



UNITED NATIONS
NORTH MACEDONIA



2020

NORTH MACEDONIA ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT

MAY 2021





UNITED NATIONS NORTH MACEDONIA



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Organization of the
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The latest version of this document is available on UN North Macedonia website at northmacedonia.un.org.

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Cover photo: A child with autism spectrum disorder and his mother, beneficiaries of a UN-developed online education platform that has taken on heightened importance amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Photo©UNFPA

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Financial data is provisional and may vary upon financial certification.

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** For detailed 2020 results per outputs, see the report Supplement*

Foreword

“ The COVID-19 pandemic is one of the most dangerous challenges this world has faced in our lifetime. It is above all a human crisis with severe health and socio-economic consequences.”

António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General

At the end of 2019 we were preparing for a busy year: the UN in North Macedonia had ambitious plans for achieving results for its 2016-2020 implementation cycle, to assist the country with the acceleration of activities towards reaching Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 and simultaneously engage with partners and people in North Macedonia in a consultative process to identify our joint strategic priorities for the years ahead.

At that point no one imagined the challenges, human suffering and socio-economic disaster, the intensity of the year ahead. 2020 was a test – for the world and the international community, for the region, for North Macedonia, for our communities, for all of us as individuals and for the UN. It is a test that we continue to take and will continue to do so, testing the strength of our systems, our agility and endurance, but also our vision and ability to think and act differently, to recover better.

The UN in North Macedonia decisively supported COVID-19 response from the beginning through reprogramming, coordination, and policy and logistic support to the Government. Our focus quickly shifted to the crisis’ mid- and long-term impact, its socio-economic aspects and the daunting effect it had on the most vulnerable and those left furthest behind.

In that sense, 2020 was particularly challenging, as it required constant balancing between supporting evidence-based, gender-sensitive response and dialogue-based response and thinking and acting with future in mind, which often involved difficult trade-offs.

Working closely with the Government of North Macedonia and other partners, we succeeded in ensuring the focus on sustainable development and achieving SDGs – our shared vision to end poverty, support our fragile planet and build social cohesion and inclusive societies. However, we were flexible enough to be able to address other difficulties and challenges that we had to jointly tackle in 2020.

The Government, backed by the UN and other partners, commendably remained committed to prepare and present its first Voluntary National Review (VNR) that showcased its renewed commitment to Agenda 2030, even during difficult times. This was a strong statement demonstrating commitment to the world and to the people of North Macedonia about the importance placed of improving the quality of life and for sustainable development in the country.

In the same context, the UN North Macedonia reaffirmed its commitment to support the country in its sustainable development endeavours, as reflected in its key strategic

document, 2021-2025 Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (SDCF). In years ahead we will continue to respond to and support national strategic priorities and reforms, and the EU accession process, with particular focus on ensuring that no one is left behind, in particular focusing on gender equality and the respect for human rights for everyone in North Macedonia.



We will continue to be a supportive and reliable partner of all segments of Macedonian society, not shying away from the realization that some may be more vulnerable than others and that they require our enhanced efforts and attention in order not to be left behind. We will do this by acting jointly as one UN and ensuring that all the people we serve benefit from our unique mandates, expertise and individual and collective efforts. We will do this as an organization that champions innovation and efficiency, promotes excellency, transparency and accountability, and offers expertise. We will do this in support of the nationally owned development vision of the country that reflects intergenerational, interethnic, interparty and gender consensus, with the best interest of people of North Macedonia in mind.

Rossana Dudziak
UN Resident Coordinator in North Macedonia



UN Country Team

The United Nations in North Macedonia worked towards strategic priorities identified in the 2016-2020 Partnership for Sustainable Development (PSD), its key strategic document, which was succeeded by the new five-year strategy (2021-2025 SDCF) adopted in 2020.

UN work contributes to the country's national development and strategic priorities, its international human rights and gender equality commitments and the commitments for achieving SDGs.

2016-2020 PSD was defined around five priority areas: more and better jobs, more responsive governance, better lives for vulnerable people, gender equality and a cleaner, greener, more resilient environment. For each of these, an umbrella outcome statement defined the joint goals that the UN, the Government and partners were jointly pursuing by 2020:

1 more women and men are able to improve their livelihoods by securing decent and sustainable employment in an increasingly competitive and job-rich economy;

2 national and local institutions are better able to design and deliver high-quality services for all users, in a transparent, cost-effective, non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive manner;

3 more members of socially excluded and vulnerable groups are empowered to exercise their rights and enjoy a better quality of life and equitable access to basic services;

4 individuals, the private sector and state institutions base their actions on the principles of sustainable development, and communities are more resilient to disasters and environmental risks; and

5 state institutions are fully accountable to gender equality and anti-discrimination commitments, and more women and girls lead lives free from discrimination and violence.

In 2020, 24 United Nations entities were engaged in operational or support activities for development in North Macedonia, working together through the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator (RC), the designated representative of the UN Secretary General for development operations in the country.

Among these, 17 had physical presence in North Macedonia – either through a stand-alone representative office, project staff or capacity embedded in the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) – and four entities have been conducting their activities fully remotely.

24

UN entities engaged in operational activities for development in North Macedonia

The United Nations team in North Macedonia in 2020 included more than 250 country-based national and international professional and support personnel backed by experts and personnel from regional and headquarter offices around the globe.

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency *
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITU	International Telecommunications Union *
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction *
UNDSS	United Nations Department for Safety and Security
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe *
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization *
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNV	United Nations Volunteers *
UN RCO	Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WB	The World Bank Group
WHO	World Health Organization

* no physical presence not PSD signatory

Key UN development partners

UN development work in North Macedonia is done mainly by providing technical assistance, capacity development, leveraging partnerships and resources, social mobilisation, brokering knowledge, and piloting and scaling up innovations, for which strong partnership is key.

During 2020, UN continued to work closely and jointly with more than 200 partners – national and local authorities, civil society, private sector, academia, international partners and all other stakeholders – to ensure the relevance and impact of its action for the people in North Macedonia.

A wordcloud of UN North Macedonia partners



Note: The visual is not exhaustive and aims to display the most engaged partner institutions and organizations identified through the stakeholder mapping exercise. Due to space limitation, collective partner categories are used in most instances. For a detailed list, see Annex (p.27).

UN North Macedonia activities are possible because of the generous contributions from its funding partners:



2020 key country developments

A politically challenging year heavily impacted by COVID-19

In 2020, North Macedonia prepared its first VNR that serves as baseline for progress against SDGs, noting significant achievements under People and Prosperity categories. The country accomplished one of its long-standing strategic priorities – membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Unable to start the European Union (EU) accession negotiations, the early parliamentary elections were scheduled for April 2020, with technical Government established in January 2020.

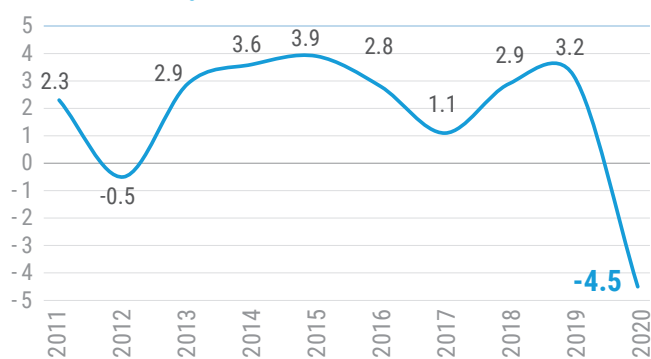
The March COVID-19 outbreak thus found the country with a technical Government and a dissolved Parliament, which significantly complicated COVID-19 response as the Government had limited powers and mandate to adopt urgent and complex response measures. To overcome this, the President declared and twice extended the state of emergency, which empowered the technical Government to respond decisively to the pandemic. Due to the ongoing crisis, the elections were postponed to July, resulting in a narrow re-election of the coalition Government.

The impact of COVID-19 crisis undercut sustainable development gains of the last decade. The health impact was relatively moderate and well-managed throughout the year, though the health system faced number of challenges, predominantly due to limited resources, equipment, and material. On the psycho-social side the disruption of education at all levels endangered the learning outcomes for many generations, while self-isolation, financial uncertainty, fear and anxiety contributed to psychosocial disorders and increased the gender and family violence up to 45%, with children making 10% of the victims.

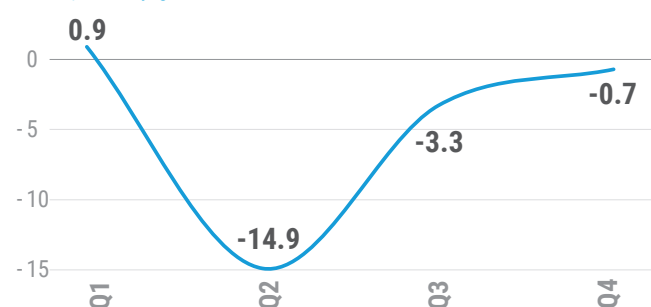
The immediate COVID-19 economic impact was caused by delayed and interrupted supply chains, mostly affecting export-oriented industries highly reliant on the EU market. Uncertainties in food and medical supplies were fortunately short-lived due to fast establishment of green lanes among Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) and EU countries. Social activities ban affected mainly micro and small companies in the hospitality sector and culture and the ban on travel affected tourism and transport sectors, and seasonal workers. The situation further aggravated during the second quarter of the year that felt the strongest economic impact, while the impact on health was the strongest in last quarter.

COVID-19 crisis drove the economy into the deepest recession in over two decades, with 4.5% annual decline. Some 90,000 jobs were estimated as lost (ILO Nowcasting Model); while the impact on the overall unemployment was moderate, it was followed by increasing inactivity trends, reduced labour income and remittances. [The loss of domestic output has been estimated at €3.7 billion](#), predominantly affecting leather, textile, automotive, electricity equipment, retail and hospitality industries. The prices of industrial and food

North Macedonia GDP growth rates
2011-2020 annual growth rate



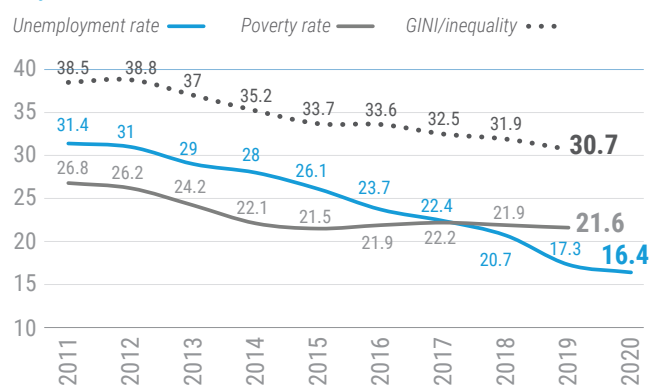
2020 quarterly growth rate



Source: SSO, 2021

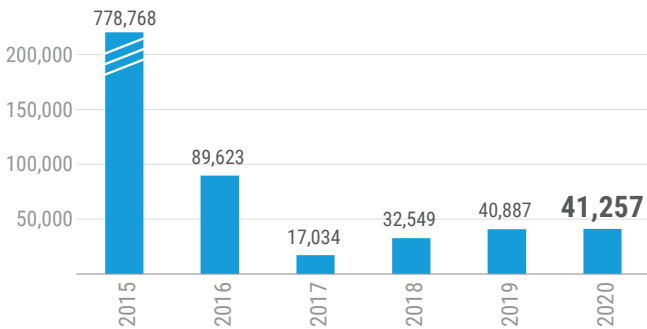
products grew by 3% between January and August 2020, thus further raising the poverty levels. Single parents, redundant workers older than 50 years, new entrants in the labour market and long-term unemployed were hardest hit. [Women were particularly hard-hit](#) due to high exposure to the most affected sectors such as health care and informal economy, and disproportionately increased home responsibilities. [Some 16,000 children have likely fallen below the poverty threshold due COVID-19 crisis in 2020](#). Responding to the crisis [created additional pressure on local governments in the context of already stretched resources](#). In Q2 of 2020, municipal revenue increased by only 1.8% compared to 11.8% in Q1,

Key socio-economic indicators, 2011-2020

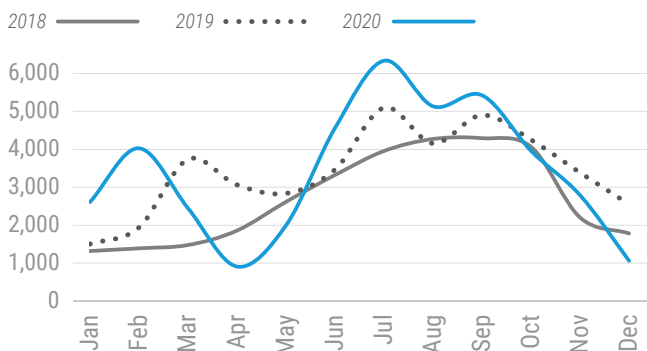


Source: SSO, 2021

North Macedonia mixed migration flows
2011-2020 annual migration flows, new arrivals



2018-2020 monthly migration flows, new arrivals



Source: UNHCR (2021), Government of North Macedonia, MYLA (2015-2016)

mostly as a result of a decreased property tax and even more pronounced in the urban municipalities. At the same time, municipal expenditures declined by 17.8% on average, with exception of public subsidies, which significantly increased. Most of the communal services were uninterrupted and supported by increased voluntary services for distribution of humanitarian packages, however the work protocols in nurseries, kindergartens and day centres remained challenging. Some €1.2 billion – over 10% of GDP – was injected in COVID-19 crisis response and recovery by the Government in 2020, providing cash transfers to the population, wage support, tax exemptions and deferrals, favourable loans to companies, as well as implementing measures to enhance business environment in support of digitalization, reduced customs tariffs and para-fiscal expenses. These measures managed to reduce the economic decline in the second half of the year, but

also pushed the public debt to over 60% of GDP, which could be critical for Macedonian economy if future recovery staggers.

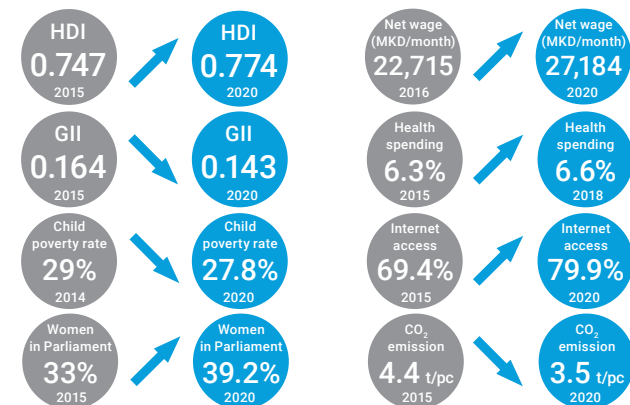
Air pollution and pollution of water bodies, improper waste management, climate change impact, loss of biodiversity, and forest degradation remained key environmental concerns in 2020, with findings related to the state of the natural and cultural heritage of Ohrid region particularly concerning. However, the Government's commitment to increase reduction of national greenhouse gas emission to 51% in 2030 compared to 1990, as well as the plans to align with the EU Green Plan for Western Balkans provide scope for optimism. Moreover, a significant number of COVID-19 response measures contributed significantly towards ensuring affordable and clean energy and orientation towards renewable energy sources.

An important step was made towards equality when the Parliament re-adopted the Anti-Discrimination Law that is now aligned with international human rights standards, explicitly recognizing sexual orientation and gender identity as protective grounds. Progress has been made towards gender equality and tackling violence against women and girls. The Government promoted and ensured meaningful consultation with various stakeholders and Macedonian civil society continued to actively perform a watchdog role. However, the administrative capacities and resources at local and central level remained limited, with a significant gap in provision of digital services. Corruption persists, despite the Government's commitment to address it.

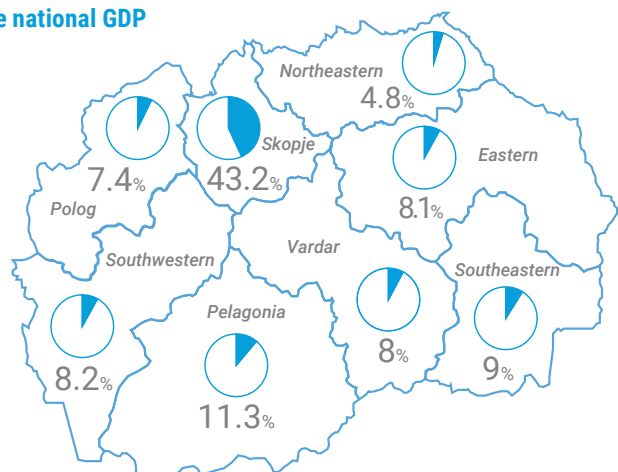
The country is along one of the main routes for mixed migratory movements to Europe, which resulted in more than 41,000 arrivals in 2020, mostly from Afghanistan, Pakistan and other countries. Migrants remained exceptionally vulnerable, often travelling in big groups exposed to higher risk of COVID-19 transmission. At least 40,000 seasonal migrant workers from North Macedonia were particularly affected by border closures, which led to a drop in remittances and reduced support for families left behind. Authorities developed a five-year "Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration" and continued to fight cross-border organized crime. In 2020, detected migrants' smuggling increased for 17.3% from previous year, and 91 persons were persecuted for 65 cases of smuggling.

Key national socio-economic indicators and regions' share of the national GDP

Baseline year vs. latest value available; regional GDP share for 2019



Sources: SSO, UNDP (HDR), HIF



Overview of 2016-2020 results

The section highlights UN North Macedonia's contribution to and results from working with the Government, civil society and development partners in 5 PSD areas – sustainable employment, democratic governance, social inclusion environment and disaster risk reduction, and gender equality – over the period 2016-2020.

PSD and national priorities

The implementation of the PSD took place against rapidly changing political and development context in North Macedonia and the region, marked by a political crisis in the country in 2015/16 and a migration crisis in 2016. A breakthrough in the relations with the neighbours resulted with a change of the Constitutional name in 2018, followed with NATO membership and ongoing attempts to advance in the Euro-Atlantic integration process. This culminated in 2020 with the global COVID-19 crisis.

Pre COVID19 crisis, overall gains have been significant in some areas of sustainable development – inequality, poverty – and steady in others – governance, environment. In 2020, despite the shocks, the Government stimulus prevented a more significant blow on the economy and unemployment, however the real impact of the pandemic is yet to be seen.

In the absence of a long-term overarching national development strategy, the development priorities are set out in several sectoral strategies and action plans aligned with EU accession agenda and the Government programmes. The 2017-2020 Government programme focused on (1) economic growth, increased employment, higher living standards; (2) NATO and EU membership; (3) one society for all; (4) responsible government and oversight over government; (5) institutions in service to citizens; and, (6) sustainable growth investments.

PSD outcomes responded directly to these priorities, contributing to country's most important development objectives and supporting the reforms of the EU accession process. With the reaffirmed commitment to Agenda 2030 during 2018-2020, the Government selected SDGs 1, 4, 8, 13 and 16 as priority SDGs.

With PSD approval and the Government's endorsement, UN entities adopted Delivering as One approach that mandated joint planning, reporting and implementation. PSD implementation was planned in three Joint workplans (2016, 2017-2018 and 2019-2020), which were all fully implemented. Per the final PSD evaluation carried out at the end of 2019, the PSD was assessed to be well aligned and responsive to the country's long-term objectives, relevant SDGs and actual needs, particularly those of the most vulnerable and marginalized people.

More jobs for all

Insufficient economic growth, high unemployment rates and income poverty were the main development challenges identified and among the highest Government priorities in the

period of formulating the PSD. Action taken between 2016-2020 yielded notable results, with a drop in unemployment rates of 40% from 26.1% in 2015 to 16.1% in Q4 2020.

 **5,438** NEW COMPANIES

 **6,298** NEW JOBS
created with UN support

 **50,000** PEOPLE TRAINED
with UN support

UN was a valued contributor through interventions at all

levels – advocating for and supporting development of labour and SMEs policies, working with authorities to adjust the education curriculum with market needs and to implement targeted active labour market measures (ALMM) and skills development programmes. UN was also building capacities of national institutions and social partners to enhance the business ecosystem through meaningful social dialogue, effective self-employment initiatives, increased private sector competitiveness and support for innovation.

Through Community Works Programme UN has promoted the employment of vulnerable people (especially, unemployed women) for the provision of social services to vulnerable groups, predominantly elderly, preschool children and persons with disabilities (PwD), as well as enhanced employability and incentivized employment of Roma and PwDs. 6,298 full-time jobs (38% women) were created, 5483 new companies established (around 13% of all companies created in the country, 36% owned by young people), over 50,000 people involved in different trainings or other employment support programmes; and over 56,605

In 2019, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy launched a new measure aimed at giving women agricultural producers financial support to improve their economic situation. This policy change was a collaborative effort between UN Women, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy and the Working Group for Gender Equality established within the Ministry, representing key institutions, academia and civil society organizations.
Photo©UN Women/Dimitrovski



Local Employment Partnership are a tool of the ILO to stir-up the labour market bottom-up, with local solutions to the specific challenges faced by local communities. Photo@ILO



persons in need received social services through programme interventions between 2016-2020.

Good governance

Progress has been modest in the area of good governance in North Macedonia, though with renewed Government commitment to reinforce rule of law, access to justice, transparency and accountability, as well as to improve quality of public services provided scope for optimism. In contrast, North Macedonia made significant progress in the process of decentralization and the experience has been transformative for the lives of the people involved.

Between 2016 and 2020, in addition to assisting the policy development and implementation, UN supported functional analyses of the public sector institutions aiming for more efficient, inclusive and accountable delivery of public services at central level. EU accession was leveraged through support for the National Plan for Adoption of Acquis (NPAA), which includes publicly accessible NPAA portal, as well around 60 pieces of EU aligned legislation – in the areas of judicial reform, energy, agriculture, environment, trade and education – and increased capacities of 600 civil servants, over half of them women, as overall result of the NPAA process. UN also

UNODC supported North Macedonia in enhancing border control and overall security through establishing the relevant legal frameworks and building capacity of the border police and customs. Photo@UNODC



Fifty frontline border police officers from Skopje and Ohrid airports and from the four regional Border Police centres had the opportunity to get familiar with the concept of Cultural mediation and the work of assistance mediators. IOM Skopje has organized the training on "Cultural competency and awareness", under the auspices of the IPA 2 regional project "Protection sensitive migration management in the Western Balkans and Turkey". Photo@IOM



supported the engagement of national stakeholders with the international human rights mechanisms and advocated for the implementation of related recommendations. At local level, UN contributed to enhanced municipal capacities and services, regularly assessed through citizen satisfaction surveys, to enhance inter-municipal cooperation, inter-ethnic dialogue and social cohesion. The establishment of business centres and regional networks supported local development and provided needed advisory and implementation support.

By end-2020, 30 municipalities had Integrated and Inclusive Local Development Plans, 21 municipalities introduced gender responsive budgeting and more than 1,000 municipal councils' members were capacitated to assume stronger role in local decision making and oversight. Civil society and citizens were empowered to be able to actively participate in policymaking and service delivery, many of them using the newly designed model of project-based funding from local government budgets. In response to the 2016 migrant crisis, Gevgelija received landfill for solid waste and a renovated hospital, and Kumanovo hospital benefitted from a new

Team eBionics are the overall winners of the global UNICEF youth challenge Generation Unlimited 2.0 in the category under 18, with their solution to expand access to prosthetic care with Venus Arm, an open-source 3D printed bionic arm for people with upper limb deficiency. Photo@UNICEF



ambulance unit. Promotion of innovation in public sector was very important element of UN work, either by using innovative methodologies to redesign services for improved delivery (for example: open innovation for improved farming, design-thinking for improvement of the community works programme, etc). UN-supported City of Skopje Innovation lab helped improve accountability and transparency of the City in service delivery and enabled testing of a different model of local governance. UPSHIFT and Generation Unlimited innovation challenges engaged significant number of young people in open innovation through capacity building on design-thinking. Generation Unlimited noted special achievements - local finalist teams in both years who participated in the global round emerged as global winners.

Social inclusion

In the area of social services, initiated reforms were supported by UN in all three sectors – education, health and social protection, prompting significant results. Social protection reform resulted in more adequate distribution of cash benefits, contributing to decreasing poverty rates. Health system steadily improved across all indicators, especially managing to reverse the alarming trend of infant mortality from 11.9/1,000 in 2017 to 5.6/1,000 in 2019. In the area of education, enrolment of children in pre-school rose from 30 to 42%, and the country achieved among the highest results' improvements in PISA across all three subjects. Ensuring full access of children with disabilities in mainstream schools and pre-schools reached a turning point and Government committed to replace all institutionalized care for children and adults, including people with disability, with alternative services. North Macedonia ensured proper protection to migrants and refugees during the crisis in 2015-2016 and afterwards.

UN assistance was crucial in these processes, firmly anchoring its work on generation of data and statistics, to help relevant institutions implement targeted policies to leave no one behind (LNOB). In all policy areas, UN was a partner of choice for design and implementation of reforms, strategies and services. It helped develop and implement the new Social

After an upsurge in neonatal mortality in 2015, swift action was taken by the Ministry of Health with technical support from WHO, UNFPA and UNICEF. A subsequent in-depth assessment clarified ways to strengthen the health system and fast-track improvements in maternal and newborn health outcomes. Photo©WHO



Protection Law and a major revision of the Child Protection Law; a Master Plan to address root causes of infant mortality; National SRH Action Plan 2018-2020

50% DECREASE IN INFANT MORTALITY
NO CHILDREN IN LARGE-SCALE INSTITUTIONS
due to UN support

with set of quality standards for SRH services; as well as a Law on International and Temporary Protection and Strategy for Integration of Refugees and Foreigners (2018-2028) with country inputs in the Regional Refugee and Migration Response Plan. UN provided evidence, multi-sector advocacy, technical support and innovation for the education reform, including modelling of inclusive education in 30 primary schools and 25 kindergartens, as well as support for de-institutionalization and inclusion of people with disabilities in social services and employment. New models were provided for primary health care (PHC) delivery, digitalization, investments and capacity building in the health; case management was introduced in the Centres for Social Work to ensure holistic approach; and border and migration officials were capacitated in humanitarian border management and crisis management personnel in camps management.

Following UN continued work and advocacy, the Government legally regulated closing the special primary schools and abolished special groups for children with disabilities in pre-school in 2019. By end-2019, there were no more children without caregivers in large scale institutions, a significant improvement compared to 2016 (133.6/100,000 children), with 30% increase of children in foster care. Children benefiting from poverty reduction transfers increased fivefold since 2016, with a raised support from \$89 to \$188 in 2020. In 2020, the country also ratified the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

Twenty-seven year old Sandra from Congo is taking Macedonian language classes to help her rebuild her life in North Macedonia, where she lives with her children after receiving a positive answer to her asylum claim. The language classes provided to help asylum seekers are just one of the many instruments introduced by UNHCR and partner organizations to ease up their integration in the society. Photo©UNHCR





The 2020 European Commission Report on North Macedonia has recognized the advanced status of land consolidation in the country. This achievement is a result of the joint efforts of FAO, EU and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy. Photo©FAO

Environmental protection

Environmental protection requires increased efforts by the state and development partners, including strengthened human resources and improved access to financing. Air pollution is a serious environmental health threat in urban areas, ranked among the top ten most polluted in Europe in 2017-2018. Fortunately, climate change is now an area of increased focus and among the highest priorities in the country.

UN support was invaluable in all areas, starting from providing evidence through four editions of the “Environmental Performance Review” and promotion of sustainable use of natural resources with capacity development and demonstrations in 25 protected areas and support for proclamation of new national parks and protected areas, as well as developing a National Forest Inventory and a Green Cadaster of the City of Skopje. With UN support, the Government has advanced a long and complex process of land consolidation to overcome the excessive fragmentation of agricultural land, introduced Climate-Smart Agriculture technologies, established National Agro-Ecological Zoning and Land Resources Information Management System to improve agricultural production and adaptive capacity of agricultural producers, while mainstreaming climate change aspects into sectorial planning. A Land Cover Assessment on the land use and changes in the forestry sector and a Methodology for designing a future National Forest Monitoring System was supported to enable evidence based decision-making and viable policy formulation for sustainable forest management.

In the area of integrated river-basin management UN supported Watershed Management Plan for the Prespa Lake, later replicated in the Strumica River Basin, and transferred protection and management functions to the municipalities. Transboundary cooperation and integrated water resources management in the extended Drin River Basin were also initiated. Waste management was strengthened with four wastewater treatment facilities and the first EU-standard landfill in Gevgelija. Research of heating practices and

air pollution provided valuable evidence for developing a holistic area-based approach of close to zero emissions neighbourhoods demonstrated in one of the most polluted areas of Skopje.

UN also provided policy support for the National Communications/Biennial Update Reports on climate change and for the first climate action plan that integrates gender considerations into the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) reporting. In the area of disaster risk reduction, UN assisted the national institutions to proactively improve flood risk management following the severe floods in 2015-2016 with integrated systems to manage hazards, vulnerabilities and exposure of communities and assets.

With these interventions, protected areas under improved management increased to about 190,000 ha. In Prespa, over 80% of local farmers adopted agro-ecological practices on 360,000 ha (compared to zero), the use of water for irrigation fell by nearly 60%, and the use of pesticides went down by 30%. Activities started for the clean-up of the hazard waste from one of the major hot-spots in the country – the OHIS factory, which is a major environmental threat in the capital. In Polog and Strumica regions, 50% increase of discharge capacity of rehabilitated canals prevent an average annual economic loss of \$50,000 to \$100,000 from future flood events with high probability. In Pelagonija region the prevented damage surpassed \$2 million for over 230,000 people. In total, approximately 5,500 ha of agricultural land, 35 ha of urbanized area and industrial zone, and 10 ha of transport infrastructure were covered in the disaster risk reduction programming. New plans were developed in agriculture and health sectors that include sexual and reproductive health in emergencies to support a full-scale simulation exercise.

Gender equality

Adoption of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) was a key achievement at national level, followed by establishment of key institutional structures, including three Sexual Assault Referral Centres in hospitals in Tetovo, Skopje and Kumanovo.

UN invested considerable efforts in the promotion of gender equality and enhancing national capacities across a range of related areas. This included assistance in drafting the anti-discrimination law and establishment of the National Coordination Body in line with international human rights standards; supporting the National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2018-2020) and the National Strategy and Action Plan on combatting trafficking in human beings and illegal migration (2017-2020).

Over 6,000 civil servants’ capacities in gender mainstreaming and gender-based budgeting were improved through courses streamlined within the State Learning Management System and other interventions. For the first time the gender-specific provisions were streamlined in the Government Strategic Planning Methodology and notable results were observed in the area of women’s employment.

2020 results

* For detailed 2020 results per output, see the report Supplement

The section highlights UN North Macedonia's contribution to and results from working with the Government, civil society and development partners in 5 PSD areas in 2020, and joint response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the mitigation of its socio-economic impact.

OUTCOME 1

More and better jobs

By 2020, more women and men are able to improve their livelihoods by securing decent and sustainable employment in an increasingly competitive and job-rich economy.

Contribution to



Development of the economy, increase of productive employment and raising the living standard of the citizens; Reforms in the education system and investment in innovation and information technology;



Fundamentals first: Economic Development and Competitiveness
19. Social policy and employment;
20. Enterprise and industrial policy;
26. Education and culture

UN entities contributing to the achievement of this outcome:
ILO, IOM, UNDP, UNECE

Government and other development partners:
Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Employment Service Agency, civil society, private sector, academia and others.

Early in 2020, UN continued with its collective interventions to improve people's livelihoods by assisting and building capacities of relevant institutions to design and implement employment strategies, plans and active labour measures, adjusting the education curriculum to market needs and providing skills development of most vulnerable, as well enhancing business environment, social dialogue and private sector competitiveness. Some of the most important achievements in this area include worker rights campaigns and supporting formulation of evidence-based National Employment Strategy with associated action plans, extending the capacity and services of the Employment Support Agency (ESA) and ensuring 314 long-term employments through different sets of active labour market measures and jobs for 67% targeted returnees. Policy and practical support were provided to SMEs, including skills assessment in several industries, engaging 186 companies in developing a training curriculum and providing market relevant skills to 584 unemployed and recognised certificates for 29 inmates.

But COVID-19 crisis required urgent adjustment of plans and ongoing programmes to effectively support beneficiaries. UN immediately undertook rapid analyses of impact on labour market and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), providing informed and evidence-based recommendations, including fully developed policy measures, for immediate response. The analysis was later extended to more comprehensive socio-economic assessment including for jobs at local and national level, as well as to some of the specific industries that contribute the most to employment and growth. UN supported the Economic and Social Council (ESC) to actively engage with the Government on the design of the crisis response packages, influencing Government response by extending the timing and reach of stimulus measures to additional 3,803 people.

Throughout the year, UN also provided direct support to the most affected target groups of unemployed, by facilitating organized engagement of 613 unemployed in social services provision, developing one stop shop for SMEs, facilitating business opportunities that resulted with 126 new companies established by people who lost jobs due to the crisis and contract farming for 35 local farmers to overcome challenges of production, distribution and market placement. As result, the Government stimulus measures ensured that the overall impact on unemployment in 2020 remained limited, despite 13.8% of working hours lost annually, and reverted to declining trend after a more severe blow in the second quarter. Simultaneously, the inactivity has grown by almost 4% by the end of 2020, a cause for concern.

Estira Ajjazovska was finally able to get a job as a baker, her dream career, after being among the first to receive job placement support through the UNDP-implemented Acceder programme for Roma employment. Photo©UNDP



OUTCOME 2

More responsive governance

By 2020, national and local institutions are better able to design and deliver high-quality services for all users, in a transparent, cost-effective, non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive manner.

Contribution to



Democratic and accountable governance
Reforms in public administration, police, and justice sector
Fight against corruption



Fundamentals first: Political Criteria and the Rule of Law
23: Judiciary and fundamental rights
24: Justice, freedom and security
19: Social policy and employment

UN entities contributing to the achievement of this outcome:
IOM, OHCHR, UNDP, UNECE, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNODC, UNOPS, UN Women

Government and other development partners:
Ministry of Information Society and Administration, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Local Self-Government, Secretariat for European Affairs, State Statistical Office, civil society, private sector, academia and others.

UN supported more responsive, people-centred, and inclusive governance, effective decentralization, and quality public services tailored to the citizens' needs and expectations. The transparent and participatory decision making, and budget planning led to more balanced socio-economic development and overall improvement of the quality of life for the most vulnerable groups. The 'citizens forums', promoted by UN, enabled direct citizens' participation in 70 out of 81 municipalities. The voices of civil society, youth, women and men, and people left behind influenced mainstreamed and targeted policies and public spending at central, sub-regional and local level. People and communities affected by the mix-migration flows were assisted to cope with the challenges imposed by their complex vulnerabilities through strengthened capacities of law enforcement and social services, EU aligned migration-related procedures, and hospital and facilities renovations. UN support in aligning the criminal justice legislation with international standards and strengthening the law enforcement capacities enabled for a more effective response and cooperation with the Western Balkan countries in addressing illicit trafficking at ports and airports, corruption, illicit financial flows, and other forms of organized crimes.

Digital solutions introduced at local level with UN support, including electronic payment of taxes, e-learning platform accessible to all 1,347 municipal counsellors in the country,

Youth consultations on the Voluntary National Review – VNR were organized by the Y-PEER Youth Network, in cooperation with the Government of North Macedonia and UNFPA support. Photo©UNFPA



60 PIECES OF EU LEGISLATION
ALIGNED

600 CIVIL SERVANTS
TRAINED

and other tools, were critical in ensuring continuation of municipal business processes during the pandemic, leading to an increase of the citizens' satisfaction with availability of information 38.4% and communication with the municipality and ad-hoc local bodies established to tackle the crisis 43.1%.

In the challenging context, UN continued supporting the Government to retain the reform momentum and deliver on the EU accession agenda by intensified harmonization of national legislation with the EU acquis and international human rights standards, increased capacities of civil servants and a publicly accessible NPAA portal.

The capacities of government institutions, the Ombudsman and civil society to translate the county's human rights commitments into practice were further enhanced. Preparations for the 2021 census, focusing on communication, were among the priorities aimed to bridge the gap of accurate and disaggregated data essential for planning and monitoring national progress towards SDGs.

The country's first VNR was prepared with critical support from the UN with inputs and quality assurance in respective fields of expertise, UN supported Rapid Integrated Assessment which mapped and analysed intersections of EU Chapters, international conventions and SDGs as well as UN facilitated consultation with the youth through the Y-Peer network. Furthermore, the National Strategy for Balanced Regional Development 2020-2029, developed with UN support, is expected to facilitate SDGs localization, which identifies large data gaps in terms of geographic coverage, timeliness and the level of disaggregation impeding such localization, as well as a policy paper that provides a framework and flexible tool for evidence-based and integrated policy making in the context of the EU integration process aligned with the SDGs.

OUTCOME 3

Better lives for vulnerable people

By 2020, more members of socially excluded and vulnerable groups are empowered to exercise their rights and enjoy a better quality of life and equitable access to basic services.

Contribution to



One society for all
Reforms in the education system and investment in innovation and information technology
Quality social services for all



18: Statistics
19: Social policy and employment
25: Science and research
26: Education and culture

UN entities contributing to the achievement of this outcome:

IOM, OHCHR, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, UNOPS, UN Women, WHO

Government and other development partners:

Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, civil society, private sector, academia and others.

UN entities worked with the Government and other development partners to create positive social change for the most vulnerable groups in the society across health, education and social and child protection sectors; and to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the most impacted groups.

UN provided technical, operational and policy support to the Government that successfully managed COVID-19 pandemic through containment and mitigation measures aimed at limiting the virus spread, protecting health of people and the health workers at the frontline, preserving the health care system capacity and its sustainability to respond and provide essential services to the population and supporting risk communication and community engagement for COVID-19.

These interventions were implemented hand in hand with the interventions for strengthening the universal health coverage: improved access to quality essential health services; strengthening of the e-health system; and support for implementation of the health system reform with accent to primary health care and maternal and child health, transforming Nursing into a valued health workforce in the new PHC model as well as improving availability of medicines and preparing the health system for large scale immunization.

UN continued to provide support to the Government in ensuring continued education to all students in the country after March nation-wide school closures. By repurposing the Early Childhood Development (ECD) platform in development, to crowd-source, collate and distribute video lessons, UN supported a national distance learning platform (Eduino) that effectively restored continuous quality education for all 300,000. In parallel, the education sector reforms have been sped up in late 2020, and UN provided support to both primary and secondary education activities and adult and life-long learning.

Basic services – ranging from simple support during the pandemic to provision of integrated home-based (mobile) health and social protection services – were **provided to the most vulnerable** categories of the population in **over 80% of municipalities**, reaching families at risk and with children, Roma, persons with disabilities and older persons.

The three newly designed social services under the Women's empowerment programme will improve the quality of care and strengthen the role of women in the families where care is provided to those in need. The first two Centres for Work-oriented rehabilitation were opened in Strumica and Skopje to facilitate employment of persons with disabilities, resulting in 20 small enterprises opened by people with disabilities already in 2020.

Digitalization of the main governmental counterparts' services dealing with asylum, by providing training and remote technology equipment enabled asylum procedure to continue uninterrupted, resulting in 22.7% increase of first instance decisions taken in 2020 compared to 4.2%, in 2019. Only two person were granted subsidiary protection in 2020, with no refugee status granted since 2016.

Aiming to provide digital education resources and keep children learning during the pandemic, in addition to Eduino, UNICEF and partners also launched the TV-classroom initiative (illustrated on the photo below). The TV-classroom is a collaboration between Ministry of Education and Science, Bureau for Development of Education, UNICEF, children's television producers OXO and national broadcaster Macedonian Radio and Television. Photo©UNICEF/Nikolovski



OUTCOME 4

Environment & diasaster risk reduction

By 2020, individuals, the private sector and state institutions base their actions on the principles of sustainable development, and communities are more resilient to diasasters and environmental risks.

Contribution to



Investments in sustainable development: agricultural development and energy
Healthy environment
Protection from natural diasasters



11: Agriculture and rural development
15: Energy
27: Environment

UN entities contributing to the achievement of this outcome:
FAO, IOM, UNDP, UNECE, UNEP, UNFPA, UNIDO, WHO

Government and other development partners:
Cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, Ministry of Health, local authorities, state institutions, civil society, private sector, academia.

300% INCREASE IN SIZE OF PROTECTED AREAS
between 2016 and 2020

UN focused on strategic support to fulfilment of country's reporting requirements for

multilateral environmental agreements (climate change, biodiversity and land degradation), greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction, improvement of protected areas management, promotion of sustainable agriculture, disaster risk reduction and tackling air pollution. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, activities on immediate crisis response were scaled up.

Key results under the environmental sustainability outcome included strategic support to creation of enabling environment for climate action and sustainable management of natural resources. The country committed to an ambitious national target of 82% reduction in net GHG emissions by 2030. Support was provided through capacity building of national stakeholders on HCFC phaseout and on direct access to the Green Climate Fund (GCF). UN supported the Government in **opening the path for the proclamation of a new national park - Shar Mountain** - through the completion of the valorisation study as well as tiggering transformational changes in the way the country manages its natural resources. **3,000ha of agricultural land are in advanced phase of land consolidation**, enabling sustainable management of natural resources in rural areas. In the area of wastewater, a new sewerage system was constructed for village Suvodol

UNEP supported the Government in opening the path for proclamation of a new national park - Shar Mountain. Photo©UNEP/Bozhinovski



(Makedonski Brod) and the site for the Tetovo wastewater treatment plant was prepared through removal of waste. Significant results were achieved in disaster preparedness, through introduction of various disaster risk reduction measures, with focus on flood risk management and COVID-19 crisis response. The focus was on **strengthening of the National Hydrometeorological Service** through upgrading of its IT equipment and specialised climatological database software and expanding the network of hydrological and meteorological stations with 46 new or renovated, 32 in Polog and 14 in the Drin River Basin, as a basis for establishment of an early warning systems. These activities added onto the previous work on flood risk management in the Strumica river basin and the number of municipalities with improved capacities for flood risk management increased to 22, with additional 300,000 people benefiting from reduced risks.

Robust support to the health system in setting up a prompt and organised response to COVID-19 crisis was provided through training of more than 3,500 health care workers on COVID-19 care, procurement of various medical equipment to set up COVID-19 wards and the set up of the new Epidemic Intelligence and Emergency Operating Centre, behavioural insights analysis, early introduction of protocols for elderly care homes, protocols for prenatal care during COVID-19 pandemic and through other activities.

UNDP reconstructed the aging Marvorica dam to reduce the risk of overflow and flooding in the Sveti Nikole municipality. Similar flood risk reduction interventions will be undertaken in the Polog region. Photo©UNDP



OUTCOME 5 Gender equality

By 2020, national and local institutions are better able to design and deliver high-quality services for all users, in a transparent, cost-effective, non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive manner.

Contribution to



Gender equality and equal opportunities for women and men
Prevention and countering violence against women
Gender-responsive policy making and budgeting based on disaggregated data



23: Judiciary and fundamental rights
19: Social policy and employment
19.7: Anti-discrimination and equal opportunities

UN entities contributing to the achievement of this outcome:
FAO, IOM, OHCHR, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women

Government and other development partners:
Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Local Self Government, local self-government units, the Ombudsman, civil society, private sector, academia and others.

UN collective advocacy and expertise supported the country's advancement in meeting its gender equality commitments. New legislation on prevention and protection against discrimination and on violence against women has been aligned with the international human rights standards, the CEDAW, and the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention.

UN provided a critical advice in drafting a new Gender Equality Law and corresponding national strategy and plan of action, as well as new incriminations against women and a state-funded compensation for victims of all forms of violent crimes, including GBV and DV. UN also supported the Government in developing the second National Action Plan (NAP) for the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, from the Women, Peace and Security agenda, with as strategic framework and operational plans for its rollout.

Women representation and participation in policy and decision making have enhanced at national and local level, however a limited number of public offices and high-level positions are being held by women. Central and local government increasingly mainstreamed gender perspective into policies, programmes and budget allocations across multiple sectors. With UN support, 14 ministries and 21 municipalities have engendered their policies and budgets, and draft Organic Budget Law, for the first time, incorporates gender responsive principles.

The voices of marginalized and excluded women, especially those facing intersecting and multiple discrimination, abuse and violence, became more visible through advocacy and awareness raising. In shaping a gender-sensitive response to the pandemic, policy makers have been informed by the Rapid Gender Assessment of COVID-19, Mapping study on the impact of COVID-19 on the socio-economic situation of women at local level, and gender budget reallocation analysis.

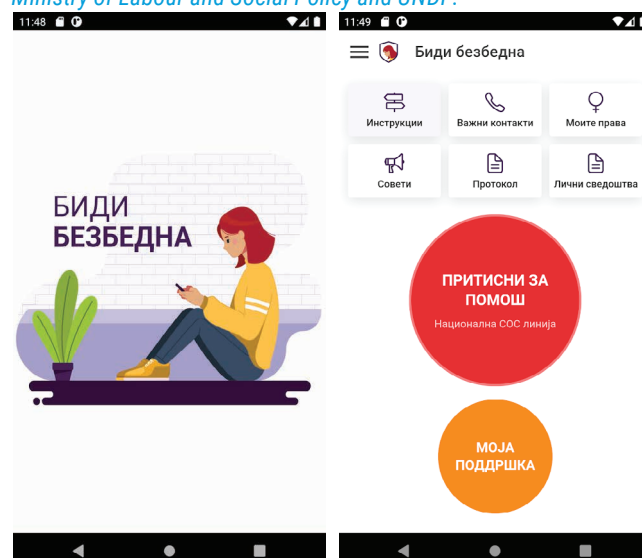
UN capacitated service providers to apply a multi-disciplinary and victim-centered approach in addressing all forms of violence against women. New protocols, two additional shelters, digital and innovative solutions, such as a "Be Safe" mobile application for raising awareness and reporting of GBV and online platform for students to share their work on violence against women and DV were used to more effectively address the shadow pandemic violence against women.

UN support amplified advocacy and created stronger alliances between women and grassroots organizations and national and local authorities in gender

mainstreaming and addressing gender inequalities, negative stereotypes and violence against women. This resulted in advocacy campaigns for women empowerment led by two women's organizations, 14 local grassroots organizations and two associations of local authorities; 263 women participated in formulating 144 policy recommendations for gendered municipal programmes and budgets; 36 CSOs representatives capacitated to oversee municipal policies and budgets from a gender perspective; collaboration of 15 CSOs that provide services to victims of gender-based violence; and 18 high school professionals were trained on prevention from violence against women. 1,897 people directly benefited from implementation of CSO projects in 5 municipalities with focus on engaging youth and people from vulnerable groups, resulting in engagement of 989 socially excluded persons and communities, including Roma children, PwDs and socialization of youth during the pandemic.

14 MINISTRIES
21 MUNICIPALITIES
with engendered policies and budgets due to UN support

"Be Safe" mobile application developed in partnership between the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and UNDP.



COVID-19 response



COVID-19 crisis exposed the existing systemic weaknesses in the country, affected the most vulnerable groups, and reduced development gains from the previous period. At the same time, it presented an opportunity to build back better, with a focus on structural reforms and human capital development. UN North Macedonia was among the key Government partners in COVID-19 response, from the early days of the crisis to assisting with shaping green and inclusive recovery, building resilient systems and capacities to respond to future crises.

Support to immediate response

65 VENTILATORS
29 IC MONITORS
2,000,000 PIECES OF PPE

provided directly through UN

Since January 2020, UN provided day-to-day technical and policy advice to the Government on containment and mitigation strategies, analysis, risk communication, investigations and response, testing, and supporting health emergency

management capacities. As the health situation deteriorated in March 2020, the UN enhanced collective support through technical assistance, coordination and resource mobilization for response. This included the assistance with consolidating needs and requirements for medical supplies and equipment for immediate response; and the procurement of some of those items.

In 2020, UN provided COVID-19 response and recovery support to the country of almost \$12 million in the form of supplies, equipment and support services targeting the most vulnerable, procured either with UN internal and existing resources or on behalf of other donors. This included, among other, a large bulk procurement of life-saving medical equipment such as ventilators, personal protective equipment (PPE) and other health and sanitation supplies targeting first responders and health facilities. This also included food and cash assistance for the most vulnerable and impacted by COVID-19, support for risk communication and preventive activities, assistance with the scale up of remote and digital

Donation to the Ministry of Health for COVID-19 response. Photo©WHO



education activities, psychosocial support and counselling to children and caregiver impacted by COVID-19 and other.

Addressing socio-economic impact

From March onwards, UN North Macedonia had emphasized the need to swiftly look into and address the socio-economic impact of the crisis and to provide coherent, well-framed and evidence-based response. UNCT offered its collective expertise to support the authorities' thinking on the response through analysis and suggested response measures using a phased approach (immediate, mid and long term), resulting in North Macedonia [COVID-19 Response Framework \(CRF\)](#), launched in June 2020. The CRF provided a comprehensive overall socio-economic impact analysis across five distinctive pillars and suggested mid- and long-term measures in response to the crisis; it was further upgraded through nine fully developed and [costed policy measures](#) that informed the Government 2020/2021 budgetary process.

UN continued to undertake [rapid and in-depth analyses](#) to assist with evidence-based policy interventions focused on the needs of the most vulnerable groups throughout 2020, including [Integral Assessment Report on the COVID-19 impact](#) and [COVID-19 Needs Assessment Dashboard](#).

Key achievements per CRF pillar

Under Health First, UN mobilized and reprogrammed \$8 million for first-hand support and expertise, including containment and

\$8 M

mobilized & reprogrammed for first-hand health support

mitigation, procurement of equipment and supplies, training of personnel etc. North Macedonia was among the first in the region to assess and monitor the health equity and socio-economic impact of COVID-19. UNCT also assisted with interventions focused on behavioural analysis, design and delivery of public (risk) communication strategies, as well as with technical support for urgent and priority projects for reconstruction of health care facilities.

Under Protecting People pillar, UN mobilized and re-programmed more than \$1.3 million to assist with analysis of impact on specific groups – children, women, farmers, Roma, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, people with disabilities and others – and to provide direct support

to them. System-wide support – such as the comprehensive support for the education system or helping the authorities to introduce gender sensitive approaches in response measures – was complemented with interventions and analysis targeting specific groups – pregnant women, families with children in education, people with disabilities – or sectors – i.e. status of food production and supply chains in the country.

Under Economic Recovery (\$2.1 million), the Socio-Economic Council was supported with analysis and evidence-based arguments to influence Government's response; and information and policy support was given for budgetary planning, labour market, SMEs and specific industries such as construction, textile, renewables. In limited case, UN provided direct support to social assistance beneficiaries and unemployed with active labour measures and self-employment opportunities and contract financing support to farmers to extend sales during the crisis. Support under Macro-economic response and regional cooperation expanded from analysis and key socio-economic indicator monitoring to policy advice and provision of financial assistance in a form of loans by IMF and WB.

Under Social Cohesion and Community Resilience (\$0.5 million) the focus was on analysis and recommendations related to the crisis impact on municipalities and building municipal capacity for local response in related areas such as crisis management and risk communication, as well as using innovative solutions to extend digital services to citizens. UN supported local response to GBV and provided technical support to law enforcement agencies dealing with organised crime threats, including cyber threats. Capacity of social partners – unions and association of employers – to engage in consultation with the Government was built; as well as support provided with organising voluntary services for supply and care for elderly people and other vulnerable groups.

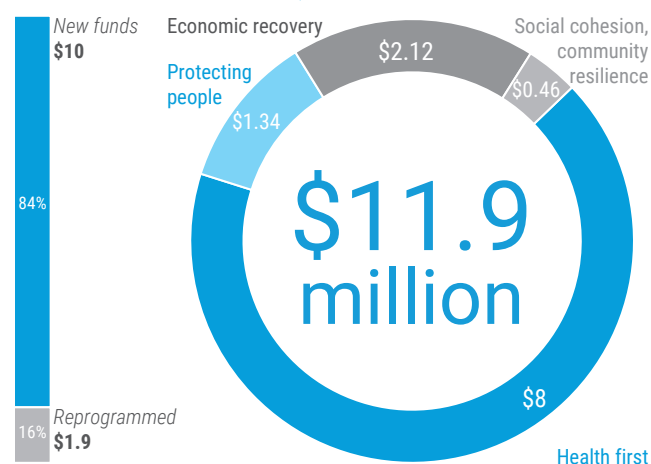
The path to recovering better

In December, and in partnership with Finance Think, UN gathered key ministers engaged in socio-economic response to COVID-19, World Bank, EU and other international partners, civil society and academia to discuss lessons learned and recommend [ways for effective recovery](#) and resuming progress towards SDGs in the country, resulting in the following conclusions:

1. Building human capital is the key precondition for sustainable development in North Macedonia.
2. Health is a prerequisite for sustainable development and a strong economic multiplier.
3. Sustainable recovery calls for coordinated policy response towards 'just transition' that integrates green and innovative sources to post-pandemic growth, while building system resilience and ensuring inclusiveness, with special focus on women.
4. Basic services for provision of protection and psychosocial support must remain available, affordable and accessible at all times.

COVID-19 response and recovery support through UN

Data as of 31 December 2020, in million US\$



Source: UN North Macedonia, 2021

5. To build more resilient and sustainable local food systems, the country should diversify food supplies and food sources, reinforce local food production where possible, and access markets to ensure sales of locally produced food.
6. The country needs to rebuild fiscal buffers however, fiscal consolidation must not restrict economic growth. North Macedonia needs to prioritize structural reforms to boost productivity through productive and innovative processes in the business sector, which needs to adjust to the new economic realities, while the Government needs to facilitate this through smart regulation and effective state aid and competition policy.
7. Focusing only on unemployment rate could lead to wrong policy choices, as many of the newly unemployed people, especially women, go directly into inactivity, which is much more difficult and expensive to revert.
8. The country needs to open dialogue on the quality of essential jobs, having in mind that essential workers – such as farmers and first respondents – are predominantly earning a low pay.
9. Public policies need to be developed in meaningful consultation with key stakeholders.

UNFPA supports the Red Cross mobile teams for helping older persons during the COVID-19 pandemic. Photo©UNFPA



Partnerships & SDG financing

In 2020, UN North Macedonia helped align efforts of multiple partners around SDG themes and leverage or better align domestic and international financial flows. These partnerships, some of which showcased here, were forged around advocacy, policy support, co-creation and resource realignment and mobilization.

Overall SDGs support

The process of Voluntary National Review (VNR) preparation, which took place during the first half of 2020, helped mobilize actors around SDGs. The preparation process was highly consultative, gathering representatives of government institutions, civil society, private sector and academia to discuss progress against SDGs and to identify the challenges and opportunities ahead. The process also contributed to raising the awareness and understanding of Agenda 2030 among stakeholders. UN also engaged with national partners to initiate the work on the National Development Strategy preparation at the end of the year.

In partnership with several ministries, UN assisted with the costing of the COVID-19 socio-economic response measures and through this supported the Government budgeting process. Furthermore, dialogue was initiated between UN and the Parliament to enhance its role in the implementation of Agenda 2030 and to strengthen its relations with UN.

Good health and wellbeing



UN facilitated a fast and coordinated resource mobilization for the immediate COVID-19 response (see 2.2.6) by proactively reaching out to and advocating with international development partners for faster reallocation and flexibility of funding for response, but also by supporting Government's leadership in donor coordination through providing transparent financial information on needs and funding made available by international partners for response.

Through advocacy, experience-sharing and evidence generation, UN facilitated the engagement of EU and the World Bank on the topic of Health, thereby realigning significant additional financing towards SDG 3, in particular for primary health care, perinatal health and e-health. This was the first time EU engaged in supporting health issues in the country, while the engagement of the World Bank was renewed after 12 years of not supporting this thematic area.

Affordable and clean energy and climate action



Access to finance for energy efficiency (EE) adoption and especially renewable energy (RE) solutions is nascent in the country, with few and only sporadic initiatives for increased access to RE and EE finance, focused on public sector EE (World Bank), large scale RE investments financing and financing for EE for the more affluent residential sector (European Bank

for Reconstruction and Development – EBRD). The UN-EBRD partnership forged in 2020 focused on co-creating and co-financing a new green finance instrument, the Green Finance Facility, to support the accelerated adoption of RE and EE in the business and residential sector. A UN-EBRD partnership could result in \$23.6 million funds leveraged by a \$7.35 UN contribution.

Support for enabling North Macedonia to access funds from the GCF, the key global financing instrument to support climate change mitigation and adaptation measures continued through a second GCF readiness project and the preparation of a GCF Country Work Programme of projects/programmes in the areas of energy, transport, water resources, agriculture, forestry, waste, biodiversity, health and cultural heritage that will be implemented as part of the country's efforts to tackle climate change. UN also continued supporting the Government to access funds through the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Some \$7.24 million was accessed via UN implementation in 2020 to support the country in meeting the objectives of international environmental conventions and agreements.

National network of climate change practitioners was established with 64 representatives from 27 institutions, including civil society and academia, as well as a network of 320 persons working in the gender equality or climate change fields at the national and local levels. The persons in these networks were actively involved in the development of the enhanced NDCs in the 3rd Biennial Update Report on Climate Change and informed on project results and recommendations.

Reducing inequalities



In partnership with the Government, regional centres, municipalities, CSOs and the private sector, UN supported the preparation of the National Strategy for Balanced Regional Development 2020-2029, which outlined the action required to address persisting inequalities among the country's regions and unlock the potential for greater engagement of other partners. The Strategy identified bottlenecks that impede SDG localization such as large data gaps in terms of geographic coverage, timeliness and level of disaggregation, providing a roadmap for further analytical engagement needed to unlock SDG localization and achievement.

Research and data partnerships was forged with the Faculty of Philosophy for conducting ethnographic research of the people's development priorities perceptions and youth behavioural study on development priorities to support the process of the Common Country Analysis and to inform UN future programming. These activities have laid out the basis for future partnering with academic institutions.

Evaluation & lessons learned

PSD evaluation

In 2020, the independent evaluation to gather key findings and lessons learned from 2016-2020 PSD implementation and to support greater accountability of the UN system towards agreed national objectives and priorities was finalized. The evaluation was jointly endorsed by the UN-Government PSD Joint Steering Committee (JSC), presented to international and Government partners, and further validated through the online UN perception survey (May 2020), which targeted UN partners.

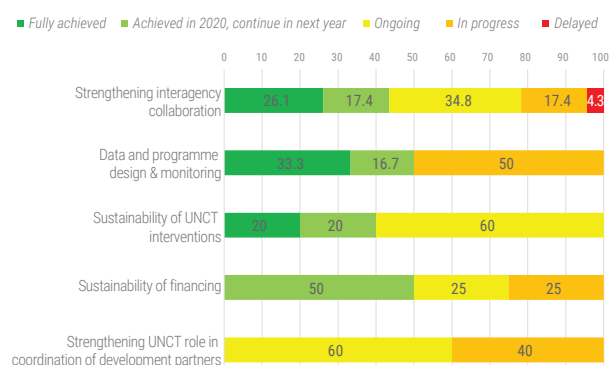
The evaluation found the PSD well-aligned with national priorities and policies and its outcomes directly supporting the achievement of national long-term objectives and the EU integration agenda. The PSD was responsive to the country's actual needs, particularly of the most vulnerable and marginalized segments of the population. Despite challenges, beneficiaries and partners were satisfied and the results set were largely achieved.

Key recommendations were related to:

- * Strengthening of the inter-agency cooperation
- * Data management and programme design and monitoring
- * Sustainability of interventions undertaken
- * Sustainability of financing; and
- * Strengthening UNCT role in coordination with development partners.

UNCT fully accepted the five sets of evaluation recommendations and committed to their implementation through the Management Response Plan to the Evaluation and many recommendations were put into immediate practice already during 2020. During the 2021-2025 SDCF design, for example, UNCT included less but carefully selected specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) indicators based on the SDGs framework and in

UNCT management response to PSD Evaluation Status of implementation as of 31 December 2020



PSD evaluation key lessons learned

Lesson 1: Close cooperation between UN entities usually emerges in those areas where there is a clear reform agenda, underpinned by a clearly identified problem and a strong commitment to change by the Government. National ownership is thus an important factor that shapes the interaction of UN entities at the country level.

Lesson 2: The UN System can become rapidly relevant and provide a major contribution in areas where it has had minimal engagement earlier. This was the case during the migration crisis [2016], for example. If there is a clear need in an area of UN expertise, capacity and experience, it is possible for UN entities to come together, coordinate effectively and efficiently deliver in close collaboration with each other.

line with the Government's EU IPA Performance Assessment Framework; and SDCF outcomes designed based on a sound and solid theory of change. Furthermore, UNCT adjusted the SDCF support structure through the establishment of the Programme Management Team (PMT) and SDCF Outcome Groups to ensure horizontal and thematic collaboration. By the end of 2020, the evaluation implementation rate was at 45%, which was largely on track to conclude it in 2021

Lessons from 2020

COVID-19 and other operational challenges in 2020 tested UN agility in North Macedonia, resulting in strategic and operational lessons learned across all areas of work, some of which are summarized below.

* Strong partnerships are key for systematically addressing complex development challenges.

* Crises reinforce inequities and disparities; consequently, persons left behind need the most support and social services.

* There is a need to accelerate the use of new tools and benefit fully from digitalization.

* The analysis of future trends and drivers highlighted the need to systematize forward-looking strategic planning and decision making within the operation, to broaden the engagement with people of concern and civil society as actors of change, and to actively engage in transforming the public narrative about refugees by building new attitudes and behaviours in communities and broadening the platform of stakeholders to combat misinformation.

UN coherence, effectiveness & efficiency

UN North Macedonia achieved important results in implementing the UN development system reform on the ground and was agile and responsive to severe contextual changes and challenges in 2020.

UN North Macedonia achieved important results in implementing the UN development system reform on the ground and was agile and responsive to severe contextual changes and challenges in 2020.

At the time of PSD signature in North Macedonia in 2016, Delivering as One approach was adopted by UN entities in the country and operationalized through annual and biannual joint workplans and the establishment of coordination fora including UN programme staff and Government technical representatives. The Joint Government-UN Steering committee was the PSD highest decision-making body that provided review and oversight of implementation.

Since 2016, the global UN Development System has undergone significant changes that have impacted the UN organization and delivery at the country level. The implementation of the reinvigorated Resident Coordinator system, reformed with the objective to support the joint UN delivery against key strategic and sustainable development priorities in all countries where UN operates, commenced in North Macedonia in 2019 and was consolidated in 2020 – a year that unexpectedly required extreme agility and responsiveness.

The fast pace of change during the early days of the COVID-19 crisis required quick adaption in working modalities and re-shaping of priorities. UN entities quickly adjusted and provided immediate support to the Government with strategic and operational aspects of immediate response, implementing the UN Secretary-General's (SG) guidance

UNCT planted 75 trees to mark UN's 75 anniversary together with the Prime Minister Zoran Zaev, several other Government officials, diplomats and representatives from the Public Enterprise National Forests on 2020 UN Day. Photo©UNDP



to stay and deliver. This helped guide the Government's response through the crisis, deliver better care for the COVID-19 patients, support the continuity of essential service delivery, and assess, develop and implement some of the mid and long-term recovery measures for mitigation of the socio-economic aspects of the crisis.



There is significant progress in how the UNCT thinks and acts since the last retreat. It is much more coherent, members see more the bigger picture - beyond their agencies, open to collaboration, understand more that jointly we can do more than individually. Overall, there is spirit of one UN family."

Anonymous UNCT member response, UNCT 2021 retreat survey

In delivering its support, the UN strived for coherence and coordination under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator from the early days of the crisis and as the situation developed and highlighted the need to refocus its operations. More than 20 UN entities operational in the country, regardless of their physical presence, demonstrated in practice their commitment to work closely and coherently together with the Government and other partners. They maintained strong focus on longer-term priorities while supporting the immediate COVID-19 needs and Government recovery planning.

One indicator of commitment to joint work was the increase in confirmed joint programming initiatives, which, increased four-fold, with four joint projects

 **1,100** CITIZENS
400 ENTITY STAFF
consulted during SDCF process

either running or having secured resources by the end of 2020 compared to one in 2019. Overall, during 2020 UNCT conceptually finalized nine new joint ideas in the areas of COVID-19 response and recovery, health, governance, and economy, migration, SDG financing and promoting people with disabilities' rights.

With COVID-19 recovery and 2030 Agenda in mind, UN and the Government jointly developed the new 5-year strategy (SDCF) geared towards the SDG acceleration and national sustainable development priorities. Despite the challenging circumstances, over 1,500 people – almost

1,100 citizens participating in the perception survey and over 400 representatives of various entities – were involved in this consultative process. This built on the comprehensive analysis of the country context – 2020 Common Country Analysis (CCA) – and was followed by an inclusive strategic prioritization exercise.

UNCT also undertook a self-assessment of its technical, operational and financial capacities to test its readiness to support the Government in achieving the 2030 Agenda 2030. The UN configuration exercise resulted in some changes ahead of the SDCF cycle, with UNCTAD and IAEA not part of the new UNCT configuration, and UNOPS and UN-Habitat inclusion. While ITU did not sign the SDCF, the entity started actively contributing to the joint work.

Throughout 2020, UN entities maintained strong in-country presence throughout the COVID-19 crisis, which contributed to its strong positioning during the challenging year. UN's real-time ability to analyse and exchange knowledge, adapt to the local situation and offer support with sustainable solutions to development and crisis challenges proved valuable to support the delivery of results. The ability to leverage knowledge and expertise of regional and global offices and non-resident entities, to learn and share the experience from other settings, was particularly valuable in 2020 when COVID-19 has severely amplified the existing development challenges. UN was quick to support the national response and to assist with assessing the impact on various development priorities. While the strategies and priorities developed in 2020 – SDCF and CRF – may need adjustment as new impact evidence becomes available, the UN system has demonstrated the necessary flexibility to adjust and support the Government and other partners with identifying and implementing long-term solutions.

The strengthened UN RC role, including through the consolidation of a dedicated coordination office, contributed to UN jointness and its operational and strategic coherence. The work of several internal thematic and operational groups has been intensified, ensuring greater efficiency, coordination, joint planning and external One UN positioning.

Joint advocacy and public outreach activities to enhance UN visibility and bring all aspects of its work closer to people were strengthened, including through the launch of the new UN North Macedonia corporate website (<https://northmacedonia.un.org>) and the regular monthly release of the Sustainable Development Bulletin, which aims to enhance UN transparency and streamline advocacy. Communications work in support of COVID-19 response – such as the development and implementation of risk communications and community engagement activities targeting the most vulnerable and impacted segments of the population – or regular annual campaigns – such as the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence – represent just a few examples of UN's joint and powerful advocacy work in 2020. Furthermore, some key internal preparatory activities were conducted in 2020 to advance the accountability and transparency of UN operations and results achieved ahead of 2021-2025 SDCF implementation, including the roll-out of the

new planning and monitoring tool UN INFO and preliminary work on the SDCF Funding Framework.

The development of the Business Operations Strategy (BOS) 2.0 in 2020 was an important step towards realizing the UN's global Efficiency Agenda. The implementation of the five-year plan (2021-2025) will generate greater operational efficiencies, synergies and coherence, estimated to result in \$1.1 million savings through eliminating transaction costs, saving staff time and benefiting from economies of scale, for example through larger volume procurement. UN North Macedonia has committed to further develop common services in the areas of facilities and premises management, information technology, human resources and finance, and procurement. This will allow for further elimination of duplication and leverage the common UN bargaining power. At the end of 2020, three UN entities shared a common premise – a UN House – that also hosted the UN RC, while other resident entities occupied individual offices.

While heavily impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, UN North Macedonia ensured business continuity and operation without interruption, keeping the care for the safety and health of its staff as top priority. Flexible and remote working arrangements were put in place early and when necessary, together with the strict implementation of prevention, mitigation and readiness measures.

Young Pavel Milanovski from North Macedonia won first prize on FAO's 2020 World Food Day Poster Contest focusing on food heroes: farmers and workers throughout the food supply chain. Photo©FAO



Finance & resource mobilization

Financial overview

In 2020, \$40.1 million was made available to the UN North Macedonia of which \$35.8 million was expended, resulting in 89% delivery rate. Looking at PSD outcomes, environmental sustainability, social inclusion and employment were the most resource-intensive, with expenditures of \$16.8 million, \$7.8 million and \$6.2 million, respectively, followed by good governance and gender equality, with \$4.2 million and \$0.8 million, respectively.

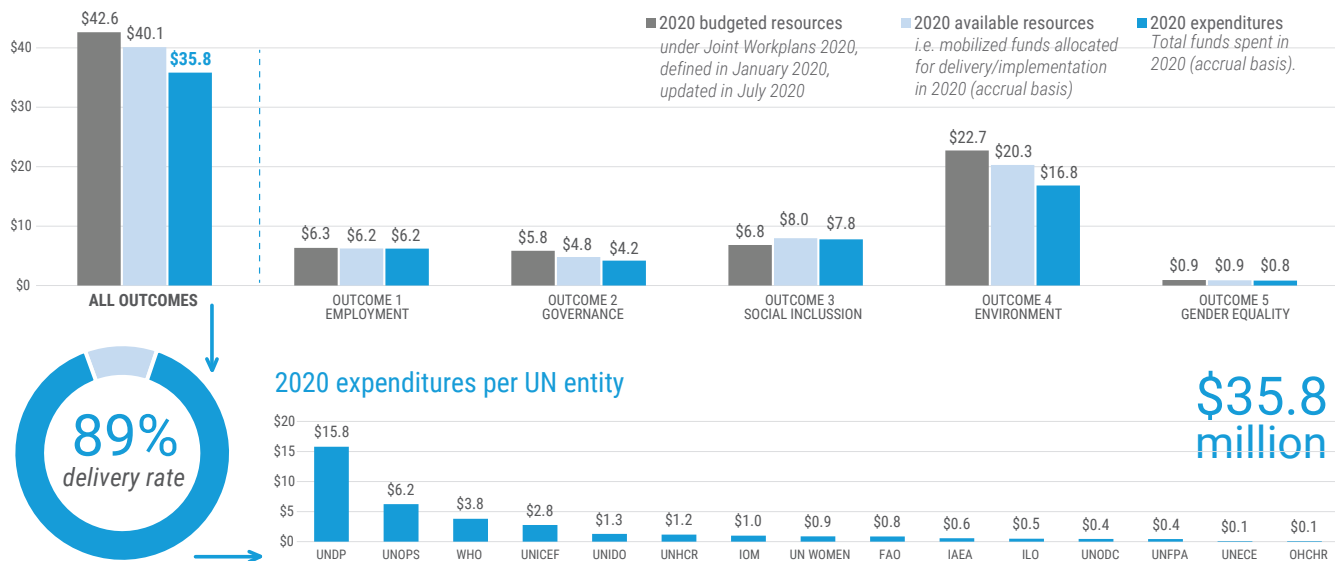
Most of the funding was received in the form of non-core resources (\$33.3 million, 89%). Among non-core

funding sources, most contributions come from project and programme specific funding (76%), followed by global vertical funds (14%), thematic funds (4%), pooled funds (3%) and government funding (3%).

The top 10 non-core funding sources in 2020 for UN work in North Macedonia were EU, Switzerland, GEF, Sweden, United States, Germany, United Kingdom, Norway, UN Migration Multi-partner Trust Fund (Migration MPTF) and North Macedonia. Financial data for 2020 is presented in the charts below. Data is as reported on 19 March 2021, for the period 1 January to 31 December 2020, in US dollars.

Required, available and expended resources – overall and per outcome

Data as of 19 March 2021, for 1 January - 31 December 2020, in million US\$

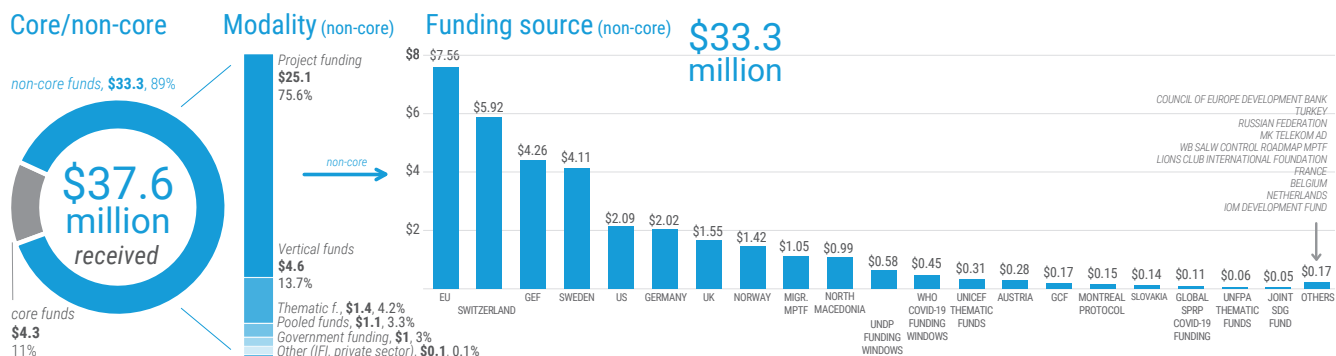


Source: UN North Macedonia; available funding and expenditures are based on UN entities financial systems or financial statements information as of 19 March 2021

Contributions by funding modality and funding source

For 1 January - 31 December 2020, in million US\$

Total core and non-core resources (\$37.6 million) represent funds received between 1 January and 31 December 2020 (partly cash basis). The amount is less than all available funds for 2020 (\$40.1 million, accrual basis) as some funding for 2020 activities was received at the end of 2019, while less 2021 advances were received in 2020.



Source: UN North Macedonia, 2021

Resource mobilization

Resource mobilization in 2020 focused on the mobilization of COVID-19 response funding and on accessing global funding for joint UN interventions.

Identifying resources for COVID-19 response

The UN rapidly engaged in mobilizing resources for prompt and adequate immediate response to the crisis in support of the Government efforts. Funds were secured from bilateral donors in the country, from global thematic and pooled funds and through reallocation of existing resources. In 2020, UN provided support to the country worth almost \$12 million, much of which was newly mobilized. UN entities were successful in leveraging their internal resources such as through the WHO COVID-19 Fund or UNDP Rapid Response Facility.

Seeking support for joint action

As one of its strategic priorities, UN North Macedonia was focused in 2020 on increasing its share of funding secured for joint action, with a key focus on global funding facilities as sources of funding. Nine developed projects were submitted to four UN pooled funds:

* Joint SDG Fund Financing Call, Components 1 and 2 (two project concepts submitted)

* Migration MPTF (three project concepts submitted)

* COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund MPTF (three project concepts submitted)

* UN PRPD Fund (one expression of interest submitted)

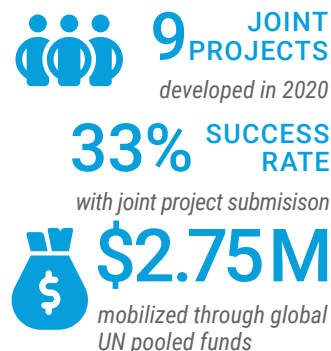
In addition, the UNCT was actively engaged in the preparation of the PBF Western Balkans regional eligibility application.

Through these coordinated efforts, UN North Macedonia successfully raised \$2.75 million for three of nine new joint projects through UN pooled funds:

- “Evidence-based migration policy planning and discourse in North Macedonia”, funded by the Migration MPTF (\$1.5 million) and implemented by IOM, UNHCR and UNFPA over 30 months.
- “Safe and innovative health services in times of COVID-19, funded by the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund (\$0.85 million), implemented by UNFPA, WHO and UNICEF, over 14.5 months.
- The inception phase of the joint project on the rights of persons with disabilities, funded by the UN PRPD MPTF

(\$0.4 million), over the period of 24 months.

These efforts aimed to improve the funding sources mix by increasing the proportion of less earmarked types of funding, such as vertical, pooled and thematic funds, and reducing reliance on project specific funding as the most tightly earmarked source of funding. At the end of 2020, project and programme specific funding remained the primary source for UN activities in North Macedonia. Transition to less earmarked sources of funding would allow for more flexible targeting of UN support and optimization of UN expertise provision.



Planning for 2021-2025 SDCF

In the last quarter of the year the SDCF Funding Framework, which provides a detailed overview of the resource mobilization needs for the next five-year period, as well as an analysis of the funding mix of the funding available, was developed. Based on this information, the SDCF Resource Mobilization Strategy will be developed in the first half of 2021, defining specific approaches and tools to ensure coordinated resource mobilization and more structured funding dialogue with contributing partners.

UNOPS procured and delivered vital medical equipment and items to fight COVID-19 in the value of €4 million allocated by the EU.

Photo©UNOPS



UN in North Macedonia in 2021

UN and the Government of North Macedonia started the implementation of the new five-year strategy (2021-2025) that has three strategic priorities:

* Sustained and inclusive economic and social development

* Climate action, natural resources and disaster risk management

* Transparent and accountable democratic governance

SDCF will contribute to achieving that by 2025 all the people in North Macedonia:

1. have improved living standard through equal access to decent work and productive employment generated by an inclusive and innovative business ecosystem;
2. have universal access to rights-based quality social services – healthcare, education, and necessary social and child protection - rooted in systems resilient to emergencies;
3. benefit from ambitious climate action, sustainably managed natural resources and well-preserved biodiversity through good environmental governance and disaster resilient communities; and
4. benefit from improved rule of law; evidence-based, anticipatory and gender-responsive policies; greater social cohesion; and effective service delivery by transparent, accountable and responsive institutions.

In 2021, UNCT North Macedonia's key focus will be:

COVID-19 response will remain a top priority. UNCT in North Macedonia will continue providing policy and technical support to the Government-led health and socio-economic response to the impact of COVID-19, as well as initiate and boost interventions for resilient, equitable and green recovery of the society as a whole through the integration of COVID-19 support with the SDCF implementation.

SDCF implementation and acceleration of the 2030 Agenda will be at the centre of UNCT's efforts through SDCF implementation – by providing policy advice and support to state institutions, closely aligned with national workstreams, in particular the National Development Strategy process.

UN in North Macedonia will work toward further **operationalizing the UN Secretary-General's prevention vision** – to anticipate, prevent and manage risks relating to internal and external shocks that could undermine the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, and support resilience; seek opportunities for regional cooperation initiatives incorporating prevention-focused activities and working

jointly with all partners to minimize the relapsing impact of ongoing crises such as COVID-19 and future threats.

Strategic financing and partnerships are key for SDG achievement. In 2021, UNCT in North Macedonia will promote and further enhance coordinated approach to partnerships, which will include increased focus on identifying and securing joint SDCF funding opportunities and enhancing SDG financing partnerships and advocacy.

UN in North Macedonia will further strengthen the **promotion of the LNOB principle, gender equality, human rights** and its fundamental values, standards and principles rooted within the UN Charter and treaties – through advocacy and promotion, consistent inclusion in policy and planning, and strengthened implementation.

In the area of **business innovation**, UNCT in North Macedonia will further assess, adjust and boost internal processes to promote and generate greater operational efficiencies, synergies and coherence through the implementation of the Business Operations Strategy and other workstreams.

Republic of North Macedonia and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021 - 2025

Photo@RCO



Links to the document:

[ENG](#)

[MKD](#)

[ALB](#)

Annexes

List of acronyms & abbreviations

ALMM	Active Labour Market Measures	IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
CEFTA	Central European Free Trade Agreement	JSC	Joint Steering Committee (JSC)
CPD	Country Programme Document	MES	Ministry of Education and Science
CRC	City Red Cross	MLSP	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
CRF	COVID-19 Response Framework	NDC	Nationally determined contributions
CSE	Comprehensive sexual education	NDS	National Development Strategy
DV	Domestic violence	NPAA	National Programme for Adoption of the Acquis Communautaire
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	PSD	Partnership for Sustainable Development
ECD	Early Childhood Development	PwD	Persons with Disabilities
ECS	Economic and Social Council	RE	Renewable Energy
EE	Energy Efficiency	SDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
ESA	Employment Service Agency	SHR	Sexual reproductive health
GBV	Gender based violence	SRHR	Sexual reproductive health rights
GCF	Green Climate Fund	UNCT	United Nations Country Team
GEF	Global Environment Facility	VNR	Voluntary National Review
GHG	Greenhouse gas		
HDR	Human Development Report		

List of partners

Government and state agencies

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy
Ministry of Culture
Ministry of Defence
Ministry of Economy
Ministry of Education and Science
Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning
Ministry of Finance
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Health
Ministry of Information Society and Administration
Ministry of Interior
Ministry of Justice
Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
Ministry of Local Self-Government
Ministry of Transport and Communications

Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors
Agency for Promotion of Entrepreneurship
Agency for Real Estate Cadastre
Basic Public Prosecutor's Office
Bureau for Development of Education
Bureau for Regional Development
Centre for Adult Education
Centre for Vocational Education and Training
Centres for Public Health
Centres for Regional Development
Centres for Social Work
Crisis Management Centre
Customs Administration
Deputy Prime Minister in charge of Economic Affairs,
Coordination of Economic Departments and Investments
Deputy Prime Minister in charge of European Affairs
Deputy Prime Minister in charge of Fight against Corruption,
Sustainable Development and Human Capital
Directorate for Execution of Sanctions
Directorate for Protection and Rescue
Directorate for Water Management
Employment Service Agency
First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister in charge of
Political System and Inter-community Relations
Food and Veterinary Agency
Fund for Innovation and Technology Development
General Secretariat of the Government
Health Insurance Fund
Hydrometeorological Service
Immunisation Committee
Institute for Public Health
Inter-party Parliamentary Group on the Rights of Persons
with Disabilities
Judiciary
Local Self-Government Units
National Commission for Fight against Trafficking in Human
Beings
National Commission of North Macedonia for UNESCO
National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD)
National Extension Agency
National Parks
Office of the President of the Republic of North Macedonia
Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of North
Macedonia
Ombudsman
Parliamentary Committee on Economy
Parliamentary Committee on Education, Science and Sport
Parliamentary Committee on Equal
Opportunities for Women and Men
Parliamentary Committee on European Affairs
Parliamentary Committee on Health Care
Parliamentary Committee on Labour and Social Policy
Primary level health facilities

Public Prosecutor for Organized Crime and Corruption
Regional Hospitals
Safe Motherhood Committee
Secretariat for European Affairs
Standing Inquiry Committee for Protection of Civil
Freedoms and Rights
State Education Inspectorate
State Environment Inspectorate
State Statistical Office
University Clinics

Civil society organizations

Agriculture and rural development CSOs
Anti-poverty CSOs
Association CeProSARD
Association Eko Svest
Association Fagrikom
Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality of
Women (ESE)
Association Green Centre
Association Kocka
Association Milieukontakt Macedonia
Association of Gynecologists and Obstetricians
Association of Nurses and Midwives
Association of Special Educators
Association of the units of local self-government of the
Republic of North Macedonia – ZELS
Balkan Foundation for Sustainable Development (BFSD)
City Red Cross Skopje
Connecting Natural Values and People (CNVP Macedonia)
Environmental CSOs
Gender rights CSOs
Health Education and Research Association (HERA)
Healthy Options Project Skopje (HOPS)
Helsinki Committee for Human Rights
Labor Law Association of North Macedonia
LGBTI rights CSOs
Macedonian Anti-Poverty Platform (MAPP)
Macedonian Ecological Society (MES)
Macedonian Lawyers' Association (MLA)
Macedonian Medical Association
Macedonian Occupational Safety and Health Association
Macedonian Red Cross
Macedonian Young Lawyers Association (MYLA)
Migrants, refugees and stateless persons rights CSOs
National council of OPDs
National Federation of Farmers
Open Gate - La Strada North Macedonia
Organization of Employers of Macedonia
Organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs)
Platform Friends of Shara
Roma rights CSOs
Rural Development Network
Sex workers rights CSOs
Skopje Lab (City of Skopje)
Smart Up – Social Innovation Laboratory
STAR STAR - The first sex workers collective in the Balkans
Trade Unions
Youth CSOs
Youth Peer Network (Y-PEER)
Zaedno Posilni (Stronger together)

Academia

Centre for Continuous Education of Family Doctors
Early Child Development Consulting & Research (ECD Cor)
Faculty of Agriculture and Food Science (UKIM)
Faculty of Computer Science & Engineering (UKIM)
Faculty of Forest Sciences, Landscape Architecture and
Environmental Engineering 'Hans Em' (UKIM)

Faculty of Law 'Iustinianus Primus' (UKIM)
Faculty of Medicine (UKIM)
Faculty of Natural Science and Mathematics (UKIM)
Faculty of Philosophy (UKIM)
Hydrobiological Institute Ohrid
Institute for Human Rights
Institute for Mother and Child Health
Institute of Economics (UKIM)
Institute of Gender Studies (UKIM)
Institute of Social Work and Social Policy (UKIM)
Macedonian Civic Education Center
Research Center for Energy and Sustainable Development
(MANU)
Police Academy Skopje
Ss. Cyril and Methodius University (UKIM)
Teacher Training Faculties in Skopje, Shtip, Tetovo and Bitola
Think-tanks
UNESCO Chairs
University 'Goce Delchev' Shtip
University Clinic of Psychiatry (Clinical Center 'Mother Teresa',
UKIM)
University of Tetovo
Various Specialized Medical Institutes

International partners

Austrian Embassy (ADA)
British Embassy
Central European Bank (CEB)
Consular Office of the Slovak Republic
Delegation of the European Union
Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Initiative for South
Eastern Europe (DPPI SEE)
Embassy of France
Embassy of Sweden (SIDA)
Embassy of Switzerland (SDC, SECO)
Embassy of the Republic of Turkey
Embassy of the Russian Federation
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)
European Training Foundation (ETF)
General Consulate of Belgium
Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF)
German Embassy
GIZ Office
International Centre for Migration
Policy Development (ICMPD)
International Union for Conservation of Nature, Regional
Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (IUCN – ECARO)
Lions Club International Foundation
Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI)
Netherlands Embassy
Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East
Europe (NALAS)
OSCE Mission
Royal Norwegian Embassy
Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO)
Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European
Programme (THE PEP)
United States Embassy (USAID)
UNECE Group of Experts on Energy Efficiency

Private sector and others

Bar association
Business Confederation of Macedonia
Chamber of mediators
Diaspora
Doctor's Chamber
Media
Primary Care Facilities
Various companies



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www.twitter.com/1UN_MK

Supplement: 2020 output results

OUTCOME 1

More and better jobs

By 2020, more women and men are able to improve their livelihoods by securing decent and sustainable employment in an increasingly competitive and job-rich economy.

Contribution to



Development of the economy, increase of productive employment and raising the living standard of the citizens;
Reforms in the education system and investment in innovation and information technology;



Fundamentals first: Economic Development and Competitiveness
19. Social policy and employment;
20. Enterprise and industrial policy;
26. Education and culture

UN entities contributing to the achievement of this outcome:
ILO, IOM, UNDP, UNECE

Government and other development partners:
Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Employment Service Agency, civil society, private sector, academia and others.

(1.1) National institutions have improved capacities to develop, implement and monitor policies and measures that help to generate more sustainable jobs

Within changing circumstances, UN continued to cooperate with national institutions, building their capacities to design, implement and monitor labour policies. This included providing employment diagnostic to support formulation of evidence-based National Employment Strategy with Action Plan, including one on Youth Employment (to be finalized in June 2021). National institutions were equipped with UN forecasting model and projections of labour market and poverty indicators for evidence-based Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) III programming. New institutions were established with UN support (two inclusive training Centres for work-oriented rehabilitation of persons with disabilities), as well as the first ever Local Employment Partnership implemented by the start-up Center Bitola with local solutions to specific challenges of the communities.

ESA was able to successfully take over and implement UN initiated self-employment measure and also benefitted from capacity building of its staff in 30 Employment Centres. In addition, to support creation of a stronger partnership between ESA and private sector, UN enhanced knowledge and skills of 49 ESA employers' advisors, of which 65% were women. ESA also managed to fully integrate the new services for employers into its operations, such as the SMEs Action Platform that performs as a one-stop shop for SMEs to overcome the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. With UN support, social partners were able to increase visibility and evidence-based advocacy, and retain and attract new members by adjusting their services to the new reality.

As the COVID-19 crisis developed, UN provided evidence-based recommendations on the socio-economic impact, through the [Rapid Assessment of the Employment Impacts and Policy Responses](#), [The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on enterprises in North Macedonia](#) and wider

[Socioeconomic Assessment of COVID-19 Impact in North Macedonia](#) later in the year. A task force on COVID-19 and the World of Work was established within ESC, which enabled its active participation in designing Government's anti-crisis measures. As a result, Government stimulus was extended to provide unemployment benefits to additional 3,803 persons excluded due to regulations by-passed by company owners; and a minimum wage subsidy scheme was extended up to June 2020.

With targeted interventions and UN support, 314 long-term employments were ensured through different sets of active labour market measures; and 126 new companies were established within the newly introduced self-employment to support people who lost jobs. UN also supported farmers by introducing contract farming and new innovative technology in food processing, dehydration and packing in the training centre in Strumica. As result, 35 local farmers were able to overcome challenges of production, distribution and market placement of the local products, especially in the context of COVID-19 crisis.

314 LONG-TERM
EMPLOYMENTS

126 NEW COMPANIES
ESTABLISHED

(1.2) Groups with low labour-force participation and employment rates gain the skills and access they need to secure more decent jobs in the formal labour market

Throughout the year UN continued to build skills of most vulnerable groups to enhance their access to formal and decent work. In this context, market relevant skills were provided for 584 unemployed, of which 65% women, and 29

inmates (8 women) obtained state recognized certificates with UN assistance.

UN also supported targeted beneficiaries including returnees, beneficiaries of the Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programme, of which 67% have found jobs and facilitated employment of 12 young persons of 183 who were trained through 5 Youth Information Clubs in 4 state universities. In addition, a Youth Resource Centre in Gostivar was newly established as innovation, career, skills and start-up hub to support young people in Polog region.

With targeted interventions, UN was able to engage 613 unemployed, of which 71 recipients of guaranteed minimum assistance to provide social services to over 8,900 end-beneficiaries in 52 municipalities.

107 ROMA EMPLOYED	584 UNEMPLOYED TRAINED	29 INMATES WITH CERTIFICATES
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(1.3) The education and training system is strengthened to provide people who lack them with the credentials and skills they need to meet labour market demands

In cooperation with the Government, UN worked on the analysis of employment opportunities that would meet business demand for skilled labour to create systemic change in the education model. Different methodological tools included assessment of the linkages and gaps between education and employment, as well as [skills assessment](#) for construction, textile and renewable energy industries. It also included situation analysis of the post-secondary education and concept for preparation of a private regional vocational education and training Centre in North Macedonia.

The process was highly consultative – 186 companies, 32 education providers and 30 central and local government institutions were involved; 48 representatives from the private sector (80% women), benefited from capacity building in human resource (HR) management. Out of these,

Thanks to the support he was provided through the UNDP-developed Self-employment Programme, Mezgjun Vejselov was able to achieve his dream of opening his own hair salon in his hometown of Shtip.
Photo©UNDP



12 companies were to receive further coaching to prepare long-term HR plans with gender metrics (%) of women and men involved in the industries. Vocational training was also designed to meet the needs of 40 companies and delivered to 149 unemployed persons, out of which over half were expected to be employed after successful training completion.

(1.4) Tripartite social dialogue institutions and processes are enhanced as a means to promote decent work and sustainable growth

Throughout the year, UN continued to support the ESC to engage meaningfully in the social dialogue with evidence-based interventions. In that context, UN has provided analysis of the collective bargaining procedures, with a focus on the wage-setting mechanisms and implemented a field project to strengthen the capacity of national and local governments to address the needs of the most vulnerable groups of population living in the informal settlements, with draft Recovery Action Plan also prepared.

As the COVID-19 crisis developed, upon request of the Government, UN developed a Technical Note on Legal and social protection of specific categories of employees that influenced the design of the stimulus measures. UN also prepared a [Legal analysis on regulation and implementation of Telework](#) and equipped the ESC with Guidelines on the implementation of the European Framework Agreement on Telework. Services of social partners were further enhanced, with UN supporting ten projects for introduction of new and modernization of the existing services, comprehensive training packages for Start and Improve Your Business. In addition, UN localized and selected nine local ESCs where local employment action plans will be developed in 2021.

UN also increased the visibility of social partners during the crisis period, launching the [campaign on workers' rights](#) and developing communication strategies for the four trade unions.

In the context of promoting regional trade connectivity, national authorities benefitted from capacity-building on Single Window and data sharing for the Western Balkans, as well as on National Trade and Transport Facilitation Monitoring Mechanism.

% of recommendations/opinions on economic and social reforms discussed in the ESC

60%	BASELINE
------------	-----------------

80%	TARGET
------------	---------------

100%	ACHIEVED
-------------	-----------------

(1.5) National policies foster entrepreneurship, a positive business environment, sustainable private-sector growth and the productive use and lower-cost transfer of remittances

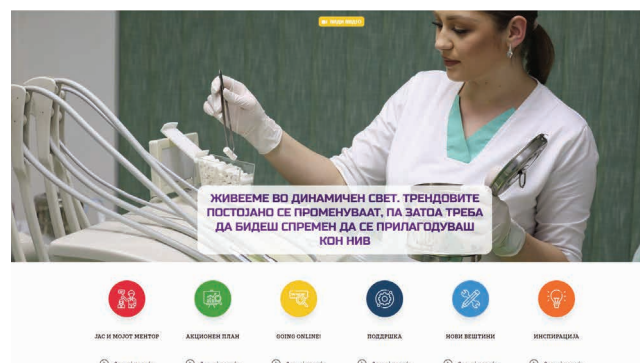
UN entities provided substantial policy input to enhance business environment, especially in the area of entrepreneurship and SMEs. This included [Policy proposal for entrepreneurial culture – a start-up and enterprise support service](#) that identified the challenges, policies and strategies related to entrepreneurial skills, as well as market assessment of the [Entrepreneurship eco-system in North Macedonia](#) and analysis of the [Barriers for Access to Finance for MSMEs](#). In addition, UN supported circular economy assessments demonstrated that applying circular practices to selected waste streams by 2030 can deliver: 951 Gg CO2-eq/year savings, 2,740 new jobs and €47.17 million of economic benefits.

In the context of the COVID-19 crisis, UN provided socio-economic impact assessment and needs assessment dashboard with critical and continuous insights for policy makers, with deeper insights and guidance for recovery in agriculture and textile industries.

In addition, during the crisis, UN assisted businesses to survive and retain workers by ensuring online servicing of the unemployed and the employers through Employment

SMEs Action Platform (bizz4all.mk)

Photo©UNDP



Centers and by establishing a SMEs Action Platform (bizz4all.mk) which is an integrated, on line one-stop shop support that facilitates a more equal access to services and helps companies overcome the challenges brought by the pandemic. Features include free, multilingual, easy-to-use web and mobile interfaces that allow users to find a simple and useful basic business tips & tricks via vivid and animated visuals, up-to-date information on available financial mechanisms, free coaching and mentoring services and online collaboration.

OUTCOME 2

More responsive governance

By 2020, national and local institutions are better able to design and deliver high-quality services for all users, in a transparent, cost-effective, non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive manner.

Contribution to



Democratic and accountable governance
Reforms in public administration, police, and justice sector
Fight against corruption



Fundamentals first: Political Criteria and the Rule of Law
23: Judiciary and fundamental rights
24: Justice, freedom and security
19: Social policy and employment

UN entities contributing to the achievement of this outcome:

IOM, OHCHR, UNDP, UNECE, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNODC, UNOPS, UN Women

Government and other development partners:

Ministry of Information Society and Administration, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Local Self-Government, Secretariat for European Affairs, State Statistical Office, civil society, private sector, academia and others.

(2.1) Local governance institutions strengthened to deliver services efficiently and equitably

The improved local governance capacities resulted in efficient and cost-effective public services and an increased citizens' satisfaction, particularly in the social protection sector.⁹ A positive trend in enabling direct citizens' participation in decision making through forums was noted in 70 out of 81 municipalities. Gender and youth considerations have been integrated into key development policies, decisions and budgets at national, sub-regional and local level. Multiple initiatives, including harmonization of migration-related procedures with the EU law, strengthened capacities and cultural mediation skills of law enforcement and social services, renovation of hospitals and accommodation facilities contributed to better services and security of migrants and asylum seekers.

Digital solutions, including electronic payment of taxes, e-learning platform accessible to all 1,347 municipal counsellors in the country, and other tools ensured

The Municipality of Novaci is part of the UN Women programme for promoting gender-responsive policies and budgets: towards transparent, inclusive and accountable governance in the Republic of North Macedonia, funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). Photo©UN Women



continuation of municipal business processes and delivery of services during the pandemic. "Be Safe" mobile application ensures reporting and raising awareness on domestic violence (DV) and gender-based violence (GBV).

(2.2) Civil society groups, individuals and young people participate directly in decision-making processes and more actively monitor national and local institutions

UN backing of broad and inclusive consultations between the government, civil society and young people resulted in people-centred and youth-sensitive policies, programmes and decisions at all levels. The survey of the COVID-19 impact on young people, especially those left behind, informed a series of peer-consultations on issues that affect their life. A comprehensive sexual education (CSE) concept, along with a digital platform for education of persons with disabilities, especially children with Autism Spectrum Disorder was promoted. Two social media campaigns on CSE, sexual reproductive health rights (SRHR) and GBV reached many young people across the country. Additionally, the civil society capacities in transparent project-based funding and management have increased, including fast-track pandemic-related projects, that mainstreamed gender perspective and equitable representation of women traditionally underrepresented in local government.

(2.3) National and local institutions have improved capacities to apply the principles of rule of law, accountability, and transparency in the delivery of public services

UN consistently supported adherence to the rule of law principles by its partner institutions, promoting their transparency, inclusiveness and accountability. Policy makers were equipped with data to make informed decision on strategic prioritization, delivery of equitable services and public finance management. An increasing number of

municipalities were enabled to regularly publish financial data, livestream municipal council sessions, apply integrity system, perform legislative and oversight role, and conduct consultations with stakeholders. UN provided technical support in the development of a new Sustainable Local Development and Decentralization Programme.

North Macedonia's EU agenda has been consolidated with 60 pieces of EU aligned legislation in areas of judicial reform, energy, agriculture, environment, trade, and education, as well as increased capacities of 600 civil servants (over half of them women) and a publicly accessible NPAA portal. Reporting skills and knowledge about the EU enlargement of journalists have also been increased. In the security sector, digital tools for evidence-based policies in firearms data were

introduced, and end-users trained on proper functioning of the system.

UN supported several regional initiatives [promoting the rule of law and good governance through targeted border control measures at ports and airport](#) aimed at tackling all forms of illicit trafficking. Based on enhanced legal and institutional framework, in 2021 a Letter of Agreement was signed with the Government on the establishment an inter-agency group composed of an Air Cargo Control Unit and a Joint Airport Interdiction Airport Task Force at the Skopje International Airport. UN also built capacities and regional platforms that reinforced the criminal justice response and cooperation against corruption, illicit financial flows and arms trafficking.

OUTCOME 3

Better lives for vulnerable people

By 2020, more members of socially excluded and vulnerable groups are empowered to exercise their rights and enjoy a better quality of life and equitable access to basic services.

Contribution to



One society for all
Reforms in the education system and investment in innovation and information technology
Quality social services for all



18: Statistics
19: Social policy and employment
25: Science and research
26: Education and culture

UN entities contributing to the achievement of this outcome:

IOM, OHCHR, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, UNOPS, UN Women, WHO

Government and other development partners:

Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, civil society, private sector, academia and others.

(3.1) Data generated to support evidence-based policies and programs aimed at vulnerable and socially excluded groups

2020 marks the successful completion of the sixth round of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS6) and the update of the TransMonEE. With UN support, the State Statistical Office successfully conducted the survey, which generated a massive amount of disaggregated data in areas that are key to children's wellbeing. Despite limited dissemination, MICS6 data has already served to address data gaps including but not limited to child health and immunization, pre-school education and protection.

As part of the rapid assessment of the effects of the pandemic on the vulnerable categories, study on social and economic effects of the pandemic on children was carried out, to examine national impact on child-related sectors – social and child protection, education, and health – assessed public finance impact, as well as the capacity of the Government to respond. The study clearly highlighted that the most vulnerable are being hit the hardest, with additional 16,000 children at risk of dropping below the poverty threshold [visualize]. Together with partners, UN used the findings to advocate for: adjusting education to the new conditions; better targeting of children most at risk; safeguarding children and women from violence, exploitation and abuse;

One of the many smiling faces that made the data collection for the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) a rewarding experience. The Survey Findings Report was finalized and published in May 2020." Photo©UNICEF



minimizing disruptions to routine healthcare and increasing public confidence and demand for services including support for mental health.

(3.2) More socially excluded and vulnerable people participate directly in the design and delivery of social services

Bottom-up participatory design of services become regular practice in UN work. Most of the activities are distributed in other outcomes, and only few will be highlighted here.

Through the Women economic empowerment programme, UN supported the Government to design three new social services, that were planned with the latest social reform but not available to the citizens: 1) Respite services (family members looking after persons with disabilities are offered up to 48 hours continuous replacement); 2) Household Assistance (home support for parents that take care of elderly during 2-3 days per week), and 3) Long-term ill care (home support to family members looking after ill persons, by teams of health and social workers). Their implementation will significantly improve the quality of care and strengthen the role of women in the families where care is provided to those in need.

Nation-wide survey to assess the needs for formalization of non-paid social and integrated social/health care service conducted informed the set of policy recommendations on flexible working policies in the workplace and pointed out the next steps to formalization of care services and promoting care economy. As a result, two new employment measures (aimed at development of a network of skilled and qualified caregivers and professional individuals) have been designed that became part of the 2021 National Operational Employment Plan. Environment for piloting of the measures was enabled by establishing 3 respite centers and capacitating 80 people in provision of care services. These measures will enable the women (67.5% of the care providers) to get formal recognition of their work.

Through the integrated community-based health and social services (within COVID-19 activities), 4,121 persons (2,735 women) from Municipalities of Kochani and Resen

received various support services. Food and hygiene supply packages were provided to 110 low-income households with vulnerabilities, including people with disabilities in local communities.

(3.3) More children realize their rights and enjoy better living standards and opportunities in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

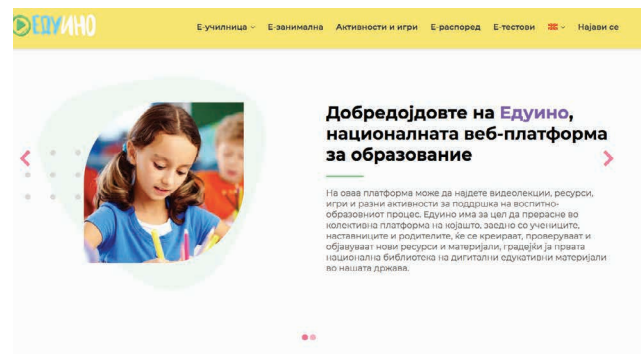
Education has continued timely for almost all 300,000 students in North Macedonia after March nation-wide school closures. By repurposing an ECD platform in development, to crowd-source, collate and distribute video lessons, UN supported a national distance learning platform (Eduino) that effectively restored continuous quality education for all 300,000 students in North Macedonia. In less than a year, Eduino grew into the only platform with verified digital educational materials for children between 3 and 18 years of age, in five languages of instruction. These materials are shared by teachers during online classes, parents at home and are broadcasted daily on the national TV station. Eduino continues to grow, and now offers over 3000 video lessons, 500 educational games for school and home use, and over 100 webinars and resources for teachers and parents. By December 2020, over 50 percent of all teachers in the country benefited from these professional learning opportunities [visualize]. The institutional experience gained in the building Eduino, alongside the resources and competencies developed, create a government owned and managed distance learning system that continues to grow in breadth and quality, serving the entire education sector.

Continuous technical assistance, advocacy and cooperation with partners resulted in a commitment by the Government to increase the low enrolment rate of children aged 3 to 6 by investing in new kindergartens and repurposing existing public buildings for early childhood education centres with a loan from the World Bank. This commitment also set clear goals by 2024 for improvements in equipment and premises. UN supported MLSP to establish a competency framework as a basis for building a system for teacher professional development and career advancement. Through the comprehensive social and emotional learning programme, UN ensured teachers receive regular peer-support and access to meaningful learning opportunities with the establishment of professional learning communities.

In parallel, 'The Teacher Matters Campaign' has achieved significant results reaching some 75 percent of the total population through the television campaign. Similar results were achieved on digital channels where it reached nearly 1 million and engaged some 45,000 people and some 250,000 video views on UNICEF social media channels.

To support the educational reforms and improved student learning outcomes, UN helped the Government with identifying the main systemic gaps for the low learning outcomes. This triggered a policy dialogue for much-needed reform of the education system. Starting with a revision of the Action Plan of the National Education Strategy 2018-2025,

UNICEF and partners marked one year of Eduino web portal for digital education, coordination and professional development launched in March 2020 to provide digital education resources and keep children learning during the pandemic. Photo©UNICEF



the reform process continued with multiple key education policies such as the Law on Primary Education and the Law on Teachers and Support Staff and the national standards for primary education setting the stage for reforming the primary education curricula. As a result, as measured by OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) from 2015 until 2018, the percentage of low performers in each subject (reading, mathematics and science) shrank by at least nine percentage points. The country saw the single highest improvement in reading performance, second highest in science and third in math.

To address the issue of violence against children, underreporting by the health professionals and act upon all suspicions or concerns, correspondent modules have been developed and 10 master trainers trained for recognition, prevention, reporting and management of VAC for FDs. Training was complemented with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) pilot screening in 10 FDs practices, to further explore existence of family dysfunction, physical, emotional or sexual abuse and neglect by caregivers, peer or community violence and prevent or mitigate its occurrence by managing cases in a trauma-informed manner. UNICEF's advocacy and technical assistance lead to a Government pledge to join the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children and to adoption of a [National Strategy to End Violence against Children \(2020 – 2025\)](#), thus setting the ways forward for further advancement in this area. Evidence generation supported by UNICEF informed the further actions resulting in the development of capacity for improved identification, referral, reporting and response to cases of violence against children. The supply gaps were addressed by establishment of a multi-sectoral teamwork, in managing the cases of violence against children. UNICEF has also strengthened the monitoring capacity of the National Body for Protection of Children from Abuse and Neglect.

(3.4) More persons with disabilities are able to realize their rights and enjoy better living standards in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its corresponding Optional

Through telephone helplines, 132 parents, 35 parents of children with disabilities, and 12 children and adolescents received psychosocial support, while around 700 attended online sessions, and 110,000 were reached with videos focusing on mental health topics.



ОТВОРЕНИ ЛИНИИ
ЗА ПРАШАЊА, ОДГОВОРИ И СОВЕТИ ЗА СЕГАШНАТА СОСТОЈБА

Protocol in 2011, UN supported the Government to initiate a set of measures aimed at fulfilling the rights of persons with disabilities.

To help make a paradigm shift in the inclusion of children with disabilities towards a human rights-based approach, new model of disability assessment based on the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) was developed and piloted. This was an important step in moving away from the previous approach of deciding whether to grant disability cash benefits to people based only on categorization of their medical condition. By the end of 2020, three centres were established (one national and two regional) for the assessment of children based on ICF, and functional assessment is incorporated in the Law on primary education. Available limited services for early detection and intervention, in a context of widely used medical model for assessment were addressed by capacity development of front-line health professionals (family doctors and home visiting nurses), complemented with the piloting of Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (M-Chat) and International Classification of Functionality (ICF) in 1% FDs practices, further expanding the action and addressing the issue of unnecessary referrals to higher levels of health care, saving unnecessary costs and burden for the parents and the health system. ICF in undergraduate curricula for medical students and paediatrics and social medicine specialization was also introduced to sensitize future medical professionals in the social aspects of disability, beyond the medical model.

Ensuring full access to children with disabilities in mainstream schools and pre-schools reached a turning point. After years of advocating and modelling inclusive education in primary schools in the country, in 2019 the Government legally regulated closing the special primary schools and starting the process of transformation to resource centres ensuring that all children are accepted and supported in an inclusive environment in mainstream education. Through Community works programme, total of 703 persons with disabilities out of which almost 400 children with disabilities received different social services. 323 personal and educational assistants

Joint programme *Working bottom up – building a local model for deinstitutionalization*

This joint programme, implemented between June 2018 and December 2020, focused on piloting models for services and smooth deinstitutionalization, with specific geographical focus on the residents of the Banja Basko institution in Strumica region. The work of the participating UN entities – UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNDP, UN Women and UNFPA – made a significant contribution in supporting the implementation of the national deinstitutionalization agenda through the multi-sectoral efforts. By building a community-level model, the UN team demonstrated how to build bridges to employment for people with disabilities; ensure inclusive education for children with disabilities; strengthen models of alternative, community-based social care and family support; and provide sexual and reproductive health services for women with disabilities. The full participation of people with disabilities throughout the entire process of the project helped pinpoint the bottlenecks and empower individuals to play an active role. In numbers: 11 women and men now live independently in the community; 5 persons got employed; 7 children transitioned into alternative forms of care. Through this action, the UN team proved that community-based options are a feasible and affordable way to facilitate independent living for people with disabilities and developed models of services for wider replication. This programme was financed by the Multi-donor Trust Fund (MPTF) of the UN Partnership to promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN-PRPD); its current top contributors include Australia, Finland, Norway, Sweden and UK.

were engaged supporting children with disabilities carry out their learning tasks in primary and secondary schools.

This milestone was successfully replicated in pre-schools as well. UN supported modelling of the concept and practices of inclusive education in 30 primary schools. This process led to the professional development of 2200 teachers trained on-site and 4500 trained with an online course, and the establishment of a new support service in schools - Educational and Personal assistance. Furthermore, through piloting 25 inclusive kindergartens where capacities for working with children with disabilities were strengthened, UN established inclusive teams as essential mechanisms for inclusive ECE practices in all kindergartens across the country.

These efforts culminated with the legislative change that abolished special groups for children with disabilities in ECE as a practice and an overall increased general public acceptance of children with disabilities in mainstream schools from 4 percent in 2014 to 24 percent in 2018.

In 2020, the first two Centres for Work-oriented rehabilitation and support for employment of persons with disabilities in Strumica and Skopje were opened and models designed. The Centres conducted functional assessments of 50 persons, including 24 candidates for self-employment which resulted with establishment of 20 small enterprises by people with disabilities.

To protect mental health of the persons with disabilities under COVID-19 lock down the Centre in Strumica provided psychosocial support to 67 persons with disabilities residents at Banja BANSKO institution, and 11 resettled persons in community-based living. To support the MLSP with future planning, a "Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Additional Cost of Disability" was prepared, together with other manuals and tools.

(3.5) More members of the Roma community are able to realize their rights, enjoy improved living standards and opportunities, and overcome social exclusion

In 2020, UN supported establishment of social workers' mobile teams, aimed to identify and assist children on the street, resulting with identification of 362 street children (38% girls), 354 of them (98%) belonging to the Roma community, while the remaining 2% are ethnic-Albanian and ethnic-Macedonian children. 76% of the assisted beneficiaries have reduced vulnerabilities and risk to violence, exploitation and abuse due to their access to relevant institutions and protection and reintegration programs offered by the state.

With UN support, the Municipality of Suto Orizari and MLSP, completed the first phase and initiated the second phase of the construction of the only Kindergarten in this municipality. With the second phase, additional 136 children (or total of 306 children) will have access to pre-school education, including nursery care for 70 children between 9-24 months. This newly available service will enable Roma parents to search for employment. In addition to the regular preschool education services, the kindergarten will provide additional space for 100 street children to attend care and services for their integration into the regular preschool and school activities.

Through the activation and support services by Roma Employment Mentors and ACCEDER programme (holistic approach working on individual level but also with families to overcome cultural barriers), over 2,014 Roma have received employment services. 216 Roma participated in different active employment measures. As a result, 107 full-time jobs were created.

Through Community Works Programme, 613 unemployed people out of which 71 were Roma, gained valuable working experience while providing social services for 8,990 end-beneficiaries in 52 municipalities. Among the end-beneficiaries receiving direct social services about 350 were from Roma community.

(3.6) Institutions have improved capacities to develop and implement inclusive, evidence-based social policies and services that reduce inequality and social exclusion and support the positive development of children

UN supported the newly started social protection reform through introduced new social support and care services for families in risk across the country. The services provided by the Centres for Social Work, were improved with the

introduction of case management that allows social workers to gain a holistic view of the needs of each of the beneficiaries, greater understanding of compounding vulnerabilities – including those arising from the family context – and to build trust between social workers and their beneficiaries. UN built capacities of the social workers to assume the role of case managers. Technical assistance in social work, case management and behavioral insights culminated in the development and introduction of new tools, guidance and training modules in social work. The Centres for Social Work were further strengthened by re-qualifying their workforce and by employing new social workers and other professional staff. In 2020 the support continued with the introduction of mentoring support for case managers, as well as supervision of their work.

(3.7) Healthcare policies increasingly address the needs of vulnerable and socially excluded groups and healthcare services respond better to these needs

It comes as no surprise that UN provided extended technical, operational and policy support to the government on COVID-19 containment and mitigation. In addition to the immediate emergency support, maintaining essential services under COVID-19 crisis was among the main priorities of support in 2020. With UN and other development partners' support, the Government adapted quickly its intervention to deal with immediate COVID-19 response at PHC level, through piloting of tele-consultations and series of other adjustments.

A rapid assessment of PPE and training needs of the maternities related to COVID-19 was conducted, to identify the priority needs of the maternities. This allowed for fair and transparent distribution of the UN procured PPE and infectious control supplies.

Recommendations for detection and management of COVID during pregnancies were developed and translated into local languages for Ob/Gyns. Based on these materials, series of online trainings for Ob/Gyn professional have been organized throughout 2020, with focus on SRH issues in the context of COVID-19. Support to older persons during COVID-19

Member of the Red Cross mobile teams, supported by UNFPA, bringing groceries and medications to older persons at their homes, during Covid-19 outbreak – November 2020, Skopje, North Macedonia. Photo©UNFPA



pandemic was secured in partnership with the Red Cross and the CSOs. Activities on sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence were adapted to respond to the national priorities and the COVID-19 Country Preparedness and Response Plan.

Yet, the support on strengthening of the universal health coverage and improvement of the quality of the health services was equally important.

The activities implemented in 2020 resulted in primary health care (PHC) delivery model that is centred around the health needs of the families and communities, introduced among others through paradigm shift in the role and responsibilities of the primary care nurses. By the end of 2020, the Professional Development Program for Primary Care Nurses had strengthened the capacities of more than 300 nurses.

Increased institutional capacity and improved national approach to better health outcomes of pregnancy and health of babies. A new National Multiyear Master Plan for Perinatal Care was developed with UN support, including detailed implementation plan. This work allowed a convergence of international partners' agenda and consolidated support from all national stakeholders. It was so instrumental and important action that it was integrated in the National Health strategy and in the upcoming technical plans of the EU support in line for the country accession in EPA III financial support to North Macedonia. Perinatal care services support was carried through 2 pilots, expected to scale up in 2021. Advancement in the introduction of the obstetrics surveillance and response system (OSRS) aimed at improving maternal health were carried out. Through joint work of several UN entities aimed at eliminating neonatal deaths introduced the first ever perinatal mortality audit in North Macedonia which will become an essential tool to inform policy making, planning and monitoring the safety and protection of mothers and babies for generations to come. The two key documents – Clinical Guideline on Tromboprophylaxis and Clinical Guideline on Hypertension during pregnancy that were developed have helped the Government and relevant health care facilities to identify the causes of maternal deaths and design appropriate evidence-based policies. Efforts on furthering the capacities of health professionals in family planning were conducted by the introduction of the

online training on contraception, to be managed by Cathedra for Family Medicine.

The first ever developed National eHealth Strategy will be a powerful tool in the hands of health policy makers for efficient provision of health services based on new technologies with a high degree of system integration and increased doctor and patient mobility. A telehealth integration to the National system for Electronic Health Record – Moj Termin enabled doctors to book appointment to their patients online for telecare and contributes to provision of more efficient health services by allowing continuity of health care in the current COVID-19 related situation and for patients to receive the care needed from home as their condition permits without presenting to the clinics physically.

Creating a national electronic immunization database connected with the national e-health records and reporting system allowed to have a full oversight of vaccination situation on the whole national territory and thus better coordinate future needs for a large-scope COVID-19 vaccination.

The equipment for diagnostic and protection of patients by oncological and non-oncological disease that was donated to the University Institute for Positron Emission Tomography (PET centre), University Clinic of Radiotherapy and Oncology, the Institute of Pathophysiology and Nuclear Medicine at the Faculty of Medicine, University Ss. "Cyril and Methodius" will shorten the time for diagnostics of the non-communicable diseases, in particular, cancer and cardiovascular diseases and help save more lives. Radiation protection of patients and health professionals was ensured through establishment of a national dose tracking system for medical imaging by connecting the scanning systems at over 20 hospitals and clinics.

Treatment facility mapping survey was completed which together with the International Standards for the Treatment of Drug Use Disorders, the Treatment Demand Indicator (TDI) and the UNODC Treatment Quality Assurance Tool, form part of a basic suggested package for treatment, planning and monitoring of substances-abuse patients. The total number of treated persons in 2019 including all availed services is 8055, however the number of persons treated only using the opioid agonist maintenance is 2058. Either figure contrasted with the baseline is showing the positive trend.

A growing body of evidence on increasing child obesity was produced. Four inter-linked studies enabled closing of critical data gaps and will pave the way for further advocacy and multi-sectoral response. The study on micronutrient deficiencies in school children led to development and adoption of new Rulebook to define school meals. The econometric study has calculated the overall cost of obesity-related diseases (both direct and indirect) as roughly 5% of North Macedonia's GDP (€482 million or €241 per person/year), showing that much of this cost could easily be avoided by preventing obesity from early age, educating the public of the dangers of poor nutrition and the benefits of physical exercise. [visualize] A behavioural study has identified and categorized nine barriers that inhibit children's capability, opportunity and

Health coordination meeting with Minister of Health and heads of UN agencies. Photo©WHO



motivation to eat healthy diets, and interventions defined to be tested and evaluated.

To strengthen the evidence on home visiting (HV) services, the Regional evaluation was completed in November 2019 with a case study focused on the country experience, that generated lessons learned and recommendations for further improvement, providing directions for establishment of a sustainable model of accessible and adequate community and outreach services. Activities such as revision of standard operating procedures for HV nurses and digitalization of the reporting forms were underway in 2020.

(3.8) Stigmatization and discrimination against socially excluded and vulnerable people reduced through persuasive advocacy and adherence to human rights standards

Forty representatives of the government, Ombudsman's Office, OPDs and CSOs stepped up their understanding of the requirements under the CRPD and new anti-discrimination legislation, aligned with international standard which, inter alia, includes disability as a specific ground for discrimination and independent complaint mechanism. The focus was on substantive v. formal equality as a precondition for disability inclusion, empowerment and full realization of the rights of persons with disabilities, prioritizing LNOB and the most marginalized groups.

(3.9) Refugees in need of international protection are given access to the asylum system in the country, treated in accordance to the international protection regime, and the needs of the most vulnerable are met

In 2020 UN continued to provide support to transiting migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. 5,574 persons in the two temporary transit centres (TTC's) in Vinojug and Tabanovce as well as the Reception Centre for asylum seekers, benefited from individual legal counselling and/or representation to bridge the gap of lack of state provided free legal aid. In addition, UN and partners provided life-saving humanitarian and medical assistance to 15,690 asylum seekers and people on the move along the borderlines.

With UN support, the City Red Cross (CRC) with expert support of the Center for Social Work, provided social protection services and integration support, ensuring that 6 children have access to education, Macedonian language courses for 5 persons with subsidiary protection and 21 asylum-seekers, 16 recreational activities and socialization activities for 21 people. Interpretation services were available for asylum seekers in reception center as well for the persons of concern to UN, living individually arranged accommodation through CRC.

To better identify the essential needs of refugees and stateless persons, UN with its partners conducted a rapid needs assessment in April. Based on the assessment, UN assisted the reception center for asylum seekers to increase the hygiene standards in the context of COVID-19 health recommendations. These measures mitigated negative effect

Free legal aid provided to migrants, asylum seekers and refugees directly at the transit centres. Photo©UNHCR



of the pandemic among persons of concern, resulting also in very low number of infected asylum-seekers and refugees with no fatality, with all 3 asylum-seekers tested positive being treated on equal footing with nationals. UN launched and advertised among the communities the "Help" Web Page and 24/7 Help Line (phone), conducted C19 prevention awareness raising along points of the irregular movements route and reception sites. UN provided computers and other technical equipment, to ensure better access to information and connectivity during COVID-19 restrictions and increase the capacity of the center to facilitate access to online education for asylum seeking children.

UN assisted in establishment of Safe Counselling/ Interviewing space at the reception centres Vizbegovo and Vinojug in order to improve the two-way communications with asylum-seekers, as well as ensure confidential and effective communication between the asylum-seekers and the legal aid partner.

To improve the reception standards for asylum seekers and increase its self-reliance capacities, UN supported MLSP to develop two important documents in 5 languages: the House Rules and the information Brochure on Access to Rights, distributed to asylum seekers accommodated in Vizbegovo Reception centre and provided technical equipment. With UN support, MLSP and Faculty of Philology introduced an online Macedonian language learning platform. This will enable access to quality language classes for asylum seekers immediately after arrival regardless of their location.

UN supported the improvement of the human capacities of authorities dealing with asylum refugees and migration issues. 77 participants benefited from an asylum hearing simulation organized in cooperation with the Academy for Judges and Public Prosecutors, while some 16 border officials benefited a training on limitation of freedom of movement.

OUTCOME 4

Environment & disaster risk reduction

By 2020, individuals, the private sector and state institutions base their actions on the principles of sustainable development, and communities are more resilient to disasters and environmental risks.

Contribution to



Investments in sustainable development: agricultural development and energy
Healthy environment
Protection from natural disasters



11: Agriculture and rural development
15: Energy
27: Environment

UN entities contributing to the achievement of this outcome:
FAO, IOM, UNDP, UNECE, UNEP, UNFPA, UNIDO, WHO

Government and other development partners:

Cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Ministry of Health, local authorities, state institutions, civil society, private sector, academia.

Climate action

The 3rd Biennial Report to UNFCCC and the enhanced Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), prepared with UN support, set increased mitigation targets for greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction, thus advancing the implementation of the Paris Agreement and aligning the country with the EU Green Deal. The country committed to 51% reduction in GHG emissions by 2030 compared to 1990 levels (82% reduction in net GHG emissions by 2030 compared to 1990 levels).

UN continued supporting the hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFC) phase out; and clean-up of the selected hexachlorocyclohexane (HCH) contaminated sites for future industrial use.

UN continued working on strengthening country capacities for climate action and finalization of a Country Work Programme for the GCF, which included development of a new methodology for preparation of the GCF Country Work Programme, assessment of GCF readiness and capacity development needs, mapping of private sector institutions with existing or potential role for supporting climate change

241,755 ha of protected areas under improved management (ensuring sustainable use of natural resources). Photo©UNEP/Bozhinovski



investments, raising awareness and knowledge of national stakeholders regarding the GCF accreditation process and facilitating direct access to the GCF through an Open Call for expressions of interest of potential GCF Direct Access Entities.

COVID-19 crisis and 2020 political developments had negative impact on climate action as limited resources were redirected towards most affected economic sectors to sustain jobs and livelihoods. Economic rescue packages also had limited green emphasis, with environment protection consequently not being an immediate priority.

Natural resources

UN continued to provide support with biodiversity protection and land management aspects. A valorisation study for Shar Mountain was produced, discussed and validated with stakeholders, paving Shar Mountain national park proclamation that is expected by the end of 2021; and the process for revalorisation of Ohrid Lake was initiated together with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Other achievements include: update of national erosion map, database of soil erosion risk, soil sealing rate and loss of soil organic matter on three pilot sites (Strumica, Ohrid and Prilep), as well as forest vegetation maps in three pilot areas (in Maleshevo and Ograzden), identification and testing of proposed quotas for one selected species/bearberry on the entire territory of the country with suggested conservation plan and recommendations for sustainable use and protection.

Activities for the identification of two pilot corridors from the proposed National Ecological Network (MAK-NEN) that are necessary for further testing of site-specific measures commenced, involving local stakeholders for management and restoration of high nature value forests and other habitats. Wider team of biodiversity and forestry experts commenced their work on the identification of high nature value forests by conducting field work activities on the selected pilot sites (Bukovikj and Belasica) that will lead to development of management guidelines by mid-2021.

Together with national partners, UN assisted with elevating country's profile in relation to investing in the management of protected areas and sustainable use of natural resources. Scalable examples that demonstrate the social and economic benefits from protecting natural resources were created through implementation of a grant scheme for 25 protected areas countrywide, covering the area of 241.755 ha. More than 600 representatives of CSOs, local governments and management authorities of protected areas have improved capacities for sustainable management of natural resources. Moreover, 31 women were trained and certified as mountain guides in protected areas. This increased awareness of women for nature protection and opened new opportunities for women through sustainable tourism in protected areas.

Sustainable agriculture

UN supported the implementation of the first round of land consolidation projects under the National Land Consolidation Programme to help agricultural landowners and rural communities address excessive land fragmentation, to increase the competitiveness of agricultural production, improve living conditions and enable sustainable management of natural resources in rural areas. In 2020, land consolidation advanced in all nine targeted areas, covering some 2,500 landowners and 3,000 ha of agricultural land.

Institutional capacities at national level and promotion of climate resilient good practices at local level were strengthened, with focus on capacity building activities for the National Hydrometeorological Service, selection of pilot demonstration sites for farmer field schools for introducing climate smart agriculture technologies and drafting the Irrigation Strategy in cooperation with the Government. Agriculture damage and loss methodology assessment was also initiated in 2020, as were the initial activities for the enhancement of the country's seed system and capacities to ensure proper and resilient seeds in the light changing climate.

Air pollution

Initial steps were taken to create a meaningful response to the air pollution in Skopje by developing subsidy models for vulnerable categories of citizens, creation of a web-platform for collection and visualization of air pollution monitoring data, stakeholder coordination, and piloting of a demonstration model for measures that address the causes of pollution from household heating. With UN support through Skopje Lab, the City of Skopje continued to lead in implementing priority measures of its Climate Change Strategy, thus reducing its environmental footprint and improving the capacities of public administration to design and deliver better services for its citizens. Also, investments in energy efficiency of two public buildings – the Gjorce Petrov Agricultural and Forestry High School in Kavadarci and kindergarten Detelinka in Kriva Palanka – helped reduce emissions.

3,000 ha of agricultural land in advanced phase of land consolidation.

Photo©FAO



Wastewater

The UN contributed to the coordination efforts to build a wastewater treatment plan (WWTP) in Tetovo, by cleaning the project site in the village of Falishe. This will enable the Municipality of Tetovo to move forward with the construction of the WWTP and should help reduce the negative environmental impact of waste in the wider Tetovo area. Further, with UN support 240 residents of the village of Suvodol, Municipality of Makedonski Brod have access to sewerage system following the completion of the construction works; this intervention also reduced groundwater pollution.

Disaster risk reduction

Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction implementation was advanced through actions implemented in Polog region, with focus on understanding disaster risks, improving governance thorough the Network for Resilient Polog and increasing disaster reduction resilience, and development of a roadmap for flood risk financing and risk transfer. Flood risk management in the region shifted from response only to integrated systems to manage hazards, vulnerabilities and exposure of communities and assets, in order to prevent and mitigate losses, and alleviate the impact of future floods.

The capacities of the HydroMet Service have been strengthened through the support provided for the extension of the national network of hydrological and meteorological stations. In the Polog region, 32 stations were upgraded and/or established, and 14 stations in the Drini River Basin. Also, latest version of CLIDATA climatological database/software was provided to HydroMet along with new IT equipment. This assistance shall improve the data collection and analytical capacities of the HydroMet Service, but it also creates a basis for establishment of early warning systems in the Polog and Drini River Basin. The unique approach to continuously update the Flood Risk Management Plan (FRMP) for the Upper Vardar/Polog region with data and information from the new research and studies, as well as the modelling done as part of the preparation of technical documentations, ensured that FRMP remains relevant planning document.

WHO donating patient monitors, pulse oximeters, and digital infrared thermometers for immediate support to the Neurology Clinic in Skopje.

Photo©WHO



This is particularly important because it is the main document that should inform the prioritization of floor risk mitigation interventions and allocation of funding. The Plan should also be taken into consideration while developing the land use and urban plans, as well as other development plans of the municipalities and the region. The cleaning and removal of 35t of sediment from the outlet of the Drini River from the Ohrid Lake and of the urban part of Drin Riverbed in length of 765 meters decreased the risk of flooding in the City of Struga (approx. 16,500 inhabitants) and it was welcomed by the citizens because the riverbed was not cleaned in the last 40 years.

In addition to UN direct COVID-19 crisis-response support (see the main report, **COVID-19 response** section), the implementation of early preparedness measures and capacity development support were key to strengthen the health system's capacity to cope with the crisis. UN supported increasing country's initial testing capacity from 150 tests/day to 3,500 test/day. Specific WHO Protocols for protection of elderly homes were implemented one month before first COVID-19 case was detected in the country, thus sparing these institutions from the outbreaks.

UN-supported establishment of the Epidemic Intelligence and Emergency Operations Centre increased the country's capacity emergency management and monitoring, strengthened communications and coordination and enhanced contact tracing capacity.

3,500 HEALTH-CARE WORKERS TRAINED

As part of the emergency response to COVID-19 pandemic, UN ensured the procurement of 65 devices for mechanical ventilation, 29 intensive care monitors, 10 stationary oxygen concentrators, kits for over 100,000 tests, over 35,000 specialised medical equipment items such as catheters, infusion pump systems and syringes. The UN donated or enabled procuring and delivering of over 2 million items of personal protective equipment, including masks, gloves, scaffanders, googles, shoe covers and protective gowns, to the healthcare institutions in the country, as well as over 5,000 litres of disinfectants and cleaners to help the protection of medical personnel and patients.

The accelerated adaptation and roll-out of training programmes targeting health workers on specific COVID-19 issues reached more than 3,500 health care workers, vitally boosting the country's health workforce capacity nationwide. The uptake of these accredited courses was regularly monitored in partnership with the E-health directorate (<https://obuki.zdravstvo.gov.mk/login>).

UN supported the development of an integrated national database of COVID-19 positive cases pulling data from national laboratories performing testing; and the set-up of a digital roster of available health workforce to support planning of surge capacities.

The implementation of the behavioural insight surveys during 2020 supported decision-makers and communicators with gaining understanding of the population's uptake of public health measures, their knowledge and trust, and offered insight into risk perceptions.

Work on emergency preparedness continued through the annual revision of the national Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) Action Plan on sexual and reproductive health was conducted in a participatory manner, to incorporate the COVID-19 context; additional MISP trainings were delivered.

OUTCOME 5

Gender equality

By 2020, national and local institutions are better able to design and deliver high-quality services for all users, in a transparent, cost-effective, non-discriminatory and gender-sensitive manner.

Contribution to



Gender equality and equal opportunities for women and men
Prevention and countering violence against women
Gender-responsive policy making and budgeting based on disaggregated data



23: Judiciary and fundamental rights
19: Social policy and employment
19.7: Anti-discrimination and equal opportunities

UN entities contributing to the achievement of this outcome:
FAO, IOM, OHCHR, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women

Government and other development partners:

Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Local Self Government, local self-government units, the Ombudsman, civil society, private sector, academia and others.

(5.1) Legislation on gender-based violence and anti-discrimination is aligned with international standards

UN contributed to the alignment of national human rights and gender equality legislation with international and European standards. The antidiscrimination law recognizes all prohibited grounds by international law including, for the first time, sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as serious forms of discrimination. The Law on Prevention and Protection against Violence against Women (GBV law), drafted at the end of 2020 and enacted shortly after, ensured implementation of the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention, as well as relevant UN human rights standards and EU Directives. UN provided advise in developing a new Gender Equality Law and a national strategy and plan of action, amendments to the Criminal Code to include new crimes against women, and a new law on state-funded compensation for victims of all forms of violent crimes, including GBV and DV.

UN supported the Government and contributed to the development of the second National Action Plan (NAP) for the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, from the Women, Peace and Security agenda. The Government adopted a strategic framework for the NAP, as well as operational plans of the institutions that will implement the NAP.

(5.2) Public institutions and CSOs have enhanced capacities for prevention of discrimination and gender-based violence and protection of survivors

The capacities of public institutions and CSOs were further enhanced to apply equality concepts and effectively address discrimination. In 2020, the Ombudsman' Office received 60 complaints on discrimination and issued 24 opinions; civil society reported 130 GBV cases that ended with a court epilogue. A total of 350 public servants and 40 professionals, including municipal administration, social services and CSOs representatives, which provide support services and legal aid to victims, have scaled up their knowledge on gender equality and GBV. Two additional sexual assault centers became

functional, which are critical for immediate assistance and referral of victims.

(5.3) Relevant line ministries/public institutions and the Ombudsperson have increased capacities to address multiple discrimination of most marginalized groups of women and respond to their needs

A multi-disciplinary response and inter-sectoral coordination in tackling discrimination, gender inequalities and GBV has been enhanced through capacity building efforts, awareness raising campaigns, information materials, and innovative tools focusing on groups facing multiple discrimination at risk of being left behind. UN assisted in producing special protocols for safe operation of shelters for GBV victims, as well as two additional protocols for safe operation of the sexual assault referral centres in the context of COVID-19, enabling more efficient support and assistance services.

Two-day training on gender equality and combating gender stereotypes in the defense, organized by the Ministry of Defense, with technical support of UN Women. The training is part of the activities to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the UNSCR 1325 and 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Photo©UN Women/Ministry of Defence



Media have a powerful role to play in the fight against gender-based violence. NGO HOPS – Healthy Options Project Skopje with partner organizations Coalition Margins and National Network to End Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence developed three modules to improve knowledge on gender-based violence for various types of media professionals: The initiative is part of the EU-UN Women regional programme “Implementing Norms, Changing Minds”, funded by the European Union. Photo©UN Women/NGO Hops



(5.4) Civil society organizations more effectively advocate and represent women and girls in addressing gender inequalities in the public and private sphere

UN advocacy with civil society pronounced a greater voice and agency of women and girls in addressing gender inequalities, negative stereotypes and violence against women. National and local authorities joined forces with women and grassroots organizations to stand up and take action for gender equality and women's rights. 263 women took part in shaping 144 local policy recommendations. Women participation in policy and decision making, along with gender-responsive budgeting and prioritization of gender specific needs in times of pandemic have been enhanced through capacity building, outreach and networking initiatives. Online platform for students to share their work on VAW and DV and a mobile application “Be Safe” developed in 3 languages (Albanian, Macedonian, and Romani) for awareness and reporting of GBV, have been widely used.

UN support amplified the advocacy and created stronger alliances between women and grassroots organizations and national and local authorities in gender mainstreaming and

addressing gender inequalities, negative stereotypes and violence against women, including:

- Advocacy campaign for women empowerment led by two women organizations, 14 local grassroots organizations and two associations of local authorities;
- 263 women participated in formulating 144 policy recommendations for gendered municipal programmes and budgets; 36 CSOs representatives capacitated to oversee municipal policies and budgets from a gender perspective;
- 15 CSOs that provide services to victims of gender-based violence were active collaborators and provided content to the mobile application “Be Safe”;
- 18 high school professionals were trained on prevention from violence against women; and
- 1,897 people directly benefited from the implementation of CSO projects in 5 municipalities of whom 535 men, 396 women, and 966 children, the focus of which has been on engaging youth and people from vulnerable groups, which resulted in engagement of 989 socially excluded persons, including Roma children, people with disabilities, and socialization of youth during the COVID-19 pandemic.

(5.5) Public officials have improved capacity to analyse gender disaggregated data and incorporate gender considerations in formulating and implementing policies and budgets at central and local level

The number of engendered policies and budgets have been increased beyond the targets set for 2020: 14 ministries (10/15) and 21 municipalities (15/81). A new National Strategy for Gender Equality (2021-2026), with a strong focus on intersectionality and meaningful participation of women in planning and budgeting processes; Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy (2021-2027); and Regional Development Strategy (2020-2029) have been prepared. The draft Organic Budget Law for the first time incorporated gender responsive principles. Enhanced local capacities benefited 51 programmes and action plans on equal opportunities for women and men with an adequate gender-responsive budget allocations, locally owned online platform, and Municipality Development Index as a resource for gender disaggregated data.

