



©UNICEF North Macedonia/Screenshot 2020

16 – 29 May 2020

Highlights

UNICEF works for children and adolescents in 22 countries and territories¹ in Europe and Central Asia Region (ECAR) and is also present in Italy, supporting refugee and migrant populations. Despite being at different stages in the epidemiological cycle, many countries are gradually relaxing strict containment measures. Governments are seeking technical guidance from UN and other expert organizations to help identify and implement appropriate prevention protocols to reopen safely.

- Notably, over this period approximately 12 million children are reported to have returned to schools and learning centres where attention has focused on supporting the implementation of measures that facilitate physical distancing, frequent handwashing, and disinfecting.
- On 25 May, Montenegro declared the country free of COVID-19 after 20 days without a new case.
- In Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Greece, and Kosovo* there has been a noted and sustained decrease in number of new COVID-19 infections. Despite recording comparatively higher rates of new infections, Italy, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, and Turkey, are also experiencing an overall downward trend².
- In Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan, data shows a continued increase in the number of new cases. Turkmenistan has reported no confirmed cases of COVID-19.
- ECAR is the first region to roll out a learning series of the [UNICEF Gender-based violence in Emergencies \(GBViE\) Resource Pack](#) to expand and strengthen prevention and response services. Online training reflecting Europe's refugee and migrant crisis in the context of the COVID-19 was launched with staff and UNICEF partners, including public institutions, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Serbia.
- A [new video diary](#) of UNICEF's Executive Director talking to young people from around the world about COVID-19 featured two young women from Bulgaria and Montenegro and a young man from Mali who arrived in Italy three years earlier. Their thoughtful questions on adolescent mental health, the resilience of children with disabilities, and UNICEF's actions to protect refugees and migrants, helped generate 11.5 million views on Facebook within the first 24 hours of posting.

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) 14 May 2020. Figures do not include Italy.

² <https://covid19.who.int/region/euro/country/al>. Number of cases are based on WHO data.

Photo: Screenshot from a virtual workshop on applying design thinking to volunteering during COVID-19 with 22 young people in North Macedonia.

UNICEF Europe & Central Asia Region (ECAR)

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Situation Report No. 8

unicef 
for every child



320,869 COVID-19 cases in 22 countries**



8,401 COVID-19 deaths in 22 countries**



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



\$133 million funding requirement for ECAR response

Funding Overview and Partnerships

Under UNICEF’s revised Global Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) appeal for the COVID-19 response, UNICEF ECAR is now appealing for approximately **\$133 million**³. Against this target, ECAR has received over **\$22.3 million**⁴ or **16.7%** of required funding. Significant funding received during the reporting period includes global HAC contributions from DFID allocated to Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Georgia and UN Multi-Partner Trust Funding for Moldova and Tajikistan.



Existing and expanding partnerships with private sector corporate entities have enabled UNICEF to make important and significant contributions to the COVID-19 response in ECAR. Private sector companies have provided financial support to ECAR countries (e.g., Armenia, Croatia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine). Support from the private sector to UNICEF’s COVID-19 response has also been an opportunity to foster a longer-term culture of participation and community engagement. For example, in some countries (e.g., Serbia), UNICEF corporate partners have activated their staff to contribute alongside the company’s donation or partnered with UNICEF to launch nation-wide flash appeals.

Through the “Business for Results” approach, UNICEF has leveraged private sector products and services to support programme delivery. In ECAR countries such as Belarus, Croatia, and Ukraine, UNICEF’s business partners are providing in-kind contributions to ensure vulnerable communities have access to life saving products and services (e.g., hygiene and disinfectant products, drinking water, early learning materials, translation services, PPE, dissemination of messages on COVID-19, SIM cards and data bundles)

Digital technology has also been crucial in supporting innovative ways to ensure people across ECAR can access accurate information on staying safe and preventing the spread of infection. For example, cutting-edge expertise has supported COVID-related data collection and analytics in Ukraine. In ECAR-wide initiatives, private sector partnerships have enabled the scale-up of the interactive, artificial intelligence-driven app, “HealthBuddy”, which answers questions in seven different languages., and has built online platforms that are strengthening teachers’ capacity and confidence in the new digital learning environment.

Situation Overview and Humanitarian Needs

On 25 May, Montenegro declared itself free of COVID-19 after 20 days with no new infections, Romania has downgraded its state of emergency to a state of alert, while in the Western Balkans, Georgia, Greece, Italy and Turkey, there are signs that epidemiological trends have begun to stabilize. During this reporting period, many of these countries have taken steps to gradually ease lockdowns, curfews and movement restrictions, open domestic travel, resume commercial sectors and education and downgrade the state of emergency, while maintaining strict measures (including social distancing in classrooms, mandatory masks in shops and on public transport etc.) and continuing to actively monitor the situation to reinstate measures if needed. On 26 May, North Macedonia lifted curfews and permitted the reopening of non-essential businesses. However, as discussions are underway for early Parliamentary elections, the President extended the state of emergency until 13 June.

³ On 8 May, UNICEF’s updated Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Global HAC appeal was issued. Globally, UNICEF is now appealing for US\$1.6 billion to support its humanitarian response for children impacted by the pandemic, up from \$651.6 million requested in a similar appeal late March. This increase reflects the devastating socioeconomic consequences of the disease and families’ rising needs. As the outbreak enters its fifth month, the costs for supplies, shipment and duty of care are increasing dramatically. Under this appeal, the ECAR revised HAC appeal now stands at USD 132,853,742, (up from an initial requirement of USD 38,070,303). The Global HAC appeal can be accessed here <https://www.unicef.org/appeals/covid-2019.html>.

⁴ List of donors available on request. The impact resulting from new and reprogrammed contributions and other support that have been gratefully received and acknowledged by UNICEF and will be documented in progress and annual donor reports, according to schedules agreed with individual donors.

Serbia, which lifted all restrictions on movement but strongly advising physical distancing and use of disinfectants, will also hold a Parliamentary election on 21 June.

In Greece, even as the country on a national scale is showing signs of overcoming the pandemic, among refugee and migrant populations lack of sufficient water and sanitation facilities inside Reception and Identification Centres (RICs) and severe overcrowding creates extreme difficulty in efforts to contain the infection among the refugee and migrant population, where there have to date been 206 confirmed cases of COVID-19. Even as lockdown measures are being lifted throughout Greece, restriction measures imposed on the RICs and on three previously quarantined accommodation sites have been extended until 7 June. UNICEF continues to call for the immediate transfer of all vulnerable refugees, including children, to the Greek mainland as soon as possible and in line with the most recent public health measures and guidelines.⁵

In other countries in the Region, there has been an increase or resurgence of new infections. In Tajikistan, the numbers continue to climb, and health personnel are under increasing pressure as medical supplies dwindle and a severe shortage of PPE and other equipment impede life-saving interventions. In Moldova, more than one in five confirmed COVID-19 cases is a doctor, nurse or medical assistant. During this reporting period Azerbaijan, which had eased restrictive measures earlier in May, experienced a surge in new cases, while Kazakhstan extended quarantine measures to cities where infections rates are most concerning. In Uzbekistan, at the request of the President, the Republican Commission and khokims (governors) of the regions are reviewing the current risk levels of areas where the epidemiological situation worsened and will likely propose strengthened quarantine measures. Despite this, Uzbekistan has lifted strict quarantine measures, permitting 91% reopening of the industrial sector and 52% of the service sector. In Kyrgyzstan, a major source of new infections has been returning citizens who comprise almost half of the country's COVID-19 cases, and quarantine measures are being imposed on migrant workers returning home from Russia. Although Turkmenistan has not reported any COVID-19 cases, UNICEF and other UN agencies are supporting the joint implementation of the country's Preparedness and Response Plan for an Acute Infectious Disease.

In Ukraine, the fight against COVID-19 is worsened by the continuing state of conflict. UN and other international actors cannot access the non-Government controlled area (NGCA) and the Government announced that the Entry Exit Check Points (EECPs) to the area will remain closed until 22 June. Despite these heavy restrictions on access, international organizations were able to negotiate a Covid-19 humanitarian convoy to Luhansk NGCA for the week of 25 May.

Partnerships & Coordination

During the reporting period, several new partnerships and coordination mechanisms were launched to strengthen UNICEF ECAR's COVID-19 response.

- In Armenia, UNICEF is leading an emerging partnership between the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MoLSA), WFP, UNDP and the World Bank around data systems, beneficiary registration and assessment within the social protection system.
- In Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNICEF partnered with the State Agency for Refugees, to assess technical specifications to ensure social distancing and safe distance learning among children in reception centres.
- In Croatia, UNICEF and the World Bank established a task team to identify areas of cooperation on data collection to inform recommendations that will address the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 on the most affected population, particularly children and families.
- In Italy, UNICEF and WHO, through the European Region Refugee and Migrant Health Programme and the Office for Investment for Health and Development, are working towards joint coordination with Ministry of Health (MoH) to strengthen knowledge generation and service delivery. Through the National Institute for Migration and Poverty, UNICEF is also supporting the MoH in conducting a needs assessment of reception centres.
- In Italy, UNICEF signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the National School of Public Health to carry out a survey and analysis on inequalities in pregnancy and childbirth outcomes. UNICEF is also working with UNHCR and IOM for joint advocacy, activity planning, and implementation, as part of the Inter-Agency COVID-19 Taskforce focusing on national contingency planning, which includes Infection Prevention and Control in search and rescue operations and in reception centres.

⁵ Significant support from the European Union and the United States Government to UNICEF's ongoing refugee and migrant response has been critical in ensuring continued services protecting the health and safety of this vulnerable population.

- In Kazakhstan, the civil society organization (CSO), Korgau-Astana is UNICEF's new partner addressing immediate needs of families and children in difficult life situations and victims of gender-based violence (GBV) at home during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In Kyrgyzstan, two important partnerships were established supporting the most vulnerable children: the first, with the Union of Social Pedagogues, which links 376 professionals with expert guidance in capacity building to deliver services, the second with Janyryk, a national network of 39 organizations comprising 486 parents of children with disabilities. The partnership will widen access of available UNICEF-supported services such as a helpline and individual psychosocial and education support.
- In Serbia the Ministry of Youth and Sports has joined UNICEF and UNICEF's partner Young Researchers of Serbia in the implementation of the "Volunteers Online" programme.
- In Tajikistan, UNICEF, other UN agencies, and civil society formed a taskforce to monitor support to the MoH on health-related supplies. The taskforce is comprised of development partners. One of the first deliverables will be the development of a common platform for tracking needs and supplies. As a result of high-level advocacy by UNICEF, the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) and a WHO technical mission, UNICEF initiated the first online meeting of the newly formed National Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) Task Force, which engaged 35 development partners, including international NGOs on effective and consistent messaging around COVID-19.
- In Uzbekistan, UNICEF entered a partnership with NGO "Barqaror Hayot" (Life Restoring) to enable improved coordination of service provision to the most vulnerable population as well as to provide, during the COVID-19 pandemic, psychosocial support to families affected by migration and with children repatriated from armed conflict zones.

UNICEF's ECA Region Preparedness and Response Actions

Supplies are essential in saving lives and ensuring that children have access to education and other critical services. In the reporting week, UNICEF delivery of WASH supplies included:

- In Albania, hygiene and disinfectant kits to cover 46,000 students and teachers.
- In Belarus, 6,126 litres of sanitizer, 8,675 litres of soap and 116 dispensers for kindergartens, schools, hospitals, baby homes, residential care institutions.
- In Bosnia and Herzegovina, in partnership with local service providers, municipalities, hygiene kits and education supplies to 2,624 Roma and other families (including 7,249 children).
- In Greece, over 2,500 family and dignity kits to vulnerable children and families inside the RICs of Lesbos and Samos.
- In Kosovo*, through the Home Visiting programme, hygiene supplies to 7,750 vulnerable families, 240 health centres and 2,400 pregnant women and mothers.
- In Moldova, sanitary/hygienic supplies to major maternity hospitals reached 430 staff, pregnant women, mothers and newborns. UNICEF also provided hygiene supplies to mothers with children residing in penitentiary institutions, as well as to children in conflict with the law in detention facilities.
- In Montenegro, as part of the Red Cross initiative, hygiene packs and diapers to 900 Roma and Egyptian families, supporting around 4,500 children and adults.
- In North Macedonia, hygiene kits to 2,368 households.
- In Serbia, hygiene packs to 4,358 foster families.
- In Turkey, in partnership with the Turkish Red Crescent, 15,000 hygiene kits to families in 26 provinces.
- In Ukraine, 1,975 litres of hand sanitizers to around 1,700 children and staff in childcare institutions, boarding schools, Child Protection services, and to GBV prevention teams in GCA Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. Thanks to an in-kind donation from water producer IDS Borjomi, UNICEF delivered 12,720 water bottles to eight hospitals.

UNICEF delivery of health supplies included:

- In Armenia, PPE (aprons, coveralls, gowns, masks) and medical equipment (thermometers) to the Ministry of Health.

- In Belarus, 150,000 pairs of gloves, 150 pyrometers, 6,200 disposable protective suits and 15,000 shoe covers, 52,000 face masks and 500 face shields to partner institutions of the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, State Border Committee, Ministry of Emergency Situations and Red Cross.
- In Bosnia and Herzegovina, PPE (masks, goggles gloves) to partners, Save the Children and NGO Fenix, and to staff at Centres for Social Work Velika Kladusa, Bihac, Cazin and Kljuc.
- In Georgia, PPE (gloves, masks, protective gowns) to 100 health workers in maternity hospitals and children's polyclinics in Abkhazia.
- In Kyrgyzstan, PPE (gloves) and paediatric and other health supplies were handed over to hospitals.
- In Tajikistan, responding to an urgent request of the MoHSP, a portion of the first delivery of PPE from China was distributed across six COVID-19 designated hospitals in Dushanbe.
- In North Macedonia, 7 ventilators to the Ministry of Health.
- In Romania, PPE (gloves and masks) to General Directions for Social Assistance and Child Protection (DGASPCs) for use by 24,500 professionals

Provision of Healthcare and Nutrition Services: During the reporting period, all ECAR countries that had suspended immunization resumed their routine vaccination programmes. UNICEF and WHO provided detailed guidance to health authorities on implementing measures to minimize transmission while re-starting such services. This included: conducting screening and triage for early recognition and source control of individuals with acute respiratory infections that could be a suspected COVID-19 case; separating flows of patients to keep well and sick visits apart; scheduling times for individual immunization appointments and limiting the number of caregivers present at an immunization points and ensuring the availability of hand sanitizer or a hand washing facility for visitors and patients at the entrance of the health facility. Compared to pre-COVID-19 crisis immunization coverage has declined by up to 30%. Governments are aware of efforts needed to rebuild people's trust in health system and to increase demand for immunization. Given the ongoing measles outbreak in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan the catch up of children who are behind on their vaccination schedule is critical.

Infection, Protection and Control (IPC)/WASH Services: With relaxing of lockdown measures, many governments turned to UNICEF for advice for IPC measures that needed to be implemented and enforced for the safe return of students to classrooms in both formal and informal settings.

- In Albania, UNICEF facilitated discussions with the Ministry of Health (MoH), Institute of Public Health and the local governments on implementing IPC measures to support the reopening of the creches and kindergartens.
- In Italy, UNICEF partners reached 116 people with health screenings, triage, referral activities, and 294 individuals with distribution of hygiene products, with a focus outside of the formal reception system.
- In Kazakhstan, all preschool institutions resumed their work in compliance with the enhanced sanitary and disinfection regime in accordance with the sanitation resolution of the Chief Sanitary Doctor.
- In Kyrgyzstan, UNICEF supported the drafting of kindergarten reopening guideline in Russian, which is currently under discussion with the Governments.
- In Montenegro, UN agencies provided guidance for reopening of kindergartens (UNICEF) and primary schools (UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank, WFP).
- In North Macedonia, UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MoLSP) in assessing when and how to reopen kindergartens. UNICEF guidance was shared with the Ministry and UNICEF agreed to supply non-contact digital thermometers for kindergartens.
- In Turkey, schools are expected to reopen in September, and UNICEF is currently working closely with Ministry of National Education (MoNE) to identify prioritized areas of support to ensure children's safe return to classrooms.
- In Ukraine, UNICEF, collaboration with UNESCO, WFP and the World Bank, supported the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) and MoH in developing recommendations, in line with WHO guidance, on or the safe reopening of preschool and kindergartens.
- In Uzbekistan, UNICEF and WHO supported the Ministries of Education and Health to develop safe guidelines and plans for school and preschool reopening anticipated in the new academic year.

Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE): Across ECAR, UNICEF continued to provide contextualized and localized key messages, increase the frequency of postings and timely dissemination of messages promoting hygiene, distance learning, safe behaviours as schools and regular a return to economic life slowly resumes. New initiatives this reporting period included:

- In Armenia, the launch of the campaign #Reimagine which is helping to position UNICEF as a cause for the protection and well-being of children during COVID-19 crisis and beyond.
- In Azerbaijan, UNICEF's co-hosted livestream on "self-evaluation" during lockdown reached more than 3,482 young people in different languages.
- In Bulgaria, in partnership with the country's national television station, UNICEF launched the integrated campaign "Education for Every Child" on 26 May. Ten media outlets and two UNICEF Goodwill Ambassadors are supporting the campaign, which focuses on supporting children with special needs.
- In Croatia, in cooperation with the Agency for Electronic Media, UNICEF developed a new [handbook "Let's talk about life on the other side of the screen"](#) to encourage conversation between parents, children and young people about their experiences on the Internet and social networks.
- In Georgia, UNICEF, in partnership with WHO, helped National Center for Disease Control (NCDC) and Public Health in drafting a RCCE Strategy on COVID-19 targeting ethnic minority region of Georgia. UNICEF also launched its [Instagram page](#) to reach Georgia's young people with COVID-19 information.
- In Kosovo*, UNICEF [called](#) on the country's 120 parliamentarians, government programmes, civil society, media and the private sector to ensure greater inclusion of children with disabilities during COVID-19 and beyond. The message was dramatically communicated through an installation of 120 wheelchairs and schoolbags lined up at Parliament Building between 17 to 25 May. UNICEF's message reached a million people through social media platforms. The Speaker of the Parliament, the Prime Minister, parliamentarians and foreign Ambassadors joined the cause, and the topic was widely advocated in discussions with politicians, partners and media.
- In Montenegro, during this crucial transition to post-lockdown UNICEF RCCE support featured a new hashtag #DistanceMasksGloves promoting behaviours to prevent a second wave of COVID-19.
- In Serbia, a partnership with the public broadcaster Radio-Television of Serbia is ensuring that some 1.2 million parents and other viewers receive UNICEF-supported daily advice and tips about prevention of COVID-19 at the time of relaxed measures and reopening of preschools.
- In Tajikistan, UNICEF supported the development of the country's official COVID-19 [website](#) which has become the country's primary source for up to date COVID-19 information. The site is managed by the MoH and in its first 20 days, during the reporting period, attracted over 100,000 visits.
- In Turkey, UNICEF's partnership with Facebook has enabled UNICEF content on COVID-19 to reach 78 million people via a dedicated COVID-19 Info Centre.

Engaging Adolescents and Young People: Examples of new initiatives to engage adolescents and young people included:

- In Armenia, 50 young people working in 12 teams participated in Armenia's first Generation Unlimited (GenU) bootcamp launched online in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, by UNICEF, UNDP, United World College (UWC) Dilijan and the Ayb Education Foundation. Five teams won continued mentorship and a small grant to transform their ideas into projects. The top two finalists will have a chance to participate in an international competition in the US.
- In Azerbaijan, with support from the EU, UNICEF's partner, Education Hub, organized a [webinar](#) to help young people cope with the stress of living through the COVID-19 pandemic. The webinar reached 1,189 people and was complemented by the distribution of communication materials in communities. A series on Basic Life Skills ("BLS Remote") delivered its third webinar, on self-esteem, reaching 3,842 young people through social media and messaging platforms, and repeated in Russian for audiences in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Ukraine.
- In Georgia, UNICEF partnered with Kant's Academy to build the resilience of adolescents in confronting the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, anxiety about the virus, school closures, excessive screen time and gaming, and isolation from friends. A UNICEF youth challenge: "Show Us Your Life Hacks" let young people exchange their experiences on how to stay productive when staying at home and studying online

- In Italy, UNICEF organized 22 Italian, refugee and migrant adolescents in focus group discussions on “The Future We Want” after COVID-19. The initiative is the first step of a tripartite partnership between UNICEF’s refugee and migrant programme, the Italian National Committee for UNICEF, and UNICEF’s Innocenti Research Office.
- In Kazakhstan, some 1,500 adolescents and young people from across the country were engaged in the first phase of the UNICEF-supported online volunteering programme aimed at prevention of the spread of COVID-19. Under the programme, volunteers participated in eight thematic webinars and reached some 400,000 young peers with information on how to support physical and mental health during the pandemic.
- In Moldova, through U-report, young people between 15 and 19 years old provided feedback to the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research on its decision to cancel graduation exams in 9th and 12th grades. The results were shared with the Parliamentary Commission.
- In Montenegro, in response to increased use of the internet during COVID-19 and increased exposure to risks such as peer violence online and cyber-bullying, UNICEF Young Reporters recorded a short video for the #Let’sStopViolence campaign which was widely circulated on UNICEF social networks. Peers were invited to master communication skills online and in the real world.
- In North Macedonia, the first blogs written by volunteer UNICEF Young Reporters were published, giving voice to young people’s perspective on issues important to them during the COVID-19 pandemic including: [Learning Online: Problems and Solutions](#); [Socialization in the “New Normal”](#); [Health Yes, Stigma No \(on mental health\)](#); and [Lessons we will Learn from this Pandemic](#).
- In Serbia, 741 adolescents (more than double the number from two weeks ago), and young people were engaged with UNICEF-supported online volunteering programme (provided peer online support and helped translate educational materials).
- In Turkey, UNICEF, in collaboration with the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality and the Izmir University of Economics (IUE), launched a new initiative that provides youth volunteers training by UNICEF experts and academics on community engagement and communication for behavioural change in the context of COVID-19. The pilot training, which will be replicated elsewhere, lasts 8 weeks and participants will learn about subjects such as child rights, media literacy and practical steps to be taken to combat the pandemic.
- In Uzbekistan, UNICEF, in partnership with national partners, conducted two U-Report polls among young people of Uzbekistan on distance learning programme and young children at home under a quarantine. Results will help the Ministry of Public Education, Ministry of Preschool Education and UNICEF to identify existing gaps.

Access to Continuous Learning: Over the reporting period, schools and learning centres re-opened in several countries, enabling some children to return to class-based learning. Alongside supporting safe return to classrooms (see IPC section), UNICEF continued activities to enable children to access learning activities, support teachers to adapt to a new teaching environment, and guide parents in providing support for children learning at home. New initiatives undertaken during this reporting period by UNICEF in ECAR included:

- In Albania, with financial support from the World Bank, UNICEF purchased tablets to enable vulnerable children (e.g., Roma, special needs, earthquake-affected) to access distance learning. UNICEF trained 18 school inspectors on using the early warning system (EWS) platform to prevent drop out. As well, 50 leaders engaged in EWS networks received online training on improving parents-school relations.
- In Azerbaijan, UNICEF-supported preschool education classes continued to be broadcasted on two national television channels targeting children below the age of 5. The early education videos are also available at the Parenting Education Portal supported by UNICEF. About 55,000 children under 5 were reached between 18 and 21 May.
- In Belarus, 1,200 teachers took part in a UNICEF-supported webinar on psychological support to cope with stress in difficult pedagogical situations. In partnership with the World Bank, UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Education to implement distance learning.
- In Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNICEF, in partnership with Ministry of Education, delivered five webinars to 250 teachers on online education. A UNICEF-supported U-report youth [survey](#) found that 76% of respondents were satisfied with the quality of online education. 45% of participants experienced access difficulties, (e.g., inadequate ICT equipment or connectivity, lack of workspace at home). UNICEF worked with UNESCO, UNICEF to support the Ministry of Education in Republika Srpska in providing mobile internet access to 4,213 children. In temporary reception centres

(TRCs), UNICEF is working with Save the Children to facilitate online education for 194 children.

- In Bulgaria, UNICEF distributed 185 tablets to support 400 children of vulnerable families in accessing online learning.
- In Greece, UNICEF partners ELIX and Solidarity Now began reopening non-formal classes. The Institute of Educational Policy made learning materials for refugee and migrant students and their teachers available online, and these include UNICEF-developed toolkit, 'Ftou kai Vgaino' for combined language learning, multilingual and social-emotional empowerment activities, the Akelius Language Learning platform. UNICEF also supported the training of 76 teachers in Thiva and Iraklion, on distance learning.
- In Italy, UNICEF supported skills-building through online non-formal education continued this week with attendance of 132 young migrants and refugees and reach on the U-Report on the Move platform averaging 650 participants per workshop. 18 UPSHIFT Online classes were held with 73 students from catch up schools, working on the incubation of eight start-up enterprises. 27 students heard testimonials from entrepreneurs at the "Ideas@Work".
- In Kazakhstan, UNICEF reached 100 employees of Beeline Kazakhstan, a mobile network operator, via a webinar on positive parenting strategies to support home learning.
- In Kosovo*, the ECD learning platform developed by UNICEF and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, reached nearly 1.8 million views. 150 children age 3-6 years old from rural areas of Mitrovica region participated in health and education online creative workshops including tasks that were given as a homework to be done with parents. Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children from Roma Mahala were supported in accessing these online lessons and supported completing homework assignments.
- In Montenegro, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education and schools to upgrade and launch web services for online enrolment as part of its continued support to the functioning of the Montenegrin Education Information System (MEIS) and relevant applications. The online service was provided for the first time has resulted in over 25% of 6-year old children being enrolled in the first grade of primary schools in less than a week since the service was launched. In partnership with the Red Cross of Montenegro, printed education materials are being distributed weekly to 336 Roma and Egyptian children who are not able to access the distance learning system (#UciDoma) due to lack of access to a TV or the internet.
- In Serbia, with UNICEF's support, the Institute for Improvement of Education adapted the two nation-wide training programmes for teachers aimed at improving their competencies in online teaching. A new cycle of the online training on learning outcome-based teaching started on 18 May, with 3,000 teachers and other education professionals participating. Online training on digital classroom and digitally competent teaching launched on 25 May with 4,000 teachers attending.
- In Tajikistan, UNICEF supported the training of 60 science teachers for distance learning. More than 200 parents supervising children at home were supported through the Early Start Network Platform covering 33 member organizations, more than 200 parents were supported by UNICEF-WHO positive parenting messages translated into Russian and Tajik.
- In Turkey, UNICEF provided financial and technical support to the Ministry of National Education to ensure national distance learning programmes are meeting the needs of all 17 million learners in Turkey, including more than 680,000 Syrian and other refugee children in public schools and temporary education centres.

Access to Child Protection and Preventing Violence: In the reporting period, new initiatives focusing on protection and well-being of vulnerable children (including children with disabilities, children in closed residences or detained in institutions) and capacity building of parents and professionals who provide care. Counselling and other types of support are helping parents cope with stress as families struggle with sudden financial hardship and prolonged confinement. The prevention and response to gender-based violence (GBV) has also been critical. New initiatives undertaken during this reporting period that cover this sensitive area of programming include:

- In Albania, UNICEF supported the participation of the Deputy Minister of Justice and a member of High Judicial Council, as distinguished guests on a global webinar on children's access to Justice during the COVID-19 pandemic. Albania shared its experiences in keeping the court system operational with 200 participants from 63 countries, including Australia, Brazil, Canada, and Japan.
- In Belarus, in cooperation with the leading experts of the Belarusian Medical Academy of Postgraduate Education, UNICEF supported the capacity development of 171 psychologists, psychotherapists, psychiatrist-narcologists to

prevent distress and provide quality mental healthcare and psychological assistance to front-line workers dealing with COVID-19 infected patients. Webinars on the provision of the emergency psychological assistance, prevention of burnout and use of the self-regulation technics engaged 607 participants.

- In Georgia, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, and the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs to develop a framework to provide remote services for children with disabilities and their families. UNICEF's partner, MAC Georgia, provided support to 400 frontline child protection staff to transition into the distance working modality to reach children with disabilities and their families. UNICEF developed guidelines for religious leaders on the prevention of violence against children and shared these with more than 150 leaders three of the Orthodox, Muslim and Lutheran faiths.
- In Greece, the relaxing of restrictive lockdown measures on the mainland have permitted UNICEF partners to resume their presence in Open Accommodation Sites with remote modalities (e.g., What'sApp groups) continuing as needed. During the reporting period, UNICEF in partnership with TdH Hellas reached 676 frontline social workers with webinars on staff wellbeing in the context of COVID-19 and remote child protection case management.
- In Italy, As part of a global rollout of the UNICEF's Gender-based violence in Emergencies (GBViE) Resource Pack, promoting an online learning series for staff and partners working on the Europe Refugee and Migrant Response, UNICEF led discussions with key partners on the impact of COVID-19 and shared relevant guidance on GBV and gendered implications of COVID-19 in response interventions, risk communication and services.
- In Kosovo*, supported by UNICEF, the Kosovo* Disability Forum launched the project "Online support through provision of psychosocial and education services for children with disabilities". Kosovo* Disability Forum and Ministry of Education organized the first joint meeting of the project steering committee with the steering board of the project. Kosovo's* Ombudsman Institution, UNICEF and the Coalition of NGOs for Child Protection in Kosovo* (KOMF) issued a joint advocacy statement on protection of juveniles in conflict with the law during and post COVID-19.
- In Montenegro, UNICEF supported the Association of Youth with Disabilities in providing psychosocial and legal support to children with disabilities and their families through an online platform: <https://vrsnjackapodrska.me/>. The platform reached 8,448 children and adults. 37,305 people were reached via Facebook. 109 members of families with children with disabilities received psychosocial support. 33 persons with disabilities received legal aid.
- In Tajikistan, through liaising with Child Rights Monitors and implementing partners, UNICEF was able to confirm that out of around 9,000 children in institutions, the majority (7,795) are now being accommodated by their biological or extended families as a safety measure against COVID-19 infection. UNICEF supported the production of printed material (e.g., posters, flyers) on psycho-social support especially for children in detention special schools.
- In Turkey, in partnership with MoFLSS, UNICEF began work on establishing a psychosocial support counselling hotline to provide families with immediate support from a network of over 500 trained psychologists and social workers. In preparation for the roll-out of the hotline, UNICEF provided online trainings to 373 MoFLSS staff.
- In Ukraine, UNICEF-supported psychosocial teams operating in Luhansk and Donetsk (NGCA) were able to continue providing consultation via phone, skype, and other social media channels to children and families living along the contact line in the East. In total, 110 people received psychosocial counselling, information on positive parenting and COVID-19 related information.
- In Uzbekistan, UNICEF developed a technical note on COVID-19 for children deprived of liberty has been shared with the key justice partners working with children in conflict with the law such as the Ministry of Interior, the Prosecutor General's Office and the Human Rights Ombudsman Office, the administration of the specialized educational correctional institutions. Referring to this note, the Prosecutor General's Office submitted an official request to the Republican Special Commission on COVID-19 response in Uzbekistan to grant early conditional release to children deprived of liberty.

Social Protection: UNICEF is working with UN agencies and other partners to support Governments in addressing the additional vulnerabilities that families are bearing as a result of COVID-19. Across ECAR countries, UNICEF is the lead UN agency on coordinating inputs and consultations for "Protecting People: Social Protection and Basic Services", or Pillar 2 of the UN Framework for the immediate socioeconomic response to COVID-19.

- In Armenia, UNICEF provided technical assistance to MoLSA to develop a system for needs assessment and rapid response to cover people working in the informal sector and fall outside of current support packages. In collaboration

with the European Union (EU), the World Bank and WFP, UNICEF initiated assessments on the vulnerability of families to the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 and on the effectiveness of distance learning.

- In Georgia, UNICEF completed the Shock Responsive Social Protection Feasibility Assessment which will be used to inform programming. UNICEF continues its partnership with the Prime Minister's Office and the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality to deliver essential hygiene and non-perishable food items to an additional 200 families in quarantine zone villages, villages near the Administrative Boundary Line (ABL) and those families enrolled in the state reintegration programme, all of whom are experiencing greater socio-economic pressures as a direct result from COVID-19.
- In Kazakhstan, UNICEF continued advocacy with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection to better target families for COVID-19 related social benefits. The second wave of \$100 allowances for those eligible (who lost income and didn't receive the first allowance in April) was advertised in May.
- In Kyrgyzstan, UNICEF conducted a COVID -19 impact analysis on child poverty indicators, complementing the World Bank's broader analysis on poverty and vulnerability. During the reporting period, the findings and practical recommendations on establishing mitigating social assistance measures were presented at the Development Partners Coordination Council (DPCC) and to the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, and to the Vice Prime Minister on Social Affairs.
- In Montenegro, the ongoing UNICEF-supported comprehensive social protection system assessment (using Inter-Agency Social Protection Assessment Core Diagnostic Tools) is being expanded to examine the impact of the current COVID-19 crisis on the social protection system and ensure the assessment provides relevant findings and recommendations, including financing options for preferred policy options which would form part of the recovery phase.
- In Turkey, UNICEF and partners continued to ensure the continuity of the Conditional Cash Transfer for Education (CCTE) for Refugee Children during the ongoing school closures. A dedicated CCTE call centre system, also continued without interruption and is accessible in Turkish, English, Arabic, Farsi and Pashto.
- In Ukraine, newly-updated [data](#) on child poverty resulting from COVID-19 generated intensive debates on how the social protection should respond in such a situation. UNICEF is now capitalizing the wide-range public debates on child poverty and social protection with the aim to translate it into a constructive dialogue among all stakeholders. The analysis indicates that absolute poverty is likely to increase from 27 per cent to 44 per cent. The impact on child poverty is estimated to be even larger: the expected rise is from 33 per cent to 51 per cent.

Data Collection Analysis and Research

Examples have been embedded in the sections above, as relevant to the area of programme.

Internal and External Media

WEBSITE

- [RO] [ECA Region COVID-19 webpage](#)
- [RO] [COVID-19 and children with disabilities in Europe and Central Asia](#)
- [RO, Ukraine] [Surge in violent attacks during COVID-19 lockdown puts children's lives at risk in eastern Ukraine – UNICEF](#)
- [RO] [HealthBuddy: A new chatbot to engage with communities in Europe and Central Asia on COVID-19](#)
- [Georgia] [How COVID-19 changed lives of children in Georgia](#)
- [Montenegro] [UNICEF's young reporters: #EndViolence](#)
- [Montenegro] [Education materials for the most vulnerable children](#)
- [North Macedonia] ["We felt alone in a room full of people, and now, when we are isolated, we are all together"](#)
- [Serbia] [Learning through play during COVID-19](#)

TWITTER

- [Global, with ECA inputs, RT] [ED Fore Answers Young People's Questions on COVID-19](#)
- [Global, RT] [European Commission thanks @unicefchief for supporting COVID0-19 #GlobalResponse](#)
- [RO, Ukraine] [A recent rise in shelling in eastern #Ukraine has hurt children, while families cope with the #COVID lockdown](#)
- [RO] [HealthBuddy: A new chatbot to engage with communities in Europe and Central Asia on COVID-19](#)

[RO, WHO EURO, RT] [HealthBuddy: A new chatbot to engage with communities in Europe and Central Asia on COVID-19](#)

- [RO] [Activities to reduce stress & anxiety](#)
- [Albania, RT] [@albania_unicef & anti-trafficking coalition partners build capacity of special mobile units](#)
- [Bosnia-Herzegovina] [“We couldn't risk any of us getting infected because it would threaten the entire community”](#)
- [Georgia] [@unicefgeorgia asked children around the country how they are coping with the new normal](#)
- [Italy, RO] [Outreach worker Abdoul Bassite visits informal settlements on the outskirts of Rome to provide vital health services to vulnerable communities](#)
- [Kazakhstan, RT] [3,000 managers, teachers, medical staff of schools attend UNICEF webinars on safety procedures for during and post-COVID period](#)
- [Kosovo**, RT] [120 wheelchairs with schoolbags at Skenderbeu Boulevard in Prishtina to call for greater inclusion of children with disabilities](#)
- [Kyrgyzstan, RT] [Lights, Camera, Action!](#)
- [Montenegro] [Education materials for the most vulnerable children](#)
- [North Macedonia] [“Volunteering in the time of #COVID”](#)
- [Romania] [It's in the mail: UNICEF partners with the Romanian Post to inform the most vulnerable families during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [Serbia] [Learning through play during COVID-19](#)
- [Serbia] [Family boxes for learning and play for vulnerable families](#)
- [Serbia/RO's “Our Voices” youth blogs series] [The show goes on: How young people moved the Festival of International Student Theatre online](#)
- [Tajikistan, RT] [Procurement of essential medical supplies, by UNICEF with EU support](#)

WEBSITE (Russian)

- [RO] [HealthBuddy: A new chatbot to engage with communities in Europe and Central Asia on COVID-19](#)
- [RO translation, global] [How to protect your family's mental health in the face of COVID-19](#)

FACEBOOK (Russian)

- [Kosovo**] [UNICEF Kosovo** installation](#)
- [RO] [Relaxing activity for children - bath](#)
- [RO] [HealthBuddy: A new chatbot to engage with communities in Europe and Central Asia on COVID-19](#)
- [RO] [Message and link to ECARO COVID-19 response webpage](#)
- [RO translation, global] [Schools reopening framework](#)
- [RO translation, global] [Tips for online safety](#)
- [RO translation, global] [Pregnancy during the pandemic](#)
- [RO translation, global] [Youth video blog from Yemen](#)

INSTAGRAM (Russian)

- [Bulgaria, RO's “Our Voices” youth blog series] [Children with disability - Maria's vlog](#)
- [Georgia] [UNICEF COVID-19 response in Georgia](#)
- [Kosovo**] [UNICEF Kosovo* installation](#)
- [Tajikistan] [Children from Tajikistan - on COVID-19 prevention](#)
- [RO translation, global] [Youth blog from Yemen](#)
- [RO translation, global] [Schools reopening framework](#)
- [RO translation, global] [Global families during the pandemic](#)
- [RO] [COVID-19 prevention](#)

Next Sitrep: 17 June 2020

Who to contact for further information:

Afshan Khan
Regional Director
UNICEF Regional Office for Europe
and Central Asia
Email: akhan@unicef.org

Basil Rodriques
Regional Adviser, Health
UNICEF Regional Office for Europe
and Central Asia
Email: brodriques@unicef.org

Annmarie Swai
Regional Adviser, Emergency
UNICEF Regional Office for Europe
and Central Asia
Email: aswai@unicef.org

Annex I: Summary of Selected Regional Programme Results (as of 28 May 2020)ⁱ

Areas of Response	2020 Target ⁱⁱ	Total UNICEF results	% Target achieved	Change in results from last Sitrep
Risk Communication and Community Engagement				
Number of people reached on COVID-19 through MESSAGING ON PREVENTION AND ACCESS TO SERVICES	170,980,000 ⁱⁱⁱ	147,803,456	86 %	▲ 60,948,843 ^{iv}
Number of people engaged on COVID-19 through RCCE ACTIONS	6,552,000	5,070,743	77 %	▲ 1,429,202
Critical Supply and Logistics and WASH Services				
Number of people reached with CRITICAL WASH SUPPLIES (INCLUDING HYGIENE ITEMS) AND SERVICES	2,926,020 ^v	345,536	12 %	▲ 6,128
Number of healthcare workers within health facilities and communities provided with PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)	122,436 ^{vi}	80,803	66 %	▲ 19,612
Provision of Healthcare and Nutrition Services				
Number of children and women receiving ESSENTIAL HEALTHCARE, including prenatal, delivery and postnatal care, essential newborn care, immunization, treatment of childhood illnesses and HIV care through UNICEF supported community health workers and health facilities.	3,427,140 ^{vii}	783,675	23 %	▲ 757,508
Number of caregivers of children (0-23 months) reached with MESSAGES ON BREASTFEEDING in the context of COVID-19	1,241,516	981,051	79 %	▲ 566,962
Access to Continuous Education and Child Protection Services				
Number of children supported with DISTANCE/HOME-BASED LEARNING	33,649,226	21,348,268	63 %	▼ -74,198 ^{viii}
Number of children without parental or family care provided with appropriate ALTERNATIVE CARE ARRANGEMENTS.	18,568 ^{ix}	10,309	56 %	▲ 10,148
Number of children, parents and primary caregivers provided with community based MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT.	1,810,350 ^x	984,758	54 %	▲ 882,034
Number of UNICEF personnel & partners that have completed TRAINING ON GBV RISK MITIGATION & REFERRALS FOR SURVIVORS	5,529	1,285	24 %	▲ 241
Access to Social Protection Services				
Number of households receiving HUMANITARIAN CASH TRANSFERS through UNICEF response to COVID-19	38,500	517	1 %	▼ -10,983 ^{xi}
Number of households benefitting from new or additional SOCIAL ASSISTANCE MEASURES provided by governments to respond to COVID-19 with UNICEF support	282,190	119,207	42 %	▲ 115,560

ⁱ This table presents the indicative programme indicators selected from the global Humanitarian Performance Monitoring (HPM) framework. Reported programme results have been extracted from the global HPM dashboard for the period ending 28 May. Work is underway to include two additional Regional indicators to better reflect regional dynamics and nuances in the context of COVID-19 response.

ⁱⁱ In comparison to the previous reporting period, some targets have been revised to account for evolving programme priorities and methodologies applied for calculating indicator targets. Technical conversations continue with programme teams to further streamline and finalise target setting and results reporting in line with revised HAC scope and scale, commonly applied methodologies and changing contexts.

ⁱⁱⁱ In comparison to the previous reporting period, there has been a marked increase in the target value of this indicator due to changes applied to the definition and scope of the indicator, and the fact that in some instances activities are scoped at country wide reach, which is made possible through far reaching social and multimedia platforms.

^{iv} The ongoing revision to the calculation methodology has meant that reported results have increased in some countries especially those who are counting country-wide reach for calculating target values (as noted above). Technical conversations continue with programme teams to further streamline and finalise results reporting in line with proper application of appropriate methodologies.

^v In comparison to the previous reporting period, target has been reduced by 6,600 due to revisions to methodology for calculating targets.

^{vi} In comparison to the previous reporting period, target has been reduced by 61,191 due to revisions to methodology for calculating targets.

^{vii} In comparison to the previous reporting period, target has significantly increased from 698,000 to 2,427,140, due to change in application of definition and scope of the indicator.

^{viii} As some schools re-opened and as some lessons ended for the summer break, the number of children targeted and benefiting from distance learning is gradually decreasing. In many countries, UNICEF is shifting focus to supporting children's return to school.

^{ix} In comparison to the previous reporting round, target has increased from 4,635 to 18,568. The increase in target is attributed to the change in the application of definition and scope of the indicator.

^x In comparison to the previous reporting round, this target has increased from 764,850 to 1,810,350 due to change in the application of definition and scope of the indicator.

^{xi} In some countries, the reporting of targets and results has shifted to the indicator on "number of households benefiting from new or additional social assistance measures provided by governments to respond to COVID-19 with UNICEF support." Hence, there is a reduction of both target and result values for this indicator, compared to those reported in in the previous reporting round.