On average, schools in the West and Central Africa region have been fully closed for 15 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 (5 of 24 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 13 weeks in Côte d’Ivoire to 62 weeks in Ghana. Schoolchildren in the region have lost nearly 100 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 4 per cent in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to 70 per cent in Gabon. 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 Sub-Saharan Africa could lose an estimated 0.6 learning-adjusted years of schooling. In Ghana, food-insecure children, children of low socioeconomic status, and children enrolled in public schools before the pandemic scored significantly lower than their peers in literacy and numeracy assessments by 0.2-0.3 standard deviations. School closures in the region have long-term implications for its learners: current learners in Sub-Saharan Africa could stand to lose half a trillion dollars in future earnings.
IS INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON CHILDREN WHO HAVE RETURNED TO SCHOOL? (N = 19 COUNTRIES)

- Yes 4
- No 14
- Don't know
- Schools are still fully closed 8 countries have nationwide data

To encourage re-enrolment, Burkina Faso offers scholarships, learning supplies and meals to vulnerable students, while Ghana provides flexible skills development opportunities for girls, including pregnant and adolescent mothers. In Nigeria, parent- and volunteer-led community learning hubs offer non-formal and bridging programmes designed to bring students back to school.

ASSESS LEARNING LEVELS.

Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire and Senegal participated in the COVID-19: Monitoring the Impacts on Learning Outcomes (MILO), which aims to provide information on the impact of the pandemic on learning outcomes in six countries in Africa.

IS YOUR COUNTRY IMPLEMENTING REMEDIATION PROGRAMMES TO ADDRESS LEARNING LOSS? (N = 19 COUNTRIES)

- Yes 5
- None (e.g., schools reopened as they were/are still closed) 14

Among countries with remediation programmes, which measures are being implemented and at what scale? (N = 14 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

Niger launched a nationwide programme supporting teachers, as well as mentoring programmes for adolescent girls. The Congo conducted learning remediation at school reopening in 2020, and will provide tutoring and coaching schemes for students with low performance in 2022.

Have any additional measures been taken for improving student well-being in schools? (N = 19 COUNTRIES)

- Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) 12
- School nutrition 1
- Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) 2

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.

After reopening schools, the Democratic Republic of the Congo trained teachers on providing psychosocial support in the classroom, and on gender-based violence and safety in the context of COVID-19. To prevent the spread of COVID-19, some countries (e.g., Benin, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania) have distributed hygiene kits to students.