HIGHLIGHTS

• UNICEF Representative was invited as a guest of honour speaking on children’s rights at a session of the Human Rights and Civil Integration Committee of the Parliament of Georgia, as well as at the first meeting of the newly established permanent Parliamentary Council for the Protection of the Rights of the Child. Upholding children’s rights during Covid-19 was covered in the speeches of both of the meetings – please see MONTHLY FOCUS on page 4.

• In Abkhazia, Georgia, five WASH facilities in schools were rehabilitated in partnership with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, UNHCR and Action Against Hunger and with financial support from the Multi-Partner Trust Fund.

• UNICEF issued a statement welcoming the re-opening of schools on 15 February.

• UNICEF reached over 165,000 parents on communication skills with children and motivating the learning process amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

• With financial support from USAID, the “Learn more about “COVID-19” TV programme aired over 100 programmes, 40 of which were produced in minority languages, reaching approximately 1,300,000 viewers per week.

• Internet connections were established in more than 50% of the 1,000 rural ambulatories to date. This will support the provision of updated protocols, recommendations, and trainings for rural primary health care doctors.

• UNICEF and Mediators Association of Georgia signed a Memorandum of Understanding to support development of a child-friendly alternative dispute mechanism for children in Georgia.

• UNICEF launched an online version of a course on Applied Pedagogy for pre- and in-service teachers in Abkhazia.

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>266,462</th>
<th>3,377</th>
<th>26,677</th>
<th>Abkhazia</th>
<th>UNICEF funding gap</th>
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<tr>
<td>Confirmed cases</td>
<td>266,462</td>
<td>3,377</td>
<td>26,677</td>
<td>Abkhazia</td>
<td>US$ 2,472,750</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confirmed deaths</td>
<td>266,462</td>
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<td>Child (&lt;18 years) cases</td>
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<td>Boys: 13,652 and Girls: 13,025</td>
<td>Abkhazia</td>
<td>12,059</td>
<td>192</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) & EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

• With the beginning of a new academic semester, UNICEF resumed its advocacy for the safe reopening of all schools in Georgia. UNICEF prepared a video, as part of its visit to one of the public schools of Gori, where schools opened on 1 February, and issued a video statement by the UNICEF Representative advocating for all schools to be reopened which was shared widely via social media channels. On 15 February, when all schools in Georgia reopened, UNICEF issued a statement welcoming the decision.
“Seeing happy faces of children, listening to the stories on how they missed school, their friends & classes confirms again the importance of safe reopening of all schools in Georgia.” – UNICEF Representative Ghassan Khalil

- School re-opening campaign was amplified via social media channels with a series of photo stories of children – voices of children about what they think and feel about distance learning and going back to school. The series included school-age children from all over the country.
- UNICEF continues to support parents in building skills on how to communicate with children and motivate their learning process amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Two webinars led by prominent child psychologists were organised about negotiation skills, including “How to negotiate with children under 10”, and “How to negotiate with teenagers”. The webinars reached over 165,000 parents across the country and generated over 2,000 comments each. The webinars are accompanied with reading material and online video blogs for parents, as well as a quiz, to test their knowledge. The project is implemented in partnership with Parents for Education, with financial support from USAID.
- With financial support from USAID, the “Learn more about “COVID-19” TV programme supported nine regional TV channels to produce and air over 100 programmes, 40 of which were produced in minority languages. The programmes provided the latest information about COVID-19, protection measures, new regulations and the latest medical news. The project concluded on February 11, reaching approximately 1,300,000 viewers per week. Despite the end of the project, several of the nine broadcasters plan to continue airing COVID-19 programming.
- Animated videos about “How to properly wear a face-mask” and “What to do while you wait for your COVID-19 test results”, developed in partnership with NCDC, were aired by national broadcasters and shared on NCDC and Government social media platforms. The animated videos were developed with financial support from USAID.
- With USAID’s support, 60 Youth Ambassadors actively participated in the creation of social media packages on COVID-19 prevention measures. As part of the campaign, three digital packages were developed and shared via youth networks to promote handwashing, distance and mask-wearing among youngsters and motivate them to use protective measures against the virus.
- UNICEF Georgia’s ChatBot engaged in 324 conversations with young people, providing reliable information about COVID-19, violence against children, and mental health issues.

HEALTH, NUTRITION & WATER, SANITATION & HYGIENE (WASH)
- As part of a partnership between UNICEF and the Emergency Situations Coordination and Urgent Assistance Centre, Skytel has established internet connections in more than 50% of the 1,000 rural ambulatories. This will support the creation of a centralised communication platform for the provision of updated protocols, recommendations and trainings for rural primary health care doctors.
- Through a partnership with Caritas Czech Republic, trainings for all rural primary healthcare professionals in Guria, Samtskhe-Javakheti, and Racha-Lechkhumi-Kvemo Svaneti regions in the management of suspected or diagnosed COVID-19 cases, as well as strengthening their capacity on distance medical consultations/interactions with patients.
- With funding from the Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF), UNICEF partnered with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), UNHCR and Action Against Hunger to improve access to water, sanitation and hygiene for children and teachers in schools in Abkhazia, Georgia. WASH facilities were rehabilitated in five schools in Abkhazia, supporting the safe re-opening of the targeted schools by providing proper handwashing points and toilet facilities for over 500 students.
• With support from SDC, UNICEF assessed water and sanitary conditions in all schools in Abkhazia. This will inform WASH programme interventions going forward.

Before and after photos of WASH rehabilitation works conducted in Abkhazia financed by MPTF with technical support from SDC.

ADOLESCENTS / YOUTH
• Youth volunteers contributed 921 hours to peer-to-peer activities including helping their peers in preparation of homework, conveying information on COVID-19 prevention measures and how to cope with stress, training for ethnic minorities to improve their Georgian language proficiency, establishing an English language teaching club, volunteering with homeless children, supporting homeless and elderly citizens, organising activities for young people, assistance to socially vulnerable families, providing cognitive activities for people with disabilities etc.
• 135 new volunteers participated in volunteering activities with guidance of the NGO “Helping Hand”.

CHILD PROTECTION
• UNICEF is supporting the Public Defender’s Office in commissioning a rapid needs assessment on child labour in the context of COVID-19 in selected regions of Georgia.
• UNICEF is supporting Tbilisi Mediation House in creating a model for online mediation.
• UNICEF and Mediators Association of Georgia signed a Memorandum of Understanding to support the development of an alternative dispute mechanism for children in Georgia and making it more focused on child’s rights.
“We will work closely to ensure that the best interests of the child are at the heart of mediation process and alternative dispute mechanisms.” – UNICEF Representative Ghassan Khalil

UNICEF Representative in Georgia, Ghassan Khalil, and Head of Mediators Association, Irakli Kandashvili, signing an MoU.

- UNICEF provided 3 laptops to the National Agency for Crime Prevention and Probation to support social workers in providing services to children in conflict with the law.
- UNICEF provided 3 laptops to the State Care Agency to support social workers in providing services to their beneficiaries.

EDUCATION
- UNICEF launched an online version of a course on Applied Pedagogy for pre- and in-service teachers in Abkhazia.

SOCIAL PROTECTION
- The National Statistics Office of Georgia, with technical support from UNICEF, is starting a second wave of the Real Time Monitoring (RTM) survey to examine the impact of COVID-19 on welfare, education, child disciplining etc. The data of the first wave is currently being analysed.
- UNICEF held a needs assessment workshop with the Kutaisi Municipality Child Rights Protection and Support Unit in the context of COVID-19, to support uninterrupted and effective response to the needs of the most vulnerable families with children. UNICEF also discussed potential areas of future cooperation with the unit.

MONTHLY FOCUS: UNICEF was invited as a guest of honour at a session of the Human Rights and Civil Integration Committee of the Parliament of Georgia

UNICEF was invited as a guest of honour at a session of the Human Rights and Civil Integration Committee of the Parliament of Georgia. UNICEF Representative in Georgia, Ghassan Khalil discussed efforts for protecting child rights, including the role of the newly created permanent Parliamentary Council for the Protection of the Rights of the Child.

UNICEF Representative was also invited as a guest of honour at the first meeting of the newly established permanent Parliamentary Council for the Protection of the Rights of the Child. The Council was established by the Code of the Rights of the Child and its main function is to ensure systematic and coordinated work on child rights issues in the Parliament. The Council will be responsible for upholding child rights and monitoring the implementation of the Code of the Rights of the Child in Georgia.

A Situation Assessment on Children’s Rights and Welfare was presented in Kutaisi Municipality. The report was prepared with support from UNICEF to help the municipality in joining the Child-Friendly Cities Initiative. The Assessment will be used to support the development of an action plan, which will include establishing and fully activating a unit for child rights protection. UNICEF also delivered laptops, computers and printers to the newly established Child Protection Unit at Kutaisi municipality, to facilitate service provision.
The first meeting of the permanent Parliamentary Council for
the Protection of the Rights of the Child with UNICEF
Representative, Ghassan Khalil, as a guest of honour.

UNICEF Representative, Ghassan Khalil and the Mayor of
Kutaisi, Ioseb Khakhaleishvili, inaugurating the Child Rights
Protection Unit of Kutaisi Municipality.

FUNDING 2021

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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 17 March 2021.

CONTACTS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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

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

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

Thea Jamaspishvili
Reports Assistant
Mobile: +995 599 166 773
Email: tjamaspishvili@unicef.org