

Latin America & the Caribbean COVID-19 Education Response

[June 25th, 2020]

COVID-19 Impact on Education in the Latin America & the Caribbean Region (LAC)¹

I. SITUATION ANALYSIS

CURRENT SITUATION OF SCHOOLS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN



See source of data in note 1.

¹ Note: The estimated data from this section has been collated from information either from the UIS database, UNICEF, and other sources:

-UNESCO Institute of Statistics <http://data.uis.unesco.org/#>

-UNICEF data: <https://www.unicef.org/lac/en/investing-education-0>

- <https://www.haiti-reference.com/pages/plan/education/education-chiffres-et-faits/>

-Figures for El Salvador were based on data reported from SIGES 2020: <https://siges.sv/inicio>

-Figures for Guyana were based on most recent data reported in Guyana's Ministry of Education website: <https://education.gov.gy/web2/index.php/digest-of-education-statistics>

As of June 25th, many countries still have their schools closed, however, some countries like Uruguay, and some countries and territories from the Eastern Caribbean Area, have started to open their schools.

UNICEF Country Offices and Regional Office in the LAC region are still providing technical support to MoEs to ensure safe, quality and continued learning for all children, as well with the elaboration of protocols to ensure the safe reopening of schools.

II. PROGRESS TOWARDS THE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS

Ministries of Education continue to support distance learning through flexible and distance home-based learning resources (on-line platforms, mobile phones, radio and TV learning content, broadcasts, learning content through social media, podcasts, etc.). However, most countries in the LAC region have already started to prepare for the reopening of schools -some countries are in the planning stages, whereas other have already initiated the reopening process in stages. Here are the last updates on schools' closures and reopening plans:

- **NEW Anguilla:** Primary Schools: Grades K to 4 will continue with E-Learning until further notice. Grades 5 and 6 will return to the classroom half day from 8:25am to 12 noon. There will be no afternoon sessions. Students in Special Education Needs (SEN) Units will continue remote learning with their teachers until further notice. For more information check [here](#).
- **Antigua y Barbuda:** Schools have opened at the fifth form level further to the completion of a sanitization programme. All schools have been outfitted with hand sanitizing stations and hand washing facilities have been installed at the entrance of each classroom.
- **Barbados:** Class Four students (around 3300) will return to the classrooms from Monday, June 15, in order to prepare for the 2020 Barbados Secondary Schools' Entrance Examination to be held on Tuesday, July 14. [The MoE has developed guidelines for the safe reopening of schools.](#)
- **NEW Chile:** The Ministry of Education is working on a back-to-school plan based on three principles: Safety (classes will be resumed when health conditions permit), graduality (flexibility to resume classes according to the context), and equity (ensuring that all families can use the safe and secure space provided by the schools).
- **NEW Colombia:** The MoE has released the directive [011](#), giving guidance on the provision of education services in the framework of the health emergency of COVID-19, and the directive [012](#), which provides additional guidance for the provision of educational services for initial, pre-primary, basic and middle levels. You can also find the directives towards reopening schools in the following [link](#).
- **Costa Rica:** The Ministry of Education has set up an interdisciplinary and expert working team to assess the gradual and controlled [return to attendance in the medium term](#), in accordance with the strictest prevention protocols and when health conditions permit.
- **NEW Cuba:** Since June 18th, Cuba has begun de-escalation in all provinces except Havana and Matanzas. The Ministry of Education has planned to carry out this process in 3 phases: **Phase 1:** (For all provinces except Havana and Matanzas): Guarantee conditions in educational institutions and the preparation of directors, teachers, students, families and the community for the completion of the school year, resuming in September. **Phase 2:** Restart and completion of the 2019-2020 school year, which runs until October 31st. **Phase 3:** The new school year will begin on Monday, November 2. In this phase the new forms of work experienced in the III Improvement of the educational system will be generalized. The official communication from the MoE can be found in this [link](#).
- **Dominican Republic:** The High-Level Commission created by the National Council of Education has launched the protocol to follow during the academic school year 2020-2021, which is planned to start on August 24.

Such protocol includes measures on personal protection, use of transport, arrival conditions, measures for students, teachers and other education staff, etc.

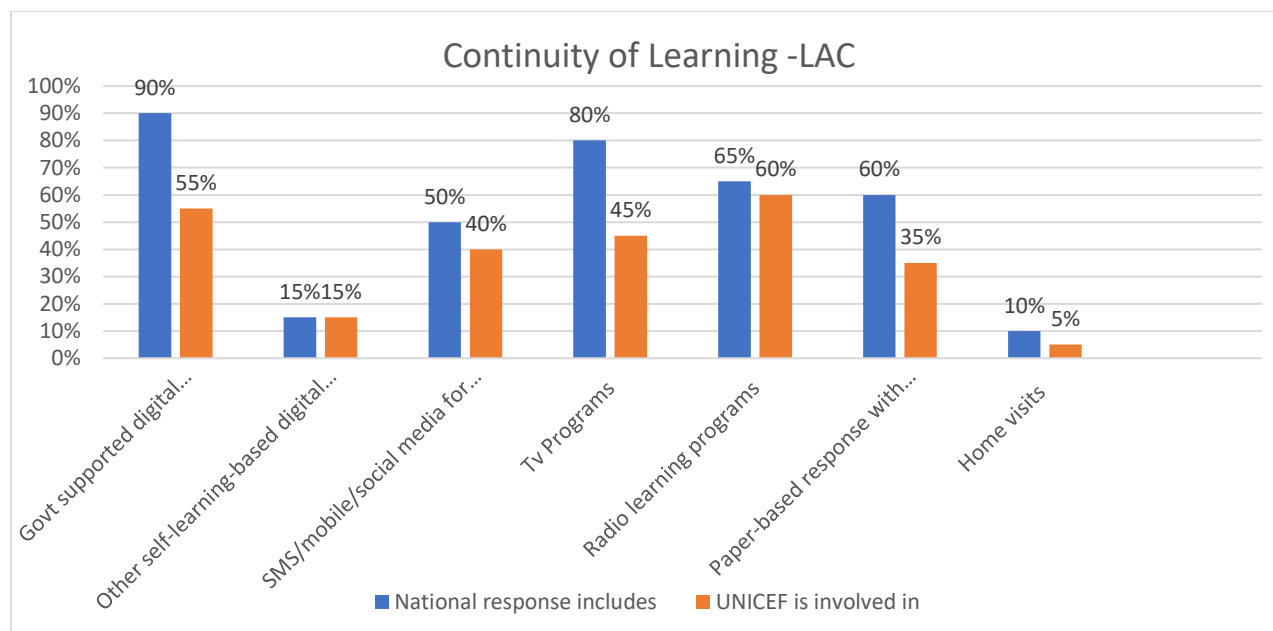
- **NEW Ecuador:** The Ministry of Education, as part of the "Plan Educativo Aprendemos Juntos en Casa", has launched the optional progressive return to schools of rural educational institutions of the Costa-Galapagos zones. Approximately 2,071 schools with 35 students or less must meet the sanitation protocols in order to receive authorization for their return to face-to-face education combined with the home-schooling modality. For more information check [here](#).
- **NEW El Salvador:** The Ministry of Education has a response strategy with actions identified in 3 phases: 1) facing the closure of schools, 2) recovery and educational continuity (Plan la Alegria de Volver a la escuela) and 3) transformation and improvement towards multimodal education.
- **Grenada:** The Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development, Religious Affairs and Information has developed [guidelines for the reopening of schools](#).
- **Guyana:** [Schools are planning to open](#) from June 8 to August 15 to facilitate students preparing to write the National Grade Six Assessment (NGSA), Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) and Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) examinations.
- **Honduras:** [The Secretary of Education has presented the protocol for the reopening of schools](#). Strategy for the Safe Return to Government and Non-Government Education Centres in the face of COVID-19 crisis.
- **Jamaica:** The MoE has issued new protocols established for students returning to the classroom. Jamaican students will sit the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC), and Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) tests starting July 27 and to that end welcomed back these external exam students in 5th and 6th form on June 8th. Students and teachers with underlying health conditions are encouraged to remain home. All public health and safety [protocols](#) are being observed system wide to ensure the safety of students and teachers.
- **NEW Mexico:** The Public Secretary of Education has established that in order to take care of the health of children, adolescents and professors, public and private schools, the return to school has been postponed to 10 August and will depend on the indications defined by the health authority according to the health risk. Also, some States have already indicated that they will open schools later. The formal distance learning strategy "Aprende en Casa" has ended with the end of the formal school year and is replaced by a summer programme "Verano Divertido", using the same platforms (internet, TV, radio).
- **Panama:** [Has presented its action plan of the MEDUCA strategy to address COVID-19](#). The strategy will align the efforts of the education sector, both public and private actors, to respond effectively to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis.
- **NEW Paraguay:** In a meeting of the Educational council and the Health authorities a preliminary plan designed for a possible gradual return to classes was analyzed. The Ministry of Education and Science (MEC) of Paraguay proposes four possible scenarios for the gradual return of schools. For more information check [here](#).
- **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:** Schools for fifth and sixth form students reopened on May 25th. The hours will be reduced to 9am–2pm.
- **Uruguay:** It is the only case of progressive reopening, which started with rural schools and will deepen its strategy in the coming weeks. [Uruguay has developed the protocol of implementation for the return of students to schools](#). [The country has also some recommendations for the return to school](#).

REOPENING OF SCHOOLS IN LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

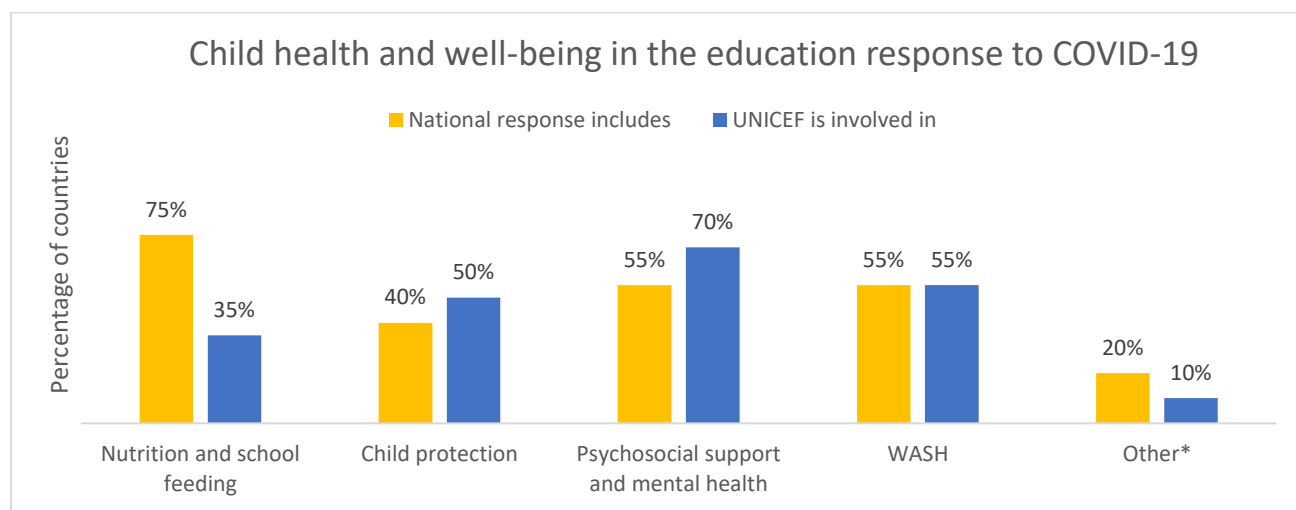


III. UNICEF LAC CURRENT DATA

LAC continuity of learning:



Child health & well-being:



IV. UNICEF COUNTRY OFFICE & GOVERNMENT COVID-19 EDUCATION ACTIONS²

Since the start of the outbreak in the Latin America & the Caribbean region, the **twenty-four UNICEF national offices in the region** have supported the MoEs in their response to COVID-19.

Argentina: On 29th of May, the MoE created the Advisory Board for the Planning of the Return to Classrooms, through the resolution 423/2020. UNICEF Argentina is a member of this multisectoral board. Two meetings were held on the 2nd and 5th of June. On 5th of June, the MoE of Buenos Aires City created the Advisory Board for the Planning of the Return to Classrooms, where UNICEF will be a member of this board to support the reopening of schools. Support to the national government (MoE) in the implementation of a national survey in homes to know the educational situation of the children and adolescents during the COVID19. This study is part of an evaluation program that has been launched nationwide.

NEW: UNICEF has provided support to the national government (MoE) in the implementation of a national survey in homes to know the educational situation of the children and adolescents during the COVID19. This study is part of an evaluation program that has been launched nationwide. Fieldwork begins the week of June 22nd.

Bolivia: UNICEF has massively developed and distributed an orientation booklet for parents so that they can support their children to continue educational activities. In alliance with Tigo, UNICEF is providing training to teachers to improve their skills and knowledge of tools to be able to carry out educational activities virtually. MoE has requested UNICEF to buy 700 hygiene (biosecurity) kits and educational materials. UNICEF is also supporting MoE on the content for the Virtual Education platform.

In addition, UNICEF has received requests for support from some Autonomous governments to contextualize and apply the framework for back to schools. MoE has legalized virtual education through a decree.

Belize: The Ministry of Education, Youth, Sports and Culture and UNICEF, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Belize Red Cross, have focused their response on preparing for the school's closure and facilitating the continuity of learning, including the implementation of UNICEF school operational guidance. For the medium-term response to COVID-19, schools, together with the assistance of the Government and UNICEF, will develop appropriate strategies to facilitate continuity of learning to enable children, teachers and schools to have flexible and distance learning materials available, such as reading materials, TV and/or radio content, online educational content.

NEW: MoE in Belize is using learning platforms to provide continuing education to children in Belize. Technology - Printed lessons via Special Edition Newsprint to be published every two weeks students from primary school to secondary schools. Radio broadcasted lessons utilizing FM Radio Stations (Monday to Friday). Television broadcasted, 2 - 3 times per week to provide support for psychosocial and life skills to children and parents. Internet based via MoE website -lessons posted daily for children from the class of standard one to six.

² For any corrections or updates, kindly send your inputs to Tania G. Veiga (tgonzalez@unicef.org), with Ruth Custode and Juan Pinzón in copy. The next update will be on July 8th and we will be accepting COs updates until July 6th 12pm.

UNICEF ECD/Education sector has supported the implementation of safe school operations guidance with government and local partners while schools were still open, including guidance on handwashing and sanitation in schools, revision of protocols, and training and support for school staff. This guidance will also be implemented once school reopen. In addition, technical support to assist the identification and development of context-appropriate strategies to ensure educational continuity through flexible and distance home-based learning methods delivered through on-line platforms.

UNICEF is supporting the development of guidance and content for parents and caregivers to assist children including psycho-social support and distance learning for most vulnerable children: migrants, refugees, children with disabilities, children out-of-school, and indigenous children, including support to ongoing school-feeding.

UNICEF is also supporting the ministry with a television programme to support children and families in psychosocial support and learning sessions. UNICEF has reached 387,000 parents, teachers and children with health and hygiene education messages.

Brazil: Brazil CO has supported local governments to develop and implement guidelines for safe school operations during the COVID-19 outbreak (e.g. promotion of hand and respiratory hygiene, screening and referral of suspected cases, as appropriate), and education about COVID-19 prevention, once schools reopen. UNICEF has also supported local governments (sub-national level) to develop and make available learning materials for children and adolescents once schools are closed adapted and implemented school active search strategy to reach out the students that eventually don't go back to school when they reopen.

The support given by Brazil Country Office are being materialized by the following actions take to date:

Educational Podcasts - UNICEF has launched a podcast series to provide children aged 4 to 10 years and their families with educational opportunities in the context of the school closure. *Deixa que eu conto* - <https://open.spotify.com/show/09Oc1iE8GlmOzjdpcygrXo>

Mobilization Educational Podcasts - UNICEF launched a series of educational podcasts focused on the culture of the people who live in the Amazon region.

National broadcast – <https://www.facebook.com/UNICEFBrasil/videos/685229985632284>. Till now more than 78 thousand people were reached.

Regional broadcast - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aqR35xNEPyE>

More than 4 thousand people have already been reached with this content.

Successful School Paths - UNICEF is adapting the implementation of its Successful School Paths strategy to que context of the coronavirus pandemic.

More information - <https://trajetoriaescolar.org.br/>

Out-School-Children - UNICEF is engaging more than 3.000 municipalities use the opportunity of the school closure to train local staff on the School Active Search strategy that aims to identify and re-enroll out-of-school children to the public-school system. More information - <https://buscaativaescolar.org.br>

Inclusion - UNICEF is disseminating to municipalities contents produced in partnership with Sesame Street on inclusion of children with disability.

You can see the material at: <https://www.unicef.org/brazil/incluir-brincando>

Always learning – UNICEF and partners lunched a digital platform to support educational managers, teachers and family's securer the right to learn of children and adolescents in the context of the coronavirus pandemic.

Link: www.aprendendosempre.org

Mobilization – UNICEF is participating in different live sessions to mobilize municipal managers of education, technicians and teachers about the challenges of education during the coronavirus pandemic and how to reduce its impact. The live session can be accessed at: <https://youtu.be/6Odd74rSvBw> or <https://www.facebook.com/convivaeducacao/videos/655126825051505/?vh=e>

Costa Rica: UNICEF and various UN agencies have received different requests from the Ministry of Public Education (MEP) in the areas of WASH, education, violence and gender. UNICEF and UNESCO will support the immediate strengthening of MEP's remote learning system as a priority, but with the intention of maintaining their support beyond the current emergency response phase in order to make the system ready and available for subsequent emergencies.

NEW: UNICEF Costa Rica has supported the development of "Autonomous Learning Guides" of the remote learning program, "learn at home". UNICEF has also assessed the impact on the student population as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and supported the MoE in the development of a return strategy to the educational process at the worktables. In addition, UNICEF has also developed audiovisual and written systematization of good practices and life stories on educational innovations, access to services and prevention of educational exclusion in the context of the pandemic, with a social communication campaign to promote the safe return to the educational process, hygiene measures and the prevention of exclusion in the context of COVID-19.

The MoE of Costa Rica has established three levels of care for students: **Universal:** reaching the entire educational system. **Focused:** Recovers the particular contexts of the populations, i.e the indigenous sub-systems, migrant population, population with disabilities, populations in conditions of poverty and greater vulnerability social, economic, emotional **Indicated:** Identification and prioritization of those populations, educational levels, regions, circuits considered to require specific indicated actions.

Five strategic premises for the work have been established: Status of the pandemic situation in the 27 Regional directorates of education, evolution of the distance educational process, scenarios for the restart of face-to-face classes, preparation of the general action protocol, prioritization of learning expected and strengthening distance educational support. Five working groups were established for the generation of protocols for returning to face-to-face classes. Training in digital media for education was provided to 66,000 teachers (99% of the total).

Chile: UNICEF - UNESCO -MoE collaboration in a series of Webinars, the first one on Socio-emotional learning in the context of a pandemic. UNICEF has collaborated with technical teams on the reopening of schools and statistics regarding adolescent concerns in the context of a pandemic.

MoE has launched the remote learning platform "Aprendo en Línea" to support continuity of the educational processes. A free downloadable software "Learning to read with Bartolo" was available to support the learning of reading for students from 1st to 3rd grade.

In addition, TVChannel #TVEducaChile, transmits cultural and curricular entertainment of the courses from 1 to 4 basic. MoE has also released graphic and audiovisual resources for socio-emotional support for teachers, students and families. Furthermore, curricular prioritization for all educational levels in response to the educational needs. MoE has launched a public announcement from the educational authority regarding the need to prepare schools for reopening.

Colombia: UNICEF Colombia has reached around 1,700 girls and boys accompanied by their tutors from home learning circles. Around 200 teachers have participated in remote awareness sessions and around 760 children continue their distance school reinforcement process. More than 577 food rations for children delivered in the past two weeks. Data collection began for the evaluation of La Aldea programme in Barranquilla with the World Bank. MoE has announced the partial reopening of schools as of August 1st, 2020. The MoE has released ministerial directive 011 with where guidelines are given for the opening of schools. Each local school secretariat and each school must have its protocol for this.

NEW: UNICEF Colombia has reached 12,000 children with the home learning strategy La Aldea in la Guajira, Norte de Santander and Barranquilla. UNICEF Colombia, as leader of the EiE cluster, has aligned the humanitarian response with the MoE and the local Secretariats, and has supported the Education Needs Assessment done by the Education Secretariats in Norte de Santander and Nariño. Additionally, as a joint action between IRC, NRC and UNICEF, pedagogical material was delivered for the education continuity of 195 children (pendulares) living in Venezuela but studying in Colombia. The MoE of Colombia launched a series of guidelines and protocols for the partial reopening of schools as of August 1st, 2020.

Cuba: Thanks to Global Thematic Funds, UNICEF Cuba is expecting materials for sanitizing schools for the reopening planned for mid-June. CO is also in the process of procuring essential school supplies for teachers and students (such as pens, chalk, among others). CO is also working on psycho-emotional support with an emphasis on children with disabilities.

Regarding government education actions, the MoE has announced the reopening of schools for the month of September. UNICEF is supporting the MoE in the reopening with emphasis on social distancing, hygiene and sanitation measures, access to schools and curricular readjustments for the 2020-2021 school year. TV oriented classes will be held until June 29th, whereas an evaluation system will be carried out at the time of reopening (for about 8 weeks).

NEW: UNICEF Cuba has contributed to the purchase of essential school supplies and sanitation process for the reopening of schools. UNICEF has also supported families in socio-emotional support, dealing with confinement situations with WhatsApp groups for the care of children with autism. UNICEF has also streamed two Facebook live with counseling to families of children with autism and materials with activations from social networks for early childhood, among other communication actions.

Since June 18th, Cuba has begun de-escalation in all provinces except Havana and Matanzas. The Ministry of Education has planned to carry out this process in **3 phases**:

Phase 1: (For all provinces except Havana and Matanzas): Guarantee conditions in educational institutions and the preparation of directors, teachers, students, families and the community for the completion of the school year, resuming in September. This phase will run from June 18 to July 18.

Phase 2: Restart and completion of the 2019-2020 school year, which runs until October 31st. In the last week of August, teachers will finish their preparations and families will be contacted on the restarting the school and ending the school year, sessions of teaching activities, schedules, calendar of final evaluations and continuity of studies. The teaching activities will start on September 1st.

Phase 3: The new school year will begin on Monday, November 2, and the curricular adaptations prepared by teams of specialists from the Central Institute of Pedagogical Sciences, the University of Pedagogical Sciences Enrique José Varona and the MoE will be applied, which do not imply reduction of frequencies of the subjects, nor removal of content. In this phase the new forms of work experienced in the III Improvement of the educational system will be generalized.

Dominican Republic: The Ministry of Education has developed a website for school continuity with educational guides and materials for all levels, including disabilities, and has supported food distribution at national level (bread, milk, HEBs to families with enrolled children). The CO has worked on the adaptation and design of posters for COVID-19 prevention and has supported the virtual educational proposal with 10 short story videos for children ages 5 to 12 with translation in sign language, which will reach families through educational TV and social networks.

The CO is also providing technical support for the adaptation to COVID-19 of the program on psycho-emotional recovery called *Retorno de la Alegría*, which the MoE will implement with UNICEF's support over the first four weeks of the school year when schools reopen on August 24. Lastly, the CO is also supporting the revision of the protocol for the reopening of schools and supporting the MoE with the design of an educational program of didactic sequences of reading, writing and mathematics for primary school.

Ecuador: UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Education to ensure that more children and adolescents have access to quality educational content through radio and television and supporting pedagogical mentors and teachers from the remedial program in the implementation of distance education. UNICEF CO continues providing technical assistance to the MOE to strengthen education policies to ensure safe school operations, wellbeing and protection, and learning as part of the COVID-19 education response strategy.

UNICEF will support the MOE in the elaboration of a rapid diagnosis tool to guide the plan for returning to school.

The Ministry of Education together with the education authorities presented the Educational Plan "Aprendemos Juntos en casa", which will be implemented in the Costa-Galapagos regions for the school year 2020-2021.

ECA: UNICEF ECA supported around 130 schools with provision of hygiene kits to the most disadvantaged children including 7 in Anguilla, 60 Barbados 30 in Saint Lucia, 25 in Tobago and 8 in British Virgin Islands. UNICEF provided support to Ministry of Education St. Lucia for provision of distant learning for 13,000 primary school children through TV and Radio programmes.

UNICEF ECA provided 639 digital devices for the most vulnerable children with devices to ensure their access to online education in the 6 island countries which include 43, in Anguilla, 120 in Barbados, 100 in Dominica, 50 in Tobago, 200 in Turks and Cacaos and 51 in Virgin Islands.

In Trinidad, more than 600 migrant children have been provided with online distant education and during the month of May additional 277 migrant children received tablets and 240 received student kits. Sixteen Facilitators have been assigned to work directly with the Notes Master team to complete outstanding online content and to receive targeted technical support with the platform to better assist migrant children in accessing on-line education.

El Salvador: UNICEF is supporting the MOE in the adaptation of the Accelerated Education, Work initiation strategies to a multimodal and digital version for distance learning. UNICEF is also supporting the strengthening of connectivity for the continuity of the Academic Leveling Tutoring strategy.

UNICEF will also support the adaptation of the "Soy Música" project, coordinated with the organization Musicians Without Borders, to be implemented in a multimodal distance learning manner.

The Ministry of Education has a response strategy with actions identified in 3 phases: 1) facing the closure of schools, 2) recovery and educational continuity (Plan la Alegría de Volver a la escuela) and 3) transformation and improvement towards multimodal education.

The activities of phase 1 are currently being implemented and include among other activities: establishing pedagogical guidelines, prioritizing the curriculum, digitalizing educational content and making available an Educational Platform and complementary resources for distance learning, as well as training teachers in the use of technologies.

UNICEF will also support the digitalization of the “Soy Música” initiative, in coordinated with the organization Musicians Without Borders, to contribute to peaceful coexistence and psychosocial support.

Other initiatives that UNICEF is supporting in the framework of this plan is the establishment of pedagogical guidelines, prioritizing the curriculum, digitalizing educational content and making available an Educational Platform and complementary resources for distance learning, as well as training teachers in the use of technologies.

NEW: On June 5, the Education Cluster was activated with more than 90 participants. The cluster is led by UNICEF and co-led by Save the Children; the World Bank is a strategic partner. The participation of the World Bank is strategic in the framework of the Initiative of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). As a long-term perspective, the objective is to reinvent education in El Salvador. The Ministry of Education actively participates in the cluster and the Minister of Education participated in the first meeting and explained the situation of the sector and the expectations of the ministry.

The education cluster has been organized into four subcommittees:

1. Policies, management and financing - coordinated by the World Bank
2. Continuous learning - coordinated by Save the Children
3. Safe operation- coordinated by Save the Children
4. Well-being and protection - coordinated by UNICEF

The commissions are elaborating their action plans, defining priorities and lines of action to support the Ministry of Education.

Guatemala: The CO has carried out the second delivery of guides on self-learning in Spanish and in priority Mayan languages to support indigenous peoples for 45 days and has provided support for the design of *Mineduct.digital*, including online learning resources for primary and secondary students. The office has also designed an online course for teachers on psychosocial support and mental health and provided support with feedback and guidelines to organizations composed by families, teachers, school directors, etc. (in Spanish *Organizaciones de Padres de Familia*), which distribute food rations and the self-study guides. In addition, the office has also provided technical support to the MoE for the recovery phase, which includes initial protocols and phases for the progressive and staggered reopening of schools. Furthermore, the Education Cluster is active and counts with the participation of 55 members, the MoE has also activated 10 technical groups.

On its end, the MoE has designed the 2020-2021 emergency curriculum and continues working on the production of learning sessions for TV and radio, as well as on the design of formative assessment tools. Mineduc.gob.gt has made available to the learning community resources, a digital library, an education blog,

and a digital magazine for teachers. The Ministry of Education has also provided pre-primary and primary students non-perishable food products for another 21 days (in total the MoE has provided them for 50 days). Lastly, the MoE has programmed virtual teacher training, that includes courses on accelerated learning, psychosocial support, implementation of the curricular adaptation and formative assessment tools.

NEW: MoE established a work group with representatives of the teachers' union in order to socialize with them the plan to reopen schools. The engagement of the teachers' union has demonstrated to be a good strategy for a local and close follow-up of the distant learning modalities and trainings. ASH has become a priority in the reopening plan since an important percentage of schools lack these services. CO has done advocacy to support the MoE in requesting IDB the option to use part of the education sector budget to do minor repairs in 5000 schools, in the most vulnerable settings. Another important issue that the MoE has strengthened is parental care for children 0-5 years old through short videos sent to community volunteers by mobile technology.

Guyana: Together with UNICEF, the MoE is currently finalizing its protocols for school re-opening under three thematic areas: Wellbeing and Protection/Psychological support; Safe Operations and Learning. UNICEF will build capacity in Ministry of Education's Crisis Management Team.

The MoE is supporting 120, 000 children with distance/home-based learning. From the total of people accessing educational services in the MoEs website, 59.7% are parents/guardians; 19 % are students and 22% are teachers. Out of these people, 95% of these are in the coastal regions with 5% being from the hinterland.

NEW: The MoE opened schools on June 14 through to August 15, to facilitate face to face learning sessions for students preparing to write the National Grade Six Assessment (NGSA), and the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) and Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) examinations. All schools were sanitized during the week of June 8 and protocols for the re-opening, and administrations of the national Examinations were gazetted "as COVID -19 Special Measures". The MoE is currently finalizing its protocols for the return to school. UNICEF Guyana as Grant Agent is in receipt of GPE C19 Accelerated Funding (US\$ 3.745 million) and has agreed with the MoE to focus on boosting distance learning, wellbeing/psychosocial support and WASH and safe schools.

Haiti: Last month, MoE launched its digital platform (<http://pratic.menfp.gouv.ht/>) with available learning resources for teachers and students and now a monitoring system is being put in place by the EiE local group to gather data on actual use of online platforms. Additionally, the MoE submitted a funding proposal to the GPE and is awaiting approval. As of today, the education sector is underfinanced to ensure learning continuity for all students. Regarding the reopening of schools, the MoE has announced 2 potential dates for reopening schools: 1- August 3rd to Sept 30th or 2- September 3rd to October 30th, depending on the COVID19 situation in the country. These 3 months will serve to catch-up the 2019-2020 academic school year. Furthermore, a working group is set up to develop school reopening guidelines.

The CO supported the MoE in the development of the GPE \$ 10 million funding proposal as Grant Agent and has also provided technological devices such as laptops, WIFI modems, smartphones, printers etc. to MoE's personnel to facilitate working from home modalities during confinement period. In addition,

UNICEF is working with a local newspaper to produce a children's magazine to give more than 25,000 children access to free reading and learning materials for 6 months and is also working with the MoE to set-up and support a working group for the development of home learning paper-based materials for children (Preschool and basic Education levels).

Honduras: UNICEF CO has supported the design and dissemination of the communication strategy to strengthen the support for parents in home activities and is providing technical assistance to the Education Secretary for the revision of reopening schools strategy. SEDUC has presented the reopening schools strategy but has not yet announced the date for the reopening.

The Honduran Secretary of Education continues to disseminate educational content through TV programs and throughout the SEDUC platform. In addition, the Ministry of Education is preparing printed material to be distributed in the most dispersed areas and continues training teachers in the use of ICTs.

Jamaica: The JCO launched a virtual instructional leadership course with the National College for Educational Leadership, an agency of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information, on June 7th 500 school leaders are enrolled in the first cohort. The JCO is also working with the Ministry of Education by providing technical assistance towards the reopening of school which includes safe journeys to and from school and will soon be handing over 210 tablets targeting public schools for children with special needs and 50 handsets to effect a tele health/counselling program partnership between the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information and the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

In addition, guidelines have been shared with all schools detailing the phases of reopening beginning with the exam preparation stage (June 2020) and continuing with the planned full reopening on Sept 7th. The UNICEF/UNESCO/WB framework was heavily referenced in this document. On and Offline provision continues through July 7th (Tv, radio, printed material, including special data plans at reduced costs for students from telecoms providers as well as data free sites) with school feeding programs converted into cash transfers and tied into the government's broader 19 response program. Lastly, teachers and school leaders continue to participate in scheduled trainings regarding online teaching and learning and assessment as well as public health protocols and the same is true for transport providers and cleaning staff.

NEW: The MOEYI has repositories of digital resources for math and language arts that are being used, as well as free access to edufocal.com which has content and programs to study for national exams. The MOEYI is partnering with the One on One Learning Management System through a zero-rated data service plan, and One on One and the Jamaica Teaching Council are training teachers through webinars to familiarize them with online platforms. The MOEYI has set up an e-instruction monitoring toolkit to be sure school is functioning in the most efficient way; there are three groups – e-leadership, e-teaching, etesting.

MoEYI has also recently partnered with Ready TV – a local cable supplier - to establish an education network specifically for the early childhood and primary levels. The station will also be carried by a community cable provider. This will be expanded to the secondary level in the second phase. ReadyTV will also provide internet service to 100 communities not being served by our major internet providers.

The ministry has begun to digitize some processes at the school level: Registration of new students at the Grade One level has been converted to the electronic process, attendance and accountability measures are

now digitized and plans are afoot to implement a Learning Management System for all schools to support teaching and learning. The tertiary institutions have also begun to transform their programmes to online modality and hybrid formats in some cases. Teacher training will continue in July to build the skill set needed for digital transformation.

The JCO is in dialogue with the MOEYI to support the reopening of schools in relation to aspects of a back to school campaign as well as support for materials to support public health and safety while at school and on the journey to and from school. Handover of 210 tablets earmarked for special needs public schools to use with their student body is being scheduled. Each tablet is equipped with safety mechanisms and zero-rated MOEYI approved apps as well as SIM cards with data free access.

50 handsets with data plans to execute a telehealth system of referrals for students identified as in need of counselling/therapy are being distributed to the Ministry of Health and Wellness as well as MOEYI staff to assist this form of mental health support.

Mexico: The Mexico CO is developing a dashboard to map the reopening of schools, absenteeism of teachers and students, causes of possible absences linked to COVID-19 and WASH infrastructure and functioning in schools. Mexico CO is working with the MoE in a learning recovery plan for basic education within the return to school framework (since it was not possible to develop an emergency curriculum), which also complements the key learning outcomes identified by the MoE. In addition, the CO is developing a mental health, psychosocial and no-discrimination strategy with educational communities during the social distancing and back to school phases. The UNICEF CO Office presented to the MoE the Framework for the Reopening of schools launched by UNICEF, UNESCO and World Bank; and will be developing guidelines and orientations for the return to school. The CO is organizing a webinar on Education in Emergencies, Preparedness and Recovery on school life, in collaboration with UNESCO and education authorities.

The CO has disseminated videos and materials with different partners (national and regional) for early and preschool education with messages on COVID-19 addressed to children in this age group. Mexico CO is jointly working with the MoE and MoH, on a mass media campaign (*Salud en tus Manos* in Spanish) and a pedagogical and training package for students and teachers on risk communication, back to school protocols and strengthening of hygiene practices. Lastly, Mexico CO with the MoE will distribute IK donations of hygiene items in priority schools of Mexico City, Chiapas, Guerrero, Michoacán and Oaxaca. The tentative date indicated for the Secretary of Education to reopen schools at the deferral level is August 10, however, some states have stated that they will not reopen on that date.

NEW: UNICEF CO is currently developing an Early Recovery Plan; the education activities are aligned with the Framework for the Reopening of schools, especially safe operations, learning, inclusion and well-being. The webinar on Education in Emergencies, Preparedness and Recovery on school life, in collaboration with UNESCO and education authorities will start on June 30. The Office is also planning a “return to school campaign”, complementary to “Salud en tus manos”.

Nicaragua: Until May, UNICEF has delivered a total of 6,150 cleaning kits to the Ministry of Education for the same number of schools, covering about 65 per cent of the schools in the country. Twenty-five technology kits have also been delivered to the same number of basic schools, which serve as teacher training centers at

municipal level, supporting the online management and training, given the impossibility of carrying out face-to-face training.

MINED has developed an educational plan in response to COVID-19, which considers the eventual closure of schools and non-face to face education, if the context requires. Until today, there is no official closure of schools.

Peru: The CO continues to reinforce key messages in the distance learning platform *Aprendo en Casa* with selfcare videos, guides for rural secondary, and general strategies to improve access. The office is also providing technical assistance to three regional governments (Loreto, Ucayali y Huancavelica) in the design and implementation of the regional education response plan to COVID-19. Lastly, the office is also providing technical assistance to the MoE with (1) the pedagogical distance model use in rural areas, (2) with the pilot plan for schools without connectivity and without COVID-19 cases, and (3) with the strategic plan for the reopening of schools. The office has also supported an intensive working plan with 123 schools throughout 4 territories (14,000) students with a comprehensive system of accompanying schools to ensure distance learning, including migrant people.

Classes are still suspended in the country and there is no return date yet. However, there is a special plan for schools located in scattered areas without connectivity and without COVID-cases. The MoE is working on strengthening the strategy of *Aprendo en Casa* and it is purchasing a million tablets for areas without connectivity and for most vulnerable students. Furthermore, technical commissions have been established to define the route for students in their last year of secondary education. Lastly, a high-level group composed by UNICED, UNESCO, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the MoE to present a strategic plan on the reopening of schools.

Panama: Over the last few weeks, the Ministry of Education of Panama (MEDUCA) has made progress in its education response to COVID-19 in the country. The Ministry has focused its efforts on the education response strategy and plan for the current emergency, including the safe return to schools. In terms of learning continuity, the Ministry has provided new educational distance content through TV and radio (including inclusive formats) and is working on the adaptation of the emergency curriculum; it has optimized its educational distance portal and continues to support teacher training. Regarding the reopening of schools' process, MEDUCA has developed the draft for the safe return to schools.

UNICEF PCO is providing technical assistance for the emergency response plan based on international standards. In addition, they are supporting the Ministry with advice on issues such as information management, C4D, generation of evidence, emergency curriculum, educational technology and school return. In addition, the PCO is also assisting with the adaptation of the emergency curriculum (providing guidance on its methodology, design, presenting examples to help prioritize content, etc.), as well as with the learning continuity response by conveying educational content through their networks and physical materials.

NEW: The Ministry of Education (MEDUCA) has announced the safe return to schools scheduled on July 20, 2020. In these weeks, MEDUCA has been developing an ad hoc emergency, remote-oriented curriculum for all grades with the support and endorsement of national education actors. MEDUCA has been also fostering its evidences via national, massive surveys to gather information about the educational spectrum in terms

of COVID-free infrastructures, knowledge of e-learning methodologies and modalities from principals, teachers, parents, caregivers and others, among other variables.

UNICEF Panama Country Office has kept its response according the MEDUCA Workplan: in this regard, UNICEF Education team has been supporting the follow-up of the Workplan implementation by facilitating discussions among actors, providing technical assistance in curriculum in emergencies development, capacity building interventions, information technology, and knowledge sharing.

Paraguay: As part of its education response to the crisis, the MOE in Paraguay (MEC) has made available the online platform “Your School at Home” through a partnership with Microsoft. Furthermore, MEC has also partnered with the state telecommunications company COPACO and VOX to give access to all state online resources without consuming any data. As part of its distance learning response, the MoE has handing out lunch kits at school for most vulnerable schools in Asuncion and has broadcasted TV content, developing lesson plans for every grade and subject. Regarding the opening of schools, the [President of Paraguay has announced](#) that schools will remain closed until December 2020.

Lastly, the MoE has also drafted an emergency plan (“Plan de Educación En Tiempos de Pandemia” in Spanish), that describes two main education delivery mechanisms to reach children: virtual and non-virtual modality.

NEW: The MoE is holding meetings with different stakeholders, including parents, teacher unions and students in order to discuss the “Plan de Educación En Tiempos de Pandemia” and back to school plans. Moreover, the MoE is drafting a back to school protocol although decision for schools to remain closed until December is still maintained.

The Paraguay CO has developed substantive education content to ensure continuity of learning during COVID-19. The office has developed a guide for families on stimulation in early childhood with an inclusive approach and short videos and audios to promote reading at home for children from 0 to 6 years old, as well as math audios and videos and STEAM activities aimed at students from 1st to 6th grade. For those regions where internet access is limited, the CO is providing support to develop adaptations of resources to radio content for rural and indigenous populations and a distribution strategy with national and local radio stations. The CO has also worked on the reactivation of school feeding mechanisms in the region. To this aim, the office has made available repository with information about school feeding, as well as guides for the stimulation and development of early childhood, COVID-19 prevention and free online resources. Regarding the reopening of schools, the CO is working with UNESCO and the World Bank to advocate for the development and analysis for reopening schools; to ensure safe school operations, proper pedagogical responses and the continuity of healthy practices in education institutions.

Suriname: In Suriname, the reopening of exam grades on June 1st has been postponed until further notice due to the fast increase in active cases as of May 26th (after the election on May 25th). In addition, MoE plans to establish a national learning platform, with adapted support through tablets offline for children in the interior and printed material. In the meantime, support via WhatsApp groups continues as well as the TV educational programming.

The protocol for the reopening of schools has been developed and distributed to schools. Schools had already started to prepare for reopening on June 1st, however, progress halted because the country is in full lockdown for two weeks starting June 8th.

As part of its learning continuity response, the CO is supporting the strategic and technical review and selection process for a distance learning platform, is developing and disseminating e-learning material and e-teacher capacity strengthening and assisting with TV broadcasting of learning material. The office is also supporting the provision of printed materials for those areas where there is limited internet and TV connection and providing WASH support in schools.

Lastly, the CO is providing technical support in the development of the protocol for the schools reopening and assisting the MoE with learning gaps, reprogramming the school calendar and the examinations.

NEW: The MoE is gradually rolling out decisions on progression of students. In primary, for all non-exam grades advancement to the next grade will be based on the test results students achieved throughout the first 2 semester (2 out of 3) of the schoolyear (When schools closed on March 16th, the second semester was 2 weeks to completion). Decisions regarding the exam grades are expected by the end of June, as well as for secondary schools.

The current schoolyear (1st October 2019- mid august 2020) will be closed off earlier than usual. Further exchange within the sector is ongoing to restart the new schoolyear earlier than the 1st of October to kick-off the alignment process of our schoolyear cycle to that of the Caribbean and to allow for remedial support on learning loss.

Even though the full lockdown measures have been eased to partial lockdown measures as of June 21st, the limitation to gathering of no more than 5 people are still in effect and pose challenges to school reopening.

Uruguay: Between April 22 and May 4th all rural schools been reopened. Some urban schools have reopened on June 1st, like for example special schools and schools for vulnerable children (A.P.R.E.D.E.R schools). The government has announced that all schools will be reopened on June 29. Furthermore, the national government has designed a protocol for the schools reopening process and elaborated guidelines for teachers during the reopening process. Learning support via WhatsApp groups continues as well as the TV programming.

On its end, UNICEF Uruguay is organizing a cycle of conferences with international speakers to promote educational continuity among teachers and supporting the National TV program organized by the Plan CEIBAL and the National Administration of Public Education (ANEP) to promote educational continuity. In collaboration with the National Administration of Public Education (ANEP), the CO is also designing a scholarship program to promote the return to schools among vulnerable adolescents affected by the economic crisis during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Lastly, the office is providing key support in the systematization of the reopening process throughout the country and the best teacher practices using virtual learning methods. The CO is also designing a teacher training course on virtual learning with the collaboration of the National Administration of Public Education (ANEP) and the Plan CEIBAL.

NEW: On June 15 elementary and middle schools reopened throughout the country. There has been a sudden rise of COVID-19 cases in the department of *Treinta y Tres* (24 cases), therefore this week education centres in this department have closed again.

Venezuela: The MoE in Venezuela has developed the ministerial instructions with weekly pedagogical guidance to support the implementation of educational activities, which are both in virtual and printed format. It is also implementing an emotional wellbeing campaign through TV, radio and social media. The campaign addresses psychosocial support topics and provides keys to keep positive during the quarantine. Furthermore, the MoE has launched the educational channel *ViveTV* and it expects to launch a new format for the beginning of the next academic year. Lastly, the government has also supported the cooperation and the exchange of technology between *Universidad Nacional Experimental del Ministerio* (UNEM) and *la Universidad Abierta* in Chile, focused on the development of capacities for teams and teachers in contexts of emergency. This process is also being supported by UNICEF and UNESCO offices.

The CO, along with the Education Cluster, LACRO and UNICEF COs of Argentina, Mexico and Cuba has developed the virtual TV seminar during the quarantine. In addition, along with the Education Cluster, the office has supported the exchange of good practices of civil society on distant learning and opened a space under the name of “*Colaboratorio de transformacion pedagógica*”. The office also provided technical support to the MoE for the publication of three reports of the virtual seminars. The CO, along with the education cluster and the support of LACRO, supported the opening of a coordination table with the MoE and the *Universidad Nacional del Magisterio* on capacities development. Lastly, the CO also supported with the development of a ministerial instruction for WASH interventions in schools and the distribution of bar soaps to students.

NEW: Continuing with the cooperation actions between the MPPE and UNICEF, the implementation of minor repairs has begun in a number of prioritized schools, through implementing partners and FEDE (Foundation for school buildings assigned to the MPPE) related to water, hygiene and sanitation in prioritized schools in the following states: Bolívar, Miranda, Capital District, Zulia and Táchira.

UNICEF participates in the commission for the integral care of children and adolescents during the holidays in the context of COVID 19, which seeks to provide the school population and their families with learning opportunities during the holidays, recreation and healthy leisure at home with their families.

Ministerial guidelines and instructions have begun to be adapted to bilingual intercultural education in order to cater for this vulnerable population, which requires a special approach.

V. REGIONAL OFFICE SUPPORT STRATEGY

Over the last weeks, the Regional Office Education Team has been in constant communication with LAC Country Offices to assist with technical support, share information, and facilitate knowledge-sharing. The below are the main activities that UNICEF LACRO is focused on:

Education in Emergencies	• Collation, organization, analysis and dissemination of relevant information (UNICEF reports, MoEs and COs updates, best practices, recommendations, and guidelines, etc.) with HQ, ROs and COs. All information has been stored and organized per categories in the regional share-point for information and knowledge sharing developed SharePoint's LACRO COVID-19 Education section; • In the process of developing an intersectoral guidance for national authorities and another for schools to ensure the safe opening of schools in the LAC region. Each guidance will include a checklist to support the reopening process. NEW: • Development of four videos with key information on the reopening of schools. These videos will be inclusive and will include captioning and sign language to make sure they are available to all children. • Regional systematization of the Education in Emergencies (EiE) interventions to support strategies for continuous learning in 24 countries of Latin America. • Development of recommendations of the Education in Emergencies (EiE) interventions to support the most vulnerable communities for continuous learning in Latin America and the Caribbean.
Disabilities	• As a result of integrated ECD-Communication and Education work with the guidance of the TASK-FROCE-TEAM for inclusion we have begun a rollout of the initiative "A House with Many Windows", consisting of a series of inclusive workshops, where children with and without disabilities and their families, will be participating and expressing through art, music and dance. The first workshops were inclusive drawing workshops with Gusti (www.gustiart.com; www.windowdown.org--a plastic artist and disability rights activist). The first workshop was held with Colombian families and the second was coordinated with the Peru CO in which Peruvian families participated. The event was transmitted in Facebook live https://www.facebook.com/UnicefLac/photos/a.261973903825969/3218213361535327/?type=3&theater • UNICEF and Special Olympics are sharing resources for families and frontline workers. The aim is to promote the rights and ensuring the well-being of persons with disabilities, with this particular work on those with intellectual disabilities (PCDI), in the face of the spread of COVID-19, creating a model that seeks to reduce disparities in equitable access to quality health and social protection services for people with disabilities in the face of this pandemic. https://www.unicef.org/lac/unicef-y-olimpiadas-especiales-trabajan-por-el-bienestar-de-los-ninos-con-discapacidad; also in NNyA con discapacidad (resources) and COVID-19.
Secondary-age Education and Skills Development	NEW: • Together with America Solidaria, Caserta Foundation and the CONCAUSA Youth Network, LACRO continues to support adolescents in the region to develop transferable skills in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic through the "Plan12 - Learn to transform" initiative. Based on the 12 skills, every week a podcast, a video and a challenge are being launched focused on one specific skill. The skill for this week is DECISION-MAKING. You can visit the Plan12 webpage to learn more about this skill, as well as the previous skills on Creativity, Critical Thinking, Empathy, Problem-solving and Cooperation. The raw materials are also available in the SharePoint. • Currently, LACRO is conducting a systematization of successful experiences and tools on formative learning assessment and developing guidelines to assess and monitor students' learning outcomes in contexts of distance education provision. The systematization will draw both from literature-based and past experiences, as well as from the current COVID-related experiences in the LAC and other regions.

Early Child Development (ECD)	• Dissemination of ECD LAC Strategic Orientation and Mapping of ECD activities; • Co-organization (with UNESCO) of a webinar on the importance of Early Childhood Education (ECE) in COVID19 context and the efforts for safe reopening of centers on June 4rd. • Dissemination of the document “Ten recommendations for mothers, fathers and other caregivers during COVID-19” (available in Spanish, English, Portuguese and French). • ECD LAC team, with the support of other sections, is working on the development of General guidance for reopening of ECD centers and services and the development of operational tools to support violence prevention, detection and referral via telephone calls. • Afinadata’s pilot in Peru was approved by the CO senior management. The pilot will target three regions of the country and will provide remote support through health service providers to young children and their families. • Dissemination of a guide to help parents combine teleworking with care of young children (available in Spanish, English, Portuguese and French).
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VI. GLOBAL RESOURCES

At the headquarters level, several key documents have been developed to support the education response to COVID-19, all available [here](#):

- ✓ The COVID-19 Education: Contingency planning, risk reduction, preparedness and response framework;
- ✓ The guide with key Messages and Actions for COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools;
- ✓ Several supplementary documents on key topics such as cleaning and supply, mental health and psychosocial support, child protection and accelerated education, to name a few and;
- ✓ The Framework for Reopening of Schools.

Other global resources:

- ✓ [Global Education Cluster](#)
- ✓ [Safe back to School: A Practitioner’s Guide](#)
- ✓ [Sesame Street Materials COVID-19](#)
- ✓ [INEE COVID-19 Resources](#)

VII. REGIONAL RESOURCES

At the regional level, the LACRO Education Section has translated and adapted to the region the key documents developed at the global level mentioned above. Here you can find the translation into Spanish, French and Portuguese of the documents, as well as a catalogue in English and Spanish with a brief overview of the documents’ content. This material is available for UNICEF staff at [LACRO COVID-19 Education Section in SharePoint](#)

UNICEF LACRO Education repository: The LACRO Education team has also launched a **public access repository of documents** with materials available to support the educational response to COVID-19. This space will be updated frequently to include new resources. [The categories are:](#)

1. Continuity of learning.
2. School reopening.
3. Education and learning (ECE).
4. Education and learning for adolescents.
5. Mental health and psychosocial support.
6. Inclusive education.



Regional Coordination: The regional Education Group (REWG)³ has been actively working to respond to the COVID-19 crisis. The group is advancing towards the development of several regional activities, aimed to support regional actors in reestablishing the education services in LAC. These activities are done in conjunction of most members of the REWG.

- ✓ A guidance to adapt the curriculum to the current COVID-19 crisis.
- ✓ Creation of the REWG website in OCHA's *Humanitarian Response site*.
- ✓ Development of regional webinars on the COVID-19 crisis response.

NEW:

- Check out [here](#) the launching of the Spanish version of the Safe Back to School Guide, developed by the Global Education Cluster and the Child Protection (Global Protection Cluster).
 - Register [here](#) for the next webinar this coming Thursday, June 25th at 11 h Santiago, Chile (-4 GMT) on the Inclusion of children and adolescents with disabilities in the distance education.
- ✓ An online teachers' course to respond to the educational needs that emerge during and after the emergency of COVID-19.
 - ✓ A regional repository of COVID-19 related documents, [hosted by UNESCO with all resources and tools by the REWG](#).
 - ✓ Data on the [national education responses from all MoEs in the LAC region](#).

VIII. NATIONAL RESOURCES

At the national level, Ministries of Education have developed and/or started using their online learning platforms. You can access the list of MoEs remote learning platforms [here](#)

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³ The REWG was established in 2011 under the framework of REDLAC (Risk Emergency Disaster Working group for Latin America and the Caribbean) to support Ministries of Education in their education in emergencies response (including risk management, disaster and migration), based on the Sendai Framework, the World Initiative for Safe Schools (WISS) and the Global Education Cluster, to ensure the right to education to all children in the LAC region. The Group is co-led by UNICEF and Save the Children and comprises the following members: AECID, ECHO, IFRC, INEE, IOM, NRC, OCHA, PLAN International, RET, UNAIDS, UNDRR, UNESCO, UNHCR, and UN WOMEN and World Vision.