

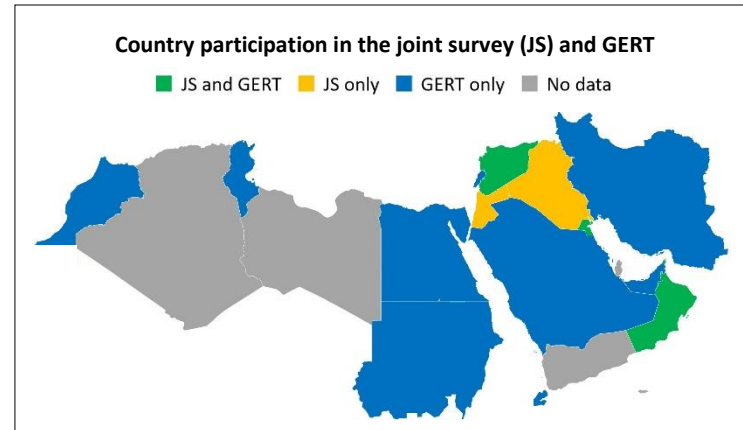
# Middle East and North Africa

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.

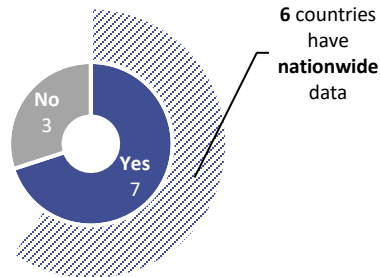


## REACH every child and keep them in school.

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=10 countries)

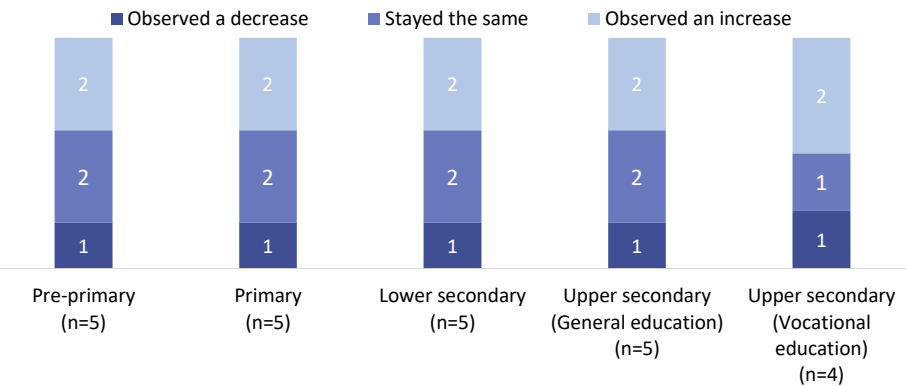


Source: GERT.

Of the 7 countries collecting information on the number of children who have returned to school, 4 countries can disaggregate the data by location (urban vs. rural) and 3 countries by gender. GERT data show that 3 of 13 countries are using Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) data at school level to monitor student return. In the joint survey, 2 in 5 countries reported observing an increase in student absences across all education levels.

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.

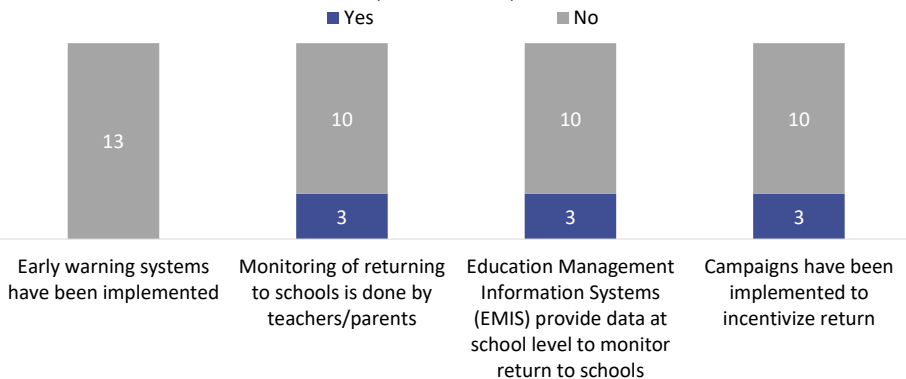
Have you observed, from your database, an increase (when schools were fully open) in the number of student absences over the three school years covered by the pandemic?



Source: 4th round of joint survey.

Have any additional measures been taken to avoid students dropping out and/or incentivizing return to schools?

(n=13 countries)



Source: GERT.

**ASSESS** learning levels regularly.

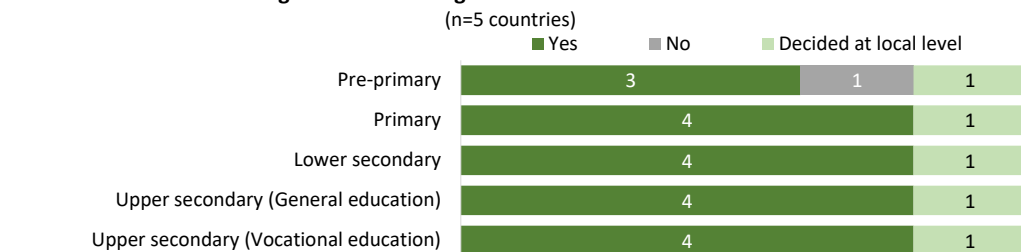
Understanding children’s current learning levels, through both classroom- and system-level assessments, allows teachers and policymakers to make informed decisions about instructional approaches and other policy decisions needed to promote learning recovery.

In the GERT, 5 of 9 countries reported that data has been collected since March 2020 to measure learning outcomes. Of these countries, 1 country can disaggregate the data by gender and 1 country by age.

In the joint survey, 4 of 5 countries reported that studies have been undertaken to evaluate the impact of school closures on learning outcomes at the primary level.

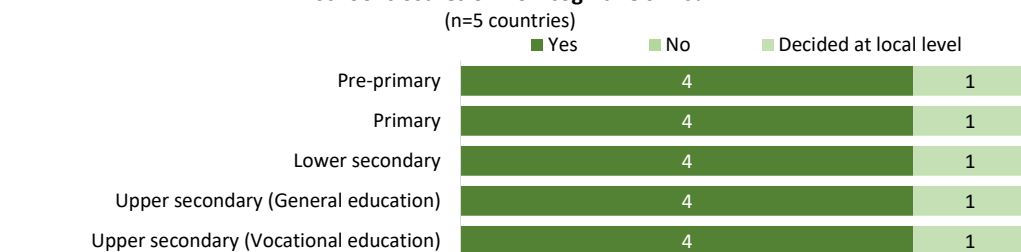
While the main priority for many countries remains assessing student learning outcomes, it is equally important to measure non-cognitive or social-emotional skills. In the joint survey, 4 of 5 countries reported that studies have been undertaken to evaluate the impact of the pandemic on non-cognitive skills.

**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?**

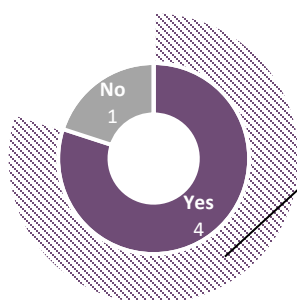


Source: 4<sup>th</sup> round of joint survey.

**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=5 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 3 of 5 countries reported implementing curricular adjustments at the pre-primary level in the school year 2021/2022, 4 of 5 countries reported implementing the same at the primary to upper secondary levels.

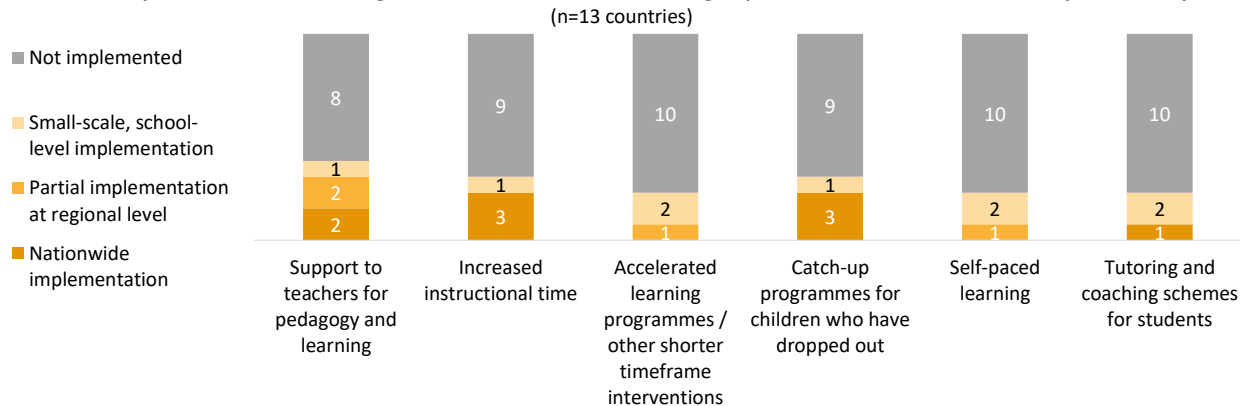
All 4 countries implementing curricular adjustments at the primary to upper secondary levels made such adjustments based on the results of student assessments.

**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, 3 of 13 countries reported implementing nationwide measures to increase instructional time.

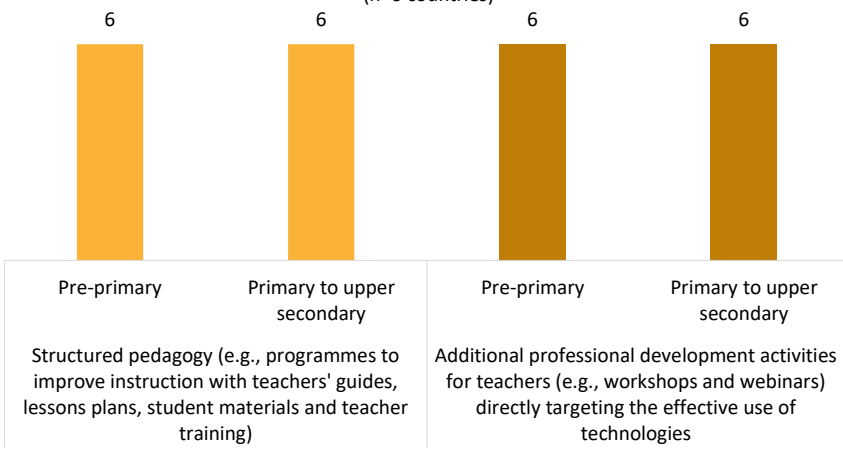
**As of today, which of the following remediation measures are being implemented and at what scale in your country?**



Source: GERT.

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

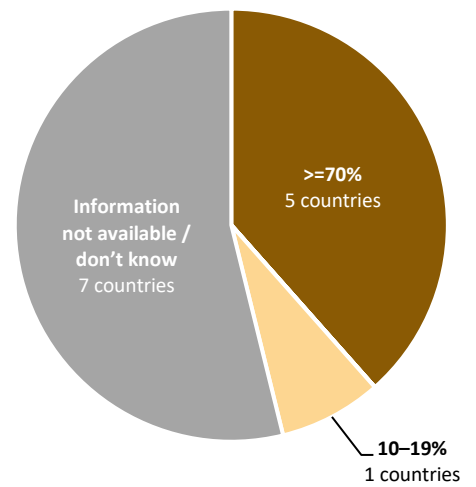
(n=6 countries)



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

**What percentage of the teacher population is vaccinated?**

(n=13 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 6 countries reported implementing measures on structured pedagogy at the primary to upper secondary levels in the school year 2021/2022.

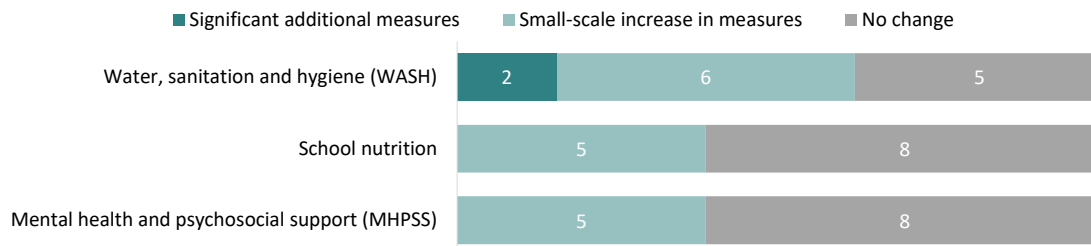
Data from the joint survey also show that primary- and secondary-level teachers were further supported with professional development activities on the effective use of technologies in 6 of 6 countries. Additionally, in the GERT, 5 of 13 countries reported that more than 50 per cent of their teacher population 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=13 countries)



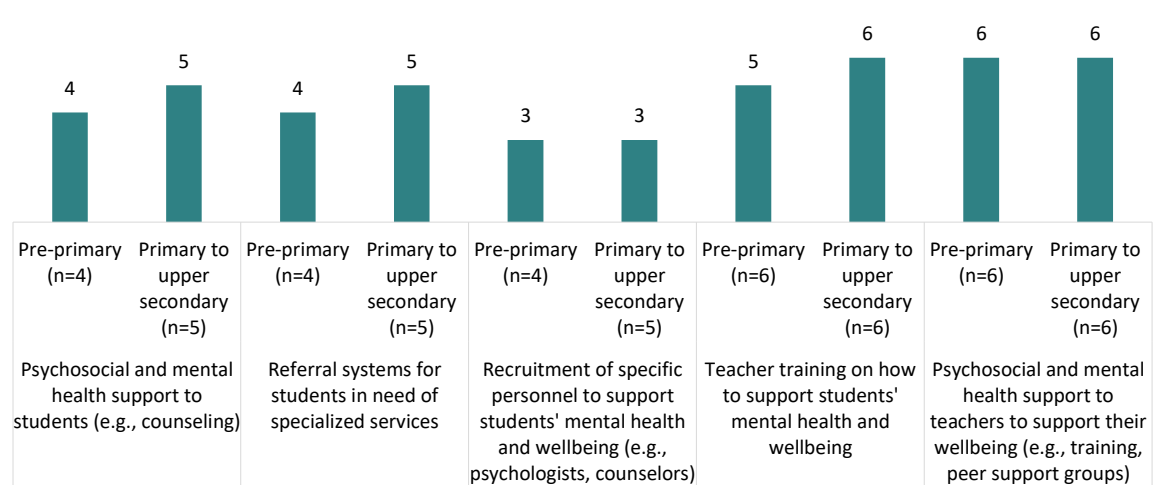
Source: GERT.

Among 13 respondent countries in the GERT, 2 countries reported taking significant additional measures for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, while none reported the same for school nutrition services or 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 5 countries and to teachers in 6 of 6 countries.

Teacher training on how to support students’ mental health and wellbeing was provided to primary- and secondary-level teachers in 6 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 Middle East and North Africa

**R**  
**REACH**  
every child  
and keep  
them in school.

- UNICEF Iraq trained [400 social mobilizers](#) to conduct the 2022 annual back-to-learning campaign in six governates and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The campaign is targeting 20,000 children (8,400 girls), including 4,000 refugees and 8,000 internally displaced children, who have dropped out of school or not yet returned to school due to the COVID-19 pandemic. By the end of 2022, 44,373 children were identified (of which 45 per cent are girls), 10,123 returned to formal education, and 3,179 enrolled in non-formal education.
- UNICEF Libya is supporting a back-to-learning campaign called *La Faraq* (No Difference), with communication materials focusing on advocating for inclusive education and access for all.
- UNICEF Sudan used 'vulnerability mapping' to identify the most vulnerable communities for targeting out-of-school children. A door-to-door 'Back to School, Back to Learning' campaign was rolled out in the targeted communities to encourage parents and guardians to send their children, especially girls, to e-learning centers. A total of 7,674 hardest-to-reach children (3,838 girls) were identified and brought back to school.

**A**  
**ASSESS**  
learning  
levels  
regularly.

- UNICEF Libya is working with the Ministry of Education to conduct a national assessment, with a sample of 64 schools including national and community migrant schools, on the effectiveness of the abridged curriculum prepared during the school re-opening after COVID-19 closures.

**P**  
**PRIORITIZE**  
teaching the  
fundamentals.

- UNICEF Sudan is supporting [e-learning](#) centers which provide a [two-year](#) programme for [out-of-school children](#) in remote communities to learn foundational reading, writing and numeracy skills.

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

- UNICEF [Jordan](#) supported the Ministry of Education in launching [Learning Bridges](#), a national blended learning programme that links printed materials with online resources to provide weekly activities based on core curricula for children in Grades 4–9. By the end of the 2020/2021 school year, Learning Bridges reached almost 500,000 students (65 per cent girls), and 30,000 teachers accessed online teacher education on blended learning.
- UNICEF [Lebanon](#) is supporting vulnerable Lebanese and refugee children and youth to access learning through the Lebanon Learning Passport, a 12-week summer programme started in August 2021 that has reached more than 4,000 learners and their caregivers. The platform delivers an interactive non-formal education curriculum to students and adaptive lessons as well as supplementary learning and assessment material for teachers.
- UNICEF [State of Palestine](#), in collaboration with established local partners and flexible donor funding, provided remedial education services to an estimated 5,000 children (2,196 girls) in Grades 1–4, and teacher training for remedial learning to 300 teachers.
- UNICEF Yemen supported catch-up for 6,128 internally displaced children through a 3-month, [non-formal catch-up education programme](#). A total of 5,848 children passed and have now successfully transitioned to the next grade of formal schools, while the 280 children who did not pass have rejoined the formal school at the grade they were in before dropping out.

**D**  
**DEVELOP**  
psychosocial  
health and  
well being.

- UNICEF Iraq is supporting teacher training on psychosocial support and positive discipline, reaching 568 teachers in Salah Al-din, Dohuk and Kirkuk governates.
- UNICEF Libya has provided training for 120 MHPSS department and sub-department heads in the Ministry of Education, reaching 37 regions in the country. The programme aims to develop basic digital literacy skills and transform the MHPSS department's internal system to an online version to increase efficiency and data security.
- UNICEF MENARO's MHPSS taskforce is preparing a guide for teachers entitled 'Well-being and Protection in Classrooms – A Resource for Teachers' to support with MHPSS, which is part of the expansion of MENARO's Return to School Teacher Preparedness Training Package.