

HIGHLIGHTS

- UNICEF developed a tool that allows the Government to project needs for hospitalization and artificial ventilation.
- Social media campaigns on COVID-19 prevention, home-based learning, play and stimulation are being carried out and have reached more than 250,000 people.
- UNICEF is developing communication materials to support the cognitive, emotional, and motoric development of young children using various platforms (social media, TV, radio).
- Needs assessments are underway to identify vulnerable children.
- Technical assistance provided for infant isolation and care capacity, ANC protocols, and routine immunization services during COVID-19.
- UNICEF-trained social workers are supporting vulnerable families in Abkhazia, Georgia including through a hotline to provide psychosocial support.
- Support to Government to develop education response strategies.

Situation Overview and Humanitarian Needs

On 26 February 2020, the first case of COVID-19 was identified in Georgia. In the following days, several more cases emerged which prompted the Government to institute restrictions on land and air movement and closure of schools, effective 2 March. The Government mobilized hospitals for confirmed cases of COVID-19, as well as quarantine spaces for suspected cases in different regions of Georgia. Despite the early actions of the Government, the number of confirmed and suspected cases continued to grow triggering the Government to declare a state of emergency on 21 March – closing borders and airports, restricting movement inside the country, banning mass gatherings and maintaining closure of all schools, kindergartens, universities. Two regions, Bolnisi and Dmanisi, were declared as quarantine zones after detecting community spread on 22 March. More cases of community spread were detected on March 28 in Georgia proper, spurring the Government to introduce a curfew, halt movement of public transport and introduce checkpoints on city crossings administered by police and military units.

The first case of COVID-19 was identified in Abkhazia, Georgia on 30 March. Restrictions on movement are in place and the administrative boundary line remains closed. All schools have been closed and end of year exams have been canceled.

Humanitarian Strategy and Response

UNICEF continues to work closely with the Government, WHO and other United Nations and humanitarian team partners, to provide technical guidance and support. In line with WHO's COVID-19 Strategic Response Plan, UNICEF is focusing on limiting human-to-human transmission and mitigating the impact of the outbreak on the health system and communities. UNICEF's mix of response and preparedness activities include:

1. Facilitating risk communication as well as learning, play, and positive parenting communications;
2. Provisioning critical hygiene and medical supplies for healthcare and education structures;
3. Ensuring children, pregnant, and lactating women are supported with adequate healthcare despite the outbreak;
4. Mitigating secondary effects of the outbreak by facilitating continued access to education, child protection needs, including prevention of violence against children, and advocating for continued access to social protection programmes.

UNICEF Georgia COVID-19 Situation Report

02 April 2020

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

134

Confirmed cases

0

Confirmed deaths

5

Confirmed cases among children
(under 18 years)

5,550

Quarantined

592,000

Children out of school

UNICEF funding needs

US\$ 3.74 million

UNICEF's Response

- 100% of UNICEF staff are practicing physical distancing.
- UNICEF developed a Multi-Scenario Interactive Projection Tool, which allows the Government to project needs for hospitalization and artificial ventilation thus informing emergency preparedness.
- UNICEF supported WHO on rapid assessment of hospital preparedness and laboratory capacity in Abkhazia, Georgia which will guide the development of a humanitarian response strategy.
- UNICEF is supporting the Government in providing hygiene and non-perishable food items to the most vulnerable 380 families of Roma community. Volunteers will also be providing the most essential information about how to protect Roma families during the distribution process.

Communication for Social Change (C4SC) and External Communications

- UNICEF is carrying out an awareness-raising campaign for children and parents about the prevention of COVID-19 and its related risks through media and digital platforms.
- UNICEF is supporting the Government with the provision of 50,000 copies of print materials on COVID-19 each in 3 languages, including Georgian, Armenian and Azeri languages.
- UNICEF launched a 15-day challenge to help parents in the care and early learning opportunities of their children. UNICEF is partnering with a major TV broadcaster on the challenge to maximize engagement with parents.
- UNICEF produced a video on continuous learning amid school closure, which reached 20,000 people through social media platforms.
- UNICEF produced a number of videos and web interviews with a child psychologist and UNICEF Early Childhood Development expert about how to ensure child development and wellbeing at home.
- UNICEF participated in several TV interviews to provide information on continuous education, on how to talk to children about COVID-19 and breastfeeding practices during COVID-19.
- Social media cards and visuals have been produced and posted on our channels about home-based learning, play and stimulation, and other COVID-19 related topics, having over 250,000 in unique reach and 27,000 engagements.
- A dedicated page on COVID-19 related topics was created on the UNICEF website, with over 30,000 unique visits and 38,000 page views.
- A number of informational videos in the Abkhaz language were produced to inform children and their families about COVID-19 and related prevention measures.

Health, Nutrition and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

- Technical assistance provided to estimate personal protective equipment and mechanical ventilation needs.
- Technical assistance provided to estimate COVID-19 infant isolation and care capacity in the country.
- Technical assistance provided on routine immunization services during COVID-19 pandemic to ensure uninterrupted service delivery including support to identify children who have missed their vaccine doses and helping health professionals to schedule immunization visits to avoid crowding in waiting rooms.
- Technical assistance provided to develop an antenatal care protocol during the COVID-19 response and organize the flow for routine antenatal care visits.
- Technical assistance provided to the Government to support the provision of basic hygiene and non-perishable food items to Roma communities.

Child Protection

- A needs assessment was initiated to identify the most vulnerable groups of children and measures undertaken by the Government and other organizations.
- Information is being collected on children in alternative care (2 state specialized institutions, foster care, small group homes, un-regulated institutions), children in the justice system and children in vulnerable families (such as street children and children with disabilities who used to attend community-based services) to understand protection needs during the COVID-19 response.
- Potential partners were identified for the provision of psychological support to children and caregivers.
- Positive parenting videos were produced for the Abkhazia region and will be aired shortly.

- UNICEF-trained social workers are supporting vulnerable families in Abkhazia, Georgia including through a hotline to provide psychosocial support.
- Developed communication materials for religious leaders focused on the prevention of violence against children.

Education

- UNICEF is supporting the development of response strategies in agreement and close coordination with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia.
- UNICEF is developing communication materials to support the cognitive, emotional, and motoric development of young children using various platforms (social media, TV, radio, preschools/municipalities).
- UNICEF is supporting the development of a brief teachers' guide for organizing effective distant learning that considers the individual needs of children and their families.
- UNICEF is assisting the development of guidelines for caregivers on physical activities for children, given the temporary measures of social distancing.

Social Protection

- UNICEF is launching a Shock Responsive Social Protection Feasibility Assessment.
- Technical support is being provided in the development of the COVID-19 response plan.

Partnerships

- UNICEF has established a strong partnership with the Prime Minister's Office to provide needs-based support to the most vulnerable children and their families like ethnic minorities, Roma communities and children with disabilities.
- UNICEF has entered into a partnership with public broadcasting and other TV channels to further amplify risk communication messages and enhance home-based learning and education.
- Partnership with Religious leaders activated in the context of response to COVID-19, and response plans developed with the Patriarchate of the Orthodox Church of Georgia and the Administration of All Muslims of Georgia.
- Partnerships with the Coalition Education for All, an alliance of CSOs working on education, and a network of organizations working with children with disabilities and their families will help to contribute to distance learning efforts of the Government and provide needed support to families with CWDs.

Human Resources

UNICEF Personnel in Georgia CO	Tbilisi	Abkhazia	Total Staff Strength
International Staff	3	1	4
National Staff	24	5	29
Total Staff	27	6	33
Consultants	13		

Funding

Programme Areas	Funding Needs	Funds Identified	Funding Gap
Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of teaching and learning resources for distance learning • Development of resources for parents for early learning and school readiness 	150,000	100,000	50,000
Child Protection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of resources to prevent violence against children • Support to service providers within the child protection and justice systems to respond to COVID-19 and enable continued service provision 	90,000	55,000	35,000

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support continued programming for children with disabilities 			
Health, Nutrition and WASH <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procure essential supplies and equipment including COVID-19 test kits Support telemedicine to enable access to critical health services Training of health professionals through telehealth Development of regulations and standards in all health specialty areas for pregnant women, mothers, newborns and children 	3,101,399	90,000	3,011,399
Social Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct shock-responsive feasibility assessment of the social protection system Conduct assessment of vulnerable and at-risk groups of children 	200,000	61,000	139,000
Risk communication and community engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out a risk communication campaign Carry out #LearningatHome campaign to help parents in care and early learning opportunities of their children 	200,000	35,000	165,000
Grand Total <i>(Fundraising efforts ongoing to bridge the funding gap)</i>	3,741,399	371,000	3,370,399

Next Situation Report: 10 April 2020

Contacts for further information:

Ghassan Khalil, Representative
 UNICEF Georgia
 Mobile : +995 591 225 281
 Email: gkhalil@unicef.org

Amy Clancy, Deputy Representative
 UNICEF Georgia
 Mobile: +995 551 548 170
 Email: aclancy@unicef.org

Maya Kurtsikidze, Communications Officer
 UNICEF Georgia
 Mobile: +995 599 533 071
 Email: mkurtsikidze@unicef.org

Andria Nadiradze, Emergency focal point
 UNICEF Georgia
 Mobile : +995 597 700 210
 Email: anadiradze@unicef.org