

# Europe and Central Asia

Results from the 4th Survey on National Education Responses to COVID-19 School Closures and the Global Education Recovery Tracker

March 2023

This brief presents regional findings from the 4<sup>th</sup> round of the Survey on National Education Responses to COVID-19 School Closures ('joint survey'), administered between April to July 2022, and the Global Education Recovery Tracker ('GERT survey'), administered between May to July 2022. It examines how countries in the region have progressed in recovering and accelerating learning through the five key policy actions in the [RAPID framework](#). These findings are a follow-up to the 1<sup>st</sup> round of RAPID data collected in March 2022, available [here](#).

Caution is advised in generalizing the results, as only a limited number of countries in the region are covered by the survey responses.

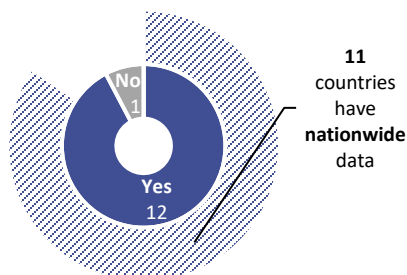


## REACH every child and keep them in school.

Reaching every child is the common denominator of education recovery. Ensuring that children return to school is essential not only for education but also to address social challenges such as early marriage, child labour and mental health.

**Is information available to policymakers on the number of children who have returned to school after schools have reopened?**

(n=13 countries)

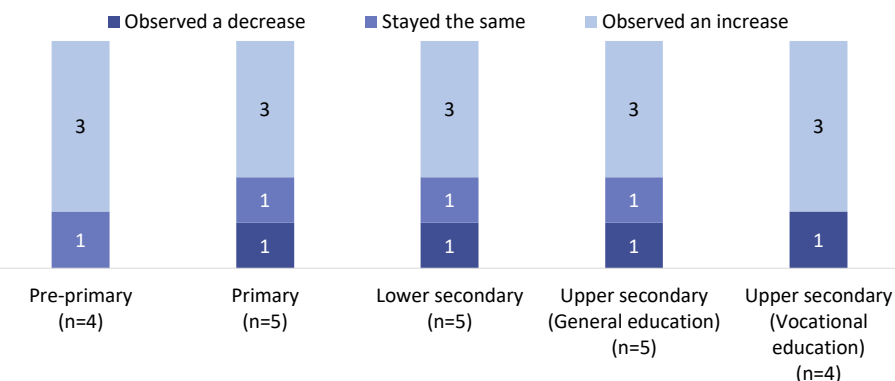


Source: GERT.

Of the 12 countries collecting information on the number of children who have returned to school, 10 countries can disaggregate the data by location (urban vs. rural) and 11 countries by gender. GERT data show that 9 of 19 countries are using Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) data at school level to monitor student return. Based on the joint survey, to encourage the return to school, automatic re-enrolment was implemented at the pre-primary level in 1 of 3 countries and at the primary and secondary levels in 3 of 4 countries.

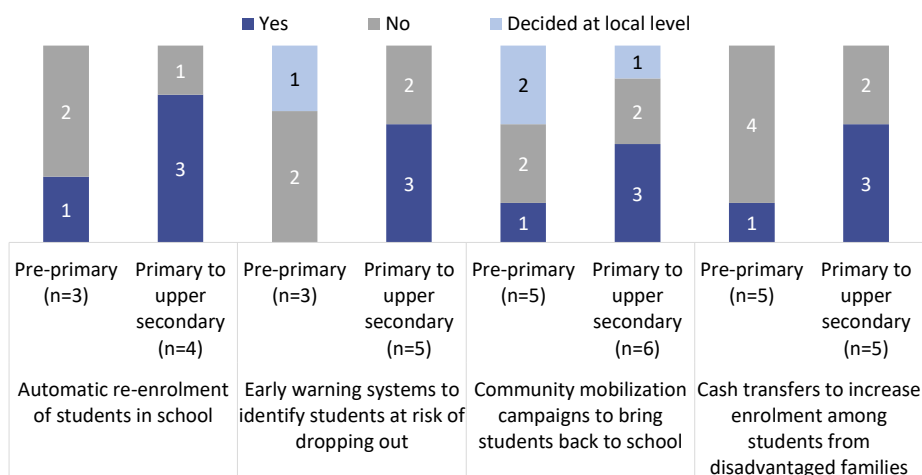
The re-enrolment challenge will likely become apparent in the medium term, as students who fall behind eventually do leave school. Therefore, countries must undertake preventive and targeted efforts now to reach and keep all children in school.

**Have you observed, from your database, an increase (when schools were fully open) in the number of student absences over the three school years covered by the pandemic?**



Source: 4<sup>th</sup> round of joint survey.

**Has your country implemented the following policy measures at a national level due to the COVID-19 pandemic in the school year 2021/2022 (or 2022)?**



Source: 4<sup>th</sup> round of joint survey.

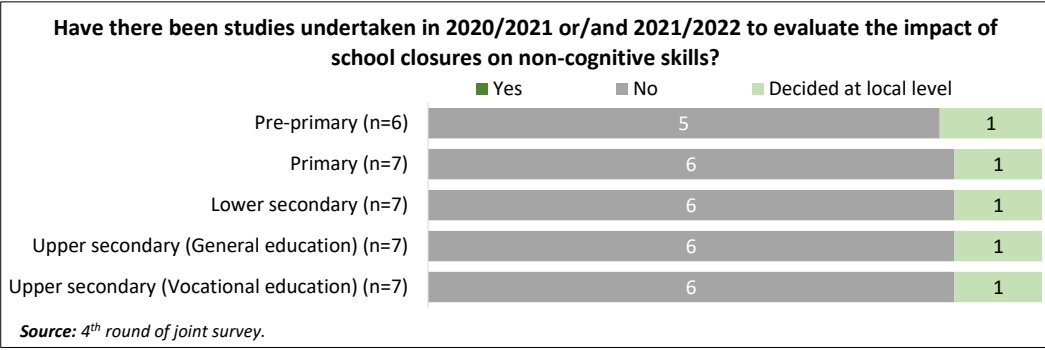
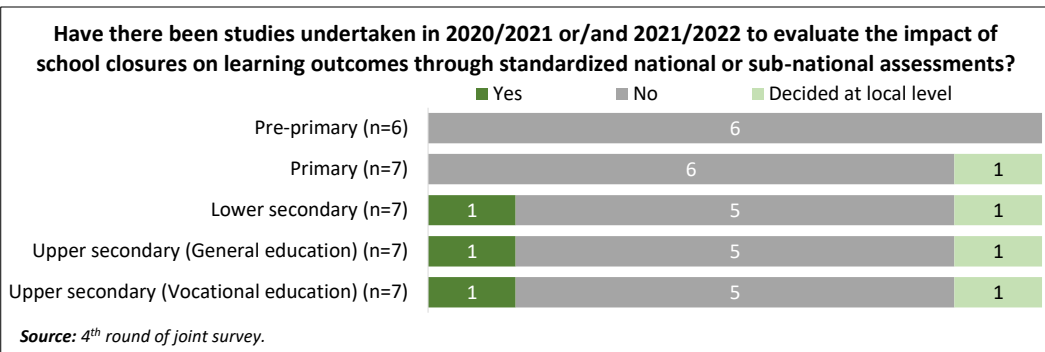
## ASSESS learning levels regularly.

Understanding children’s current learning levels, through both classroom- and system-level assessments, allows teachers and policymakers to make informed decisions about instructional approaches and other policy decisions needed to promote learning recovery.

In the GERT, 11 of 15 countries reported that data has been collected since March 2020 to measure learning outcomes. Of these countries, 5 countries can disaggregate the data by gender and 4 countries by age.

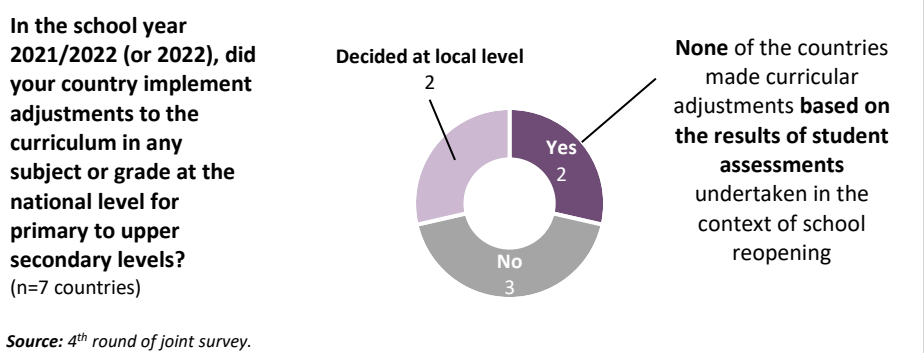
In the joint survey, none of the 7 countries with valid responses reported that studies have been undertaken to evaluate the impact of school closures on learning outcomes at the primary level.

While the main priority for many countries remains assessing student learning outcomes, it is equally important to measure non-cognitive or social-emotional skills. In the joint survey, none of the countries with valid responses reported that studies have been undertaken to evaluate the impact of the pandemic on non-cognitive skills.



## PRIORITIZE teaching the fundamentals.

COVID-related education disruptions have pushed students behind their grade-appropriate learning levels. To effectively recover learning, countries will need to adjust the curriculum across and within subjects, as well as adjust teaching plans to prioritize foundational skills.



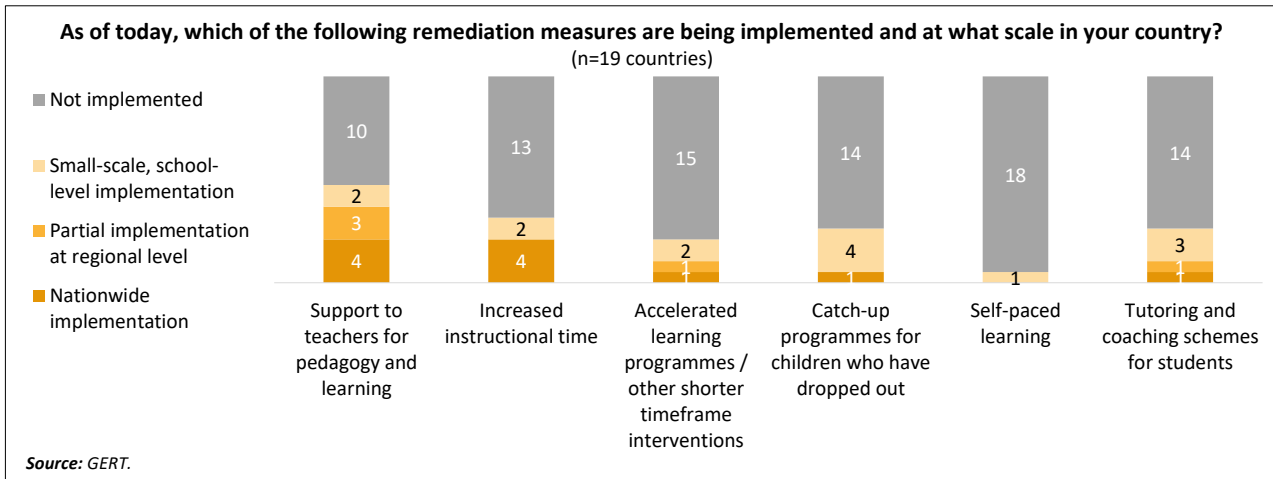
While none of the 6 countries with valid responses reported implementing curricular adjustments at the pre-primary level in the school year 2021/2022, 2 of 7 countries reported implementing the same at the primary to upper secondary levels.

Neither of the 2 countries implementing curricular adjustments at the primary to upper secondary levels made such adjustments based on the results of student assessments.

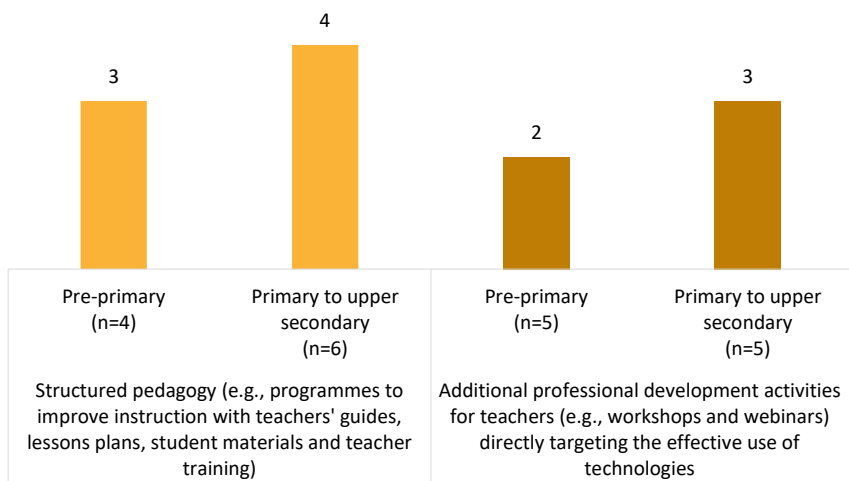
## INCREASE the efficiency of instruction, including through catch-up learning.

To recover from learning losses, school systems must implement measures that increase the amount of learning within classrooms through more effective teaching practices and learner-focused recovery strategies, as well as ensure that adequate support is provided to teachers.

A variety of measures were implemented to increase the efficiency of instruction. In the GERT, 4 of 19 countries reported implementing nationwide measures to increase instructional time.

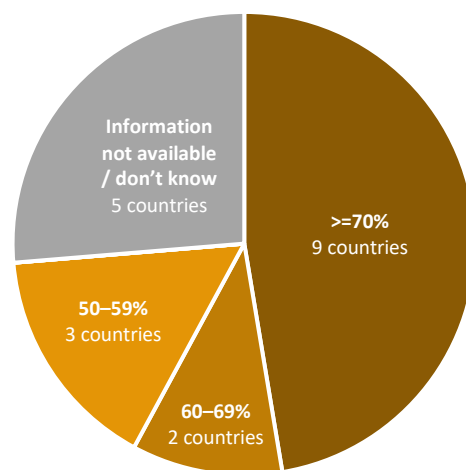


**Number of countries that reported implementing national-level policy measures to support teachers in the school year 2021/2022 (or 2022)**



Source: 4<sup>th</sup> round of joint survey.

**What percentage of the teacher population is vaccinated? (n=19 countries)**



Source: GERT.

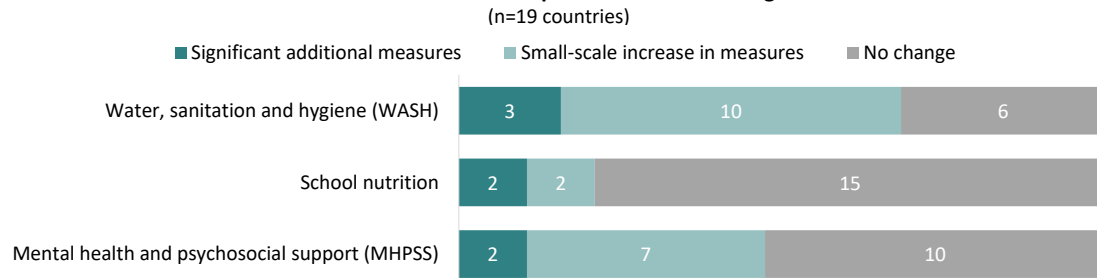
The evidence is overwhelming that structured pedagogy programmes – including supporting teachers with teachers’ guides and structured lesson plans – leads to improved learning outcomes. In the joint survey, 4 of 6 countries reported implementing measures on structured pedagogy at the primary to upper secondary levels in the school year 2021/2022.

Data from the joint survey also show that primary- and secondary-level teachers were further supported with professional development activities on the effective use of technologies in 3 of 5 countries. Additionally, in the GERT, 14 of 19 countries reported that at least 50 per cent of their teacher population is vaccinated, which will help manage teacher health and stress.

**DEVELOP psychosocial health and wellbeing.**

The impact of COVID-related school closures reaches far beyond lost learning, affecting children’s mental health and psychosocial wellbeing, physical health and nutrition. To support whole-child development, countries must ensure children have access to essential services in school.

**Have any additional measures been taken (compared to existing levels) for improving student wellbeing in schools after schools have reopened for the following facilities? (n=19 countries)**



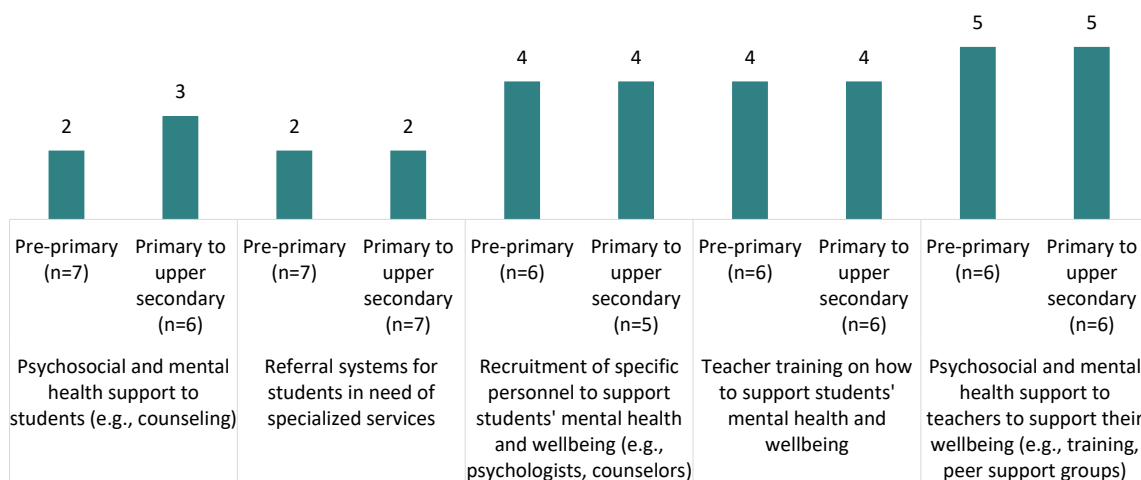
Source: GERT.

Among 19 respondent countries in the GERT, 3 countries reported taking significant additional measures for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, 2 countries reported the same for school nutrition services, and 2 countries for mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services.

Data from the joint survey show that in the school year 2021/2022, psychosocial and mental health support was provided to primary- and secondary-level students in 3 of 6 countries and to teachers in 5 of 6 countries.


Teacher training on how to support students’ mental health and wellbeing was provided to primary- and secondary-level teachers in 4 of 6 countries.


**Number of countries that reported implementing national-level policy measures related to mental health and psychosocial support in the school year 2021/2022 (or 2022)**




Source: 4<sup>th</sup> round of joint survey.

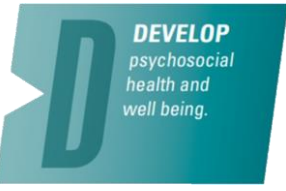
## Implementing the RAPID Framework: UNICEF examples in Europe and Central Asia

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- UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO) continues supporting year-long regional back-to-school/learning campaigns to support the education and learning of Ukrainian children in alignment with a [commitment to action on education in crisis situations](#) that was adopted during the Transformation Education Summit in 2022.
  - UNICEF ECARO, UNESCO and UNHCR launched the mapping of data and surveys on the education and learning of Ukrainian refugee children to identify children who are still out of school and learning and to address data gaps that are critical for designing and implementing interventions.
  - Through the UNICEF ECARO internal coordination mechanism in which education officers in Ukraine and refugee-hosting countries participate, regular updates are shared on the educational situations of refugee/displaced children and key interventions being planned and implemented to facilitate access to formal and non-formal education.
  - In [Türkiye](#), UNICEF has supported the Ministry of National Education's goal of integrating all school-aged Syrian refugees into the national education system, including through a [National Conditional Cash Transfer for Education \(CCTE\)](#) programme. By February 2021, 682,882 learners (335,978 girls) received conditional cash transfers to access education opportunities.

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- To help strengthen teacher capacity for formative assessment, UNICEF [ECARO](#) has developed a set of modules, '[Formative Assessment for Quality, Inclusive Digital and Distance Learning during and beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic](#),' which explores the many purposes, approaches and tools for formative assessment across a variety of education delivery modalities. The set is the first of five sets of teacher professional development modules, as part of a package of support for teachers. 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.

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- UNICEF [Ukraine](#) has provided 556 laptops to teachers to support their students with remote learning while all schools remain closed. Equipping teachers with teaching and learning materials, including hardware, supports their effectiveness in teaching the fundamentals and education recovery.
  - In [Türkiye](#), the [Accelerated Learning Programme](#) is a certified second chance learning opportunity for Syrian and other forcibly displaced non-Turkish speaking out-of-school children and adolescents. It prioritizes literacy and numeracy skills as the foundation for learning, with instructors receiving in-service training on topics such as Teaching Turkish as a Foreign Language.
  - One week after pre-school closures, UNICEF [North Macedonia](#) and the Ministry of Education and joined efforts to create the [Eduino platform](#), which offers open and free [4,062 video](#) lessons and over 400 games for parents to stimulate their child's development at home. A significant portion of these resources focuses on offering [distance learning modalities](#) for pre-primary education, including multiple exercises and [emotional well-being activities](#).

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- UNICEF ECARO supported the participation of Ukrainian children in summer learning programmes to catch up and prepare for the start of the new school year.
  - UNICEF [Tajikistan](#) has supported the digital learning platform [Learning Passport](#) (known as [Magic Box](#) in Tajikistan), which is expected to reach 890,000 children (45 per cent girls) ages 3–6 in the 2022–2023 academic year. The country office has also supported the training of 10,000 teachers in digital teaching practices, which includes scaling up the digital learning platform Omuzgor Mobile to augment blended learning approaches as well as the continuous professional development of teachers.

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- Since 2012, UNICEF has collaborated with the Government of [Kazakhstan](#) to develop and implement the [Adolescent Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Programme](#), an intersectoral, school-based response that aims to strengthen the national education and health systems' ability to respond to adolescents' mental health and psychosocial needs. During the pandemic, UNICEF, with the support of USAID, developed a joint action plan with the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Healthcare to ensure continued access to psychological counselling services during the pandemic and meet the emerging capacity-building needs of the school counsellors.