UNICEF Georgia COVID-19 Situation Report
4 December 2020

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), UNICEF, and UNHCR are partnering to improve access to water, sanitation and hygiene facilities to support a safe learning environment for children.
- UNICEF continues advocating for all children to have internet access to fulfill their right to education - please see WEEKLY FOCUS on page 4.
- UNICEF with financial support from USAID, delivered sanitizers to schools near the administrative border line to facilitate a safe learning environment.
- Elementary school teachers and administrators from 100 schools are being trained in distance teaching and learning as part of a partnership between the Ministry of Education, the Government of Estonia, and UNICEF Georgia.
- A 6-week online student-centered Instruction (SCI) methodology course was launched for education experts in the Abkhazia region.
- On the Day of the Persons with Disabilities, UNICEF provided the Central Rehabilitation Center with basic supplies and development toys.
- UNICEF provided 500 boxes of food and hygiene items to the Office of State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, reaching 2,000 vulnerable people.
- Over 100 young scouts participated in an online training session on the Code on the Rights of the Child and on coping with the Covid-19 challenges delivered by the UNICEF Representative.
- UNICEF provided disinfectants and PPE supplies to all 75 offices of the Social Services Agency (SSA), covering 400 frontline social agents.
- A 5 day-training was conducted for National Statistics Office data collectors, the real-time monitoring questionnaire was tested, and fieldwork was launched.
- A Memorandum of Cooperation was signed between UNICEF and Batumi City Hall on the decision to join the Child-Friendly Cities Initiative.
- UNICEF Representative and Georgian experts facilitated a panel discussion organized by the Child Rights Center of Akaki Tsereteli State University - Kutaisi on the impact of COVID-19 on the fundamental rights of children.

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

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<tr>
<td><strong>Confirmed cases</strong></td>
<td>152,704</td>
<td><strong>Confirmed deaths</strong></td>
<td>1,425</td>
<td><strong>Child (&lt;18 years) cases</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Quarantined</strong></td>
<td>1,241</td>
<td><strong>Abkhazia Confirmed cases</strong></td>
<td>6,204</td>
<td><strong>Confirmed deaths</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>UNICEF funding gap</strong></td>
<td>US$ 1,841284,399 412 (429%)</td>
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Humanitarian Strategy

UNICEF continues to work closely with the Government, WHO, and other United Nations and humanitarian partners to provide technical guidance and support. In line with WHO’s COVID-19 Strategic Response Plan, UNICEF is focusing on risk communication; provision of critical hygiene supplies and PPE for frontline workers; and mitigating the secondary effects of the outbreak by facilitating continued access to healthcare, education and child protection services, as well as social protection programmes for children, pregnant, and lactating women.

Communication for Social Change (C4SC) and External Communications

- UNICEF continues communicating COVID-19 related information through the TV program - “Learn more about “COVID-19”, which is broadcasted via nine regional TV channels, reaching over 936,000 TV viewers and 19,000 social media users throughout Georgia. With
support from USAID, a total of 359 editions (including 160 programs in minority languages) were broadcast thus far.

- A webinar was organized on how to protect children when online with practical tips and recommendations for parents of children of all ages.
- UNICEF released a short video by a Digital Safety expert regarding the safe usage of online games for kids, as well as existing control mechanisms for parents.
- UNICEF continued active advocacy for children who do not have access to the internet and electronic devices. Based on the evidence from two global reports. Intensive media engagement has been undertaken to raise awareness on the issue and push for change. Several media interviews were organized on the impact of the pandemic on children.
- With support from USAID, a new partnership was launched with the youth platform - www.izrune.ge, focusing on increasing awareness on COVID-19 guidelines and self-protective measures among children, youth, and their family members.
- A training program is underway for “Youth Health Ambassadors” on COVID-19-related topics and communication skills.
- To mark the Day of the Persons with Disabilities, a young person with a disability and a parent of a child with a disability talked about their challenges amid COVID-19 and their wishes for the future. UNICEF Representative also released a video address, focusing on the importance of a discrimination-free environment and the need for family-type care for all children with disabilities. UNICEF chatbot released on November 20, to mark World Children’s Day (see more about the day here), initiated over 60 conversations with young people and received trustworthy information about COVID-19, violence against children, and mental health issues.
- UNICEF continues publishing special posters made for preschool institutions about prevention measures against COVID-19, offering printable version of all preschool posters for download.
- UNICEF risk communication reached 139,568 people through Facebook on COVID-19 issues.

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

- The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and UNICEF are partnering to improve access to water, sanitation and hygiene facilities for children in schools. This partnership will support the safe reopening of schools and a safe learning environment for children.
- In partnership with the Emergency Situations Coordination and Urgent Assistance Centre, UNICEF is working to establish a centralized communication platform to equip and support rural primary health care doctors in the COVID-19 response as well as to ensure the continuation of essential health services for mothers and their children.
- UNICEF handed over 500 boxes of food and hygiene items to the Office of State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality for further distribution to female-headed households with many children, thus meeting the critical needs of over 2,000 most vulnerable individuals across the country.

Adolescents/youth

- Over 100 young scouts participated in an online training session on the Code on the Rights of the Child delivered by the UNICEF Representative
- UNICEF’s partner organization - Helping Hand, recruited 50 additional adolescents for participating in capacity building activities on youth volunteering.
- During the reporting period, youth volunteers contributed 2,730 hours to peer education, distance learning, supporting homeless and elderly citizens, popularizing the idea of volunteering, organizing entertainment meetings with the involvement of the local communities to reduce the stress caused by the pandemic, organizing information campaigns to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 infection, sewing and distributing reusable masks, charitable activities, assistance to socially vulnerable families, cognitive activities for people with disabilities, etc.
- An animation on volunteering was produced in coordination with UNICEF and aired three times through the Public Broadcaster and online posters on volunteering were disseminated through Facebook, reaching 34,415 people.
- Webinars on “Combating Climate Change through Volunteering” and “Inclusive Volunteering”, reached 4,100 and 3,990 people, respectively.
- Psychosocial center - Synergy, conducted 205 consultations for adolescents, 32 one-time consultations for parents. Additionally, delivering 10 supervision sessions concerning serious mental health cases.
• During the reporting period, GIP-T delivered online training sessions, which were attended by 3,900 students and 576 teachers from Batumi and mountainous villages of Adjara, Gori and Tbilisi.
• An animation video was developed and uploaded on a Facebook page of GIP-T - Attention Adolescents: How to reach an agreement, reaching 12,800 views.
• UNICEF’s partner, Adjara Organization of Georgia Scout’s Movement, visited 10 selected mountainous public schools of the Adjara region to provide 470 students with face-to-face training on COVID-19 prevention measures with the guidance of a medical doctor with extensive knowledge and experience in public health.
• 32 online sessions were conducted for 300 adolescents by peer educators as a follow up of the training: “Gambling, its risks, and consequences on adolescent’s development and fake news”, conducted by Kant’s Academy.

**Child Protection**

• UNICEF delivered educational and sport supplies to 45 small group homes across the country, which will improve the development and entertainment of children in these homes during the lockdown period.
• In partnership with the Parliament and the State Care Agency, the UNICEF-supported child hotline “111” continues to assist children and their families, supporting 1,406 cases to date, of which 1,272 already received assistance and were closed accordingly.
• UNICEF’s partner, Children of Georgia (CoG), provided online psychological support to 446 children and 339 caregivers in small group homes and foster care through group and individual sessions.
• UNICEF partner, Initiatives for Social Change (ISC), provided training and supervision for mediators from the National Agency for Crime Prevention and Probation on online platforms and remote communication enabling the provision of online mediation. ISC also organized a workshop with social workers from the educational system to discuss draft guidelines for the identification, referral, and support of children at risk in schools.
• A Facebook page to support parents of children with disabilities continues to provide practical information, one-to-one counseling with specialists, and chats for parents and caregivers, engaging more than 200,000 people.
• UNICEF partner MAC finalized guidance for the hybrid provision of social services, including a costing mechanism, and submitted it to the Ministry of Health for approval. The draft was developed with technical assistance from Beit Issie Shapiro, with the financial support of the Embassy of Israel to Georgia.
• UNICEF partner, RHEA, delivered sessions on sports, art therapy, and puppet workshops to young people with disabilities in Akhalkalaki Centre.
• On 3 December, International Day of Persons with Disabilities, UNICEF provided the Central Rehabilitation Center for Children with Disabilities with basic supplies, developmental toys, and books on childcare for parents.

**Social Policy**

• After carrying out a workshop to identify the needs of the LEPL Social Services Agency (SSA) for the continued delivery of safe services to the most vulnerable populations amid the COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF provided disinfectants and PPE supplies to all 75 offices of the SSA, covering all 400 frontline social agents.
• In preparation for real-time monitoring of the effects of COVID-19 on families, a 5 day-training was conducted for the data collectors of the National Statistics Office of Georgia. During the reporting period, UNICEF piloted the questionnaire and tested technologies. The fieldwork is launched, and the first results are expected at the end of the year 2020.
• A Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) was signed between UNICEF and Batumi City Hall on the decision to join the Child-Friendly City initiative. The memorandum outlines specific actions needed for Batumi to become a part of the Child-Friendly Cities Initiative and to pay greater attention to meeting the rights of their youngest citizens, including in emergencies.
Education

- UNICEF with financial support from USAID, delivered sanitizers to schools near the administrative border line to facilitate a safe learning environment.
- UNICEF Representative co-facilitated a panel discussion organized by the Child Rights Center of Akaki Tsereteli State University on Child Rights in Georgia and the impact of COVID-19 on the fundamental rights of children.
- UNICEF Representative co-facilitated a workshop at the Local Action Group (LAG) education center in Akhalkalaki, bringing together over 20 representatives of community-based organizations to cover topics of occupational safety, child labor, and child rights, including in the context of COVID-19.
- UNICEF held a meeting with Akhalkalaki Kindergarten Management Union Director and Deputy Director to identify the kindergarten needs regarding COVID-19 prevention and response and discussed possible support from UNICEF, including training for kindergarten staff on COVID-19 related regulations for kindergartens and safe reopening.
- Elementary school teachers, school administrators, and educators from 100 schools in Georgia are being trained in distance teaching and learning as part of a partnership between the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Georgia, the Government of Estonia, and UNICEF Georgia.
- A 6-week online student-centered Instruction (SCI) methodology course was launched for education experts in the Abkhazia region.

WEEKLY FOCUS: DIGITAL DIVIDE

According to a joint report from UNICEF and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), 15% of Georgia’s school-age children do not have an internet connection. Approximately 661,500 children are affected by COVID-19 school closures in Georgia, forcing students to rely on online education.

Before the pandemic, there was increasing pressure for young people to compete in the 21st century economy. With COVID-19, the digital divide, referring to the gap between those who are able to benefit from the internet and those who are not, is putting education out of reach for many children in Georgia.

UNICEF Representative: "Lack of connectivity prevents children and young people from competing in the modern economy."

Last year, UNICEF and ITU launched Giga, a global initiative to connect every school and its surrounding community to the internet. Working with governments, Giga has now mapped over 800,000 schools in 30 countries. The initiative is now collaborating under the Reimagine Education initiative and in coordination with Generation Unlimited. Through its Reimagine Education initiative, UNICEF aims to address the learning crisis and transform education by giving children and young people equal access to quality digital learning. A key to achieving this is universal internet connectivity.

UNICEF Georgia continues advocating for all children to have access to internet to contribute to fulfilling their right to education.
**Funding**

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<tr>
<th>Programme Areas</th>
<th>Funding Needs</th>
<th>Funds Identified</th>
<th>Funding Gap</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>300,000</td>
<td>282,100</td>
<td>17,900</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child Protection</td>
<td>514,000</td>
<td>260,650</td>
<td>253,350</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health, Nutrition and WASH</td>
<td>3,001,399</td>
<td>2,146,287</td>
<td>855,112</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Policy</td>
<td>400,000</td>
<td>241,950</td>
<td>158,050</td>
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<tr>
<td>Risk Communication and Community Engagement</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,415,399</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,130,987</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,284,412</strong></td>
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**Partnerships**

UNICEF wishes to express its gratitude to donors supporting its response to COVID-19: Bulgaria, Estonia, the European Union, Korea, Norway, SIDA, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and USAID.

The next Situation Report will be issued on 18 December 2020

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