HIGHLIGHTS

- On 13 March, the first batch of COVID-19 vaccines arrived in Georgia through COVAX facility – please see MONTHLY FOCUS on page 4.
- A joint EU-UNICEF project ‘Strengthening Systems and Services for Child Protection in Georgia” was launched to support the Government in the implementation of the newly adopted Code on the Rights of the Child.
- A 3-year partnership between UNICEF, the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Government Agency for Special Needs Education (Statped) was launched on 19 March to strengthen the quality and inclusiveness of the national education system.
- UNICEF, in partnership with Parents for Education and USAID, continues to support parents amid the COVID-19 pandemic including through a webinar on how to motivate children to study better, which reached 138,000 parents.
- Youth Health Ambassadors reached 730,000 social media users on COVID-19 prevention measures.
- With UNICEF’s support, the Public Defender’s Office studied the effect of COVID-19 on child labour.
- UNICEF launched a project to provide technical assistance to the Public Defender’s Office to undertake and complete a Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) related to COVID-19.
- UNICEF visited a school in Kutaisi, Imereti region, to continue advocating for all schools to adhere to the safety measures and stay open for the children to fully enjoy their right to education.
- UNICEF, in partnership with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, is providing continued support to 33 social workers to support the most vulnerable populations in all districts of Abkhazia.

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Confirmed cases</th>
<th>Confirmed deaths</th>
<th>Child (&lt;18 years) cases</th>
<th>Boys: 14,386 and Girls: 13,679</th>
<th>Confirmed cases – 13,121</th>
<th>Confirmed deaths – 205</th>
<th>UNICEF funding gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abkhazia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>US$2,472,750</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</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

- The arrival of the first batch of COVID-19 vaccines to Georgia, facilitated by UNICEF through COVAX facility was widely covered with multimedia stories (video, photo) produced and shared on web and social media platforms, as well as through mass media outlets. A press conference was held in partnership with the National Center for Disease Control and the Ministry of IDPs from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health, and Social Affairs, with the participation of UNICEF Deputy Representative.
- UNICEF, in partnership with Parents for Education, with financial support from USAID, continues to support parents in building skills on how to communicate with children and motivate their learning process amid the COVID-19 pandemic. A webinar led by prominent child psychologist was organised about how to motivate children to study better, reaching over 138,000 parents across the country. The webinar was accompanied with reading materials about this topic, online video blogs for parents as well as a quiz to test their knowledge.
- With USAID’s support, 60 Youth Health Ambassadors actively worked on creating and sharing communications packages on COVID-19 prevention measures, generating combined reach of 730,000 social media users.
- During the past month, the Youth Health Ambassadors participated in four online workshops, covering cyber-bullying, disinformation, people with disabilities and public health. The workshops will help the youth health ambassadors to finalise their presentation materials, with which they will later conduct individual seminars and meetings with peers.
- UNICEF reached 1,072,533 people with its social media content during the past month.
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 85% of the planned target rural ambulatories. The internet connections will support the creation of a centralised communication platform for the provision of updated protocols, recommendations and trainings for rural primary health care doctors.

• The infrastructure of the remaining 15% of ambulatories is in a very bad physical condition, precluding internet installation, thus the Emergency Situation and Urgent Assistance Centre decided to establish more than one access point in approximately 200 clinics with multiple medical teams.

• The ambulatories are actively utilising the centralised communication platform for training of rural doctors in 6 regions (Adjara, Guria, Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi, Kaketi, Mtskheta-Mtianeti) on topics related to maternal and child health including post-natal care, immunisation and infant and young child feeding as well as management of COVID-19.

CHILD PROTECTION

On 18 March, a joint EU-UNICEF project “Strengthening Systems and Services for Child Protection in Georgia” was launched to support the Government in the implementation of the newly adopted Code on the Rights of the Child. The project will support the Government to decentralise services and will include strengthening family support services, strengthening child-friendly approaches in the justice system and informing children, parents and the wider community about violence against children and child rights protection mechanisms.

• With UNICEF’s support, the Public Defender’s Office finalised a study on the effects of COVID-19 on child labour. The study, conducted in four regions (Adjara, Guria, Kakheti, Samtske-Javakheti), reviews the legislative regulation of child labour and provides recommendations for action. A presentation of the study is planned for early April 2021.

• In line with the European Network of Ombudspersons of Children (ENOC), UNICEF launched a project to provide technical assistance to the Public Defender’s Office to undertake and complete a Child Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) related to COVID-19.

• UNICEF has been working on a draft concept for establishing a child-friendly justice system in Georgia and is expected to be finalised in the next few weeks.

• UNICEF is supporting the analysis of existing legislation and recommending amendments to harmonise with the newly enacted Code on the Rights of the Child.

• UNICEF, together with the Georgian Association of Social Workers, is supporting the State Care Agency to develop a case management system with an emphasis on the supervision of social workers, including through online modalities.

• UNICEF is supporting MoIDPOTLHSA to conceptualise and ensure child participation in the disability assessment and status determination system.
• UNICEF, in partnership with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, continued the provision of operation and methodological support to 33 social workers working with vulnerable children and their families in all districts of Abkhazia.

EDUCATION

On March 19, a three-year programme funded by the Norwegian Government was launched by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Norwegian Government Agency for Special Needs Education (Statped) and UNICEF, to strengthen the quality and inclusiveness of the national education system. The programme will focus on children 3-18 years of age, with a specific emphasis on children with disabilities, national minorities and marginalised children, including those who are currently not attending school and are at risk of dropping out.

Left to right: The Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia Mikheil Chkhenkeli, Ambassador of Norway to Georgia Helene Sand Andresen and UNICEF Representative Ghassan Khalil at the joint project launch.

• UNICEF visited a school in Kutaisi, Imereti region, to continue advocating for all schools to adhere to the safety measures and stay open for the children to fully enjoy their right to education.

“Happy to visit Kutaisi public school #30 to congratulate students and teachers on returning to classes & handover education resources for children with special needs. Every child should have access to quality & inclusive education.” – UNICEF Representative Ghassan Khalil

UNICEF Representative in Georgia, Dr Ghassan Khalil in Kutaisi public school No.30.

SOCIAL PROTECTION

UNICEF, in partnership with the European Union, National Association of Local Authorities and Kutaisi Municipality, held a working meeting on municipalities’ role in provision of social services under the Code on the Rights of the Child and Decentralisation Strategy.
MONTHLY FOCUS: The first batch of COVID-19 vaccines arrived in Georgia

On March 13, Georgia received its first batch of the COVID-19 vaccine via COVAX Facility. UNICEF supported the Government of Georgia to procure 43,200 doses of the AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine produced by AstraZeneca-SKBio (Republic of Korea). The 43,200 doses will be fully utilised for the first dose. This decision was taken based on the information that the next delivery of 86,400 doses will be in April and the recommended interval between the injections is 8 to 12 weeks.

On 15 March, vaccinations against COVID-19 started in Tbilisi and in the regions with the priority groups identified by the Government.

UNICEF Georgia has been supporting the Government of Georgia in carrying out routine immunisation programmes and has facilitated engagement with the COVAX Facility on COVID-19 vaccines upon the request of the Government. As the largest vaccine buyer in the world, procuring more than 2 billion doses annually for routine immunisation and outbreak response on behalf of nearly 100 countries, UNICEF is coordinating and supporting the procurement, international freight, and in-country distribution of COVID-19 vaccines for COVAX Facility. COVAX is part of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, a ground-breaking global collaboration to accelerate development, production, and equitable access to COVID-19 tests, treatments, and vaccines. COVAX is co-led by the Vaccine Alliance (Gavi), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), working in partnership with UNICEF as a key implementing partner for vaccine procurement and delivery. The goal of the COVAX initiative is to provide nations with equitable and affordable access to safe and effective vaccines against COVID-19, regardless of their income level. It is an international solidarity mechanism set up for the benefit of 92 low- and middle-income countries to collectively and effectively combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

To mark the arrival of COVID-19 vaccines, a press conference was held in partnership with the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health of Georgia (NCDC) and the Ministry of IDPs from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health, and Social Affairs, and WHO, with the participation of UNICEF Deputy Representative.

"Today is a historic day in Georgia as the first batch of COVID-19 vaccines arrived. UNICEF, along with other partners such as WHO and GAVI, are delighted to support the Government of Georgia in COVID-19 vaccine procurement. Immunization of front-line health workers and vulnerable groups will allow a gradual return to normality."

- said UNICEF Deputy Representative in Georgia, Amy Clancy

Left to Right: Dr Amiran Gamkrelidze, Director of the NCDC, Health Minister Ekaterine Tikaradze, Amy Clancy, UNICEF Deputy Representative in Georgia, Dr Tamar Ugulava, UNICEF Georgia Health Specialist and Dr Tamar Gabunia, First Deputy Health Minister, at a joint conference to mark arrival of the first batch of COVID-19 vaccines to Georgia.
FUNDING 2021

<table>
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<th>Programme Areas</th>
<th>Funding Needs</th>
<th>Funds Identified</th>
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<td>Risk Communication and Community Engagement</td>
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<td><strong>Grand Total</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 14 April 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