

LACRO COVID-19 EDUCATION RESPONSE: UPDATE 18

SPECIAL FOCUS ON THE PROVISION OF WASH SERVICES IN SCHOOLS

[Released on October 29, 2020]

Next update: November 26, 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

Many education systems around the LAC region continue to deal with the complex decisions of when and how to reopen schools for face-to-face learning following widespread closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As of October 29, 13 countries in the region have fully opened their schools, 5 of them have partially opened them and 18 of them remain with their schools closed. Ensuring at least basic Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) services in schools in LAC region remains a challenge as 16% do not have water services, 6% do not have sanitation services, 12% do not have hand washing services and even higher

portion of schools only have limited WASH services. To ensure safe return to school in the best interest of the child, progressive measures need to be put in place, be adapted to the local context and capacities and should ensure at least basic hand hygiene and disinfection and then progressively basic water and sanitation services.

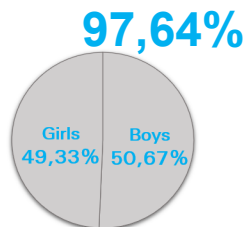
Because WASH services are essential to improve school safety during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, update #18 sheds light on the main plans, initiatives and actions taken by COs in the LAC region in regard to drinking water, sanitation and hygiene in schools.



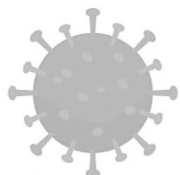
2. SITUATION OVERVIEW



18 countries and territories in the LAC region with **schools completely closed**.



of children (137M approx.) are not receiving **face-to-face classes** in the region due to school closures.⁴



An estimation of **174** school days on average without **face-to-face classes** since school closures in mid March to October 2nd.¹



13 countries and territories in the region (Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Haiti, Montserrat, Nicaragua, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Uruguay) have all their schools **fully open**.



5 countries and territories in the region (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Cuba) have opened their schools **partially**.



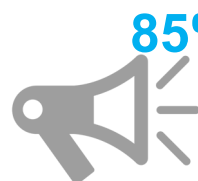
24 countries and territories in the region have developed **protocols** for the safe reopening of schools.



42M children in 24 countries supported by UNICEF in the provision of **distance learning programmes** during school closures.²



62% of countries in the LAC region have decided on a **date for school reopening**.⁵



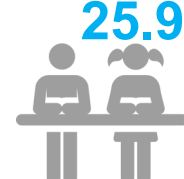
85% of countries and territories have engaged in **advocacy or communications** for school reopening.³



22 countries and territories in the region continue school lessons through **remote learning** online or via television, radio, WhatsApp etc.



COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES WITH REMOTE LEARNING:
Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, ECA, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, and Venezuela.



25.921 schools implementing safe schools protocols (Covid-19).⁶

Sources of information

¹ Data from [UNDP Latin America and the Caribbean #COVID19 | Policy Documents Series](#).

² Data from [Latin America and the Caribbean. COVID-19 Response Progress Report No 2](#).

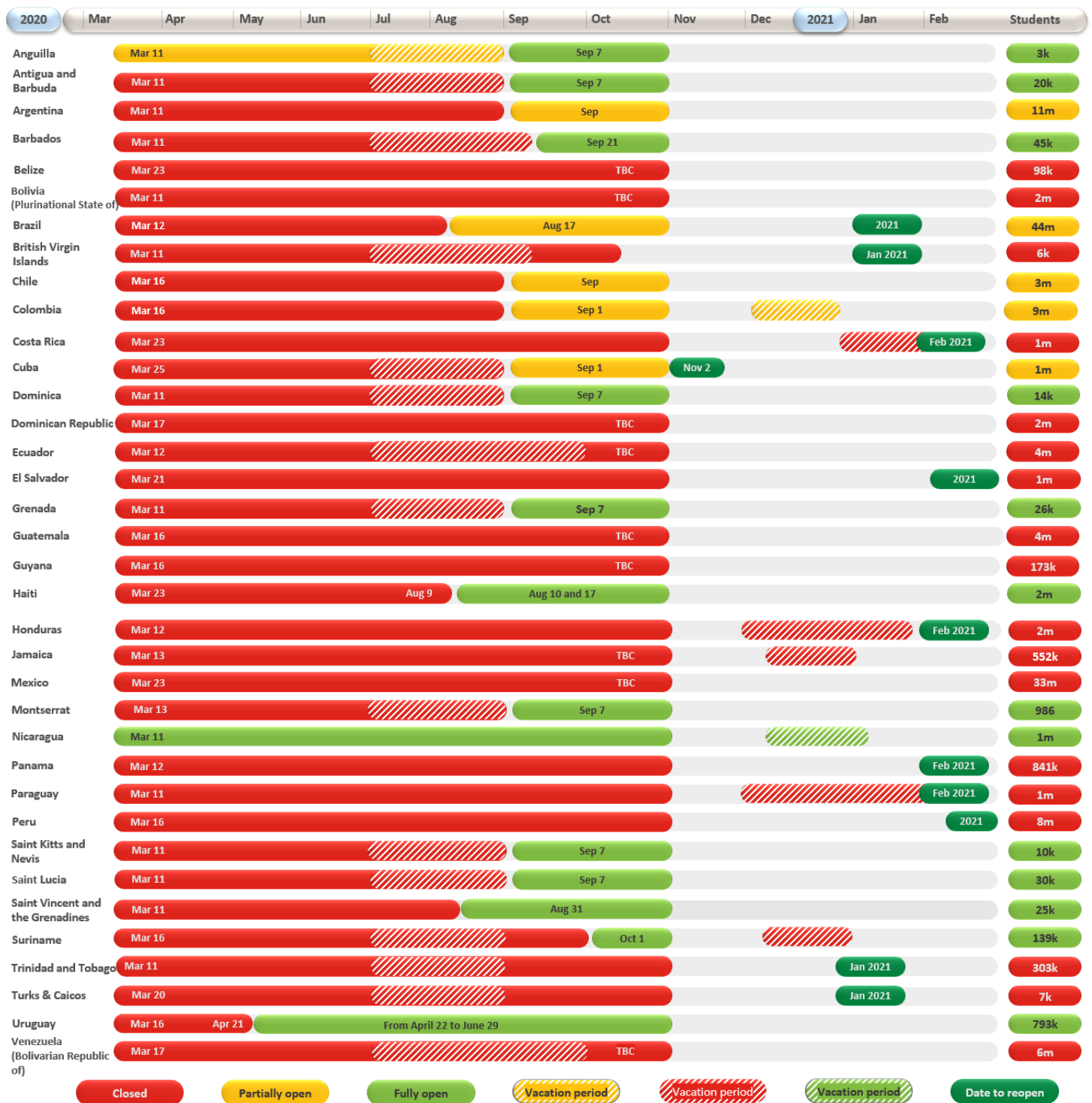
³ [Global Education Cluster, Tracker analysis Advocacy, 14 August 2020](#).

⁴ Data extracted from United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Institute of Statistics, 'Welcome to UIS.Stat', <http://data.uis.unesco.org/#>>. The figure 137M and the percentage 97,64% include the number of children and adolescents based in countries where schools are fully and partially closed, as there is no available data on how many students receive face-to-face classes in these countries.

⁵ [Global Education Cluster, Tracker analysis Advocacy, 14 August 2020](#).

⁶ [Global Covid-19 SitRep indicators](#).

FACE-TO-FACE CLASSES TIMELINE⁷



Sources of information

⁷ Data reported from Cos updates. Information consulted from the 19 to 27 October, 2020.

3. WASH INITIATIVES IN SCHOOLS SUPPORTED BY COUNTRY OFFICES

As part of the school's reopening process, COs in the LAC region are supporting the Ministry of Education and/or the Ministry leading the WASH sector to provide the minimum WASH products and services that would allow school reopening. Below are the main activities reported by COs in this regard:

ARGENTINA

The Ministry of National Education conducted an updated survey of the 24 jurisdictions to assess the status of school's health infrastructure prior to reopening.

Based on this, an investment of 2.3 billion pesos is being made: 500 million in direct transfers of up to 50,000 to the schools prioritised by each province, in order to purchase inputs for the return to presential status; 1.3 billion pesos for works on water supply, repairs to toilets and hygiene and safety conditions; and another 500 million to reinforce "Programme 37" of School Infrastructure, aimed at minor repairs.

Main challenges include providing 4,500 schools of all levels and modalities in the country with drinking water. Most of them are located in the northern provinces and the province of Buenos Aires. Furthermore, 16% do not have public water (19% state-owned, 10% private, 36% rural and 10% urban) (Aprender, 2019).

BELIZE

In Belize, UNICEF continues to pledge its commitment to support programs initiated and subsidized by the Government of Belize. To this end, UNICEF has provided funding for access to a thousand (1000) nutrition hampers, including hygiene kits to be distributed to the families of children who have been beneficiaries of the Ministry of Education's School Feeding Program.

UNICEF is working to secure critical hygiene and prevention items for use in schools, health facilities, and public spaces – including upcoming testing kits and additional PPE Supplies.

BOLIVIA

As part of the back-to-school protocol, UNICEF is developing back-to-school protocols in 11 municipalities in Cochabamba, Pando and Beni, covering 101 fiscal educational units, benefiting approximately 50,000 students. The protocols include the provision of mobile washing stations in those schools that do not have any kind of water and sanitation infrastructure with a special emphasis on schools in rural areas.

These 101 educational units include 16 schools where UNICEF was already planning to implement

the refurbishment and rehabilitation of WASH infrastructure to complement and enhance the activities already planned.

BRASIL

Nationwide, 39% of public schools do not have access to adequate basic sanitation. Although among public schools this percentage is rising, this means that the WASH challenges for the reopening process are great. The Ministry of Education recently launched an orientation manual for safe return to school. However, it is the responsibility of state and municipal departments to implement actions to ensure the adequacy of school environments.

Therefore, several class entities and local governments have organized preparatory strategies for safe reopening of schools. Water, sanitation and hygiene initiatives are being planned. UNICEF prepared a [self-assessment panel](#) on WASH, with guidance for school administrators, which is being disseminated with the support of the National Union of Municipal Education Directors (Undime). The initiative is expected to reach the vast majority of Brazilian municipalities.

CHILE

Most of the country's educational centers have water and sanitation services. However, in the context of the pandemic, the Ministry of Education is providing an essential kit that includes a thermometer, hand soap, masks, alcohol gel, face shields for teachers, and supplies for disinfection. Kits will be delivered once only, and the number of kits delivered will depend on the number of students per educational center. The coverage after the essential kit is delivered will be challenging, especially in schools with limited resources.

COLOMBIA

Diagnoses of WASH conditions are being made, in addition to the establishment of hygiene and basic cleaning and disinfection kits required in the event of a reopening. Actions are being taken in conjunction with WASH table partners, including government authorities. In addition, there are guidelines for the promotion of handwashing with soap and water.

The **main challenge** is to have a costing over the minimum necessary investment to guarantee WASH services.

COSTA RICA

UNICEF Costa Rica has worked with an \$800,000 grant from USAID to provide critical hygiene supplies (alcohol gel, disinfectant, liquid hand soap and thermometers) to 642 priority schools of the

Ministry of Public Education to reach 256,229 children when they reopen (22% of the total number of students).

It has been a challenge for the Costa Rica office to start working on supplies, which has never been done before. The delivery is almost complete with excellent results. This has involved a rapid coordination and the generation of a tripartite commission (UNICEF/MEP/Ministry of Health) and coordinating with the US Embassy to establish technical specifications and the logistics of the whole process.

Each element in the management route has been a challenge, such as the management of warehouses where COVID-19 has been present among the workers, technical closures for that reason and coordination between deliveries, inspection, labelling, etc.

Check out the following [link](#) for further information.

CUBA

With the Education Thematic Fund and other Emergency funds, UNICEF contributes to access to water and sanitation in schools by supporting sanitation facilities and toilets.

So far, more than 653,000 girls who attend kindergartens and primary schools have access to hygienic and sanitary conditions that are essential for safe education. A total of 5,234 primary schools, 1,085 nursery schools and 50 children's homes without family protection have benefited.

MINED is working on the preparation of spaces to guarantee physical distance and hygienic conditions in the schools, as well as to guarantee the investigations of students and teachers. Certification for reopening is provided by the Ministry of Public Health.

Getting 100% of the schools to meet the requirements of the protocol is the greatest challenge MINED is facing.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

At the national level, the Ministry of Education has integrated into the Educational Action Plan for the Coronavirus Pandemic all health and educational measures, as well as the provision of inputs for the cleaning of spaces and personal hygiene and protection.

ECA

Some support is being provided to expand handwashing facilities in two countries. The main challenge in terms of WASH is that there is currently no comprehensive assessment of WASH in schools at this time.

ECUADOR

The key WASH actions carried out in the country include:

- Inter-ministerial preparation (MINEDUC and MSP) of the self-care and hygiene protocol for the educational population during the progressive use of educational institutions in COVID-19.
- Completed national WASH assessment in more than 16,000 education centers in less than 2 weeks using the WASH School Improvement Tool (WASH SIT).
- Ongoing costing of the investment required to fill the gap in access to water, sanitation and hygiene in schools.
- National virtual WASH course in schools for teachers and MINEDUC staff.
- Technical assistance to MINEDUC for the strengthening of water, sanitation and hygiene policies in the school environment. Framework of the return plan and the health emergency by COVID-19 (ongoing).
- Preparation and implementation of improvement plans in 20 schools and ECD centers.
- Delivery of WASH kits and improvements to 50 schools for prevention of COVID-19.
- Preparation of a pedagogical guide with handwashing activities in schools.
- Activation of the WASH groups in schools.

EL SALVADOR

The Ministry of Education has developed and launched a back-to-school plan consisting of 4 stages (and a previous stage called the "0" stage) that includes WASH in schools. The Ministry has initiated phase 1, which diagnoses sanitation and basic maintenance of infrastructure, equipment and school furniture and includes information on WASH. During the months of January and February 2021 the Ministry will prepare all the WASH conditions for schools.

The Ministry of Education has requested cooperation to overcome the deficiencies identified in WASH in some schools identified by the diagnosis and to ensure that all schools meet the minimum hygiene and safety requirements for opening in February 2021.

GUATEMALA

In terms of sanitation, there is a partnership with the private sector for the safe return to classes of \$125.00 per school for the purchase of chlorine, gel and masks. Such an initiative would include the first allocation as the Ministry of Education would then

use one of the funds it transfers to parents for subsequent purchases.

GUYANA

The MoE's WASH initiatives are in progress with upgrades and new installations of sanitation hubs for schools in need. UNICEF has contributed US\$130,000 from the GPE COVID-19 FUNDS to retrofit 100 schools in Hinterland/Deep Riverine with hygiene hubs and working sanitary facilities.

HAITI

UNICEF Haiti has implemented WASH initiatives in schools to ensure availability of adequate WASH facilities to reopen in a safer environment.

- UNICEF Wash and Education sections have been supporting the back-to-school campaign with the provision of WASH services and supplies to more than 1,500 public schools since August 2020.

- 1,250 schools were supported by UNICEF WASH in partnership with WFP through their school-feeding program with the provision of WASH NFIs in order to respect hygiene protocols and more than 250 schools are being targeted with longer-term WASH activities.

- Out of a total of around 2,500 public schools in the country, WASH facilities were evaluated in 831 public schools. Results show an access of 6.3% to hygiene/handwashing facilities; 30.1% to drinking water and 46.9% to basic sanitation.

In [terms of challenges](#), public schools in Haiti represent a minority of the country schools and many private schools don't have or have poor WASH services. Ensuring sustainable access to Wash facilities in schools is a major challenge in Haiti. Schools need to find resources to adequately maintain Wash facilities. WASH evaluations conducted in public schools throughout the country in partnership with the National Water institute as well as the implementation of WASH activities are however still being affected by the country's socio-political issues currently affecting the education sector.

HONDURAS

- Dissemination of UNICEF/WHO guidelines on WASH and reopening of schools with WASH actors through the WASH in Emergencies desk, and promotion of increased coverage of functional WASH services in schools in conjunction with SEDUC.

- Support to the Secretary of Education (SEDUC) in developing the WASH component of the biosafety protocol for schools reopening.

- Inclusion of WASH COVID-19 prevention in teachers' training on Comprehensive Risk

Management (GIR) and WASH in 370 schools in coordination with SEDUC.

- Inclusion of WASH COVID-19 prevention training with parents and teachers in 80 schools under drought relief.

- WASH COVID-19 infrastructure response in 30 schools without access to water.

The main challenge is funding to fill the current gap of almost 6,000 educational centres nationwide without access to WASH services, providing comprehensive support in WASH infrastructure and training and in COVID-19 prevention equipment.

JAMAICA

An audit has been completed and public/private sector partnerships are being sought. The government has also distributed funds towards upgrading of supplies according to Ministry of Health protocols shared with the sector as part of the COVID 19 response guides. These funds do not cover all the needs. UNICEF is finalizing a Humanitarian Programme Document with a local NGO, Food for the Poor to respond to cover WASH needs (water tanks and/or handwashing stations) in 2 critical parishes.

[Challenges](#) include requirement of verification of data within audit, lack of funding for ongoing maintenance and replenishment of supplies (soap) as well as some schools without existing water supply which requires rainwater harvesting tanks.

MEXICO

UNICEF is supporting education authorities in 6 states with the installation of hand-washing stations for schools. It is also distributing hygiene and cleaning supplies. The current programme will benefit 250 schools in 6 states. More funds are expected to be raised to reach 350 schools. In addition, UNICEF, in coordination with the Secretary of Public Education (SEP) has developed a dashboard that will allow monitoring of the return to schools; this will also enable the collection of information on WASH infrastructure in schools.

As part of the government's actions, the Ministry of Public Education and the Ministry of Welfare, through the "La Escuela es Nuestra" programme, has prioritised access to water in schools, as well as hygiene and sanitation infrastructure. As part of these actions, an investment of 850 million pesos was announced for the installation of drinking water systems in 2,245 schools that lack service. In addition, coordination between school communities, municipal authorities and local operators will be strengthened in order to find joint measures to access or improve WASH services in schools.

To ensure a safe return to school, the SEP together with the Ministry of Health developed a guide to implement hygiene and prevention measures within schools.

With regard to [challenges](#), the SEP's response is currently focused on distance education continuity and there is little perceived preparation for the time of re-opening. Guidelines for return have been established, both in terms of infection control and pedagogical guidelines, however, there does not appear to be a specific focus on strengthening the WASH infrastructure, which in many schools is deficient from before the pandemic.

It is estimated that there are about 27,500 schools in the country that do not have access to water, in addition to those where the continuity and quality of service, as well as the availability of hand hygiene infrastructure is limited.

The education information systems do not have adequate mechanisms and indicators to have a current and real diagnosis on the real situation of WASH services in schools, which limits the mapping of the most vulnerable schools, and therefore, the implementation of specific actions to guarantee adequate WASH services and thus the safe reopening of schools.

Finally, it is important to point out that although the provision of water and sanitation services to schools is the responsibility of the municipalities, there is little clarity about who is responsible for ensuring adequate infrastructure within the school, as well as the availability of hygiene products, being a neglected issue so far that affects the most vulnerable populations where usually parents and caregivers are responsible for meeting these needs.

NICARAGUA

Efforts are being made to ensure that schools observe health and hygiene measures to prevent COVID-19, although in practice it is difficult to implement the measures due to a lack of resources and even a lack of discipline.

Through a Multipartner Trust Fund project, UNICEF and WFP are helping to ensure that nearly 700 schools have safe access to drinking water through storage tanks, equipment and materials for more hygienic handling of school meals, and a smaller number of schools (40) are equipped with water wells. These improvements are expected to be in place by the opening of the 2021 school year starting in February.

UNICEF continues to provide hygiene materials to schools, and in this reporting period cleaning supplies were provided to 24 special education schools, benefiting nearly 3,000 students with disabilities.

PANAMA

The reopening of schools is being coordinated by the Ministry of Education, which has developed a diagnosis of the state of the infrastructure in terms of WASH. In Panama, only 24% of schools have access to drinking water and 76% have access to tap water throughout stream or river, wells, rainwater or water tanks.

Among the options presented by the sector in question, to guarantee access and conditions of potable water and hygiene, are: i) Supply of plastic tanks for water reserves (pump and gravity-fed systems), ii) Water harvesting - water collection, treatment and storage systems (in 41 rural schools), and iii) supply and installation of hand washing stations in 700 schools.

The [main challenges](#) are:

- The effective financing and short-term execution of the projects presented by the infrastructure area.
- The bidding processes required by the state for the type of interventions or projects presented by the government.
- The adaptation of flexible models, financed by actors other than the government, which guarantee a minimum of WASH conditions for the reopening of schools.

PARAGUAY

As part of the school reopening planning process, UNICEF is implementing water, sanitation and hygiene initiatives to ensure that schools have adequate WASH facilities and practices. To this end, UNICEF Paraguay is working with the Ministry of Education and Science to advance technical assistance for the rapid collection of data on water, sanitation and hygiene services in publicly managed educational establishments through WASH SIT, which includes: a) the joint development of the base questionnaire for the survey, and b) the training of departmental coordinators and supervisors in the use of the tool.

In addition, with SIWI, technical assistance is being provided to the WASH-education-health intersectoral table for the preparation of a bottleneck analysis for WASH access in schools. A workshop on Bottleneck Analysis for WASH in Schools will be held for them, with key actors at the national level and will lead to an action plan.

Similarly, with local governments and the education sector in targeted territories, technical assistance will be provided for investment assessment, design of WASH in schools demonstrative resilient models.

Finally, it is planned to develop a campaign to promote handwashing at the national level and to disseminate the prevention and mitigation protocol in school contexts.

PERU

The strategic plan for the safe and timely reopening of schools that UNICEF, UNESCO, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank developed for MINEDU considers the issue of WASH at the heart of safe operations. For now, the Ministry of Education has announced a plan to improve the sanitary infrastructure in 700 schools.

SURINAME

WASH in Schools is part of UNICEF Suriname's support to MoE for safe school reopening focusing on Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) and WASH: improving water access, rehabilitating existing handwashing facilities, supply of hygiene items, improving sanitation facilities in selected schools and hygiene and handwashing promotion through posters and animations.

Furthermore, UNICEF Suriname is in the process of designing and testing 2 handwashing station models suitable for children in primary and secondary education.

Main challenges include high logistical costs to reach schools in the interior and a lack of national standards for WASH.

URUGUAY

As part of the process of reopening schools, priority was given to defining sanitary conditions. Three protocols were drawn up during the process: the protocol for the resumption of activity in rural schools (17 April 2020), the protocol for the protection of ANEP officials (in agreement between the education authorities and the education unions) (26 May 2020) and the protocol for Protocol for reintegrating students into educational centres (29 May 2020). The "Framework for reopening schools", elaborated by UNICEF and UNESCO, was a useful input to design this last Protocol and the following official documents related to the school reopening process. The WASH-related actions specified in the protocols to ensure that schools comply with sanitation and hygiene conditions are the following ones:

- Recruitment of school assistants.
- A week before the start, sanitary items were distributed to schools throughout the country in order to comply with the requirements defined in the protocols (masks, disposable gloves and alcohol gel).

- Influenza vaccine for staff and children up to 5 years old.

- Nasopharyngeal swabs for teachers and non-teachers who have symptoms or have been in contact with people diagnosed with COVID-19.

- Face masks during transfers and while carrying out activities in the school.

- Handwashing on admission and frequently.

- Basic questions about symptoms on admission of students (if symptoms are present, arrangements will be made to return home). In specific situations of doubt, the temperature will be monitored on site.

- Accompanying adults will not be allowed to enter the school (except in situations that warrant it).

- Daily ventilation of the rooms.

- Sanitary mats at the entrance to the centre.

- Distance of one and a half metres between students in the classroom, staggered breaks and no games that allow physical contact.

VENEZUELA

Comprehensive WASH actions are currently being carried out in 171 public and subsidized schools in priority states, including: 1) diagnosis and repair of infrastructure and wash services, 2) provision of cleaning and hygiene supplies and water treatment, 3) training of school staff on hand washing, food hygiene, water treatment/conservation, proper solid waste management and environmental cleaning and disinfection, 4) provision of drinking water in schools and hygiene kits for school feeding programmes, and 5) hygiene promotion actions with the whole school community.

Technical support to the MoE is planned for the design of protocols for safe operations in schools and the production of communication content. Comprehensive WASH programmes will soon be developed in another 200 schools nationwide, with a focus on safe school reopening. In addition, support will be provided for the recovery of schools that were used as centres for preventive quarantine of COVID-19.

The challenges identified include responding to a national dimension of the problem and coordinating multisectoral preparation for the safe reopening of schools. Likewise, to develop a diagnosis in order to address the structural or semi-structural causes that contribute to the deterioration of WASH in educational institutions.

4. REGIONAL ACTIONS

The regional office is supporting the country offices in the following WASH initiatives:

- Translation and dissemination of the WASH School Improvement Tool “WASH SIT” developed by HQ for quick baseline of WASH services now used by at least Brazil, Paraguay, Ecuador, Mexico.
- Engaging countries in horizontal learning around WASH in schools multi sector coordination and rapid WASH assessment (Ecuador with Paraguay and Mexico).
- Providing at the beginning of the pandemic to the national WASH in emergency platforms a proposed national WASH in COVID-19 response plan with clear activities focusing WASH in schools (used by 9 countries at least).
- Participation in regional Education webinars around safe reopening of schools.
- Developing with SIWI support (through regional PCA) concept notes to advocate for WASH in schools in El Salvador, Honduras and Mexico.
- Conduct with SIWI a global desk review of the good WASH in school practices (29 countries worldwide) as well as an analysis of the good practices in LAC with deep dive in 3-5 most advanced countries to formulate strategic recommendations to WASH, Health and Education ministries. This study is done in close collaboration with the Regional Education Working Group (REWG).
- Working on a market-shaping study for wall-mounted soap in schools.
- Support general WASH sector governance in 11 countries so that coordination with other ministries is facilitated and joint roadmaps are developed. Strengthening the sector governance is critical in order to bridge the service gaps and sustain the gains on the long term.

The gap to reach universal basic WASH services in schools in LAC is important and only progressive improvements of the WASH services is realistic for the most deprived schools. It should start with at least basic hand hygiene (through handwashing with water and soap or temporary hydroalcoholic solutions if water is not available⁸) and disinfection and then address sustainable water and sanitation services ensuring that they are gender sensitive and climate resilient.

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES (EiE)

The EiE Team, with the help of the Knowledge Management Regional Focal Point, has worked on the new organization of the [online repository of resources for the COVID-19 education response](#) located in UNICEF LACRO's website. This new distribution keeps the six initial categories: 1. Learning continuity, 2. Reopening of schools, 3. Early childhood education and learning, 4. Education and skills development for adolescents, 5. Mental health and psychosocial support, and 6. Inclusive Education.



Learning continuity



Reopening of schools



Early childhood education and learning



Education and skills development for adolescents



Mental health and psychosocial support



Inclusive Education



Guidance notes and guidelines



Resources and publications



Audio-visual materials



Updates on LAC education response



National protocols

As part of the UNESCO's “Leaving no one behind in times of the COVID-19 pandemic” initiative, the last [webinar \(#22\) on Education for Sustainable Development and Climate Change. Opportunities and challenges for social transformation towards sustainable lifestyles from schools and their communities](#) was held. You can access the webinar [here](#).



HOME ■ LAC: School closures and reopenings by country ■ LAC: National responses ■ Webinars for the region
■ Thematic resources ■ Our work in the regional media ■ Distance learning solutions (UNESCO Paris)

Webinars for Latin America and the Caribbean

Leave no one behind in times of the COVID-19 pandemic

⁸ Water for handwashing with soap does not necessarily mean 24h/24 running water from the tap. Water stored in a container equipped with a lid and a tap and soap is considered as a basic handwashing facility.

Also, under the umbrella of the Regional Education Group for the LAC region, UNICEF, jointly with Plan International, World Vision, RET, NRC and INEE, has supported the creation of an online training called [Creando Aula: practical educational tools for teachers in the emergency context](#). The regional initiative is an innovative approach to support teachers in the region to respond and be better prepared for emergency context so that they can promote access to education for girls, boys and adolescents. At the moment, the pilot of the course is taking place with 110 participants from 24 different countries. Participants also include members of the Regional Education Group.



Following the first edition of the online course [The right to education in times of crisis](#), the second edition is now here: [The right to education in times of crisis: safe return and response to multiple threats](#). This new edition, developed by the Universidad Abierta de Recoleta (UAR), the Cluster of Education of Venezuela, the MPPE (Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Educación) and the Universidad Nacional Experimental del Magisterio Samuel Robinson (UNEM) with the support of UNICEF, UNESCO and Save the Children, has started on October 14th and includes two additional modules. Check out [here](#) all the basic information about the course and the link for registration.



DISABILITIES

A [House with many Windows initiative](#) that took place in Argentina and Jamaica were held as inclusive dance workshops. Together with CONCUERPOS dance company and the country offices and their partners, children, adolescents and their families with and without disabilities enjoyed, played, and learned about inclusion in an innovative manner.

Regionally, inclusion of children and people with disabilities are being advocated and UNICEF is being identified as an agency that promotes and work for the rights of children with disabilities. We are organizing regional participation in several high-level events such as the third conversation organized by the Network for Inclusive Disaster Risk Management and Disability of Latin America and the Caribbean, "GIRDD-LAC network" that held a multiagency [webinar](#) on inclusive response and recovery in face of the socio-economic consequences of the pandemic (October 22, 2020). Lastly, Education Specialist (Diversity and Inclusion & Children with Disabilities) will also participate in the first [Global Digital Summit](#) on Inclusive Management on Disaster and Disabilities "Inclusive reconstruction of the World" (October 27-29).

SECONDARY AGE EDUCATION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

LACRO continues to support adolescents in the region in the development of transferable skills through the "Plan12 - Learn to transform" initiative. In order to strengthen the activities of PLAN12, "PLAN 12: THE COURSE" was launched on Tuesday October 27th. A free online learning program designed by UNICEF and America Solidaria, in collaboration with Socialab and adolescents from the region, seeks to promote the development of transferable skills in adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean by providing basic tools and content for the creation and strengthening of projects, as well as, encouraging young people to explore solutions to problems that arise in their communities.

Within the framework of the current agreement between LACRO and CECC/SICA, the Regional Office supported the development of the COVID-19-related [Education Contingency Plan for the SICA region](#). The Contingency Plan is based on 4 main areas of work: a. Permanent updating and exchange of information, good practices and lessons learned among the Ministries of Education of the region; b. Strengthen resources of the Ministries of Education on distance education in order to supplement face-to-face schooling; c. Share initiatives, strategies and recommendations regarding the return to school, which includes the reopening and safe school

operations; and d. Jointly explore possible partnerships with international organizations. Moreover, the Council of Ministers of the CECC/SICA formulated a set of 62 recommendations that emerged from the conceptual foundations explained in the Contingency Plan. The Contingency Plan, as well as, the recommendations are available [here](#).

EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT (ECD)

In order to support mothers, fathers and caregivers in their parenting role during the pandemic and to help front-line health and child development frontline workers continue to support these parents and caregivers while ECD services are disrupted, LACRO's ECD team contracted Afinidata to develop and support the implementation of a technology-based solution. **Using the power of artificial intelligence and social**

networks, the tool equips parents and educators with a virtual ECD system that provides them with advice and activities adapted to the age and needs of their children. The tool also allows front-line workers to monitor parents' interactions with the system, the activities they undertake, and to track progress and challenges with them.

On October 21, the tool was officially launched in Peru, where the pilot project will aim at strengthening support for families of children aged 0 to 2 years accompanied by the Growth and Development Monitoring (CRED) programme in 14 first-level care facilities (in north of Lima, Huancavelica and Ucayali) reaching approximately 12,000 families. The tool will also be piloted in Bolivia, targeting 2000 families of children aged 0 to 5 years old who benefit from the daycare services of the PAN MANITOS network of children's centers in the municipality of El Alto.

5. GLOBAL RESOURCES

1. The Executive Summary of the **White Paper "Averting an Education Catastrophe for the World's Children"**, the outcome of an education partnership under the banner **"Save our Future"**, has been released.

Save Our Future is led by a core hub of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa, the Asian Development Bank, BRAC, Education Above All, Education Cannot Wait, the Education Commission, the Education Outcomes Fund, the Global Partnership for Education, Save the Children, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, the World Bank, and the World Food Programme in partnership with over 600 organizations and youth.

Click in the image to access the full report:



2. The launch of the **Global Education Cluster's Core Coordination Training -CORE 1 (in English)** is finally **here!**. The course aims to develop essential coordination and information management theoretical knowledge and practical skills for education coordination staff and key stakeholders. Through six online self-paced modules, participants will develop theoretical knowledge around the fundamentals of coordination and education cluster, humanitarian programme cycle and education cluster strategies, basic coordination practical skills on effective education cluster meeting and presentation.

The Global Education Cluster is planning to translate the course in three additional languages (French, Arabic, and Spanish) and aims to make those versions available in early 2021.

Click in the image to access CORE 1 of the course:

Global Education Cluster Core Coordination Training – CORE 1

Develop essential coordination and information management competencies for education cluster staff and key cluster's stakeholder.

Topic: Focus areas: Children and Youth, Education, Humanitarian Action, Response, Strategies, Operational support, Human resources, Inclusion, ICT, Data Analysis & Information Management, Monitoring & evaluation, Programming, Leading and managing

Format: Online courses

Provider: Coalitions and networks, Global Education Cluster

Language: English

6. NATIONAL PROTOCOLS

At the national level, several Ministries of Education in the region have developed protocols and guidelines for the reopening of schools in LAC countries. You can access the list of MoEs protocols [here](#).