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UNICEF Flash Report

COVID-19 Impact on Children in Ukraine

Key Highlights and Advocacy Points

- On 1 September, over 95 per cent of the 5 million school-aged children in 14,175 schools resumed their education. UNICEF [is supporting](#) the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) with an informational campaign to ensure children's safety as they return to school during the pandemic.
- UNICEF [is calling on](#) the Government of Ukraine to accelerate implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration. Children and teachers in 3,500 educational facilities are continuing to face daily violence as the conflict in eastern Ukraine enters its seventh year.
- With the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF is expanding awareness communication on basic preventive behaviors, including wearing face masks and social distancing.
- Following the recent decision to replace 'baby boxes' with monetary support, UNICEF [is encouraging](#) the Government to keep the Baby Box Initiative as critical childcare support for families with children. UNICEF research shows that 80 per cent of parents prefer to receive in-kind support.
- UNICEF is concerned about the amendments to the National Strategy for Reforming the Institutional Care System that would result in boarding schools being excluded from the de-institutionalization strategy.

Overview of Child Rights



Child Protection

- On 21 August, the Prime Minister introduced a decree with amendments to the National Strategy for Reforming the Institutional Care System for 2017-2026 and to the Resolution "On the Procedure for enrolling children for an around-the-clock stay in institutions providing institutional care and upbringing of children. "These changes could result in boarding schools being excluded from the de-institutionalization strategy and therefore efforts to find family-based care for over 80-90,000 children would be limited.
- Further, it is not considering the fact that earlier this year the MoES made a decision to close most of the boarding schools due to the COVID-19 quarantine measures and around 40,000 children were "returned" to their biological families without prior assessment of the family situation and often with a safety and protection risk to children. In addition, the majority of those children with special education needs due to disability had no further access to online education.
- UNICEF and partners are continuing to monitor the situation of children in five regions who have been returned from institutions to their families as a result of quarantine restrictions introduced by the Government in response to COVID-19.
- UNICEF online webinars for social workers and child protection specialists have received over 155,000 views on the social media channels of UNICEF and partners. These webinars provide useful guidance on child protection risks during the pandemic, including on the prevention of child institutionalization as well as the reintegration of children from institutional care back to their families and communities, inclusive education, child safety, and so on.
- New informational content and materials were produced and distributed to 30,000 social workers on how to use personal protective equipment and talk with families about COVID-19.
- Over 2,000 social workers and child protection professionals in five regions were provided with personal protective equipment for safe working with families and children.
- UNICEF is continuing to support the national child rights hotline, which is providing to be in high demand for children, caregivers and parents. During the reporting period, 2,473 beneficiaries received phone consultations, including 80 per cent of girls and women and 52 persons with disabilities. Twenty-four per cent of the calls relate to mental health and psychosocial well-being. Calls related to violence against children remain high at the level of 25 per cent, while 10 per cent are linked to family relationships.
- With UNICEF assistance, gender-based violence (GBV) mobile teams in eastern Ukraine have provided over 12,000 phone consultations to people in need since the COVID-19 pandemic began. In August alone, GBV teams delivered 3,178 online consultations to people

Epidemics Trends

As reported by Public Health Centre of Ukraine



159,702

COVID-19 cases [have been confirmed](#)
70,810 patients have recovered and 3,264
have died as of 15 September.



Health care workers account for 8 per cent
of cases. At least 105 of them have died.



10,327

children have been diagnosed with COVID-19
and 5,100 have recovered. One child under
9 died in Chernivtsi region.
Children account for 6 per cent of cases.



The regions with the highest numbers of confirmed COVID-19 cases are Kyiv city (11.1 per cent of confirmed cases), Lviv (10.8 per cent), Kharkiv (8.2 per cent), Chernivtsi (7.8 per cent), and Ivano-Frankivsk (7.2 per cent).

living along the 'contact line'. Nineteen of the calls were from families of children who had returned from boarding institutions and 88 were from persons with disabilities. More than half of all reported cases are related to violence, and 14 per cent are linked to COVID-19.



Education

- Before the new school year, the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the MoES issued a set of recommendations on safe school operations with inputs from stakeholders, including UNICEF.
- At the Annual August Education Conference, several government stakeholders including the MoES and the MoH declared their commitment to make provisions for the most vulnerable groups of children when schools reopened. The key findings of the National Assessment of School Preparedness conducted jointly by UNICEF and the MoE were presented during the online conference, as well as the highlights of the Back to School Campaign supported by UNICEF.
- In August, UNICEF continued to receive reports about challenges faced by education facilities in meeting the requirements outlined in safe school operations guidelines, mainly related to lack of funding in local budgets for procuring infection prevention control supplies.
- In accordance with the Government's so-called 'adaptive quarantine approach' – dividing regions in four risk levels for the spread of the epidemic – schools started to operate normally in all zones except for the red one.
- In response to the MoES' request to support safe school reopening, UNICEF and Unilever will deliver 40,000 litres of floor and surface disinfectant. This in-kind donation will be shipped to 30 communities that were badly affected by the COVID-19 outbreak to cover 3-months' requirements for 600 schools with an estimated 100,000 children enrolled.
- In addition, 116 schools and 68 kindergartens in Donetsk and Luhansk regions have already received e-vouchers for hygiene supplies to be redeemed in nearby partner shops, to enable adherence for three months to sanitary norms for COVID-19 times.
- On 9 September, UNICEF published a press statement calling for strengthened protection of schools in eastern Ukraine and speeding up of implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration. Additionally, a joint press release was issued with the MoES to highlight the situation of 400,000 children going to school in the conflict zone in eastern Ukraine.



Health and Nutrition

- The lockdown [has brought](#) many difficulties and experiences to the lives of pregnant Ukrainian women, changing their daily routines and working practices, and reducing their access to health care services.
- UNICEF supported an online marathon on International Breastfeeding Week and promoted a series of materials on the importance of breastfeeding and safe practices during the pandemic. Online outreach and thematic online sessions with experts on vaccination and breastfeeding in the context of COVID-19 reached about 100,000 people.



Water, Hygiene and Sanitation

- 21 health care facilities, 2,000 households, and 600 people on observation in non-government-controlled areas (NGCAs) of Donetsk regions will receive support thanks to a new UNICEF project. The project will provide 400 social workers with personal protective equipment and sanitizers, and 300 people with special needs with hygiene kits.
- UNICEF and its local partner provided 724 health care workers and patients in Donetsk region with 40 Institutional Hygiene Kits, 80 waste bins of various volumes, and 1,000 litres of liquid soap.
- UNICEF is paying particular attention to reaching disadvantaged Roma communities in western Ukraine who cannot equally benefit from technology-based solutions for communication, learning, and psychosocial support. UNICEF is working to raise awareness on hygiene practices among Roma children living in Zakarpattia region, one of the most vulnerable minor communities in Ukraine. Together with a local NGO, UNICEF delivered family hygiene kits to over 4,000 people, including 2,862 children, in Roma settlements in Zakarpattia.

Situation in Eastern Ukraine

- The overall humanitarian situation in eastern Ukraine remains similar to previous weeks with an improved security situation and marked de-escalation of armed tension since 27 July, when a new ceasefire agreement came into force.
- Observers, however, remain cautious about the sustainability of this calm situation along the 'contact line', as this is not the first time that the sides have agreed a ceasefire.
- Freedom of movement remains restricted between government-controlled areas and NGCAs, with specific criteria to be fulfilled for people to cross in addition to the observance of two weeks of isolation.

Promising Practices and Solutions:

- Over 50,000 health care professionals received UNICEF's comprehensive counselling guide on how to talk to patients about COVID-19. The guide is intended to promote positive behaviours, reduce alarm and reduce stigma and discrimination.
- Materials on revamping vaccination amidst the COVID-19 pandemic were produced and disseminated through UNICEF's and the MoH's social media channels, reaching over 400,000 users.
- UNICEF supported 88 boys and 3 girls in juvenile colonies with personal protective equipment (PPE), disinfectants and specifically developed informational materials on COVID-19 prevention, self-care and psychosocial support. In addition, instructions and guidelines were provided to professionals working with children on the use of PPE, hygiene requirements, communication and psycho-social assistance. A COVID-19 checklist was developed for staff.
- A webinar was conducted on COVID-19 preventive behavior for the staff of two detention facilities for mothers with children aged 0-4 years. The mothers and personnel were provided with PPE, disinfectants and thermometers.
- UNICEF supported psychosocial teams in Luhansk and Donetsk NGCAs to provide online and phone consultations to 316 beneficiaries, including 246 children, with a focus on positive parenting and COVID-19. Twenty-seven children without parental care were provided with essential protection services and psychosocial support.
- The national solidarity campaign continued unfolding through a social media activation fighting stigma and discrimination in the context of COVID-19. An interactive Instagram mask was launched in August, reaching over 900,000 and engaging 25,000 users, including six celebrities and social media influencers.
- Ukraine joined the UNICEF digital activation on the COVID-19 Champions for Children with stories of Ukrainian social workers from conflict-torn eastern Ukraine, which received over five million engagements through UNICEF's global channels.
- UNICEF Facebook live sessions for volunteers on health behaviours and volunteer mobilization for healthcare system reached 720,000 people online, while a webinar with a psychologist on mental health and the impact of COVID-19 on healthcare workers reached 60,000 people online.
- 430 education professionals and 530 parents took part in online courses on psychosocial support and positive parenting, which were developed in cooperation with a local NGO and Kyiv Mohyla Academy.

Funds

UNICEF is currently appealing for US\$23 million for the COVID-19 response in Ukraine, in addition to an existing humanitarian appeal of US\$9.8 million to support families with children in the conflict-affected east. As of yet, UNICEF has received 52 per cent of the funding required the 2020 Humanitarian Appeal for Children, and 11 per cent of the funding needed for the COVID-19 response across the country.

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