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## UNICEF EDUCATION

### Education Case Study

#### EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

#### Strengthening teacher capacity for formative assessment

27 October 2021

Between 2020 and 2021, students across Europe and Central Asia experienced disrupted learning for an average of [33 weeks](#) due to COVID-19-related closures. Western Balkan countries and Turkey were particularly hard hit, with full and partial closures lasting for 53 weeks in North Macedonia and 49 weeks in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Turkey. Overall, 53.4 million children were impacted by school closures in the region.

UNICEF estimated that during the peak of school closures, [1 in 3 learners worldwide—and even more of the most vulnerable learners—were not reached by digital and broadcast remote learning](#). Regardless of whether learning takes place in person, remotely, or using a hybrid approach, teachers need ways to measure student's individual learning to align learning recovery with all students' needs and strengths.

As part of the LearnIn initiative on digital learning, UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia is developing a package of support for teachers that includes a framework on educator's digital competencies and five sets of teacher professional development modules. Each set comes with a guide for teachers, available online or in print, to enable independent, self-paced learning and a trainers' manual for offering facilitated versions of the courses.

The first set of modules, [Formative Assessment for Quality, Inclusive Digital and Distance Learning during and beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), explores the many purposes, approaches, and tools for formative assessment across a variety of education delivery modalities.

#### RESULTS

- **Inclusion at the heart of the modules:** The teacher professional development modules were developed by UNICEF with inputs

from UNESCO, the Education Endowment Foundation, and the University of Bucharest. The modules have a particular focus on inclusion, drawing on principles of Universal Design for Learning, and aim to improve not only teachers' assessment but also learners' self-assessment to support self-regulated learning.

- **Flipped instruction to enable interactive learning:** A trainers' manual has been developed to enable the delivery of a facilitated version of the course. It employs a flipped classroom approach, in which teachers complete readings on their own. Group sessions then focus on applied work, giving teachers the opportunity to engage more deeply with the content and with each other.
- **Leveraging the Learning Passport:** The development of the course was linked with the rollout of the Learning Passport, the UNICEF-supported digital learning platform. Housing the modules on the Learning Passport makes the course available to a much broader audience of teachers across the entire region at no additional cost.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- **Technology must be harnessed to support rather than to replace quality, inclusive pedagogy.** The regional approach to digital learning integrates technology with the instructional core of schools and builds on the depth of knowledge and rich experiences that teachers already possess. The package for teachers harnesses technology to support learner-centred formative assessment integrated

with the daily interactions between teachers and students, no matter how these take place.

- **For transformative results, a systems approach to formative assessment is needed.** Throughout the pandemic, teachers were often tasked with assessing students' learning but were provided little practical support. Transformational change requires more than teacher training. It requires alignment with a learner-centred vision at all levels of the system, including in pre- and in-service teacher training.
- **Innovation can be as simple as using existing tools in new ways.** UNICEF's existing experience with Articulate 360 software for authoring digital learning content was combined with its ongoing work on Learning Passport to provide access to quality content to teachers across the region. Moreover, use of Learning Passport addresses multiple challenges in traditional teacher professional development, from the cost of attending in-person workshops to the inadequate support provided by episodic training.

## NEXT STEPS

In late 2021, UNICEF, with generous funding from the European Union, will begin training teacher trainers in the Western Balkans (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro and North Macedonia) on formative assessment in distance, digital and hybrid settings. Data on impact will be used to inform scale-up across the region. As well, the UNICEF Regional Office is exploring how the Learning Passport can be used to provide digital communities of practice for teachers for peer-to-peer support and mentoring.

**Cost effectiveness:** With valuable resources from the European Union, UNICEF will invest US\$5.9 million between 2021 and 2022 to ensure continuity of core social services in six countries in the Western Balkans and Turkey to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. Approximately US\$600,000 supports regional-level education activities, of which an estimated US\$83,000 is for the development of the online and offline teacher professional development. While the initial package aims to support teacher trainers in four countries to reach 5 per cent of their teacher cadre, the modules will also be available through the Learning Passport at no additional cost to any country in the region—and beyond.

For more information, please contact:

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