LACRO COVID-19 EDUCATION RESPONSE: UPDATE 26 STATUS OF SCHOOLS' REOPENING

unicef for every child

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I. INTRODUCTION

As of June 30, 18 countries and territories in Latin America and the Caribbean still have their schools partially closed, in 4 countries and territories schools are totally closed, and in 11 of them schools are totally open, which translates into 101 million children and adolescents still affected by the closure of schools in the Latin America & the Caribbean region and an average of 154 school days without face-to-face classes from March 2020 to June 30, 2021.

Over the last several weeks the reopening status of schools has been changing constantly in the region due to the appearance of new waves and strains of COVID-19. As a result, some countries and territories in the region where schools were opened were forced to close again, such as is the case of Anguilla and St. Kitts and Nevis, where schools closed again in May. While in Anguilla schools managed to reopen again on June 1, in St. Kitts and Nevis schools are still fully closed. These cases show how important is for teachers that learning resources and modalities are adequately adjusted to this new scenario of ongoing reopening and closure of schools to ensure quality and continuity of learning for all children and adolescents in the region.

With this in mind, Update 26 presents the progress made on the reopening of schools in the Latin America & the Caribbean region since the previous report, published in early June (Update 25). Along with the overview of key data on the reopening process and the timeline of face-to-face classes, this report offers a systematization of the reopening process in all countries and territories of region, including information on the existing strategies to improve school's infrastructure (installation of hand-washing stations, repairs, implementation of biosafety protocols, etc.), as well as the progress made on the perception surveys addressed to children, adolescents and teachers on the current situation of schools. Lastly, the report also presents the progress made on the prioritization of teachers' vaccination of the region, as well as new key regional and global resources for the reopening process of schools.

UPDATE HIGHLIGHTS

Check out here the *New York Times* article released on June 26, "1+1=4? Latin America Confronts a Pandemic Education Crisis", and here the *Wall Street Journal* article released on July 4, "Latin America's Long School Shutdown Is Leading to Crisis", with UNICEF mentioned as a source in the two of them.

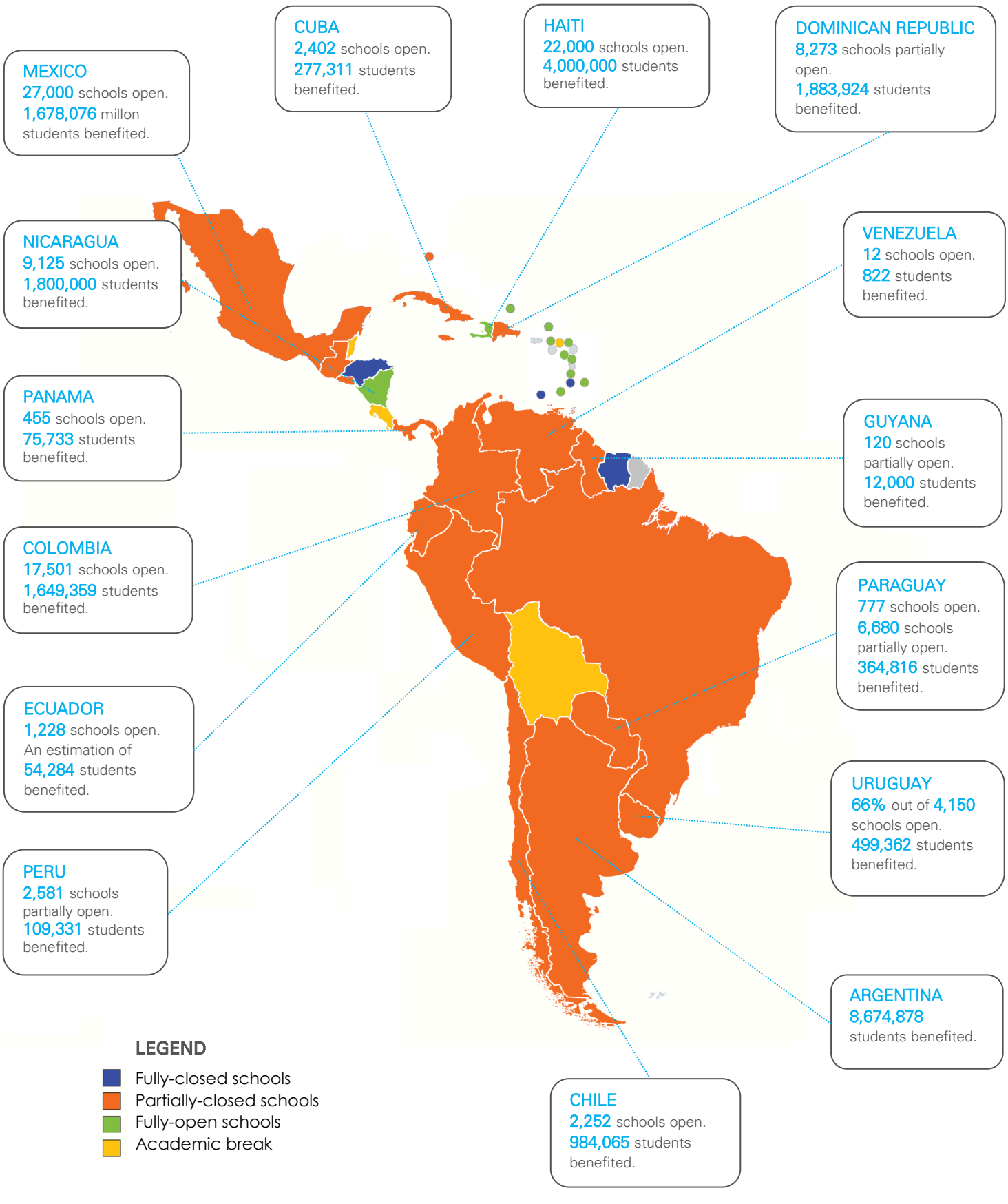


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II. REOPENING OF SCHOOLS' MAP

For the purpose of this report the following categorization has been considered:

- **Fully closed:** all schools closed for face-to-face education from pre-primary to upper secondary education.
- **Partially closed:** refers to some schools open for face-to-face education from pre-primary to upper secondary education.
- **Fully open:** all schools open for face-to-face education from pre-primary to upper secondary education.



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. Information received by COs and updated until June 30, 2021.

III. SITUATION OVERVIEW

This section was prepared based on information received by COs and updated until June 30, 2021.



4 countries and territories in the region (Honduras, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago) with schools fully closed.



11 countries and territories in the region (Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Haiti, Montserrat, Nicaragua, St. Lucia, and Turks and Caicos Islands) have all their schools fully open.



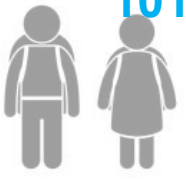
18 countries and territories in the region (Argentina, Bahamas, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela) have their schools partially closed.



25 countries and territories in the region continue school lessons through remote learning via online or television, radio, WhatsApp, printed materials and/or hybrid models.



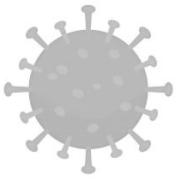
70% of countries in the LAC region have decided on a date for school reopening.[1]



101M children affected by schools' closures. (This includes the number of children in countries with schools fully and partially closed).[2]

2,4M children affected in countries were schools are fully closed.

99,5M children affected in countries were schools are partially closed.



An average of **154** school days without face-to-face classes between March 2020 and June 30, 2021.[3]



4 countries and territories in the region (Belize, Bolivia, Costa Rica Saint Kitts and Nevis) are on academic recess.



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



19 countries and territories in the region have prioritized teachers in the vaccination process.

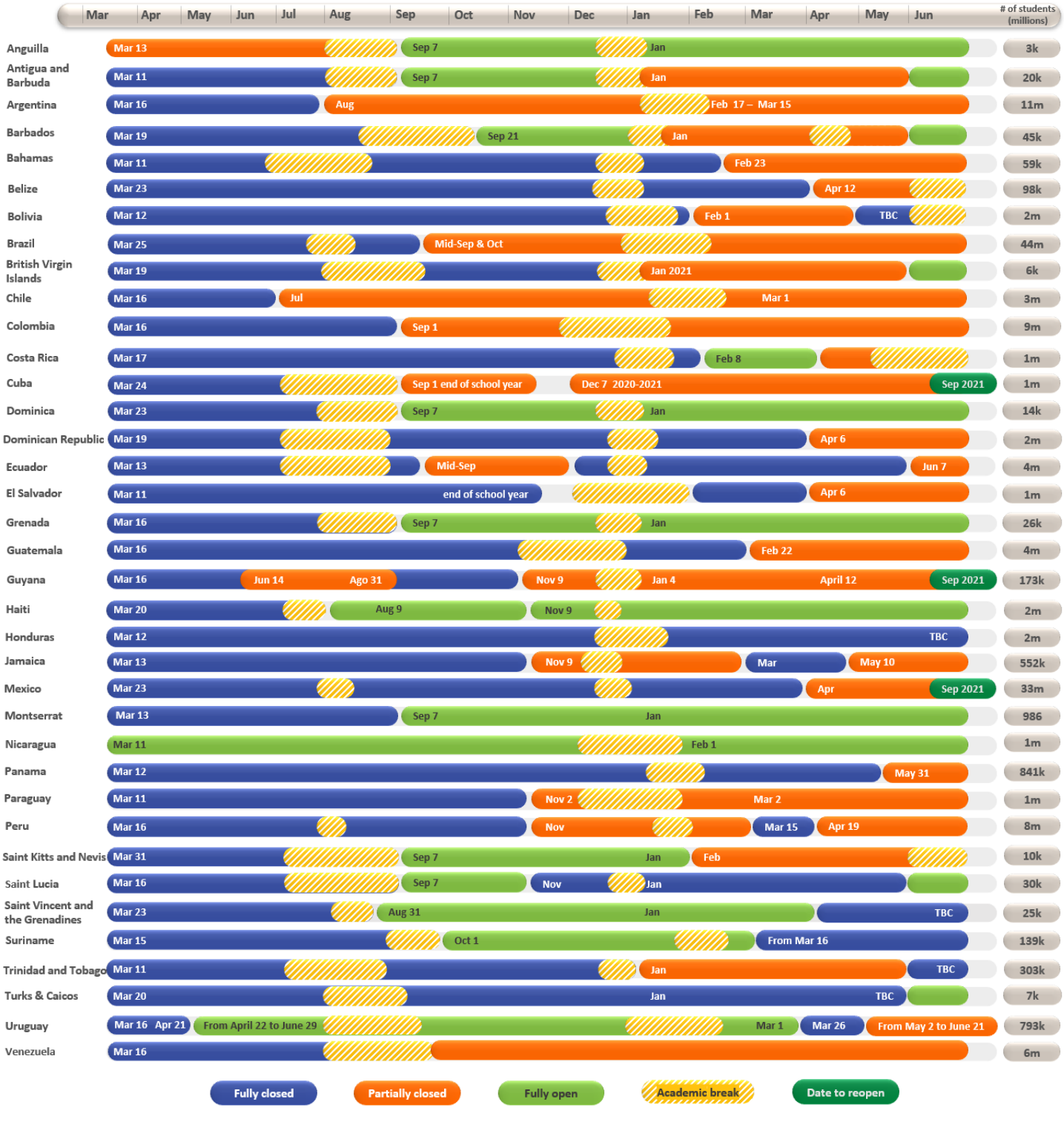
Sources of information:

[1] This percentage was calculated by information provided by COs.

[2] Data extracted from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Institute of Statistics, 'Welcome to UIS.Stat', and information provided by UNICEF COs until June 30, 2021. The figure of 101 million has been calculated based on the number of children affected by schools that are partially or fully closed. In the case of Brazil, the number of children affected by schools' closures has been calculated using data on the total of students in Brazil and an approximate figure provided by the CO of the number of children that have received distance or hybrid classes.

[3] Figure calculated using the schools' closures information from the Timeline (page 4). The information of the timeline has been provided by UNICEF COs from March 2020 until June 30, 2021.

IV. REOPENING OF SCHOOLS' TIMELINE[4]



Note for the timeline: The label for 'Academic break' represents the holiday period in all countries.

Sources of information:

[4] Data reported by UNICEF COs from December 7, 2020, to June 30, 2021.

V. MAPPING OF THE PRIORITIZATION OF TEACHERS' VACCINATION

The below map provides a mapping of the prioritization of teachers' vaccination in the Latin American and the Caribbean region since April 2021.

LEGEND

- 48.65% of countries and territories with prioritization of teachers' vaccination
- 45.95% of countries and territories without prioritization of teachers' vaccination
- 5.41% No data



VI. OVERVIEW BY COUNTRY OF THE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS

This section presents a brief overview of the most up-to-date information on the reopening of schools' process in every country and territory of the Latin America & the Caribbean region. Additionally, it includes key data on the actions supported by UNICEF COs with respect to this effort, as well as most recent information on the strategies carried out to improve school's infrastructure in these countries and territories.

This new structure by country/territory has been designed to facilitate the reader' s access to information with the idea to provide a brief at-a-glance profile of each of them.

ARGENTINA

In In Argentina, schools continue partially open. The reopening date was staggered by jurisdiction, starting on February 17 in the City of Buenos Aires and Jujuy. The educational models offered are the face-to-face and blended or hybrid (face-to-face and distance education) modalities.

To date, a total of 8,674,878 (75%) students at the initial, primary, secondary and higher education levels are attending face-to-face classes. According to official information reported by the Observatory for the Face-to-Face Return to the Classrooms (Observatorio del Regreso Presencial a las Aulas in Spanish), as of 24 June, 15,353 (24%) schools at the initial, primary, secondary, and higher education levels are partially or totally closed.

Regarding the existence of mechanisms to monitor the schools' reopening process, Argentina has created the Observatory for the Face-to-Face Return to the Classrooms, created by the Resolution CFE No. 386/2021 (art. 13) with the participation of UNICEF and UNESCO, which collects information based on consultations with the Jurisdictional Ministries of Education and the platform Caring for Schools (Cuidar Escuelas in Spanish). The Secretariat for Education Evaluation and Information is responsible for systematising the information and producing the report for the Observatory. On the other hand, in terms of the systematisation of good practices for the reopening of schools, Argentina has carried out a study on good educational practices for the reorganisation of the return to classes in times of COVID-19, which covers the period from June to November 2021.

Finally, in terms of progress on the survey of children's perception of the current situation of schools, three waves of the COVID-19 Rapid Survey were conducted in 2020 and the fourth round of the survey on the population's perception and attitudes was published in 2021.

- UNICEF's Support. Technical assistance to the committee of the Observatory for the Face-to-Face Return to the Classrooms within the Ministry of Education, support in the dissemination of evidence, promotion of intersectoral actions to support students' on-site attendance, as well as attention and re-engagement of most vulnerable children and adolescents.
- Strategies to improve school's infrastructure (installation of hand-washing stations, repairs, implementation of biosafety protocols, etc.). As a means to support the process of reopening schools, the Ministry of Education, through Resolution 1024/20, made funds available for the prevention of the COVID-19 emergency in educational establishments. Among the different lines of action, it includes the programme for the supply of water suitable for consumption and sanitary improvements in schools.



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BAHAMAS[5]

In the Bahamas, schools remain partially closed with a combination of face-to-face and distance learning. All public elementary, middle, and high schools suspended face-to-face classes from May 25 to June 3, 2021. During this exam period, only students taking exams were allowed to enter the centers' facilities, while the other students continued learning through the Ministry of Education's virtual platform. However, during this period, face-to-face classes continued at the preschool level.

From June 7 to 18, face-to-face classes and end-of-term examinations resumed. In addition, schools classified as low risk for COVID-19 transmission may officially request the director of Education to continue face-to-face classes.

Furthermore, selected quarantined students participated in the 2021 National Examinations. The Grade Level Assessment Test (GLAT) for third and sixth graders commenced on May 31st, and the Bahamas Junior Certificate (BJC) and the Bahamas General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE) for high school students continued until June 25th.


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[5] Information retrieved from the Bahamas Ministry of Education's official website.

BELIZE



The school reopening date was April 12, 2021. However, schools are currently fully closed in Belize due to the commencement of summer holidays. With respect to educational modalities, schools offered a combined hybrid education (face-to-face and distance education) before entering the holiday period.

Regarding the monitoring mechanisms for the reopening process, district education officers are monitoring the schools that have reopened and the Ministry of Education is preparing an assessment to collect data on areas affecting students and schools after the reopening of schools. The focus of this assessment will be on school feeding, psychosocial support and education recovery issues.

- **UNICEF's Support.** Continued advocacy for the safe reopening of schools to provide face-to-face instruction to students, including the provision of critical hygiene supplies with the support of the Ministry of Education.
- **Strategies to improve school's infrastructure** (installation of hand-washing stations, repairs, implementation of biosafety protocols, etc.). In collaboration with the MoE, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and US Embassy, UNICEF has supported the provision of critical hygiene supplies and WASH facilities for schools to improve infection prevention and control, as most of the schools, especially in the rural communities, do not have adequate water, sanitation and hygiene facilities.[6]



[6] For more information check this video.



BOLIVIA

Schools in Bolivia are completely closed due to the academic break. With the escalation of cases during the third wave, the Ministry of Education decided to bring forward the winter holidays, hoping that during this period teachers can conclude their vaccination process as a priority and in the hope of being able to return to the classroom.

Although schools were partially opened in February 2021, the earlier holidays and resulting school closures were declared from 1 June 2021. During the period when schools reopened, according to data provided by UNICEF, 34,858 students were able to return to school in person.

Regarding the progress of the survey on children and adolescents' perception of the current situation in schools, Bolivia launched the U-Report "Educational continuity during quarantine" (La continuidad educativa durante la cuarentena), which includes two surveys, the first focused on the technologies to which U-reporters had access, and the second one focused on educational continuity during the quarantine.

Regarding the prioritization of vaccination for teachers, mass vaccination began on May 25.

- UNICEF's Support. During the month of June 27 washing stations were delivered to 27 schools to ensure the implementation of the safe return to school protocol. A total of 53 stations are currently being produced and will be delivered in July.
- Strategies to improve school's infrastructure (installation of hand-washing stations, repairs, implementation of biosafety protocols, etc.). Strategies to improve educational infrastructure, such as the installation of hand-washing stations, repairs, implementation of biosecurity protocols, etc. are in place to support the process of the reopening schools with UNICEF support.

BRAZIL

In Brazil, schools are partially closed. Each state has set a date for the return to face-to-face classes for state schools and each municipality stipulated the return to face-to-face classes in the municipal network, therefore, there is no common date. About 40% of schools in Brazil have resumed face-to-face classes and according to the results of the third survey on the primary and secondary impacts of COVID-19 on children and adolescents, 4 out of 10 students are already taking face-to-face classes. In addition, 93% of schools continued to offer distance activities during the pandemic, with WhatsApp and print media activities being the main means of accessing activities.

15 states have announced the reopening of state schools, so it is estimated that, as of today, 14,852,256 students enrolled in these state schools have received distance learning or hybrid classes.

In terms of teaching modalities, there are schools that are offering face-to-face education, distance education through internet-based platforms and printed materials, as well as blended or hybrid education (face-to-face and distance education).

Regarding the monitoring mechanisms of the school reopening process, the National Council of Secretaries of Education provides a regular update of the situation of the state network.

In addition, Brazil launched a survey on the issue of safe reopening of schools through a U-Report aimed at Brazilian students, for which a total of 2,034 responses were received. The main results of the survey revealed that:

a) 68% of students indicated that they are not taking face-to-face classes.

b) Among students who are taking face-to-face classes, 61% of them indicated that they would prefer to have only non-face-to-face classes; 53% indicated that they are following all health protocols; and 35% indicated that they are afraid of contagion in schools.

Regarding the prioritization of vaccination of teachers, they have been prioritized in several states of the country; this process occurs at different times of the vaccination campaign.

- UNICEF's Support. UNICEF has constantly updated the website with the latest recommendations and new materials to support decision-making by education networks. In addition, UN Brazil is organising a seminar coordinated by UNICEF Brazil for the promotion of the safe reopening of schools that will take place on 7 July 2021. In the seminar there will be representatives from UNESCO, PAHO and ministers of education and health, among others.
- Strategies to improve school's infrastructure (installation of hand-washing stations, repairs, implementation of biosafety protocols, etc.). Water, sanitation and hygiene protocols are being implemented in some schools in Brazil.



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CHILE

The reopening of schools started in March 2021, with closures according to quarantine status. Schools that are closed maintain a distance education model. There are 2,252 (24%) primary and secondary schools, and 1,793 (30%) early education schools that offer on-site classes, while 7,198 (76%) primary and secondary schools and 4,153 (70%) early education schools offer non-on-site classes.[7]

Approximately 984,065 students are receiving face-to-face classes through a blended or hybrid model of education (i.e., face-to-face and distance education), and the number of schools benefiting from the reopening of schools depends on the capacity of schools and the prioritisation of students.

In terms of mechanisms for monitoring the reopening process, the Chilean Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) maintains a survey aimed at schools, and UNICEF collaborates with the monitoring process in early education schools.

About surveys of children's perceptions of the current situation in schools, Chile has promoted an initiative between the Children's Ombudsman's Office (*Defensoría de la Niñez* in Spanish) and the Ministry of Education, which, through the creation of participatory spaces, seeks to consider the voices and opinions of children and adolescents in the back-to-school plan. The *My Voice, My School Plan* seeks to incorporate the voices of students of different ages so that the back-to-school process is a participatory process.

Regarding surveys of teachers' perceptions of the current situation in schools, Chile published the results of the survey of pre-school teachers in the document Reopening of Kindergartens in Chile During the First Year of the Pandemic (*Reapertura de Jardines Infantiles en Chile Durante el Primer Año de la Pandemia* in Spanish).

- **UNICEF's Support.** UNICEF Chile provides support in the design of a survey of families with children in pre-school education; the guide on using playgrounds as educational spaces; the implementation of 11 pilot educational playgrounds; the publication of the guide for socio-emotional support in school contexts; as well as participates in the Advisory Council of the Chilean Ministry of Education (MINEDUC).

[7] Information retrieved from data provided for Update 25, published on June 7, 2021.

COLOMBIA

In Colombia, schools are partially closed, specifically 17,501 schools are open, representing 33.9% of the total number of schools in the country. Schools reopened in September 2020, and in July 2021 it is planned to move towards the full reopening of schools across the country. So far, 1,649,359 students have benefited from the reopening of schools, which corresponds to 16.8% of the country's total school enrolment.

As for the modalities of reopening, there are face-to-face education modalities, distance education through web platforms, TV, radio, and print media, and combined education or hybrid model (face-to-face and distance education).

Regarding the monitoring mechanisms of the reopening process, there are reports from the Ministry of National Education shared with organisations in the education sector. On the other hand, surveys of children's and adolescents' perceptions of the current situation of schools are currently under development, as are surveys of teachers.

- UNICEF's Support. UNICEF Colombia provides technical support at three levels:

a) Education: Pedagogical and policy guidance to support schools reopening plans with local governments.

b) Communication for Development (C4D): Community communication for information dissemination, rumour reduction and reinforcement of caring practices.

c) WASH: Water and basic sanitation strategies.

- Strategies to improve school's infrastructure (installation of hand-washing stations, repairs, implementation of biosafety protocols, etc.). In support of the school reopening process, UNICEF WASH has worked on improving education infrastructure.



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COSTA RICA

Schools in Costa Rica are currently in academic recess. All schools in the country (5,369 public and private schools) are completely closed due to a break in the school calendar because of the increasing COVID-19 infection level in the country. As a result, a return to combined education is expected on 12 July 2021.

The reopening of schools through a combined learning mode (face-to-face and distance learning) took place on 8 February 2021, with a break of total closure in the school cycle from 24 May to 9 July. It is worth noting that, during the period that schools were open, the number of children benefited was 1,173,286, 49% girls and 51% boys.

The reopening monitoring process has been coordinated through the ministerial platform SABER (*Sistema de Administración Básica de la Educación y sus Recursos* in Spanish), a technological tool that has allowed the Ministry of Public Education and the country to have, for the first time, relevant information on students and educational centres in an automated manner, as well as to carry out censuses and surveys for the elaboration of opening and monitoring plans.

Regarding information on the perception of children and adolescents on the current situation of schools, a household over-the-telephone survey focused on the situation of children and adolescents in the face of the COVID -19 emergency is currently underway.

On May 18, the Ministry of Health authorized the start of Group 4 vaccination, which includes teachers. At the beginning of June, progress was reported in the vaccination of teachers in 34 health areas of the country.

- UNICEF's Support. A back-to-school campaign is being coordinated together with the Ministry of Education and the National Children's Trust. In addition, a work plan has been defined within the framework of GIGA-Gen U to bridge the digital divide.
- Strategies to improve school's infrastructure (installation of hand-washing stations, repairs, implementation of biosafety protocols, etc.). A technical team has been coordinated to provide an assessment of the specific needs of schools that face water problems. In this regard, UNICEF has supported the dissemination of the Ministry of Education's specific protocols for the reopening of schools, as well as the delivery of critical hygiene supplies.

CUBA

In Cuba, schools are partially closed. More specifically, 7,253 schools are closed and 2,402 are open (25%). That said, all schools are expected to reopen in early September following the planned mass vaccination. However, in recent weeks there has been an increase in COVID-19 cases in the country, so some provinces that have kept their schools open have ultimately decided to bring forward the school break, which officially starts in early July. Although there is not much data, it is known that there is a tendency to close schools in provinces outside Havana. In addition, schools in Havana are completely closed. Tele-classes are maintained until 30 June, when the school break begins.

In terms of children benefiting from the reopening of schools, 277,311 children attend face-to-face classes and more than one million are taught through organised TV and digital platforms. This way, in Cuba, there are several learning modalities registered: face-to-face education, distance education through web and TV platforms, as well as the blended or hybrid education model (i.e., face-to-face and distance education).

On the one hand, the monitoring of the reopening process is carried out by the provincial and municipal education directorates under the direction of the Ministry of Education; on the other hand, the systematisation of good practices from the first reopening of schools was collected in the document "Education in times of COVID-19. The Cuban experience". Afterwards, the epidemiological situation in the country worsened and 75% of the schools had to be closed. Scenarios are now being studied for the reopening of schools scheduled for September, for which the reopening systematisation will be entitled *Education in times of COVID-19 MINED-UNICEF*.

Finally, regarding progress in surveys of children's and adolescents' perceptions of the current situation in schools, a telephone survey of households is currently underway about children and adolescents in the face of the emergency.

- **UNICEF's Support.** UNICEF provided complementary capacity-building support to teachers with a focus on early childhood and vocational schools, as well as social-emotional support to families of children with autism and intellectual disabilities.





DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

According to information provided by the Ministry of Education of the Dominican Republic (MINERD), schools reopened on April 6, 2021, in 48 municipalities. Approximately, 3,000 schools are totally closed, and 8,273 schools are providing semi face-to-face education. There are 999,074 boys and 884,850 girls receiving semi face-to-face education and 417,675 boys and 502,686 girls receiving distance education. In terms of distance education, children and adolescents studying remotely are learning through TV, radio, and printed resources. The mechanism that monitors the schools' reopening process in the country is overseen by the Ministry of Education.[8]

Regarding the prioritization of vaccination for teachers, all teachers have been vaccinated in Phase 1.

- UNICEF's Support. Development of the *Return to Joy Programme*, a psycho-affective recovery programme implemented in all schools that have started semi-presential education.

UNICEF, together with the Ministry of Education (MINERD), has developed 8 books that describe the plan of activities for the month of November for children from pre-primary to third grade of secondary school. These books support the educational series "Aprendemos en casa" (We learn at home), which contains four books with a monthly plan of activities that revolves around a specific topic of interest. For pre-primary and primary school, they are named "Plan a Magical Journey" and for secondary school "Glimpses of the World: Environment and Health".[9]

[8] Information Information retrieved from data provided for Update 25, published in June 7, 2021.

[9] Information retrieved from data provided for Update 24 published in May 6, 2021.

ECA (Eastern Caribbean Area Countries)

Schools in Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Lucia, Trinidad & Tobago, and Turks & Caicos Islands are fully open.

While schools in Antigua & Barbuda, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Lucia, St. Kitts & Navis, St Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago and Turks & Caicos reopened in January this year, schools in Barbados reopened in May. That said, schools in Anguilla and St. Kitts & Navis had to closed in May due to a COVID-19 outbreak. Similarly, schools in St. Vincent & the Grenadines had to closed in April as well due to the volcanic eruption, therefore in this territory only the preparation classes for external exams are face-to-face. The rest of the students are learning through the on-line modality.

As schools are fully opened in most ECA territories, classes are provided entirely through face-to-face modality, except for Antigua & Barbuda, where there is a combination of face-to-face classes and hybrid models; St. Lucia, where classes are provided through a combined learning hybrid model; St. Vincent & the Grenadines, where schools are fully closed, and students are learning through distance learning and combined learning hybrid models and Trinidad & Tobago, where all schools are also closed, therefore students are learning through distance-learning modalities. Lastly, in St. Kitts & Nevis schools are currently on holidays. In terms of mechanisms to monitor the reopening process in the ECA territories, the Ministries of Education are responsible for this process.

- UNICEF's Support. Support provided for digital content development as well as for the planning of the summer learning loss recovery programming.

In addition, UNICEF has also supported Vincentian students displaced by the eruption La Soufriere as they prepare for regional exams. The Ministry of Education, with UNICEF's financial assistance, has provided 3,000 Form 5 and Grade 6 students with breakfast and lunch and materials including scientific calculators, geometry sets and stationery to help them get ready for the upcoming Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE), Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) and the Caribbean Primary Exit Assessment (CPEA).[10]



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[10] Information extracted from UNICEF's Eastern Caribbean website. Check here for more information.



ECUADOR

A decree was issued on 2 June 2021 to begin a gradual return to school as of 7 June 2021. Currently, schools in Ecuador are partially closed, with 15,786 schools offering regular education, 1,495 counting with approved plans to use their educational facilities, and with 1,228 schools that have already returned to classes in a mixed learning modality.

Currently, 54,284 students, 7,044 teachers and 1,228 educational institutions are benefiting from the schools' reopening process through various modalities of education: face-to-face education, distance education and combined education or hybrid model (face-to-face and distance education).

Regarding the reopening of schools monitoring, the Ministry of Education is implementing a monitoring system to provide regular information on the progress of the Integrated Education Continuity Plans (*Planes Integrados de Continuidad Educativa,* in Spanish, PICE) of educational institutions, to know which schools already have their PICE approved, which ones are in the stage of progressive return and what is the number of students involved in the process. In addition, this system allows COVID-19 cases to be monitored. Also, the education in emergencies cluster carries out a set of periodic operations to assess the situation of the educational communities during this period.

On the other hand, the systematisation of good practices for the reopening of schools is being initiated and is planned to be implemented in three educational districts. Regarding the surveys on children and adolescents' perception of the current situation of schools, it is planned to carry out the new surveys by the end of June and throughout the month of July, as well as the surveys for teachers on the current situation of schools.

- UNICEF's Support. UNICEF supports advocacy and the generation of evidence in favour of the gradual reopening of educational institutions. In addition, it has provided technical assistance for the elaboration of the Rural Education Model, in which one of the main axes is the reopening of rural schools.
- Strategies to improve school's infrastructure (installation of hand-washing stations, repairs, implementation of biosafety protocols, etc.). Currently, thanks to resources from the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) global fund, WASH improvements are being implemented in 50 educational institutions in the country.

EL SALVADOR[11]

Schools in El Salvador are partially closed. With a total of 6,000 educational centres in the country (5,164 public and 836 private), only 42 educational centres (5 public and 37 private) remain closed to date. In other words, there is an average of 601,214 children and adolescents studying in the blended learning modality, and 648,906 studying through various online platforms such as Google Classroom, Google Site, Tele classes, Radio classes, printed self-learning guides, etc.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, and after the preventive closure of educational institutions, the Ministry of Education (MoE) established an Education Continuity Plan that is being implemented in its different phases with the slogan "Education goes on". The modules for the seventh, eighth and ninth grades, as well as the modules for the first and second year of baccalaureate can be found on the website of the Ministry of Education.

With the optional, semi-presential, multimodal and gradual return to educational institutions, the MOE presents the plan "The joy of returning to school", in its executive version. This plan includes various stages for the safe and joyful return of students to educational institutions: 1. Diagnosis, cleaning, sanitation and basic maintenance of educational institutions; 2. Educational management and planning for psychosocial and pedagogical intervention; 3. Psychosocial support for students; 4. Education Continuity.

Regarding the mechanisms for monitoring the reopening process of schools, the mechanism consists of the record that each departmental education directorate keeps of the schools in its department.

- **UNICEF's Support.** In the framework of Reimagine Education, UNICEF El Salvador supports the Ministry of Education (MINED) in the purchase of computers and laptops for students, including children and adolescents with disabilities. In the framework of GIGA, the government of El Salvador is also being supported to increase connectivity in schools.



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[11] Information retrieved from data provided for Update 25, published on June 7, 2021.



GUATEMALA

In Guatemala schools are partially closed. The status of schools depends on the alert level of the municipality where schools are located. Schools located in a municipality in green or yellow status may open depending on the capacity of classrooms, whereas schools based in municipalities in orange or red must remain closed.[12]

- **UNICEF's Support.** UNICEF handed over 13 educational modules to the Ministry of Education, benefiting more than 2,400 children and adolescents in five municipalities of Alta Verapaz: Coban, San Juan Chamelco, San Cristobal Verapaz, San Pedro Carcha and Santa María Cahabon. This guarantees their educational continuity and prevents them from dropping out of school. In addition, UNICEF donated sheets, washbasins, and toilets for 78 schools in Alta Verapaz and 17 schools in Puerto Barrios, Izabal.[13]
- **Strategies to improve school's infrastructure** (installation of hand-washing stations, repairs, implementation of biosafety protocols, etc.). The Minister of Education and the First Councilor of Salcajá signed the Framework Agreement for Inter-institutional Cooperation (*Convenio Marco de Cooperación Interinstitucional* in Spanish), to contribute to the improvement of education and school technology in the municipality. The actions include the implementation of alternative routes to improve school infrastructure, the acquisition and provision of technological equipment, educational software, furniture, as well as school supplies and didactic material that will benefit several educational centers.[14]

[12] Information retrieved from Update 24.

[13] Information retrieved from UNICEF Guatemala CO's website.

[14] Ministry of Eduation Newsletter, n 14. Published on June 25, 2021.

GUYANA

Schools are partially closed in Guyana. Schools reopened on January 4, 2021. For the time being, 120 secondary schools open for Grades 9, 10 and 11 with 12,000 students benefiting from the reopening. These are the learning modalities in the country: face-to-Face, distance learning through internet-web based, TV, radio and printed materials and combined learning hybrid models (face-to-face & distance learning). In terms of mechanisms to monitor the reopening process, Education Officers and schools' welfare officers conduct on site visits and telephone check-ins.


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Regarding the prioritization of vaccination for teachers, they were prioritized immediately after the group of essential workers and the over 60 age group. The uptake has been below expected, with a 21%.

- UNICEF's Support. Together with the UNESCO - IIEP, development of a national Risk Management Policy and a Communication Strategy. With the GPE, 23,000 more students in Grades 1-5, have access home based learning material, 1,022 laptops procured for wider reach and 46% of hinterland schools where provided with hygiene hubs.
- Strategies to improve school's infrastructure (installation of hand-washing stations, repairs, implementation of biosafety protocols, etc.) UNICEF is supporting WASH in schools particularly, hand-washing facilities and hygiene promotion. IADB supported a project to commence in the coming months with the focus on improving sanitation facilities in schools in the interior.


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HAITI

All schools are fully open in Haiti, with a total of 22,000 schools open, benefiting 4,000,000 students (49% girls and 51% boys). Schools reopened on August 10, 2020. In terms of learning modality, all schools in the country offer a face-to-face modality.

Regarding the perception surveys of children and adolescents, and perception surveys targeting teachers on the current situation in schools, the survey results are not ready, as in recent weeks there has been an increase in COVID-19 cases since the presence of 2 variants was discovered in the country. Special measures are being strengthened to reinforce the health protocol.


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- UNICEF's Support. UNICEF Haiti has participated in the distribution of school supplies to 12,000 students; and in the selection of the most vulnerable for the cash transfer program.
- Strategies to improve school's infrastructure (installation of hand-washing stations, repairs, implementation of biosafety protocols, etc.). Since its re-opening in August 2020, there has been efforts to improve WASH facilities.

HONDURAS

At present, all schools are closed due to a decision of the National Risk Management System (Sistema Nacional de Gestión de Riesgos in Spanish, SINAGER). On July 6, SINAGER released a provision stating that any authorisation to reopen schools that had been granted should be rendered null and void as a precautionary measure. The provision also stated that SINAGER will analyse the evolution of the virus and on that basis will assess the situation.[15]

In terms of education modalities, several alternatives are being offered: distance education through web-based platforms, TV, radio, and print media.

UNICEF advocates with SINAGER and the Ministry of Education, International Cooperation through the Bureau for External Cooperation in Education (Mesa de Cooperantes Externos en Educación in Spanish, MERECE) and NGOs to achieve the gradual and staggered reopening of schools through a blended learning mode, to guarantee with equity and quality the right to education for children, youth, and adults in pre-basic, basic, and high school in the current year 2021.

Regarding the prioritization of vaccination for teachers, the government has prioritized this group as of July 2021.

- UNICEF's Support. UNICEF, together with MERECE, the Education Cluster and the Ministry of Education (SEDUC) prepared and arranged a meeting with SINAGER to present the arguments for the need to reopen schools and the guidelines for the gradual and staggered reopening of schools on a semi-presential/hybrid basis.
- Strategies to improve school's infrastructure (installation of hand-washing stations, repairs, implementation of biosafety protocols, etc.). With funds from AECID, UNICEF is repairing 40 schools affected by hurricanes Eta and Iota in the northern part of the country and, from the second semester onwards, more ACECID funds are expected to continue this project, which includes the installation of hand washing, repairs, and implementation of biosecurity protocols. Similarly, UNICEF, through its Water and Sanitation in Schools component, is coordinating with its partners (GOAL, WPF, Save the Children and others) donations from Canada, Koica, PRM and other funds and donors, to ensure that most affected schools in vulnerable populations can improve their infrastructure.



[15] Official Statement of the National Risk Management System (SINAGER) released on 6 July 2021.



JAMAICA[16]

All schools are closed in Jamaica for the delivery of face-to-face classes, except for the students exit exam grades 6th, 11th, 12th, and 13th. Only students belonging to the exit exam grades attend schools in a face-to-face manner, the other students continue online classes and with other forms of support. According to *The Gleaner*, over 500 schools reopened for face-to-face classes.[17]



Regarding the learning modalities used, schools in Jamaica offer face-to-face classes, distance learning through internet/web based, TV, radio, and printed materials, as well as combined learning hybrid models (face to face and distance).

Regarding mechanisms to monitor de reopening process in the country, schools report to regional offices, which in turn report to the central ministry. It is also worth noting that the Jamaica Country Office uses the UNICEF, UNESCO, WFP, World Bank and UNHCR's Global Guidelines for school reopening, which were adapted by the Ministry of National Education.

- **UNICEF's Support.** UNICEF Jamaica provided advocacy around support to students taking high-stakes exams, and psychosocial support through training in the *Return to Happiness* psychosocial support methodology for guidance counselors, social workers and their students.

[16] Information retrieved from data provided for Update 25, published on June 7, 2021.

[17] For more information check this link.

MEXICO

Currently, schools are partially closed. According to a bulletin of the Ministry of Public Education published on 15 June 2021, 27,000 schools reopened in 14 states with a green epidemiological traffic light. This benefits 1,678,076 students attending onsite classes.

However, the reopening situation is constantly changing as states change their "epidemiological traffic light" frequently, such as is the case in Mexico City, where some schools were closed again on 21 June when the state returned to a "yellow" epidemiological traffic light. The first schools opened in the state of Campeche on 19 April, while other states continued opening their schools as soon as they have turned green.

In terms of education modalities, there are different modalities: face-to-face education and distance education through web platforms, TV, and print media.

UNICEF has developed a dashboard with geospatial information to monitor the number of schools open, as well as the re-entry of enrolment, teaching staff and WASH infrastructure for the Undersecretariat of Basic Education.

- UNICEF's Support. UNICEF provides technical support for educational TV programming. In addition, progress has been made in the installation of hand-washing stations in schools and teacher training, and there is an active virtual course for teachers in psychosocial support. Lastly, the above-mentioned dashboard to monitor the reopening of schools is now operational.
- Strategies to improve school's infrastructure (installation of hand-washing stations, repairs, implementation of biosafety protocols, etc.). The Ministry of Education has developed an Orientation Guide for the Reopening of Schools in the face of COVID-19 with a safe return to school pathway of 9 interventions and 5 key moments, including the use of masks, healthy distance, the use of soap and water. Currently, this guide is awaiting strategies and budget for its implementation.




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NICARAGUA

In Nicaragua, all 9,125 schools are open. The reopening process began on 1 February 2021 with the start of the 2021 school year. There are approximately 1,800,000 students benefiting from the reopening and different learning modalities are being implemented: face-to-face education and combined education or hybrid model (face-to-face and distance education).

Nicaragua is preparing a survey on the perception of children and adolescents on the current situation of schools, which is expected to be implemented in August 2021.

- UNICEF's Support. UNICEF Nicaragua is working on providing support to the institution's capacities for socio-emotional support, improved access to drinking water in schools, enhanced management of school snacks, and improved access to personal and school hygiene.
- Strategies to improve school's infrastructure (installation of hand-washing stations, repairs, implementation of biosafety protocols, etc.). There are strategies to improve educational infrastructure (installation of hand-washing stations, repairs, implementation of biosecurity protocols, etc.) especially in areas affected by hurricanes Eta and Iota.


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PANAMA

Schools in Panama are partially closed. The reopening started on 31 May 2021, and there are currently 455 schools open which benefit 75,733 students. In terms of education modalities, there are different modes: distance education through web platforms, TV, radio, and print media, and the combined education or hybrid model (face-to-face and distance education). In addition, the monitoring process of the reopening of schools in Panama is done by the Ministry of Education (MEDUCA), through the Directorate of Evaluation and Statistics.

Through U-Report Panama, a perception survey of children and adolescents on the current situation in schools, called Experiences and Perspectives on Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic, was developed and launched on 15 March 2021 with 809 participants.

Furthermore, a UNICEF survey of 1,004 households conducted between 17 May and 6 June revealed the following data:[18]

a) 9 out of 10 households are receiving some form of distance education.

b) More than half of the households are using mobile phones as a device for the distance learning process.

c) Most students want to go back to school.

Although for the time being there is no information regarding teachers' perception surveys on the current situation in schools, this topic is being included in the seven-dimensional exclusion field study based on the Global Out-of-School Children Initiative (OOSCI), which will be implemented in July 2021.

- UNICEF's Support. UNICEF, together with the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator (ORC), UNESCO, UNDP, FAO, and the World Bank, is driving the school reopening partnership. UNICEF has generated evidence on what distance education looks like, perceptions of school reopening and the impact of closure to inform decision-making.
- Strategies to improve school's infrastructure (installation of hand-washing stations, repairs, implementation of biosafety protocols, etc.). The Ministry of Education has installed water tanks and hand washing facilities in several schools.



[18] Access the households' surveys carried out by UNICEF here.



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PARAGUAY

The reopening of schools started on 2 March 2021. Currently, there is a partial closure of schools, with 777 institutions in face-to-face mode, 6,680 institutions in hybrid or combined mode and 1,500 institutions in virtual mode. The student enrolment is 1,507,826, with 364,816 students attending face-to-face classes and 1,143,010 attending distance learning classes. Given the increase in COVID-19 cases, schools in red districts have closed again. The winter holiday is scheduled from July 12 to 30.

In terms of learning modalities, Paraguay offers face-to-face education, distance education through web platforms, TV, radio and print media, and blended or hybrid education (face-to-face and distance education).

The monitoring mechanism for the reopening of schools is established in the Protocol and Guide for the Safe Return to School 2021 and is carried out through the educational committees for risk management (institutional, regional, departmental) who are responsible for the review, control and approval of the opening of educational institutions, ensuring that all biosecurity measures are complied with.

Regarding students' perception of the current state of the schools, a student organization carried out a systematization of students' voices on this issue. In addition, the U-Report process, in which students' perceptions are conveyed, is also continuing.

- UNICEF's Support. Within the framework of communication actions, an impact study of the back-to-school campaign has been carried out, which will serve to improve the communication of the return to school after the winter holidays. In line with this, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education in the development of an official website that will complement the communication actions. In addition, the UNICEF has reinforced personal protective equipment (PPE) for 500 schools as part of the implementation of the back-to-school protocols for the winter holidays.
- Strategies to improve school's infrastructure (installation of hand-washing stations, repairs, implementation of biosafety protocols, etc.). Within the framework of UNICEF's support, there are water and sanitation improvements and hand-washing facilities in priority schools have been installed. In addition, many schools have supported the installation of hand-washing facilities through articulated work with parents' associations and corporations from the private sector.

PERU[19]

The partial reopening of schools started on 19 April 2021. As of July 1, there are 2,581 schools providing semi face-to-face education in 11 regions of the country (Amazonas, Ayacucho, Cusco, Huanuco, Junin, Loreto, Madre de Dios, San Martín, Ucayali, Arequipa and Moquegua), benefiting 109,331 students out of a total of 8 million students in the country. The reopening modality is distance education through web platforms, TV, radio and blended or hybrid education.

In addition, Peru is conducting an online survey on the reopening of schools with parents and caregivers and the Ministry of Education, with the support of the National Office, has developed a set of guidelines for managers of comprehensive schools. The guidance includes a mapping of each step of the school reopening pathway, as well as guidance on the implementation plan for carrying out the reopening.

- **UNICEF support.** UNICEF continues to promote school reopening, including conducting three webinars with UNESCO on reopening and disability; reopening and biosecurity; and reopening and mental health; organizing meetings with two subnational governments to promote local strategies; and developing primers for children, adolescents and parents.



[19] Information extracted from data reported for Update 25, published on June 7, 2021, and from UNICEF Peru social media information.



SURINAME

All 574 schools are fully closed in Suriname and the tentative date for the reopening of exam grades is June 30th, 2021. In terms of learning modalities, schools offer distance learning through internet-web based, TV, and printed materials. Teachers have been prioritized in the vaccination process, which began on May 10, 2021.

- UNICEF's Support. The project for the scale-up of the production of video learning content commenced and the preparation stage was completed. The production phase is planned to commence in July. Furthermore, the design of the WASH in schools' system strengthening (3-star approach) project was completed, and the implementation is expected to start in July.



- Strategies to improve school's infrastructure (installation of hand-washing stations, repairs, implementation of biosafety protocols, etc.). UNICEF is supporting WASH in schools, particularly hand-washing facilities, and hygiene promotion. The Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) supported a project to commence in the coming months with the focus on improving sanitation facilities in schools in the interior of the country.

URUGUAY

Schools in Uruguay are partially closed, with 236 pre-schools and 2,490 primary schools fully open, representing 66% out of the total of 4,150 public and private pre-schools, primary and secondary schools.

After schools were closed at the end of March, initial and primary schools reopened with a full timetable in a gradual process between 2 May and 21 June. In terms of student numbers, 499,362 children have returned to school, with 355,991 adolescents in secondary education still to be returned to onsite classes.

In terms of education modalities, both face-to-face education and distance education through web-based platforms are being offered. The National Public Education Administration and the Ceibal Plan monitor class attendance and connection to educational platforms. Currently, fieldwork is being carried out for the survey of children and adolescents on the educational situation, which will be completed this week.

- UNICEF's Support. UNICEF is systematising the reopening of schools during July 2020-June 2021. The report will be published in July. UNICEF is supporting ANEP and Plan Ceibal with the protection of educational continuity, training teachers in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and supporting the socio-emotional well-being of students and families.
- Strategies to improve school's infrastructure (installation of hand-washing stations, repairs, implementation of biosafety protocols, etc.). At the beginning of the year, school buildings were extended or other public buildings such as universities were lent to enlarge the size of classrooms. This has allowed for face-to-face attendance without always splitting the groups in the primary grades on all days and respecting the one metre distance between students.





VENEZUELA

It is estimated that 80% of schools are partially open in distance education mode and providing face-to-face attention in school feeding for the most vulnerable children; for pedagogical attention for families and students who require it; and voluntary face-to-face evaluations. The situation of students and learning modalities vary depending on the region.

Schools have remained open operating in hybrid mode, i.e., distance and face-to-face during flexible weeks and with voluntary attendance. In addition, schools have continued with the School Feeding programme for most vulnerable students. In September 2020, with the start of the new school year 2020-2021, the initiative of onsite attention to students with greater learning needs was promoted through the strategy of Pedagogical Attention Points during the flexible weeks. This initiative exceeded expectations with many children, adolescents and their parents attending, making it necessary to organise them in shifts to comply with biosafety standards.

On the other hand, voluntary face-to-face assessments in schools will begin in January 2021. The Minister of Education has confirmed that 100% face-to-face classes will begin in October with the opening of the new school year (2021-2022), but that the process will be conditioned by the national vaccination plan which aims to reach 70% of the vaccinated population. Teachers and education personnel will be prioritised.

It is estimated that 80 % of the Venezuelan student population has been able to continue accessing education and is being benefited by some of the strategies of the distance education modality. However, the Ministry of Education, with technical assistance from UNICEF, is reviewing methodologies to validate this information for better monitoring.

The Ministry of Education's National Education Supervision System has an organisational structure of 3,722 educational circuits (each with between 5 and 12 schools) to which a supervisor is assigned to follow up and monitor processes at all school levels and modalities. In the contingency of the COVID-19 pandemic, these supervisors oversee the development of distance education from the national plan "Every family, one school" and promote the pedagogical guidelines issued by the governing body regarding the preparation of schools to receive students in the weeks of flexibilization for pedagogical attention.

UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education in the systematisation of good practices in early education under the distance modality and a magazine is being prepared for its dissemination. In the framework of the return to school and the evaluation of the Pedagogical Guidance Points that are being developed in the flexible weeks, UNICEF is supporting the development of an instrument to collect information and systematize good practices.

Finally, regarding the surveys of children and adolescents' perceptions of the current situation in schools, Venezuela has conducted an informal exploratory survey of 65 adolescents from the Capital District, Miranda, Zulia, Táchira and Bolívar. In relation to the prioritisation of vaccination of teachers, it is expected that 100% of teachers will be vaccinated between July and December.

- UNICEF's Support. UNICEF Venezuela, in coordination with the Education Cluster, the support of LACRO and the WASH cluster, held a seminar on preparing for the reopening of schools and their protocols as part of the advocacy and technical assistance for the return to face-to-face education. Similarly, together with LACRO, UNICEF Venezuela organised the International Seminar on *Early Education in Protection and Prevention, Impact, Good Practices and Challenges*, which sought to reflect on and systematise the care provided to children in early education under the new distance education modality, as well as to prepare for the return to face-to-face education at this level of education. The same exercise is expected to be carried out for primary and middle school.

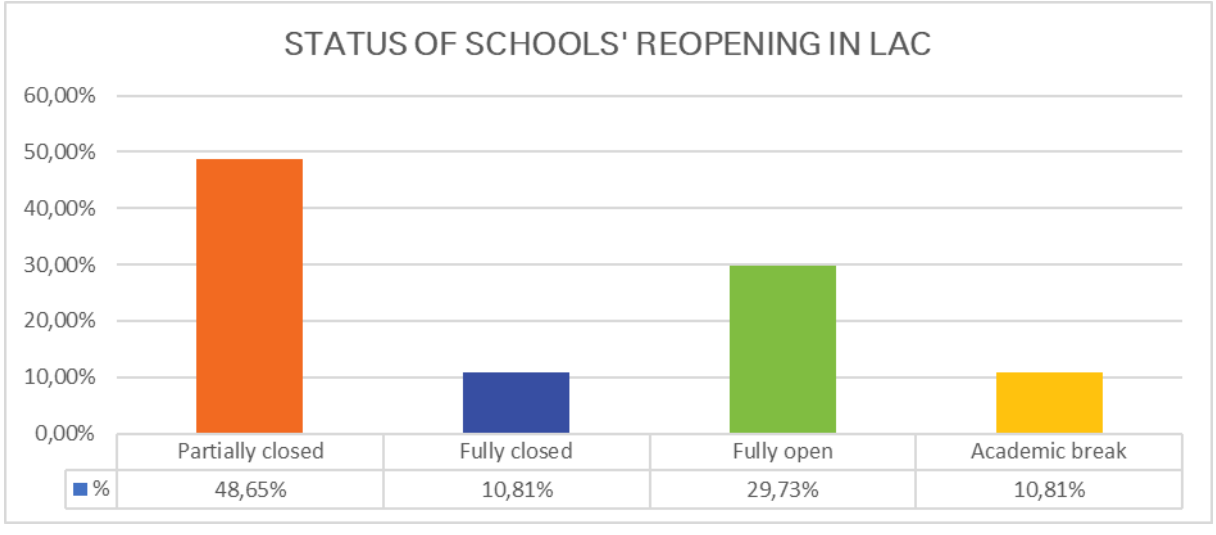
- Strategies to improve school's infrastructure (installation of hand-washing stations, repairs, implementation of biosafety protocols, etc.). The Ministry of Education has a National Plan for the care, maintenance and preparation of schools for the on-site care of children and adolescents. This plan is intended to promote a process of articulation at the local level and at all levels related to the executive branch.

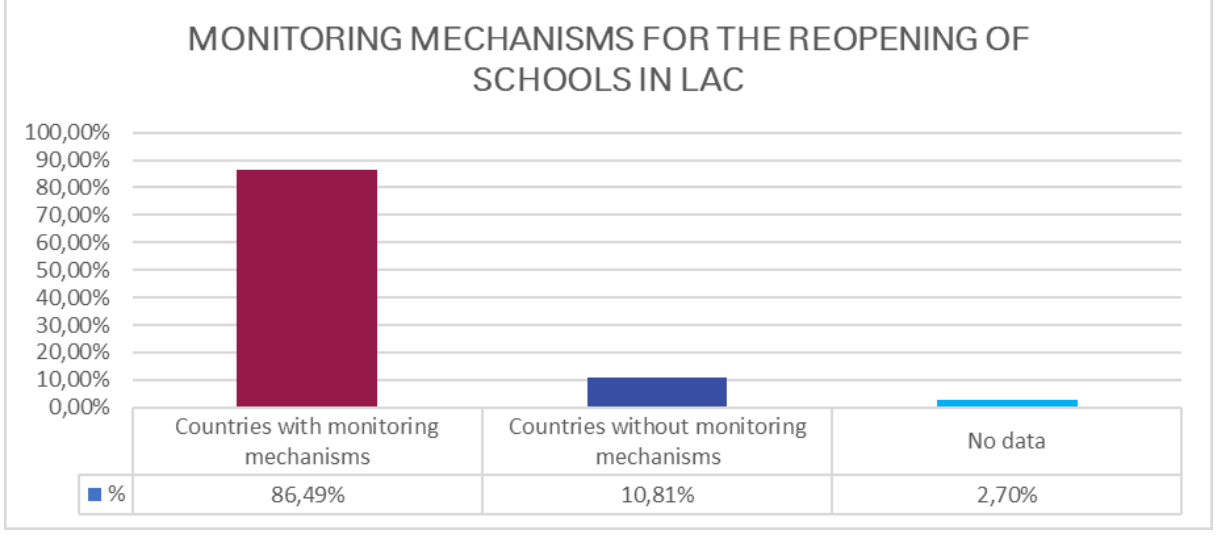


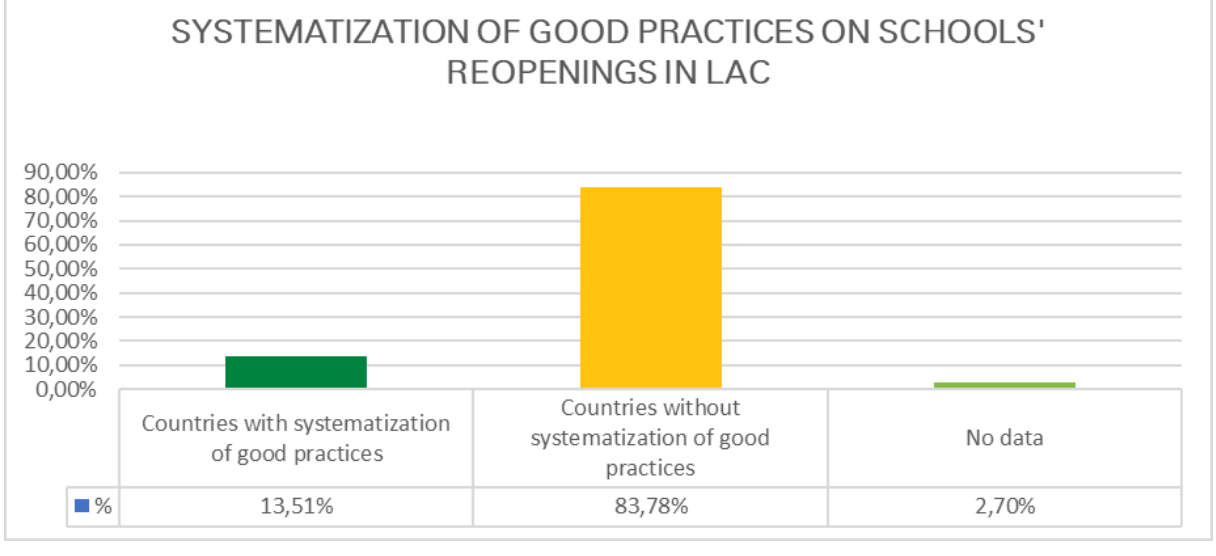
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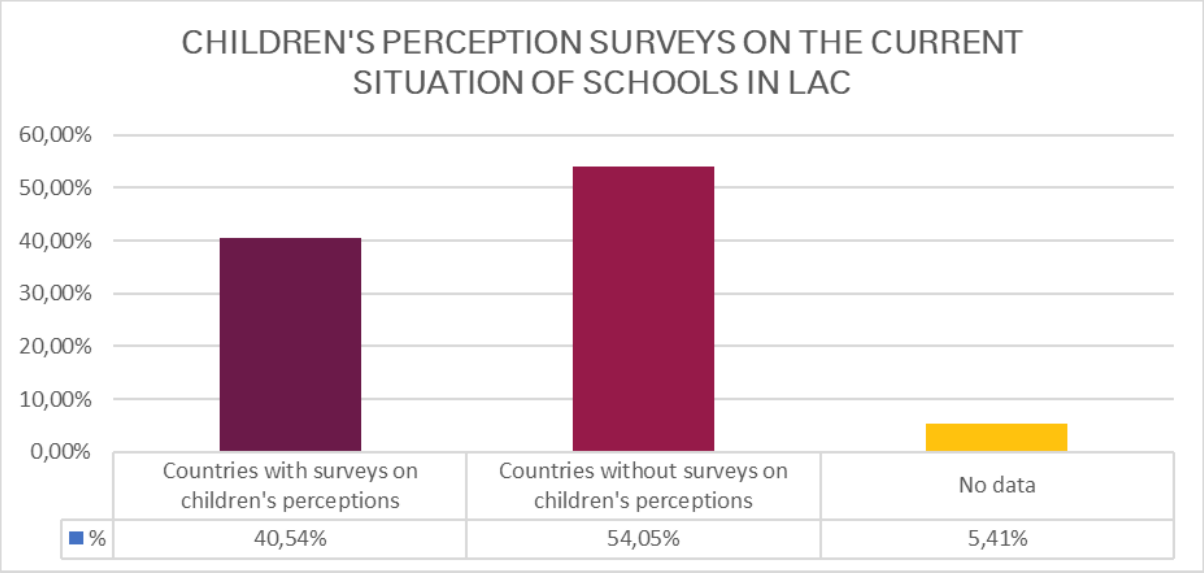
VII. THE SCHOOLS' REOPENING PROCESS IN FIGURES

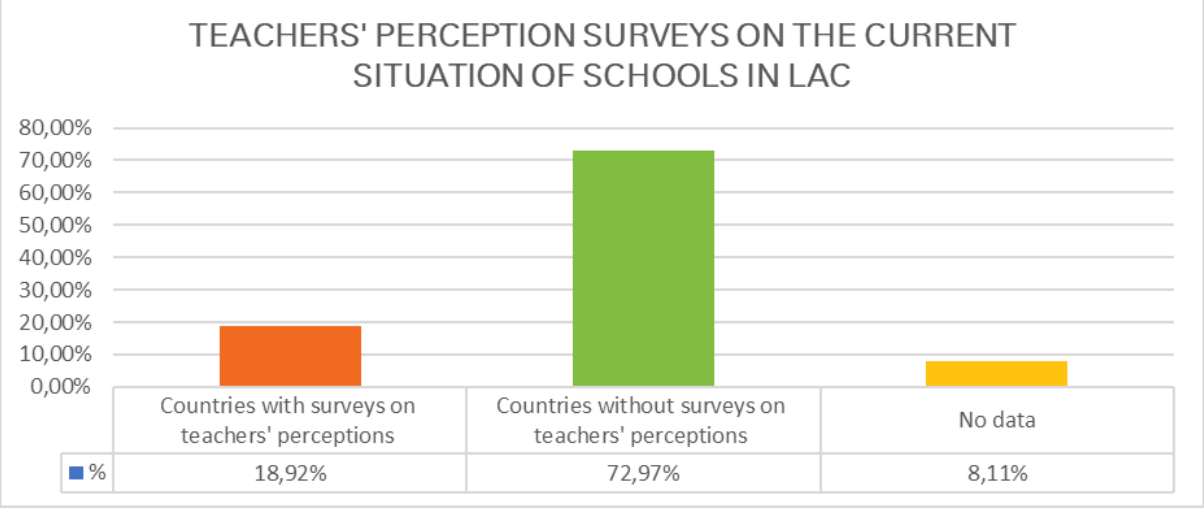
The following section provides a quick overview in graphs of the key indicators used to monitor the reopening of schools' process in the LAC region: (a) the existing mechanisms in countries to monitor the reopening process; (b) the existing systematization of good practices to supervise the process; and (c) the existence of surveys targeting children and teachers on their views of the current situation of schools:

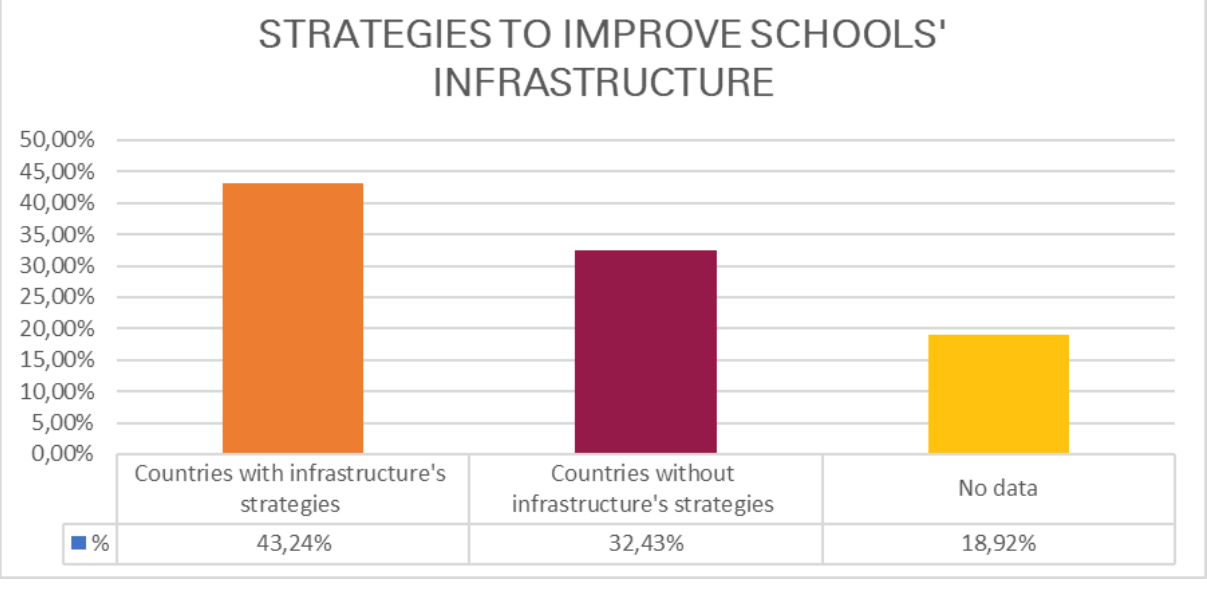







CHILDREN'S PERCEPTION SURVEYS ON THE CURRENT SITUATION OF SCHOOLS IN LAC
60,00%
50,00%
40,00%
30,00%
20,00%
10,00%
0,00%
Countries with surveys on children's perceptions
Countries without surveys on children's perceptions
No data
%
40,54%
54,05%
5,41%


TEACHERS' PERCEPTION SURVEYS ON THE CURRENT SITUATION OF SCHOOLS IN LAC
80,00%
70,00%
60,00%
50,00%
40,00%
30,00%
20,00%
10,00%
0,00%
Countries with surveys on teachers' perceptions
Countries without surveys on teachers' perceptions
No data
%
18,92%
72,97%
8,11%


STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE SCHOOLS' INFRASTRUCTURE
50,00%
45,00%
40,00%
35,00%
30,00%
25,00%
20,00%
15,00%
10,00%
5,00%
0,00%
Countries with infrastructure's strategies
Countries without infrastructure's strategies
No data
%
43,24%
32,43%
18,92%

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES (EiE)

Recommendations for a safe return to schools. Audio-visual materials. The EiE team has adapted a series of videos for teachers, parents and students (secondary and preschool) on practical tips and recommendations to support the safe return to schools from the original videos developed by the China Country Office.

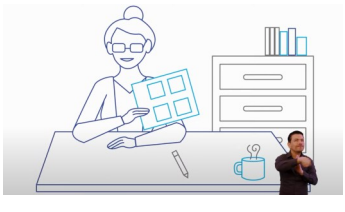
These short and practical videos are available in English and Spanish and they also come with subtitles to facilitate their accessibility.

You can find the videos in the Reopening of Schools Section from the LACRO 's online repository or via the following links or in Youtube:









INCLUSION

A House with Many Windows: How to Implement Inclusive Online Gatherings. In May 2021, UNICEF LACRO launched the guide *A House with Many Windows*, which collected lessons from a series of inclusive workshops, where children with and without disabilities and their families shared art, music and dance expressions. The guide is based on the implementation of workshops with frontline workers and families throughout 2020 involving countries such as Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, Jamaica and Paraguay. This document is now a useful toolkit for COs on how to organize and build inclusive spaces to share, participate and learn, even in virtual settings.

Mental health of children with intellectual disabilities. The UNICEF Honduras office and Special Olympics Honduras (Olimpiadas Especiales de Honduras in Spanish, OEH) have continued collaborating to facilitate the development of skills for mental and physical health amongst children and adolescents with intellectual disabilities. Families were given a kit of materials such as balls, books, scissors, coloured pencils, etc. to aid gross, fine, social and cognitive motor development of children.

In addition, parents were advised virtually and in person by OEH volunteers who provided recommendations on the adequate stimulation of children with disabilities.

Report launched: Our opinion matters. Perspective of Boys, Girls and Adolescents on Discrimination and Barriers to Inclusive Education. This new study allows a look inside schools and classrooms through the eyes of those who participate and learn in them – boys, girls and adolescents with and without disability. The report was prepared and launched in collaboration between UNICEF LACRO and Inclusion International, and it will be useful to inform the design of programs and policies about inclusive education based on an analysis from those who must be at the centre of it. The report is also available in Spanish.

Part of the Solution: UNICEF LACRO continues implementing a series of events under the umbrella of this collaborative strategy with disability organizations and networks in the region. Examples of current initiatives are the agreements signed with Grupo Social ONCE, the Latin American Network of Persons with Disabilities and their Families (RIADIS), the Youth Network META and the Special Olympics. These partners are working under the leadership of the Regional Disability Task Team to provide technical assistance to COs in several countries, including training front liners, collaboration on implementing inclusive local management of programs and addressing the challenges to reopen schools with less barriers and more learners with disabilities.

SECONDARY EDUCATION AND LEARNING

Children and adolescents today live in a world of challenges and opportunities, including the rise of new technologies, changing labor markets, migration, conflict, health crisis and environmental and political changes. To navigate a world with changing dynamics, all children and adolescents need access to quality education and learning that helps them develop skills, knowledge, attitudes and values to become successful life-long learners who can learn, un-learn, and relearn; find and retain productive work; make wise decisions; and positively engage in their communities.

Developing skills can and should be a lifelong process that can take place through different modalities and in a range of contexts. Now more than ever, with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, there has never been a more important time to focus and recognize the importance of skills development as a tool to tackle



the impact of COVID-19 and mitigate the negative effects. Multiple efforts are needed to strengthen access to skills development and promote upskilling and reskilling. As such, there is an urgent need to expand, rethink and transform education and learning systems to provide all children and adolescents, especially those who are marginalized and in conflict and emergency settings, with quality learning opportunities that include the skills they need to succeed in school, work, and life.

1) A webinar with Aflatoun was held on June 29th, with whom we have signed a Long-Term Agreement (LTA) on skills development at the global level. Aflatoun International is a dynamic network of partner organizations, teachers, supporters and staff, delivering high-quality social and financial education and skills.

Please find below the recording and resources shared during the webinar:

a) Link to the recording and PPT of the webinar, including the LTA documentation.

b) Materials developed with UNICEF and other partners in English and Spanish.

c) Local partners at the global level.

d) Research reports.

2) The discussion paper on the "Importance of Transferable Skills Development in Latin America and the Caribbean" is available in Spanish and English.

The document aims to:

a) demonstrate the importance of transferable skills development, particularly in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region, highlighting the challenges children and adolescents in the region face in this regard.

b) stimulate and inspire UNICEF Country Offices in the region to reflect on transferable skills development.

c) support country offices in the LAC region in strengthening the design and implementation of transferable skills development programs.

EARLY CHILDHOOD (ECD)

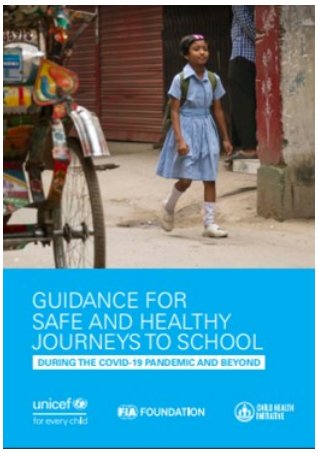
The LACRO ECD team (in collaboration with the Child Protection and Communications teams) collaborated with the Alliance of Spouses of Heads of State and Representatives (ALMA) to organize a virtual meeting "COVID-19 Crisis and the impacts on violence towards early childhood in the region" that took place on June 23rd with the purpose of promoting a dialogue on the violence that has been exacerbated by the pandemic and that has had a worrying impact on the youngest children in the region, putting their development at risk. During this event, the First Ladies of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and the Dominican Republic highlighted the urgency of strengthening work with early childhood to mitigate the increase in violence against young children at home in times of pandemic. The meeting has been followed by communication efforts from both organizations.

IX. GLOBAL RESOURCES

Guidance for Safe and Healthy Journeys to School: During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond:

As schools reopen, we have a unique opportunity to look not only at measures to help keep students safe on school premises, but also on the journey to school. These measures help to keep students safe during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and help to address other safety issues such as road traffic crashes, the number one killer of young people aged 5-29 years.

This guidance is for education authorities and policymakers, school administrators, teachers and staff, parents, caregivers, community members, and students.



It complements the UNICEF, UNESCO, World Bank, World Food Programme and UNHCR global framework for reopening schools and the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) interim guidance for COVID-19. Prevention and Control in Schools. This guidance suggests practical steps to build back better health and safety systems – to address COVID-19 and promote active transport like walking and cycling to improve air quality, physical activity and road safety.

This resource is available in English, Spanish and French.

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