% of children who can read a simple text

**SOUTH ASIA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>% of Children Can Read A Simple Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>39%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jammu and Kashmir</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**GLOBAL AVERAGE**

- **20** WEEKS FULLY CLOSED
- **51%** OF CHILDREN CAN READ A SIMPLE TEXT

**REGIONAL AVERAGE**

- **35** WEEKS FULLY CLOSED
- **41%** OF CHILDREN CAN READ A SIMPLE TEXT (IN 6 COUNTRIES WITH DATA)

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).

Note: This map does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. The dotted line between Jammu and Kashmir represents approximately the Line of Control agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been finalized by the Parties.

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On average, schools in the South Asia region have been fully closed for 35 weeks, as of 28 February 2022, according to the UNESCO Global Monitoring of School Closures. By the end of February 2022, six out of eight 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 22 weeks in the Maldives to 95 weeks in Nepal. Schoolchildren in the region have lost near 700 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 7 per cent in Afghanistan to 85 per cent in Sri Lanka. A growing body of evidence shows substantial losses and worsening inequalities in learning outcomes as a result of COVID-related school closures. In rural Karnataka, India, the share of Grade 3 students in government schools who were able to perform simple subtraction fell from 24 per cent in 2018 to 16 per cent in 2020; across grades, learning losses were larger for students in Grades 3 and 5 than in Grade 7. In rural Pakistan, declines were observed in the share of students in Grades 1-5 who were able to read in Urdu (from 24 per cent in 2019 to 22 per cent in 2021) and to solve 2-digit sums (from 20 per cent in 2019 to 16 per cent in 2021). In Bangladesh, adolescent girls’ literacy and numeracy scores dropped by 6 per cent, and learning losses among the poorest 40 per cent of girls was three times greater than their richer peers. School closures in the region have long-term implications for its learners: current learners in South Asia could stand to lose near 1 trillion dollars in future earnings.
**RESULTS FROM UNICEF’S PULSE SURVEY (MARCH 2022) ON MEASURES FOR LEARNING RECOVERY**

### Reach every child and Retain them in school.

**Is information available on children who have returned to school? (N = 7 countries)**

- Yes: 2 countries have nationwide data
- No: 3 countries
- Don’t know: 4 countries
- Schools are still fully closed: 5 countries

In **Pakistan**, information on student enrolment, including disaggregation by gender, is collected through the National Education Management Information System. In **Bangladesh**, data is collected at the school level, shared at the sub-national level, and is compiled and sent to the national level.

### Assess learning levels.

In **Gujarat, India**, formative assessments and data analysis helped customize learning materials to students’ learning levels. In **Sri Lanka**, results from diagnostic assessments informed curriculum adaptation and a blended approach of classroom- and home-based remedial activities.

### Prioritize teaching the fundamentals. Increase catch-up learning and progress beyond what was lost.

In **Nepal**, local governments were given flexibility to design learning programmes that meet their specific needs. In **India**, shared states are designing state-specific learning recovery programmes.

#### Among countries with remediation programmes, which measures are being implemented and at what scale? (N = 5 countries)

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

### Develop psychosocial health and well-being so every child is ready to learn.

In **Bangladesh**, head teachers of primary schools were provided with a minimal grant to sanitize schools, a protocol reinforced by nationwide campaigns. In **Nepal**, a psychosocial training manual was developed for students and teachers.

#### Have any additional measures been taken for improving student well-being in schools? (N = 7 countries)

- Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH): Significant additional measures
- School nutrition: Small-scale increase in measures
- Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS): Significant additional measures

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.