



UNITED NATIONS  
ALBANIA



# COVID-19 RESPONSE

A Special Covid-19 Response Newsletter

● Issue No 5 ● July - August, 2020

This fifth issue of our special newsletter dedicated to Covid-19 response brings fresh news on the work of UN family of agencies in Albania to help facing the continued health emergency, support the most vulnerable cope with the additional challenges that the crisis has created and work with government and stakeholders to develop and activate a forward-looking and sustainable response.

The UN Country Team in Albania completed its [Socio-Economic Recovery and Response Plan for Albania](#) which provides a scanning of the current situation and sets out UN's consolidated offer of socio-economic recovery and response support complementing the Government of Albania National Response Plan (to be released soon) and the current National Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan.

The Plan identifies 113 priority actions focused in 5 key areas: Protecting health services and systems; Social protection and basic services; Protecting jobs and small and medium sized enterprises, and the most vulnerable productive actors; Macroeconomic response and multilateral collaboration; Social cohesion and community resilience.

The Plan follows Secretary-General's launch on May 4th of the UN's global framework for immediate social-economic response to COVID-19.

[Download the Report.](#)



World Health Organization (WHO) continues to be the frontline UN agency in supporting the fight against COVID19 in Albania, from supplying the necessary Covid-19 testing kits and to training laboratory and hospital staff, supporting the work on risk communications and community engagement and coordinating health aid.



"WHO Country Office Director Dr. Bettina Maria Menne with the Director of IPH, Dr. Albana Fico and other IPH management entering the Laboratory of the Institute after the hand-over the procured goods". Photo, WHO Albania

## Latest news from WHO in Albania:

- Materials for the diagnosis of COVID-19 (Viral RNA extraction Kit, Microamp Optical Tubes, glove examination, etc) supplied to the Institute of Public Health (IPH) laboratory and the University Hospital (supported by USAID).
- An "Analysis of the Health System response to COVID-19 in Albania" has been produced. [Access Report here](#).
- An in-depth assessment of training needs of the University Hospital Mother Tereza regarding IPC in process was completed.
- Work is ongoing to upscale country's Contact Tracking Capacities. Significant logistical support is being planned for 4 Regional health operators.
- An online laboratory training on Saliva samples and Sequencing was provided.
- 8 Mental Health trainings for healthcare and social services professionals have been delivered in cooperation with UNICEF and MoHSP. (Read more on page 7)

UNICEF in cooperation with the Department of Neonatology at the School of Medicine organized a webinar with 20 neonatologists from all over the country to discuss the challenges of the neonatology service in the context of the pandemic, the latest scientific evidence and global WHO/UNICEF recommendations for breastfeeding in the context of COVID-19, the important role of the maternity personnel to support breastfeeding, and address concerns of mothers for safe breastfeeding. [More here](#).

UNDP Albania has teamed up with A2 – the CNN Exclusive News Channel Affiliate operating in Albania in a communication campaign aiming to increasing awareness and providing the public with reliable information on the benefits that physical distancing can have in the fight against the pandemic.



**COVID-19**

## KEEP YOUR DISTANCE

It's nothing personal

Thanks to funding from our development partners including the EU, USAID, Sweden, Switzerland and Norway, the UN Agencies in Albania continue to provide support for in Albania in securing the necessary supplies for Covid-19



Picture: UNOPS handing over of the 4<sup>th</sup> delivery of #EU4Health supplies to Ministry of Health and Social Protection.

**UNOPS** completed the fourth delivery of the EU's 4million Euro aid for health (#EU4Health) supplies to the Ministry of Health. The delivery included CPAP Ventilators, ECG machines, Patient Monitors, Defibrillators and Ultrasound and mobile X Ray equipment numbering hundreds of items. These will be used in the new COVID 4 hospital that has just been set up in Tirana in response to a worsening

**UNICEF** handed over to the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, medical equipment for oxygen therapy including 10 oxygen concentrating units and necessary consumables (oxygen supply tubes, nasal cannulas, pulse oximeters, oxygen analyzers, oxygen masks) for oxygen therapy . These devices will contribute to the capacities of health services for mother and child, in hospital care for case management with # COVID19. UNICEF will also support the work of hospital health staff to ensure the continuity of maternal and child services for patients in need of oxygen therapy in the course of hospital treatment for other health problems.



Picture: UNICEF Representative Roberto de Bernardi, handing over health supplies to the Ministry of Health and Social Protection.



Picture: IOM's Head of office, Alma Jani handing over the PPEs to State Police authorities

**IOM** has provided Albanian Border and Migration Police with over 112,000 pieces of personal protective equipment against COVID-19 made possible through funding [from the EU](#) and [Norwegian Government](#).

**UNICEF** delivered [critical personal and family hygiene supplies](#) to 11,562 children and 15,876 adults in municipalities of Tirana, Fier, Vlore, Shkoder, Korce, Kukes, Elbasan, Lezhe, Pogradec, Vau i Dejes, Berat, Maliq, Durres following a partnership with local governments to identify and help vulnerable families and children in need of emergency support. 2000 additional hygiene kits, containing cleaning and disinfection supplies were distributed to 400 creches and kindergartens benefiting around 18,200 children.



Picture: IUNICEF delivering hygiene supplies in Vau I Dejes

**UNDP** supported vulnerable communities through the resources of the Rapid Response Facility and the joint UN Programme “Ending Violence Against Women in Albania” funded by Sweden. 21,200 protective masks were distributed to first line providers and gender-based violence survivors to protect themselves from COVID-19 .

In addition, by partnering with the Community Development Centre “Today for the Future” and the Shelter for Abused Women and Girls (SAWG), direct support is continuously being provided in Tirana, Lezha and Durres to women and girls, victims of domestic violence and their families in the context of COVID-19 emergency.

To support families in need in the context of the situation with pandemic, food and hygiene items have been distributed. After a series of physical and online meetings on participatory budgeting processes **UN Women** through Albanian Community Centre Today for the Future supported vulnerable communities in Tirana, Lezha, Lushnja, Dibra, Elbasan, Durres with humanitarian packages in support prevention and protection measures like masks, disinfectants, gloves.

(Supported by SDG Joint Fund, LNB funded by Swiss Government, and EVAW supported by Government of Sweden)



UN Women delivers food and hygiene items to families in need.

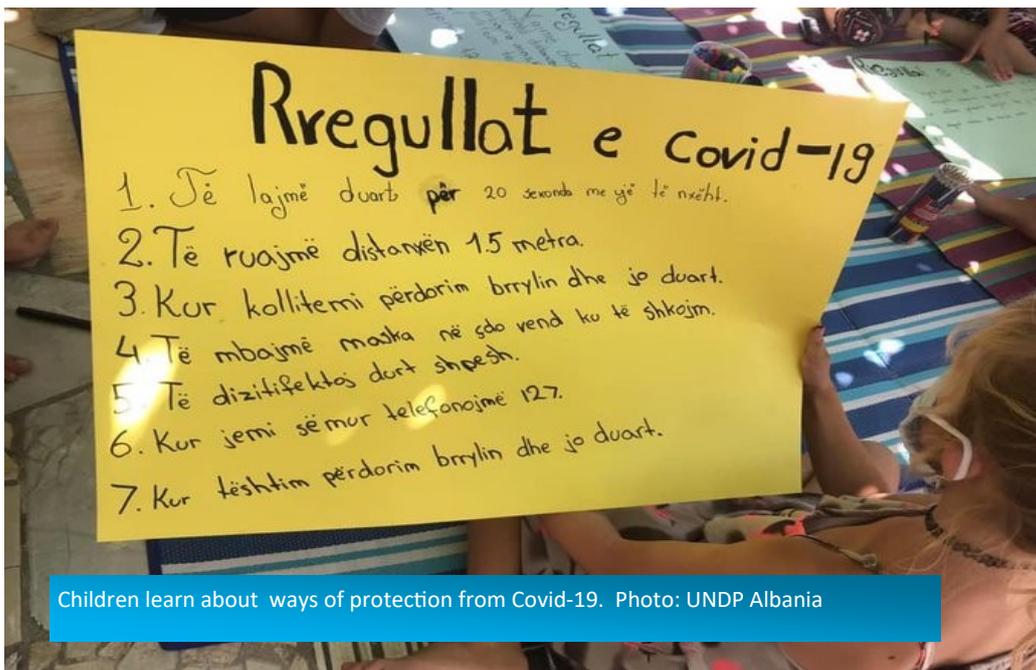
Under the UN Joint Programme “Ending Violence Against Women in Albania” (EVAWIA) funded by Sweden, UNDP worked through multi-sectorial technical teams of Coordinated Referral Mechanisms in 15 municipalities to ensure coordination of efforts from all involved stakeholders to prevent and handle domestic violence cases at local communities, especially in the context of the COVID-19 situation.



Picture: UNDP signing a MoU with local CRM stakeholders in Mat

## More from UNDP

- As part of the UN Joint Program "Improving Municipal Social Protection Service Delivery" supported by SDG Joint Fund, UNDP and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection launched piloting of innovative social protection services in response to # Covid19. [Read more.](#)



Children learn about ways of protection from Covid-19. Photo: UNDP Albania

Under the UN Joint Programme “Leave No One Behind” supported from Swiss Government and in partnership with 3 Municipalities, UNDP facilitated cultural and entertainment activities for +300 Roma and non Roma children as part of Integrated Social Services Approach that the programme is implementing. [Read More.](#)

- Through a partnership of UNDP and the School of Magistrates, online capacity building trainings continued with judges, prosecutors and other judicial officials on due diligence principles on adequate DV law implementation tailored for the COVID-19 situation. 18 participants, prosecutors and DV coordinators in prosecutors’ offices benefitted from these trainings. [Read More.](#)

As part of joint UN Programme EVAWIA, supported by Sweden, 87 women and girls received online courses of self-defense which combine awareness-raising on gender-based violence with empowerment and self-defense techniques. This is part of the work **UN Women** and their partners are doing to make sure the gender-differential impact of COVID-19 is addressed in time.



Self Defense Classes for girls and women. Photo: ADS

**More From UN Women:**

The Albanian Disability Rights Foundation (ADRF), in response to COVID-19 has prepared a mapping of services for survivors of violence, with a special attention on COVID-19 related developments, such as SOPs produced on functioning of referral mechanisms, available services during the confinement measures and other resources for women from marginalized groups;

The Woman Forum Elbasan has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the regional police directory in Elbasan to provide support to police officers in issuing emergency preliminary protection orders, which was identified as a gap and need during the COVID-19 confinement measures that overwhelmed police response and created backlog in dealing with cases of VAWG.

Following completion of a needs assessment for civil society organizations including their capacities and skills to cope with emergencies including COVID 19-, a tailored training on the above skills was held on 20-22 July where 20 organizations from 6 municipalities participated. (Supported by SDG Joint Fund). More [here](#).



A video aiming social enterprises of women in rural areas of Permet, South Albania was prepared and launched in July in order to raise awareness of tourists to consume women products, which are especially suffering economic consequence due to Covid 19 pandemic. **(Funded by Norway)** .  
Watch video [Here](#)

The majority of children in conflict with the law in Albania have committed petty crimes or minor offences and too often prejudice because of social and economic status may bring a child into conflict with the law. Thanks to advocacy by UNICEF, a number of children have been released from pre-trial and post-trial detention in response to COVID-19 in Albania. [More here](#).

Quarantine measures have led to higher psychological and psychosocial distress, exacerbating mental health problems for children and caregivers. More than 250 frontline professionals from child protection, social services, health, education and justice services participated in an 8-week, online training on 'Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergencies' organized jointly by UNICEF and the WHO. The training sessions were organized in close cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Social Protection. They addressed capacity development needs identified by the Child Protection in Emergencies Working Group, led by UNICEF. [Read more](#).



## PROTECTING PEOPLE—MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

**UNHCR** continues to implement the project “Addressing COVID-19 challenges within the migrant and refugee response in the Western Balkans” – funded by the EU Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace. In July 61 asylum-seekers and refugees were provided with first aid or medical advice, either through the UNHCR partner-funded nurse at the National Reception Centre or over-the-phone with a doctor. Partners, National Reception Centre staff and some refugees/asylum-seekers were also provided with PPE to prevent transmission during frontline operations.

**UNICEF** in cooperation with **UNHCR** and other national counterparts to provide learning and platform for language acquisition (Akelius platform) to refugee and migrants in the three reception centres in Albania. UNICEF through the regional office support has engaged in LearnIn initiative. As a follow-up of the training held by RO, 300 teachers have been trained in Albania through the professional development networks. The LearnIn manuals are being enriched and contextualised to reflect better Albania’s situation through a cooperation with Ministry of Education. [Read More](#)



**RMSA** —the UNHCR partner in Albania - continues to work closely with previous and potential employers to facilitate re-employment of refugees who lost their jobs at the outset of the COVID-19 emergency. Psychosocial assistance and counselling has been provided for 97 asylum-seekers and refugees residing at the National Reception Centre and in private accommodation. Food, material and cash-based assistance continues to be provided to families on a tailored basis, according to needs and situation.

## EDUCATION

UNICEF is helping Ministry of Education to prepare for school re-opening by providing the MOE and other actors a comprehensive guidance on what to consider for the opening of the schools and preschools. A series of workshops for the development of the new education sector strategy are being held where issues of COVID-19 response such as: digital skills, online learning, financial shocks to education, learning loss and digital divide due to COVID-19 are also been discussed and prioritised as a response.



The open source digital platform Akademi.al— supported by UNICEF - has now enriched its content with more 2100 video lessons . This content is also available and is being aired in the main public TV for a bigger reach with the most vulnerable children. Plans are being developed to upgrade of the platform into an online and offline app as well as a tool to be used for improving learning remotely and during regular classes by improving its interactivity.

[Read more.](#)

## ECONOMY

**The UN Joint SDG Fund** has allocated funds for the implementation of “Support to SDG Financing Albania”. This project represents the global efforts to stimulate integrated and transformative policy shifts. It supports the creation of SDG financing strategies to support Covid-19 response and accelerate the progress on the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals. The joint programme by UNDP, UNICEF and ILO along with RCO, UN WOMEN and UNPFA aims to provide technical assistance and work with the government to identify and integrate in the national budgetary framework more equitable and adequate financing for SDGs.

**FAO** is continuing its evaluation of the impact of Covid-19 situation to the food supply, food security and food production with specific monitoring of agricultural production, livestock sector and agritourism. The a survey is under works aiming to learn directly from food supply actors/operators whether and how COVID-19 pandemic is affecting their work.

**The International Labour Organization (ILO)** is providing technical support to the State Labour Inspectorate on the post COVID-19 OSH standards to be established and observed at the company level. In close cooperation with the Albanian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety in the Workplace (AOSHC), the ILO will enable the up-skilling of at least 60 labour inspectors on COVID red protocols and OSH standards defined by Government of Albania (GoA) and ILO for a safe resume of operations after COVID – 19 that should be established and observed at the workplace (September 2020).

Read More about Covid-19 at UN Global space  
<https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus>



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