



UNICEF Kosovo*/2020

UNICEF Europe & Central Asia Region (ECAR)

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Situation Report No. 13

unicef 
for every child



1,242,297 COVID-19 cases in 22 countries**



27,989 COVID-19 deaths in 22 countries**



\$149 million funding requirement for ECAR response

27 August – 24 September

Highlights

UNICEF works in 22 countries and territories¹ in Europe and Central Asia Region (ECAR) and is present in Italy, supporting refugee and migrant populations. During the reporting period:

- New cases of COVID-19 infections continued to rise with the highest daily increases in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Moldova, Montenegro, and Ukraine. The lowest daily increases were recorded in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia, Turkey, and Uzbekistan.
- Humanitarian and political developments in Belarus, Greece, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, and most recently an escalation of conflict in the Nagorno-Karabakh area is creating additional hardships for populations already struggling with the health and socioeconomic impact of COVID-19, and are complicating government-led efforts to ensure a systematic response to reach the most vulnerable children and families.
- On 9 September, a fire at the Moria Reception and Identification Centre (RIC) on the Greek island of Lesbos left the entire refugee and migrant population of 12,000 people, including 4,200 children, homeless. Within 24 hours of the fire, all 406 previously identified unaccompanied and separated children living inside Moria were safely transferred to the mainland.
- UNICEF programmes across ECAR have reached over 181 million people with COVID-19 prevention and safety messages through online platforms and social media. During the reporting period, in support of children's safe return to classrooms, UNICEF's work centred around hygiene promotion in schools and communities. New campaigns were launched in several countries, including Albania, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Kosovo*, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Tajikistan, Turkey and Ukraine.

¹Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Greece, Kazakhstan, Kosovo*, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan

*In line with UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR 124)

**Source: World Health Organization (WHO), as of 24 September. Figures do not include Italy

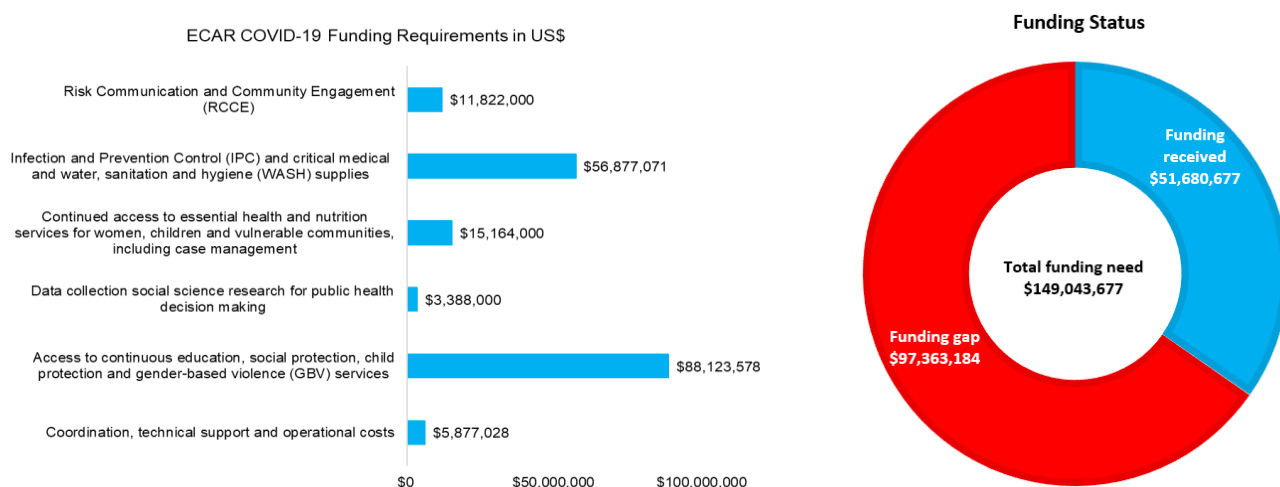
Photo: In Kosovo, volunteers from UNICEF's #itseasy2makeitwork campaign support children's safe return to school.

- About 1.6 million people have benefited from WASH supplies support, including hygiene items. As part of school reopening efforts, UNICEF has provided critical hygiene and sanitation supplies for schools and kindergartens; supported WASH assessments in schools and health facilities; and helped develop guidelines and protocols for safe school environments.

Funding Overview and Partnerships

Under UNICEF’s Global Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) appeal for the COVID-19 response, ECAR is appealing for a little over **\$149 million**. At the end of this reporting period, ECAR has raised nearly **\$51.7 million²**, or nearly **35%** of the required funding. UNICEF is grateful for the continued support of all donors and over the reporting period, acknowledges the important financial contributions from the Government of the United States (Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Serbia) and ECHO (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Ukraine).

UNICEF’s response in ECAR remains underfunded, particularly in ensuring that the hardest-hit children and families are reached with critical water, sanitation and hygiene supplies; support for distance and home-based learning; child protection and GBV prevention and response services; social protection services.



During the reporting period, UNICEF launched the Moria fire flash appeal³ to meet the immediate and medium-term needs of refugees and migrants who remain on Lesbos and face a heightened risk of COVID-19 infection.

Situation Overview and Humanitarian Needs

In the first two weeks of September, Montenegro recorded the highest average daily increase of COVID-19 cases in ECAR at 22 new cases per 100,000 population. This was followed by Moldova (10.7), Bosnia and Herzegovina (7.7), Ukraine (5.8), and Croatia (5.6). During the reporting period, in Greece, the number of newly confirmed cases continued to rise with more than 15,928 confirmed, of which 611 (including 25 children) were among refugees and migrants. Ten Open Accommodation Facilities and three Reception and Identification Centres (RICs), including Moria, were placed under lockdown.

Some countries have been able to keep their average daily case increase per 100,000 population to below 2, including Serbia (0.81), Kyrgyzstan (1), Uzbekistan (1), Azerbaijan (1.40) Georgia (1.79), and Turkey (1.97). There are still no officially confirmed cases in Turkmenistan. Hospitals are conducting COVID-19 tests, but positive results are provided only verbally or classified as pneumonia.

In the first two weeks of September, the highest average numbers of COVID-19 related deaths in ECAR per one million population were recorded in Kosovo* (3.12), Moldova (2.27), Montenegro (2.23), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2.13), Romania (2.07), North Macedonia (1.66), Albania (1.34), Bulgaria (1.1), and Ukraine(1.1). Countries in Central Asia have kept their number of deaths per one million below one. Despite an increase in number of COVID-19 related deaths in Turkey, the country has recorded a relatively low number of deaths per one million, at 0.64.

² List of donors to HAC available on request. Impact resulting from these contributions will be documented in progress, annual donor reports, according to schedules of individual donors. UNICEF is also grateful for support enabling the ongoing response to refugee and migrants in Europe, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. On behalf of these vulnerable children and families, UNICEF acknowledges: the European Union, the Government of the United States (BPRM), CEB, Education Cannot Wait, IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF National Committees (France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, United States).

³ UNICEF’s emergency flash appeal for the Moria fire emergency now stands at \$3 million (at 2 October) and prioritizes immediate relief assistance to meet the needs of children and families in shelter, water, and for critical supplies such as tents, hygiene items, winter clothes, and play and learning materials.

During the reporting period, children started to return to in-person learning in primary and/or secondary schools. Across ECAR, schools were required to follow standard preventive protocols (e.g., wearing masks, frequent hand washing, social distancing) ordered by education and health authorities. Additional measures enforced by countries included, for example, requiring schools with large student populations to hold classes in shifts or staggering reopening dates so that younger children started in-person classes a few weeks ahead of older ones (or vice versa). Some countries delayed their originally announced returned to school for epidemiological reasons. However, another reason cited was the lack of budget needed to secure adequate PPE for students and teachers (Kyrgyzstan), with Romania and Ukraine also noting a PPE shortage for school staff. Blended learning, which combines in-person and distance classes, appeared to be the most commonly implemented option across ECAR. Some countries, or more specifically, some districts within countries have chosen to have all children continue learning from home.

In countries where schools re-opened, attendance is often quite high and the reception positive. In Belarus, a UNICEF-World Bank COVID-19 rapid online survey, found that 84 per cent of school-aged children returned to in-person classes. In Croatia, more than 90 per cent of schools reported that all children are back in class, and less than one per cent opted for distance learning. In Montenegro a public opinion survey revealed that [parents are concerned but supportive of school reopening](#). However, in North Macedonia, where pre-schools have reopened, only half of the children are attending.

Governments are taking extra measures to ensure digital learning is more accessible to more children. For example, in Armenia, the Ministry of Education (MoE) requested the newly established Distance Learning Centre of the National Centre of Educational Technologies to launch a centralized learning platform to disseminate lessons for Grades 1 to 12 online. North Macedonia announced a new national online platform that will enable two-way communication between teachers and students. In this reporting period, teachers in Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Serbia, Ukraine are among those who received training to help them plan and deliver distance education more effectively.

During the reporting period, serious political and humanitarian situations are complicating a systematic response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In each case, UNICEF is strongly advocating governments to put the needs of children first.

- In Belarus, as many as 200,000 people continued to gather in mass protests without social distancing nor wearing masks. The situation is primed to accelerate the spread of COVID-19 infections. UNICEF has also voiced [serious concerns](#) about reported excessive use of force by police against protestors, in many cases, children. The lack of information on the numbers of children detained is also worrisome.
- In Greece, following the fires that destroyed Moria RIC and displaced the refugee and migrant population, the Government of Greece erected a temporary tent site in the nearby vicinity (Kare Tepe). At the same time, priority was made to immediately transfer all 406 unaccompanied children living in Moria RIC to the mainland. In the following weeks, other vulnerable children and families followed. There remain nearly 9,500 refugees, migrants and asylum-seekers at the tent site, with limited access to services. Water, sanitation and hygiene continue to be extremely problematic due to the transitory nature of the site and WASH facilities are far below the standards and number needed to support the population. All emergency response activities will be delivered in consideration of the COVID-19 context, particularly in light of the confirmed outbreak at Moria RIC only a few days before the fire.
- In Italy, since July there has been an increase in the number of arrivals by sea, especially among Tunisians fleeing the economic crisis resulting from pandemic containment measures. UNICEF has been advocating that, while respecting precautionary measures required to minimize the spread of infection, children must be allowed to disembark from vessels first, and that their health screenings, and quarantine take place in child-friendly accommodations. The rise in COVID-19 cases is stoking the politicization of the migrant and refugee issue in Italy.
- In Kyrgyzstan, contested elections and the potential dissolution of Government has limited the capacity of focus on the interventions and longer term strategies to address the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, an escalation of conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan since 27 September has put populations living close to the line of contact, already vulnerable to health risks associated with COVID-19, at additional risk.

Partnerships & Coordination

During the reporting period, noteworthy new and expanded partnerships included:

Armenia: UNICEF formalized its partnership with HayPost CJSC, the official national postal operator of Armenia. HayPost has agreed to distribute pro bono, COVID-19 awareness raising materials to families with children with disabilities who are receiving Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) benefits.

Azerbaijan: UNICEF has expanded its existing RCCE-based partnership with the State Health Agency (TABIB), to include capacity building of health professionals on Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) and strengthening the Primary Health Care (PHC) system, as an important part of preparing for the resumption of services.

Greece: A new partnership with the International Red Cross (IRC) was signed to re-establish [refugee.info](#), a website aimed to provide information for refugees on topics such as asylum procedures, work permissions, registering children for school, or finding a doctor and includes links to organizations that can help in COVID-19 situations, for example, public health guidance on employment, related mental health counselling, etc.

Moldova: UNICEF established a new partnership with Copil Comunitate Familie (CCF) and Educație Timpurie și Informare a Familiei (CNETIF) to pursue activities that are helping children, teachers and parents ensure a safe return to school.

Tajikistan: UNICEF, FAO and WFP are discussing strengthened collaboration in nutrition programming and have agreed to develop a UN strategic framework on nutrition for joint planning, programming, advocacy and resource mobilization.

Response Actions

Supplies: UNICEF delivered a range of personal protective equipment (PPE) and/or hygiene supplies to vulnerable children and families (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine); health care facilities (Albania, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Ukraine, Uzbekistan); and schools (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kosovo*, Moldova, Ukraine).

Distribution of other critical supplies was completed to support back-to-school programmes, for example, thermometers (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan); air circulators (Belarus); and “Learn at Home kits” in Turkish and Syrian for vulnerable children (Turkey). ICT and office equipment and supplies were delivered to the domestic violence hotline call centre (Kyrgyzstan). Specialized medical equipment and supplies were delivered to health institutions (e.g., in Serbia, oxygen flow meters; in Tajikistan, ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF); in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, oxygen concentrators).

Provision of Healthcare and Nutrition Services: UNICEF in partnership with WHO, governments, healthcare experts, NGOs, continued efforts to ensure children and families have access to health information and basic health services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Outreach on a variety of mother and child health issues was achieved through a range of modalities, for example:

Azerbaijan: UNICEF enabled experts to provide online counselling to parents on issues related to early childhood development (ECD) for example, diet, teeth, exercises, allergies, etc. Live online sessions with medical specialists were also organized.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: UNICEF, in partnership with NGOs Romalen Kakanj and Kali Sara, completed awareness raising on COVID-19 prevention, routine immunization for 520 families in 26 Roma communities. With Danish Refugee Council (DRC), UNICEF provided dental and [health care services](#) to 198 children in [temporary reception centres](#) (TRCs) in Sedra and Borići.

Georgia: UNICEF’s virtual antenatal care programme reached 20,260 pregnant women, of whom around 34 per cent participated in virtual medical consultations in regions with the highest COVID-19 infection rates.

Kosovo*: UNICEF launched a social media campaign to provide correct information to new parents on the importance and safe management of breastfeeding and child nutrition during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Moldova: UNICEF, jointly with WHO, published a series of [video animations](#) to raise public awareness on the importance of vaccination in the context of the reopening of preschools and schools during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Serbia: Continuity of UNICEF-supported health care provided by Roma Health Mediators through telephone interventions was secured through partnership between the Ministry of Health, UNICEF and the Association of Health Mediators. During the reporting period, 19,694 Roma were reached, including 7,785 children. Roma Health Mediators referred 118 people to COVID-19 outpatient clinics, and 286 children to immunization.

Tajikistan: UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Health to extend provision of therapeutic food for children with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) from one week to one month, and provision of supplementary food from one month to three months. Newly trained health staff have started door to door screening to identify malnourished children.

Turkmenistan: UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry (MoHMI) in maintaining the supply chain for immunization. Almost 80 per cent of all planned Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) supplies were delivered. To date, there have been no reported vaccine stock-outs.

UNICEF efforts to help governments assess quality, set national standards, and continue building capacity of healthcare professionals have been key in ensuring continuity of health and nutrition services during the pandemic. Results are also investments in strengthening health care systems well beyond COVID-19. Highlights during the reporting period:

Armenia: UNICEF's continued training of health workers on breastfeeding, young child nutrition, hygiene and safe immunization during the COVID-19 pandemic, has now reached 1,500 professionals.

Belarus: UNICEF-supported [training videos](#) for health care providers on use of PPE, and respiratory support for COVID-19 patients were made available on the Belarusian Medical Academy of Post Diploma Studies (BelMAPO) YouTube channel. In cooperation with BelMAPO experts, guidelines on clinical laboratory diagnosis and a module on COVID-19 diagnosis, treatment, and prevention, were also developed.

Croatia: UNICEF worked closely with national health experts to design an innovative virtual assessment of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) standards in all maternities, to help ensure the sustainability and success of the BFHI. [The e-learning platform for early childhood intervention](#) (ECI) practitioners on providing quality tele-intervention services for children with developmental delays and disabilities during COVID-19 is now fully functional. So far, 255 practitioners, have completed the online course.

Kazakhstan: UNICEF with MoH, launched a series of webinars to improve knowledge of healthcare providers on immunization in the context of COVID-19. The first, on vaccine safety, false contraindications was attended by 80 medical workers.

Kyrgyzstan: UNICEF supported the training of 187 neonatologists on the management of newborns whose mothers have confirmed or suspected COVID-19.

Serbia: UNICEF supported the drafting of national guidelines as well as a training package to support tele-working visiting nurses. During the reporting period, tele-services were provided by 134 nurses who supported 1,664 pregnant women, mothers and parents with newborns and infants.

Tajikistan: Around 10,042 doctors and nurses were trained on updated COVID-19 guidelines.

Ukraine: UNICEF supported the VII Forum for Owners and Managers of Medical Clinics which discussed changes in medical businesses after the COVID-19 crisis. The forum included a panel discussion on responding to COVID-19 in the context of health care reform, reaching over 180 healthcare managers and healthcare workers from private and state funded sectors from all over Ukraine.

Infection, Protection and Control (IPC)/WASH Services: UNICEF efforts are helping to ensure that countries have the capacity to enable everyone in institutional (e.g., school, hospitals, health centres) or community settings to practice preventive hygiene. During the reporting period:

Azerbaijan: UNICEF, in partnership with NGO Reliable Future Social Initiatives Public Union, the Public Health and Reforms Centre and TABIB, organized IPC and COVID-19 risk communication trainings in ten districts, covering over 500 health workers, particularly paediatricians, gynaecologist, general practitioners and infectious diseases specialists. UNICEF launched the implementation phase of the new PROACT programme, which is focusing on building capacity of hospitals (e.g., improved triage systems, IPC, and case management etc.) ahead of the next COVID-19 wave. Digital means are being established to mentor and support newly trained personnel.

Bulgaria: UNICEF is assisting the Ministry of Health (MoH) in developing an order on health requirements for schools, to help address findings from a Ministry of Education (MoE) survey on the inadequacy of WASH facilities available to students to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Out of the 1,993 schools providing data, 387 have no hot water. As well, UNICEF launched an extensive WASH assessment in partnership with the Trust for Social Achievements to assess and provide sustainable recommendations for targeted municipalities.

Georgia: To strengthen IPC and hygiene in preschools and schools, UNICEF, in close coordination with the Ministry of Education, Science Culture and Sports (MoESCS) and other key stakeholders, defined existing WASH gaps and needs and prepared a response plan.

Montenegro: To complement the MoE's allocated EUR 1 million for critical WASH and protection supplies in schools, UNICEF has committed to covering funding gaps for cleaning material and protective cloth masks for the most vulnerable children.

North Macedonia: UNICEF developed a WASH self-assessment tool to support safe reopening of schools. Field visits and testing of the tool were completed. There is an ongoing discussion on how to integrate the tool with the work of the State Educational Inspectorate and the Public Health Institute, which will include training of teachers and other school staff.

Tajikistan: UNICEF, in cooperation with WHO, and Donor Coordination partners contributed to the design of a WASH assessment for health care facilities (HCFs) and schools. During the reporting period, data collection was launched. UNICEF is supporting the MoES by providing technical input to develop IPC/WASH guidelines and protocols for safe schools reopening.

WASH infrastructure works are ongoing in 45 targeted schools, covering 45,000 children and staff. During the reporting period, WASH works in 14 schools were finalized and facilities operationalized.

Turkmenistan: Six UNICEF-supported video spots (in Russian and Turkmen languages) on IPC in health and education facilities were shared with the MoH for use and dissemination.

Ukraine: UNICEF provided e-vouchers to 169 healthcare institutions for hygiene supplies, redeemable in partner shops.

Uzbekistan: With UNICEF support, the State Inspectorate for the Supervision of Education Quality (SISEQ) collected data on WASH in preschools and prepared basic preliminary statistics that are helping regional departments to support preschools with limited WASH facilities.

Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE): New campaigns launched during the reporting period included:

Albania: UNICEF launched an RCCE campaign promoting hygiene practices to stop the spread of COVID-19 using hashtags #SuperHeroesWearMask #WeHugwithHeart, targeting children, families and teachers through traditional and digital platforms.

Azerbaijan: UNICEF and the Ministry of Education (MoE) launched a new back-to-school campaign, aiming to reach 1.5 million people. The first posts reminded parents of safe school drop-off and pick-up procedures. Web articles covered the [mental well-being of children during school reopening](#), [frequently asked questions by parents about new school year](#) and [tips for teachers about appropriate ways of talking about COVID-19 to children](#). In partnership with Regional Development Public Union (RDPU), UNICEF posted new content on social media and via television, intended to increase public awareness and support of attitudes and behaviours to minimize the threat of escalating infections.

Bulgaria: UNICEF conducted a “Back2School with Business” campaign to support of parents and their children with COVID-19 information. The campaign, aimed at companies, emphasizes the importance of work-life balance, and encourages employers to support their staff as they prepare their children for a new school year.

Georgia: A new RCCE initiative launched in partnership with Parents for Education, aims to provide best practices of parent-child communication in stressful environments, including COVID-19. The initiative has reached 30,000 people so far.

Kosovo*: UNICEF launched a major social mobilization campaign, engaging hundreds young volunteers in 15 municipalities, political leaders, mayors, celebrities, and the general public to promote preventive measures against COVID-19 pandemic focusing on #backtoschool.

Kyrgyzstan: UNICEF led the launch of the national campaign #Sakta (Protect) to stop the spread of COVID-19, announced by the Prime Minister and supported by UN and international partners.

Moldova: UNICEF launched the social media campaign, “Thank you Teacher” mobilizing people in expressing gratitude to teachers who ensure children receive quality education in the context of COVID-19.

Montenegro: Public advocacy messages on the negative impact of education disruption and safe reopening of schools jointly issued by WHO, UNESCO and UNICEF were widely covered in the media and amplified by partners, including parents and teachers’ associations. Interviews on approaches to safe school reopening with UNICEF staff appeared in daily news media aired on television and radio.

North Macedonia: UNICEF Volunteer Young Reporters joined efforts to rethink education in light of announcements that online learning will continue for students in Grade 3 and above. The Young Reporters are preparing social media content that will highlight the role of teachers in education and building back better.

Tajikistan: UNICEF provided technical support to the Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defence (CoES) on RCCE. Through this partnership UNICEF will roll out a multi-channel communication campaign, reaching over 30,000 children.

Turkey: UNICEF and Ministry of National Education (MoNE), in close coordination with Education Sector Working Group (ESWG), launched a nationwide back-to-school campaign which focuses on scaling up access to safe and quality education for all children and youth. The campaign was launched on social media and the first post reached 18,000 people.

Ukraine: UNICEF and the MoE launched a back-to-school campaign “School, We Are Ready” promoting safe practices for students and parents, and equipping teachers with education materials on COVID-19. The campaign rolled out with outdoor advertisement countrywide, digital activation for parents and young people (i.e., Facebook, TikTok), and television promotions. The campaign also provides interactive lessons for teachers, a [dedicated web platform integrated](#) with the MoE’s website, and printed information materials for all schools.

Uzbekistan: UNICEF issued a statement following the Presidential decree on additional measures for social support of the population aimed at mitigating the negative impact of the coronavirus pandemic. The remarks were disseminated widely, including via national television.

Engaging Adolescents and Young People: UNICEF worked with partners to implement an array of programmes aimed to keep youth at the forefront as leaders in community engagement, and to support them in building skills, and keeping physically and mentally healthy as the pandemic imposed limits in daily life. Young people are also seizing opportunities to express their opinions and ideas – helping to shape the COVID-19 response and beyond. For example:

Armenia: UNICEF supported training on communication and COVID-19 messaging for staff of Spitak Youth House which will serve as a safe space for adolescents and youth to develop community engagement and citizenship.

Azerbaijan: UNICEF supported basic life skills training that is helping 62 adolescents in Binagadi, Mingachevi, Shamkir and Gazakh to build interpersonal relationships during the pandemic. Live webinars with experts on why people argue and on fears and phobias, were also organized.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Under the joint UNICEF, UNDP and UN Women initiative, IT Girls, a partnership with BIT Alliance launched a social media campaign on the on the Information Management (IT) sector specifically, their organisational culture and response to the COVID-19. The campaign highlights principles of gender equality and inclusion in the workplace. Nine of the country's IT companies are participating.

Bulgaria: UNICEF concluded a national digital campaign to promote U-Report and participation in a European Union-African Union partnership with young people.

Georgia: UNICEF in partnership with the Adjara Organization of Georgian Scout Movement, launched a project to involve young Scouts in shaping initiatives for adolescents in Adjara region to support the COVID-19 response and recovery.

Italy: The Future We Want (FWW) initiative which is engaging adolescents and young people in contemplating a post-pandemic world, conducted five mini forums via the UNICEF Italy Facebook channel. Key results of a participatory survey highlighted that adolescents were satisfied with life in general, with the environment, and with their relationships. However, they worried about their family's economic well-being and health.

Kosovo*: UNICEF launched the new youth platform, [Leaderonline.net](https://www.leaderonline.net), which aims to mobilize adolescents and youth around COVID-19 prevention and to motivate them to act as leaders and social agents in the domains of science, culture and sports.

Kyrgyzstan: UNICEF supported young IT specialists in finalizing the design of digital solutions to address gender-based violence (GBV) during the COVID-19 pandemic. An [online platform](#) uses elements of fairytale storytelling to bring children and parents closer together, to develop skills such as self-awareness, empathy, and critical thinking.

Romania: In the context of local and parliamentary elections, the reopening of schools, and the development of new national strategies for the period 2021-2027, the National Council of Students (CNE), the Romanian Children's Board and UNICEF proposed a set of [ten solutions](#) to improve conditions for disadvantaged children and their families during the pandemic.

Ukraine: UNICEF supported a two-day consensus forecast event on impact of COVID-19 on the economy which highlighted the views of young people.

Uzbekistan: UNICEF and the European Training Foundation (ETF) conducted a U-Report poll to better understand what young people think about the immediate and long-term impact of COVID-19 on their well-being and resilience. More than 10,000 young people across Uzbekistan participated.

Access to Continuous Learning: During the reporting period, UNICEF across ECAR supported Ministries responsible for safe school reopening in a variety of ways:

Armenia: In light of the COVID-19 crisis, UNICEF applied the School Disaster Risk Management Methodology to assess and enhance crisis management capacities at in schools across 30 selected underserved communities. During the reporting period, School Disaster Risk Management Plans were piloted in 15 schools.

Azerbaijan: UNICEF shared global and regional guidelines on preparing for safe school reopening with the MoE and the Institute of Education and supported them in developing of a back-to-school strategy that combined face-to-face and online learning.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: UNICEF and UNESCO completed the Phase II Rapid Situation and Needs Assessment in Education and presented their findings to international and government partners. This assessment generated a series of recommendations for education authorities and the UN on improving access and quality of education during and after the pandemic.

Bulgaria: UNICEF presented to the MoE, results of the Rapid Assessment on the Impact of COVID-19 on preschool and school education covering Grades 5 to 12 (1,200 students, 1,650 parents, and 1,060 teachers and other school staff). The findings will help inform the development of the national framework for the new school year.

Croatia: UNICEF, in collaboration with Government partners, finalized a publication on financing pre-primary education. Extra financial support is essential for kindergartens to keep children safe and to provide quality learning.

Georgia: To support the safe reopening of schools, UNICEF, in coordination with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport (MoESCS), WHO, and the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), prepared information, education, and communication (IEC) materials on COVID-19 in Georgian and ethnic minority languages for students, teachers, and non-teaching staff. UNICEF in partnership with the CK-12 Foundation, is supporting the Education for All Coalition in translating and adapting interactive and online teaching and learning resources for students and teachers.

Kyrgyzstan: UNICEF helped develop and update the education management information system (EMIS) and it is now being offered to schools.

Kosovo*: UNICEF is supporting the development of a Case Registration Reporting System (SRCC) which will help track COVID-19 cases in schools. The SRCC will be integrated into the existing EMIS. As well, UNICEF set standards and determined the frequency of monitoring of supplies delivered to schools as part of the #backtoschool campaign. A close pre-delivery inspection and monitoring of supply distribution is underway.

Moldova: UNICEF supported the development of guides for [students](#) and [parents](#) explaining the new learning conditions in schools.

Romania: The safe school reopening report developed in partnership with Step-by-Step Associations covering creches and kindergartens and based on UNICEF modelling, was finalized. Recommendations, informed by field visits to preschool classrooms, will be shared with national authorities.

Tajikistan: UNICEF activated school-based monitoring, reaching more than 100 school communities and eliciting feedback from school principals, teachers and students. A monitoring mechanism and questionnaire were developed to measure school compliance with recommendations and guidance.

Turkey: Following the gradual resumption of face-to-face learning, UNICEF continued partnering with the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) for safe school reopening by supporting the provision of hygiene materials and cleaning services to 326 boarding schools and 350 Turkish public schools in provinces with high numbers of refugees and high COVID-19 prevalence.

Uzbekistan: UNICEF supported the State Inspection for Supervision of Education Quality (SISEQ) in preparing guidelines for parents to support children during the blended distance learning period. The IEC materials based on these guidelines are under preparation.

During the reporting period, UNICEF supported efforts to promote inclusion included improving access to digital learning, and put children who are missing out on a more equal footing when school officially reopens, for example:

Azerbaijan: The roadmap on safe school reopening also included guidelines for teachers to plan and deliver effective distance education.

Belarus: UNICEF and the World Bank supported the development of webinars and training for teachers and other school staff to help them become more effective in managing inclusive online learning,

Bosnia and Herzegovina: UNICEF worked with Save the Children and World Vision to continue providing formal and non-formal education activities for refugee and migrant children in temporary reception centres (TRCs) Borići, Sedra, and Bira.

Bulgaria: UNICEF launched a new campaign on Assistive Technologies (AT) in education, focusing on augmentative and alternative communication. One of the aims is to adapt CBoard, an app for symbol communication, to reflect the local context.

Georgia: With support from partner MAC Georgia, UNICEF disseminated information for the safe return to school of children with disabilities. UNICEF launched a new partnership with NGO RHEA Union, to organize developmental activities for children and young people with intellectual disabilities in two disadvantaged municipalities with ethnic minorities population. UNICEF signed an agreement with the MoESCS and the Government of Estonia which focuses on training teachers and other school staff from 100 schools to become more skilled in distance teaching.

Kazakhstan: A joint MoES, National Centre for Mental Health and UNICEF plan was launched to support school psychologists and staff, children and adolescents, and parents/families in promoting mental health and psychological resilience, prevent violence and cyberbullying during distance learning. 841 school psychologists from five regions were trained.

Kyrgyzstan: UNICEF completed production of 121 video-lessons for preschool education and 1,426 video-lessons of school education out of planned 7,000. This covers 96 per cent of the first quarter of 2020-2021 school year.

North Macedonia: UNICEF provided support in developing lessons housed in the country's EDUINO platform. These will be disseminated via a newly unveiled Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) national online platform that can facilitate two-way communication between teachers and students.

Tajikistan: Ongoing support to blended learning is being provided through development of TV lessons targeting Early Childhood Education, and the pilot of digital platform to remote schools.

Serbia: With UNICEF's support, the Institute for the Improvement of Education (IIE) adapted the programme of two nationwide training programmes to accommodate the immediate needs of teachers for improving their competencies in online learning reached 10,886 teachers. A digital support service for planning and implementing teaching and learning using ICT was established on the new IIE's National Education [portal](#) which serves 185 schools. New cycles of online training on improved skills in outcome-based teaching reached 3,937 teachers.

Tajikistan: Over 30,000 teachers, school principals, heads of regional education departments, and representatives of local government authorities have been trained on norms and standards along with considerations on issues related to access, learning, safety, and well-being.

Ukraine: UNICEF helped to organize teachers to deliver distance education and blended learning to children with hearing, visual and intellectual disabilities. In the Distance Learning Toolkit supported by UNICEF, there is an explanation on how to use available free platforms, software and resources for teaching and learning and how to minimize loss of knowledge in this challenging situation. UNICEF continued supporting children and teachers nationally through capacity building on preventing and responding to the cases of violence during the quarantine. UNICEF conducted a series of webinars on identification and responding to cases of bullying and violence, benefitting over 180 teachers and some 85 children.

Access to Child Protection and Preventing Violence: UNICEF deployed wide-ranging activities to protect children most vulnerable to the physical threats and psychological pressures resulting from the pandemic-related stresses. New activities and milestones during this reporting period included, for example:

Armenia: UNICEF provided COVID-19 response training and psychosocial support to social service providers and families in border communities in Vayots Dzor, Gegharkunik and Syunik Regions.

Azerbaijan: Within the Integrated Social Services Project, UNICEF supported positive parenting targeting vulnerable families affected by financial hardship, families of children with disabilities, single parent families, families experiencing additional stress due to the risks of infection and/or staying at home, and families at risk of domestic violence. During the reporting period, 5,665 people were reached via social media and messaging platforms; 1,200 copies of printed materials were distributed. UNICEF support enabled psychological tele-counselling to reach 101 people (including 72 children). The UNICEF-supported Azerbaijan Child Helpline received 522 calls (including from 99 children).

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Over 620 children along with parents and professionals, benefited from mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services that UNICEF is providing through a partnership with Association of Psychologists and the Association for Integrative Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy.

Georgia: In partnership with the Parliament and State Care Agency, the UNICEF-supported child hotline "111" continued to help children and their families, providing assistance to 775 cases to date.

Kosovo*: As part of an ongoing project with NGO partner SOS, UNICEF supported the placement of a psychologist and social worker to support migrant children and their families at Asylum Centres during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Montenegro: UNICEF enabled the Association of Youth with Disabilities to provide psychosocial and legal support to children with disabilities and their families through an [online platform](#). 634 families with children with disabilities received psychosocial support, including 111 children. 188 persons with disabilities received legal aid concerning requests for legal advice.

Romania: UNICEF supported media launch for TELVERDE, the hotline for children and adults, with and without disabilities, living in residential care, and their caregivers, in functioning in partnership with the National Authority for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Children and Adoption (NARPDCA), Council for Institutionalised Youth (CIY) and Centre for Legal Resources (CLR). To date, TELVERDE has received 1,096 calls, mostly from residential care beneficiaries who, in addition to being heard and receiving encouragement, ask for information about the COVID-19.

Serbia: In coordination with the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs, UNICEF initiated support to strengthening the National Child Help Line (NADEL). The support includes upgrading IT capacities through the development of

chat-box, Viber-bot and website redesign to expand reporting options for children.

Tajikistan: UNICEF concluded the Programme Cooperation Agreement with NGO Hayor dar Oila to support transformation of the Baby Homes into Family and Child Support Centres. One of the components of this cooperation is online support to vulnerable families whose children at risk of being placed in the residential institutions.

Turkey: UNICEF supported the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services (MoLFSS) in establishing a nationwide psychosocial support hotline which provides remote psychosocial support services and addresses concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic and similar emergencies.

Ukraine: UNICEF supported psychosocial teams operating in Luhansk and Donetsk non-Government controlled area (NGCA) in reaching 425 people (including 362 children) via phone, skype, and other social media channels.

Uzbekistan: Repatriated and migrant families received online counselling and referral services in line with guidelines for specialists providing psychosocial support to children and families to during COVID-19. A total of 218 children and 75 caregivers from repatriated families, as well as 110 children and 46 caregivers from migrant families received social support and legal counselling.

UNICEF's focus on protecting children and women in particularly difficult circumstances including those vulnerable to gender-based violence (GBV), is reinforced by support to partners and resources that ensure the availability of legal and/or psychological support. Examples during the reporting period:

Belarus: UNICEF, in partnership with the Belarusian Association of Barristers, supported an online chat-bot that provided free legal aid consultations on free legal aid for 14 appeals.

Bulgaria: The UNICEF-supported Child Advocacy Centres in Sofia, Shumen and Montana reached 172 people (including 91 children). 26 unaccompanied children, newly- arrived in Bulgaria, received legal consultation and assistance. 62 children were reached with quality MHPSS, legal counselling and case management.

Croatia: UNICEF's implementing partner NGO Society for Psychological Assistance finalized a needs assessment of employees and directors of centres for social welfare, children's homes and community service centres. The findings will inform a detailed plan to provide supportive web-based supervision/mentoring meetings.

North Macedonia: UNICEF supported the Macedonian Young Lawyers Association to establish six mobile teams of lawyers and social workers to provide social protection to at-risk families impacted by COVID-19, and who are also risk of domestic violence, risks due to disabilities, violence against children, GBV, etc. The mobile teams have started providing support to the target groups, covering 11 municipalities.

Ukraine: UNICEF supported 12 mobile GBV teams that provided 3,150 online consultations (284 from children) by telephone and Skype to the population living along the contact line in Donetsk and Luhansk (GCA). Around 54% of all reported cases (adults and children) are related to violence, 15% to COVID-19. More than 2,300 beneficiaries were referred to the local social service departments, police and/or legal aid.

Social Protection: In line with government socioeconomic recovery plans, UNICEF and partners continue to establish or strengthen humanitarian cash transfers (HCTs), improve existing social protection systems and services, and introduce new schemes and programmes. Highlights during this reporting period include:

Armenia: The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) of Armenia and UNICEF signed a [collaboration agreement](#) to support families of 3,055 children with disabilities with one-time cash plus assistance within COVID-19 response.

Georgia: UNICEF produced a microsimulation model estimating the impact of COVID-19 on population and child poverty in Georgia. The results that cash transfers could halt the rise in poverty.

Montenegro: UNICEF launched a multi-pronged child poverty advocacy strategy which aims to provide evidence for preventing further budget cuts in social sector, proposing how child benefits could be used to offset increases in poverty levels.

Tajikistan: Over 25,000 poor families with children below three years old received one-off financial support through the humanitarian cash transfer programme supported by the World Bank. The programme was designed with technical support from UNICEF with the aim to test shock-responsiveness of the national social protection system.

Turkey: The Conditional Cash Transfer for Education (CCTE) Programme for Refugee Children continued without interruption 624,553 recipients. The UNICEF-supported CCTE call centre system, managed by Turkish Red Cross (TRC) continued providing services during the pandemic and is accessible in Turkish, English, Arabic, Farsi and Pashto.

Internal and External Communication

WEBSITE

- [\[RO\] ECA Region COVID-19 webpage ; COVID-19 and children with disabilities in Europe and Central Asia; UNICEF Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia remarks at the Human Rights Council's Urgent Debate on Belarus; Countering Online Misinformation resource pack; Schooling in the time of COVID-19 resources](#)
 - [\[Bulgaria\] Snapshot from Bulgaria: An Afghan family overcomes one stumbling block, only to find another](#)
 - [\[Georgia\] First day at school, amid the pandemic; Fatherhood during quarantine](#)
 - [\[Montenegro\] UNICEF's Young Reporters on education during the pandemic](#)
- More available on [Stories from the region](#), [Press centre](#), and ["Our Voices"](#)

TWITTER

- [\[RO\] Supporting Families and Children Beyond COVID-19: Social protection in Southern and Eastern Europe and Central Asia ;n\[RO, Brussels Office, RT\] An S.O.S. for education, second post](#)
- [\[RO, Innocenti, RT\] How can we shield children from the economic impact of #COVID19?](#)
- [\[RO, Albania, RT\] #SuperheroesWearMasks & #HugWithHeart like these children in Shkodra; Supporting local communities in Berat with hygiene kits for families in need](#)
- [\[RO, Georgia\] A preschool teacher in Georgia explains how he created a fun distance-learning environment for children during the #COVID19 lockdown; The first day back in school was unusual and emotional for both students and teachers in Georgia; Luka and his father on how they spent one month in lockdown](#)
- [\[RO, Greece, RT\] Children at new temporary facility created by Greek government to host Moria RIC population after the fire; UNICEF Representative speaks to the Palais press corps from Lesvos; Programme Associate, Sokratis Vlachakis, reporting from a temporary facility](#)
- [\[RO, Montenegro\] UNICEF's Young Reporters share their views on the pros & cons of distance-learning](#)
- [\[RO, Turkmenistan\] UNICEF, Government & WHO conduct briefing for reporters on #COVID19 prevention & response](#)
- [\[RO, Ukraine\] Teachers in eastern Ukraine are doing their best to ensure that every child can learn despite #COVID19](#)

WEBSITE (Russian)

- [\[RO\] UNICEF statement on children affected by the Moria camp fire on Lesvos island](#)
- [\[RO translation of global\] 150 million additional children plunged into poverty due to COVID-19, UNICEF, Save the Children say](#)

FACEBOOK (Russian)

- [\[RO\] UNICEF statement on children affected by the Moria fire](#)
- [\[RO, Georgia\] Young person's video blog](#)
- [\[RO, Ukraine\] Young people use 3D-printer to produce medical shields; Education activation - "thank you teachers"](#)

INSTAGRAM (Russian)

- [Young person's vlog from Georgia](#)
- [UNICEF statement on children affected by the Moria fire](#)
- [150 million additional children plunged into poverty due to COVID-19, UNICEF, Save the Children say](#)
- [Safety in schools during the pandemic](#)
- [How to wear a mask - WHO recommendations for children](#)

Next Sitrep: 28 October 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

Annamarie 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 24 September 2020)ⁱ

Areas of Response	2020 target ⁱⁱ	Total UNICEF Results	Increase from last SitRep	% Achieved
Risk Communication and Community Engagement				
Number of people reached on COVID-19 through messaging on prevention and access to services	193,570,000	180,188,717	▲ 2,151,561	93%
Number of people engaged on COVID-19 through RCCE actions	10,116,550	7,068,274	▲ 314,992	70%
Critical Supply and Logistics and WASH services				
Number of people reached with critical wash supplies (including hygiene items) and services	3,818,300	1,613,960	▲ 599,384	42%
Number of healthcare workers within health facilities and communities provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	161,136	124,812	▲ 8,864	77%
Provision of Healthcare and Nutrition Services				
Number of children and women receiving essential healthcare through UNICEF supported community health workers and health facilities.	3,751,492	2,590,153	▲ 88,645	69%
Number of caregivers of children (0-23 months) reached with messages on breastfeeding in the context of COVID-19	1,329,050	1,632,982 ⁱⁱⁱ	▲ 56,145	123%
Access to Continuous Education and Child Protection Services				
Number of children supported with distance/home-based learning	42,381,092	24,858,114	▲ 22,030	59%
Number of children without parental or family care provided with appropriate alternative care arrangements	35,735	25,678	▲ 1,900	72%
Number of children, parents and primary caregivers provided with community based mental health and psychosocial support	2,420,888	2,358,764	▲ 163,781	97%
Number of UNICEF personnel & partners that have completed training on GBV risk mitigation & referrals for survivors	6,180	2,012	▲ -	33%
Number of parents/caregivers of children under 5 receiving ECD counselling and/or parenting support	1,327,000	816,297	▲ 38,820	62%
Number of teachers trained in delivering distance learning	103,330	85,761	▲ 18,260	83%
Access to Social Protection Services				
Number of households receiving humanitarian cash transfers through UNICEF response to COVID-19	14,800	3,904	▲ 1,067	26%
Number of households benefitting from new or additional social assistance measures provided by governments to respond to COVID-19 with UNICEF support	793,841	616,898	▲ 417,516	78%

ⁱ This table presents 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 24 September.

ⁱⁱ In comparison to the previous reporting period, some of the indicator targets have changed owing to the adjustments and revisions made to account for the shifting contexts and needs and evolving programme priorities.

ⁱⁱⁱ The result has been overachieved mainly due to the use of social media and online platforms, leading to a broader coverage than initially anticipated. The pro bono boost offered by various social media platforms has contributed to this higher level of achievement.