

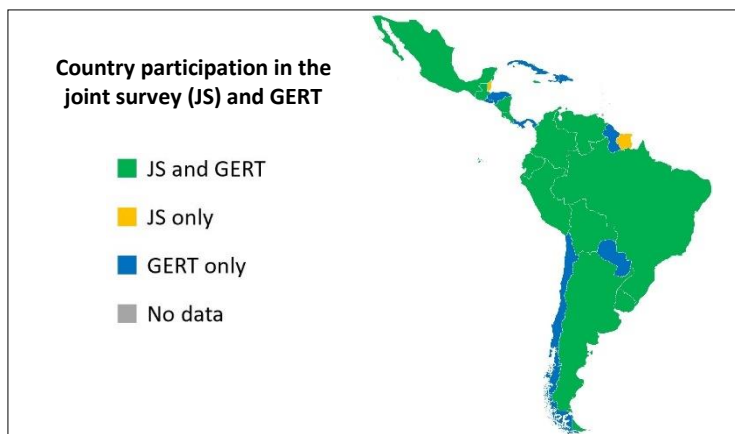
Latin America and the Caribbean

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 4th 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 1st 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.

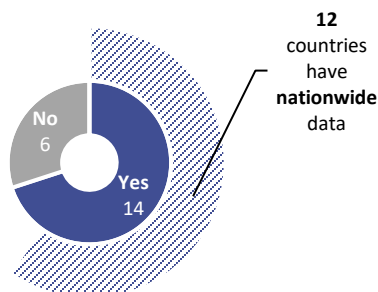


REACH every child and keep them in school.

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=20 countries)

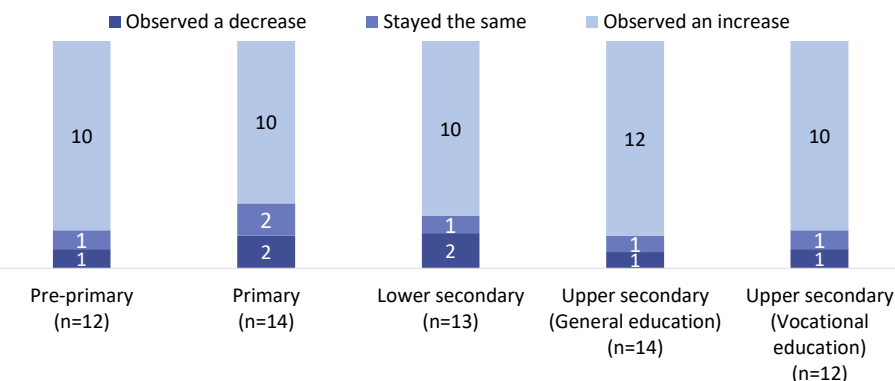


Source: GERT.

Of the 14 countries collecting information on the number of children who have returned to school, 7 countries can disaggregate the data by location (urban vs. rural) and 5 countries by gender. GERT data show that 4 of 25 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 7 of 11 countries and at the primary and secondary levels in 9 of 14 countries.

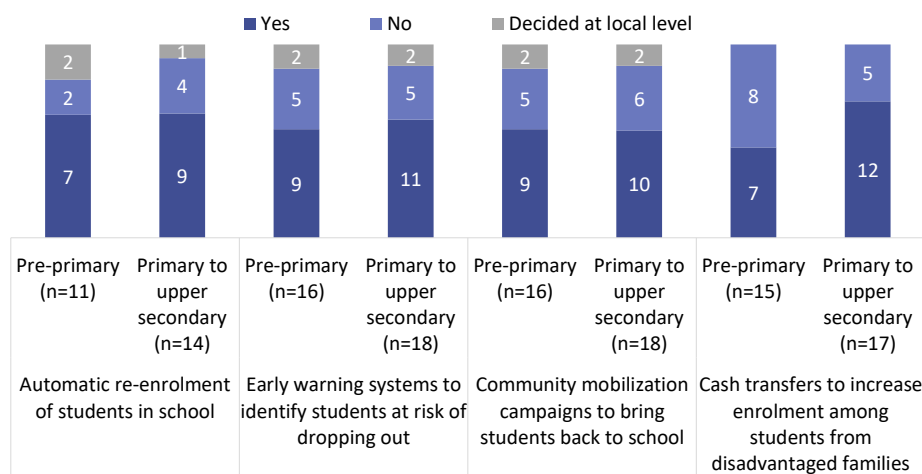
The re-enrolment challenge will likely become apparent in the medium term, as students who fall behind eventually do leave school. Therefore, countries must undertake preventive and targeted efforts now to reach and keep all children in school.

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: 4th 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: 4th round of joint survey.

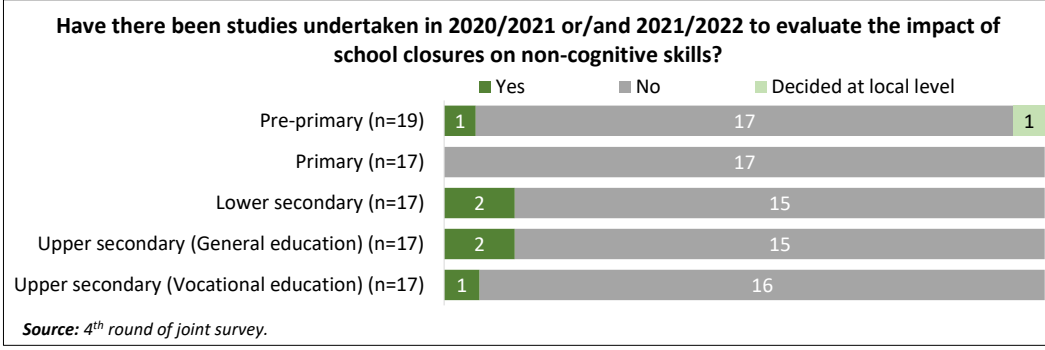
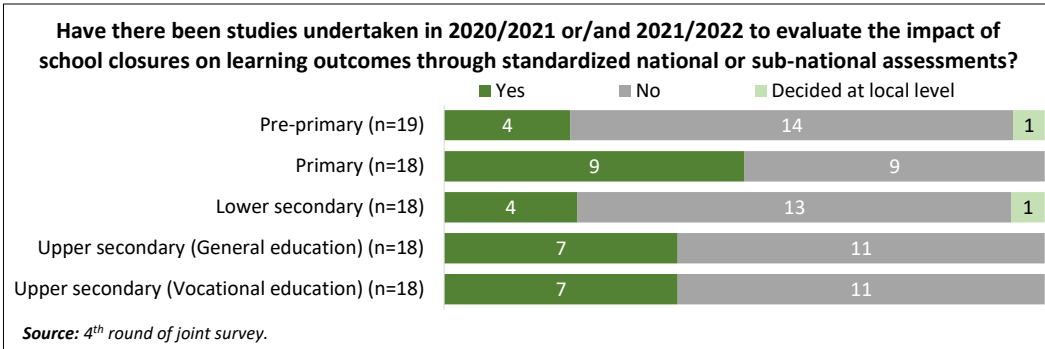
ASSESS learning levels regularly.

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, 13 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 10 countries by age.

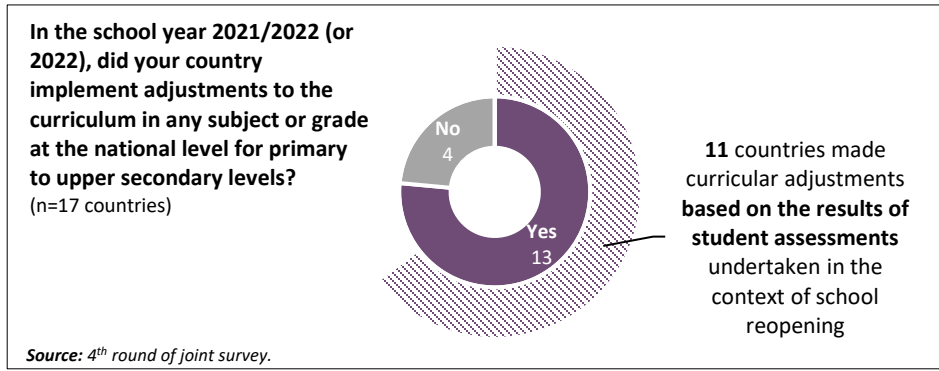
In the joint survey, 9 of 18 countries reported that studies have been undertaken to evaluate the impact of school closures on learning outcomes at the primary level.

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, 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.

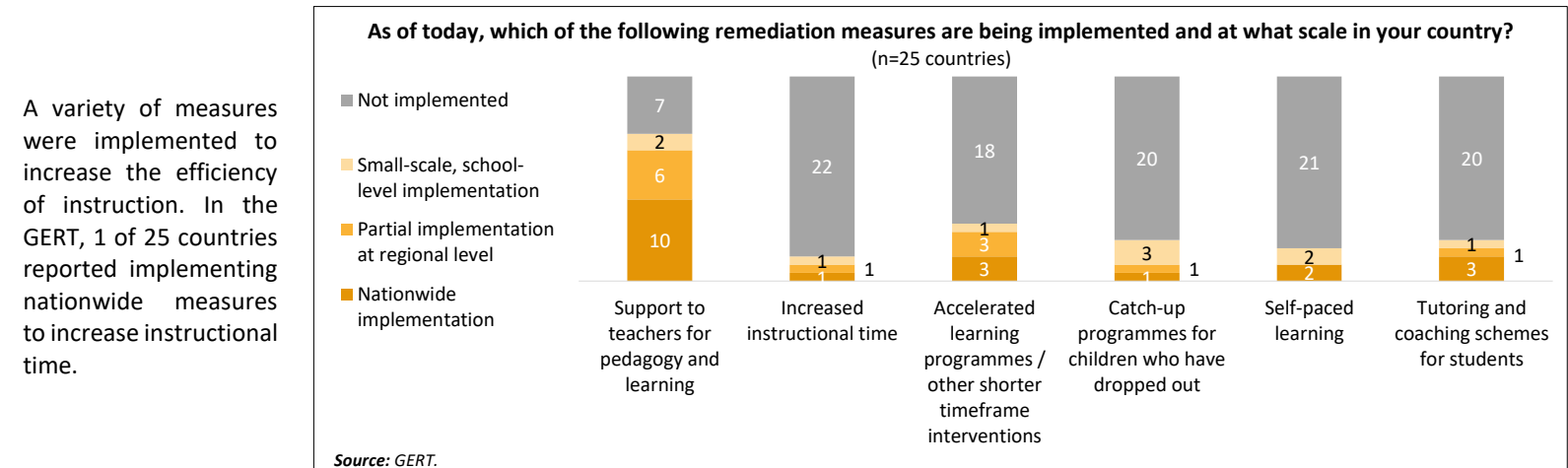


While 11 of 12 countries reported implementing curricular adjustments at the pre-primary level in the school year 2021/2022, only 13 of 17 countries reported implementing the same at the primary to upper secondary levels.

Among the 13 countries implementing curricular adjustments at the primary to upper secondary levels, 11 countries made such adjustments based on the results of student assessments.

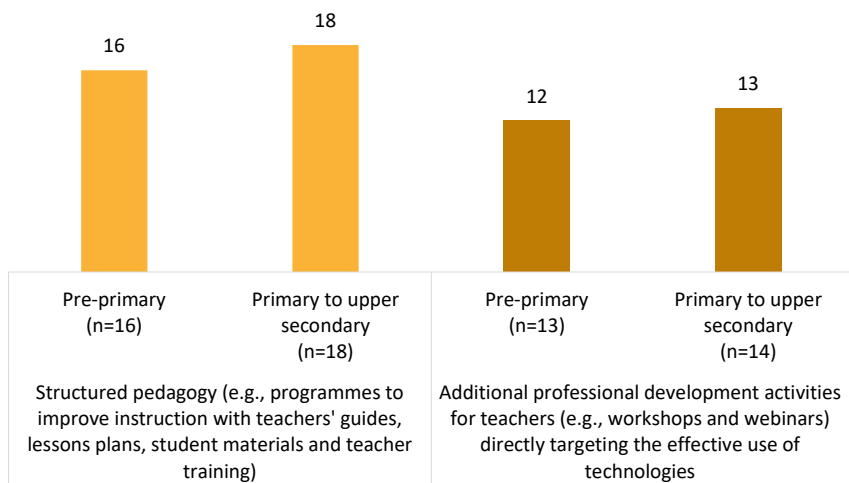
INCREASE the efficiency of instruction, including through catch-up learning.

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.



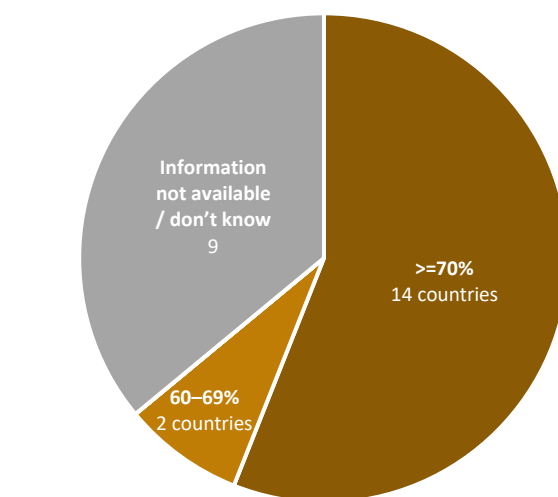
A variety of measures were implemented to increase the efficiency of instruction. In the GERT, 1 of 25 countries reported implementing nationwide measures to increase instructional time.

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



Source: 4th round of joint survey.

What percentage of the teacher population is vaccinated? (n=25 countries)



Source: GERT.

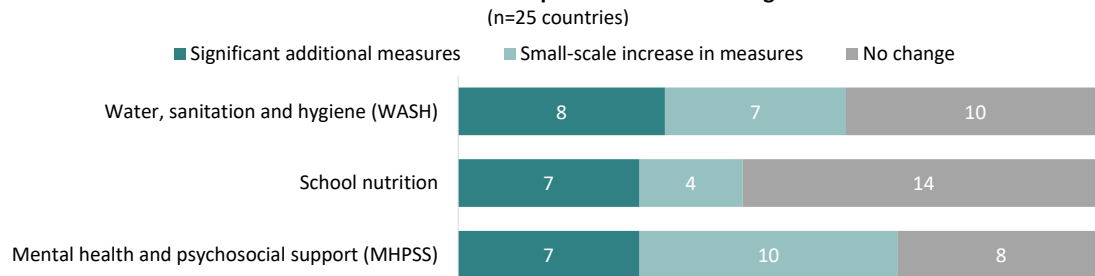
The evidence is overwhelming that structured pedagogy programmes – including supporting teachers with teachers’ guides and structured lesson plans – leads to improved learning outcomes. In the joint survey, 18 of 18 countries reported implementing measures on structured pedagogy at the primary to upper 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 13 of 14 countries. Additionally, in the GERT, 16 of 25 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=25 countries)



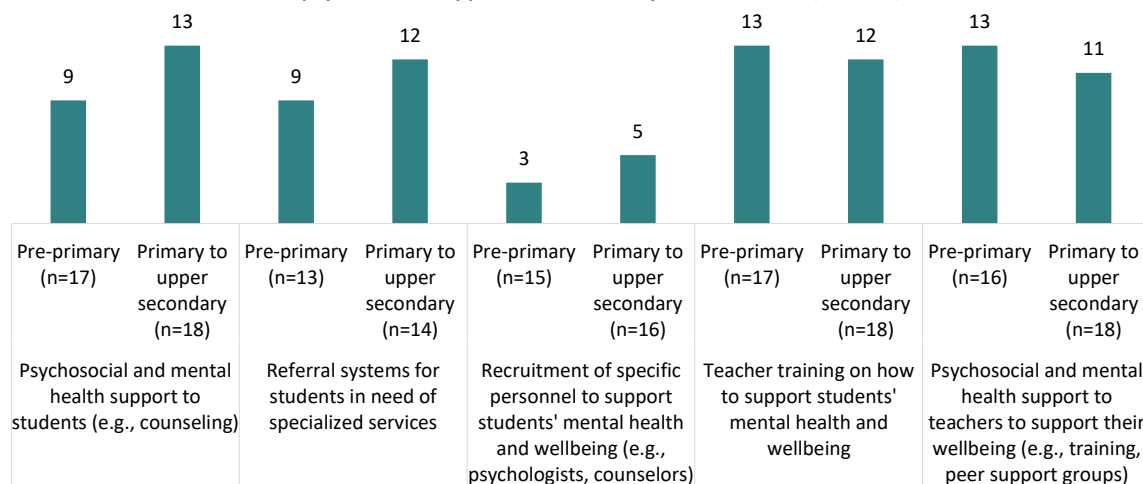
Source: GERT.

Among 25 respondent countries in the GERT, 8 countries reported taking significant additional measures for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, 7 countries reported the same for school nutrition services, and 7 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 13 of 18 countries and to teachers in 11 of 18 countries.

Teacher training on how to support students’ mental health and wellbeing was provided to primary- and secondary-level teachers in 12 of 18 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: 4th round of joint survey.

Implementing the RAPID Framework: UNICEF examples in Latin America and the Caribbean

R
REACH
every child
and keep
them in school.

- UNICEF [Brazil](#), with support from the Barça Foundation, has adapted the existing [School Active Search](#) (SAS) tool to increase schools' engagement and bring back every child who has missed out on learning during the pandemic. By 6 May 2021, 2,126 municipalities (39 per cent) and 23 states were using the platform and have re-enrolled over 80,000 children since SAS's inception.
- UNICEF Dominican Republic supported the Ministry of Education with the publication of the Early Warning app and aided in its testing to ensure its use at the beginning of the school year in September 2022. The purpose of the app is to identify children and adolescents at risk of dropping out of school through tracking attendance. [Demonstration videos](#) have been created to facilitate its use.
- UNICEF Trinidad and Tobago is supporting 237 migrant students, mostly from Venezuela, who were unable to secure a place at local schools upon school re-opening after COVID-19 closures, with cash transfers for data packages, transportation and other education needs to enable them to access the US-accredited [online education](#) platform [Dawere](#).

A
ASSESS
learning
levels
regularly.

- UNICEF Bolivia developed diagnosis instruments for schools to self-apply and use to track learning progress. It has begun implementation in 70 schools. To date, 20,017 students (9,912 girls) benefited from enhanced pedagogical practices and materials for 936 teachers.
- UNICEF Venezuela provided initial diagnostic tests to 750 out-of-school children, with tests for an additional 1,019 currently being conducted. Children scored an average of 37 per cent in language, 30 per cent in mathematics and 62 per cent in psychosocial areas. Upon completion of the recovery programme, average scores improved by 38 per cent.

P
PRIORITIZE
teaching the
fundamentals.

- UNICEF [Colombia](#)'s flagship education programmes for refugee and migrant learners, Learning Circles and The Village, aim to promote foundational learning, mental health and psychosocial wellbeing and socioemotional development. During COVID-19, UNICEF adapted these programmes for use during distance learning, including family follow-up, the provision of learning guidelines and school supplies, and teacher training.
- UNICEF [Dominican Republic](#) supported the Ministry of Education in the public [launch of the national policy](#) in November 2022 to improve learning in the first three grades of primary school, with the Building the Foundations for Learning ('CON BASE') Programme. The objective of the programme is to ensure that students at the end of the third grade of primary school build a strong foundation of communicative and mathematical problem-solving skills. A total of 446,934 students will benefit from this programme.
- The [Learning Passport](#) in [Mexico](#) ([Pasaporte al Aprendizaje México](#)) aims to mitigate learning loss after widespread school closures. The platform promotes digital learning to strengthen foundational skills in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Since October 2021, the Learning Passport in Mexico has 12 active courses open to more than 65,000 active students and 3,672 teachers.

I
INCREASE
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of instruction,
including through
catch-up learning.

- UNICEF LACRO supported the development of the digital course [Educating in Times of Crisis: Preparing for the Return to School in Latin America & the Caribbean](#) with the Regional Education Group of Latin America and the Caribbean, together with the Universidad Abierta de Recoleta.
- UNICEF Venezuela is training 185 teachers supporting the catch-up and school reintegration programme *Nos vemos en la Escuela*. These teachers also received incentives to ensure the continuity of teaching and the functionality of educational service.

D
DEVELOP
psychosocial
health and
well being.

- UNICEF Bolivia is supporting the Safe Family helpline to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on children's and parents' mental health. Between January 2022 and end of August 2022, 22,594 calls were received, with 19 per cent of these calls referred to child protection services.
- UNICEF [Brazil](#) supported the development of a cross-sectoral strategy to address students' learning, mental health and protection needs during and after school reopening. [Three practical guides](#) were developed, and education professionals were trained on MHPSS and child protection. As part of the training, participants developed MHPSS action plans to take forward in their schools, resulting in 164,816 children and adolescents impacted overall.
- UNICEF [Nicaragua](#) supported the launch of a new programme called 'I feel good expressing myself'. Through the programme, [kits containing arts and play materials were distributed across 153 schools](#), reaching 73,000 children and adolescents. Additionally, 60,000 guidebooks on providing socioemotional support and adapting curriculums were developed and distributed, giving teachers practical tools to support their students.