

LACRO COVID-19 EDUCATION RESPONSE: UPDATE 27

STATUS OF SCHOOLS' REOPENING

[Released on August 11, 2021]

I. INTRODUCTION

As of August 11, 13 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean still have partially closed schools, in 1 country they are fully closed, and in 3 of them schools are fully open. In 20 countries and territories, schools are in recess until the new academic year begins in August-September. 63 million children and adolescents are still affected by school closures in the region, with an average of 156 days without face-to-face classes from the start of the pandemic until July 30, 2021.

The increase in COVID-19 cases due to the emergence of new strains continues to destabilize the process of reopening schools in the region. In Haiti and Cuba, for example, a drastic increase in the number of infections has led the Ministries of Education to bring forward the school break. In other cases, schools remain completely closed, as in the case of Honduras, while in other countries where schools were partially closed, all schools have been able to reopen to offer face-to-face classes to all students, as in the case of Uruguay.

Compared to the last regional education report ([Update 26](#)), it is important to note that many countries are currently on holidays, Jamaica, Mexico, Paraguay and Belize are some examples. This is why the decrease in the number of children and adolescents affected by

school closures due to COVID-19 is not due to considerable progress in the school reopening process, but rather to an increase in the number of schools that are closed for vacation.

Update 27 presents the latest regional developments in schools' reopening as of July 30. The report includes an overview with key data, the timeline of face-to-face classes, and a regional update of the school reopening process in each country. Some countries and territories have also reported some progress in the perception surveys targeting children, adolescents and teachers on the current situation of schools and in the prioritization of the teachers' vaccination process.

UPDATE HIGHLIGHTS

- [Statement](#) by UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore and UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay released on 9 July advocating for the reopening of schools
- [Video](#) by UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore on the reopening of schools & mental health.
- [Press release](#) published on July 13 presenting the main findings of the new UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank and OECD report "Lessons on Education Recovery".



©UNICEF Peru

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.



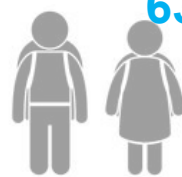
Note for the map: Please note that we have only included information about the countries for which we have received the data on number of schools open and number of children benefited by the reopening of schools. Information received by COs and updated until July 30, 2021.

III. SITUATION OVERVIEW

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



1 country with schools **fully closed** (Honduras).



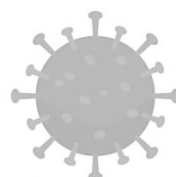
63M children affected by schools' closures.²

2M children affected in countries where schools are fully closed.

61,4M children affected in countries where schools are partially closed.



3 countries have all their schools **fully open** (Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Uruguay).



An average of **156** school days **without face-to-face classes** between March 2020 and July, 2021.³



13 countries have their schools **partially closed** (Argentina, Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Panama, Peru and Suriname).



6 countries and territories with learning assessment and/or remedial education programmes.



20 countries and territories (Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Dominica, Granada, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Montserrat, Paraguay, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Turks and Caicos, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela) are on **academic recess**.



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



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



18 countries and territories have prioritized teachers in the **vaccination process**.



73% of countries and territories have decided on a **date for school reopening**.¹



20 countries and territories with strategies to improve schools' infrastructure.

Sources of information:

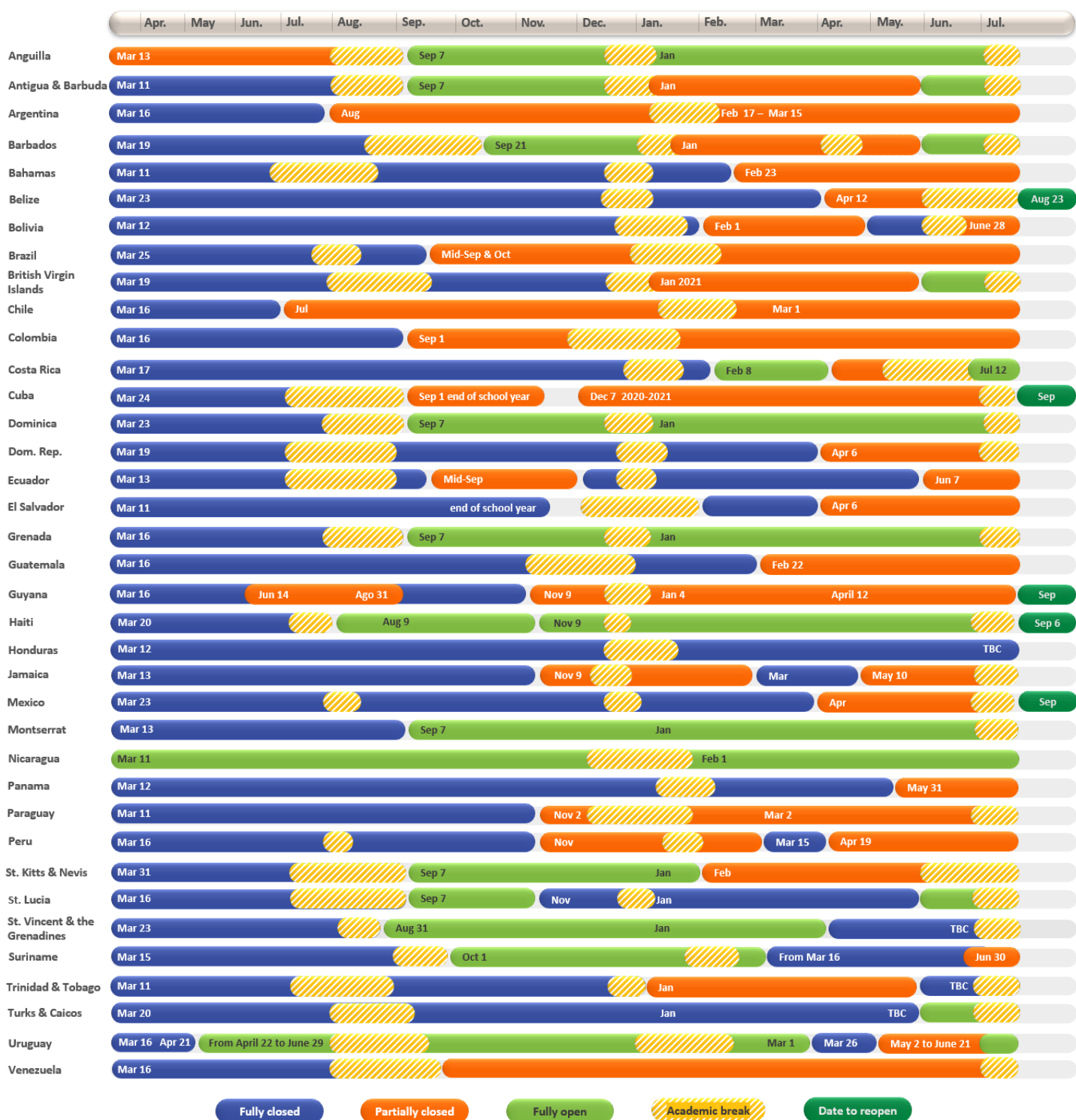
¹ This percentage was calculated by information provided by COs.

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 July 30, 2021. **The drastic reduction in the number of children affected by school closures since the [previous report](#) (Update 26) is mainly due to an increase in the number of countries that are currently on academic break, rather than an increase in the number of schools that have opened since then.**

The figure of 63 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 July 30, 2021.

IV. REOPENING OF SCHOOLS' TIMELINE⁴



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 July 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



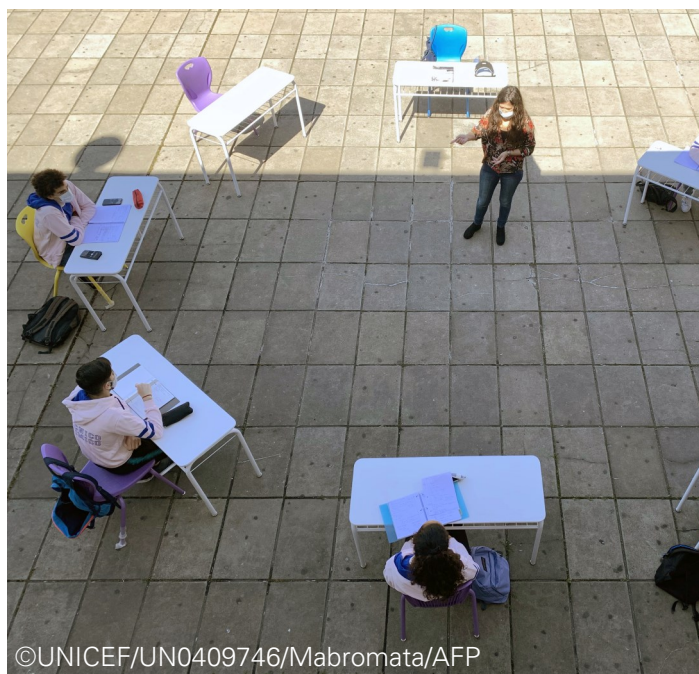
VI. OVERVIEW OF THE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS BY COUNTRY

ARGENTINA⁵

Schools are partially closed, with reopening dates staggered by jurisdiction as of February 17 in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires and Jujuy. The educational model is a face-to-face and blended education model. According to the latest information reported, 8,674,878 (75%) students at the pre-school, primary, secondary, and higher education levels are attending face-to-face classes.

The Observatory for the Return to Onsite Classes in which UNICEF and UNESCO participate, has been created to monitor the reopening of schools. It collects information based on the consultation of the Jurisdictional Ministries of Education and the Taking Care of Schools (*Cuidar Escuelas in Spanish*) platform. The Secretariat of Educational Evaluation & Information is responsible for systematizing the information and producing the [report](#) for the Observatory.

- **UNICEF's Support:** Technical assistance to the committee of the Observatory of the Presential Return to Onsite Classes, support in the dissemination of evidence, promotion of intersectoral actions to support onsite classes, and the attention and re-engagement of students with greater vulnerability.
- **Strategies to improve schools' infrastructure:** Support the process of reopening schools, the Ministry of National Education made funds available for the prevention of the COVID-19 emergency in educational establishments, which includes a program for the supply of safe-drinking water and sanitary improvements in schools.



©UNICEF/UN0409746/Mabromata/AFP

BAHAMAS⁶



©UNICEF/UNI270721/Urdaneta

Schools are partially closed with a combination of face-to-face and distance learning classes. All public elementary, middle, and high schools suspended face-to-face classes from May 25 to June 3, 2021. In the case of preschool education, face-to-face classes continued as normal. Schools classified as 'low risk of COVID-19 transmission' may officially apply to the Director of Education for the continuation of face-to-face classes.

From June 7 to 18, on-site classes and end-of-year exams resumed. During the exam period only students taking exams were allowed to enter the premises, while the rest of the students continued their learning through the virtual platform. In addition, some quarantined students participated in the 2021 national exams. The Grade Level Assessment Test (GLAT) for third and sixth graders began on May 31, and the Bahamas Junior Certificate (BJC) and Bahamas General Certificate of Secondary Education (BGCSE) for high school students continued until June 25.

Finally, the Bahamas Ministry of Education has organized a four-week face-to-face program for students from pre-school to grade 11 called "Extended Learning Academies" to offer students the opportunity to improve their academic level.⁷

BELIZE

Schools are closed for summer vacation. The reopening date after the summer vacation is August 23 for secondary and tertiary schools, and August 30 for nursery and primary schools. Before the vacations, the learning modality offered was blended learning. Regarding the prioritization of vaccination for teachers, they were prioritized in Phase II of vaccination for being considered front-line workers.

- **UNICEF's Support:** UNICEF has continued its efforts in advocating for the safe reopening to provide face-to-face education to children and adolescents including the provision of critical hygiene materials.
- **Strategies to improve schools' infrastructure:** On July 16, in collaboration with UNICEF Belize, 29 hand washing stations were donated to the Ministry of Health and Welfare as part of the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Program led by the WASH Multisectoral Body. The handwashing stations will serve as additional support for 29 primary schools in 29 rural communities in Toledo.⁸

⁵ Information extracted from data reported for [Update 26](#), published on July 8, 2021.

⁶ Information retrieved from the Bahamas Ministry of Education's [official website](#).

⁷ Information extracted from the [official website](#) of the Bahamas Ministry of Education on Facebook.

⁸ [Press release](#) from the Government of Belize, issued on July 16, 2021.

BOLIVIA



©UNICEF Bolivia/2021/Rodríguez

Schools are partially closed. As of July 30, there are 4,484 schools in face-to-face mode (28.10%), 5,444 schools in blended mode (34.12%) and 5,987 schools in distance mode (37.58%). The learning modalities offered are face-to-face education, distance education through the web, TV, radio, and blended education. To date, there are 661,573 students attending face-to-face classes, 935,297 students attending blended classes and 1,375,157 students attending distance classes. Regarding monitoring mechanisms for the reopening process, a system of written reports per educational unit and the consolidation based on the structure of the system's operation, by district, departmental and national level, were developed.

The U-Report "Educational continuity during quarantine" was launched in July 8, in which more than 77% of 368 students surveyed indicated that the semi-presential and face-to-face modality would be the best option to continue classes. Regarding perception surveys directed to teachers, the study "State of the situation of children's education in Bolivia in times of pandemic" gathers information from teachers working with different cycles, modalities, and contexts.

- **UNICEF's Support:** The Maestr@s conectad@s training process continues, with the implementation of the radio and virtual education program in the alternative modality for pregnant adolescents, teenage mothers and fathers and young people who have dropped out of the education system or are at risk of doing so, in rural municipalities in the department of Cochabamba and Cobija. In addition, a "Safe Return to School" booklet was prepared for all schools.
- **Strategies to improve schools' infrastructure:** UNICEF has delivered 39 hand-washing stations; 900 books for decision-makers for the safe return to school; distributed biosafety kits to 100 educational units for more than 42,000 students and 2,200 teachers; provided training to teachers, educational unit directors, district directors and municipal officials on protocols and action routes for the return to school in 8 municipalities in the country; and trained teachers from the disciplinary commissions of 100 educational units.

BRAZIL

Schools remain partially closed. Each state has set a date for the return to classes for state schools and each municipality does the same for the municipal network, so there is no common date for the return to classes. The education modalities offered are face-to-face education, distance education through web platforms, radio, printed media and combined education.

UNICEF, UNESCO and PAHO/WHO in Brazil have signed a [manifesto](#) calling for the immediate and safe reopening of schools. So far, 15 states have announced the reopening of state schools, so it is estimated that 14,852,256 enrolled students have received distance or hybrid classes. The reopening of schools has been more intense in the last month.

The National Council of Secretaries of Education provides an [update](#) on the situation of the schools' state network. On the other hand, the survey of children's perception of the current situation of schools shows that connectivity of students and teachers, and educational infrastructure are still considered the greatest difficulties faced by the networks during the pandemic.

- **UNICEF's Support:** The website has been constantly updated with recommendations and new materials to support decision-making by educational networks. In addition, UN Brazil organized a national seminar on this topic, which took place at the end of June. UNICEF Brazil is also investing in the active search of non-enrolled students and in learning recovery.
- **Strategies to improve schools' infrastructure:** It is estimated that 57% of municipal networks have completed their sanitation protocols for COVID-19 prevention. UNICEF Brazil has implemented the water, sanitation and hygiene strategy in some schools.



©UNICEF Brasil/Alessandro Potter

CHILE⁹

Currently there is a partial closure of schools. The gradual reopening began in March 2021, with school closures according to quarantine status. There are 2,252 (24%) primary and secondary schools and 1,793 (30%) preschools in face-to-face mode. In addition, there are 7,198 (76%) primary and secondary schools and 4,153 (70%) with the distance learning modality.

It is estimated that 984,065 students attend face-to-face classes; this figure depends on classroom capacity and prioritization. In terms of learning modalities, a blended education model is offered. Regarding monitoring mechanisms for the reopening process, the Ministry of Education has a survey aimed at schools, and UNICEF also monitors early education schools.

Regarding surveys of children's perception of the current situation of schools, the initiative My voice, my School (*Mi Voz mi Escuela* in Spanish) has been promoted between the Childhood Ombudsman's Office and the Ministry, which, through the generation of participatory spaces, seeks to consider the voices and opinions of students of different ages in the plan to return to school. Regarding surveys on the perception of the current situation of schools aimed at teachers, the results of the survey were published in the document [Reopening of Kindergartens in Chile during the First Year of the Pandemic](#).

- **UNICEF's Support:** UNICEF Chile provides support in the design of a survey of families with children in preschool education; with 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 and participates in the Advisory Council of the Chilean Ministry of Education.

COLOMBIA

The reopening began on September 1, 2020, with schools partially closed to date. However, the Ministry of National Education has promoted strategies to consolidate the total reopening of the country's schools. There are 17,588 schools open (33% of the total number of schools) with 1,663,009 students benefiting from the reopening (16.9% of the total school enrolment). Different educational modalities are offered: face-to-face education, distance education through the web, TV, radio, printed media and combined education. The Ministry of National Education monitors the reopening process through [periodic reports](#) consolidated by the Observatory for Educational Management.

- **UNICEF's Support:** UNICEF has collaborated in the implementation of water, sanitation and hygiene strategies for school reopening, pedagogical and regulatory support for local government school reopening plans, strategies to prevent and protect against risks of violence and abuse, and educational support programs for vulnerable communities.
- **Strategies to improve schools' infrastructure:** UNICEF Colombia has proposed water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) strategies for the improvement of educational infrastructure to support the actions of the Ministry of Education.

COSTA RICA



©UNICEF/UN0437995/Sifontes

On July 12, all schools reopened, including 5,359 public and private centres in the blended learning modality, benefiting a total of 1,187,749 students, according to data provided by the ministerial platform of the Basic Administration System of Education and its Resources (SABER).

The reopening monitoring is coordinated through the SABER platform, which has allowed the Ministry and the country to have relevant information on students and educational centres in an automated manner, as well as to carry out censuses and surveys to prepare opening and monitoring plans. Regarding the registration of COVID-19 cases in schools, a national information system was developed, which monitors cases as suspected, discarded, positive and recovered. Furthermore, a telephone survey to households on the situation of children and adolescents during the emergency is currently underway.

- **UNICEF's Support:** Support for the PANI-MEP-UNICEF joint campaign for the return to classes; advocacy for vaccination of teachers; hire of a technical team to provide a diagnosis of the specific needs of schools with water problems; and psychosocial support for students through the "Here I am" telephone line. In addition, support is being provided for the registration of the Ministry of Education in the Learning Passport initiative as an official platform for virtual education.
- **Strategies to improve schools' infrastructure:** Support for a technical team that will be providing a diagnosis of the specific needs of the centers that have water problems. In addition, UNICEF participated in the working groups for the [general guidelines](#) for the resumption of on-site services in public and private educational centers before the COVID-19, providing support in a campaign to raise awareness among the educational community about their use.
- **Learning assessment and/or remedial education programmes:** The Ministry of Education is moving forward with the [Plan for educational leveling because of the COVID-19 pandemic](#), which seeks clarity on the essential, core and basic learning for the development of students. This plan also includes guidelines for a comprehensive approach to the vulnerable population and people at risk of educational exclusion.

⁹ Information retrieved from data reported for [Update 26](#), published on July 8, 2021. There has been progress in the reopening process after the winter break, but no official data has yet been published.

CUBA

Schools have been closed due to school recess since June 30. If the current epidemiological situation allows it, full reopening is scheduled for September, given the planned mass vaccination. Due to the increase in cases of COVID-19 in recent weeks, some provinces that kept their schools open decided to bring forward the school break, which officially began in early July. Although no data is available, it is known that there is a tendency to close schools in provinces outside Havana, while schools in Havana are completely closed. Before the holiday period 277,311 students attended classes in person and more than one million received classes through TV and digital platforms. The learning modalities offered were face-to-face education, distance education through the web and TV and blended learning.

The monitoring of the reopening process is carried out through the provincial and municipal education directorates under the direction of the Ministry of Education, while the systematization of good practices of the first reopening of schools was collected in the document "Education in times of COVID-19. The Cuban experience". At present, scenarios are being studied for the reopening scheduled for September, and the systematization will be entitled "Education in times of COVID-19 MINED-UNICEF". Regarding the progress made in the surveys on children and adolescents' perception of the current situation of schools, a telephone survey of households on the situation of children and adolescents in the emergency is underway.

- **UNICEF's Support:** Complementary support was provided for capacity building of teachers with emphasis on early childhood and trade schools and socioemotional support to families of children with autism and intellectual disabilities.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Schools are currently closed for the holiday period. The school year ended on Friday, July 30, and the President has announced that the next school year will start in September with nationwide onsite attendance.

The study [Education for all preserving health: A look at the functioning of public distance education in the Dominican Republic in times of COVID-19](#) was carried out, which includes a survey of families and school principals. Teachers have already been vaccinated in February and according to the Ministry of Education, there is a minimal percentage of teachers who do not want to receive the vaccine.

- **UNICEF's Support:** The UNICEF office has continued with the training of technicians and teachers at the national level, as well as in the "Return to Joy" program for the psycho-affective recovery of children and adolescents in emergency and disaster situations. In addition, UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Education in the design of an Early Warning System to identify children out of the education system and also has a protocol for the return to school that support the monitoring process.

- **Strategies to improve schools' infrastructure:** The Ministry informed that the decentralized school boards are transferring resources to repair or create adequate water conditions in schools. In addition, thanks to the implementation of the biosecurity protocol where school personnel were trained, the correct functioning of the protocol was evidenced during the reopening phase, since there were no contagions in schools after almost two months of reopening in 48 municipalities.

ECA (Eastern Caribbean Area)¹⁰

Most Caribbean countries and territories have had different learning modalities, with the hybrid model (distance and face-to-face education) and face-to-face education being the most common methods. All territories are currently on school break until the beginning of September.

- **UNICEF's Support:** Support was provided for digital content development; the planning for the summer learning loss recovery programming began; support was provided to Vincentian students displaced by the *La Soufriere* eruption as they prepare for regional exams. In addition, the Ministry of Education, together with UNICEF, has provided 3,000 Grade 5 and 6 students with breakfast and lunch, as well as school supplies to help them prepare for the upcoming Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE), Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) and Caribbean Primary Exit Assessment (CPEA).¹¹



©UNICEF/UN0345668/LeMoyné

¹⁰ Information retrieved from data reported for [Update 26](#), published on July 8, 2021.

¹¹ Information extracted from the official UNICEF website. For more information, click [here](#).

ECUADOR

There is a partial closure of schools, which began in the last quarter of 2020. On June 2, 2021, a decree was issued to initiate a gradual return to schools as of June 7.

Of the 15,786 schools offering regular education, 2,029 have approved their plans to make use of the facilities, and of these, as of July 15, 600 schools offer education in mixed modality, benefiting 21,203 students and 3,091 teachers. Currently, students in the Sierra region are on vacation, so their records are not available.

The Ministry of Education has implemented a monitoring system that registers schools, teachers and students returning to face-to-face classes, which issues a weekly report. Together with the Ministry's research and information department, instruments have been developed for the collection of information in order to evaluate existing good reopening practices. During the month of July, a survey on the perception of the current situation of the schools was made available online, in which 330 students participated.

- **UNICEF's Support:** It promotes advocacy through webinars with the educational community and the generation of evidence in favor of the gradual reopening of schools and is implementing a community education model, where one of the central axes is the reopening of rural schools.
- **Strategies to improve schools' infrastructure:** In 2020, support was provided for the implementation of a census of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) conditions in schools, and for technical assistance to estimate the investment needed to ensure minimum WASH conditions and biosafety protocols. With this, the Ministry of Education planned to invest US\$107 million by the end of the year.
- **Learning assessment and/or remedial education programmes:** Meetings have been held with the technical teams of the Ministry of Education to discuss learning recovery evaluations or programs. The Ministry included this topic as part of its pilot plan.



©UNICEF/Ecuador/2021/Arcos

EL SALVADOR



©UNICEF/WIL_2023

Schools are partially closed. Currently, 124 public schools are totally closed due to infrastructure works, water supply problems and due to COVID-19 cases; 5,029 schools are open offering semi-presential, multimodal, gradual and optional educational services; and 42 bicultural schools are on hold from their activities.

From July 19 to 23 there was an average of 344,284 students in face-to-face classes. This figure is higher, since some students from the evening shift are not reported. In addition, the attendance of each student varies from week to week. The educational modalities offered are face-to-face education, distance education through the web, TV, radio, print media and blended education. As for monitoring mechanisms of the reopening process, each Departmental Education Directorate, through technical teams of educational advisors, verifies the status of closure and reopening, as well as the attention of educational services in all its modalities. Regarding the vaccination of teachers, they were prioritized in the process at the beginning of March after the health sector, with a small number of teachers who have not been vaccinated to date by their own decision.

- **UNICEF's Support:** Within the framework of "Reimagine Education", the Ministry is supported in the purchase of laptops for teachers and students and assistive devices for students with disabilities. Within the framework of the GIGA initiative, support is provided to the government to increase connectivity in schools. In addition, technical support is provided for the virtualization of educational material and the generation of educational audiovisual content.
- **Strategies to improve schools' infrastructure:** 658 schools will have handwashing stations, with 15 stations completed, 306 under implementation, and 337 to be started.
- **Learning assessment and/or remedial education programmes:** From the end of June to July, diagnostic evaluations have been carried out with the participation of 65% of students from third grade of basic education to second year of high school.

GUATEMALA



Schools are partially closed; their status depends on the alert level of the municipality in which they are located. Schools located in a municipality in green or yellow status may open depending on the capacity of the classrooms, while schools located in municipalities in orange or red status must remain closed.¹² Regarding the prioritization of vaccination of teachers, they are being vaccinated in Esquipulas, San José La Arada, Chinautla, Cuilapa, Milpas Altas, Pastores and San Marcos.¹³

As part of the #Returntoschoolplan2021, the Ministry of Education is carrying out a Coronavirus prevention campaign that includes key messages on hand washing, use of soap, physical distancing and biosecurity protocols. In addition, as part of the back-to-school support program, the Ministry of Education carried out the fifth delivery of school food packages, benefiting 2.6 million students from 29,000 educational establishments throughout the country. This package includes perishable products, as well as fresh products from family farming.¹⁴

- **UNICEF's Support:** UNICEF delivered 13 educational modules to the Ministry of Education, benefiting more than 2,400 children and adolescents in five municipalities of Alta Verapaz: Cobán, San Juan Camelco, San Cristóbal Verapaz, San Pedro Carcha and Santa María Cahabón. This guarantees their educational continuity and prevents them from dropping out of school. In addition, UNICEF donated sheets, sinks and toilets for 78 schools in Alta Verapaz and 17 schools in Puerto Barrios, Izabal.¹⁵
- **Strategies to improve schools' infrastructure:** The Minister of Education and the First Councilman of Salcajá signed the Interinstitutional Cooperation Framework Agreement, to contribute to the improvement of education and school technology in the municipality. Among the actions are the implementation of alternative ways to improve school infrastructure, acquisition and provision of technological equipment, educational software, furniture, school supplies and didactic material, benefiting several educational centers.¹⁶

¹² Information retrieved from [Update 24](#).

¹³ Information extracted from the [official web page](#) of the Ministry of Education of Guatemala on Facebook.

¹⁴ Information extracted from the [official web page](#) of the Ministry of Education of Guatemala on Facebook.

¹⁵ Information retrieved from UNICEF Guatemala CO's [website](#).

¹⁶ [Ministry of Education Newsletter, n 14](#). Published on June 25, 2021.

GUYANA

Schools in the country opened on January 4. Currently, schools are partially closed, specifically 240 schools are fully closed and 120 are partially closed, which translates to 12,000 children benefiting from the reopening.

The learning modalities in Guyana are diverse. There is face-to-face education, distance education through web-based platforms, distance education through TV and radio, distance education through print media, and blended or hybrid education.

Regarding the monitoring of the process of reopening schools in the country, the Ministry of Education consults with the Ministry of Health and uses the return to school protocol to monitor the process and ongoing progress. Regarding the vaccination process, at this time anyone over 18 years of age can be vaccinated.

- **UNICEF's Support:** Monitor progress made with the Global Partnership for Education (GPE)-funded Lifelong Learning Project, including training teachers in distance learning program development and monitoring.
- **Strategies to improve schools' infrastructure:** Installation of hand-washing stations and repairs to existing infrastructure.

HAITI

All schools in Haiti are currently closed due to an increase in cases of COVID-19 following the emergence of two new variants of the virus. Consequently, a premature presidential decree put an end to the current school year on June 19, 2021. All schools and 4 million students were affected by this closure, except for 300,000 grade 2 students who will take state exams. The school recess in the country's schools began on July 30.

Initially, schools reopened last year in mid-August to finish the 2019-2020 school year, while the 2020-2021 school year began in November 2021, closing prematurely on June 19, 2021. However, the scheduled start date for the 2021-2022 school year is September 6, 2021.

- **UNICEF's Support:** Support to the Ministry of Education with the implementation of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) COVID-19 response program.
- **Strategies to improve schools' infrastructure:** There are several ongoing programs from different donors that focus on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in schools.
- **Learning assessment and/or remedial education programmes:** Learning assessments have been conducted as usual, as all schools have operated for most of the school year. On the other hand, remedial programs have also been offered to students taking state exams.

HONDURAS

Currently, all schools are closed with no fixed date for a possible reopening. Regarding learning modalities, distance education modalities are offered through web platforms, TV, radio and printed media.

The National Risk Management System (SINAGER) issued a provision on July 6, stating that any authorization to reopen schools that had been granted would be without value and effect as a precautionary measure.¹⁷ SINAGER also informed in another statement that the Ministry of Education (SEDUC) has proposed a management scheme in the plan for the Safe Return to Semi-Presential Classes, which confirms that no school will open its doors to receive students until the administrative teaching staff has been immunized and the physical-organizational conditions of all schools have been checked.¹⁸

- **UNICEF's Support:** Advocacy for the reopening of schools, presenting cases of reopening in the region and suggesting options to proceed with the reopening process. It also provided support for materials, devices and strengthening of the platform.
- **Strategies to improve schools' infrastructure:** There is currently a plan to improve school infrastructure, including water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).

JAMAICA

Schools are closed in Jamaica because of the holiday period. The Ministry of Education is preparing summer school, however, the number of children benefited is not yet definite.

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).



©UNICEF/UN0352088/Makyn



©UNICEF/UN0443697/Kelly

- **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 counsellors, social workers, and their students. Teacher training Return to Happiness is slated to begin this summer. Jamaica CO is also supporting the national summer school programme with material provision, including the printing and distribution of 60,000 copies of the MoE-developed learning kits.
- **Strategies to improve schools' infrastructure:** So far, we have completed WASH installations in 23 rural primary schools, and we are aiming to complete 4 more schools by the end of September.
- **Learning assessment and/or remedial education programmes:** We encouraged Ministry colleagues to take the functional literacy and numeracy courses offered by HQ and have begun training targeting some 6,000 teachers by the end of December in blended learning strategies using the Blackboard Platform.

MEXICO

Schools in Mexico are closed for the holiday period. The tentative reopening date is August 30, 2021. Regarding learning modalities, before the holiday period, face-to-face and distance education modalities were offered through web platforms, TV and print media.

Regarding monitoring mechanisms for the reopening process, UNICEF Mexico supports the development of an online dashboard to track the process, and it is expected that schools will make a report starting in September.

- **UNICEF's Support:** The office has provided support for *Health in your Hands*, content of the "[Learn at Home](#)" Program.
- **Strategies to improve schools' infrastructure:** Strategies have been developed to improve educational infrastructure, such as the [Salud en tus Manos](#) (Health in your Hands) program, which includes the installation of free hand-washing stations and hygiene supplies. In addition, training was carried out in 588 schools in 5 Mexican states.

¹⁸ Official Statement of the National Risk Management System (SINAGER) released on 6 July 2021.

¹⁹ Official Communiqué of the Epidemiology Unit of the National Risk Management System SINAGER, published in July 2021.

NICARAGUA

In Nicaragua, all 9,125 schools of the pre-school, primary and secondary education subsystems are open, benefiting approximately 1,800,000 children. The school year began on February 1, 2021, after being closed during the months of December and January due to inter-annual vacations. In terms of learning modalities, face-to-face and blended or hybrid education models are offered.

Regarding monitoring mechanisms for the process of reopening schools, Nicaragua carries out institutional monitoring. A survey of children's and adolescents' perception of the current situation of the schools is currently being prepared and is expected to be applied in August 2021.

- **UNICEF's Support:** The office provided support in the provision of water and sanitation systems in the context of the emergency caused by hurricanes Eta and Iota.
- **Strategies to improve schools' infrastructure:** Strategies have been developed to improve educational infrastructure (installation of hand-washing stations, repairs, implementation of biosecurity protocols, etc.), especially in schools affected by hurricanes Eta and Iota.

PANAMA

Schools are partially closed in Panama. Since schools reopened on May 31, the opening of educational centers has been gradual. At present, 354 schools out of the 4,587 schools in the country are teaching through the blended learning modality, with a total of 82,563 children and adolescents benefiting from the reopening of schools.

The process of reopening schools is monitored and supervised by the Directorate of Evaluation and Statistics. The results of the third household survey on the situation of families with children and adolescents during the pandemic have been published. According to the survey, although access to distance education has increased in the last year, those children from lower socio-economic levels or living in more remote areas do not have continuous and quality access.

- **UNICEF's Support:** UNICEF has disseminated the results of the third [household survey](#) on access to and quality of distance education, as well as household perceptions of the return to the classroom. Advocacy work continues at all levels to accelerate the process of reopening schools in the country.



©UNICEF/UN0433853/Moreno González



©UNICEF/UN0458488/Brom

- **Strategies to improve schools' infrastructure:** The Ministry of Education has installed water tanks and sinks in several schools in the country.

PARAGUAY

Schools in Paraguay are in vacation period. Before the recess, 777 educational institutions were in face-to-face mode, 6,680 institutions in hybrid mode and 1,500 institutions in virtual mode, benefiting 364,816 students who attended face-to-face classes. The reopening date is August 2, when most of the country's schools are expected to return to face-to-face classes.

The monitoring mechanism for the reopening process 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, which are responsible for the review, control and approval of the reopening of schools, ensuring that all biosecurity measures are complied with.

- **UNICEF's Support:** UNICEF has supported more than 1,000 schools in the preparation and implementation of the *Protocol for Safe Return and Safe Travel to Schools*, has distributed personal protection equipment to 330 schools (including indigenous schools), which will benefit the return of approximately 10,000 children. In addition, school support days have been established for the continuity of learning and retention in the educational system.
- **Strategies to improve schools' infrastructure:** With the support of UNICEF, a safe return protocol and an operational guide have been developed and are being used in more than 1,000 schools. In addition, there are components for water and sanitation improvements, installation of hand-washing sinks and provision of personal protective equipment.

PERU

The partial reopening of schools began on April 19, 2021. As of July 23, there are 4,025 schools providing blended education benefiting 167,250 students out of a total of 8 million in the country. The reopening modality is distance education through web platforms, television, radio and mixed or hybrid education.

The Ministry of Education is in charge of preparing a report based on the information sent by the schools regarding their reopening status, which in turn, is systematized by the local educational management units. As for the vaccination process for teachers, the rate of vaccinated teachers as of July 20 is 12.4%. Most teachers were vaccinated in the regular vaccination program; however, since July 6, the process has been accelerated for teachers in rural areas.

- **UNICEF's Support:** UNICEF works together with the Ministry of Health to advocate for early vaccination of teachers in rural areas and has prepared booklets with guidelines for the reopening of schools for families, children and adolescents. Most of these booklets have been shared virtually, while 34,000 have been distributed in paper version in Amazonian areas. Together with UNESCO, the Coalition for Education has been promoted, which has encouraged the collaboration of the private sector, civil society organizations and international agencies in the face of the impact of the pandemic.
- **Strategies to improve schools' infrastructure:** Since April, the Ministry of Education has supported the installation of hand-washing stations in 15,757 schools nationwide, and the purchase of cleaning materials, masks and other biosecurity supplies. In addition, [specific guidelines](#) have been developed for the proper return of the school year.

SURINAME

Schools in the country, approximately 60, are partially closed. They initially reopened on June 30 for lower secondary examinations, on July 14 for primary education, and on July 26 for upper secondary education. Currently, the partial reopening is benefiting 10,000 children and adolescents. Learning modalities vary, some students are receiving face-to-face classes, while others are receiving classes via web/internet platforms or television.



- **UNICEF's Support:** Support for the development of digital didactic material.
- **Strategies to improve schools' infrastructure:** UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Education with the implementation of the 3-Star Approach to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), which is designed to improve the effectiveness of hygiene behavior change programs. The approach ensures that healthy habits are taught, practiced and integrated into daily school routines. Notably, multiple partners and the government support the improvement of WASH infrastructures in schools.

URUGUAY

In Uruguay all schools are open. The reopening process began on May 3 with rural schools and ended on July 19 with the opening of the 2nd and 3rd years of lower secondary education and 2nd and 3rd years of upper secondary education, so all children and adolescents in the country are benefiting from the reopening of schools.

Regarding the monitoring of the school reopening process, the National Public Education Administration (ANEP) and the *Ceibal Plan* have been in charge of monitoring class attendance and connection to educational platforms during the period in which schools were partially open.

- **UNICEF's Support:** Last month the UNICEF office in Uruguay won the Set Aside Funds to implement the Learning & Innovation project: "The *Plan Ceibal* Approach to Reimagine Education", which seeks to deepen the scope of *Plan Ceibal* in the national territory and scale it to other countries in the region.
- **Strategies to improve schools' infrastructure:** The educational infrastructure was improved, the centers were enlarged, and the government entered into agreements with other organizations to expand classroom space.

VENEZUELA

Venezuela has completed its third pedagogical moment and the closing of the 2020-2021 school year. Schools are currently in vacation period with a reopening date for the beginning of the new 2021-2022 school year in classroom mode in October 2021. At this time the modality used is blended learning.

Regarding the monitoring mechanisms of the reopening process, the National Education Supervision System of the Ministry of Education has an organizational structure of 3,722 educational circuits to which a supervisor is assigned to follow up and monitor the processes. The supervisors monitor the development of the distance education modality from the plan "Every family, one school" promoting pedagogical guidelines regarding the preparation of schools.

Regarding surveys of children and adolescents' perception of the current situation of schools, Venezuela has conducted an informal exploratory survey of a group of 65 adolescents from the Capital District, Miranda, Zulia, Táchira and Bolívar.

- **UNICEF's Support:** UNICEF Venezuela has provided technical assistance to the different levels and modalities for the design of guidelines and strategies and supported the Ministry of Education in carrying

out the 2nd International Seminar on Special Education in times of pandemic: a constitutional right to exchange significant experiences with the participation of UNICEF offices in Cuba, Panama, Argentina and the regional office. UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education in the systematization of good practices in early education under the distance modality and, within the framework of the return to school and the evaluation of the *Pedagogical Guidance Points*, is supporting the development of an instrument to gather information and systematize good practices.

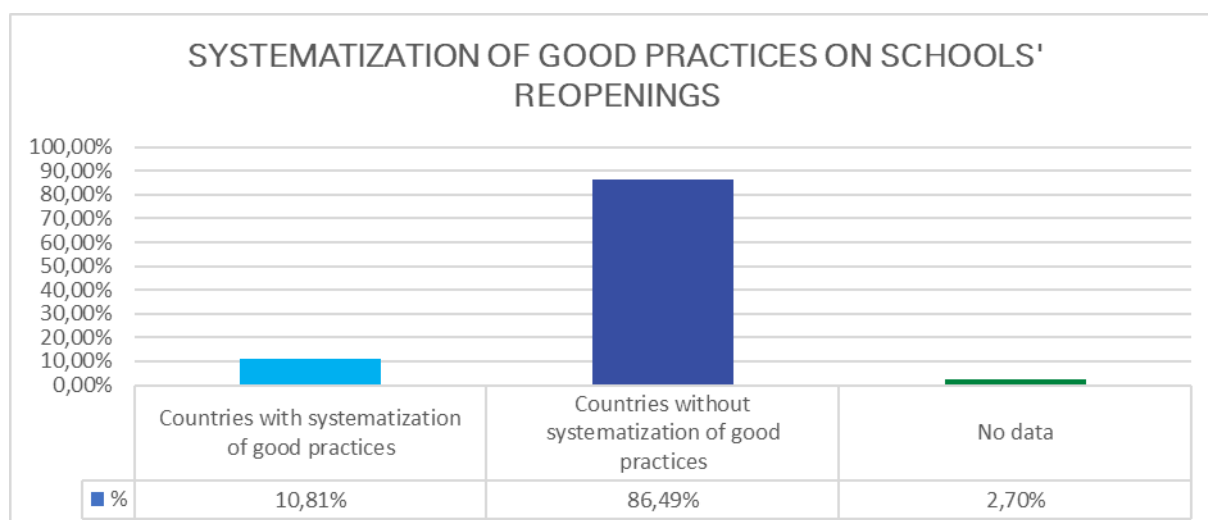
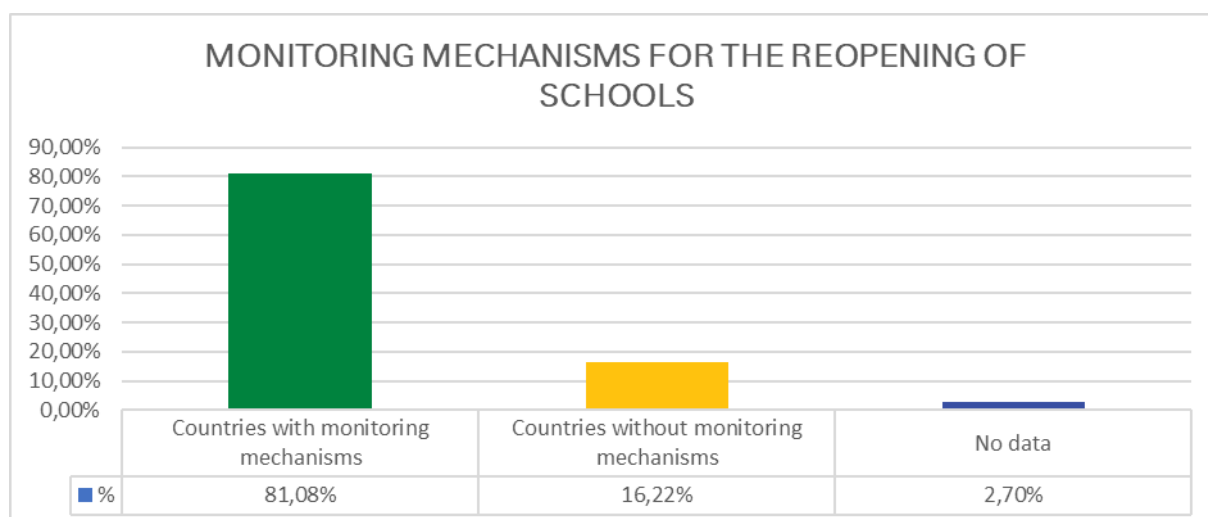
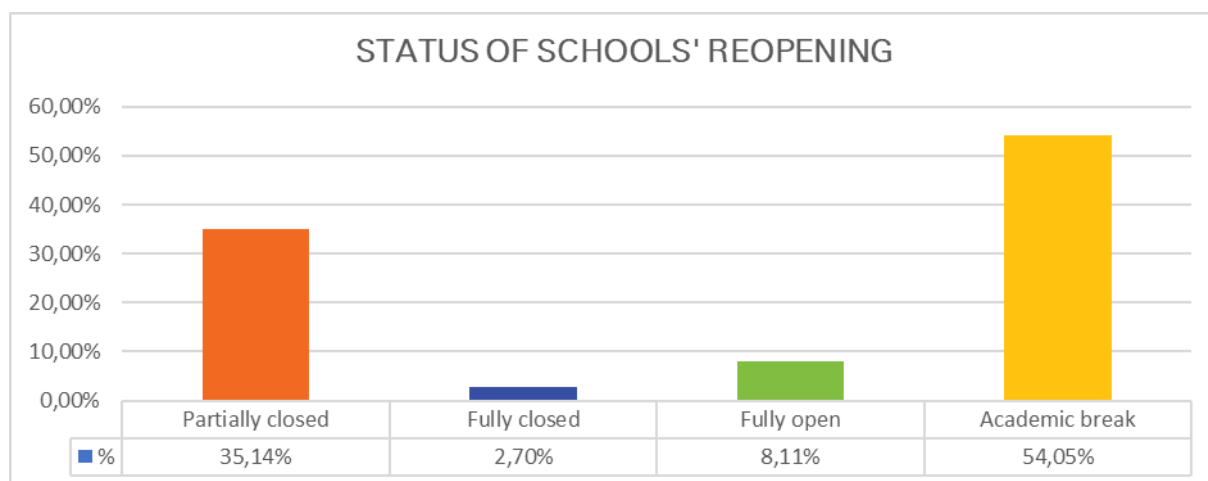
- **Strategies to improve schools' infrastructure:** The Ministry of Education has formed a high-level working group to improve educational infrastructure, which has gathered information on the state of schools and prioritized 500 schools. UNICEF, through the WASH section, and in coordination with the education section, will participate in the attention to these schools.
- **Learning assessment and/or remedial education programmes:** The Ministry, with technical support from UNICEF, is in the phase 2 of the design of the accelerated education program for over-age students who have not completed primary school.



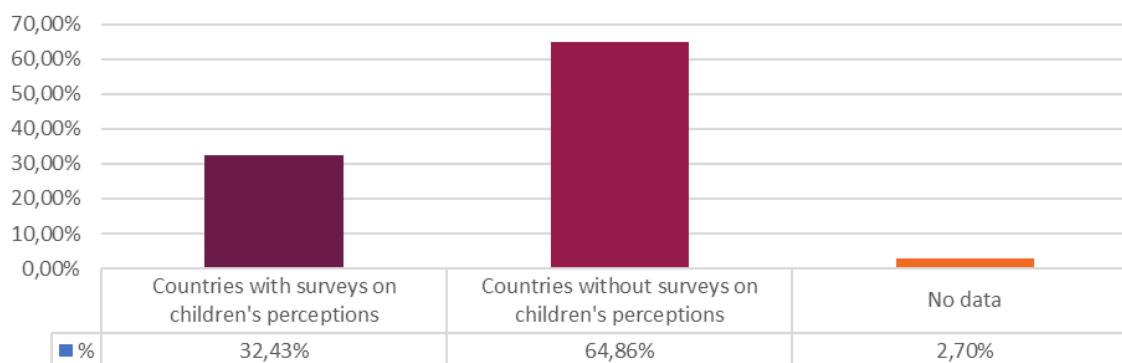
© UNICEF/UN0483557/Poveda

VII. THE SCHOOLS' REOPENING PROCESS IN FIGURES

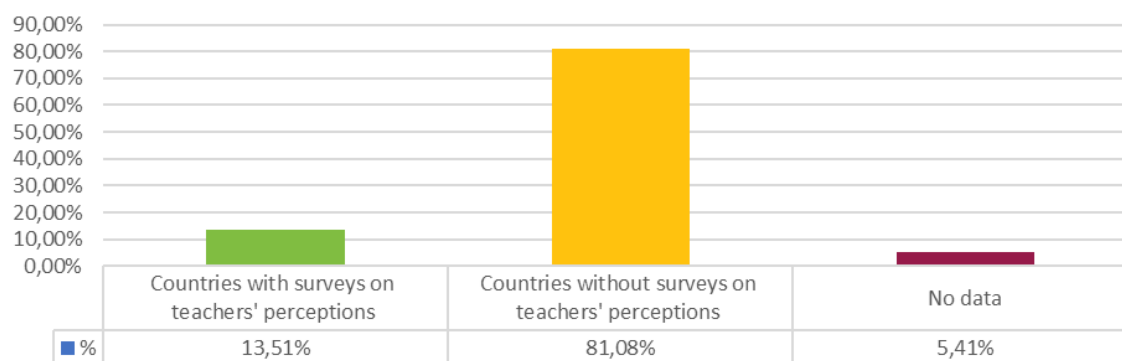
The following section provides a graphic overview of key data used to monitor the school reopening process in the LAC region: (a) existing mechanisms in countries and territories to assess the reopening process; (b) existing systematizations of good practices to monitor the process; (c) the existence of surveys directed to children, adolescents and teachers on their opinion of the current situation of schools; (d) the existence of strategies to improve educational infrastructure; and (e) the progress made on assessments and/or learning recovery programs.



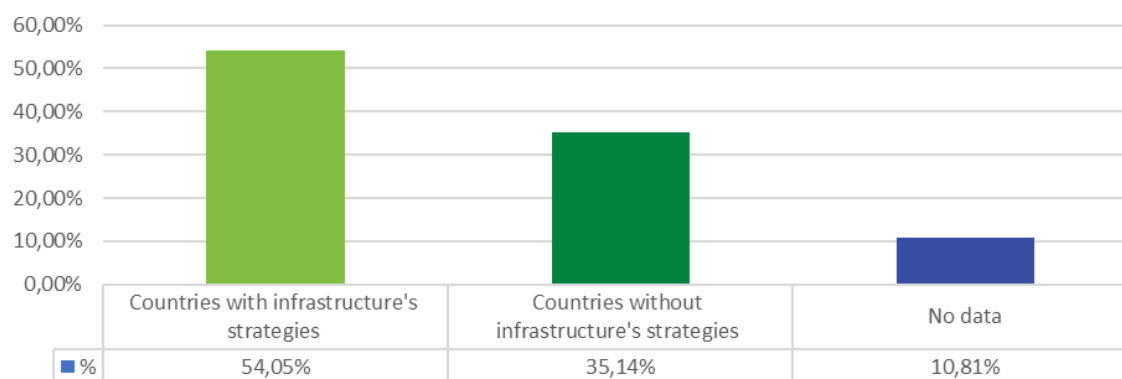
CHILDREN'S PERCEPTION SURVEYS ON THE CURRENT SITUATION OF SCHOOLS



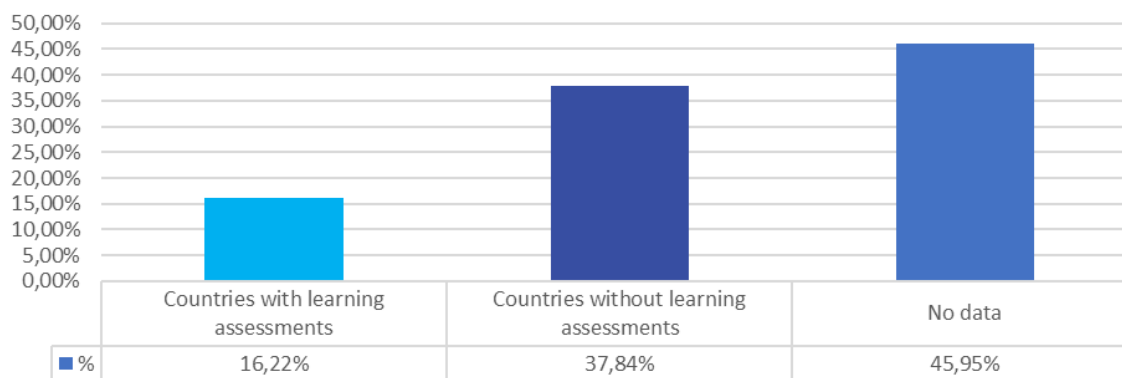
TEACHERS' PERCEPTION SURVEYS ON THE CURRENT SITUATION OF SCHOOLS



STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE SCHOOLS' INFRASTRUCTURE



LEARNING ASSESSMENTS AND/OR REMEDIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMES



EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES (EiE)

- The Education in Emergencies Team is working on the **Systematization of the Distance Education Responses** that countries and territories in the Latin America & Caribbean region have been implementing since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

One of the main characteristics that many of the countries and territories in the region share is the use of online educational platforms and resources along with face-to-face classes, as most of them continue to use the hybrid education model in which face-to-face classes are combined with online classes, mainly due to the new emergence of waves and strains of the virus that involve the constant closure of schools.

Access the region's main [educational resources and platforms](#) in UNICEF's [regional repository](#) COVID-19: Educational Preparedness and Response.

The study also includes a **Mapping of Educational Responses for Migrant & Refugee Children and Adolescents** in the region, who face even greater challenges of continued access and quality of education. On the one hand, language poses a challenge for Spanish-speaking refugees and migrants arriving in non-Spanish speaking countries and territories in the region, and on the other hand, the lack of documentation of migrant and refugee children poses a considerable challenge in the acceptance and inclusion of students in the education systems of host countries.

For more details on the recognition of prior learning (RVA) of refugee and migrant children and adolescents access [here](#) the latest document on this topic developed by the Education in Emergencies team of the UNICEF Regional Office.



- Latest newsletter from the **Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction & Resilience in the Education Sector (GADRRRES)**. The GADRRRES newsletter focuses on initiatives that work to ensure that all schools are safe from disaster risks and all students live in a culture of safety. The newsletter includes a section dedicated to each of the global regions with the latest initiatives and tools on disaster risk and resilience in the education sector. The section dedicated to Latin America and the Caribbean includes the report developed by UNICEF "[Reflections on the recognition of prior learning of refugee and migrant children and adolescents](#)", in the framework of the Regional Response to the Venezuelan Crisis and with the support of Education Cannot Wait (ECW), and the initiative "[Learning on my journey. Zuri's Adventures](#)," developed by UNICEF and the PLAN Colombia Foundation, among others.

Click here to access the newsletter in [English](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#).



**Global Alliance for
Disaster Risk Reduction & Resilience
in the Education Sector**

GADRRRES Newsletter

June 2021

INCLUSION

- **Regional Accessible Digital Textbooks (ADT) Project:** LACRO will be scaling the "Accessible Digital Textbooks for All Initiative" at regional level and supporting the pilots in Jamaica, Nicaragua, Uruguay and Paraguay for a period of 3 years. Some of the strategies include the creation of a regional repository of accessible content for teachers, publishers and MOEs, building strong partnership around the production of ADT to ensure sustainability in the region and developing a communication strategy to raise awareness of the importance of providing accessible learning materials to children with disabilities in inclusive settings. All progress will be featured on the global initiative [website](#).

- **Conference of State Parties:** In the third week of June, the activities were widely carried out in the framework of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). This allowed participation of several UNICEF National Offices (LACRO) in round tables and seminars that updated the state of the art on topics such as Early Inclusion, Inclusive Education and Community Based Rehabilitation.
- **Part of the solution:** Within the framework of our cycle of webinars and workshops, and in collaboration with Special Olympics, LACRO held two encounters that had great participation from technical teams and front-line workers across the region:
 - ♦ On June 23, on criteria and care for the reopening of early childhood centers.
 - ♦ On July 21, [Workshop](#) “A house with many windows”, together with the inclusive dance group Concueros.
- **Webinar with Inclusion International:** Together with *Inclusión Internacional*, we presented the Report “[Nuestra Opinión Vale](#) (Our Opinion Matters)” on June 24, with participation of regional authorities and representatives of children.
- **Task Team assistance to COs:** In June and July, with the support of the Team of Counselors for Inclusion, technical assistance was provided for the offices of Panama, Nicaragua, Colombia and Venezuela, building capacities of the teams from both Ministries of Education in the mainstreaming disability inclusion approach.
- **Rapid Assessment on Bullying:** In July we began the preparation of a regional survey on bullying and mistreatment of children and adolescents with disabilities. The survey seeks to contribute a Manifesto prepared by UNICEF (HQ) to be presented at the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) during its 86th session in September 2021.



©UNICEF Bolivia/2021/Rodríguez



©UNICEF/UN033398/LeMoyn

Declared by the United Nations General Assembly in 2014, on July 15th, we celebrated the World Youth Skills Day! This day is meant to commemorate, acknowledge, and celebrate the importance of skills development to equip adolescents and young people for the challenges of the future.

It is especially important to commemorate this day during these times of change and uncertainty due to the COVID-19 pandemic, that affected young people by disrupting their education and training, as well as constrained their opportunities to succeed in the future.

To celebrate this year's World Youth Skills Day, LACRO developed audiovisual materials highlighting the importance of transferable skills and how these can be a tool to cope with the pandemic and the socio-economic challenges brought with it. The videos were focused on 4 skills and are available in English and Spanish:

- ♦ Resilience ([English](#) and [Spanish](#))
- ♦ Decision Making ([English](#) and [Spanish](#))
- ♦ Critical Thinking ([English](#) and [Spanish](#))
- ♦ Empathy ([English](#) and [Spanish](#))

IX. GLOBAL RESOURCES

- UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank and OECD new report "[Lessons on Education Recovery: Findings from a Survey of Ministries of Education amid the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)". In each country, the survey questionnaire was completed by the Ministry of Education officials responsible for education planning at the central or decentralized levels. The questions covered four levels of education: pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary. While the first two rounds of the survey were implemented during the periods May–June and July–October 2020, respectively, the third round was implemented during the period February–June 2021. In total, 143 countries responded to the questionnaire.



- UNESCO, UNICEF & The World Bank new report "[Mission: Recovering Education in 2021](#)". Disruptions to education systems since early 2020 have already driven substantial losses and inequalities in learning. All the efforts to provide remote instruction are laudable, but this has been a very poor substitute for in-person learning. Therefore, it is not enough for schools to simply reopen their doors after COVID-19. Students will need tailored and sustained support to help them readjust and catch-up after the pandemic.

The report is also available in [Spanish](#) and [French](#).



- Launch of the Global Education Cluster Core Coordination Training –CORE 1 in Spanish. This online course is aimed at helping develop essential coordination and information management

competencies for education cluster staff and key cluster's stakeholder. Through six online self-paced modules, participants will develop basic theoretical knowledge around the fundamentals of coordination and education cluster, humanitarian programme cycle and education cluster strategies, basic coordination practical skills on effective education cluster meeting and presentation. You can access the Spanish Summary of Global Education Cluster Core Coordination Training – CORE 1 [here](#). The [English](#) and [French](#) versions are also available.



- ECD HQ in collaboration with Sesame Workshop and the support of The Lego Foundation, developed and translated into Spanish COVID-19 messages for families and caregivers. The content includes information related with: Prevention from virus, Child-caregiver social - emotional wellbeing and Sustaining learning at home. All the content is ready for internal download from WeShare , where you will find the translated videos organized by title and labeled, and the digital assets (in the "Graphics" folder) organized by language.

Access below the relevant and open-access material on the reopening of schools:

- [1. Recommendations for taking care of yourself in times of COVID19](#)
- [2. Taking care of your health with Elmo, Raya & Tala](#)
- [3. Washing our hands](#)
- [4. How to cough and sneeze safely](#)
- [5. Kindness quiz](#)
- [6. Fun ways to care, cope and connect](#)



For additional information or any queries please contact:

Ruth Custode, rcustode@unicef.org; Tania González Veiga, tgonzalez@unicef.org; Juan Pinzón, jpinzon@unicef.org; María J. Melo, mmelo@unicef.org.