On average, schools in Eastern Europe and Central Asia have been fully closed for 14 weeks, as of 28 February 2022, according to the UNESCO Global Monitoring of School Closures. By the end of February 2022, about a fifth of countries in the region saw durations of full school closures beyond the global average of 20 weeks. The total duration of school closures (fully closed and partially closed) ranges from 0 weeks in Belarus to 54 weeks in North Macedonia. Schoolchildren in the region have lost 50 billion hours of in-person learning.

Pre-COVID, and among countries with available data, the proportion of children who can read a simple text ranged from 36 per cent in Kyrgyzstan to 98 per cent in Kazakhstan. A growing body of evidence shows substantial losses and worsening inequalities in learning outcomes as a result of COVID-related school closures. Under a pessimistic scenario, students in Europe and Central Asia could lose an estimated 1 learning-adjusted year of schooling. In Krasnoyarsk, Russia, students in Grade 6 lost the equivalent of 3-4 months of learning in language, while students in Grade 8 lost the equivalent of 1.5 years in science literacy. School closures in the region have long-term implications for its learners: current learners in Europe and Central Asia could stand to lose over 4 trillion dollars in future earnings.

Source: UNICEF calculation based on UNESCO Global Monitoring of School Closures, UNICEF MICS Foundational Learning Skills Module and UNESCO and World Bank Learning Poverty Index. “Can read a simple text” refers to “one minus learning poverty rate”, reflecting late-primary level of reading; countries marked with * refer to the foundational reading skill rate, reflecting early-grade level of reading (for countries without learning poverty data).
REACH EVERY CHILD AND RETAIN THEM IN SCHOOL.

Is information available on children who have returned to school? (N = 20 countries)

- Yes
- No
- Don’t know
- Schools are still fully closed

16 countries have nationwide data

In North Macedonia, schools report the number of students attending school online or in-person through a daily monitoring system. To increase enrolment and retention, Turkey provides refugee and vulnerable learners with tailored information on the Accelerated Learning Programme and Turkish Language Courses, in addition to cash transfers.

ASSESS LEARNING LEVELS.

In Kyrgyzstan, USAID targets Grades 1–4 through the Early Grade Reading Assessment and Early Grade Mathematics Assessment, while UNICEF targets Grades 5 and 6 to improve foundational learning literacy and numeracy skills as part of learning recovery.

Is your country implementing remediation programmes to address learning loss? (N = 20 countries)

- Yes
- None (e.g., schools reopened as they were/are still closed)

3 countries have a nationwide systematic plan to measure learning when children return

PRIORITIZE TEACHING THE FUNDAMENTALS, INCREASE CATCH-UP LEARNING AND PROGRESS BEYOND WHAT WAS LOST.

Among countries with remediation programmes, which measures are being implemented and at what scale? (N = 9 countries)

- Abbreviated/ prioritized curriculum
- Support for teachers to adapt teaching to students’ learning levels
- Increased instruction time
- Individualized self-learning programmes
- Tutoring and coaching schemes
- Accelerated learning programmes
- Catch-up programmes for dropouts

In Romania, a peer e-learning platform was developed by the National Council of Students with UNICEF support. In Serbia, education technology libraries were established in three refugee and migrant centers to provide learning continuity. Uzbekistan developed individualized learning remedial and catch-up programmes, with a focus on grouping students according to their learning levels.

Note: Data in graphs are based on UNICEF’s Pulse Survey administered through UNICEF country offices and UNICEF National Committees between 3–11 March 2022. Unless hyperlinked, information on country examples is based on qualitative responses from the same survey. Caution is advised in generalizing the results represented in the figure on the implementation and scale of remediation measures, as only a limited number of countries (those who responded to the survey and reported having remediation programmes) responded to this question.

DEVELOP PSYCHOSOCIAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING SO EVERY CHILD IS READY TO LEARN.

In Turkey, an MHPSS programme trained school counselors and teachers to work with students, teachers and families. In North Macedonia, a nationwide programme is being developed to strengthen MHPSS capacities among school support staff.

Have any additional measures been taken for improving student well-being in schools? (N = 20 countries)

- Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)
- School nutrition
- Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS)

Note: Significance not tested.