNICEF and the National Authority distributed [support material](#) for safety and protection of social workers and community professionals. Preparatory work started for an analysis of longer-term impact on vulnerable children and families, with focus on Roma children, children with disabilities, children in public care, and their caregivers.
- In Serbia, UNICEF with UN agencies is coordinating activities to battle the increase of online violence and support reporting and responding in high-stress home environments where increased likelihood of domestic violence and abuse cause further psycho-social distress to children. With the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs and the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration, UNICEF continues to support monitoring and coordination of child protection actors in relation to GBV and safeguarding concerns for refugee and migrant children, women and families.
- In Turkey, UNICEF launched on-line training seminars with Government and non-government partners focusing on child protection, psychosocial interventions, psychological first aid, psychoeducation, case management, positive parenting and disability during the COVID-19 pandemic period. Government community-based child protection services implemented through the network of 332 Social Services Centres of the MoFLSS are ongoing.
- In Ukraine, UNICEF published an official statement on protection risks for 42,000 children returned home from boarding schools and other childcare institutions due to the pandemic, without prior verification of family situation. UNICEF also translated and disseminated to local media a statement on online risks for children and the need for a global ceasefire

- In Uzbekistan UNICEF provided recommendations for staff in four specialized educational correctional institutions and 14 Social and Legal Supports Centres of the Ministry of Interior on basic psychosocial support and counselling for children placed in institutions as preventive measures during the pandemic. Guidance on remote case management was developed with the Ministry of Public Education and Republican Centre for Social Adaptation of Children, who UNICEF supported to conduct a rapid assessment on COVID-19 impact on 43 families with 110 children affected by migration in four regions.

**Social Protection:** UNICEF continues efforts to strengthen social protection programming and reinforce safety nets for children most at risk in ECA Region.

- In Albania, UNICEF finalized arrangements with three municipalities for humanitarian cash transfer (hTC) to support over 1,500 households not part of the current social protection programme with a onetime payment. UNICEF continued to co-lead with IFRC a hCT working group on cash interventions by different organizations to cope with the COVID-19 crisis.
- In Armenia, UNICEF continued collaborated closely with MoLSA and UN agencies on social protection needs of vulnerable population. UNICEF is helping design a multi-purpose cash assistance support (as a top-up for those already in the family benefit system) to around 3,500 children with disabilities to cover basic needs. UNICEF is providing technical assistance to MoLSA to develop mechanisms for horizontal expansion of the family benefit system, including rapid needs assessment, to primarily cover those outside current support packages and employed in the informal sector. UNICEF launched the cross-sector UN working group to coordinate and ensure complementarity on cash transfer programming.
- In Azerbaijan, 516 vulnerable households were supported through UNICEF supported social work teams to access a special lump-sum Government payment of 190 AZN (\$113).
- In Belarus, UNICEF is working with World Bank to develop measures for policy response to support vulnerable families with children regarding the COVID-19 situation.
- In Bosnia and Herzegovina, a rapid assessment of impact of pandemics on social protection in one Canton is ongoing to support planning of short and mid-term response measures. UNICEF, with UNDP, is co-chairing a UN and IFI's Task Force on Assessment of Socio-Economic Impacts of COVID-19.
- In Georgia, UNICEF is launching a Shock Responsive Social Protection Feasibility Assessment focused on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the most vulnerable groups, with special attention to children.
- In Kazakhstan, UNICEF advocated for cash transfers instead of in-kind support for vulnerable families during COVID-19 with the Presidential Administration and Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.
- In Moldova, UNICEF continued discussions with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research on reallocation of funds for school meals to in-kind or cash-transfers to vulnerable families with children during the closure of schools.
- In Montenegro, as part of a UN-wide Rapid Impact Assessment on the socio-economic impact of COVID-19, data was collected by 15 partner organizations (including four Centres for Social Work, a Day Care Centre for Children with Disabilities and 10 NGOs) on the situation of children, WOMEN and families. For children of single parents, Roma families, in foster care, with disabilities, whose parents have a history of substance abuse, and growing up in families who are beneficiaries of social assistance, primary needs pertain to food and hygiene supplies.
- In Romania, work was initiated for analysis of longer-term impact on vulnerable children and families, with special focus on Roma children, children with disabilities, children in public care, and their caregivers. The Croatian Government adopted 66 measures to support the economy during the COVID-19 pandemic, to preserve jobs and enable payment of salaries.
- In Serbia, piloting of a UNICEF-supported questionnaire for a phone-based survey of 1,800 families to assess impact of COVID-19 on access to social services was completed with 46 households. The survey will start next week to also assess financial impact on families with children during and after isolation, helping Government shape socio-economic measures after the emergency.
- In Tajikistan, UNICEF provided technical support to the Ministry of Health and Social Protection to develop the country's social protection preparedness and response plan to COVID-19, which was presented to all development partners and will be finalized next week. The plan will describe key areas for interventions depending on scenarios for COVID-19 spread in the country and ensure coordination between different actors in addressing vulnerabilities.
- In Ukraine, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine to develop the Economic Consensus forecast to support decisions including on state budget. UNICEF finalized the microsimulations of the impact of COVID-19 on poverty (including

child poverty) and estimated that 6.3 million more people in Ukraine to become poor of whom 1.4 million children as a result of the economic decline caused by COVID-19.

## Data Collection Analysis and Research:

- In Armenia, under the UN Multi-Sector Response framework, UNICEF in coordination with UNDP and with involvement of the WB, ADB, EU, is contributing to a joint COVID-19 Socio-Economic Impact Assessment at community level.
- In Azerbaijan, data collection on public awareness, perceptions and behaviors in relation to COVID-19 and on identification of preferred and trusted channels of communication, as well as a periodic rapid assessment of the impact of the outbreak on health, mental health, nutrition, education, child protection and the economic situation of families, began on 13 April.
- In Belarus, UNICEF developed a Rapid Online Survey of 1,000 families with children to monitor the COVID-19 situation, including school attendance. Results will inform World Bank COVID-19 socio-economic impact and policy simulations.
- In Greece, UNICEF supported the second round of data collection of the Inter Agency joint monitoring tool on preparedness and response to COVID-19 in open accommodation sites.
- In Italy, an internal monitoring system was set up to keep track of impact of COVID-19 on unaccompanied minors and young migrants and refugees.
- In Ukraine, UNICEF procured and delivered a Power BI Pro license and IT equipment through private sector for the PHC to support data analysis. Several dashboards supported by UNICEF expertise were developed for PHC to visualise COVID-19 cases and trends, which serve as the primary data source for the Government. Additional internal ArcGIS map are being developed for in-depth geo analysis.

## Internal and External Media

### From UNICEF Offices in ECAR Countries

#### Web stories

- [UNICEF young reporters: stay home and demonstrate media literacy – Montenegro](#)
- [UNICEF's Young Reporters in Montenegro ask their peers to help the elderly stay home by regularly delivering groceries to their grandparents](#)
- [USAID and UNICEF provide additional support to vulnerable families during COVID-19 pandemic – North Macedonia](#)

#### Twitter

- [Georgia delivery of supplies to Roma families and second post](#)
- [Prime Minister of Kosovo\\* appreciates UNICEF on learning passport initiative](#)
- [Montenegrin Young Reporter Dunja Šestović](#)
- [UNICEF Ukraine Representative calls for comprehensive measures to assist children sent back from institutions to vulnerable families, RT](#)
- [Young Montenegrins help peers to fill their screen time with #COVID-19 prevention and #StayAtHome content](#)
- [UNICEF Romania and members of the Children's Board discuss the challenges being faced by children, in an e-meeting streamed on Facebook](#)
- [A 9-year-old girl in foster care in Kosovo\\* shows the importance of washing hands](#)
- [In Bulgaria, UNICEF's #COVID-19 response involves close work with the Government, NGOs, businesses and media – to protect every child](#)
- [In Albania, U-Report gives young people a way to amplify their concerns and feedback on COVID-19](#)
- [Young Reporters in Montenegro lead by example, regularly delivering groceries to their grandparents](#)
- [UNICEF Serbia raises more than \\$935,000 for procurement of medical and protective equipment, and distribution of hygiene kits to the most vulnerable](#)
- [Alisa, 15, from Ukraine, reads books, learns how to cook, and studies at home to stay #HealthyAtHome. And you?, RT](#)
- ["Being under quarantine... had a huge impact on me. I started to enjoy simple things," says Aizat in Kyrgyzstan, RT](#)

#### Facebook

- [Youth video blog - Moldova](#)
- [Children's experience of distance learning, Georgia](#)
- [Youth video blog from Moldova](#)

- [The right way to sneeze, video from Kyrgyzstan](#)
- [Youth video blog from Ukraine](#)

#### From ECA Regional Office

##### Web Stories

- [ECARO COVID-19 response updated webpage](#)
- [Maintaining routine immunization services vital during the COVID-19 pandemic – UNICEF-WHO joint press note making European Immunization Week 2020](#)
- [UN agencies welcome first relocation of unaccompanied children from Greece](#)
- [Staying apart but connected during COVID-19 – Italy](#)
- [U-Reporter Bassirou Dembele, aged 20, shares vital information on COVID-19 with other refugees and migrants in Italy, and with family and friends in his home country of Mali – Italy](#)
- [UPSHIFT: Shifting gear in response to COVID-19](#)
- [U-Reporters mobilize to fight COVID-19](#)
- [Responding to COVID-19: Behaviour and social change resource materials and communication tools for young people, general public, parents and frontline workers](#)
- [Tips for parenting during the COVID-19 outbreak](#)
- [Tips for communicators to address stigma during the COVID-19 outbreak](#)
- [Key messages for general population during the COVID-19 outbreak](#)
- [Key messages for young people and adolescents during the COVID-19 outbreak](#)
- [Updated webpage](#)
- [Maintaining routine immunization services vital during the COVID-19 pandemic – UNICEF-WHO joint press note making European Immunization Week 2020](#)

##### Twitter

- [UNICEF, IOM and UNHCR welcome relocation of unaccompanied children from Greece to Luxembourg, and urge EU Member States to continue relocations](#)
- [Bassirou found the first 2 weeks of quarantine very hard. He already had overcome many challenges upon arriving in Italy from Mali...](#)

##### Facebook

- [UNICEF delivers medical equipment to 11 countries in ECA](#)
- [UNICEF works with Ministries of Education across the region](#)

#### Next Sitrep: 28 April 2020

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## Annex I: Summary of Selected Regional Programme Results (as at 16 April 2020)<sup>4</sup>

Areas of Response	2020 Target	Total UNICEF results	% Target achieved
<b>Risk Communication and Community Engagement</b>			
Number of people reached on COVID-19 through messaging on prevention and access to services	63,165,000	28,307,987	45%
Number of people engaged on COVID-19 through RCCE actions	3,150,700	702,900	22%
<b>Critical Supply and Logistics and WASH Services</b>			
Number of people reached with critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items) and services	432,770	77,339	18%
Number of healthcare workers within health facilities and communities provided with personal protective equipment (PPE)	103,350	5,860	6%
<b>Provision of Healthcare and Nutrition Services</b>			
Number of caregivers of children (0-23 months) reached with messages on breastfeeding	747,476	34,020	5%
<b>Access to Continuous Education and Child Protection Services</b>			
Number of children supported with distance/home-based learning	15,021,769	2,630,939	18%
Number of children without parental or family care provided with appropriate alternative care arrangements	6,985	5,523	79%
Number of children, parents and primary caregivers provided with community based mental health and psychosocial support	164,290	10,617	6%
Number of UNICEF personnel & partners that have completed training on GBV risk mitigation & referrals for survivors, including for PSEA	1,386	114	8%
<b>Access to Social Protection Services</b>			
Number of households (affected by COVID-19) receiving humanitarian multi-sector cash grant	295,956	40,000	14%

<sup>4</sup> This table presents the indicative programme indicators which have been selected from the global Humanitarian Performance Monitoring (HPM) framework. The reported programme results have been extracted from the global HPM dashboard for the period ending 16 April. Work is underway to identify additional Regional indicators to better report on the regional dynamics and nuances in the context of COVID-19 response.