



UNICEF/UNI319153/Romenz

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Highlights

UNICEF works for children and adolescents in 22 countries and territories¹ in Europe and Central Asia Region (ECAR). UNICEF is also present in Italy, supporting refugee and migrant populations.

- Countries are at different stages in contemplating a gradual lifting of lockdown and quarantine measures. Within ECAR, UNICEF has been supporting planning required to re-establish primary health care services (e.g., routine immunization in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*); nutrition services (e.g., breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan); and WASH in schools and health facilities in (e.g., Armenia and Kazakhstan).
- During this reporting period, routine immunization programmes received heightened attention as a result of efforts to promote Immunization Week 20 -26 April. [A joint statement](#) by UNICEF and WHO was amplified on UNICEF on-line and social media channels in Armenia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Uzbekistan (among others), seizing the opportunity to direct public attention to the importance of vaccination as a vital civil responsibility, especially in the face of the crisis caused by COVID-19, which currently has no effective vaccine.
- UNICEF continued to support actions to intensify mass media and social media messaging, connecting millions of families and children to activities and advice on coping and getting along during long periods of lockdown. During the reporting period, UNICEF in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Georgia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Montenegro, Serbia, Ukraine, Turkey, and Turkmenistan participated in social media campaigns such as [#LearningAtHome](#), [#HaveFunAtHome](#), and [#StayAtHome](#).
- AI-driven virtual chatbots have been an innovative way to inform adolescents and young people on staying safe, often complementing their engagement via U-Report and other interactive digital platforms. This week, UNICEF in Greece, Moldova and Serbia launched new or improved versions in different languages.

UNICEF Europe & Central Asia Region (ECAR)

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Situation Report No. 5

for every child

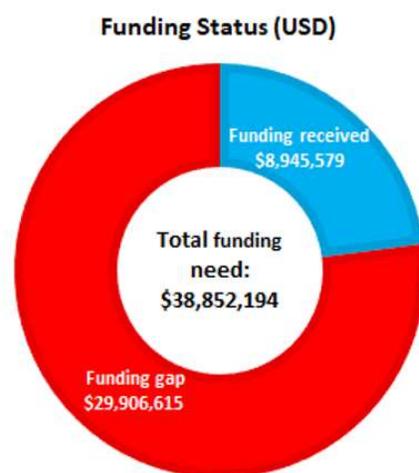
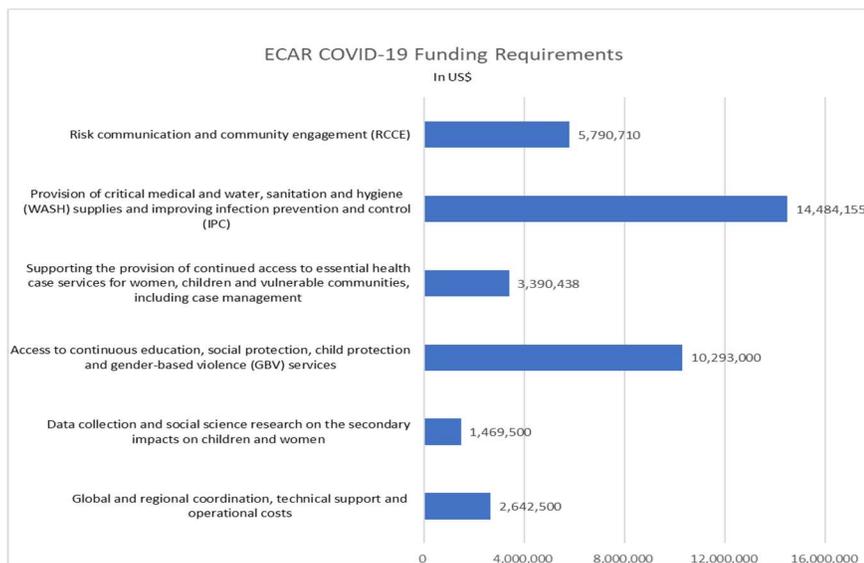
- 171,958 COVID-19 cases** in 22 countries**
- 4,470 COVID-19 deaths** in 22 countries**
- 56 million children** affected by COVID-19-related school and learning centre closure
- US \$38 million** funding requirement for ECAR response

¹ 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.

PHOTO: Francesca, 7, learns about importance of handwashing from an INTERSOS/UNICEF outreach worker in Rome, 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, ECAR has raised nearly **\$8.96² million** or **23%** of required funding. While the majority of this funding is provided by public sector donors, including governments, international financial institutions and intergovernmental agencies, support from individuals and private sector companies has also been incredibly important given the Region’s upper-middle- and high-income context. ECAR is especially grateful for efforts of UNICEF National Committees leading fundraising campaigns that also raise public awareness about children’s needs and support for UNICEF’s work.



Situation Overview and Humanitarian Needs

In ECAR, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan remain the only countries with no government-confirmed cases of COVID-19 infections. In Turkmenistan, while borders have closed, schools and business have been functioning as usual. In Turkmenistan a first meeting was held 21 April between the Government and UN agencies to discuss the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 on the country’s population. In Tajikistan, to ensure readiness in the health, education and social sectors, the Government has leveraged technical support and leadership of UNICEF and other UN agencies for preparedness planning and to build partnerships with international financial institutions (IFIs), donors, and NGOs. Efforts have helped teachers adapt to how they teach and parents to be better informed on how to cope and support children in a lockdown situation.

Ensuring continued delivery of routine immunization programmes has been challenged by the pandemic, with services sometimes having to be rationalized to address the outbreak, or delivery options having had to be reconsidered to adequately protect health workers and individuals receiving vaccinations. In some countries (e.g. Bulgaria), national immunization programs were temporarily suspended, while in others (e.g. Uzbekistan) routine immunization continued at a modified pace. As countries begin to plan for a gradual return to social and economic life, the resumption of regular services has been key. Positive steps have been noted in the past week: immunization services have re-started in Bulgaria, plans for restarting have commenced in Kosovo*, and vaccine procurement is underway in Albania. While the prospects for restarting routine health services appear positive, the toll that the pandemic has had on delivery of non-COVID-19 medical supplies should not be underestimated. In Kyrgyzstan for example, severe restrictions imposed on the international movement of supplies, have resulted in near-stock outs of essential medicines for children and for cancer and diabetes patients.

The impacts of school closures as a result of COVID-19 have differed across and within countries. Georgia has announced the cancellation of final exams, while Albania and Azerbaijan are attempting to integrate end-of-year exams into their respective strategies on school re-opening. While schools in Belarus have re-opened, it appears, unofficially, that less than half of enrolled children are attending. In Kazakhstan, school closures did not apply to 2,800 rural multi-grade schools. In countries where classes were suspended, not all participants have been able to adapt easily to learning remotely. In Moldova and Romania, the main issues for both students and teachers have been a lack of IT equipment and lack of internet connection. As well, some

² List of donors available on request

teachers did not have skills on how to teach remotely and use digital resources (if these were available). Among students, deprivations are keenest in communities that have inherent vulnerabilities due to poverty, ethnicity, or disability. A UNICEF/IPSOS poll conducted in Montenegro showed that among households with children, 21% do not have laptops and 51% do not have computers or tablets connected to the Internet. Another study revealed that 30% of children in Romania could not access remote learning, and that the inability to adapt to online learning may intensify the risk of dropping out.

To prevent COVID-19 response measures from intensifying disparities already felt by the marginalized children, UNICEF has deployed targeted efforts to ensure adapted learning opportunities reach these boys and girls. Without exception, UNICEF in all ECAR countries, has been supporting education authorities in developing and translating online and broadcast learning materials in minority languages. This week, in Kyrgyzstan, UNICEF supported the production of over 1,000 primary and secondary school lessons for TV with sign language and in Uzbek and Tajik languages. In Greece, UNICEF distributed tablets to seven shelters for unaccompanied children on the mainland and on Samos to ensure they can access education through the UNICEF/Akelius digital language learning platform. In Turkey, UNICEF has helped to mobilize support from within refugee communities (e.g., 12,000 Syrian volunteer education personnel among others) who are targeting parents and caregivers with information on how to help their children access distant learning opportunities. These efforts are helping to ensure that 680,000 Syrian and other refugee children in public schools and temporary education centres, who are among Turkey's 19 million learners, are able to benefit from uninterrupted distance learning via broadcasting lessons on TV and digital learning.

Some extended lockdowns make it difficult to reach vulnerable communities with health or WASH services, safety awareness, continued learning, or protection. In Bulgaria, a person wishing to move from one location to another requires official authorization, which is granted for a documented reason (e.g., going to a job or a doctor's appointment). However, systemic discrimination is evident in the situation of Roma families who earn their livelihood in the non-regulated sector (e.g., collecting recyclables in more affluent neighbourhoods) and therefore have no means of obtaining such official authorizations. In some parts of Georgia, restrictions on imported products have jeopardized food supply. In Kazakhstan, migrant families continue to face several deprivations as a result of COVID-19 lockdowns, including loss of incomes, inability to return to the country of origin and social impact on the migrant families.

In closed facilities, whether residential homes or detention centres, communal accommodation makes practising physical distancing very difficult. Following the rapid spread of COVID-19 in an adult prison in Albania, the People's Advocate (i.e. Ombudsman) called for authorities to seriously considering releasing any children held in detention facilities, particularly pre-trial detention, and replacing sentences with alternative measures to the maximum extent possible. In Kazakhstan, UNICEF's advocacy with the Human Rights Ombudsman and human rights NGOs resulted in a statement to the General Prosecutor's Office and Ministry of Internal Affairs to oversee and strengthen response measures for children in closed institutions, particularly children affected by migration placed in Centres for the Adaptation of Minors. In Turkey, UNICEF continued to engage with the Directorate of Migration Management, Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services (MoFLSS) and Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to advocate for the release of children in detention and ensure adequate care and access to hygiene and health services for children in institutions and closed facilities, including removal centres.

In Greece, lockdown measures have impeded the ability of UNICEF and its partners to reach refugee and migrant children and families with services. As of 26 April, there were 190 confirmed COVID-19 cases (out of a country total of 2,517) within the refugee and migrant population, including eight children. Infections are concentrated in three Open Accommodation Sites, hosting 27,500 refugees and migrants and one IOM-managed hotel, all under quarantine. To ensure national preparedness plans are implemented in all sites, triage spaces are being established and most have space for quarantine. The situation in overcrowded Refugee Identification Centres (RICs) on Aegean islands, home to 35,000 people, including children without parents or family, is dire. As part of the Government's plans to ease pressure on the islands, a plan is in place to transfer 1,500 people from RICs on Moria and Lesbos to the mainland. In Italy, the Government's full attention on battling COVID-19 has shifted focus from pressing issues around refugee and migrants. Despite a nation-wide fund-raising campaign spearheaded by the UNICEF National Committee in Italy, the lack of funding for refugee and migrant programmes in Italy has impeded the COVID-19 response for this vulnerable population.

In Kosovo*, the pandemic has been exacerbated by continued political tensions resulting from the collapse of the former coalition government, and there is no united leadership to confront the crisis. The President called the minority party to form a new government, an action perceived by some opponents as unconstitutional. This has fuelled social media calls for nationwide protests on 4 May. In Ukraine's conflict areas, humanitarian access to non-government-controlled areas (NGCAs) remains difficult. A significant increase in hostilities resulted in civilian casualties and damage to non-military infrastructure (private houses, electrical grids, water facilities, etc.). While COVID-19 humanitarian convoys can enter Donetsk NGCA, access to neighbouring Luhansk NGCA is completely restricted, even by the Russian Federation. A compromise of allowing a pedestrian humanitarian bridge is under discussion.

Lockdowns severely impact lives and livelihood of vulnerable families. Scaling up of existing social assistance, including child benefits for low income families is key for mitigating the socio-economic impact of COVID-19. In Belarus, the Government issued a decree allowing temporary payment of benefits to caregivers of children up to 10 years if the child is a first- or second-tier contact of a COVID-19 patient. UNICEF and the World Bank are working to prepare a socio-economic assessment to support Belarus's emerging child poverty policy interventions. In Kazakhstan, 4.25 million people have sought Government financial support since the start of the pandemic, with 1.1 million receiving food supplies. In Kosovo*, the EUR 120 cash transfer payment for the most marginalized families does not match rising price of food and other essential goods. A UNICEF-commissioned household survey in Montenegro revealed an 8-percentage point increase in the share of people who have lost the ability to afford food and medicine, with around 60 % of respondents foreseeing their income declining. In Romania, almost 1.2 million people were temporarily laid off due to the COVID-19 crisis. Preliminary results of a rapid assessment show that many vulnerable families (e.g., Roma, the poor) do not have enough money to buy basic food items.

Tajikistan is heavily dependent on remittances, which contribute up to 30% to the country's annual GDP. According to Eurasianet, the pandemic has caused overall remittances from the Russia Federation (where majority of migrants reside and work) to decline by up to 35 percent. The International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Executive Board approved immediate debt service relief to 25 member countries, including Tajikistan, under the revamped Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust (CCRT). This intervention intends to provide grants to the poorest member states to cover their IMF debt obligations for an initial six-month phase. Countries could then channel their scarce financial resources towards vital emergency, medical, and other relief efforts. In Turkmenistan, so far the social protection measures have been limited to ensuring subsidized prices of basic commodities and subsidized food voucher schemes in sub-regional level. Discussions are underway and suggestions being made by the UN, including UNICEF, on alleviating longer-term socio-economic impacts. International financial institutions will provide the Government of Uzbekistan with at least \$1.6 billion in loan funds to support the budget and finance the anti-crisis fund. The World Bank (WB), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), UNICEF and other UN agencies have formed a task force to assess the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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 ECAR, 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, Italy, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Romania, Serbia, Turkey); Education (Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, 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, Italy Kazakhstan, Kosovo*, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan); and WASH (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan).

In Turkey partners, including UNICEF, are coordinating COVID-19 response for refugee and migrant population and vulnerable host communities within the Regional Refugee and Resilience (3RP) mechanism, while in Ukraine, overall coordination for nationwide COVID-19 response is led by the Resident Coordinator and WHO, with complementary 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 ECAR Preparedness and Response Actions

Supplies:

Across ECAR, access to personal protective equipment (PPE), and life-saving health supplies is the most-frequently cited challenge. This week, UNICEF in Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Kosovo*, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Romania, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan continued to identify supply shortage as a critical bottleneck to controlling the spread of COVID-19. While nearly all PPE that does arrive is prioritised to meet the needs of healthcare workers treating patients, front-line child protection workers who require PPE to deliver in-person social service support can face constraints in reaching vulnerable children and families. In Ukraine, the Minister of Health issued a decree allowing doctors to treat COVID-19 cases with malaria and ARV medication - though not recommended by WHO, resulting in much needed

oxygenators and ventilators being de-prioritized. During the reporting period:

- UNICEF in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Serbia, Romania, Ukraine delivered PPE (aprons, boot covers, caps, coveralls, gloves, gowns, masks) to health workers, social workers, government counterparts, staff in residential care institutions, police and probation officers, penitentiary staff working with juvenile inmates, NGO partners and volunteers, including Red Cross volunteers, community nurses and workers.
- UNICEF in Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Italy, Moldova, Serbia, Romania, Ukraine, Uzbekistan delivered hygiene supplies (chlorine, hygiene kits, sanitizers, soap) to hospitals, children and families in refugee/migrant accommodation, vulnerable families (e.g. Roma), children's residential care institutions, police and probation officers, NGO partners and volunteers, community nurses and workers.
- UNICEF in Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan delivered learning materials (ECD kits, school-in-a-box, televisions/receivers for distance learning, tablets) to government counterparts (MoE), children, including those in most disadvantaged families, in boarding schools for children in contact with the law, and at refugee reception centres. UNICEF in Belarus and Ukraine delivered medical equipment (e.g., respirators laboratory reagents kits to) to hospitals and laboratories.
- In Turkey, on National Children's Day on 23 April, UNICEF distributed 5,000 psycho-social support kits (including activity books, art supplies, toys) in collaboration with the Turkish Red Crescent, to help parents engage with and support children formerly accessing community-based psycho-social support services in Gaziantep, Sanliurfa, Hatay, Mersin and Adana.

Provision of Healthcare and Nutrition Services:

- In Azerbaijan, UNICEF supported radio broadcasts with specialists from the Public Health and Reforms Centre on caring for children during self-isolation, child nutrition and maintaining routine vaccinations.
- In Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNICEF distributed key guidance documents on breastfeeding, immunization and maternal newborn and children health's (MNCH) in local language to relevant MoHs.
- In Bulgaria, home-visiting services in two regions are being conducted online by visiting nurses. Support to parents and caregivers is being provided via telephone, skype and Viber. UNICEF helped develop and distribute via Facebook and UNICEF's website, video for parents on introducing solid foods to infants.
- In Georgia, UNICEF initiated a partnership with the State Medical University Hospital to establish a telemedicine centre that enables remote referrals for antenatal and paediatric care. UNICEF supported local stakeholders in Abkhazia to develop rapid preparedness and response plans covering RCCE messages, patient, contact tracing, immunization-related interventions, guidelines on pregnant women and breastfeeding.
- In Greece, with IOM, UNICEF provided remote breastfeeding counselling for women in at Ritsona site (under quarantine).
- In Kazakhstan, UNICEF supported the development of the national protocol on treatment of COVID-19 in children. UNICEF provided technical support and facilitated dialogue between practitioners of the Ministries of Health and Education on ensuring sanitary and epidemiological norms in remote, rural, and multi-graded schools.
- In Kyrgyzstan, UNICEF supported the MOH in implementing infant young child feeding (IYCF) using IT solutions to access IYCF global guidance and to monitor use of breastmilk substitutes.
- In Moldova, UNICEF with WHO and Institute of Mother and Child Health organized three webinars on Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI) in the context of COVID-19.
- In Romania, UNICEF launched and distributed a national-level position paper on breastfeeding in the COVID-19 context.
- In Serbia, with MOH and the Association of Roma Health Mediators, UNICEF supported Roma Health Mediators to intensify contacts with families through proactive phone calls. UNICEF provided technical support to home-visiting nurses and early childhood interventions teams to reach to families with newborns, young children and children with disabilities.
- In Tajikistan, UNICEF has been providing support to the national Scaling-Up Nutrition (SUN) Coordination Committee to prepare the nutrition response to plan in the COVID-19 context. The costed nutrition response plan aims to focus measures to prevent the negative impact of the COVID-19 on the country's nutrition situation.

- In Ukraine, UNICEF participated in Technical Task Force meetings and advocated jointly with WHO and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to coordinate activities related to scale up of the testing strategy and care and evidence-based treatment for hospitalized patients.

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

- In Armenia, UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Emergency Situations to ensure COVID-19 and other pandemic preparedness and response are elaborated in school disaster management guidelines and plans, and distance assistance is provided to school and preschool administrators. UNICEF translated and adopted the guide on school cleaning and supplies and is exploring opportunities for organising the safe return to school after the restrictions are lifted.
- In Kyrgyzstan, UNICEF provided the Ministry of Emergency Situation with essential hygiene kits and water filters for frontline workers and border points.
- In Serbia, UNICEF began distribution of hygiene products and information materials on protection measures to 19 residential institutions for children.
- In Tajikistan, UNICEF supported WASH rehabilitation (hot and cold water, improved sanitation facilities) in three maternity departments of Central District Hospitals
- In Ukraine, UNICEF and Triangle Génération Humanitaire have develop COVID-19 and hygiene informational materials for selected health facilities in eastern Ukraine.

Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE):

- In Azerbaijan, UNICEF with support from USAID, launched its Instagram platform with new materials to reinforce messages on COVID-19 safety, and support parents on education, nutrition and hygiene.
- In Georgia, UNICEF launched a dedicated Facebook page for parents of children with disabilities. UNICEF also reached out to young people with TikTok videos on COVID-19 safety and mental wellbeing.
- In Greece, the Greek-language version of the AI-driven health buddy platform went live.
- In Italy, UNICEF, with INTERSOS and Mediciens du Monde disseminated culturally and gender appropriate messaging in multiple languages on COVID-19 safety to refugees and migrants in Rome.
- Kazakhstan and Ukraine, were among the Russian-speaking countries that participated in a Facebook live-stream Q&A where a family psychologist answered the most pressing questions of parents of pre-schoolers on overcoming stress and anxiety during quarantine. The transmission attracted over 25,000 views.
- In Kyrgyzstan, UNICEF piloted an online platform for village health committees (VHC) to disseminate information on COVID-19 and collect feedback from communities.
- In Serbia, UNICEF developed and disseminated communication materials for families with children and young people on how to prevent COVID-19 and seek assistance, psychosocial support for children, young people and parents. Posters and leaflets are made available in Romani for the Roma community and in Arabic, Pashto and Farsi for refugees and migrants.
- In Tajikistan, UNICEF and Red Crescent Society (RCS) have partnered to conduct community mobilization on COVID-19 in 10 districts, where RCS will communicate key messages on COVID-19 signs and symptoms, prevention, and seeking care.
- In Turkey, UNICEF's social media activities for National Children's Day reached 8.7 million people with COVID-19 messages. RCCE activities target Turkish, refugee and migrant children, adolescents and youth as well as their families.

Engaging Adolescents and Young People:

- In Azerbaijan, UNICEF's local NGO partners implementing the joint UNICEF-European Union programme on community-based services have adapted their respective programmes activities to contribute to the COVID-19 response, for example: Junior Achievement organised [a webinar on Professional Development and Distance Education During the Pandemic](#) for 60 adolescents and young people from six project districts; EduHub implemented the "Create... Grow... Contribute" project focusing on Art for Development and organised [a webinar by a professional psychologist on how to deal with stress, fear and anxiety](#) ; a live session was conducted on Instagram on [how to acquire programming skills while in isolation](#) for 40 adolescents and young people and [a webinar on distance-based team management](#).

- In Bulgaria, in line with the country's youth agenda, UNICEF developed a video on adolescents with disabilities and protecting adolescent mental health during COVID-19.
- In Georgia, UNICEF provided opportunities to children to reflect and share knowledge and ideas on COVID-19 by video.
- In Belarus, UNICEF conducted webinars for volunteers, adolescents and medical students on COVID-19 and mental health issues as part of the peer-to-peer volunteer counselling process.
- In Italy, the number of young people participating in U-Report's "On the Move" platform continued to grow, thanks to a Facebook live chat conducted during the reporting week. A poll was conducted to assess young people's awareness of government vouchers, bonuses and financial help that are available in the COVID-19 emergency.
- In Moldova, UNICEF launched the virtual chatbot on U-Report, and several COVID-19 and remote learning related polls. U-Reporters engaged in a social media campaign on cyber hygiene, including 25 U-report Ambassadors to develop content addressing fake news on virus and share their experience on staying at home. U-Report outreach in Moldova is 30,000 users.
- In Montenegro, under the UNICEF-supported UPSHIFT programme, the Youth Innovation Lab launched its study-support programme [#StudyBuddy](#) which matches adolescents with younger peers to help them with homework and study. 20 selected mentors who have passed the application process will support their younger peers with different subjects.
- In Serbia, UNICEF launched the U-Report chat-bot 2.0 as well as an online peer-volunteer [platform](#) to help adolescents and young people cope better with pandemic. This attracted 317 applicants in one week, wanting to help in safe online activities and awareness raising interventions among their peers and community networks, including around COVID-19 issues, mental health, and mobilizing new U-Report participants.
- In Romania, UNICEF conducted two U-Report surveys on children's views during COVID-19 including on [online education](#), and their [experiences](#).
- In Tajikistan, adolescents engaged in UNICEF Innovation Lab produced 13,000 multi-use masks that will be distributed to marginalized children and to teachers the Centre for Additional Learning.
- In Turkey, with the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS), UNICEF developed an integrated 'youth package' that includes learning resources, a 'Mahalle' (neighborhood) support mechanism aimed at supporting youth volunteers in their local communities' pandemic response, and a media production concept designed to promote key messages via the voices of young people. UNICEF is working with MoYS to identify 250 youth focal points and roll-out the integrated package.
- In Ukraine, UNICEF with Ministry of Digital Transformation, IT Association, and business chambers, supported the COVID-19 "Challenge Hackathon" which brought together 400 participants and 80 teams to brainstorm on technology solutions to address the impact of COVID-19 in social sectors. At the request of Cabinet of Ministers, U-Report conducted a third poll to measure young people's reactions to the quarantine restrictions during the Orthodox Easter holidays. Out of 12,000 young respondents 84% supported the measures.

Access to Continuous Learning

- In Albania, UNICEF convened an online training (via Zoom) for all 55 representatives of the local departments in education in the country who serve as focal point for children dropping out of schools. The training provided skills on social-emotional and academic support to at-risk children in COVID-19 emergency context.
- In Armenia, a partnership with the National Centre for Education Technologies was established to accelerate production of video-lessons being broadcasted on national and local TV and digital skills of teachers. UNICEF joined the Commission on Education of the National Assembly to discuss challenges and opportunities of current practice of distance education in Armenia with teachers, parents, school principals and education specialists.
- In Azerbaijan, preschool education classes developed by the Institute of Education with support of UNICEF began broadcasting via two national television channels. The parenting education portal and cell phone application for parents, "ilkSil", reached over 1,500 parents last week with resources on early education and child development provided by UNICEF.
- In Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNICEF brought together international organizations working in education to harmonize approaches and interventions. UNICEF presented the findings from a rapid needs assessment on children's learning and the report has been shared with stakeholders and donors.

- In Bulgaria, UNICEF completed an information session for children on how to behave in online classrooms. In anticipation of school re-openings, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Science and Education to establish learning expectations and guidelines for safe schools.
- In Greece, UNICEF and IOM established priority actions on providing education to children in sites. UNICEF distributed tablets to seven shelters for unaccompanied children on the mainland and on Samos island, bringing the total to 17 shelters supported, to ensure children can access education through a UNICEF/Akelius digital language learning platform. UNICEF trained 10 additional educators on digital learning, bringing the total to 161 formal/non-formal teachers trained on how to deliver distant learning, since mid-March.
- In Italy, UNICEF's online UPSHIFT programme delivered ten classes this week and included the incubation of eight start-up enterprises. The UNICEF-supported "Active Citizenship" programme has completed training of young facilitators and launched its first COVID-19 impact poll.
- In Kyrgyzstan, UNICEF supported the MoES Press Secretary preparing content on remote learning for its social media accounts. UNICEF also supported the production of over one thousand primary and secondary school lessons for TV with sign language interpretation, digitization of videos and uploading them to mobile network applications for free access to teachers and children. Some lessons were produced in Uzbek and Tajik languages. Support was also provided to develop lessons for preschoolers and children with disabilities, as well as for parents around activities at home.
- In Montenegro, UNICEF is supporting the MoE to provide capacity building for use of digital tools for 2,000 teachers, upgrade web services for online enrolment and develop a new online learning platform. A group of experts and practitioners was established to participate in the UNICEF "LearnIn" project, aimed at developing the capacities of teachers to use digital tools in line with principles of quality and inclusion.
- In Serbia, UNICEF provided technical support to the MoE to develop and monitor the implementation of a national response plan of preschool education system to the COVID-19 outbreak, targeting preschool children and their families. UNICEF purchased screen capture Camtasia software licences to support the MoE to improve technical conditions for recording distance learning lessons, and helped collect digital, open source materials. A distance learning support team for teachers is being established within the Institute for the Improvement of Education to help teachers improve their online teaching practices. In cooperation with MoE, the Pedagogic Society of Serbia and the Institute for Improvement of Education, UNICEF helped develop a repository of resources for school psychologists and pedagogues to help teachers in preparing teaching materials for distance learning during COVID-19 epidemic.
- In Tajikistan, under the National Education Response Plan (NERP), training of 52 teachers and local experts and production of a first module of TV lessons was conducted, with MoES leadership and UNICEF technical support. The Education Rapid Needs Assessment was endorsed by MoES with data collection to start next week. UNICEF continued to coordinate partners interventions as part of weekly education sector response meeting with Development Partners on NERP activities.
- In Turkey, over 12,000 UNICEF-supported Syrian volunteer education personnel continued to spread key (via Rapid Pro) messages among refugee communities on COVID-19 risks and mitigation measures. Nearly 8,000 Syrian and Turkish parents and caregivers participating in UNICEF early childhood education programmes received essential information (via Rapid Pro) on mitigating the risk of COVID-19, as well as how to access distant learning opportunities. Syrian and vulnerable Turkish families across Southeast Turkey received daily phone calls or WhatsApp messages from a network of over 200 teachers containing instructions and guidance on key early-learning activities, benefitting nearly 5,000 young children.
- Ukraine became one of the first countries where UNICEF's collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), Microsoft and Cambridge University has expanded the global Learning Passport platform, helping children and youth affected by COVID-19 continue their education at home. The platform will also provide key resources to teachers and educators. UNICEF also supported MoES in launching a national rapid assessment of needs related to distance learning for children with disabilities, provided by schools and centres for special education. UNICEF finalized an agreement with MoES and the Institute of Educational Analytics to conduct nation-wide school survey on preparedness to implement global guidance for COVID-19 control and prevention in schools.

Access to Child Protection and Preventing Violence:

- In Albania, UNICEF is holding weekly webinars to support child protections workers to share experience and lessons learned related to COVID-19, as well as identify specific challenges and support needs.

- In Armenia, UNICEF is supporting child protection professionals to maintain early identification and response to cases of violence against children through development of tools to ensure continuity of child protection functions. UNICEF consults with the MoLSA, the Office of the Human Rights Defender (HRDO), Yerevan Municipality and respective civil society organizations for possible support in the establishment/functioning of helplines, and online and phone counselling.
- In Azerbaijan, with support of the EU, UNICEF initiated support for vulnerable families with children who have returned from care institutions and for children and young people with disabilities, through distribution of a package of basic food items, hygiene materials and risk communication materials.
- In Bulgaria, UNICEF-supported Child Advocacy Centres are operating well, and consulting with children, parents and conducting hearings (via Zoom) for children who are victims of violence. UNICEF also provided support to the most vulnerable refugee and migrant persons who are living outside of reception centres. UNICEF supported Gender Based Violence (GBV) training of front-line workers who in the reporting week have been engaged in supporting survivors and individuals at risk.
- In Georgia, a MoU was signed between Parliament, the State Care Agency and UNICEF for the creation of a child helpline. UNICEF's partner, "Children of Georgia", provided psychological support to children, caregivers, and to foster and re-integrated families across 11 areas. UNICEF's partner, "Initiative for Social Change" developed COVID-19-related guidelines for social workers from child protection and justice systems.
- In Greece, UNICEF with partner Terre des Hommes, delivered two additional webinars on staff well-being and mental health and psychosocial support related to COVID-19, where 270 frontline staff participated. UNICEF partner Solidarity Now developed a podcast on GBV communicated, through the IOM managed central WhatsApp group, to beneficiaries in Open Accommodation Sites.
- In Italy, UNICEF continued to provide case management, counselling and psychosocial support to GBV survivors, individuals at risk and migrant and refugee children. UNICEF raised awareness on COVID-19 specific GBV risks, and provided information on available support mechanisms, for example, via Facebook and Instagram, a national hotline number, and an app dedicated to GBV survivors, in five languages. UNICEF has adapted face-to-face GBV training curriculum for cultural mediators, and supported case management provided by partner INTERSOS at emergency shelters in Rome and at Centro Penc, a local non-governmental organization, providing specialized psychological and psychosocial support in Palermo. Médecins du Monde continued to provide remote counselling and psychological first aid to GBV survivors, individuals at risk and vulnerable migrant and refugee children.
- In Kazakhstan, UNICEF helped develop guidelines for school psychologists (counsellors) to equip them with tools and tips to provide remote psychological help and support to parents, children and teachers. The guidelines are part of a joint action plan of the MoES, National Centre for Mental Health and UNICEF which includes online capacity building sessions for school psychologists, counselling and supervision in case management and access to online counselling by mental health specialists.
- In Kyrgyzstan, UNICEF contracted psychologists to provide psychosocial support to children left behind by migrating parents. Assessments were conducted on the children's vulnerabilities, and these became the basis for referral to social services. UNICEF also supported a census of children currently residing in institutions after the onset of the quarantine which enabled a precise targeting of the support, as well a basis for preparing policies on deinstitutionalization.
- In Montenegro, UNICEF established cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and the Police Directorate to support the ongoing #SafeAtHome campaign against Domestic Violence. The Red Cross and UNICEF Montenegro publicly announced their partnership for "Protection of the most vulnerable children and families in Montenegro during the COVID-19 pandemic". A training plan has been developed for 50 Red Cross staff and 250 volunteers on COVID-19 related child protection risks, including prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. The child helpline for psychosocial support to children during COVID-19 was announced by Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, civil society organisations and UNICEF.
- In North Macedonia, UNICEF opened a national help line for counselling of parents and caregivers on positive parenting practices. Technical Assistance was provided to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Ministry of Justice to design and develop safety protocols for potential quarantine and isolation of children in small group homes, children in correctional facilities and youth in juvenile prison.
- In Kyrgyzstan, UNICEF provided two additional psychologists to provide support to children of migrants, emergency support to children in residential institutions according to prioritization needs assessment and support via the Ministry of Labour and Social Development hotline.

- In Romania, more and more anecdotal information exists with regards to increase of cases of violence against children. In this context, discussions were initiated to complement the existing TelVerde (hotline for children, adults and staff of the publica care system) with the development and functioning of a Violence against children on-line reporting platform including referral mechanism to virtual specialised services.
- In Serbia, UNICEF supported coordination, knowledge dissemination and advice to hotlines for timely quality phone/online psychosocial support and first-aid counselling to children and their families, including in relation to protection from any kind of violence. UNICEF supported the Government by preparing COVID-19 guidance for prevention of unnecessary separation of children from families and securing psychosocial support and supervised alternative care in cases when separation is in the best interest of the child in relation to parent's/caregiver's hospitalization.
- In Tajikistan, a rapid assessment of the condition of closed and semi-closed institutions was conducted through questionnaires. The number of children and duty-bearers who need PPE and additional support have been identified. IEC materials on COVID19 parenting were developed and distributed including videos on parenting. UNICEF signed a partnership document with the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan to conduct community mobilization in 10 districts around COVID-19 with a focus on communicating key information on its signs and symptoms, prevention and care seeking in case of symptoms.
- In Turkey, UNICEF worked with partners to ensure the continuation of community-based child protection services via alternative communication channels and approaches, including virtual counselling through email, text messaging, online chat, or mobile phone, reaching over 6,000 children and their families. UNICEF provided online trainings on "Psychosocial Support in Pandemics" to four government and NGO partners, benefitting 218 people. Trainees included probation officers in order to sustain remote follow-up of children in contact with the law.
- In Ukraine, UNICEF psychosocial teams operating in Luhansk NGCA region are providing consultation to a 25% increase of calls via phone, skype, and other social media channels from children and families living along the contact line in the East. More than half of all reported cases are related to violence including against children. As an immediate response to the increasingly reported cases of violence and neglect, UNICEF is developing online courses for education professionals, parents and caregivers, as well as for children on psychosocial support, positive parenting. UNICEF launched support to the national toll-free helpline where children and adolescents exposed to violence can receive psychological counselling or referral. UNICEF successfully negotiated a linkup between the helpline to online legal aid services.

Social Protection:

- In Albania, UNICEF finalized payment for a humanitarian cash transfer (hCT) programme to support over 1,500 households with a onetime payment to help municipalities reach families who are not part of the current social protection programme. UNICEF developed and disseminated guidance for hCT during a public health emergency such as COVID-19.
- In Armenia, UNICEF with Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) is designing a multi-purpose cash assistance support (as a top-up for those already in the family benefit system) for around 3,500 children with disabilities to cover basic needs, potentially through the Treasury System and complementary to existing family benefit schemes. UNICEF is providing technical assistance to MoLSA on to develop mechanisms for horizontal expansion of the family benefit system, including rapid needs assessment, to primarily cover those outside of current support packages and employed in the informal sector. A regulation and an assessment tool were developed. UNICEF launched the cross-sector UN working group on cash transfer programming, where agencies shared current initiatives and agreement was reached for further coordination and complementarity of efforts.
- In Azerbaijan, UNICEF supported parents of vulnerable children in three districts (Agjabadi, Ganja and Shirvan) to access the new social assistance lump-sum payment of 190 AZN (\$112) provided by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population.
- In Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNICEF, with UNDP, is co-chairing a UN and IFI's Task Force on Assessment of Socio-Economic Impacts of COVID-19. A joint assessment matrix has been developed and technical work will be organized around five pillars of the UN response as set out in the global guide.
- In Bulgaria, UNICEF in partnership with World Bank, is designing an assessment on the social economic impact of COVID-19, focusing on children.
- In Georgia, UNICEF launched a Shock Responsive Social Protection feasibility assessment.

- In Romania, UNICEF and the National Authority developed and distributed at national level a support material for the safety and protection of social workers and other community professionals.
- In Tajikistan, technical support to the MOH and Social Protection on its preparedness and response plan is ongoing. Efforts of development partners interested in provision of complementary cash transfers is being coordinated by UNICEF and WFP. A joint consultation meeting with State Agency on Social Protection is scheduled for this week to reach a common agreement on cash transfer modalities.
- In Turkey, UNICEF and NGO partner Development Workshop continued to raise awareness among state, civil society and private sector stakeholders on the vulnerabilities of seasonal agricultural worker families—many of whom are refugees and migrants. UNICEF NGO partner, Support to Life continued to provide children and families at risk of child labour remote case management, awareness raising, and counselling services through phone calls and messaging platforms. A key tool in this regard is the Support to Life Information and Support Hotline, which operates across multiple languages and allows callers to receive information about STL’s activities for vulnerable Turkish and refugee families and governmental and non-governmental services available for them.
- In Ukraine, a UNICEF-supported forecast on the economic impact of COVID-19 on children and families received wide media coverage. The evidence-based finding will form the basis for ongoing UNICEF and UN advocacy on social protection. UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Social Protection to mobilize resources from private sector to provide PPE for the frontline social workers.

Data Collection Analysis and Research

- In Azerbaijan, the first round of weekly high-frequency surveys to gain insights to public understanding and response to COVID-19 was completed. Results were shared with key government and international entities in the country to support refinement of messaging and strategic response planning.
- In Bulgaria, UNICEF supported several ongoing projects in data collection, including: COVID-19 related needs and identification of most vulnerable groups of families and children and assessments covering the impact of COVID-19 on children’s health, education, protection, and on the socio-economic status of families.
- In Greece, UNICEF through information exchange with UN agencies and national authorities as well as field visits, has established a process to perform weekly situational analysis (including the number of suspected and confirmed cases). A report is compiled and disseminated internally every week.
- In Italy, UNICEF established an internal weekly monitoring system to keep track of the impact of COVID-19 on unaccompanied minors (UAMs) and young migrants and refugees.

Internal and External Media

From UNICEF Offices in ECAR Countries

WEBSITE

- [RO - ECAR COVID-19 webpage](#) – For the latest on the regional response, including the latest SitRep (#4, attached). Also on the webpage, a series of resources, tips and messages aimed at promoting protective behaviours, managing stress, and reducing stigma and discrimination.
- [Armenia/RO - “Our Voices” youth blogs series - Young climate activist from Armenia - on a glimpse of hope amid anxiety and health fears](#)
- [Georgia - UNICEF continues providing essential supplies to the most vulnerable families in Georgia](#)
- [Montenegro - UNICEF young reporters: stay home and demonstrate media literacy](#)
- [Romania - UNICEF in Romania provides protective equipment to frontline community workers during the pandemic](#)
- [Turkmenistan/RO “Our Voices” youth blogs series “Be the change you want to see in the world” says young climate activist from Turkmenistan](#)
- [RO - In Pictures: UNICEF continues support for critical frontline care during COVID-19 pandemic in Italy](#)
- [RO joint statement with WHO EURO - Maintaining routine immunization services vital during the COVID-19 pandemic – WHO and UNICEF](#)
- [Global - UNICEF and Microsoft launch global learning platform to help address COVID-19 education crisis](#) – with mentions of [Kosovo*](#) and [Ukraine](#)

- [Global - COVID-19: Children at heightened risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence amidst intensifying containment measures – UNICEF](#)

More information available on [Stories from the region](#), [Press centre](#), and [“Our Voices”](#)

WEBSITE (Russian)

- [Armenia/RO - “Our Voices” youth blogs series "Now is the right time to rethink what we do to the planet" - youth blog from Armenia](#)
- [Turkmenistan/RO - “Our Voices” youth blogs series “Be the change you want to see in the world” says young climate activist from Turkmenistan](#)
- [RO - PR: Maintaining routine immunization services vital during the COVID-19 pandemic – WHO and UNICEF](#)
- [RO translation/global - How to keep your child safe online while stuck at home during the COVID-19 outbreak](#)
- [Global - PR: UNICEF and Microsoft launch global learning platform to help address COVID-19 education crisis](#)
- [Global - Statement: As COVID-19 pandemic continues, forcibly displaced children need more support than ever](#)

TWITTER

- [Armenia - A young climate activist from Armenia offers a glimpse of hope amid anxiety and fears](#)
- [Global VoY, RT - A young climate activist from Armenia offers a glimpse of hope amid anxiety and fears](#)
- [Bosnia-Herzegovina - UNICEF & USAID handover phones & tablets to mental health centres](#)
- [Croatia, RT Borna from Croatia shares how she feels about climate change in COVID-19 times](#)
- [Georgia - 10-year-old Gega talks about COVID-19](#)
- [Georgia - 380 Roma families receive essential hygiene & food products, and second post \(video\)](#)
- [Kosovo*, RT - How our children are very aware of the importance & wellbeing of the planet](#)
- [Kosovo*, RT - Prime Minister appreciates UNICEF on Learning Passport initiative](#)
- [Montenegro - UNICEF Young Reporter, Dunja Šestović uses humor to encourage everyone to stay at home](#)
- [Romania - @FondationBotnar, longer term partner for UNICEF Romania, donates \\$400,000 for medical equipment, Covid-19 tests](#)
- [Romania - UNICEF delivers hygiene supplies to social workers and nurses](#)
- [Turkey, RT - Message from UNICEF Representative, Children’s Day](#)
- [Turkmenistan - Young climate activist Kristina writes about the importance of collective action and engaging youth](#)
- [RO - In Italy, UNICEF-supported Intersos outreach teams visit informal settlements to provide #ChildrenUprooted with health info & hygiene supplies](#)
- [RO - During the COVID-19 crisis, routine immunization programmes are more critical than ever](#)
- [RO - UNICEF welcomes transfer of 47 unaccompanied children from Greece to Germany](#)
- [Global - ED’s Ramadan video message](#)
- [Regional Director’s Twitter feed](#)
 - [A special message from Philippe Duamelle, UNICEF Representative to Turkey #23NisanKutluOlsun](#)
 - [#COVID19 has brought much of #Italy to a halt but the @UNICEF supported @Intersos health outreach team continues to provide children & families in vulnerable situations with vital health screenings, hygiene supplies & health information](#)
 - [Read Kristina’s blog, a young climate activist from #Turkmenistan](#)
 - [An important #EarthDay2020 read – a blog by young climate activist Vardan from #Armenia](#)
 - [In #Italy youth skills-building programme #UPSHIFT has moved online due to #COVID-19](#)
 - [The urgent need for a #COVID-19 vaccine underscores the pivotal role #immunizations play in protecting lives & economies](#)
 - [Important message from Secretary-General @antonioguterres](#)
 - [More good news. Thanks to Germany these #ChildrenUprooted will finally have a fair chance for better future.](#)

FACEBOOK (Russian)

- [Armenia/RO “Our Voices” youth blogs series Earth Day - activist from Armenia](#)
- [Belarus Tips for ECD during the pandemic \(Belarus\)](#)
- [Tajikistan\] Hand washing video from Tajikistan](#)
- [Turkmenistan/RO “Our Voices” youth blogs series Earth Day - activist from Turkmenistan](#)
- [Uzbekistan Distance learning tips from UNICEF Uzbekistan](#)
- [Regional EIW - statement](#)
- [RO translation of global Immunization master class video](#)

- RO translation of global ["Learning passport" launch - PR](#)
- RO translation of global [Quarantine video diary](#)

INSTAGRAM (Russian)

- Armenia/RO - "Our Voices" youth blogs series [Earth Day - young activist](#)
- Tajikistan - [How to protect yourself? Video from Tajikistan](#)
- Ukraine - COVID-19 content for targeting people in non-government controlled areas of Eastern Ukraine: [post](#), [post](#), [post](#), [post](#), [post](#)
- RO translation of global - [WIW - immunization during COVID-19](#)

Next Sitrep: 5 May 2020

Who to contact for further information:

Afshan Khan

Regional Director

UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia

Email: akhan@unicef.org

Basil Rodrigues

Regional Adviser, Health

UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia

Email: brodrigues@unicef.org

Annmarie Swai

Regional Adviser, Emergency

UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia

Email: aswai@unicef.org