

LACRO COVID-19 EDUCATION RESPONSE: UPDATE 32

STATUS OF SCHOOLS' REOPENING

[Released on February 15, 2022]

[The information in this report represents data from late December 2021 to early February 2022]

I. INTRODUCTION

As of February 15, 9 countries have fully reopened their schools, 14 are partially closed and 7 are fully closed. In addition, 7 countries and territories are currently on academic recess.

Although these data indicate that the number of children affected by partial and total school closures has decreased considerably with respect to the last [Updates](#), from 60 million in the previous report to 24 million children, it is important to take into account that 7 countries are on vacation, which corresponds to 21% of the total number of students in the region.

In addition, since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020 until the beginning of February this year, there has been an average of 168 school days without classes. Although the presence of the Omicron variant has caused a delay in the return of face-to-face classes in some schools, as for example in some states of Mexico, most of the countries that are in recess plan to start the new school year between February and March in a face-to-face manner, as is the case of Brazil, Costa Rica, and Panama.

The first report of 2022 (Update 32) presents the latest advances in the process of reopening schools, vaccination of teachers and students, and contains important information on the difference in enrolment between 2019 and 2021 in the 8 countries that already have this information available.

UPDATE HIGHLIGHTS

- Video "Three reasons why schools should stay open". Access the video in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).
- Case study. Brazil: "Mental Health & Psychosocial Support".
- [Two years of school have already been lost. Not one more.](#) Article by the regional director of UNICEF LACRO.



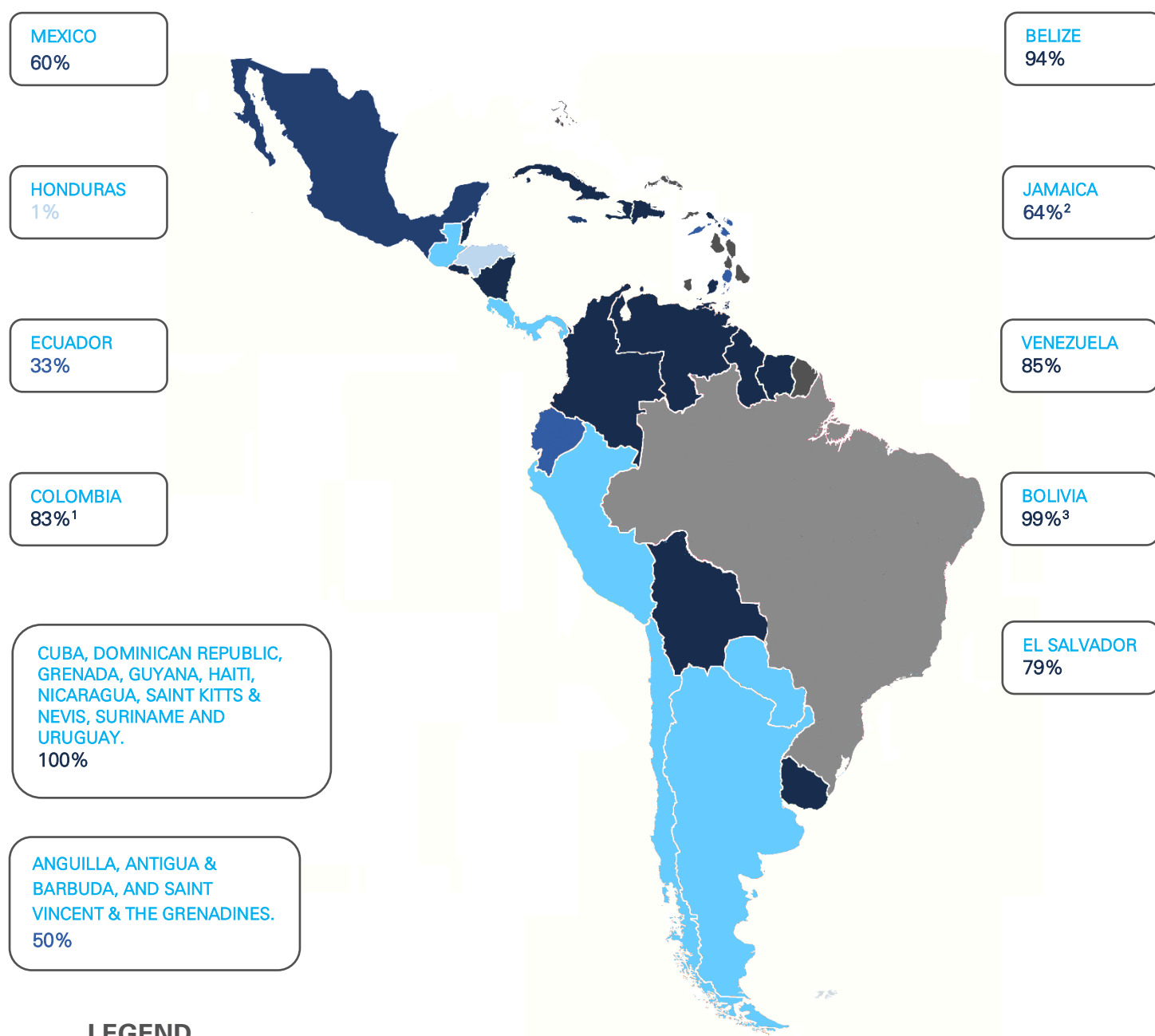
II. REOPENING OF SCHOOLS' MAP

This report uses UNESCO's definition of school closures. Schools are considered:

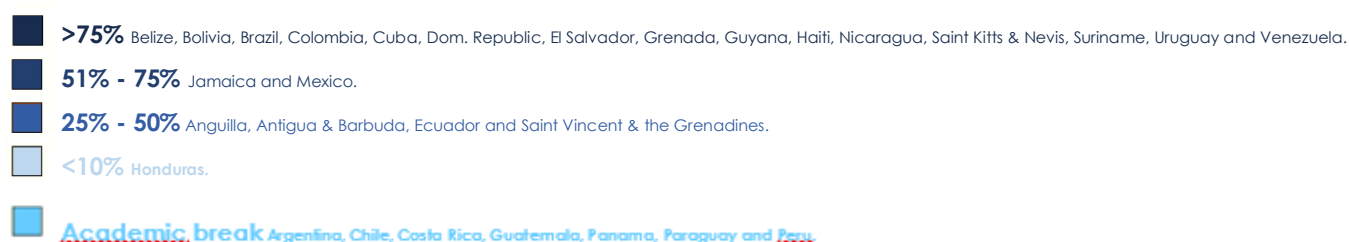
- **"Fully closed"** when the closures affect most or all the schoolchildren enrolled at pre-primary, primary, lower, and upper secondary levels.
- **"Partially closed"** refer to situations in which schools are either closed in some of a country's administrative units, for some grade levels, or are operating with limited capacity.
- **"Fully open"** means that classes are held in-person for all schoolchildren and at all grade levels.



III. PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS BENEFITED BY FACE-TO-FACE CLASSES



LEGEND



¹Information received by the UNICEF Colombia Country Office as of December 31, 2021.

² The percentage 64% refers mainly to students at the primary and secondary school levels.

³ Schools are partially closed. However, information on the total number of children attending face-to-face classes is not yet available, so data provided by the Bolivia Country Office for Update 31 has been used.

Note: The percentages have been calculated based on the total enrolment of students from pre-primary to secondary school and the number of children and adolescents benefiting from face-to-face classes.

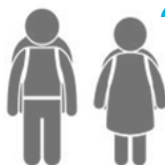
Sources of information: Data obtained from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Institute of Statistics ([Welcome to UIS.Stat](https://www.uis.unesco.org/)), and the information provided by UNICEF COs until early February 2022. In the case of Brazil, the number of children benefiting from the reopening has been calculated based on an estimate of the reopening of schools of the states and municipalities using the state school calendar as a reference. As these are estimates, the country has been distinctively colored. For more information go to: <https://www.consed.org.br/coronavirus>

IV. SITUATION OVERVIEW

This section was prepared based on information received by COs and updated until early February 2022.



7 country with schools **fully closed** (Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Montserrat, Saint Lucia, Trinidad & Tobago, and Turks & Caicos Islands).



24M children affected by schools' closures.⁴

413,745 children affected in countries where schools are fully closed.

24M children affected in countries where schools are partially closed.



9 countries have all their schools **fully open** (Cuba, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Nicaragua, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Suriname, and Uruguay).

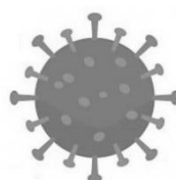


31M

of children in the region are in academic break.



14 countries have their schools **partially closed** (Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, and Venezuela).



An average of **168** school days **without face-to-face classes** between March 2020 and early February, 2022.⁵



7 countries are on **academic recess** (Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay, and Peru).



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



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



23 countries and territories have prioritized students in the **vaccination process**.

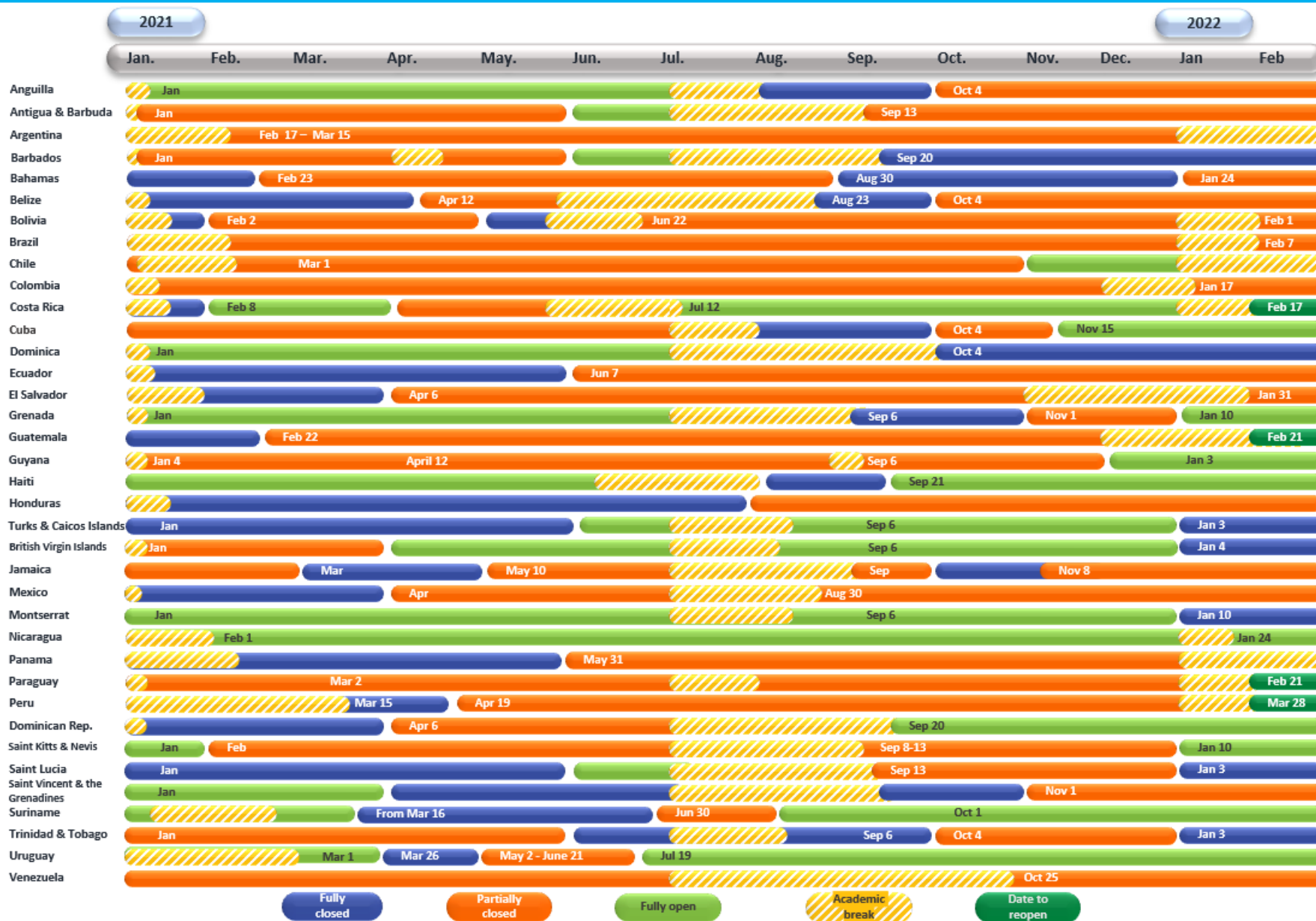
Sources of information:

⁴ 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 early February 2022.

The figure of 24 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 benefiting from the reopening has been calculated based on an estimate of the reopening of schools of the states and municipalities using the state school calendar as a reference. For more information go to: <https://www.consed.org.br/coronavirus>

⁵ Figure calculated using the schools' closures information from the Timeline (page 5). The information of the timeline has been provided by UNICEF COs from March 2020 until early February 2022.

V. 2021-2022 REOPENING OF SCHOOLS' TIMELINE⁶



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

⁶ Data reported by UNICEF COs from January 2021 until early February 2022.

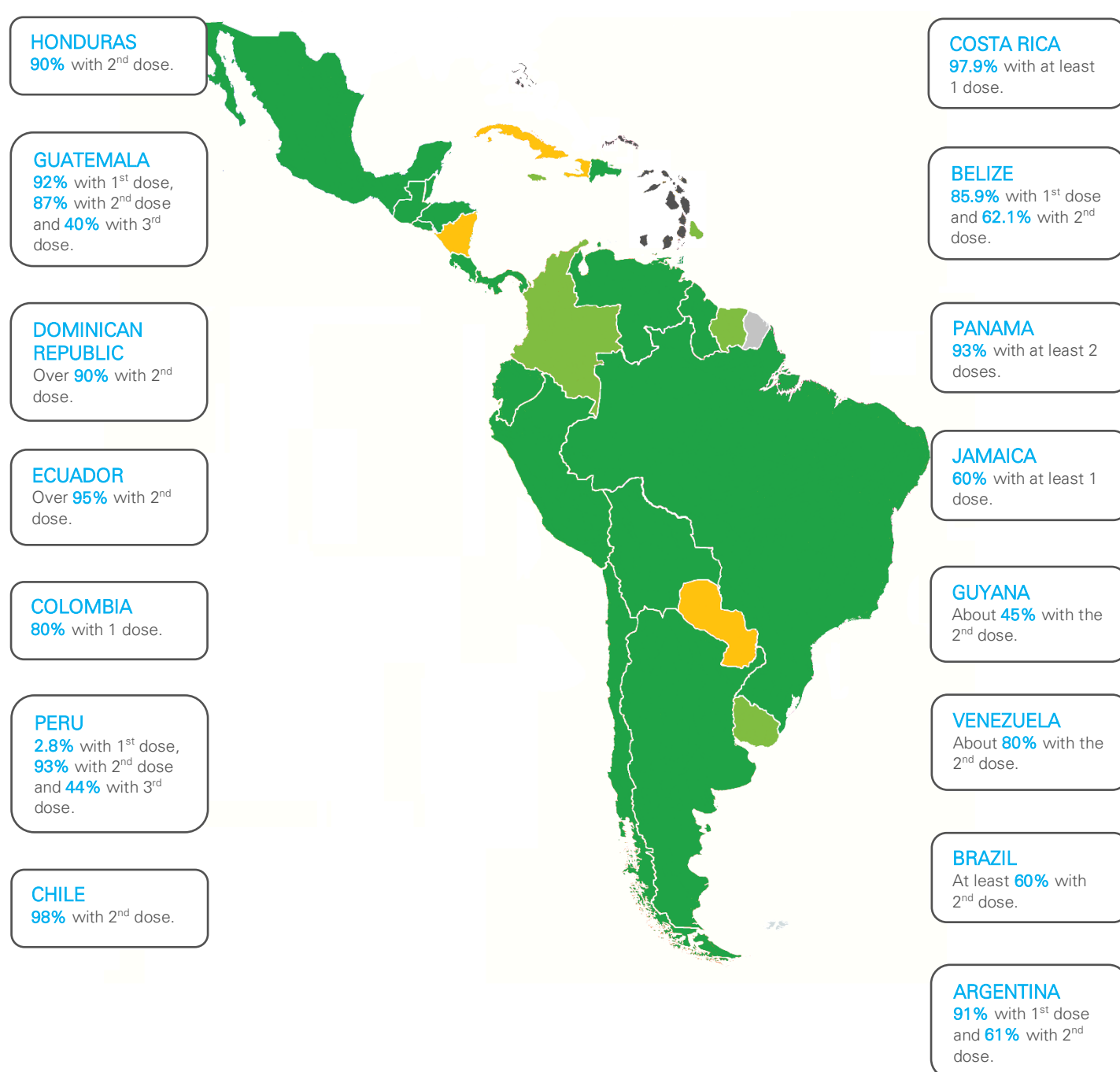
⁷ Access [here](#) the 2020 Reopening of Schools' Timeline.

VI. PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS VACCINATED

The below map provides a mapping of the prioritization of teachers' vaccination in the Latin American and the Caribbean region from April 2021 to the present for the countries and territories that have sent us information.

LEGEND

- 5 countries with teachers vaccinated with the 1st dose
- 16 countries with teachers vaccinated with the 2nd dose
- 4 countries without prioritization of the vaccination
- 12 countries without available data



Note: Vaccination of teachers in Uruguay was prioritized in 2021 with the application of the 1st dose but was not prioritized further.

VII. MAPPING OF THE PRIORITIZATION OF STUDENTS' VACCINATION

The following map shows the prioritization of vaccination of children and adolescents in the Latin American and Caribbean region as of the beginning of November 2021 for the countries and territories that have sent us information.

LEGEND

- **62.16%** of countries have prioritized the vaccination
- **2.70%** of countries have not prioritized the vaccination
- **35.14%** of countries with no data available

CUBA

Between **12** and **18** years old, **96.6%** with 2nd dose.

PANAMA

Between **12** and **18** years old, **62%** with 2nd dose. Beginning of vaccination between **5** and **11** years old.

JAMAICA

Between **12** and **17** years old, **70%** with 1st dose and **32%** with 2nd dose.

COLOMBIA

Between **3** and **11** years old, **45%** with 1st dose and **17%** with 2nd dose.

ECUADOR

Between **5** and **11** years old **59%** with 2nd dose. Between **12** and **17** years old **75%** with 2nd dose.

URUGUAY

Between **5** and **11** years old **20%** with 1st dose. Between **12** and **14** years old **71%** with 2nd dose. Between **15** and **19** years old **85%** with 2nd dose and **15%** with 3rd dose.

COSTA RICA

Between **5** and **11** years old **3.5%** with 1st dose, between **12** and **19** years old **90.2%** with 1st dose, **77.4%** with 2nd dose and **0.1%** with 3rd dose.

PERU

From **12** to **17** years **81.2%** with 1st dose and **67.3%** with 2nd dose.

CHILE

Between **6** and **18** years old **41%** with 1st dose and **23%** with 2nd dose.

ARGENTINA

Between **3** and **11** years old **66.7%** with 1st dose and **43.3%** with 2nd dose. Between **12** and **17** years old **83.8%** with 1st dose and **64.7%** with 2nd dose.

BOLIVIA

Between **12** and **17** years old **41.6%** with 1st dose and **25.6%** with 2nd dose. Between **5** and **11** years old **20.2%** with 1st dose.

Countries\Age range	0-5 years old	6-11 years old	12-18 years old
Brazil	x	x	x
El Salvador		x	x
Dominican Republic	x	x	x
Guatemala			x
Guyana			x
Honduras	x	x	x
Mexico			x
Nicaragua	x	x	x
Paraguay			x
Venezuela	x	x	x

VIII. OVERVIEW OF THE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS BY COUNTRY

ARGENTINA

Currently, all educational centers in the country are closed for the academic break. Before the recess, schools were partially closed offering face-to-face and hybrid education modalities and benefiting 10,802,904 children with onsite classes.

BAHAMAS

The Ministry of Education announced that students have returned to on-site classes on Monday, January 24. All schools started with the hybrid teaching model with biosecurity measures in place to guarantee a safe return to schools⁸.

BELIZE

The academic year started on October 4, 2021. Schools are currently partially closed, although already 94% (568) of all schools in the country were approved for safe reopening. Of the schools that have already been approved, 402 are open for hybrid learning and 166 continue to offer distance learning.

BOLIVIA

The new school year began on February 1, 2022. The inauguration ceremonies of the Educational Management were held simultaneously in the nine departments of the country, with the objective of guaranteeing that the 2,929,557 students enrolled throughout the country have access to their right to education in the 15,911 educational units that reopened their doors⁹.

BRAZIL

On February 7, 2022, seven states resumed classes in face-to-face format. However, because of the increase in COVID-19 cases, some states such as Amazonas and Mato Grosso do Sul have decided to postpone the beginning of the academic year.

CHILE

All educational centers are in academic recess. Prior to the recess, 94% of schools remained fully open offering various learning modalities: face-to-face, distance learning through web platforms, TV, radio, print media and hybrid learning.

COLOMBIA

In December 2021, 83% of the total national school enrolment attended face-to-face classes, equivalent to 8,285,759 students. For 2022, the Ministry of Education has announced the return to face-to-face classes without

capacity restrictions, so it is expected that the more than 70,000 early childhood centers, which serve 1.7 million children, and all official schools will return to face-to-face classes. As of January 24, 63 out of the 96 education secretariats had already resumed face-to-face activities

COSTA RICA

Schools are in academic recess. Full reopening will take place on February 17, 2022, in all 5,369 schools and 1,266 early childhood centers that make up the national education system and the National Child Care and Development Network. On January 3, the Ministry of Education issued Resolution N°03-2022, which aims to re-establish the compulsory nature of face-to-face education for the 2022 school year, seeking to ensure the pedagogical recovery of the educational service while guaranteeing the implementation of health measures and protocols¹⁰.

CUBA

All 10,754 educational centers and 1,040 early childhood centers in the country are fully open, offering face-to-face classes to more than 1,700,000 students.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Schools reopened on October 1, 2021, and currently all educational and early childhood centers are fully open, so all students are benefiting from the school reopening. Face-to-face education is combined with distance education to reduce class sizes. Regarding early childhood centers, 695 are in operation, of which 503 correspond to the family and community-based program, where attendance is twice per week, and 192 correspond to comprehensive care centers. These services benefit 205,772 children.

ECA (Eastern Caribbean Area)

Of the twelve countries, only Grenada and St. Kitts & Nevis have their schools fully open. Trinidad & Tobago, St. Lucia, Turks & Caicos, Montserrat, Dominica, Barbados, and the British Virgin Islands have all their schools totally closed. The rest of the countries keep their schools partially closed.

ECUADOR

Of 16,290 schools, 12,748 are partially closed. Regarding the 1,959 child development centers, 89 are partially closed and 1,870 are totally closed. Currently, 1,427,124 students benefit from face-to-face classes, hybrid, and

⁸ Information extracted from the [official website](#) of the Bahamas' Ministry of Education on Facebook.

⁹ Data obtained from the [official website](#) of the Bolivian Ministry of Education.

¹⁰ Information extracted from the [official website](#) of the Ministry of Education of Costa Rica.

distance education. The Ministry of Education informed that classes will be suspended from January 10 to 14 in order for students and educational personnel to be inoculated¹¹. In addition, the [COVID-19 Protection Stoplight](#) was implemented to address the growing outbreak of infections, and the Ministry prepared a document with [Guidelines for the Safe Return to Classroom Education](#).

EL SALVADOR

The new school year began on January 31, 2022, maintaining the semi-presential, multimodal and gradual modality.

The Ministry of Education informed that school personnel have been trained to apply the Plan "[The happiness of going back to school](#)" (*La alegría de regresar a la escuela* in Spanish) and thus guarantee the safe development of school activities. In addition, it indicates that it is not mandatory for students to have a vaccination card but invites families to vaccinate their children for the beginning of the school year¹².

GUATEMALA

All schools are closed for the academic break. Classes are expected to resume on February 21, 2022. Before the recess, 6,120 schools were totally closed, 21,918 were partially closed and 21,696 used the hybrid mode.

GUYANA

Schools are fully open as of January 3, 2022. All students, from kindergarten (early childhood education from 3 years and 3 months to 5 years and 6 months) to secondary, benefit from face-to-face classes. In the case of kindergarten and primary education, schools with large numbers of students use a shift system to allow for physical distancing. Only seventh grade students continue with distance education, as they have not yet been able to receive the vaccine because they are under 12 years of age.

HAITI

The new academic year started in September 2021. Currently all schools are fully open benefiting around 4 million students.

HONDURAS

Out of a total of 23,000 schools, the semi-presential opening of 131 public and private schools was achieved, benefiting 17,388 students in this modality, and 14,000 students through the educational platform "[Learning Passport](#)". It is expected that schools reopen progressively in March 2022.

JAMAICA

Schools are partially closed. At present, 974 of the country's 983 schools are now open offering face-to-face or hybrid education depending on the context. The reopening process began in phases in January of this year and currently around 64% of students, mostly primary and secondary students, are benefiting from face-to-face classes.

MEXICO

Schools are partially closed. The process of returning to face-to-face classes began on August 30, 2021, and since then schools have been opening gradually. In the context of contagion peaks during the December vacations and the OMICRON variant, several states and schools have decided to postpone the date of the start of face-to-face classes for a few weeks. According to the February 8, 2022, [bulletin](#) of the Ministry of Public Education, 196,655 schools are open, and 17,628,001 students are receiving face-to-face classes.

NICARAGUA

All schools and early childhood centres have been fully open since January 24, when the academic break ended, and the new school year began.

PANAMA

Face-to-face education in the country began as of May 31, 2021, and schools are currently in academic recess; however, through Executive Decree 2077 of December 1, 2021, onsite education has been established for all schools as of March 7, 2022.

PARAGUAY

Schools are currently in academic recess. The new academic year starts on February 21, also including early childhood centers. It is expected that students will be able to resume face-to-face classes.

PERU

The school year ended in December 2021 and schools are currently in academic recess. At the end of December 2021 there were 24,077 schools and educational services open (22% of the total) and 1,313,211 students (16% of the total) were benefiting from the reopening. Schools are expected to reopen on March 28, 2022.

SURINAME

Schools reopened on October 1, 2021, and currently all educational and early childhood centers are fully open, so the totality of students are benefiting from the school reopening. Face-to-face education is combined with distance education to reduce class sizes.

¹¹ Information extracted from the [official website](#) of the Ministry of Education of Ecuador on Facebook.

¹² Information extracted from the [official web page](#) of the Ministry of Education of El Salvador on Facebook.

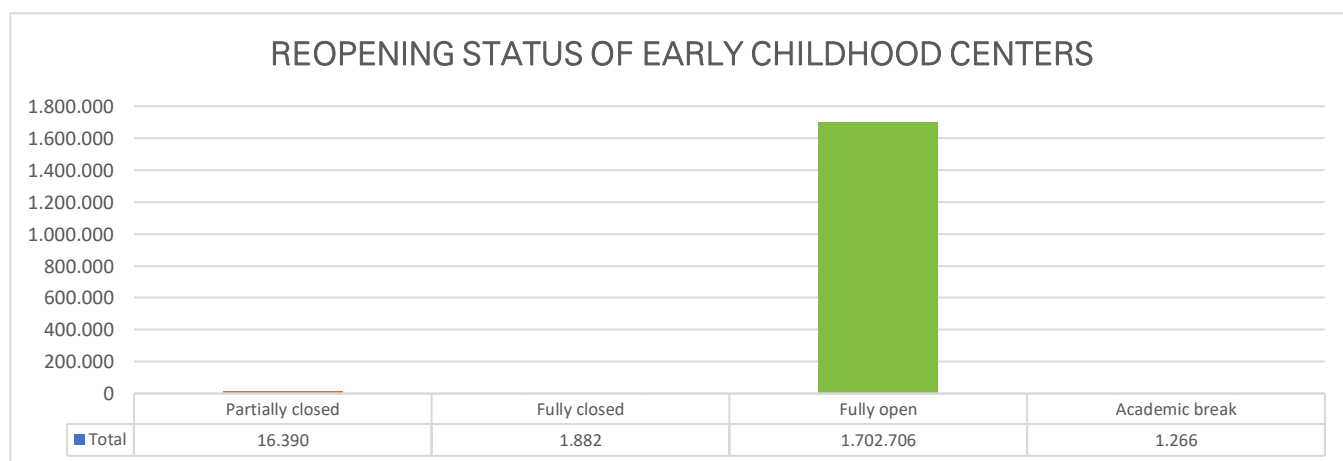
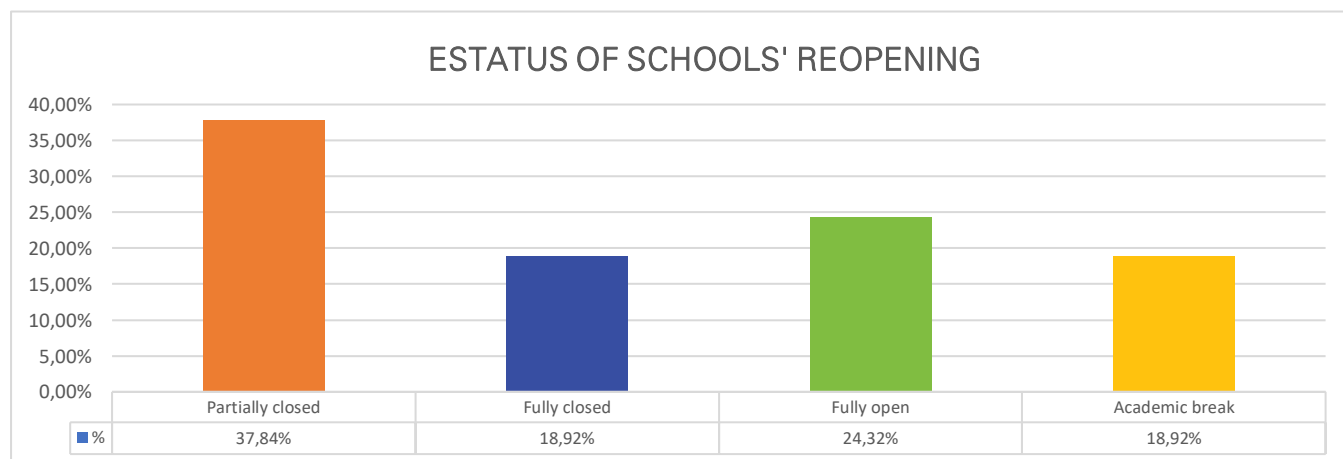
URUGUAY

The reopening started on July 19, 2021, and currently all schools and early childhood centres are open offering face-to-face classes to all students (772,463) from Early Childhood Education to Higher Secondary Education.

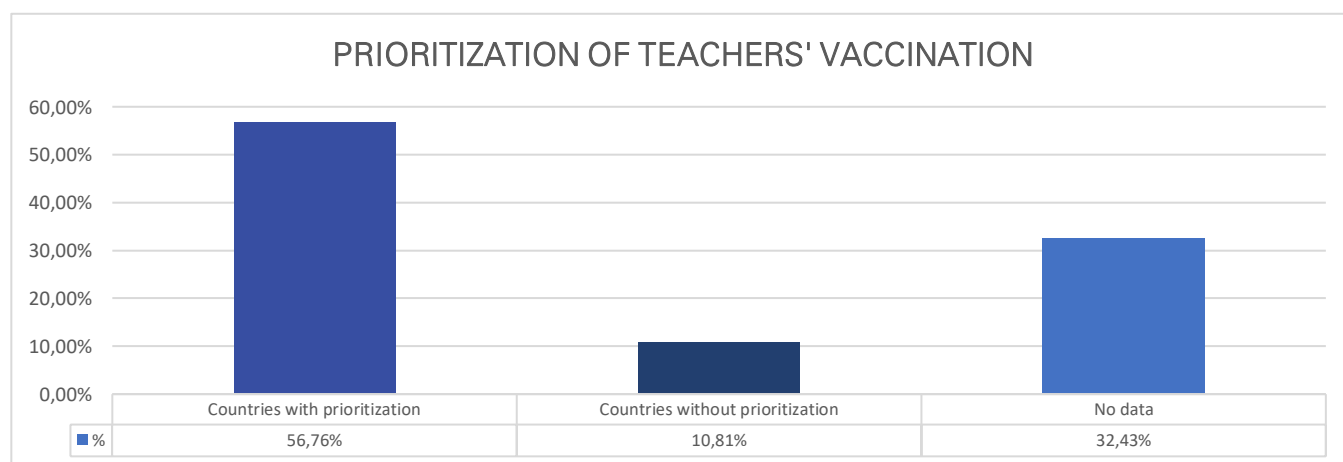
VENEZUELA

Schools are partially closed. The reopening process was divided in two moments: on October 25, 2021, the first pedagogical moment started and on January 10, 2022, the second one did. Currently there are 26,748 partially closed schools benefiting 7,448,606 students, which represents 85% of the enrolment (41% girls and 59% boys).

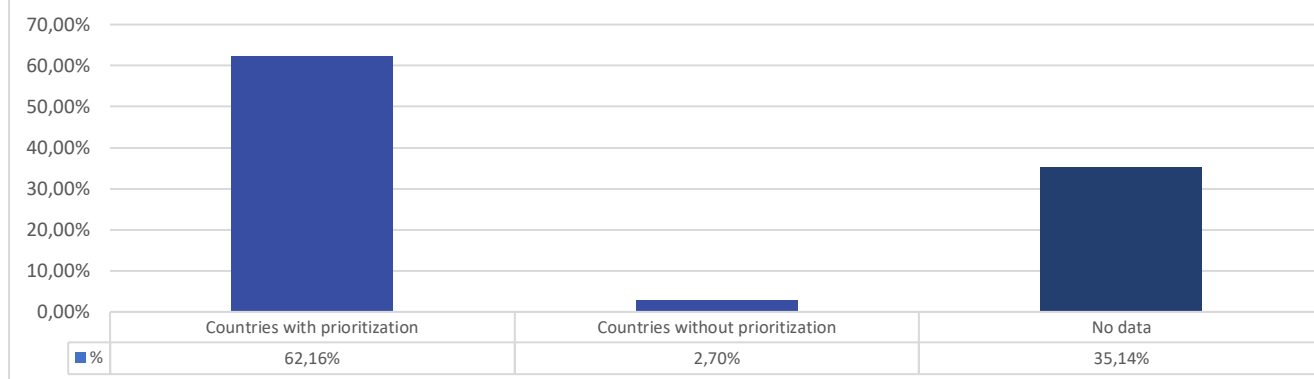
IX. THE SCHOOLS' REOPENING PROCESS IN FIGURES



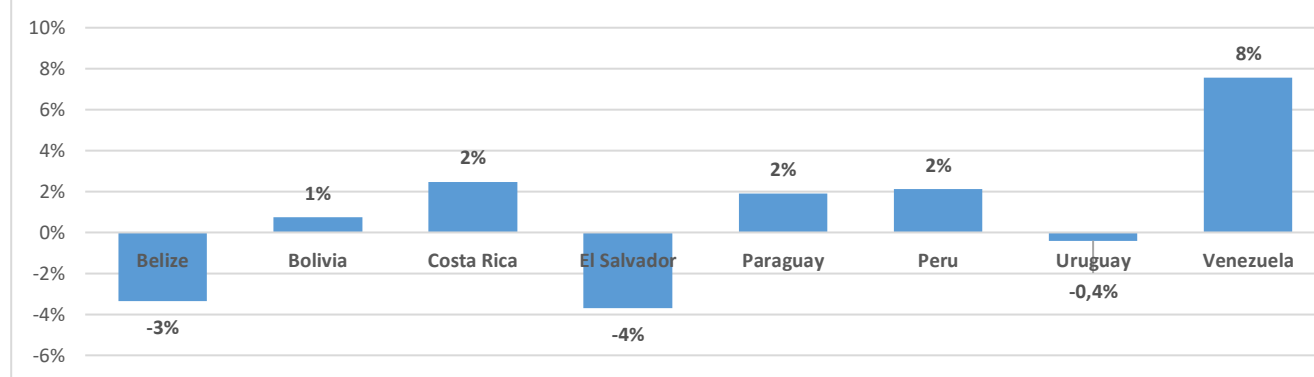
Note: The chart on *early childhood centres* was compiled from information received by 10 UNICEF Country Offices.



PRIORITIZATION OF VACCINATION OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS



ENROLLMENT VARIATION RATE FOR THE PERIOD 2019-2020



Note: The graph on the *variation rate for the period 2019-2020* was done with the information received by 8 UNICEF Country Offices.

X. UNICEF'S REGIONAL SUPPORT

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES (EiE)

- 2nd 3rd & 4th Meetings of Humanitarian Coordination Mechanisms of the Education Sector.** On December 9, 2021, and February 3, 2022, the 3rd and 4th meetings with the national coordination mechanisms organized by the Regional Education Group of Latin America & the Caribbean were held to support the exchange of experiences and capacity building. The third meeting focused on inclusive education and the design and implementation of intersectoral strategies in the Humanitarian Response Plans, while the fourth dealt with the creation of spaces for consultation and meaningful participation of children and adolescents in decision-making. During 2021, we had the regular attendance of 9 mechanisms (Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, Trinidad & Tobago, and Venezuela), and this year two more mechanisms have joined: Costa Rica and Dominican Republic. At least two more meetings are expected to be held in 2022.
- Annual Planning Meeting of the Regional Education Group.** On Tuesday, January 25, the Regional Education Group of Latin America & the Caribbean organized an annual planning meeting with all 18 members of the Group to review and identify priority activities for the 2022 work plan. The plan identified several priorities in the areas of advocacy & governance, promotion of tools & communication, capacity building and strengthening of coordination mechanisms, and mobilization of technical and financial resources for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Emergency Education (EiE) initiatives. Visit the [Humanitarian Response](#) Regional Education Group page for more information about the Group.



INCLUSION

- **Update on the Accessible Digital Textbooks (ADT) regional project:**

- **Nicaragua:** The Nicaragua CO, together with the Ministry of Education and the National University of Nicaragua, has officially launched the ADT project on January 31, 2022. Mrs. Lilliam Herrera, Minister de Education and the Representative of UNICEF, Mr. Antero Almeida de Pina were present and introduced the project. During the next six months, all partners will be developing the first ADT prototype and pilot it in 15 schools across the country, as well as providing trainings on universal design for learning principles in pedagogy. The office of Research *Innocenti* will support data collection and trainings for the pilot. For more information visit [MINED y UNICEF presentan “Libros de textos digitales accesibles” para aprendizaje inclusivo](#).
- **Jamaica:** The Jamaica CO has contracted the services of Book Fusion, a local editor specialized in digital content, to coordinate and support the ministry of education in creating the series of Literacy I, II, III in accessible digital format. Like in Nicaragua, the process of creating one prototype and to validate it with children with and without disabilities in schools will take six months, after then they will produce the entire series. UNICEF is supporting overall implementation and evidence generation, including the training for the technical group and teachers on content adaptation and Universal Design for Learning accessible technology.
- **Part of the Solution I:** UNICEF LACRO continues implementing its collaborative strategy with disability organizations and networks in the region. On December 3rd, we presented “Painting INCLUSION, in a house with many windows” the result of a series of webinars conducted in partnership with the Special Olympics Latin American Network and the artist and activist *Gusti*. The workshops gathered children with and without disabilities and their families from different countries and provided guidance to represent inclusion through art. The work of children was [celebrated](#) by UNICEF Director Jean Gough.
- **Part of the Solution II:** We completed a regional study on bullying and mistreatment of children with disabilities. On November 29 the results of this rapid assessment were shared with children and adolescents

that took part in the assessment and the next steps to respond to the problem were discussed with them. Participating children and adolescents had the opportunity to engage in an exchange with UNICEF Disabilities Advisor, Rosangela Berman Bieler, LACRO Focal point for disability, Cynthia Brizuela, and the UN Special Envoy Ma Soledad Cisternas to explore future collaborative in this area.

- **Inclusive Education roadmap for Panama:** on November 17 UNICEF LACRO participated in a workshop to discuss and finalize the road map to inclusive education that was prepared in support of the Panama CO and MEDUCA. The final document and Declaration include recommendations prepared by local experts with the technical assistance of UNICEF Disability Advisors, including specific measures to be taken in the areas of disability data, standards, good practices, teacher training, and partnerships.

SECONDARY EDUCATION & LEARNING

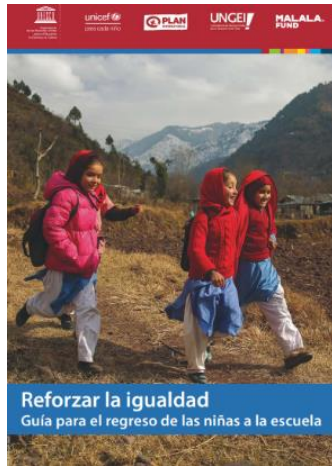
- The [Regional Workshop](#) on “Strengthening Learning Skills within the Framework of the Curriculum in Emergencies” organized by CECC SICA in collaboration with UNICEF LACRO and UNESCO was celebrated online during February 7th-8th, with the objective to provide conceptual and methodological support to countries in the SICA region to face the learning challenges faced in the region.

With the attendance of the members of the Inter-ministerial Technical Team for the Strengthening of Learning Skills (appointed by the Ministries of Education of each SICA country); as well as invited speakers, panelists, experts, representatives and technical teams from CECC SICA, UNICEF, UNESCO, IDB, World Bank and the academia, the participants had the opportunity to share the international experience in strengthening learning skills and agree on the general outlines of a technical proposal to strengthen learning skills in primary and secondary level students in the SICA region, which will be presented to the Council of Ministers to be held in April 2022.

This workshop is an initial exercise of the “Regional Initiative to Strengthen Learning Skills in the Framework of the Curriculum in Emergencies” in the SICA region, which aims to adopt a specific goal, strategy and common actions to prioritize the development of learning skills in literacy and numeracy, as well as commit to the enhancement of autonomous learning tools at all levels of the education system, which have exacerbated as a result of the pandemic.

XI. GLOBAL RESOURCES

- **Strengthening Equality. A Guide for Getting Girls Back to School**, jointly developed by UNESCO, UNICEF, PLAN International, UNGEI & Malala Fund. The COVID-19 pandemic has generated the largest educational disruption in history. In recent months, most governments around the world have temporarily suspended classes in schools and other learning spaces in an attempt to contain the spread of the virus. At the peak of the pandemic in April 2020, these interruptions affected more than 1.5 billion students in 200 countries, or more than 90% of the world's student population, from pre-school to higher education.



The most marginalized, including girls with disabilities, as well as those living in conflict-affected areas, in remote and rural communities, and those in the poorest quintile of the population, are expected to be the most affected by the COVID-19-related school closures, facing further difficulties in accessing their rights to education, health and protection, among others.

- Access [here](#) the Spanish guide.
- Access [here](#) the English guide.
- Access [here](#) the French guide.



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