**Highlights**

- With UNICEF support, Ministry of National Education (MoNE) has improved the bandwidth coverage of the EBA remote learning platform to more effectively offer quality distance learning services to all K-12 students nationwide. As of 16th October 2020, MoNE reports that 10,703,812 students and 842,438 teachers actively benefited from the online EBA platform.

- UNICEF continues to support a safe school reopening process for face-to-face learning organized for pre-school, grade 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, and 12 students, and all grades in villages and special education schools with a reduced number of students per classroom. The support has included: (a) launch of a national “Back to School campaign”, (b) teacher training in relation to distance education pedagogy and school administrator training on managing distance education and creating safe school environments and (c) development of a COVID-19 specific Psychosocial Support (PSS) Programme that will be rolled out for school counsellors and Syrian Volunteer Education Personnel.

- Information on COVID-19 has been sent using Rapid Pro SMS technology to 12,176 Syrian Volunteer Education Personnel (6,481 females, 5,695 males) and to 11,501 ECE parents and caregivers in Arabic and Turkish. The messages included tips on parenting during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as information on school registration and distance learning.

- UNICEF and partners distributed 12,560 COVID-19 Family Hygiene Kits, including masks and hygiene materials, to 31,189 individuals including 19,374 children (12,321 girls and 7,053 boys) from the most vulnerable Turkish and Syrian refugee households in 29 provinces.

- UNICEF’s partners reached 8,351 people (including 4,168 children) with remote counselling and 3,634 children (1,767 girls, 1,867 boys) with case management services. A total of 426 families (totalling 1,942 individuals out of whom 1,183 are children) were identified with imminent protection concerns and received emergency cash assistance while awaiting longer-term specialized support.

- The COVID-19 pandemic shaped the modality and content of the International Day of the Girl Child Conference held virtually in partnership with UNFPA, UN Women and Aydin Dogan Foundation on 11th October, directing the discussions around the effects of the COVID-19 on gender equality, including empowerment of refugee women and girls. The conference reached over 15,000 people online.
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 October 12,759,069 people have been tested nationwide, 353,426 cases have been reported (including 11% healthcare professionals), 9,513 people have died and 308,446 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 87% and 2.7% respectively. MoH reports indicate a moderate increase in number of newly registered cases since the second half of August. The daily average of the incidence of cases calculated per week is 15.6 cases/week/100,000 population (Figure 1a), and the daily average of the incidence of deaths calculated per week is 6.0 deaths per week/ Million population (Figure 1b). As of 20th October, 552 COVID-19 patients were hospitalized, and the proportion of hospitalized COVID-19 patients among new patients is 29%.

1 Only symptomatic cases/patients have been reported among individuals tested since 29 July
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 national average ICU and ventilator occupancy rates in Turkey are 65.2% and 32.1% respectively, but some provinces are experiencing higher occupancy rates. Turkey has expanded case tracking and filiation team’s capacity. There are more than 11,000 field teams who reach all contact of a positive case in an average time of 7.5 hours. If the contacts show Covid-19 symptoms they are given a PCR test. All contacts, symptomatic or asymptomatic, must quarantine at home for 14 days.

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, limiting movements for certain age groups (elderly) for certain hours, 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 an additional contribution from the Government of Germany (KFW) for the support to the Back to School Campaign for 2020-2021 school year. Despite the generous previous contributions from the USA Government (BPRM) and 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) reprogrammed funding, Canada and Denmark, **UNICEF Turkey currently still faces a 43% funding gap**. Additional funding is still required to meet the needs on the ground, especially in view of the new 2020-2021 school year, 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.

As of 21st of October, UNICEF in partnership with Turkish Red Crescent, ASAM (, the Turkish Tradesmen and Craftsmen Confederation (TESK), Support to Life, Gaziantep Municipality, Kilis Municipality, TKV and ACEV and the Gap Administration distributed a total of 12,560 Covid-19 Family Hygiene Kits, reaching **31,189 individuals** including **19,374 children** (12,321 girls and 7,053 boys) of the most vulnerable Turkish and Syrian refugee households in 29 provinces.
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 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 continues to implement the national “Back to School” campaign. The campaign kicked off on social media reaching around 18,000 people in its first post. Currently the campaign billboards have been placed in more than 3,000 outdoors in 28 provinces. 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.

- RCCE messages using Rapid Prom SMSs have been sent out to 12,176 Syrian Volunteer Education Personnel (6,481 females, 5,695 males) and to 11,501 ECE parents and caregivers in Arabic and Turkish to spread cross-sectoral COVID-related and distance learning information. The messages specifically included information on COVID-19 Parenting Tips aimed at supporting parents and families during the pandemic, as well as information on school registration and distance learning.

- In partnership with TRC, RCCE materials consisting of flyers about cloth mask and sanitizer usage, basic prevention measures and pamphlets on GBV were printed in both Arabic and Turkish. Over 12,000 sets of these RCCE flyer have reached beneficiaries through the ongoing distribution of the 2nd generation of Family Hygiene Kits.

- 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 first on 21st of September (Kindergarten and grade one students) and second on 12th of October 2020 (grades 2-4, 8 and 12 learners). A blended approach of online and face-to-face teaching is used, with face-to-face learning organized for pre-school, grade 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, and 12 students, and all grades in village and special education schools 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.

- Comprehensive Back to School (BTS) Campaign: In partnership with MoNE and the Education Sector Working Group members in Gaziantep, Izmir and Istanbul, UNICEF launched a national Back to School campaign – “At School – At Home! Education Anytime, Anywhere” to advocate and encourage the continuation of learning for all children across Turkey, including Syrian children. The campaign has three main messages targeting children and their parents: (1) Raise awareness on the importance of continuing education; (2) Importance of hygiene practices; and (3) Encouraging social integration and taking care of each other’s wellbeing.

- Support to EBA: During the COVID-19 outbreak, UNICEF supported the government and other partners to ensure the continuity of safe learning by providing financial and technical support to a national remote learning system (EBA), targeting 17 million leaners in Turkey (grades 1 – 12) and 1 million active teachers. In response to the pandemic, UNICEF’s support enriched the bandwidth coverage of the EBA remote learning platform to effectively offer quality distance learning services to all K-12 students nationwide. As of 16th October 2020, MoNE reports that 10,703,812 students and 842,438 teachers actively benefited from the online EBA platform.

- Capacity development: A COVID-19 specific psychosocial support (PSS) programme was developed to support children who are feeling stress, anxiety, grief, and worry during the pandemic. Through this programme, school
counsellors and Syrian Volunteer Education Personnel will be trained in the next reporting period to work with teachers and families to help them to understand the implications of the pandemic on the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of children. During the reporting period, UNICEF has provided technical and financial support to MoNE for the provision of teacher training in relation to distance education pedagogy and school administrator training on managing distance education and creating safe school environments. Both trainings are currently ongoing.

- **Early Childhood Education**: Syrian and vulnerable Turkish families across Southeast Turkey continued to receive daily phone calls and WhatsApp messages from a network of more than 200 teachers containing tips, instructions and guidance for parents and caregivers on key early learning activities. These interventions benefitted 1,057 young children during September and early October (576 girls, 481 boys). A total of 20 ECE teachers from Kilis and Gaziantep municipalities were supported with remote ECE capacity building training to improve teachers’ knowledge and skills and to prepare teachers for the safe reopening of playrooms in municipality community centres. As part of the COVID-19 response and as a contribution to distance education, 38 children’s storybooks that were developed for young children (ages 3 to 7) within the scope of UNICEF’s Inclusive Early Childhood Education for Children with Disabilities Project, were uploaded on EBA so that all young children, parents and teachers could have access to them.

- **EBA Support Classrooms**: UNICEF continued supporting education activities implemented in Antakya and Iskenderun Children and Youth Centers of the Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) in Hatay province. As of 18 September 2020, some rooms in these two centers were turned into EBA support classrooms for vulnerable children who need education support in accessing remote and online learning.

- **Turkish Language Courses (TLC) and Homework Support**: Within the scope of the Kilis Municipality partnership, 329 Syrian children (212 girls, 117 boys) were provided with TLC and 878 Turkish and Syrian children (565 girls, 313 boys) benefited from Homework Support.

**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 8,351 people (including 4,168 children) with remote counselling and 3,634 children (1,767 girls, 1,867 boys) with case management services.

- In addition, during the reporting period, a total of 426 families (totalling 1,942 individuals out of whom 1,183 are children) who were identified with imminent protection concerns, received emergency cash assistance while awaiting longer-term specialized support.

- The COVID-19 pandemic shaped the modality and content of the **International Day of the Girl Child Conference** held virtually in partnership with UNFPA, UN Women and Aydin Dogan Foundation on 11th October, directing the discussions around the effects of the COVID-19 on gender equality, including empowerment of refugee women and girls. The conference reached over 15,000 people online.

- The MoLFSS and UNICEF established a **nationwide hotline** to provide psychosocial support services and address other inquires during the coronavirus pandemic, which is available to both Turkish and refugee families. During the reporting period 98 MoLFSS staff were trained on psychosocial support, remote counselling and self-care. The hotline will be active for at least 12 months with the support of UNICEF, and will be promoted through MoLFSS communication channels, including social media accounts. It is expected to reach 33,000 people in a year.

- Kilis Municipality PSS Team received a two-days training on Remote PSS Implementation via phone calls for youth and their families. The Training has been provided to staff by GAP technical staff and focused on practical tips and role-playing in a remote setting.

**Social Protection**

- The **Conditional Cash Transfer for Education (CCTE)** Programme for Refugee Children continued without interruption. Cumulative number of beneficiaries is 628,856 (312,467 girls, 316,389 boys; 529,446 Syrians and 93,880 from other nationalities) 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, 1853 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, UNICEF and its NGO partner’s cash plus programme targeting children engaged in or at risk of child labour continued to provide cash assistance to 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 response, the ‘Mahalle Support Mechanism’ (MSM) initiative implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS) continued to support the engagement of 251 youth volunteers to work with the most disadvantaged adolescents and their families across 25 provinces in Turkey. During this period, UNICEF and partners reached a total of 5,487 vulnerable adolescents and youth.

- The ‘Mahalle Support Mechanism’ concept was disseminated to the Turkish Red Crescent Society for modelling. Once finalised, UNICEF and TRC will expand the concept within TRC select activities enabling part of their youth volunteers to be a part of the ongoing COVID-19 response.

- **Youth-centred communications**: UNICEF 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 5 different 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 10,000 people.

- **Youth ‘vloggers’**: An initial cohort of 482 youth vloggers have been identified and will benefit from a video production experience that will enable them develop youth-led video stories that will be disseminated by MoYS and youth associations helping positively communicate and share youth experiences during the COVID-19 response.

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 featuring young people giving messages to their peers on how to spend their time and protect themselves during COVID-19. The video was viewed 6.6K times.

- A video was produced showcasing a success story of the Accelerated Learning Programme interventions during COVID-19. The video was viewed 28.2K times.

- A video was produced documenting the positive impact of UNICEF supported PSS Kits distributions on vulnerable children. The video is yet to be published on TCO social media channels.

- A video was adapted to raise awareness about the importance of breastfeeding especially during COVID-19 pandemic. The video was viewed 20.4K times.

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