

MEXICO CASE STUDY | SCHOOL REOPENING PROCESS

[Published on February 15, 2022]

INTRODUCTION



The process of reopening schools began in April 2021 in a gradual manner and following the epidemiological traffic light system established at the state level, based on vaccination progress, among other factors. The first schools to reopen gradually were some rural schools, followed by schools in several states such as Chiapas, Campeche, and Nayarit. However, some states such as Mexico City were forced to close some of their schools again due to the increase of COVID-19 cases in the city. After the academic break, schools partially reopened on August 30, and since then the number of children benefiting from school reopening has advanced rapidly. This document shows in detail the provisional and quantitative evolution of the reopening process in the country in the last months.

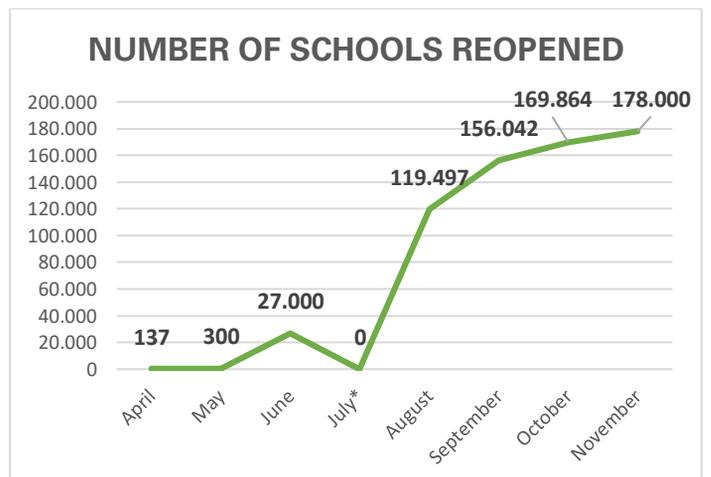
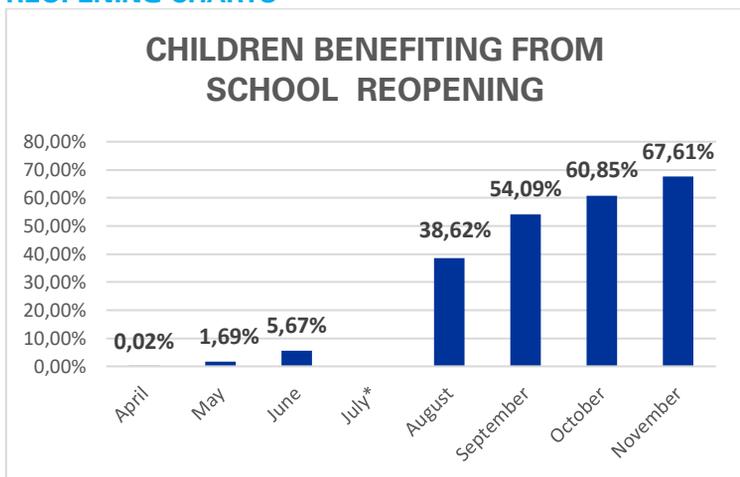
OVERVIEW OF THE SITUATION

- **Total number of students:** 29,582,239¹
- **Children benefited by the reopening:** 67.6%²
- **Total number of schools (primary and secondary level):** 249.795
- **Teaching modality:** Face-to-face, distance & hybrid.
- **Number of teachers and other education sector personnel vaccinated:** 2,564,406

SCHOOL REOPENING TIMELINE



REOPENING CHARTS



Notes: * In the month of July the number of students benefited is not specified because the schools were in academic recess. The number of schools opened in the month of July is zero because the schools were in academic recess.

Source: Data provided by Mexico country office education focal points for the period April - November 2021, based on data published by the Ministry of Public Education (SEP).

¹ This figure includes the number of students in primary and secondary education. Data has been obtained from [statistics](#) of the SEP.

² Figure calculated from the number of students benefited by the reopening provided by the [SEP](#) in its bulletin.

UNICEF ACTIONS

- Support to the SEP for development of distance education programming through television (Aprende en Casa).
- Development of a [dashboard](#) with geospatial information for the Undersecretary of Basic Education that monitors the number of schools opened, enrollment reentry, teaching staff and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure. It is currently collecting information from 112,000 schools.
- Implementation of strategies for the prevention of COVID-19 infection and in support of compliance with school protocols and filters, focusing on proper hand washing habits with the "[Salud en tus Manos](#)" program, that includes a pedagogical package, installation of hand-washing stations and distribution of cleaning materials and hygiene supplies, reaching 479 schools in 5 states and Mexico City, benefiting more than 100,000 students.
- Support for training of health personnel in childcare centers with recommendations for reopening of services for children under 3 years of age.
- Training of educators and teaching staffs from pre-primary to secondary schools in psycho-social and socio-emotional support.
- Development of an emergency curriculum for early education.
- Advocacy work and support for safe return to school in four areas: monitoring of return to school, communication, strengthening of protocols for safe return, recovery of learning and enrollment.
- Support for a formative diagnosis of learning for secondary education, implementation of learning recovery strategies through adaptation of the "Learning Passport", with remedial courses for secondary education with a current capacity to serve 100,000 students and learning camps for 6,000 students from 3rd to 6th grade with "Teaching at the Right Level".

LESSONS LEARNED

- Scarcity of data and diagnosis is an important limitation when i) measuring the scope and impact of distance learning, ii) informing decisions and planning on strategies for recovery of learning and enrollment, and iii) knowing the real progress of school reopening.
- Mexico was one of the countries where schools have remained completely closed for the longest time. In part, this is due to a highly contentious public discussion of the potential health risks of the return to school for children and teachers. In this context, UNICEF's advocacy in favor of reopening was a crucial support to the authorities in ordering the return to face-to-face classes.
- The decision to return to on-site classes was dominated by an evaluation of health risk factors, without giving the necessary weight to risk factors and benefits in terms of student learning and wellbeing. In this sense, inter-sectoral coordination and the role and leadership of educational authorities in these decisions should be strengthened. Likewise, at the time of the on-site return to classes, the support and guidance provided by the education authorities focused mainly on "safe operations", and less on the other key dimensions proposed by the "Global Framework for School Reopening": inclusion, wellbeing and protection, and learning. These dimensions should be made more visible and strengthened.
- The COVID-19 contingency has made visible the gaps that exist in many schools with respect to WASH services and has allowed for strengthening of advocacy and incidence on school infrastructure programs.
- Digital platforms and massive courses have offered an opportunity to reach large numbers of teachers and educators with training, however, there is no information on the impact of MOOCs on teaching practices.

For more information or any questions, please contact:

UNICEF Mexico Chief of Education Astrid Hollander, ahollander@unicef.org