

PRESS NOTE

Spreading facts, not fear, in the fight against coronavirus in Lebanon

BEIRUT, 6 March 2020.- Lebanon confirmed its first coronavirus (COVID-19) case on February 21st and, with infections spreading globally, people need to know how to protect themselves. UNICEF, in close collaboration with the Ministries of Public Health and Education, WHO Lebanon, the Lebanese Red Cross and other partners, is putting efforts on spreading the facts and the preventive measures as recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Despite massive dissemination of factual information and the effective protection measures, misleading information is sowing fear and confusion among communities. Moreover, some rumors have been spread about UNICEF through WhatsApp, including a “bulletin from UNICEF” with wrong information and a message about “UNICEF employees going to visit families at their houses to conduct corona virus screening”. UNICEF is neither sending WhatsApp messages, nor conducting a door-to-door screening against coronavirus and the communities should beware of strangers impersonating UNICEF staff for any medical screening.

UNICEF team co-lead the national Risk communication and Community Engagement group on COVID-19, which brings together the Government, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations. Thus, UNICEF will continue to disseminate the information that can help people in Lebanon to prevent the infection and in support of the national response to control the spread of the virus.

Communication efforts are focused on contributing to reduce misinformation, providing the communities, schools, health centers and the public with vital information around the symptoms, transmission, and prevention of COVID-19.

UNICEF’s contribution to the national response to COVID-19 in Lebanon includes supporting the screening at the five borders –but not at people’s houses–; training of frontline workers, workers of social development centers, teachers and health councilors in schools to strengthen their capacity for awareness raising, for infection prevention and control and the promotion of healthy practices. UNICEF is focusing also on secondary impacts of the virus: for example, to prevent bullying or stigmatization; to ensure that children affected and left without care due to the virus have access to adequate alternative care arrangements; and to ensure continuity of essential services like immunization.

To access and disseminate reliable information on COVID-19, please consult:

[Ministry of Public Health](#) (includes phone numbers to contact for any inquiry related to COVID-19)

[Ministry of Education and HE \(MEHE\)](#)

[World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)

[UNDP Lebanon](#)

[UNICEF Lebanon](#)

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