

[Released on March 5, 2021]

1. INTRODUCTION

According to the latest UNICEF¹ report "Covid-19 and school closures, a year of interrupted education", Latin America and the Caribbean has been the region most affected by the prolonged school closures, 3 out of every 5 children who lost a full school year worldwide are in the region and approximately 60% of all students in Latin America and the Caribbean have not yet had access to face-to-face classes.

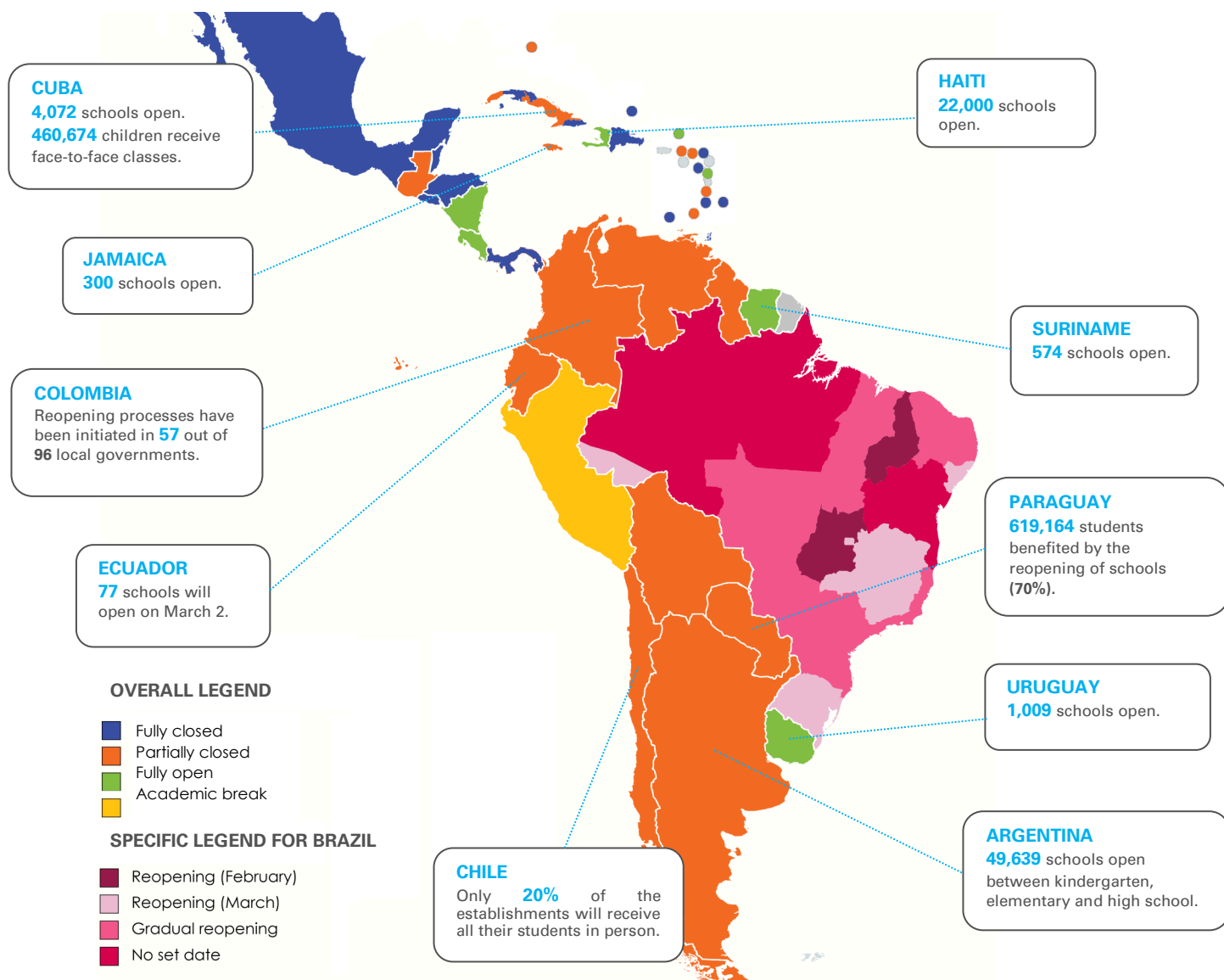
In other parts of the world, schools have gradually reopened, but in the region, although some countries had announced that they would resume face-to-face classes, this has not been possible due to the arrival of the second wave of Covid. This means that there are millions of children who will have to attend classes virtually this year as well, and this is already the case for two years.

The closure of schools unfortunately has implications that go beyond the guarantee of the right to education, the school is the space where many of the children receive

their only nutritious meal of the day, where they have safe and protective spaces, where they socialize and develop their life skills. In terms of learning, hard-earned educational gains are being lost, many children may never return. The longer educational institutions remain closed, the less likely it is that the most vulnerable students will return to class, including those who have disabilities, are migrants or belong to indigenous communities.

As of the date of this report, only 7 countries in the LAC region have fully opened their schools, while in 12 countries and territories schools remain closed and in 17 countries schools are partially closed, approximately 114 million children and adolescents continue to be affected.

In this document we will review the status of school reopening, the existence of learning assessments and/or remedial education programs, monitoring mechanisms and Unicef-supported actions.



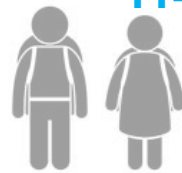
¹ Covid-19 and school closures: One year of education disruption, March 2021.

Note for the map: Please note that we have only included information about the countries for which we have received the data on number of schools open and number of children benefited by the reopening of schools.

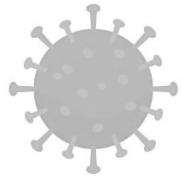
2. SITUATION OVERVIEW



12 countries and territories in the LAC region with schools **fully closed**.



114M children without **face-to-face classes**. (This include the number of children in countries with schools fully and partially closed).⁶



An average of **158** school days without **face-to-face classes** between March 2020 and February 2021.²



7 countries and territories in the region (Anguilla, Costa Rica, Dominica, Haiti, Nicaragua, Suriname and Uruguay) have all their schools **fully open**.



17 countries and territories in the region (Argentina, Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, BVI, Colombia, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Jamaica, Paraguay, St Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia and Venezuela) have **partially** closed their schools.



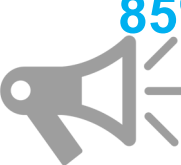
25 countries and territories in the region have developed **protocols** for the safe reopening of schools.



45M children in 24 countries supported by UNICEF in the provision of **distance learning programmes** during school closures.³



60% of countries in the LAC region have decided on a **date for school reopening**.⁷



85% of countries and territories have engaged in **advocacy or communications** for school reopening.⁴



23 countries and territories in the region continue school lessons through **remote learning** online or via television, radio, WhatsApp, or **hybrid models**



9M children, parents and primary caregivers have been supported by UNICEF with community based **mental health and psychosocial support**.⁵



33,233 schools implementing safe schools **protocols** (Covid-19).⁸



11,918M has supported by UNICEF through **Risk Communication and Community engagement (RCCE)** actions.

COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES WITH REMOTE LEARNING AND /OR HYBRID MODELS

Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, BVI, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, St. Lucia, Suriname, and Venezuela.

Sources of information

² Data from [Covid-19 and school closures: One year of education disruption](#), March 2021.

³ Data from [Global COVID-19 SitRep Indicators](#).

⁴ [Global Education Cluster, Tracker analysis Advocacy, 14 August 2020](#).

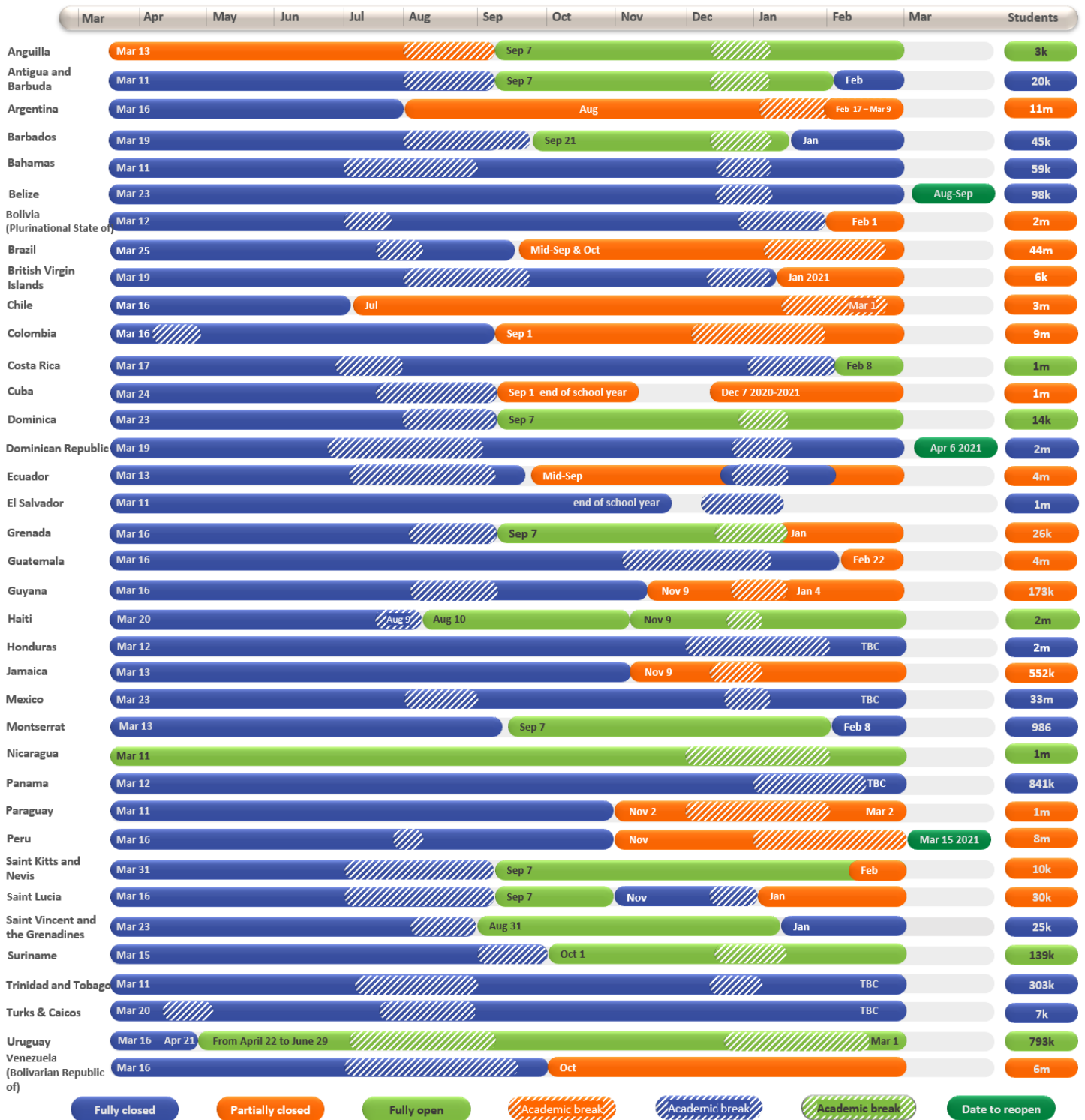
⁵ [Global Education Cluster, Tracker analysis Advocacy, 14 August 2020](#).

⁶ Data extracted from United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Institute of Statistics, 'Welcome to UIS.Stat', <http://data.uis.unesco.org/#>>, and information provided by Unicef COs,

⁷ [Global Education Cluster, Tracker analysis Advocacy, 14 August 2020](#).

⁸ [Global COVID-19 SitRep Indicators](#).

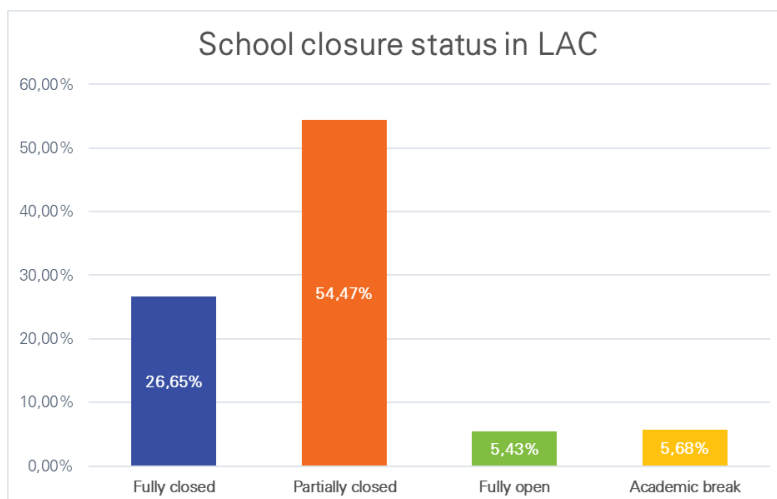
FACE-TO-FACE CLASSES TIMELINE⁹



Sources of information

⁹ Data reported by COs. Information consulted from December 7, 2020 to March 2021.

3. STATUS OF SCHOOLS REOPENING IN LAC



UNESCO Global monitoring of school closures caused by COVID-19 and data reported by COs. Including pre-primary to upper-secondary level data.

ANGUILLA

In school classes, ECD centres are opened.

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

Schools closed first week in February and moved to remote learning until 5 March at which time this will be reviewed for possible extension of school closure.

ECD Centres are currently closed. The MoE has been providing some learning packages for Providers to share with Parents.

ARGENTINA

The Council of Education Ministers in an assembly presided by the President of the Nation, unanimously approved two resolutions ([386 Annex](#) and [387](#)) on the return to classes, under three modalities: face to face, blended learning, and for the high risk groups distance learning with the possibility of sustaining some instances of individual face-to-face exchange under the corresponding health care.

All provinces have determined full attendance in the cases that the epidemiological situation and school infrastructure allow it.

BARBADOS

Fully online. ECD Centres are closed. Some Preschools are participating online.

BELIZE

All schools are still closed. The Minister of Education has commented on plans to kickstart the reopening of schools for all Belizean students in August and September and a possible phased reopening even earlier, particularly for students with disabilities.

BOLIVIA

It is estimated that 43% of the schools (mainly in rural areas) have opened with an alternating modality. The remaining schools have opened through distance modalities: virtual, radio or TV.

BRAZIL

In most cases, the return has been in a hybrid format, with an effort by the education secretariats to identify students who do not have or have limited access to the Internet.

Each Brazilian state is autonomous in the decision to reopen schools. However, although several states have resumed face-to-face educational services, the second wave of the pandemic hit each state differently. There are also the educational services provided at the municipal level, which may also be affected by the health emergency.

In Brazil, 21 of the 27 states have started school activities in some format. However, this is a rough estimate, since it does not consider the situations of each of the country's 5,570 municipalities, which are responsible for part of the educational services and have the autonomy to decide individually.

The local Secretaries of Education opted for remote or hybrid teaching, which is not possible in all schools. Since each secretariat and school must deal with the situation with the resources and formats available, the control of student attendance is affected. While there are indications that in the most vulnerable communities the frequency is still very low. There is still no consolidated data from the country to know the current reality of school attendance in Brazil.

BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

Blended – in school and online. A few larger schools with am/pm shift or 2/3-day rotation. ECD Centres are opened.

CHILE

The school year began on March 1st in a gradual, flexible and voluntary manner. Schools will have a system of shifts and alternate days so that not everyone goes at the same time. Only 20% of the schools will receive all their students in person, which corresponds mainly to small or rural schools that meet the protocols. Eighty percent of the schools will divide their courses into half days, days or weeks alternating between on-site and

remote. In parallel, remote education will continue to be provided to adapt to the health context.¹⁰

COLOMBIA

Are implementing processes of gradual, progressive and safe opening in alternating modalities.

COSTA RICA

The opening modality of each educational center was made according to its own characteristics, location capacity, number of children, services provided, and the willingness of the educational center management to send the children to the centers. In some centers the children go two or three days a week, in others the whole week or every other week (depending on the groups established) or every other week.

According to Ms. Melania Brenes, the Minister of Education a.i. of Costa Rica, 95% of the Educational Institutions have opened as planned in a hybrid mode since 8 Feb. Only 16 educational centers were not able to open due to limitations.

In addition, there are 708 educational centers in vulnerable situations, where the MoE distributed liquid soap, alcohol gel, disinfectants and digital thermometers.¹¹

CUBA

4,072 schools and 920 kindergartens (early childhood centers) opened.

Dates of the reopening process: 8 provinces in the Autonomous Transmission Phase that have closed their schools: Artemisa, Havana, Mayabeque, Matanzas, Villa Clara, Santiago de Cuba and Guantánamo, and the municipality Isla de la Juventud.

Municipalities of other provinces that are partially closed: municipalities Cienfuegos, Camagüey, Pinar del Río, Consolación, Mantua, Viñales, La Palma, Holguín, Moa and Frank País).

The reopenings are gradual and will depend on the epidemiological situation; as long as the provinces/municipalities are in the autochthonous transmission phase, they will not be reopened. These phases are based on a set of indicators that are analyzed in a multisectoral government group.

DOMINICA

In-school classes. ECD Centres are opened.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

All schools are still closed: On Feb 24th, the council for national education met to support the decision of MoE and MoH to present a calendar to initiate school reopening. A mapping and follow up of Covid-19 and vaccination process will be taken into consideration.

Within the framework of the plan "Caring for the joy and security of reunion", the Ministry of Education, together with the Cabinet and the Ministry of Public Health presented the general protocol and the schedule for the voluntary, progressive and controlled return to school with the consent of the family. In places where the return to normality cannot yet be authorized, the virtual modality will remain in force.

On Friday, March 5, the Minister of Education, Roberto Fulcar, announced in a press conference that from next April 6, the students of early childhood, kindergarten and first cycle of primary school will return to school in semi-presential mode, as well as the students of sixth grade of secondary school of the technical mode. The schedule will be staggered for 50% of their students in groups: group #1 on Mondays and Tuesdays and group #2 on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. The Ministry prepared a [video](#) to provide guidance on the division of groups.

[Vaccination of teachers](#) has begun. Teachers will remain in phase 1D, along with adults over 60 years of age, both with and without co-morbidities.

ECUADOR

The Emergency Operations Committee authorized, as of Tuesday, March 2, the voluntary return to semi-presential classes in 77 schools in rural areas of Ecuador with little access to the Internet. To do so, schools must comply with biosecurity protocols, disinfection before entering classrooms, the use of masks, hand washing and physical distancing.¹²

Ecuador has the Covid-19 Educational Plan, which consists of two phases:

- Phase 1 - Learning Together at Home.
- Phase 2 - Educational continuity plan.

The Ministry of Education is currently conducting a consultation with students¹³ and parents¹⁴ to identify strategies and agreements to guarantee the right to education.

EL SALVADOR

Classes continue virtually.

GRENADA

Senior primary and senior secondary have in-school classes. Others on a shift system. ECD Centres are opened.

GUATEMALA

On February 15th, the schools opened for teacher preparation, and on February 22nd, classes began in the hybrid model. Students will attend in small groups, as long as their Covid alert allows it and the schools have water to comply with the hygiene protocol.

¹⁰ Ministry of Education of Chile: [Let's keep learning in times of Covid](#). Information consulted in March 2021.

¹¹ [MEP interim head: Students arrived 'passive, withdrawn, anxious and a little bit sad, they don't talk to each other'](#). Information consulted in March 2021.

¹² [Educational continuity plan](#). Information consulted on March, 2021.

¹³ Consultation for [students](#). Information consulted on March, 2021.

¹⁴ [Adult](#) consultation. Information consulted on March, 2021.

Since the opening , students will get their learning materials and teachers their teaching supplies; school meals will be delivered to parents for a 20-day period since meals will not be cooked at school. Schools will also purchase cleaning material and face masks. Schools will open according to the level of risk provided by the Health Ministry. Unfortunately, 9,900 school will not be able to open regardless of the level of risk because they lack WASH, a required condition to open which will leave 930,000 students learning exclusively at home through distant learning material. ECD will also open for individual attention of children under 5.

Aprendo en casa y en clase will continue to provide learning alternatives: tv, radio, digital learning.

GUYANA

Grades 10 and 11 are in school. Dates for other grades not yet determined.

HAITI

All 22,000 schools in Haiti are reopening. However some schools have difficulty functioning due to violence in certain urban neighborhoods.

HONDURAS

Schools across the country remain closed.

JAMAICA

The Ministry of Education has decided to adjust its position on face-to-face classes in schools in the light of the recent spike in the Covid-19 numbers.

The Minister of Education Fayval Williams announced that effective immediately only students who are to sit exit exams are to be allowed in schools for face-to-face classes.

For schools that are operating in the face-to-face mode, MoE has made an adjustment and we have directed that those schools in the face-to-face mode only have students from grade six, which is the exit for our primary schools and students in grades 11, 12 and 13 in secondary schools. All other students will stay at home and utilise the online learning platform or the audio-visual approach which will be watching the lessons on television [and] listening to lessons on radio,

According to the MoE, more than 400 schools have been approved for face-to-face classes so far but only about 300 have actually opened their doors.

MEXICO

There are no official guidelines currently. The federal education ministry has issued guidelines only for community learning centers, which provide pedagogical and socio-emotional support to small groups of a maximum of 9 children per classroom. Schools interested in this modality must submit a work proposal to the authorities. As of today, there is no information of any center that is officially working with this modality.

MONTSERRAT

Schools are closed from February 8 to February 28 with classes online, scheduled to reopen on March 1 if there are no further cases. ECD Centers are currently closed.

PANAMA

The Ministry of Education announced the decision to implement the first trimester of the 2021 school year under the distance education modality, using multiple media formats and intervention strategies which include the use of platforms, radio and television, as well as tutorials, home visits and project work, and taking into account the guidelines of the 2021 school year.

Periodic evaluations of the epidemiological conditions of each educational region will be carried out to determine the teaching modalities during the second and third trimester.

PARAGUAY

The return to classes was March 2, the modality chosen will be a mix of partial and full opening depending on several factors: the number of students enrolled for face-to-face or virtual modality and the availability of teachers to perform either face-to-face or distance education according to their health conditions per institution. Institutions in rural areas are encouraged to open fully and to analyze the total or partial opening of schools in urban areas.

The families can choose whether they wish to enroll their children in face-to-face or distance education (hybrid). In the face-to-face setting, the following options are available: full face-to-face or semi-face-to-face. The capacity of the classrooms will define the existence of bubble groups. In the distance mode, the following scenarios are possible: with technology and without technology.

Paraguay It is estimated that a total of 864,235 students have registered in the Ministry of Education's platform (platform designed for families to register their education modality). Of the total, 619,164 will start face-to-face classes (70%) and 258,721 (29.4%) will start virtual classes.

PERU

All schools will work remotely until April 15. From that date, schools will open on a semi-presential basis, depending on the health situation, in various departments and provinces. A first list of the areas where schools could be opened will be announced by the Ministry of Education (Mineduc) by the first week of March. The specific regulations (including up to date of protocols) will be given the first week of March.

ST. KITTS & NEVIS

In school classes however some schools have an am/pm shift system. ECD Centres are opened.

ST. LUCIA

Blended – in school and online ECD Centres are currently closed. A few centres are online.

ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

Fully online. ECD Centres are currently closed.

SURINAME

All schools are open 5 days a week, but children attend on an alternate schedule 2-3 days a week.

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Senior secondary (4,5 & 6 Forms) are in school from 8 February. All other students are online.

ECD Centres are currently closed. The MoE is providing content for virtual learning for those with access.

TURKS & CAICOS ISLANDS

Fully on-line. Small groups of exam classes approved for in-school classes. ECD Centres are opened.

URUGUAY

In 2020, schools opened on June 30. However, in order to maintain the 1.5 meters of distance inside the classroom, the presence was not full, in fact, in 2020 only 29% of the schools had full presence. This meant that groups had to be split in two and days and schedules divided. In 2021, the protocols reduced the distance between classrooms from 1.5 meters to 1 meter and the president of ANEP points out that 400 million pesos were invested in infrastructure for the beginning of the year. This has allowed the percentage of full attendance to increase from 29% to 87%.

VENEZUELA

Currently, the partial reopening modality continues to be implemented: two weeks a month (which are flexibilization weeks in the country) schools open and provide pedagogical counseling to families and students who require it. In addition, schools with active feeding programs remain open on a permanent basis operating the daily distribution of meals to children and adolescents.

4. LEARNING ASSESSMENTS AND/OR REMEDIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

ARGENTINA

The national program Bridges for Equality seeks to support, through different resources, the design and implementation of institutional projects and the diversification of pedagogical proposals in schools to reconnect students.

BELIZE

Before Covid-19 pandemic there were programs on early identification systems in early literacy and in early grades.

COLOMBIA

"Evaluate to advance" is the tool created by the Ministry of National Education to measure the learning of children and adolescents within the framework of Covid-19 in Colombia. Since 2020, this tool was implemented in a sample of 2,540,263 school students in the country, with a positive response of use among teachers.

COSTA RICA

Currently, blended education is being initiated. This education involves differentiating the elements that can be provided remotely and in person. The assessments of learning and evaluations are formative in nature. The remedial education approach prepared for 2018 teacher's strike is being used, with the fundamental topics for the curricular advancement of children selected.

CUBA

The Ministry of Education regularly monitors the implementation of the curricula through the TV classes. The contents that must be systematized at this stage of the school year and retaken as remedial once schools

reopen have been adjusted. This is monitored through the national, provincial and municipal education structures.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

UNICEF has supported the Ministry of Education with the development of learning assessment sheets for teachers to assess the children's achievements at home; however, there is no defined evaluation.

EL SALVADOR

There are face-to-face diagnostic tests for all grades and subjects, which will be applied once the children and adolescents return to school. Currently, the Ministry of Education is working on the development of virtual diagnostic tests. In relation to remedial education, there are flexible education modalities, which will support the leveling of learning.

GUATEMALA

Once the schools are reopened, the first 3 weeks are for leveling and reinforcement through printed guides, TV and radio and digital programming. Then in module 1 of learning, a diagnostic test and psychosocial support material are included.

GUYANA

Continuing education system in place.

HAITI

Students in grades 9 and 12 participated in the national state exams. The Ministry of Education, with financial support from Unicef, has provided remedial classes to students in preparation for the national exams. The

remedial courses will continue during this school year to make up for learning losses.

HONDURAS

It has been announced that there would be evaluations for the beginning of the year.

JAMAICA

Monitoring is being done in specific areas where attendance has been observed to be lower than expected using existing national tools and, beyond that, individual schools are conducting their own assessments and adjusting their teaching plans accordingly. A new intervention program, the mobile intervention program, has been launched in an effort to help students in need of intervention with small group classes twice a week focusing on math and English.

MEXICO

This information is not officially available at the moment. In 2020, Unicef conducted a survey among a representative number of households in Mexico, which showed that 78% of children and adolescents have had difficulties in continuing their education at home (ENCOVID infancia, June-July 2020), raising an alarm about possible school lag and dropout.

PANAMA

The Executive Decree No. 26, dated January 14, 2021, establishes the academic recovery program under the distance learning modality, on a temporary basis, for middle and high school students of official and private schools. It is established that during the first five weeks of the school year (from March 1 to April 2), academic reinforcement and psycho-educational support activities will be carried out. Diagnostic, formative and summative evaluations will be implemented, with emphasis on formative evaluation to guarantee the achievement of learning outputs through follow-up and feedback modalities. The academic recovery plan is being prepared but has not yet been officially launched. [digital Official Gazette](#).

PARAGUAY

Five weeks of learning feedback are foreseen. In the second week of March (from March 8) diagnostic evaluations will be developed. Then, at least 3 weeks of feedback on the previous year's learning will be based on these evaluations. Currently, a document is being prepared on the capacities to be prioritized in 2021.

PERU

The Minedu has announced that the first month of classes from March 15 will be precisely to determine the level of learning of students and a process of reinforcement and leveling until July of this year. However, no single or standardized assessment program has been announced, only orientations.

SURINAME

Learning is assessed in schools during face-to-face learning days. Students receive self-guided printed instructions each week, which they have to return to the school (or WhatsApp to the teacher) for review during school closing times or days that students study from home.

URUGUAY

During December 2020 and in order to evaluate students' grade passage, the annual grade was replaced by a report describing each student's learning. All primary education students were promoted and promotion was deferred to 2022. At the secondary level, although promotion was not postponed, during the months of December and February, support and accompaniment activities were carried out for those who did not achieve the performance levels. Likewise, although grades were maintained in secondary education, final exams were not held for each subject in December. In a country with one of the highest repetition rates in Latin America, all these measures constitute unprecedented innovations that can serve as opportunities to be maintained in the future.

Currently, the standardized learning assessment ARISTAS is being carried out. This is conducted by the national institute for educational evaluation (Ineed) and the results will be available in March.¹⁵

VENEZUELA

There are no learning assessment or remediation programs at the national level. Learning assessment is carried out in each school by teachers to evaluate student progress in the achievement of competencies and the development of skills and abilities. Remedial educational actions are generally applied at the general secondary and technical secondary education levels, for which additional activities are implemented for students who do not reach the minimum necessary competencies.

Unicef has recently initiated with the Ministry of Education a project for the development of an accelerated education curriculum, which does not exist in the country, to address the needs of over-age students who have been excluded, for various reasons, from the education system and which focuses on the acquisition of basic literacy and mathematics competencies.

¹⁵ Ministry of Education of Uruguay: [Presentiality in kindergartens and schools increased from 29% to 87% over 2020](#), March, 2021.

5. MONITORING MECHANISMS FOR SCHOOL REOPENING

ARGENTINA

The resolutions of the federal council approved on February 12, which organize and regulate the return to classes throughout the country, created the observatory for the return to classes: a monitoring unit for the return to classes composed of representatives of the federal education council, teachers' unions with national representation, the national health ministry, the national council for quality education, the national ombudsman for children and adolescents and other agencies and sectors considered relevant for the fulfillment of these functions (among them, Unicef).

BELIZE

The Ministry of Education has formed a Covid-19 Education Task Force to bring together relevant key stakeholders and partners in education to help guide the Government's commitment to the delivery of quality, accessible education during the Covid-19 pandemic, and to provide specific recommendations for the safe and responsible reopening of schools for face-to-face instruction in August/September 2021 or when it is deemed safe to do so by the Ministry of Health and Wellness. The Covid-19 Education Task Force will be working together from January to July 2021.

BRAZIL

The National Council of Secretaries of Education monitors the reopening of schools, together with other civil society organizations.

CHILE

All facilities in Chile submitted their operating plans, regardless of their size, and must implement the physical distancing measures defined in the protocols.

Only 1% of the schools that opened in 2020 had more than one case of Covid-19 and no outbreak occurred within a school. The Mineduc provided all schools with a sanitary kit and allocated funds to bring their infrastructure in line with sanitary needs.¹⁶

COLOMBIA

The Ministry of National Education monitors the processes of reopening schools by accompanying the 96 local governments certified in education. This information is periodically shared with organizations and agencies of the education sector present in Colombia.

COSTA RICA

The MEP monitors the opening of educational centers through the regional education directorates throughout the country and with the implementation of the SABER platform, which collects information on all educational centers and the children who attend them.

CUBA

Education in Cuba is 100% state-owned. Therefore, under the leadership of the Ministry of Education and its provincial and municipal directorates, the entire process of monitoring the closing and opening of schools is carried out.

ECA (EASTERN CARIBBEAN AREA COUNTRIES)

The Ministry of Health provides guidance and schools are opened based on cabinet guidelines. There are no specific control mechanisms.

ECUADOR

The monitoring of reopening processes will be based on periodic surveys led by Unicef and the use of administrative records generated by the Ministry of Education.

EL SALVADOR

The Ministry of Education, in coordination with the Secretariat of Innovation of the Presidency of the Republic, has created a platform in which schools must register through a "step by step" process. The Ministry of Health must authorize the reopening, and once they are open, the Ministry of Education will make a sampling to verify compliance with the return plans. To date, more than 2,800 return plans have been received.

It is also proposed that, four months after the reopening date, a census will be carried out to identify which schools are functioning and which are not, analyze their conditions and provide support until all schools are reopened.

GUATEMALA

The Ministry of Education has a system for monitoring the quality of education, which deploys more than 1,000 monitors nationwide who feed the system of indicators. In addition, the evaluation department conducts random sampling and monitors enrollment through the education statistics system.

GUYANA

Monitoring activities depend on the decision of the national Covid-19 task force.

HAITI

There is no specific monitoring mechanism for the opening process, as all schools opened at the same time. However, Unicef and other partners monitor attendance rates and work with the ministry of education to address school dropout.

¹⁶ Ministry of Education of Chile: [Let's keep on learning](#). Information obtained in March 2021.

HONDURAS

There will be a reopening pilot in 18 schools.

JAMAICA

The MoEYI monitors this through its Planning and Development Division. It is called the Risk Vulnerability Ranking.

MEXICO

At the moment there is no monitoring scheme at the federal level; the states are responsible for defining guidelines according to the traffic light system.

PANAMA

The Ministry of education has developed a system for monitoring and continuous evaluation, see article 14 of the executive decree n°25 of January 14, 2021: [digital Official Gazette](#).

PARAGUAY

Based on the guidelines for the prevention and control of Covid-19 in educational institutions (based on the safe school operations guide and the global back-to-school frameworks) adapted to the country's context, specific checklists were developed. Together with the Red Cross, Unicef Paraguay is supporting the reopening of schools in the capital and the central department, where in addition to training school principals in the guide, Unicef will be accompanying the principals of 1,000 schools to monitor the implementation of the recommendations. In addition, a general systematization process is foreseen.

6. UNICEF SUPPORT

ARGENTINA

Unicef continues to advocate for the return to face-to-face classes, participating in different discussion and planning spaces with the provincial and national executive, teachers' unions and relevant actors in education policy. Unicef generates and disseminates empirical evidence and carries out a public advocacy strategy through different communication platforms. Unicef has also actively participated in the national council for the elaboration of national protocols and in the national. Federal Education Council on February 12, where the 24 jurisdictions approved the [protocols](#) that prioritize the return to face-to-face classes in all educational institutions in the country.

BELIZE

Unicef has engaged with the Ministers and senior management teams of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology, and with the Ministry of Health and Wellness to advocate for safe reopening of schools. Guidance, key messages/statements and frameworks on school reopening have been shared and been discussed. Presently Unicef is planning a children's town hall and other communication strategies to advocate for access to safe and quality learning. Unicef has also pledged financial resources and is presently

PERU

Minedu has already worked with a dashboard for distance education in 2020. It is expected that there will be a similar one for the reopening of schools.

SURINAME

Checklists have been established as part of the reopening protocol. The inspection department oversees/monitors that schools adhere to guidelines.

URUGUAY

To date, when there are outbreaks of Covid-19 in schools, classrooms or schools are closed, depending on the size of the outbreaks. This is stipulated in the various health protocols.

VENEZUELA

The National System of Educational Supervision of the Ministry of Education has an organizational structure of 3,722 educational circuits (each one groups between 5 and 12 schools) to which a supervisor is assigned to follow up and monitor the processes in all levels and modalities of the schools. In the contingency of the Covid-19 pandemic, these supervisors monitor the development of the distance education modality from the national plan "every family a school" and promote pedagogical guidelines issued by the governing body regarding the opening of schools in weeks of flexibilization for pedagogical attention. This process is coordinated by the national directorate of supervision and evaluation of the educational system, which manages all the follow-up and monitoring information.

reviewing its workplan with the Government to support safe reopening of schools.

BOLIVIA

Unicef, in partnership with WFP, has finalized the back-to-school protocol that is being endorsed by the Ministry and is expected to be launched during the first half of March. In addition, in partnership with Unicef and the IDB, an advocacy Webinar has been prepared to share the evidence on the low incidence of contagion in schools and the experiences that countries in the region have had with the reopening of schools. Unicef has completed the purchase of supplies for the implementation of the protocols, including hand-washing stations for 75 schools.

BRAZIL

Unicef Brazil continues to strongly advocate for the safe reopening of schools and the immediate return of children to the educational environment. Actions include actively seeking children for enrollment and follow-up in the formal education system.

COLOMBIA

Unicef is supporting the habilitation of schools to start reopening processes through the implementation of water and sanitation protocols and the distribution of hygiene kits, the promotion of care habits and community communication aimed at reducing rumors around Covid-19, and educational support to local governments and schools with pedagogical guidelines for the reopening of schools under alternating models.

COSTA RICA

Unicef collaborates with the MEP the working group on reopening, promoting in social media a campaign for the safe return to school, providing critical hygiene supplies for 21% of its population (alcohol gel, disinfectant, liquid hand soap and thermometers) which are being used in the opening, generating material for the "I learn at home" strategy. Unicef is also collaborating to solve the lack of access to water in some educational centers and in the definition of new actions for combined education.

CUBA

Unicef has been accompanying the opening process from the planning stage with supplies to ensure safety (hygiene equipment, thermometers for research and materials) to the communication campaign aimed at children, families and teachers.

Unicef Cuba has developed a [document](#) that gathers its experience to guarantee educational continuity in the face of school closures and the subsequent process of reopening schools from March to December 2020. The document details issues related to curricular adaptations, complementary actions for educational continuity and the reopening process. It also describes UNICEF's support during these stages.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Unicef provides technical support to MINERD for the elaboration of protocols, development of booklets for students accompanied by guides with orientations for teachers and the advocacy strategy for the reopening of schools.

ECA (EASTERN CARIBBEAN AREA COUNTRIES)

Unicef continues to work with countries by providing relevant updated guidance on the safe reopening of schools and engaging education officials in this regard. It is also providing support to ensure supplies of hygiene, sanitation and protective spaces as required.

ECUADOR

Unicef continues to advocate for the prioritization of the reopening of schools and provides advice to the Ministry of Education in the reopening process, together with the student counseling departments, Unicef is monitoring the situation of children, their families and teachers and continues to coordinate the education in emergencies

group that promotes the gradual and safe reopening of schools.

On February 28, the National Emergency Operations Committee decided that the Ministry of Education should approve and authorize the progressive use of educational facilities in coordination with the Ministry of Public Health. This provision may facilitate the approval process of the institutional plans for educational continuity and the eventual reopening of schools.

EL SALVADOR

Unicef is in constant communication with the ministry of education to understand the challenges the MoE is facing in the safe reopening of schools. Between June and December 2020, the education cluster co-led by Unicef, Save the Children and the World Bank was activated. Within this framework, actions aimed at reopening of schools were identified, some of which are being financed by Unicef: purchase of kits with educational materials and biosafety equipment for teachers, support in the development and printing of psychosocial care guides and purchase of kits for their implementation, technical advice for updating the school protection plan.

Unicef has supported the development of virtual learning contents to facilitate the multimodal education proposed by the Ministry of Education: accelerated education for the first cycle of basic education, work initiation modules for the basic education cycle, family education program, school coexistence plan, as well as the creation of television and radio programs that are being broadcast on the national educational television program "let's learn at home".

With the objective of having robust information that allows adequate decision making for the beginning of the new school year and the reopening of school, Unicef has supported actions to strengthen the Salvadoran educational information and management system (SIGES), has shared guidelines, evidence and successful experiences to guide the staff of the Ministry of Education in areas related to the reopening of schools.

GUATEMALA

Unicef has supported the design, development, validation, printing, distribution of health protocols and teacher training. Information capsules were also produced for TV and radio with the return and information protocols. Psychosocial support materials for teachers to support children were designed, developed, validated, printed and distributed. Support was provided for the basic repair of some educational centers damaged by eta and iota so that students could return. Unicef has accompanied the entire process for the opening of classes and supported the realization of return drills.¹⁶

¹⁶ Ministry of Education of Guatemala | [MINENDUC](#). Information obtained in March 2021.

GUYANA

Unicef provided protective equipment and is supporting water, sanitation and hygiene initiatives, gender-sensitive psychosocial capacity building for school welfare officers and classroom teachers.

HONDURAS

Unicef is supporting the rehabilitation and minor repairs of educational centers, ASH actions, provision of furniture and school supplies (in design phase).

JAMAICA

Unicef is supporting the creation of [media content](#) that supports safe travel to school/safe reopening, as well as handwashing stations for 19 primary schools in high-risk areas of Covid.

MEXICO

Unicef continues to advocate at the federal and state levels for the gradual and healthy reopening of schools. In February, high-level meetings were held with the governors and secretaries of education in Hidalgo, Oaxaca and Michoacán, states that are beneficiaries of the Health in Your Hands program. Through this program, Unicef seeks to provide hand-washing stations and hygiene supplies to schools. Unicef has offered support to state authorities so that beneficiary schools can consider opening community learning centers, taking advantage of the supplies and proposing technical support for protection protocols in schools. Although the program is well received at the state level, there has been partial openness on the part of the authorities to consider the reopening of schools, in some states such as Oaxaca, the reopening is a politically controversial issue and there was no willingness to consider these modalities.

PANAMA

Unicef advised Meduca on the guidelines for the reopening of schools prepared for the year 2020. The week of March 8, a television campaign on educational exclusion and safe and progressive return to school will be launched. Given the efforts of Unicef Panama, more than 40 organizations have joined the campaign (UNESCO, UNDP, Chamber of Commerce, Civic Clubs, Allies for Children, the Great Educational Alliance, Chamber of Social Development, ODENA, OEI, APEDE, etc.).

Unicef has donated more than 120,000 bars of soap and will soon donate 100,000 kn95 masks for schools that begin the pilot phase of semi-presential education.

In addition, a technical commission Meduca is being advised to initiate pilot experiences of semi face-to-face education and other strategies.

PARAGUAY

Unicef has been supporting the Ministry of Education in the elaboration of a general return plan, [return protocol and operational guide](#). The protocol is endorsed by the Ministry of Health. Unicef supported the development of

[guidelines for the prevention and control of Covid](#) and the training of 10,000 educators. Unicef is also training humanitarian partners on the protocol and guidelines so that partners can replicate the training in their areas of influence.

Together with the Red Cross, Unicef is supporting the reopening of schools in the capital and the central department, where in addition to training school principals in the guidelines, support will be provided to the principals of 1,000 schools to monitor the implementation of the recommendations. It is planned to replicate the training and accompaniment in indigenous and rural communities.

Unicef is supporting the Ministry of Education in the development, design and dissemination of communication materials within the framework of the comprehensive campaign on the return to school, especially in indigenous and rural communities, considering that they will return in person.

Access to audiovisual material in [spanish](#) and [guarani](#).

PERU

Unicef has provided technical and political support for the definition of the technical standard that will establish the criteria and procedures for the safe, gradual, flexible and voluntary reopening of schools. It has led validation and consultation processes with key actors in the education system.

Likewise, as co-leaders of the global coalition for education-Peru chapter (together with UNESCO and the Minedu itself), Unicef has supported the reopening process, including private sector organizations.

Unicef is going to prepare tools for local education authorities and school principals to make the reopening effective, which we will validate in about 130 schools that we accompany in 4 areas of Peru, in order to be able to use them at the national level.

Finally, Unicef is preparing a media campaign (TV, radio) and social networks to promote the enrollment of vulnerable children, and we will link it to a subsequent campaign to promote the safe reopening of schools.

SURINAME

Unicef provides support in digital content development; development of learning platforms; strengthening of data management; strengthening of psychosocial support; capacity building of teachers; safe reopening communication.

URUGUAY

Unicef is leading, in coordination with the National Administration of Public Education (ANEP) and other agencies of the United Nations System (Unesco, PAHO, UNFPA) a back to school campaign. The campaign will be broadcasted on open television starting this week. The audiovisual materials have already been recorded and the materials for networks are being designed. Likewise, Unicef has carried out a new systematization of the second stage of school reopening, during the second semester of 2020, focused on the epidemiological

aspects of the opening. It collects national evidence that supports the hypothesis of safe school reopening. It is currently being edited.

VENEZUELA

Unicef continues to provide advocacy and technical advice to the Ministry of Education to promote and guide the reopening of schools. A teacher training package for the safe reopening of schools (from Unicef MENA) has recently been translated and adapted with LACRO support. Webinars are being designed with this content, courses in forum-chat modality that favor the training of technical teams and teachers of the ministry of education, as well as of the organizations of the education cluster. Radio capsules and videos are also being produced to sensitize families for the return to school.

7. UNICEF REGIONAL SUPPORT

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES

The regional EiE team has supported the following initiatives during the month of February:

Creando Aula: A [virtual course](#) for Latin American teachers that introduces important aspects of Education in Emergencies and contributes to the development of pedagogical and socioemotional skills of educators to face humanitarian crises. The course focuses on three elements that will be the central themes of the course: Education in Emergencies, Well-being and socioemotional skills in teachers and students, and adaptation and creativity in pedagogy and curriculum. The course has been developed by members of the Regional Education Working Group (REWG) in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Launching of the campaign "En la Escuela estoy Mejor": This campaign has been developed by the Convenio Andres Bello (CAB) with the technical support of UNICEF LACRO and developed within the framework of the FER project of Education Cannot Wait (ECW). The objective of this campaign, which includes video pieces, podcasts, gifs and infographics, is to inform and promote the use of the CAB Equivalency Table as a reference to achieve a more agile and efficient integration of children and adolescents in migration situations in the educational systems of host countries.

Curriculum adaptation guide: With the purpose of orienting and strengthening educational development at the normative and operational levels of the Education Sector and to be used as a tool in crisis contexts in order to prevent school dropout and backwardness, Plan International and UNICEF developed a guide for curriculum adaptation in emergency situations. The guide provides technical and reflective elements for adapting and incorporating educational content in the context of emergencies.

Training package for teachers and education personnel: In close coordination with the Unicef Venezuela, the training package "[Ready to go back to school: training package for teachers and education personnel](#)" has been developed: The package aims to address immediate needs arising in relation to health and safety, lost learning

In addition, school kits continue to be provided to schools nationwide, as well as communication material for the prevention of Covid-19 and separator stickers for school floors. Actions are being prioritized with field officers to attend to indigenous populations in this context. From the WASH area, water and sanitation repairs have been carried out in more than 180 prioritized schools nationwide.

time, and mental health and wellbeing in schools and classrooms. The information it presents has been developed by educators, teachers and education staff with the Middle East and North Africa region in mind, adapted and contextualized to the region. The modules are based on the Framework for School Reopening developed by UNESCO (UNICEF), the World Bank, the World Food Program (WFP) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

EARLY CHILDHOOD (ECD)

In order to provide technical inputs and evidence to advocate for the reopening of Early Childhood and Preschool Education (ECE) services, LACRO has prepared a technical note to support the advocacy work of Regional and Country Offices. The note contains arguments based on the latest available evidence on the opening of early childhood and preschool services and the low transmission in this age group. Finally, it provides elements to call on governments, decision makers and the private sector to generate all the necessary conditions for a safe reopening of early childhood centers.

INCLUSION

With EIB (Intercultural Bilingual Education), UNICEF LACRO facilitated two meetings with the regional task force to share cases and practices in the LAC region, particularly in the context of the pandemic and school reopening. Two consultants were hired to map different IBE educational materials in the region and create a digital repository on the LACRO website, and map and systematize protocols for IBE materials.

LACRO received additional GPE funds for EIB learning materials to be used in the reopening of schools. Additionally, LACRO received a 3-year grant to implement the Accessible Digital Textbooks (ADT) for All initiative in the region. The initiative brings together writers, publishers, teachers, disability organizations, technologists and representatives from the Ministry of Education to develop the necessary guidelines for producing producing [textbooks in accessible digital formats](#).

SECONDARY EDUCATION AND LEARNING

LACRO has developed a [publication](#) on Formative learning assessment in contexts of remote provision of educational services in Latin America and the Caribbean (Documentary review, guidelines and tools).

This document proposes to identify a series of considerations and approaches to guide decision-making processes regarding policies and procedures for formative learning assessment in circumstances of remote (or hybrid) educational service provision. In this way, it is expected to inform and enrich the deliberations for the development of guidelines and procedures to support teachers and other agents responsible for conducting formative assessments, in order to account

for the results of the teaching-learning process and gather key evidence to adjust practices related to the remote provision of education, taking into account the diverse contexts and living conditions of students, with emphasis on the most vulnerable. Additionally, it includes a list of examples of Learning Management Systems, as well as digital tools to support formative assessment.



For additional information or any queries please contact:

Ruth Custode, rcustode@unicef.org; Juan Pinzón, jpinzon@unicef.org