

UNICEF Georgia COVID-19 Situation Report

18 September 2020

HIGHLIGHTS

- On 15 September, UNICEF celebrated the start of another academic year with [videos of children talking](#) about their experiences as they return to schools, and social media posts of [children sharing their views on school reopening](#).
- An agreement between the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports (MoESCS) of Georgia, the Government of Estonia, and UNICEF was signed, which focuses on training teachers, school administrators, and educators from 100 schools in distance teaching, learning concepts, and quality education practices.
- UNICEF's partner, MAC Georgia, provided information on health and safety requirements for returning to preschool/school, engaging 110,000 people.
- UNICEF, in partnership with NCDC and with the financial support of USAID, organized a [training in Batumi](#) for regional media representatives on COVID-19-related health risks and recommendations.
- UNICEF, in partnership with the Adjara Organization of Georgian Scout Movement, launched a project to involve young scouts in shaping initiatives supporting the COVID-19 response and recovery for adolescents residing in the mountainous villages of the Adjara region.
- UNICEF launched a new partnership with NGO RHEA Union to organize developmental activities for children and young people with intellectual disabilities in Akhalkalaki and Aspindza municipalities.

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

3,119

Confirmed cases

19

Confirmed deaths

159

Child (<18 years) cases

5,014

Quarantined

Abkhazia

Confirmed cases - 782

Confirmed deaths - 7

UNICEF funding gap

US\$ 1,841,399 (42%)

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.



Photo 1: Visit to a school in village Makhuntseti, and distribution of hygiene supplies and disinfectants.

Photo 2: Minister of Education of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara with UNICEF Representative visiting a child attending online sessions at home.

Communication for Social Change (C4SC) and External Communications

- On 15 September, UNICEF celebrated the start of another academic year: [videos of children talking](#) about their experiences as they return to schools; [photo story](#) of the first day at Sagarejo public schools #1 and #4; [a video of a school teacher](#), talking about distance learning versus face-to-face teaching; and social media posts of [children sharing their views on school reopening](#).
- UNICEF, in partnership with NCDC and with the financial support of USAID, organized a [training in Batumi](#) for regional media representatives on COVID-19-related health risks and recommendations. A total of 20 prominent media organizations attended the training together with senior representatives from the MoIDPOTLHSA and the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara.

- The second phase of the UNICEF-led campaign for young people kicked off with social media posts related to safety measures for the return to school. [A quiz “are you ready to go back to school?”](#) included multiple answer questions on COVID-19-related regulations and recommendations for children and young people.
- On 10 September, UNICEF partner, Parents for Education, organized the first [webinar on how to communicate with children aged 0-6 during the pandemic](#). The webinar generated high interest among parents with 46,000 views and more than 16,600 engagements through social media. Following the webinar, the NGO developed [three short video blogs](#) on the topic to help parents improve their communication with children.
- With the support of USAID, over 60 COVID-19-related programmes went on air in the Georgian language, together with 50 special editions in Armenian and Azerbaijani languages, on [nine regional TV channels](#), reaching more than one million people to date with information about COVID-19 prevention measures.
- Marneuli TV broadcasted UNICEF-developed COVID-19 digital posters and graphic animations in Azeri.
- Advocacy for positive parenting amid the COVID-19 pandemic continued with a [video of Luka and his father](#), widely shared through UNICEF Georgia and ECAR social media channels.
- The following COVID-19 materials were translated and published on the UNICEF Georgia website and promoted through social media channels: [Supporting Child's Mental Health During COVID-19 School Returns](#), and [Classroom Precautions during COVID-19](#).
- During the reporting period, UNICEF Georgia reached 377,238 people and engaged 19,710 people on topics about COVID-19 through Facebook.

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

- UNICEF’s virtual antenatal care programme reached 20,260 pregnant women, out of which around 34% participated in virtual medical consultations. To date, the programme covered red zones, such as Bolnisi, Gardabani, Marneuli, and Vani, as well as the entire pregnant population of Tbilisi, Adjara, Guria, Imereti, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, and Kakheti regions.
- UNICEF, in coordination with the MoESCS, WHO, and NCDC, prepared information, education, and communication (IEC) materials on COVID-19, IPC and handwashing, proper use of face masks, and physical distancing recommendations in Georgian and ethnic minority languages for students, teachers, and non-teaching staff.

Adolescents/youth

- UNICEF, in partnership with the Adjara Organization of Georgian Scout Movement, launched a project to involve young scouts in shaping initiatives supporting the COVID-19 response and recovery for adolescents residing in the mountainous villages of the Adjara region. A total of 80 young scouts were recruited. During the reporting period, scouts attended a three-day workshop covering: COVID-19 prevention measures; healthy lifestyles with a focus on drug abuse and online gambling; and safe scouting, leadership, and teamwork.
- During the reporting period, youth volunteers contributed 579 hours to peer learning, online training, workshops, film screening, organized activities for older people, making new friends, breaking out of the cycle of social isolation and loneliness, and more.
- Volunteer stories were prepared and disseminated through Facebook, reaching 20,650 people.
- Young volunteers presented their work in radio talk shows in the Samtske-Javakheti region and Tbilisi.
- 35 participants attended a webinar on Technologies and Modern Challenges led by the director and founder of IT Academy-Step Georgia. The webinar was also live-streamed on the Facebook page of Kant’s Academy.
- UNICEF's partner, Global Initiative in Psychiatry (GIP), continues a series of online webinars for adolescents and their parents, covering the following topic: The Role of Parental Emotion Regulation, reaching 6,900 views; Psychoactive substances – the taboo topic, we must talk about, reaching 2,800 views; Positive Adolescents’ Parenting – communication between adolescents and parents, reaching 1,300 views. GIP psychologists continue online consultations with adolescents in Tbilisi and Batumi.

Child Protection

- In partnership with the Parliament and State Care Agency, the UNICEF-supported child hotline “111” continues to provide assistance to children and their families, supporting 775 cases to date, of which 690 already received assistance and were closed accordingly. There is an increase in the number of cases related to violence against children, reaching 43 during the last week.

- UNICEF’s partner, MAC Georgia, provided information on children’s school preparedness and required government health and safety requirements for returning to preschool/school, engaging more than 110,000 people.
- UNICEF launched a new partnership with NGO RHEA Union to organize developmental activities for children and young people with intellectual disabilities in Akhalkalaki and Aspindza.
- Through group and individual sessions, UNICEF’s partner, Children of Georgia, provided online psychological support to 279 children and 197 caregivers in small group homes and foster care, in all regions of Georgia. During the reporting period, the following topics were covered: distress caused by COVID-19; emotional state of children; anxiety due to restrictions/isolation; conflict management; violence; and challenging behavior.

Education

- An agreement between the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports (MoESCS) of Georgia, the Government of Estonia, and UNICEF Georgia was signed this week, which focuses on training elementary school teachers, school administrators, and educators from 100 schools in distance teaching and learning concepts and quality education practices.
- UNICEF, in close collaboration with NCDC, is supporting MoESCS in the safer reopening of schools, including the development of child-friendly posters on COVID-19 preventive measures for use in preschools and primary schools.
- With UNICEF support and in partnership with CK-12 Foundation, Education for All Coalition is translating and adapting interactive and online teaching and learning resources for students and teachers of Georgia.

WEEKLY FOCUS: WASH IN SCHOOLS

Hygiene is a critical element to disease prevention. Yet data shows that many children within Georgia do not have the ability to properly wash their hands at home and at school. The 2018 WHO-UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) for Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene found that:

- 26% of schools had limited or no water service;
- 88% of schools did not have handwashing facilities with soap and water available at the time of monitoring; and
- 28% of schools had poor or no sanitation facilities at all.

The 2019 Public Defender’s Monitoring Report added additional evidence of the dire WASH situation in schools with 17% of monitored schools having no drinking water, toilets were not available in 2% of monitored schools, and where sanitary facilities existed, 32% were not functional, and 51% were only partially functional. Inadequate WASH facilities decrease the ability of students and teachers to practice proper hygiene and increases their risk of disease.



Minister of Education of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara and UNICEF Representative visited a school in village Makhuntseti, Keda municipality and handed over essential hygiene supplies and disinfectants.

UNICEF Representative: “I hope, lessons will be held in classes soon. It is very important that every child has the access to quality education and is safely returned to school”.

COVID-19 underlined the importance of WASH services as part of infection prevention and control in schools. Thus, this is a major focus of the Government of Georgia’s strategy for the safe reopening and operation of schools amid the COVID-19 pandemic. With UNICEF’s support, WASH-related technical regulations were developed for schools and a monitoring framework of WASH in Schools was developed and tested. The work for integrating these regulations into the education management information system (EMIS) continues. With support from USAID, UNICEF is procuring hygiene materials to support the reopening of preschools/schools. While significant progress is being made, gaps persist and need to be addressed to ensure that children, especially the most vulnerable, are protected.

The above situation calls Georgian Government, health and education officials, donor agencies, and other key stakeholders to further support the improvement of WASH conditions in schools to contribute to the enhancement of health, wellbeing, and development of children.

Funding

Programme Areas	Funding Needs	Funds Identified	Funding Gap
Education	300,000	282,100	17,900
Child Protection	514,000	260,650	253,350
Health, Nutrition and WASH	3,001,399	1,589,300	1,412,099
Social Policy	400,000	241,950	158,050
Risk Communication and Community Engagement	200,000	200,000	0
Grand Total	4,415,399	2,574,000	1,841,399

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, UKAid, and USAID.

The next Situation Report will be issued on 25 September 2020

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