

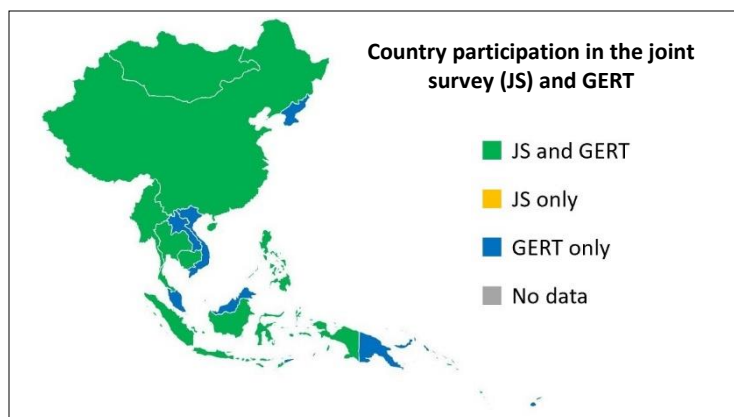
# East Asia and Pacific

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'), 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.

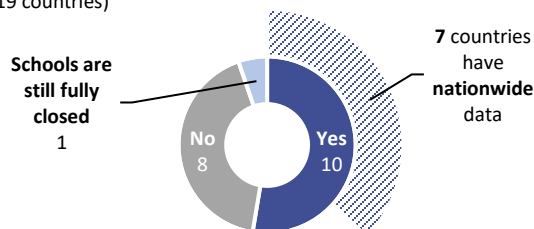


## REACH every child and keep them in school.

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=19 countries)

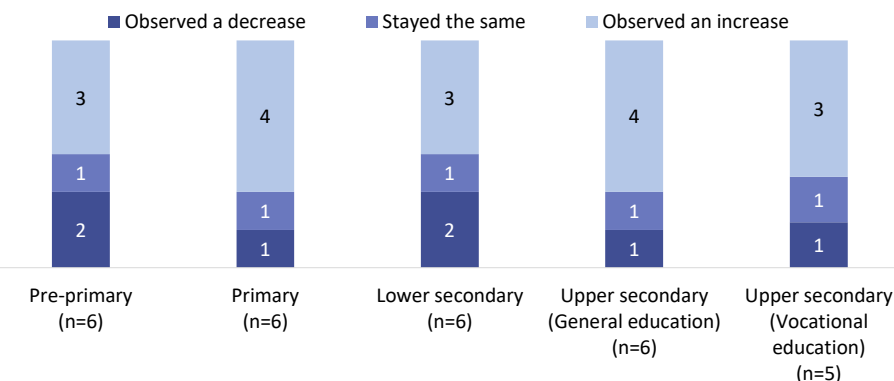


Source: GERT.

Of the 10 countries collecting information on the number of children who have returned to school, 5 countries can disaggregate the data by location (urban vs. rural) and 6 countries by gender. GERT data show that 8 of 23 countries are using Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) data at school level to monitor student return. Based on the joint survey, the most common national-level policy measures implemented to encourage the return to school included automatic re-enrolment and cash transfers.

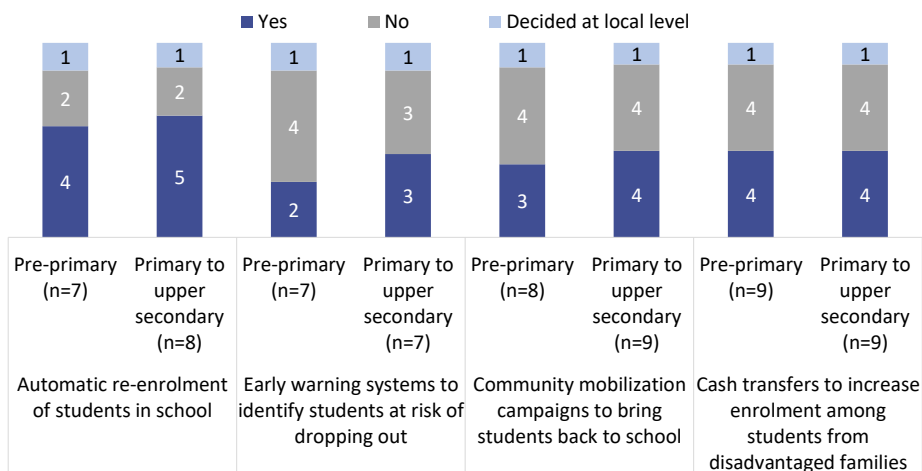
The re-enrolment challenge will likely become apparent in the medium term, as students who fall behind eventually do leave school. Therefore, countries must undertake preventive and targeted efforts now to reach and keep all children in school.

**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.

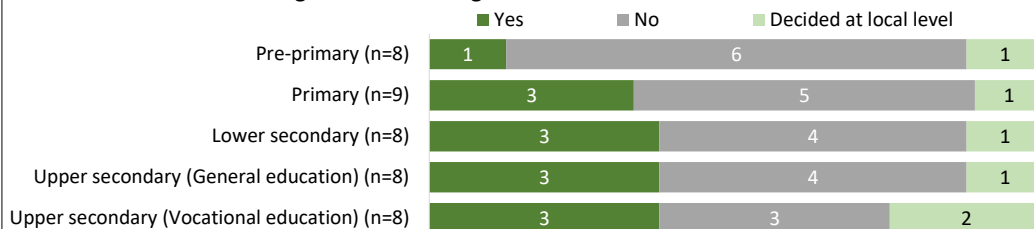
Understanding children’s current learning levels, through both classroom- and system-level assessments, allows teachers and policymakers to make informed decisions about instructional approaches and other policy decisions needed to promote learning recovery.

In the GERT, 14 of 17 countries reported that data has been collected since March 2020 to measure learning outcomes. Of these countries, 7 countries can disaggregate the data by gender and 5 countries by age.

In the joint survey, 3 of 9 countries reported that studies have been undertaken to evaluate the impact of school closures on learning outcomes at the primary level.

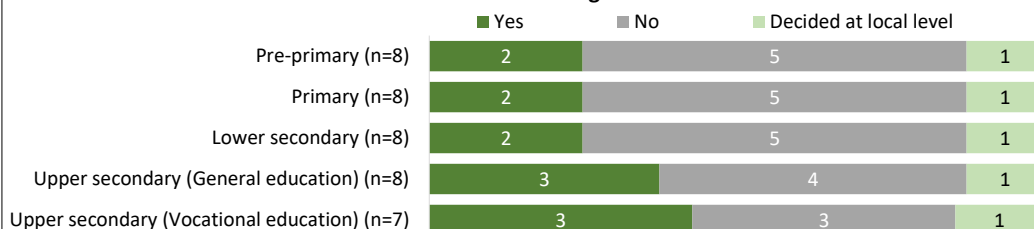
While the main priority for many countries remains assessing student learning outcomes, it is equally important to measure non-cognitive or social-emotional skills. In the joint survey, only 2 of 8 countries reported that studies have been undertaken to evaluate the impact of the pandemic on non-cognitive skills at the primary level.

### Have there been studies undertaken in 2020/2021 or/and 2021/2022 to evaluate the impact of school closures on learning outcomes through standardized national or sub-national assessments?



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

### Have there been studies undertaken in 2020/2021 or/and 2021/2022 to evaluate the impact of school closures on non-cognitive skills?

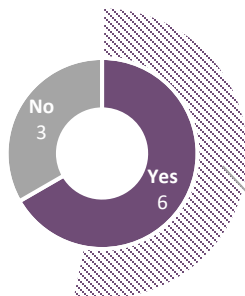


Source: 4<sup>th</sup> round of joint survey.

## 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.

In the school year 2021/2022 (or 2022), did your country implement adjustments to the curriculum in any subject or grade at the national level for primary to upper secondary levels? (n=9 countries)



4 countries made curricular adjustments based on the results of student assessments undertaken in the context of school reopening

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

While only 4 of 8 countries reported implementing curricular adjustments at the pre-primary level in the school year 2021/2022, 6 of 9 countries reported implementing the same at the primary to upper secondary levels.

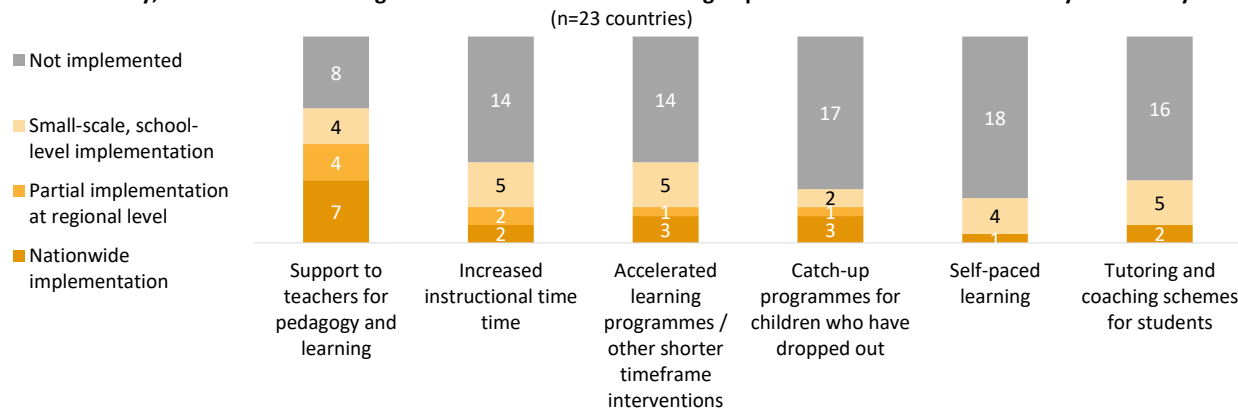
Among the 6 countries implementing curricular adjustments at the primary to upper secondary levels, 4 countries made such adjustments based on the results of student assessments.

## 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.

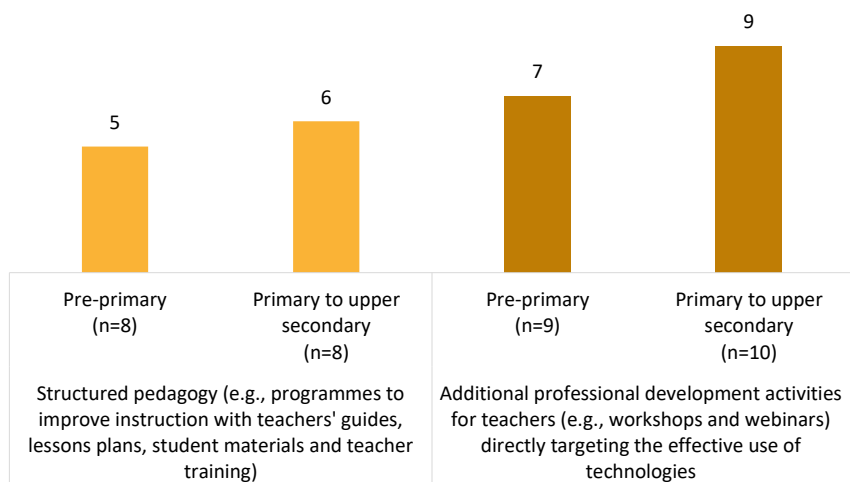
A variety of measures were implemented to increase the efficiency of instruction. In the GERT, 2 of 23 countries reported implementing nationwide measures to increase instructional time.

### As of today, which of the following remediation measures are being implemented and at what scale in your country?



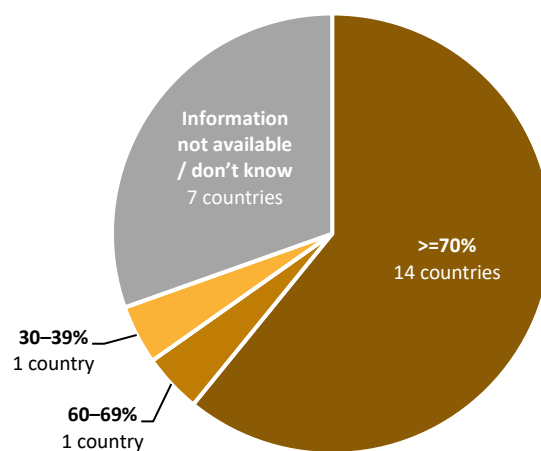
Source: GERT.

**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=23 countries)**



Source: GERT.

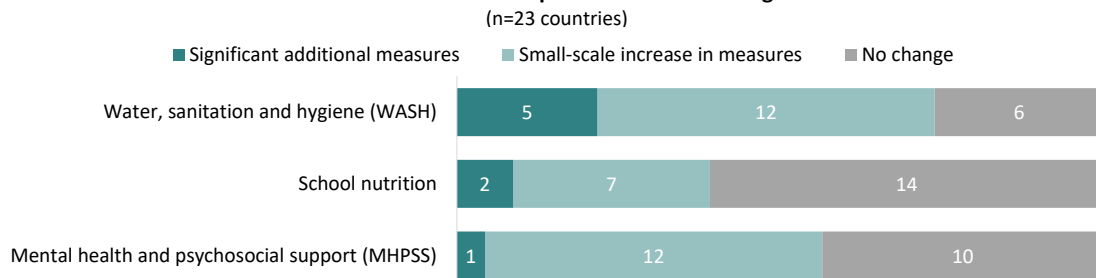
The evidence is overwhelming that structured pedagogy programmes – including supporting teachers with teachers’ guides and structured lesson plans – leads to improved learning outcomes. In the joint survey, 6 of 8 countries reported implementing measures on structured pedagogy at the primary to upper 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 9 of 10 countries. Additionally, in the GERT, 15 of 23 countries reported that more than 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=23 countries)**



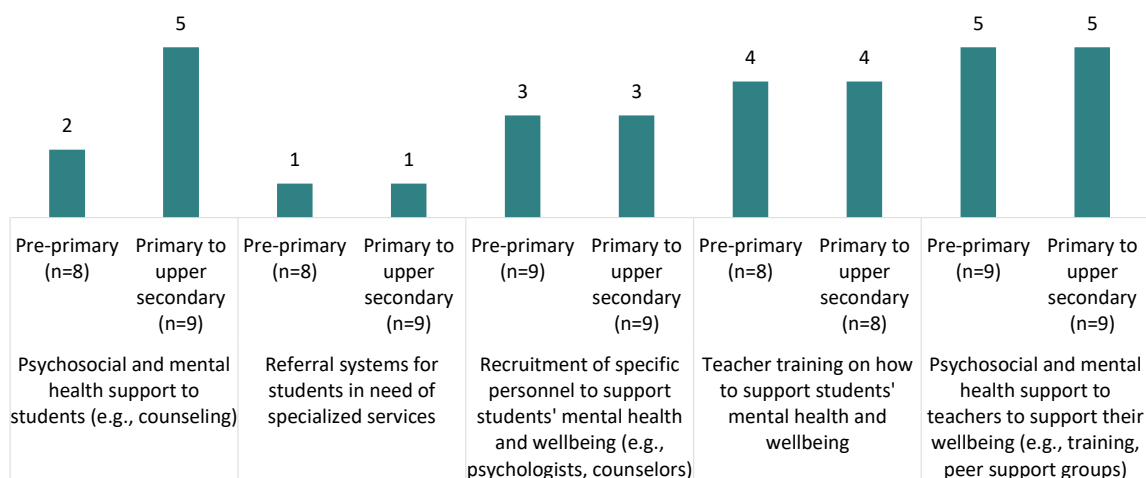
Source: GERT.

Among 23 respondent countries in the GERT, 5 countries reported taking significant additional measures for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, 2 countries reported the same for school nutrition services, and 1 country 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 5 of 9 countries and to teachers in 5 of 9 countries.


Teacher training on how to support students’ mental health and wellbeing was provided to primary- and secondary-level teachers in 4 of 8 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.

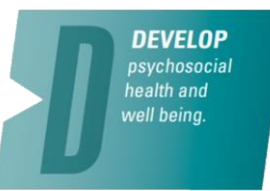
## Implementing the RAPID Framework: UNICEF examples in East Asia and Pacific

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- UNICEF China helped the Government mount a [back-to-school campaign](#), reaching 241 million learners, as well as their teachers and parents, nationwide. Early in the school reopening planning, UNICEF established a back-to-school Working Group led with focal points from education, health, child protection, gender, communications, and monitoring and evaluation. [Key messages and communication materials](#) reflected an integrated approach.
  - UNICEF [Lao People's Democratic Republic](#) mobilized the support of key partners to help the Ministry of Education and Sports mount and execute the national safely back to school campaign. The campaign reached 4.6 million people, including 1.2 million views of [videos](#) developed for students, parents and schools.
  - UNICEF Philippines developed and provided [learn-at-home kits](#) to parents, [supporting 34,000 children](#), including children with disabilities, with early learning at home during the two-and-a-half-year COVID-19 school closures. Storybooks to help young children cope with the challenges of COVID-19 while continuing to learn at home were also provided to 20,906 preschool and kindergarten children (9,692 girls).

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- In [Mongolia](#), teachers used the first two classes of the year for formative assessments to gauge children's learning levels following the school closures period. Then, a four-class recap of TV lessons was conducted, followed by two classes tailored to the specific needs of children identified through the earlier assessments. Questions posed to children through simple Q&A boxes filled after each class were also used to tailor remedial lessons.

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- In [Viet Nam](#), curriculum adjustments – dropping certain tests and modules and carrying over others to the next school year – were made to allow students to catch up on missed learning, which will reduce academic pressure and psychosocial stress.
  - UNICEF Myanmar is providing a community-based early learning programme for 9,482 children (4,758 girls) aged 3–5 in 203 centers in six states, focused on language development and readiness. Additionally, 238 teachers are being trained to deliver quality early childhood development programmes.

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- UNICEF EAPRO is supporting the development of digital learning platforms to support learning recovery. In particular, the Learning Passport is being deployed in [Timor-Leste](#) (School Goes Home); [the Lao People's Democratic Republic](#) ([Learning Passport](#); [Wisdom Warehouse](#)); [Kiribati](#) (Learning Passport); Myanmar (Open Learning); and the Philippines (offline). Currently, over 140,000 users are enrolled on the platforms, with some 45,000 course completions to date and with users now accessing over 700 courses and 14,000 lessons.
  - In Papua Province, [Indonesia](#), [tailored instruction](#) is a vital component of the Early Grade Literacy (EGL) programme. The programme used a baseline assessment to identify learning gaps, and teachers continually assessed progress in classrooms and adjusted teaching to individual needs. As schools reopened, EGL strategies are now integral components of COVID-19 education recovery plans.
  - UNICEF Myanmar is supporting 431 out-of-school children and adolescents (239 girls) aged 10–17 in seven states/regions to complete four weeks of Non-Formal Education self-study materials. They have also enrolled in the non-formal [EXCEL](#) (Extended and Continuous Education and Learning) Programme, an 11-month programme that equips children with key life skills training, as well as support with COVID-19 safety.

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- UNICEF EAPRO promoted and further disseminated the ASEAN comprehensive guidance for the safe reopening and operations of schools, '[Reopen, Recover and Resilience in Education: Guidelines for ASEAN Countries](#)', which were adopted by its member states and launched in May 2022.
  - In [Papua New Guinea](#), the National Department of Education urgently scaled-up its approach to support safe reopening of schools. Interventions introduced included investing water, sanitation and health in schools. With the support of the Government of Japan, UNICEF is establishing handwashing points in 44 National Capital Schools to provide clean water and hand washing facilities. More than 37,000 students (18,437 girls) in 23 schools in the National Capital District have access to clean water and handwashing points.
  - UNICEF Myanmar is supporting 629 children in early childhood development (ECD) centers with the provision of hygiene kits, COVID-19 protective items and nutritional food during ECD classes. Additionally, the country office is supporting 431 out-of-school children and adolescents (239 girls) aged 10–17 to learn prevention messages and hygiene practices for the prevention of COVID-19 and to develop psychosocial competencies.