Following the gradual resumption of face-to-face learning on 21 September, UNICEF continues partnering with the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) for a safe school reopening process. Support has included 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 prevalence rates of COVID-19 cases.

UNICEF and Ministry of National Education (MoNE), in close coordination with Education Sector Working Group (ESWG), launched a nationwide “Back to School (BTS) campaign” which focuses on scaling up access to safe and quality education for all children and youth. The campaign was launched online on social media reaching 18,000 people in its first post.

15,145 vulnerable Turkish and 60,403 Syrian children in 61 provinces received “Learn at Home kits” that include environmentally friendly bags, basic stationery supplies, Turkish language books, and a story series, plus COVID-19 hygiene brochures.

UNICEF and partners distributed a total of 66,539 Covid-19 family hygiene kits, reaching 289,966 people, including 164,674 children (87,547 girls and 77,127).

UNICEF supported MoLFSS in the establishment of a nationwide psychosocial support hotline, operational from 25th of September 2020, to provide remote PSS services and address other concerns related to Covid-19 pandemic and similar emergencies.

UNICEF’s partners reached 2,188 people (including 1,525 children) with remote counselling and 7,701 children (3,767 girls, 3,934 boys) with case management services. A total of 305 families (totalling 1,490 individuals out of whom 907 are children) who were identified with imminent protection concerns received emergency cash assistance while awaiting longer-term specialized support.

Technical guidance on basic psychosocial support adapted to distance delivery was provided to 902 (female 829, male 73) professionals working in the Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers and Women’s Shelters.

8,039 adolescents and young people benefitted from online services and engagement activities such as sports, quiz, and arts challenges on YouTube.

Situation in Numbers
(Data as of 21 September)

- 304,610 confirmed cases of COVID-19
- 7,574 reported deaths, 268,435 people recovered
- 17 million learners affected, including 680,000+ refugees
- US $25 million required for UNICEF Turkey response
Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

The first case of COVID-19 was confirmed in Turkey on 11 March. According to the Ministry of Health (MoH), as of 21 September, 9,381,957 people have been tested nationwide, 304,610 cases have been confirmed (including 10% healthcare professionals), 7,574 people have died and 268,435 have recovered.

According to the latest report published by the Turkish Ministry of Health (MoH) the recovery rate and death rate of all confirmed cases in Turkey were 88% and 2.5% respectively. MoH reports indicate a moderate increase in number of newly registered cases since the second half of August. In the past 2 weeks (between 7 and 20 September 2020), the number of active cases has increased by 24%. The weekly incidence of COVID-19 cases has increased to 14.1 cases per 100,000 population in the week between 14 and 20 September (Fig1a). The proportion of hospitalized patients has also increased by 38.8% as of 19 September 2020.

Fig 1a: Weekly number (Epi week) of new COVID-19 cases and weekly incidence of cases reported in Turkey as of 20 September

The weekly number of COVID-19 deaths in Turkey is also increasing, with recorded 17.5% increase between the weeks 7 - 13 and 14 - 20 September (Figure 1b)

Fig 1b: Weekly number (Epi week) of new COVID-19 deaths and weekly incidence of deaths reported in Turkey as of 20 September

The Government of Turkey continues with the full mobilization of national capacities to address the crisis, with more than 1,200 public and private hospitals across the country providing treatment and services to Covid-19 patients and
deploying 223 laboratories certified to test suspected cases. As of mid-August, the average number of tests in Turkey is constantly above 100,000 tests per day.

The ICU and ventilator occupancy rates in Turkey have increased in the recent period, currently standing at 66.3% nation-wide, with some provinces (such as Ankara) experiencing even higher occupancy rates. In general, the MoH is assessing the available capacities as sufficient to address the increased needs emerging during the second peak of pandemic in the country.

The Government of Turkey (GoT) continues to implement a wide range of Covid-19 infection prevention and control (IPC) measures, while remaining committed to facilitating ‘normalization’ of public services and economic activities in the country. Public and private transportation is functioning without major disruptions, the number of domestic and international flights continues increasing, and social amenities and basic services remain open and available. In the context of a reported increase in the number of Covid-19 cases over the past four weeks, the Government is strengthening the IPC measures, including compulsory use of masks both indoors and outdoors, limitation to movements for certain age groups (elderly), introducing flexible working modalities in public and private sector workplaces, and deploying inspection teams in all 81 provinces in Turkey tasked to oversee the implementation of measures.

Funding Overview

The UNICEF Turkey funding requirement for the COVID-19 response is US$25 million until 31 December 2020. During the reporting period, UNICEF Turkey received a contribution from the USA Government (BPRM) of US$1,75 million and US$1 million was additionally reprogrammed by the German Government for the COVID-19 response in the country. Together with previous contributions received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany, the UN Central Emergency Respond Fund (CERF), UNICEF Thematic Pool for Humanitarian Response, UNICEF Thematic Education, Germany (KFW/BMZ), Canada and Denmark, UNICEF Turkey currently still faces a 65% funding gap. Additional funding is required to meet the needs on the ground and UNICEF continues engaging with key donors—including the EU, the Nordic states, the United States, Germany, the UK and UNICEF National Committees—to mobilise additional resources.

Partnerships and Coordination

UNICEF is closely coordinating with government, civil society and private sector partners to support national efforts to address the COVID-19 outbreak in Turkey. UNICEF’s response plan is aligned with the Government’s Pandemic Preparedness and Response Plan, WHO’s global Strategic Response Plan (SRP), the UN’s Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19, and UNICEF’s COVID-19 Humanitarian Action for Children appeal.

UNICEF also continues to respond to the Syrian refugee crisis within the framework of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), implemented by the UN and NGO partners and led by the inter-agency Syria Response Group. UNICEF and 3RP partners have completed a revision of planned activities within the 3RP framework in order to reflect the additional needs of affected populations in the context of Covid-19 outbreak and impact it has on refugee and migrant populations, as well as host communities.

Summary of UNICEF’s Preparedness and Response Actions

Supplies

Since the start of the outbreak, UNICEF Turkey has worked with the Government and NGO partners on the provision of essential supplies to support infection prevention and control efforts in vulnerable households in Turkey, as well as for UN staff and UNICEF partners’ front-line workers.

During the reporting period:

- **Hygiene Kits:** By the end of August UNICEF in partnership with MoNE, MoYS, Kilis Municipality, Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) and ASAM (NGO partner) distributed a total of 66,539 Covid-19 family hygiene kits, reaching 289,966 people, including 164,674 children (87,547 girls and 77,127). The second round of distribution of Covid-19 family hygiene kits, including PPE supplies, is starting, targeting over 45,000 most vulnerable Syrian refugee and Turkish households and implemented in collaboration with 8 Government and NGO partners in 24 provinces.

- **Psychosocial Support (PSS) Kits:** UNICEF and partners have continued the distribution of PSS kits, reaching 3,994 vulnerable Turkish and Syrian refugee children (2,174 boys, 1,820 girls) during August. Since the onset of COVID-19, a total of 45,542 PSS kits have been distributed, reaching nearly 90,000 children across 33 provinces in 4
Turkey. The PSS kits target children who were formerly accessing community-based psycho-social support services and aim to help parents continue supporting their children during the confinement period.

- **15,145 vulnerable Turkish and 60,403 Syrian children in 61 provinces** received “Learn at Home kits” that include environmentally friendly bags, basic stationery supplies, Turkish language books, and a story series plus COVID-19 hygiene brochures.

**Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)**

UNICEF COVID-19 RCCE activities include a wide range of initiatives that target both Turkish and refugees and migrant children and families, implemented closely with government and civil society partners. The main focus of RCCE activities during the reporting period have been concentrated around the ‘Back to school’ campaign.

- In partnership with the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), UNICEF launched a national “Back to School” campaign. The campaign kicked off on social media reaching around **18,000 people** in its first post. The social media initiatives are complemented by messages using a variety of other communication channels, with billboards and TV spots planned in the next phases of the campaign. The main focus of the campaign is to scale up access to safe and quality education for all children and youth by encouraging parents to help their children continue with education and learning through different available modalities, including distance learning.

- The campaign also aims to raise the awareness among children and parents on the correct practices to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 among children going to school and help children and parents to access distance learning channels. The campaign targets both the Turkish and refugee communities and the campaign products are available in Turkish and Arabic. UNICEF is also collaborating with other UN agencies and partners to have campaign products available in other languages for the non-Arabic speaking refugee and migrant families in Turkey.

- Considering the increasing number of COVID-19 cases in the Southeast of Turkey, UNICEF and its partners have intensified dissemination of risk prevention messages and awareness raising activities on COVID-19 through a network of child protection community-based outreach teams as well as community volunteers. UNICEF and partners are also using individual messaging via mobile phones, WhatsApp communication with beneficiaries, teachers’ parent WhatsApp groups and ongoing parenting sessions.

- The **UNICEF Turkey Facebook page** has reached over **78 million people** with COVID-19 related information and engaged more than **650,000 people**. The high numbers of people reached and engaged through UNICEF’s social media reflects the ongoing partnership between UNICEF and Facebook, which places relevant content on their dedicated COVID-19 Info Centre.

**Continued Access to Essential Services for Children**

**Education**

- **Safe reopening of schools:** The school semester officially started with online catch-up classes for all grades on August 31, followed by a gradual reopening of schools started from 21st September 2020. A blended approach of online and face-to-face teaching is used, with face-to-face learning organized only for pre-school and grade 1 students, with a reduced number of students per classroom. UNICEF is working closely with MoNE to implement and adapt existing national guidelines and facilitate safe school reopening. Priority areas identified for UNICEF’s support include safe school operations (provision of hygiene items and services in schools), a comprehensive back to school communication campaign, support to the EBA remote online system, and teacher trainings.

- **Safe Schools Support:** To support the re-opening of schools and ensure the safety of children when face-to-face learning resumes, UNICEF is providing support to MoNE to procure hygiene materials and organize cleaning services in 326 boarding schools and 350 Turkish public schools in provinces with high numbers of refugees and high prevalence rates of COVID-19 cases.

- **Learn at Home Kits:** To support vulnerable Turkish and refugee children in continuity of their learning while at home, more than **75,000 ‘Learn at Home’ kits that include** environmentally-friendly bags, basic stationery supplies, Turkish language books, a story series plus COVID-19 hygiene brochures, were distributed to **15,145 vulnerable Turkish and 60,403 Syrian children in 61 provinces**.

**Child Protection**

- The **Community-Based Child Protection** programme continues to ensure Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
(MHPSS) is available using alternative communication channels and approaches, including remote counselling, phone and/or virtual individual and group PSS consultations. During the reporting period, UNICEF and its partners reached 2,188 people (including 1,525 children) with remote counselling, reaching a cumulative total of more than 22,000 people (including 12,500 children). Furthermore, UNICEF and partners have reached a total of 7,701 children (3,767 girls, 3,934 boys) with case management services, reaching thus far a total of nearly 14,000 children.

- In addition, during the reporting period, a total of 305 families (totalling 1,490 individuals out of whom 907 are children) who were identified with imminent protection concerns, received emergency cash assistance while awaiting longer-term specialized support.

- UNICEF has continued to provide technical support to the MoLFSS by providing basic psychosocial support modules with specific emphasis on distant intervention for professionals working in the Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers and Women’s Shelters, reaching in total 902 individuals (female 829, male 73).

- The MoLFSS and UNICEF established a nationwide hotline line to provide psychosocial support services and address other inquires during the coronavirus pandemic, which is available to both Turkish and refugee families. The hotline will operate between 9:00 and 18:00 every working day and support will be provided remotely by 249 psychologists and social workers. The hotline will become operational as of 25 September 2020 and will be active for at least 12 months, with the support of UNICEF. The hotline will be promoted through MoFLSS communication channels, including their social media accounts.

- In collaboration with Kilis Municipality and NGO partner ACPU, UNICEF organized remote awareness raising sessions on how to support children to better cope with psychological distress caused by the pandemic, reaching 1,061 individuals (including 230 girls, 223 boys).

### Social Protection

- The Conditional Cash Transfer for Education (CCTE) Programme for Refugee Children continued without interruption. Cumulative number of beneficiaries is 624,553 (310,355 girls, 314,198 boys).

- The CCTE call centre system, managed by TRC, continued providing services during the pandemic and is accessible in Turkish, English, Arabic, Farsi and Pashto. An automatic message on COVID-19 was integrated to the 168 Call Center waiting line and informs callers of recommended hygiene and social distancing measures, potential symptoms and access to health facilities.

- UNICEF and partners continued to provide services to children and families at risk of child labour. Since the beginning of the pandemic, 1,307 individuals have been supported with remote case management, awareness raising, and counselling services through phone calls and messaging platforms delivered in multiple languages.

- In Şanlıurfa, the recently launched cash transfer programme provided assistance to 472 (148 Syrian, 324 Turkish) seasonal agricultural worker families who lost their income due to COVID-19, thus preventing child labour for 1,206 (370 Syrian, 836 Turkish) children.

### Adolescent and Youth Engagement

- **Youth volunteerism:** As part of the COVID-19 “Mahalle Support Mechanism” (MSM) initiative, in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS), 139 youth volunteers continued to work with the most disadvantaged adolescents and their families across 25 provinces in Turkey. 8,039 adolescents and young people benefitted from online services and social activities such as sports, quiz, and arts challenges on YouTube.

- **Youth-centered communications:** UNICEF also continued to support the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS) in broadcasting COVID-19 related programming specifically targeting adolescents and youth. During the reporting period, with UNICEF support, MoYS conducted 18 live broadcasts mobilizing various public figures, including health specialists, artists and sports figures, to influence positive behaviours among young people. The live MoYS sessions reached over 100,000 people between 24 August and 17 September 2020.
Internal and External Media

During the reporting period, UNICEF Turkey continued producing and adapting to Turkish language a wide range of media content to support efforts to combat the pandemic in Turkey and highlight the situation of vulnerable Turkish, refugee and migrant families.

- A **video was produced** highlighting UNICEF supported Hygiene kits distributions as part of UNICEF efforts to meet the needs of the most vulnerable families during COVID19. The video was watched **4.2M** people.
- A **video was produced** in partnership with Ministry of Health to raise awareness about the importance of vaccination for children. The video reached **22,000** people.

**Who to contact for further information:**

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