Research and Analysis of Schools Closures Response in the Americas (RASCRA) - 2020

Final Report - February 2021

BRITISH COUNCIL

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The suspension of face-to-face classes as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic profoundly affected the educational systems of the Americas. The countries of the region made enormous efforts to guarantee the continuity of learning. However, these efforts were limited by the challenges presented by the context and the unequal initial conditions of access to infrastructure and other resources.

The present document is an initiative of the British Council Argentina in partnership with the Varkey Foundation, and looks at actions taken during the pandemic by governments and schools, with a view to identifying, from the perspective of stakeholders in the education system, lessons learned and the pending challenges for 2021, as well as reflecting on post-pandemic education. Specifically, this research covers primary and secondary levels of 11 countries in the Americas, these are: **Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, the United States, Mexico, Peru, the Dominican Republic and Uruguay.**

The analysis consisted of a methodological triangulation of quantitative and qualitative instruments and analysis techniques such as literature and document reviews, interviews, surveys, and focus groups. 63 interviews were carried out with government leaders, teachers, academics, unions and third sector organisations, more than 5000 surveys of teachers from the different countries analysed, and 11 focus groups with 67 teachers participating.

The report is organised into 6 chapters: (1) Government initiatives, (2) Support to students; (3) Teacher responses to the crisis, (4) The link between school and family, (5) Management: decision-making in the face of the unprecedented, and (6) Experiences in focus.

1- Government initiatives

The unequal access to electricity, technological devices and the internet in households was taken into account when designing the emergency responses. Many of the measures taken to expand the digital infrastructure and make educational content available were achieved through alliances with private companies, social organisations, community groups, and non-educational public agencies. The teachers surveyed identified that the efforts to carry out these measures came from both the ministries of education and educational institutions.

The use of educational platforms or online repositories, educational applications and software for videoconferencing were implemented in contexts of moderate and high technological maturity. In contexts of limited technological maturity, television and radio teaching strategies were used. While teachers adopted the former, the latter, according to the survey, were less used in their teaching. As to the the effectiveness of the proposals, this was independent of the format, with teaching quality being instead more fundamental. However, there is still no evidence to conclude whether these statements also apply in the current context of crisis and the consequent emotional impact of the prolonged time of isolation.

The unequal access to connectivity across the world was highlighted and perceived as a limiting factor. Those interviewed agree that it is essential to guarantee access to connectivity and review educational practices, the curriculum and teaching goals to train digital citizens. At present, although schools are not fully-equipped for this purpose, they represent for children and young people a place with the highest probability of access to the internet compared to their homes (UNESCO, 2020).

2. Support to students

The transition from face-to-face to remote education was accompanied by curricular adaptation or adjustment. In addition, issues related to prevention and health care have been incorporated, and socio-emotional skills have become more central to pedagogy. Distancing between teacher and students and the consequent transformation of teaching meant learning technologies would take a leading role. The data from the teacher survey indicated that only 3.4% of teachers consulted did not carry out any type of curricular adaptation.

Regarding assessment, adjustments were made, such as unifying the 2020-2021 school years, and suspending or rescheduling national and international exams scheduled for 2020. This was done because of doubts related to the reliability and the equity of results, given the wide differences in the reality of each student in the context of the pandemic and the variation in factors that affected their educational experience. This chapter outlines proposed alternative initiatives and goes into depth on the role of formative assessment and its ability to respond to the challenges that arose during the crisis.

In terms of tools for monitoring and follow-up, these are a pending challenge. In general terms, the information available relating to learning outcomes, as well as the risk of school dropout, has been obtained through estimates at the school level. Therefore, the development of measurement and diagnostic instruments is evidenced as necessary to plan a return to class focused on supporting students. It will also be necessary to develop remedial policies for the negative impact that the closure of schools has had due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. Teacher responses to the crisis

This chapter presents a review of remote teaching resources, strategies and practices developed by teachers in the Americas during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The data produced by the survey show the importance of digital and audiovisual resources that the teachers themselves created. In turn, among the strategies considered most effective, were those that made it possible to give personalised attention to the needs of students and those that included a socio-emotional aspect. Teachers had to make changes to their usual practice to achieve greater effectiveness in remote teaching. This promoted reflection on traditional ways of teaching, and on the importance of student-centred teaching.

Actions to strengthen teacher professional development and provide support to teachers, from both ministerial and institutional levels, focused on updating content for socio-emotional education, developing technological skills, and providing other specific

training. Training was delivered online. In most cases, this involved presentations by experts. To a lesser extent, workshops were given, which allowed for greater interaction with content and between experts and participants, with teachers receiving feedback. On the other hand, opportunities for exchange of good practice between teachers were made available, provided or promoted by educational institutions, ministries, universities and third sector organisations. These opportunities for knowledge exchange were most valued, according to the survey.

Three major changes for the future were identified by educational leaders in the region: the need to carry out structural changes to initial teacher training; a new teacher profile with competencies for remote teaching and establishing support systems for teachers in schools in vulnerable contexts.

4. The link between school and family

The closure of schools meant that students stopped meeting their teachers in the classroom and had to continue learning from their homes. In this context, the need to establish alternative communication channels to face-to-face arose, in order to maintain the link between school and students. In the face of this new reality, the role of the family became central since it was fundamental to sustain pedagogical continuity, especially in the case of younger students who did not have sufficient autonomy to manage their own learning. Access to resources available to children and families at home became important, as well as the educational level of the adults in charge of caring for the children. This has restarted the conversation about the role of the family in education and the link between schools and families in order to sustain learning.

The feeding and caring functions of educational institutions were also highlighted. The efforts of schools and governments in the provision and distribution of food became more evident. Faced with the economic crisis that accompanied the health risk, schools became a socio-emotional and nutritional support centre for many families. The increase in interactions between teachers and families, which became part of everyday life, also generated a revaluation of the teaching role by families.

Overall, it was observed that the suspension of face-to-face classes represented an opportunity to strengthen the bond between school and family, a bond that should continue and be further strengthened in the future, for the benefit of learning and well-being of students.

5. Management: decision-making in the face of the unprecedented

In an unprecedented and uncertain environment, management teams had to adapt and provide increased support to both institutional and pedagogical management of schools. This resulted in new challenges and demands arising from the health emergency, which in turn implied an increase in responsibilities and tasks. In particular, school leaders and management teams were key to supporting teachers in the transition to distance education. The results of the survey of teachers in the region place school authorities in second place (27.6%), after their fellow teachers (51.8%), as their main allies during the transition to distance learning in this period.

It is observed that many school leaders have seen their decision-making powers expanded given the need for the system to provide contextualized responses to achieve pedagogical continuity. This has had different effects on school communities depending on the degree of support from government authorities and the existence (or not) of clear guidelines, and according to the leadership skills and strategic planning of each school leader. On the other hand, it was agreed that the decision-making process and the decisions themselves were adjusted and adapted as the school closure period was extended.

Also, due to the need for contextualized responses, in some cases there was an increase in communication and collaborative work between technical teams from ministries and schools. In some cases, managers and teachers were involved in the assembly of pedagogical material to respond to the emergency context and / or consulted in decision-making at ministerial level.

To sum up, it was verified that in different countries of the region management teams have played a key role during the period of school closures. There is clearly a need for support and continued training to help with effective decision-making in schools, as well as the desire from school leaders that their voices continue to be heard in the development of educational policies.

6. Experiences in focus

Although there is still not enough information regarding student learning and the effectiveness of the programs and policies implemented in different countries, the analysis of selected experiences in focus and perception of the teachers who participated in focus groups, allows us to glimpse some significant points.

- Those programs or initiatives that have a long-term vision gave a more contextualized and meaningful response to the closure of schools.

- The greater diversification of strategies or comprehensive proposals had greater reach and outreach to students.

- Initiatives that promote collaboration spaces and the construction of professional learning communities were fundamental for the support, development, and training of teachers.

- Countries that were digitally prepared and had clear objectives prior to the pandemic were able to face the closure of schools without great difficulties

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic particularly affected the Americas, with most countries in the region suffering full or partial school closures and having to adapt to alternative means of education. At the beginning, in March 2020, almost 155 million children in the countries of America were not attending school (UNICEF, 2020). Statistics built on the basis of surveys carried out by UNICEF, UNESCO and the World Bank (2020) in different instances to the Ministries of Education of some countries[1] show that by October 2020, an average of 47 days of school had been missed, which is equivalent to a quarter of the school year. The average rose to 54 days in countries that still had the current academic year[2].

Although schools are gradually reopening in various parts of the world, at the time of writing this report (February 2021), the vast majority of classrooms are still closed throughout the region and it is not yet known for sure what will happen in 2021 (UNICEF, 2020e). Almost a year after the start of the pandemic, COVID-19 continues to put education on hold for more than 137 million children and adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The severity of the impact has begun to be felt in different spheres. From an economic point of view, there is evidence that the loss of future income of students will increase with an increase in the duration of the suspension of schooling. For example, a preliminary research study conducted by The Brookings Institution, estimated a loss of income of $ 1,337 per year per student in the period of 4 months without classes (Aroob Iqbal, S., et al, 2020). A simulator developed by the World Bank to measure the potential impact of school closures on learning, based on data from 157 countries, showed that, without compensatory actions, 7 months' absence could result in a loss of up to $25,680 during the working life of an average student.

Likewise, the World Bank estimates that there will be a significant drop in the global level of schooling and learning. The COVID-19 crisis could result in a loss of between 0.3 and 0.9 years of schooling, negatively impacting the years of basic schooling that students achieve in their lives. Around 7 million primary and secondary students could drop out of school due to the decrease in income from the pandemic (Aroob Iqbal, S., et al, 2020). Estimates made in May 2020, after only two months since the closure of schools, considering a forecast of a return to school in September, indicated students would achieve only 70% of what was usually expected in reading during a typical year school and only 50% in mathematics. These same estimates showed almost a whole year of delay for students of

[1] The study includes a sample of 121 countries, excluding 28 countries that requested not to be included in the publicly available data set. In terms of regional distribution, there were 5 North African countries, 26 sub-Saharan African countries, 9 Central and South Asian countries, 11 East and Southeast Asia countries, 11 West Asian countries, 26 European countries, 25 countries from Latin America and the Caribbean, 1 country from North America and 7 countries from Oceania.

[2] At the time of writing this document, a third round of information gathering and publication of this report is foreseen. http://tcg.uis.unesco.org/survey-education-covid-school-closures/

certain school years, compared to what could be learned under normal conditions (UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, 2020)

In addition to barriers of access, there are other factors that affect the loss of student learning. Among them are the availability of resources and the readiness of teachers to switch to virtual education, the emotional overload generated by this new way of teaching modality during a health emergency, the ability of students to sustain interest and active participation in adverse conditions such as the lack of a dedicated space for learning, responsibility for household chores, and the increased difficulty to understand the concepts taught and to ask for help in the new working environment (whether that be through booklet, television, radio, texting or online learning). The available literature also increases the likelihood of finding more adverse effects on marginalized groups such as ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and girls/women.

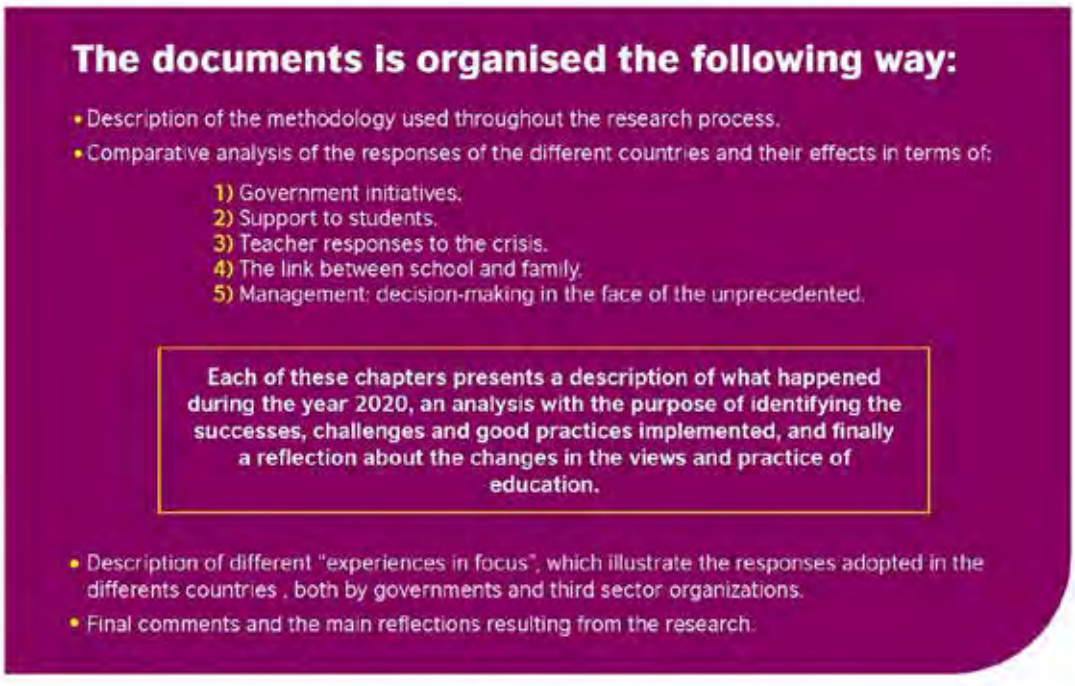
Some reports suggest that the return to school for children with disabilities is likely to be more complex than for their peers. Families of these children have expressed their concern about the difficulty of their children to maintain social distance, about the availability of facilities and accessible infrastructure, as well as the greater propensity to contract the virus. This could result in them choosing to keep their children at home, which could negatively affect the continuity of their education. At the same time, those who live in disadvantaged environments, in marginalized situations, will undoubtedly have had greater difficulties in continuing their schooling during the school closures. These children may even be at risk of abandoning the education system, so it would be necessary to pay special attention to their reintegration.

Regarding female students, some data anticipates that progress in relation to gender equality in education could have been delayed due to the pandemic. There is evidence from past crises that shows that girls are particularly vulnerable to prolonged school closures. School closures exacerbate the unpaid care work of girls and women, limiting their available time to study at home. In addition, gender inequality in the digital sphere is also reflected in fewer learning opportunities for female students during these periods (UNESCO, 2020e). On the other hand, quarantine due to COVID19 has increased the exposure of many girls to the risk of gender violence in the home and have at the same time reduced their possibilities of accessing services for their protection, nutrition, health and well-being (UNESCO, 2020b).

At the time of publishing this report, numerous documents are available in relation to the initial state of education systems in the face of this emergency and the responses of governments. However, beyond some estimates made, there are still significant gaps in the effectiveness of these responses (including distance learning, online guided learning, mobile learning, television and radio, etc.) and the specific effects of the pandemic on education.

In this context the British Council Argentina, in alliance with the Varkey Foundation, considered it appropriate to generate a report that accounts for the measures taken during the pandemic by governments and schools and identify lessons learned and challenges for 2021, in order to improve on solutions that were adopted in the event of the contingency. Likewise, this document enables reflections on the profound changes that school systems have undergone and the effect on post-pandemic education.

Specifically, the research includes 11 countries in the Americas: **Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, United States, Mexico, Peru, Dominican Republic and Uruguay[3].**



Methodology

The research was based on a methodological triangulation of quantitative and qualitative approach, using the following research techniques: literature review, data analysis, interviews, surveys and focus groups.

In the **first instance**, to analyse how the educational systems of the different countries of America were affected by the pandemic, a review and analysis was carried out of the content of the existing academic literature, official documents (laws, resolutions, etc.), websites, official documents from international organisations, reports, local media and reports. More than 200 documents published between April 2020 and January 2021 were consulted. This first stage included information on the pre-pandemic context of the education systems (their institutional and governance characteristics and their "preparation" to approach distance education) and on the responses adopted by each country to guarantee pedagogical continuity. As way of synthesis, responses by country are available in the Annex.

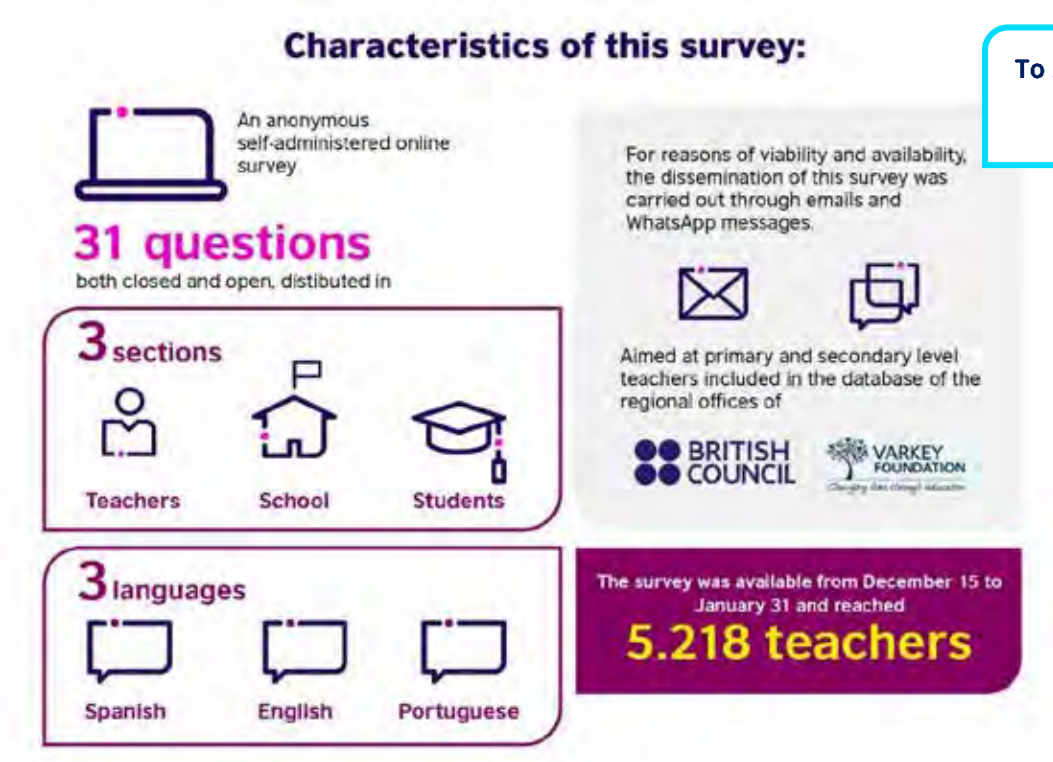
In the **second instance**, information "gaps" were identified on the objectives and research problems that emerged from the first stage and this led to surveys, interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders and representatives of countries under analysis to seek to fill those gaps.

The research techniques applied in these instances are described below.

[3] Those countries where organizations have alliances, contacts or the possibility of accessing relevant actors were prioritized.

Teacher survey

The objective of the teacher survey was to identify how the initial conditions of the educational systems affected the performance of the teachers, which were the resources they used the most, who they relied on, what follow-up they carried out of their students and the perception they had regarding to the lessons learned.



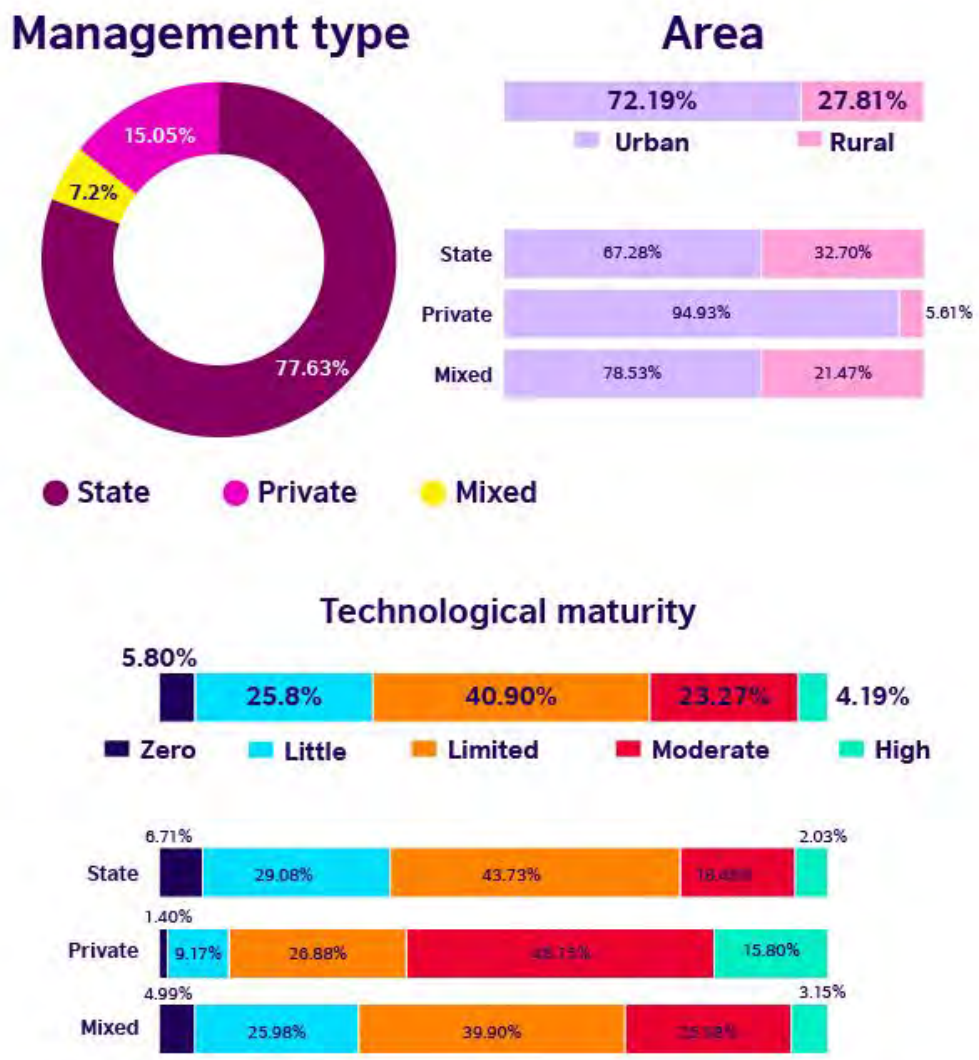
To see survey results click here!

From the survey, the following limitations are recognized:

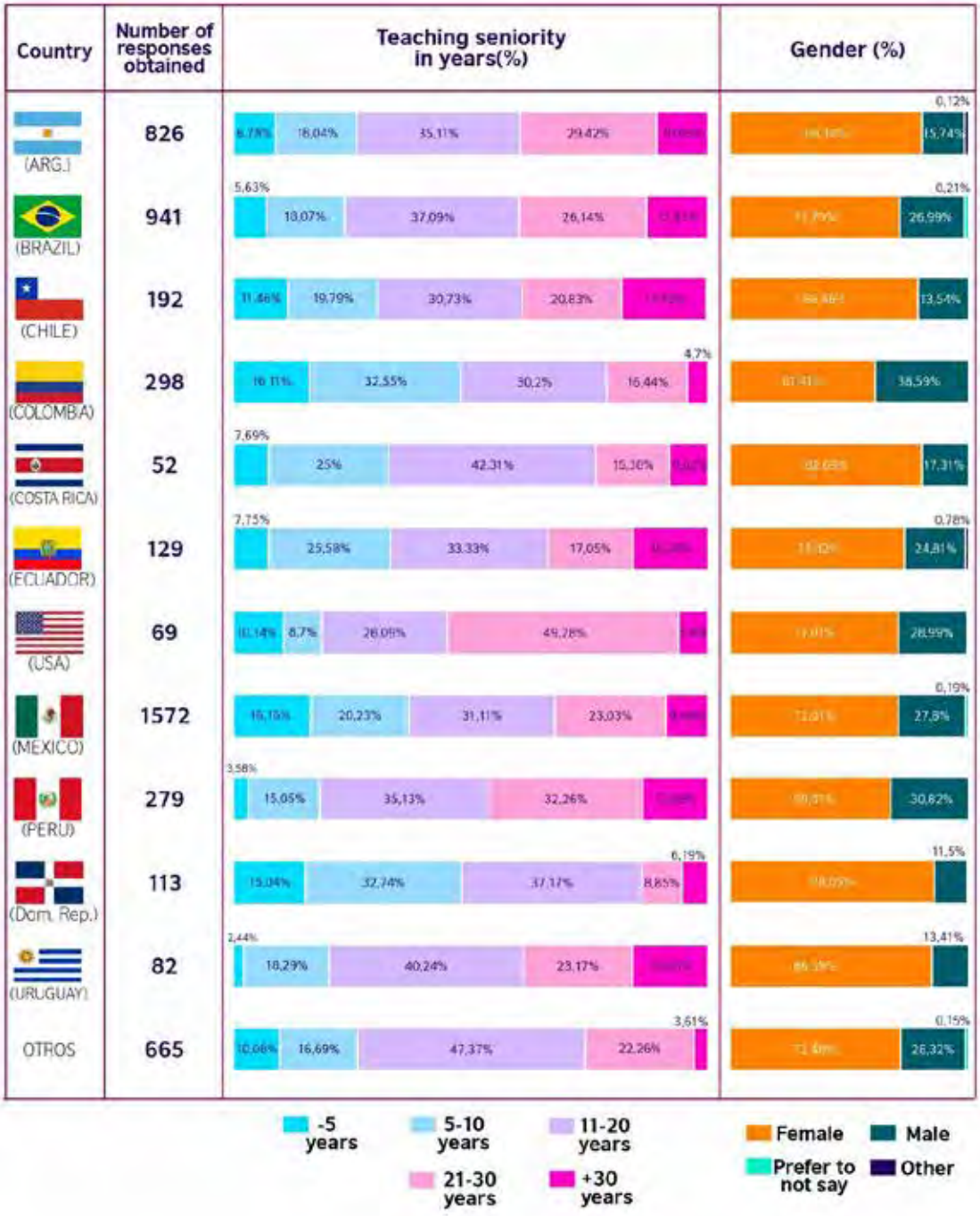
- The sample was not random, and the teachers surveyed were self-selected.
- The survey was conducted online and therefore cannot represent the views of those teachers who do not have internet access.
- The sample size by country was not proportional to the population size, which means that results cannot be generalized, and certain data sources may predominate.
- The lower response rate in some countries (Costa Rica and the United States) could be associated with a lower penetration of the dissemination of the survey in those territories.

Profile of respondents:

Characteristics of the teachers' schools surveyed



Characteristics of teacher respondent



Interviews

The interviews conducted were semi-structured and focused on four aspects:

- The description and assessment of the interviewee in relation to the initiatives and measures adopted by national governments,
- Knowledge about successful experiences at the school or program level,
- Reflection on the impact of the crisis in the education system,
- Medium and long-term responses that in his opinion should be planned by the government, schools and the third sector.

For the treatment of the interviews, the different responses of each person interviewed were categorized and then converged on a base that contemplates the structure of final categories and their subcategories. These categories allowed the information to be grouped into 5 themes that shaped the report and which are developed in the different chapters:

1. Government initiatives
2. Support to students
3. Teacher responses to the crisis
4. The link between school and family
5. Management: decision-making in the face of the unprecedented

The categories and their subcategories are described below.

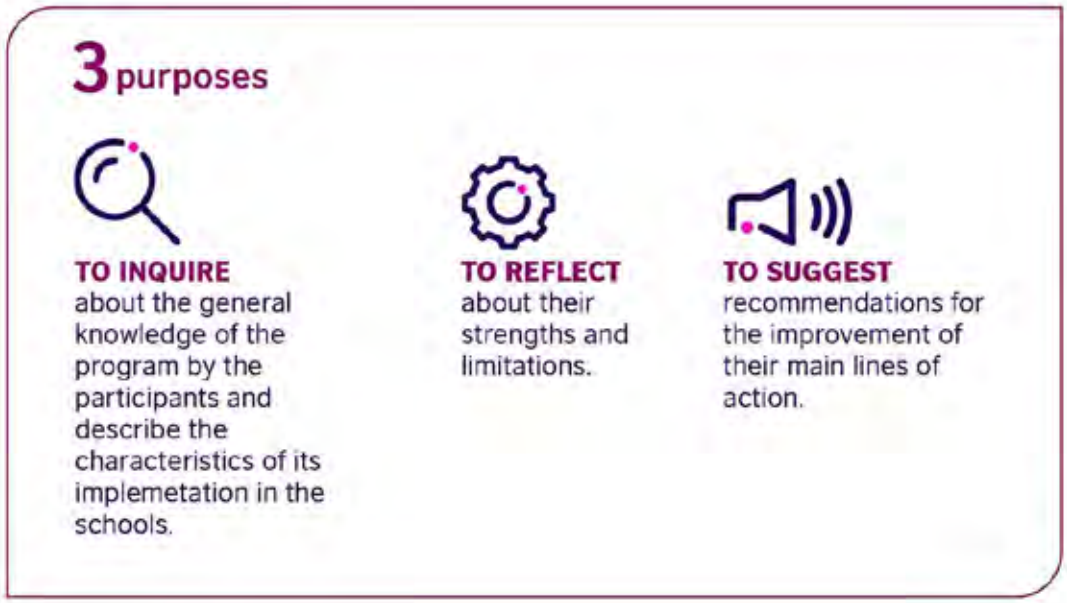
Categories and subcategories

Focus groups

The objective of the focus groups was to gather information about the characteristics of the implementation of the programs that have been selected as **"experiences in focus"** in the framework of this research. These meetings were aimed at exploring the perceptions and evaluations of teachers and management teams of the target schools of these programs or initiatives. The segmentation criteria of the participants included aspects related to:

- The professional position (management team, teacher, pedagogical coordinator) and seniority in the function
- The characteristics of their school institutions, namely, the type of school management (Public and Private), the area (Rural and Urban), the geographical location and the socioeconomic level of its population.

Following these postulates, the groups were composed in a heterogeneous way, with a minimum of six to a maximum of twelve participants. The meetings focused on three purposes:



11 focus groups were carried out with the participation of 67 teachers and school leaders. In some countries, despite previous confirmation of attendance, it was not possible to count on the necessary number of participants in order to hold the meeting.

1.
Government initiatives

Comparative analysis

Based on the material collected through the different instruments detailed above, in the next 5 chapters a comparative analysis of the responses to the closure of schools in different countries is presented, identifying successes and challenges and including reflections on the changes that have occurred regarding the vision of school education.

1. Government initiatives

Distance learning initiatives were implemented in very heterogeneous settings, mainly due to accessibility to resources such as the internet, electronic devices (radio, TV, computer, cell phone) or even electricity. In some cases, countries had initial conditions that facilitated decision-making and the implementation of responses. The government official interviewed agreed that **emergency actions were taken anticipating the period of school closures would not last as long as it actually did.** The initiatives that are analysed in this chapter consist of:

50% of teachers who answered the survey reported not having received digital expansion related to increasing connectivity and access to devices such as computers, tablets or mobile. 30% reported not having greater access to repositories of digital content or software and educational platforms.

Table N° 1: Digital infrastructure expansion in school institutions and their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

	I don't know where the media came from	Means provided by the government	Means provided by the school	Means provided by NGO	Means provided by a private sector organization	Means provided by unions	There was no digital expansion
Connectivity (Internet, data plan)	11,87%	13,95%	17,60%	0,75%	4,18%	0,21%	
Digital educational content repository	13,99%	9,26%	17,16%	0,59%	3,11%	0,48%	
Mobile devices (computers, tablets, cellphones)	9,24%		24,84%	1,30%	3,43%	0,33%	
Software or online platforms	8,57%	20,54%	23,94%	0,84%	4,85%	0,50%	

Source: own elaboration based on data from teachers survey.

In expanding access to connectivity (49%) and devices (45%), the school was more involved than the government.

- In the case of connectivity, the proportion was: 17,6% was provided by the school versus 13,95% being provided by the government. When analysing this by type of management[4], state school teachers indicated that 17% was provided by the government and 13% were provided by the school. Regarding privately managed teachers, 40% stated that they had provision of connectivity, of which they indicate that 3% came from the government and 37% from schools.

- Regarding the devices (computers, tablets, cell phones), 17.15% of the teachers surveyed claim that they were provided by the school against 9.26% provided by the government. If analysed by type of management[1], the set of state school teachers indicates that approximately 11% was provided by the government and 13% provided by the school. As for privately managed teachers, 36% stated that they had provision of devices, of which approximately 2% indicate that they came from the government and 35% from schools.

When considering the responses according to urban or rural area, the trend is maintained with regard to the access to each of the elements considered, and varies slightly when discriminating by provider (the recognition attributed to the government being higher than schools in rural areas when compared to those urban areas).

Regarding access to online content in repository format (70%), educational platform or software (67%):

- 31% indicated that the repositories of educational content in digital format to which they had access came from the government and 25% that it was provided by the school.

[4] This can be visualized by applying the "management" filter in the dashboard. The filter shows the results of the teachers' survey.

- Regarding access to educational software or digital platforms, the participation of the government in the provision (28%) over the school (24%) is also perceived to be slightly higher.

- Regarding the remaining values, about 10% did not know where the media were provided. About 5% indicated that it was provided by the private sector and about 1% that it comes from NGOs and unions respectively.

In summary, it was observed that to a large degree, educational continuity was achieved a result of a shared effort between the government and educational institutions.

1.1 Strategies and means to facilitate distance education

This section describes the characteristics of the means used to sustain educational continuity. Special attention will be paid to mentioning good practices that have been shared in forums or publications and reflections or opinions of the persons interviewed.

Platforms, connectivity and devices

This triad is presented in all the countries of the Americas under analysis. In other words, wherever educational platforms or digital content repositories were implemented, measures were also taken to expand connectivity and access to technological devices.

Platforms

The 11 countries under analysis developed **proposals in digital online learning portals and made access to educational content available via the web.** In some cases, there were already existing portals, but even so, many were not prepared to receive the increase in the number of visits that occurred during the school closures. For this reason, many had to adapt or rebuild.

With regard to diversity and special needs, some platforms presented part of their content in native languages, and applications aimed at students with visual or hearing disabilities (e.g. Aprendo en Casa - Peru). Some were designed to strengthen the television proposal and promote contact with families and students (Educa-Ecuador). Families were the exclusive recipients of some of the digital content, particularly when it came to accompanying early childhood (Tempo de Aprender - Brazil). Likewise, exclusive actions were implemented for teachers and students, such as partnerships with mobile application companies to allow teachers and students to access free resources related to communication, class management, digital libraries, content management and learning online, among others (Aprendo en Casa - Peru). Chapter 3, aimed at teaching during school closures due to COVID-19, will analyse in greater detail the resources offered and online training that was developed to strengthen teacher professional development.

In the cases analysed, examples were identified in which national and regional programs coexisted. Some were defined as complementary actions that expanded the national offer, making available a content repository (ReCrea Digital- State of Jalisco, Mexico).

Finally, the Uruguayan proposal stands out. Because of Plan Ceibal the “Uruguay Educa” platform and “CREA Platform (LMS)” for classroom management and access to curricular content were available. Uruguay are also able to guarantee access to a device for each student in the education system and has a large number of resources through the Digital Library, the Open Educational Resources Repository, with more than 50 applications included in tablets. In addition, it made available web videoconferencing platforms to help in this period of social isolation.

In some cases, specific actions were developed in order to guarantee the teaching of the English language. Some examples of these are “Aprende en Casa Perú – Área Inglés” program, and in Colombia, the digital App. #BeThe1Challenge”. The latter was an initiative of the National Ministry of Education in partnership with The British Council which aims to reinforce the English language in students from 6° to 11° grade in all schools in the country. #BeThe1Challenge uses pedagogic and gamified tools that create a stimulating, exciting and fun learning environment with a gamified user experience for children. At the same time, it provides English teachers with a useful tool to stimulate their students in the process of learning the language (Colombia Aprende, 2020)

Connectivity

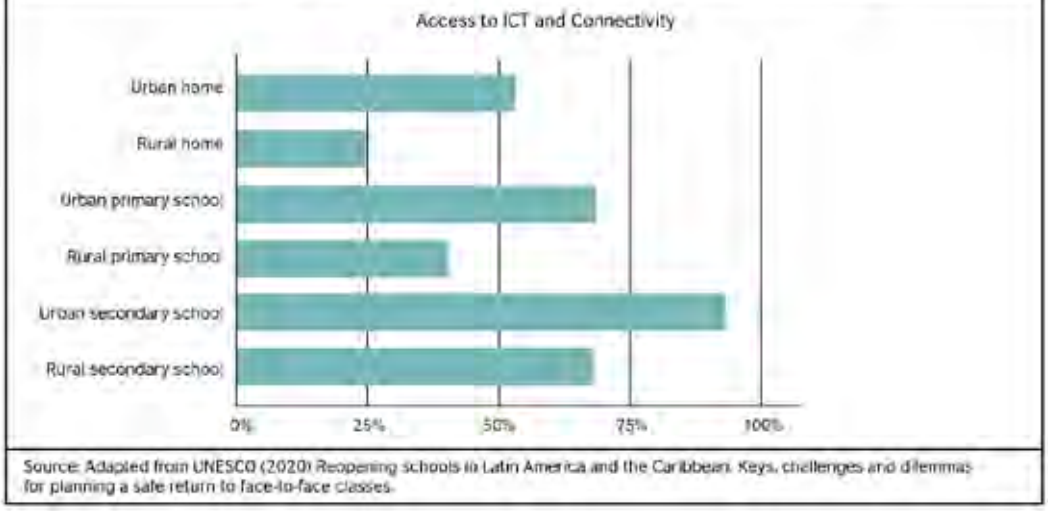
Access to educational platforms was sought by expanding connectivity. **Agreements were made with telecommunications companies to free up the use of mobile data** in accessing educational platforms so that students could browse for free (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Costa Rica). Publications on these initiatives indicate that these agreements have limits that are associated with the design of the platforms, many of them with links to resources outside the domain of the portal, as it is in the case of Argentina (Cardini et. Al, 2020). In other cases, agreements with the mobile phone operators were not based on a single domain, but on 5, as it is in the case of Colombia (Universidad de Los Andes, 2020). This action was implemented in conjunction with the design of a version of the national platform "Colombia Aprende" specifically for browsing from cell phones "Colombia Aprende Móvil" (Siteal, 2020; Sanchez Ciarrusta, A., 2020). And in terms of results, between April 21 and May 14, this site received almost 283,000 visits from around 66,000 users (Sanchez Ciarrusta, A., 2020). A similar strategy for adapting the platform for navigation with mobile telephony was carried out by the Department of Educational Technology of the Ministry of Education of Peru, in which the content of the national program “Aprendo en Casa” was made available on a bigger scale, which facilitated access to users with lower bandwidth. (Muñoz Najar, 2020).

Even with all the initiatives aimed at expanding access to online training, the practice of synchronous and asynchronous virtual teaching encountered limitations due to lack of internet connectivity, bandwidth or access to devices.

“We were not prepared, we did not even have a telephone connection with the students. It is the common denominator of urban and rural schools in Chile. We have a very high number of schools with internet, but without access to families. 30% of students nationwide have an adequate connection for synchronicity. In my case, we are practically isolated. The cell phone plans that families have access to are very basic and restrictive, they did not allow access to many platforms, in addition to the parents' lack of digital skills ”. (Academic, Argentina)

These perceptions are consistent with the data presented by the IDB and UNESCO (Berlanga, C., et. al, 2020) based on PISA 2018, in which it is observed that internet access reaches 54% in urban homes and rises to 70% in primary schools and 95% in secondary schools. In rural areas, the values range from a 25% access in homes to 41% in schools at the primary level and 69% at the secondary level.

Graph N° 1: Access to ICT and internet connection at homes and schools



Source: Adapted from UNESCO (2020) Reopening schools in Latin America and the Caribbean. Keys, challenges and dilemmas for planning a safe return to face-to-face classes.

In rural areas, in addition to access gaps, there is also a difference in the quality of the service. In some cases, connectivity was strengthened by expanding the infrastructure and providing greater supply.

"Connectivity was not enough in rural areas because it was 3G or less... and to meet the requirements that students had, they needed high performance connectivity. They reinforced the connections, made 300 of those connections, and greatly strengthened the Educational Centers. In May they returned to face to face for that reason... because they did not have enough connectivity. But this is uneven in the country". (NGO leader, Uruguay)

The proposals for virtual home teaching highlighted the lack of internet connection in the homes of students who do have this service at school and the lack of devices to support these technologies at home. *"In the last 8 years, nationwide, they have been distributing computers. And in the city there was the Sarmiento Plan. This is not from now. (...) The city distributed resources, has connected the schools to the internet. The schools, but not the houses. They distributed computers that weren't connected. (...) When I say that the school got into the house, it got offline, it became a bit isolated. What should be done is deepen connectivity. Not only the teachers', but for many kids as well. We must begin to deepen the use of technologies and provide more computers and technological equipment, mainly for teachers and for children".* (Teacher Union leader, Argentina)

Finally, **some governments have allocated or increased funds to implement, improve or expand the internet connectivity service** of schools (Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica and Peru). These initiatives are especially relevant in view of possible partial openings of schools, greater freedom of movement of teachers and students, and the potential adoption of hybrid models of teaching and learning. In the case of Brazil, within the "Connected Education Innovation Program" the aim is to exceed 80% of Internet coverage in urban schools and reach 40% of rural schools (Siteal, 2020; Vilela, 2020). Finally, the Ministry of Education of Peru reported that it is developing the strategy "Todos y todas conectados" This initiative seeks to provide connectivity, by March 2021, to some 18 thousand educational institutions through a system of web servers and antennas that will allow the contents of the "Aprendo en Casa" platform to be transmitted to their students (Siteal, 2020).

Devices

In relation to the **distribution of equipment**, in Argentina for example, the City of Buenos Aires, within the framework of the "Plan Sarmiento", computers and tablets were delivered to students of families benefiting from social plans and / or residents of vulnerable neighborhoods (Molina, 2020; Cardini, et al. 2020). At the national level, computers that had been acquired some time ago but which remained in storage, without having been delivered (Cardini et al., 2020). In Costa Rica, within the framework of the "Hogares Conectados" (Connected Homes) program, a list was drawn up to define students in need of social assistance and therefore to be benefited by the delivery of computers (Ministry of Public Education, 2 020). In Argentina, Banco Nación offered loans at a subsidized rate to facilitate the purchase of computers by teachers (Molina, 2020).

In the case of Chile, computers and tablets were delivered to populations identified as vulnerable and it was decided to incorporate free internet access to the devices for approximately one year. This initiative is part of the collaboration of business associations, within the framework of the "Siempre por Chile" (Always for Chile) initiative, which groups together companies and entrepreneurs summoned by the Confederation of Production and Commerce (CPC) (Siteal, 2020). In California, United States, Google together with the local government made donations of computers to students in rural areas (ECS, 2020b). Similar alliances were made in Ecuador (between companies, decentralized governments, international organisations, the public sector and the civil society) for the delivery of devices within the framework of the "Conectando al Futuro" plan -Connecting to the Future- (Ministry of Education, 2020). This last initiative, like that Colombia´s (delivery of equipment to students and teachers), has precise information on the quantity or status of the delivery of the devices. In the case of Colombia, the information is systematized by jurisdiction, scope and institution (Government of Colombia, 2020).

Some of the persons interviewed questioned the prioritisation of these device delivery initiatives over others. They consider that these proposals, attract media interest, but previous conditions did not exist (previous plans with professional teacher training for the use of these resources and connectivity). The use of funds destined for these purposes, if carried out with other actions, would have had a greater probability of impact on learning.

Radio and TV programs with educational content

"There were problems such as, for example, families that only had one device. So I had to prioritize: Who is given priority? To learning? To work?". (Government official, Colombia)

Faced with the access barriers generated by the lack of devices and connectivity, educational television and radio were an option adopted by the countries to sustain educational continuity. In some countries, there were previous experiences that accelerated design and distribution actions, that can be taken into account to analyse these proposals in terms of potential results.

The educational broadcasts on television and radio, contemplated the educational needs of students and were a means to offer intergenerational learning on health and psycho-social well-being issues during the threat of COVID-19. The fine-tuning of these proposals raised some coordination challenges in the absence of prior collaboration between specialists in the educational field and the audiovisual sector. Regarding capacity challenges, it became necessary to procure large amounts of content of training, and resources to generate instruments for monitoring and evaluating learning in a short time.

In the meetings held by UNESCO between May 11, 2020 and July 21, the representatives of the national radio broadcasters assigned great importance to the collaboration between teachers, authorities of the education sector and broadcasters for the elaboration of content. However, they agreed that it is still necessary to have investment in order to evaluate aspects such as the quality of educational programs, the motivation of students and learning outcomes (UNESCO, 2020a).

When reviewing the steps that allowed for an agile response, the following actions were identified, accompanied by examples from the countries under analysis:

Identify the available resources:

- "Telesecundaria" in Mexico is a proposal that existed before the pandemic and is now being used by students in Central American countries, the United States and Canada. (Cobo and Sanchez Ciarrusta, 2020)

- The government of the Dominican Republic made alliances with third sector organisations. *"All the videos were delivered to television, to an educational channel." (Academic, Dominican Republic)*

- In Colombia previously prepared content was also used. *"In Colombia television programs, in particular a program called COLOMBIA APRENDE, which has been running for a while and was brought to TV. The elements of Colombia Aprende were taken and classes were held on TV". (Academic, Colombia)*

Identify the platforms for transmission:

- MINEDU Peru, used pre-existing alliances with TV Peru and Radio Nacional, both operated by the government, and which also incorporated the main private TV signal that broadcasts classes for the last year of high school (Munoz-Najar, A., 2020)

- The persons interviewed from Mexico stated that unequal access to transmission platforms made it difficult to identify a good partner. *"We have to recognize that TV programming left out a large number of students, due to the lack of accessibility. The big national chains, the public TV has few repeaters and little reach. Private TV has uneven coverage in the territory and that brought a big problem". (NGO leader, Mexico)*. To support this action, public institutions of Higher Education joined the transmission through their television and radio broadcasting systems.

Maintaining a regular broadcast schedule and communicate it:

- The definition of the duration of the transmission varied as the closure of schools was prolonged to the new school year. *"The first thing that came up were 27 sessions of 50 minutes on TV. The compulsory working day (between 6 and 12 years old) is 4 hours and that was reduced to 50 minutes of television programming. There was a very low contact with learning opportunities. We sought to reach the maximum penetration after those 27 sessions, almost at the end of the school year... (classes begin in August and go until June), that summer period was to rethink the strategies such as an extension of hours: it went from 50 to 120 minutes". (NGO leader, Mexico)*

- Partnerships with private broadcasters made it possible to expand the time slot for educational content programming. *"(..) The government sent the classes out there, it signed an agreement with the private television stations to put the content there. So that the student had different options according to their schedules". (Government official, Mexico)*

- Programmes such as *VeoVeo, Papo's Workshop*, *I am made in Ecuador, Tell and tell you* and *Chao Pereza* are part of Ecuador's "Educa" strategy, and are presented on television in 160 channels with local, regional and national coverage. In turn, it has a digital channel, which is active 24 hours a day and educational programming on the radio "Educa Contigo".

Just as some tips were structured for the fine-tuning of television training proposals, there have been initiatives that systematise good practices for educational radio programming. Below there is a summary of the advice published by the Education Development Center (2020b).

Identify channels for transmission:

In general, national TV channels are the simplest means of reaching the largest number of people. However, this can also be supplemented by:

- Diffusion by community radio stations: Community radio stations can support educational radio by broadcasting advice on what is necessary for education to take place and to share good practices and experiences of local people. Community radio stations are also usually trusted by locals.

- Telephony: using the reversal of charges option, it would be possible to have a telephone number that does not imply any cost for the user. Through a system of programmed options you could choose content to listen to. This method has the advantage of being able to have individualized follow-up through the phone number and the advantage of flexible hours of access to educational material.

- Satellite and Shortwave Radio - These two methods have a long range and may therefore be better than an FM signal.

- Uploading to a web page, which enables downloads and streaming can contribute to the diffusion even when there are interruptions in connectivity.

- Uploading content to a podcast contributes to the dissemination to the extent that the content organisation is generated in a serial format, which can help access to new chapters reach the user without the need to search for it.

Use programs already designed without making edits:

- Radio programmes designed with an interactive approach provide learning opportunities for students. When preparing to reuse these materials, it is important to bear in mind that making changes and / or cuts may cause difficulties in understanding the activities or content, since these are often interrelated. That is why it is suggested to keep the material as it was prepared even when there may be subsequent curricular adjustments that do not impact the content.

Provide guidance for participation in activities:

- A fundamental aspect of all distance learning proposals is preparing the environment to receive and participate in training activities. In this sense, it is important to provide advice and guidance that accompany the material. In some cases, educational proposals designed for radio in contexts prior to the pandemic include moments of group or peer work; in order to carry out these activities when children are at home, the participation of families is likely to be required. And this should be reported in advance and made as clear as possible.

1.2 Analysis

Initial conditions

The difference in initiatives coincided with the diversity of resources and knowledge available to schools and the general population. Responses adopted at the beginning of the school closure period tended to establish direct communication between the ministry and the students and their families. As the weeks advanced, and it was observed that school closures would continue, it was necessary to strengthen the bond between teachers and students. However, as previously mentioned, access to connectivity, digital devices, educational platforms and videoconferencing was unequal. The responses, therefore, had to be consistent with the level of technological maturity of populations and educational institutions.

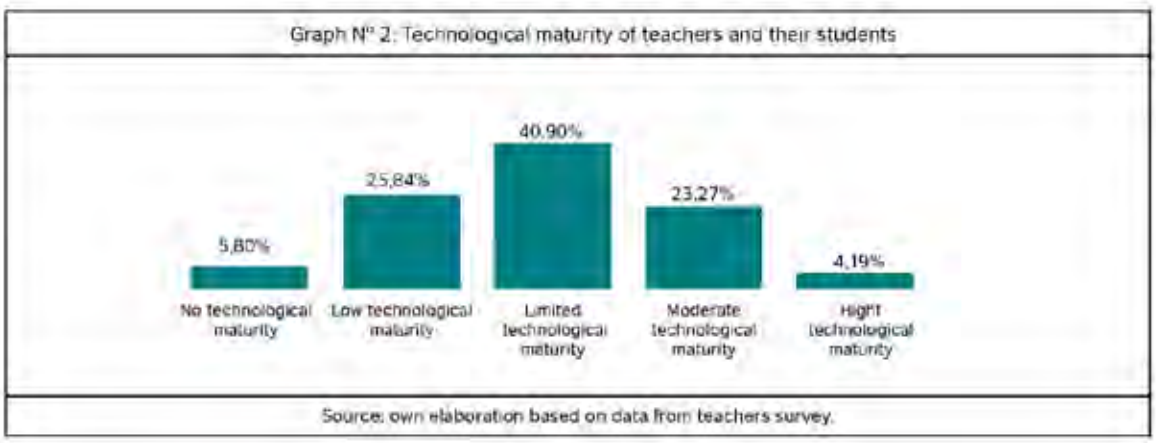
The Distance Learning Framework developed by McKinsey (Dorn, E., et al., 2020b) defines these possible scenarios and presents their corresponding educational responses:

Table N°2: Digital scope and technological availability. Possible scenarios and appropriate educational responses.

Technological Maturity Level	*Characteristics*	*Answers*
Zero	No access to electricity, little TV or radio reach, limited telephony.	Printed material and interaction through notes is the only possible means for remote training.
Little	Stable electricity, high radio and television range, basic access to telephones (e.g., analog devices) for students and teachers, low digital literacy on the part of users.	Massive initiatives such as educational radio and TV programs can be implemented. And cell phones or landlines can support interaction between teachers and students.
Limited	Internet access for the majority of students and teachers, limited access to digital devices - device sharing among multiple users - some digital literacy by users and decreased use of this knowledge in the classroom.	It is possible to exchange materials from videos made or selected by teachers and the generation of activities for students to solve without having to be connected to the internet. In this case, the follow-up can be done by emails, individual videoconferences (one to one) or in a group (the teacher with several students).
Moderate	Access to the Internet and digital devices for the majority of students and teachers, some digital literacy on the part of users, and some use of this knowledge in the classroom	
High	High-speed Internet access and access to digital devices for the majority of students and teachers, moderate or high digital literacy and extensive use of this knowledge in the classroom, incorporating it into the curriculum, etc.	They support adaptive software and virtual teaching systems. In this case, the instructions or activities can be programmed so that they are adapted to the knowledge that each student possesses and becomes more complex as the student manages to correctly solve the activities. Teachers can follow their students' progress online and interact with them through multiple channels (chats, blogs, emails, and video conferences).

Source: Own elaboration based on McKinsey, 2020: *Back to school: A framework for remote and hybrid learning amid covid 19.*

When analysing the back to school hybrid proposals, in the short or medium term, it is necessary to have a clear picture of this aspect. In this study, a survey was conducted among teachers to find out more about their situation. Although the results are not representative, they provide an orientation and approach to the topic. 4% of the teachers reached by the survey claimed to have high technological maturity in their environment. This allows to make some hypotheses regarding how far this scenario is from the norm of schools and homes in the countries under analysis.



40,9% of the teachers surveyed reported that they carried out their tasks in environments with limited technological capacity for asynchronous teaching. However, as Trujillo and Navaz (2020) point out, it is necessary to highlight that technological conditions are necessary but not sufficient: *"The prior presence of technology in educational centres (which may well have been understood in different ways in different educational centres, and even within the same centre, as shown by Sancho Gil and Padilla Petry, 2016, or Area-Moreira, Hernández-Rivero and Sosa-Alonso, 2016) becomes a "triggering" factor now because it could condition the technological competencies that students should learn at this time "* (Trujillo et. al., 2020).

25,84% of the teachers indicated that they were in scenarios of low technological maturity, in these cases Radio and Television are most appropriate. This is the reason why we will analyse them below.

Finally, we observed that 5,8% of teachers affirmed that they teach in places without technological maturity. This group may be underrepresented as the survey was administered only in digital format, therefore, a higher percentage was expected within this group. This implies that the intention to sustain educational continuity through printed material was successful. As well as the decision to diversify efforts.

"Aprendo en Casa" was set up with 4 channels. A Virtual channel, with forums and online classrooms for teachers (many teachers did not know how to use the pc, or they did not have internet connectivity) to overcome this they did training for teachers- 100% of the teachers had training. They also accompanied the teachers. Canal Capital - TV: slots from 7 to 10 and 14 to 17 with an emphasis on academic content on television. Also, a Radio channel: three times a week. Accompanied reading emphasis. They made an alliance with the stations. On-site channel: 200,000 children with materials and kits. Family compensation funds were the nexus". (Government official, Colombia)

Effectiveness of the responses

The perception of the effectiveness of the different distance training modalities implemented by governments was captured in a survey carried out by UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank. The results allow us to know the opinion of leaders of the Ministries of Education of 149 countries (among which we can find insight of Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay), between July and October 2020, on the effectiveness of these distance education proposals. However, they do not account for aspects related to implementation or the proportion of recipients reached, nor do they allow specifying by system (state or private).

The results, grouping the responses by level of income in the country, indicate that globally **online platforms were rated as very effective** by 36% of the respondents and quite effective by 58% of the total consulted. The positive assessment is higher in countries with upper and upper middle income. And being, in this same group, the negative assessment of this modality is very low: only 6% of upper middle income considered online platforms as ineffective (UNESCO, UNICEF and The World Bank, 2020).

The programming of educational content on television was the most used modality in lower income contexts, and when there was no internet access at home. Globally, it was considered very effective by 28% of the respondents, ranking second after online training (UNESCO, UNICEF and The World Bank, 2020).

> *"There was no evidence of the use of TV, it was an experiment. We always have the doubt of how viable the strategies have been because there was no time to schedule a follow-up of evidence, which is random, logical. The ministry was considering to stop the school year, we stood up to say "education continues, whatever it may be".* (NGO leader, Dominican Republic)

Radio was considered a fairly effective remote learning proposal by 65% of low-income and lower-middle-income countries. And 16% of respondents from those countries considered it very effective. This group tended to perceive the other remote teaching proposals (online, TV and booklets) as not very effective (UNESCO, UNICEF and The World Bank, 2020).

These approaches offer some perspectives regarding the effectiveness of the Online, Television and Radio modalities. However, while more rigorous measurements are not yet available, it is possible to analyse the effects of these modalities in pre-pandemic situations.

Online interaction synchronous or asynchronous teaching?

The McKinsey report "Back to School: Lessons for Effective Remote and Hybrid Learning" (Dorn, E., 2020c) identifies the different instances of teaching and, analyses which are most effective. Among the teaching instances identified, there are instances of direct instruction, instances for students to explore the content and carry out learning, instances of discussion, instances of guided practice and independent work. Followed by instances of assessment that allow the teacher to recognise the learning achievements reached and adapt their teaching practice. Having recognized the instances, it is possible to make suggestions, prioritising, for example, synchronous instances on occasions in which the

participation of the whole group and the teacher's intervention during the activities will be possible.

The research published so far regarding synchronous or asynchronous teaching does not highlight one method over the other. The synthesis of more than 60 research studies prepared by the Education Endowment Foundation reaches the following conclusions:

- The quality of teaching is more important than the technology used (this implies that an explanation made by the teacher in video or synchronous format has a differential impact according to the quality of the explanation and not the means by which it is transmitted);
- Access to technology is a limiting factor (so clear explanations are required for both teachers and students regarding the use of new tools);
- The interaction between students promotes motivation and contributes to learning (the opportunities to tell how they solved an activity, or make corrections among peers are very beneficial although they require different supports according to the age of the students);
- Offering support for autonomous work improves learning (metacognition activities that, for example, prepare the student to identify what to do when they get stuck, are very helpful);
- In the diversity of ways of implementing remote teaching, there are adequate proposals for different content and learning styles of students (for example, games can be useful to teach vocabulary in a foreign language but their effectiveness cannot be assured in other areas of knowledge) (Education Endowment Foundation, 2020).

The limits of these investigations, carried out prior to the closure of classes due to COVID-19, lie in the fact that the remote teaching situations analysed are not similar to distance education in times of the pandemic. For example, many of the distance learning technologies used were implemented in schools to support face-to-face teaching. Furthermore, in the cases in which distance learning is involved, in general, the students came from a young adult population. In other words, the effects on students in the first years of schooling are not considered.

During the pandemic, the use of videoconferencing has undoubtedly meant teachers who used it have been able to offer greater support and have had more communication with their students at home. In the following chapters, this will be explored in more detail. Regarding the decision of which method to use, whether synchronous or asynchronous, this was stated by one of the leader of the interviewed schools:

"What I can tell you is that we changed the course of action several times. The first answer was very different from what we can give now. Families didn't have that many connecting devices so we advocated for everything to be asynchronous. We recorded all the classes and the teachers were always ready to support.

After 15 days we sent a survey to understand what the experiences had been in those days, how they were feeling and how we could better accompany them. We realised that the asynchronous was working but that we lacked the synchronous accompaniment, the feeling of being heard. So we started the process of making more synchronous classes and less asynchronous. In any case, the material was available for those students who could not be online". (Teacher leader, Mexico)

Is educational interaction on television possible?

Educational television has more than 50 years of experience as a distance training proposal. In Mexico, in normal circumstances, the Telesecundaria proposal covers 21.4% of the level's global enrollment (Cobo and Sanchez Ciarrusta, 2020). This offer is aimed at the rural population of multigrade schools. And although TV training was conceived as an opportunity to expand access, the model has received some criticism regarding the rigidity of its structure: "The televised classes follow one after another without stopping and prevent a process of information feedback and formative assessment "(Hernandez Polo, L., 2009).

However, **given the difficulties in obtaining teachers for schools located in rural areas, distance education is a practical solution, this is why it has been the subject of research.** In Ghana, for example, an attempt was made to establish the impact of a distance learning program that used live satellite television, for primary school students in a controlled study of 147 schools. The model was interactive so that students could connect in real time with a remote teacher. In the results, improvements were observed in the learning achieved by this group, with respect to the control, which could be identified that the best result was attributable to having been exposed to better teaching proposals (Johnston and Ksoll, 2017).

These studies that present the results of distance education via TV prior to the schools closures, illustrate potential, but they do not reflect expected learning of the proposals implemented during the pandemic. In the research (Education Endowment Foundation, 2020), students were in an environment designed for learning, with their schedules, workspaces, routines, and companions. This meant they had the possibility of interacting with each other and participating actively in the learning process.

That said, it must also be recognised that the challenge of enabling interaction with students was presented as a necessity during the emergency responses. In the case of Peru, the "Aprendo en Casa" strategy sought to solve the difficulty of student participation during classes by identifying well-known TV presenters. This proposal received criticism

from the teaching community, which led to a rapid adaptation of the format to programs in which, in addition to the presenter, an expert teacher and students participated, simulating a classroom format. (Munoz-Najar, A., 2020).

Previous distance education TV experiences show **it is possible to promote student participation with this model, and indicate which formats could be used in future** emergency situations, or to supplement the training with remote proposals. At the same time, no studies have yet been carried out to determine whether during the educational emergency due to COVID-19, some TV teaching strategies have been more successful than others.

"In Mexico, TV Educativa has existed since 1968. And over the years it has given quite good results, in a particular the case of "Telesecundaria". In the case of rural education, the teacher guides that TV content. Telesecundaria students performed better than normal high school students. There are several hypotheses for this. For example, a more attentive and dedicated teacher". (Government official, Mexico)

Is educational interaction by Radio possible?

Radio has been used in various parts of the world as a formal and non-formal distance education tool. These programs were typically aimed at teachers, students, non-literate adults, health personnel, among others. As with TV, research shows that **radio is pedagogically effective as well as cost efficient.**

Interactive radio instruction (IRI), studies show learning results in students, including increased retention at primary level, and also positive impact on continuing professional development -since they allow for mentoring and modelling of teaching practices- to the introduction of curricular content and new pedagogies. These proposals have a comprehensive approach that includes guidance for the teacher, printed material for students, and guided learning activities.

The World Bank (2020) in the wake of the pandemic, made available a collection of research on distance learning via radio. Among them, *5 myths about educational radio*, published by the Educational Development Center (2020a) offers several ways to think about the potential of educational radio.

First, they present radio as a powerful resource for unleashing the imagination. There are studies that show that listeners, having to imagine their own visual image, develop creativity more than those who observe images on television. Second, the belief that young people do not listen to radio is challenged by the increase in popularity of podcasts. In 2019, 53% of Spotify users ages 12-24 had listened to a podcast. And Latin America was among the regions with the highest growth in podcast consumption (Gray, G., 2019).

Another myth is the belief that radio classes are only expository. This is not the case, since interactive radio proposes constant actions by students that can be carried out with a teacher or among themselves. Interactions with those who are sharing the same space may

be suggested. But for this to be effective, it is necessary to anticipate and communicate this to families. In order to move forward in the design of interactive radio programs for both the classroom and the home, knowledge of didactics for multigrade approaches could contribute to effective planning of learning modes and group activities.

The design and production of student-centred classes, with formative assessment takes time. The persons interviewed coincide in stating that the emergency situation that led to to the closure of schools did not give the ministries time to generate high quality resources. However, in the current scenario, in which it is not yet clear when a definitive return to school can take place, interactive radio could be a means to sustain continuity. If so, these studies and further research would be beneficial.

Vulnerability vs. continuity. How does interaction happen?

Although there were measures aimed at expanding access to the Internet and electronic devices, educational Television and Radio were the initiatives with the largest reach. Despite this, not all students were reached. According to a survey conducted by UNICEF only 3, out of 22 countries surveyed, indicated that they had carried out actions to improve access to equipment and electrical and internet connectivity for very poor students in remote areas (Berlanga, C., et al., 2020)

"In Lima, the metropolitan region, we work with people who collaborate to locate students who do not have access to the material. The educational institution reaches the student and they take the material, the booklets, and return after two weeks. This makes us wonder if the presence is so central". (Government official, Peru)

Many of these guides, workbooks and self-study books were delivered by educational institutions to families and students, or were taken home together with food kits:

"Food was maintained and with this material, booklets were sent home. This was very important". (NGO leader, Chile)

The printed material was not only used in remote places or rural areas. It was widely disseminated, sometimes becoming a means of interaction between students and teachers.

"In schools where there was not so much access, there was a lot of use of printed material. From the ministry we made a lot of material, first they were delivered fortnightly then more spaced, delivered together with the nutritional basket (before lunch at school). In these printed materials there were interesting experiences related to going and coming back: schools where the students had cell phones and held meetings of 3 or 4 students with the teacher to have contact once a week ". (Government official, Argentina)

In the Dominican Republic, the Ministry of Education distributed physical (booklets) and virtual materials to promote the continuity of education at all levels. With UNICEF they collaborated in the creation of booklets to support distance education for children from Pre-primary (last grade of preschool) and Primary Level. This is the educational series "Aprendemos en Casa", which contains 4 booklets with a monthly plan of activities that revolves around a topic of interest. For kindergarten and primary school, they are: "Plan a Magical Journey", and in secondary: "Views of the World: Environment and Health". Inicia Educación, together with the European Union and PROETP, provided the support booklets for distance education for the 2nd cycle of Secondary Level (EDUCA, 2020).

"In our country, we neither have a digital culture, nor schools, nor ministries. The Ministry invited different organizations to involve them in a dialogue table. In Secondary, together with private organizations, a curriculum analysis and then booklets and work sequences were carried out, which the Ministry subsequently printed and delivered. Videos were also made and broadcasted on television. 150,000 students completed their studies on the platform". (Academic, Dominican Republic)

Another example is the case of the Ministry of National Education of Colombia, which approved additional resources, so that all public educational establishments could acquire, print and distribute material for educational work at home. Likewise, guides, texts and pedagogical support material were acquired for the different educational establishments (World Bank, 2020). These measures were valued, although in some cases they did not have a finished structure or planning for the delivery and monitoring of the use of the material.

"The (National) Ministry and the province (Ministry) wanted to maintain the link through the booklets. I tried to organize the distribution of the booklets in the most vulnerable sectors, so that no one loses educational continuity and continue to maintain the link. (...) The booklet was a success. The mistake was the disorganization of the booklet. There must be a commitment to follow up. The challenge was organization. Like when the computer is delivered and there is no follow-up". (Teacher, Argentina)

1.3 Reflections

Promoting digital citizenship

The closure of schools made visible the **great inequalities in terms of access to quality educational opportunities and experiences.** Standarised assessments at national, regional and global levels have long shown that it is the poorest sectors that bear the greatest burden.

Given the potential debate on future priorities from the point of view of investment, and the decisions to be made when providing resources, the majority of those interviewed agree that **access to the Internet should be considered a priority in the same ways other basic services for citizens are.**

"Connectivity is already a service like electricity. They faced the country with the problem of connectivity. They made negotiations that will reach 40 thousand schools. It is still scarce, because we have to have a connected country. Facing this problem is key". (Government official, Colombia)

If expansion of internet access (both at school and in the home) is undertaken, educational systems will also be challenged with the responsibility for training digital citizens. In other words, digitally literate students who are capable of making critical and safe use of information and communication technologies for leisure, work and communication.

The digital competence was widely developed during the closure of schools by teachers and students who had access to the internet and used it as a medium for learning.

"We have to try to maintain this use. With the orientation of making a pedagogical proposal that gives a role to technology. A student who investigates with the internet, who has the possibility to create, to think in an alternative way. This we should try to cultivate in the future. There will be many teachers who had lost their fear, who became more skilled with technology. Let's make a different pedagogical proposal". (Academic, Argentina)

Undoubtedly, this phenomenon further democratised the use of the Internet, broadened the interest in questions of pedagogy, regarding the "what" and "why" of digital education; but it has also accentuated inequalities between those who have and those who do not have connectivity.

"And the connectivity thing. It can't be that it's so uneven. Someone who has a computer will know more than someone who does not have. Technology has to be a right, a basic service. And going back to the role that I occupy, as a union, we work for that. That is why the insistence on returning to presence. Because it did not catch us prepared. We have to start working on that, to be technologically the same. In the future, we must work on the right to access technology". (Teacher Union Leader, Argentina)

Digital citizenship involves the understanding of political, cultural and social issues related to Information and Communication Technologies, as well as the application of behaviors relevant to understanding and the principles that guide it: ethics, legality, security and responsibility in the use of the Internet, social networks and other available technologies. Among the changes introduced by the pandemic, this aspect was

highlighted. *"With the pandemic, vulnerability turned into" not having connectivity. "The vulnerability changed".* (Academic, Colombia)

In this sense, to achieve the development of digital skills, schools are better placed when it comes to connectivity, compared to homes. But the demand for universal access has been highlighted by the closure of schools.

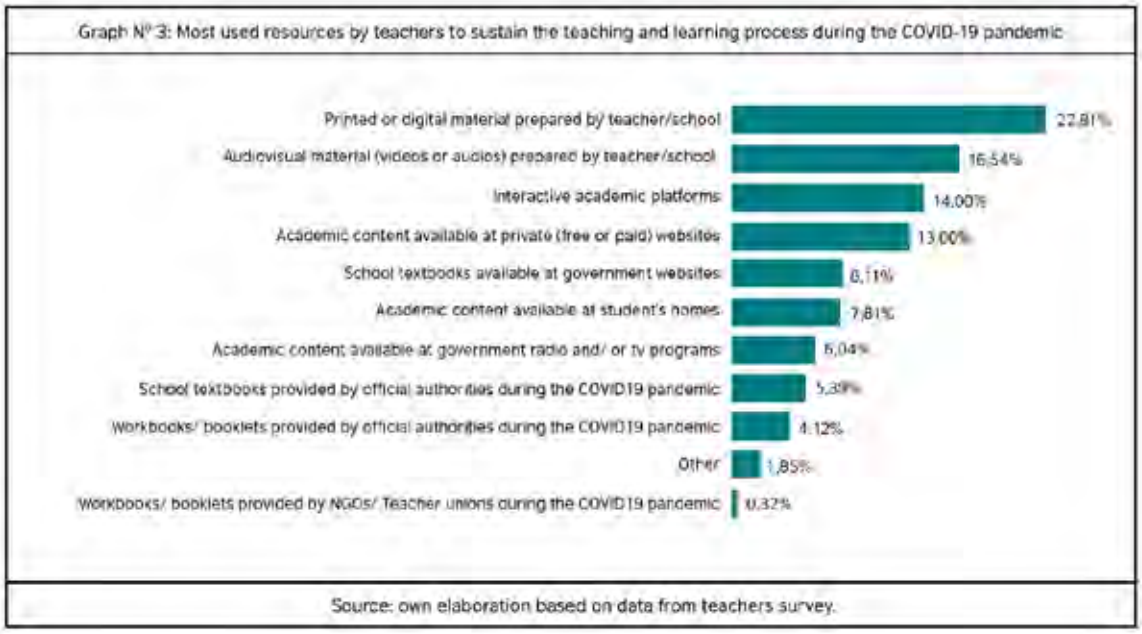
> *"The dilemma changed: it is not connecting schools (connecting rural schools is a huge step). The problem is the connectivity of the citizens, to progress. Negotiations with telecommunications companies will further expand this need for connectivity".* (Government official, Colombia)

Can TV and radio be an educational response once face to face interaction is restored?

In current scenarios of poor connectivity and shortage of access to devices, the design of **educational content transmitted by radio and TV could be part of an effective educational strategy for other emergency situations that cause the closure of schools** (earthquakes, floods, storms, forest fires, among others). In addition, as methodology is revised and improved, they could also be considered for other events that hinder pedagogical continuity, such as the case of students who cannot go to school due to illness.

At the pre-school level, as a complement to formal education, educational content should be accompanied by guides with orientation and resources that help the adults at home in early literacy. At secondary level, it can be a means of increasing the enrollment rate (World Bank, 2020). It can also contribute to providing specialised training in remote places where the supply of teachers with specific knowledge is low (Navarro-Sola, 2019).

However, when consulting teachers in the survey as to the three most used resources, educational television and radio were in place number seven. It should be analysed if this is due to the fact that they are only effective remedies in emergency situations in which the presence of a teacher cannot be counted on; or if the teachers omitted these proposals because they did not consider that they were of sufficient quality, or did not have prior knowledge of the programmes and content to include them in their proposals, or they felt that using them implied making additional resources. On the other hand, the evaluated proposals for Television and Radio presented in the chapter show they allowed for interaction between students and teachers. However, this was not part of the actual programming.



In summary, in the scenarios where it was not possible to reach with radio, television or online content, text messages sent by teachers, and some face-to-face meeting, allowed to sustain the pedagogical link to some extent (Vegas, E., & Winthrop, R., 2020). **This flexibility and creativity of response in educational systems and innovative proposals have established a precedent of educational innovation**.

In addition, **cooperation between actors from various sectors to generate responses at scale opens the opportunity for alliances that**, over time, **could contribute to expanding educational opportunities both inside and outside of school**.

2.
Support to students

2. Support to students

In April 2020, it was estimated that 94% of the students around the world were affected by the closure of schools as a result of the pandemic (1.58 billion children and young people from 200 countries). The ability to respond to this emergency situation varied dramatically depending on the level of development of each country (United Nations, 2020). It is estimated that in countries where education systems were more fragile, the effects of the interruption of the academic cycle and the emergency context had disproportionately negative effects on the education of the most vulnerable students, not only because of weak infrastructure that hindered education transition and access to distance education, but also because social contexts and household conditions increased food and socio-emotional risk, further aggravating pre-existing inequalities.

This section presents a review of the measures taken at the national and school levels to "cushion" the impact of the crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic on the educational paths of students. The prioritisation and curricular adjustment, the consequent adaptation of assessment, and the design and implementation of tools for monitoring and follow-up of student performance are identified.

2.1 Measures to support students

The closure of educational establishments and the extension of the pandemic meant countries in the region had to go beyond the traditional borders of the school to maintain educational continuity. To do this, **curricular adjustments were made** in order to prioritise minimum learning content and assessment of the school year. The implementation of the curriculum and assessment -with adaptation, prioritisation and adjustment- was based on the characteristics of national and provincial curricula, school calendars, social structures and available resources.

Curriculum

The sudden transition to remote education put the structure and relevance of curricular content in check. **The decision to adjust or adapt the curriculum was a priority for education systems.** This is how a specialist describes it:

"What really worried us was how to cover the curriculum. It took a long time for us to break the control of the plan and realize that what matters is communication and monitoring. When the communication began, they realized the need to cover the emotional part. They realized the emotional affectation in boys and teachers and the awareness of the socio-emotional part began". (Academic, Mexico)

When the state of emergency was announced, some of the countries under review, such as the United States, Mexico and the Dominican Republic were in the middle of the school year, while the rest of the countries were at the beginning of the new school year. These conditions were taken into consideration, as well as other, such as resources for distance education, digital infrastructure, levels of inequality, the particular characteristics of each curricular design, and the alternatives that were developed for the implementation of the curriculum.

50.7% of the teachers consulted made curricular adaptations according to their students, 23.4% made curricular adaptations proposed by the Ministry of Education and 22.4% affirmed that they had adjusted the curriculum from the proposal of their institution. Only 3.4% did not make a curricular adaptation. (Source: Teacher survey)

a. Prioritisation and flexibility of content

Among the measures adopted, there were **curricular adjustments** promoted at national level and aimed at **prioritising and making content more flexible**. In this sense in Argentina, Chile, Peru, Ecuador and the Dominican Republic said curricular adjustments consisted of an adaptation of curricular programmes, prioritising the current curriculum in the framework of the health emergency. This adaptation was also carried out around vital competencies (Dominican Republic) and pre-established competency standards (Colombia). In the case of Argentina, there was also a temporal reordering of educational goals, which were decided to cover the 2020-21 school calendar as a work unit. (SITEAL, 2020) Likewise, in the case of Ecuador, the curricular prioritisation tried to promote an autonomous teaching and learning process.

The prioritisation and flexibility of content was adopted as a measure to contain all students in the face of the challenge of adjusting to remote education. At the same time, it was a strategy aimed especially at students in high-risk, rural and indigenous reservation communities, where the possibilities of access to connectivity or other means of dissemination (radio, TV) were very difficult.

On the other hand, this measure consisted of support for teachers who, due to the urgency of making the transition from face-to-face to an online class, found it was not possible to cover all of the current curricula. In this regard, a person interviewed from the Dominican Republic maintains that these adjustments were not well received by the entire teaching community who, in the face of the curricular reduction, expressed their discontent through demonstrations in the press and sending messages to the minister.

b. Incorporation of content

Just as certain content was prioritised because of COVID-19, in some cases **content based on skills and learning acquired greater relevance** in the context of the health emergency.

A general agreement is observed in the testimonies of the persons consulted about the unpredictability of the effects that the pandemic had on the emotional state of the students.

> *"These effects were unpredictable (lockdown depression, emotional effects). We had no experience of having children locked up for a long time". (*University Scholar, Argentina)

> *"The new normal led us to have an alternate curricula".* (Government official, Colombia)

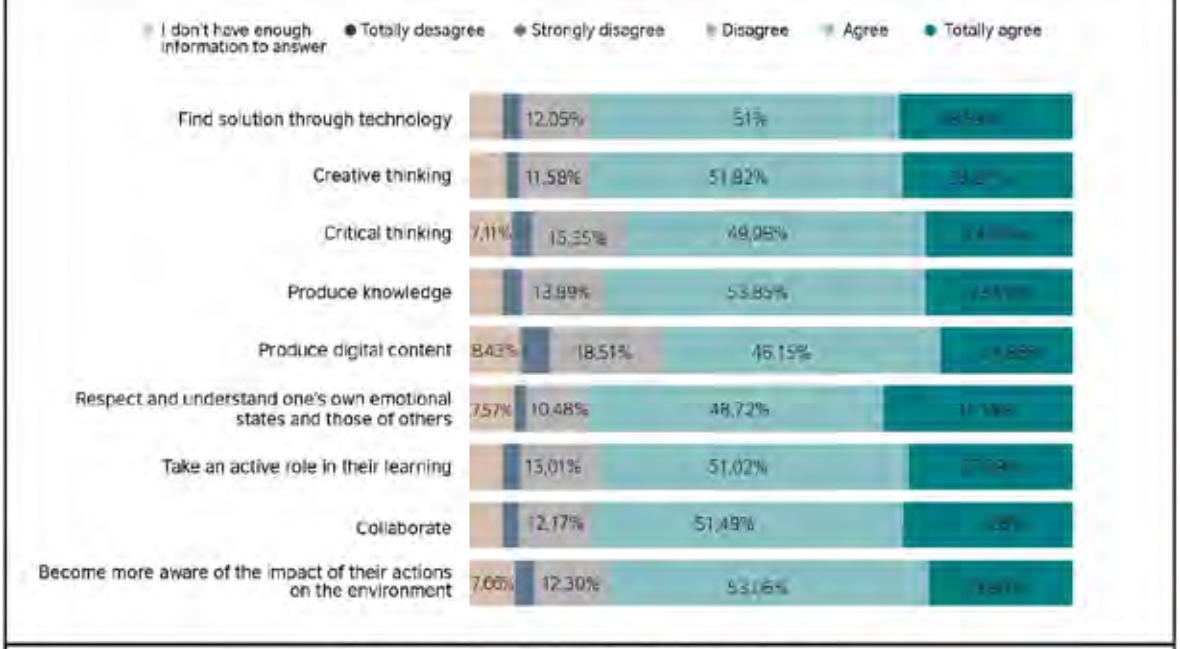
The three main axes were: **socio-emotional skills, health care and the use of technologies.** For this, we can find content such as: the ability to develop life skills, the ability to adapt to uncertainty, the development of critical thinking, analysis and argumentation, empathic communication, decision-making, collaborative work and the management of technologies, physical well-being, civic and ethical training, health care, coexistence at home, strengthening citizenship and the common good. Regarding the management of technologies, some curricula were restructured to focus on computational thinking.

> *"Computational thinking must be understood as a possible response to the great revolution that we have to live in".* (NGO leader, Uruguay)

Both the prioritisation and the incorporation of content was accompanied, in some countries such as Uruguay, Peru, Chile and Mexico, by the **selection of educational resources adapted to the curricular guidelines.** In some cases, this content was obtained from pre-existing national or international educational repositories and, in other cases, it was necessary to develop their own guides.

Although the effects that these curricular changes will bring to student learning have not yet been identified, the survey asked teachers about their perception of the skills developed by students during the school closure period by COVID-19.

Graph N° 4: Skills developed by students during the school closure period by COVID-19



Source: own elaboration based on data from teachers survey.

Assessment

The assessment and monitoring of student learning constituted a key aspect to gain knowledge of the educational situation of students and implement measures aimed at improving pedagogical strategies. Strategies to sustain the teaching and learning process were based on **adjustments in the assessment and promotion system, the continuation of education between 2020 and 2021, and the rescheduling of examinations** planned during the course of the school year.

The suspension or rescheduling of assessment was decided mainly by the fact that it was not possible to ensure equity and reliability of exams, due to the factors that affected educational paths to different degrees, further deepening inequalities among students. Therefore, the diagnosis of what was done may not be representative. It is necessary to highlight that the suspension of examinations brings with it several difficulties, such as the lack of information and indicators that are used in decision-making, in the delivery of benefits and subsidies to schools and families, certification issues, entry to higher education, among others.

For these reasons, countries such as Brazil, Costa Rica and Peru opted for a rescheduling of official national and international examinations.

With regard to internal assessment, because it was not possible to ensure the fairness and reliability of examinations, governments and schools were forced to **broaden the range of strategies and activities when collecting evidence on the performance of the students.**

In some countries of the region, **promotional measures were taken in line with the formative paradigm of assessment.** Such is the case of Uruguay, Argentina, Mexico, Colombia, and Costa Rica, in which national assessment initiatives focused on monitoring the educational paths of students.

In these cases, the initiative of not using numerical qualifications was interesting, but rather the focus of assessment was on the follow-up, registration and return of families and students to the teaching and learning processes, generating descriptive and conceptual reports. (SITEAL, 2020) Some of the countries that opted for this type of assessment also incorporated summative assessment instruments, in order to have a better definition of the academic situation of the students (assessment of the learning portfolio, bulletins of pedagogical assessment and psychosocial support of students, for example) to follow those paths that were strongly affected by emotional issues.

In October 2020, UNESCO (2020d) gathered experiences of formative assessment used by teachers in the Latin American and Caribbean region that show its increase: 75% affirm that formative assessment arose as a response to the pandemic and 22% affirm that it had to be adapted due to the crisis. In turn, 51% used it for diagnostic and training purposes, while 41% used it for the promotion and certification of students. In turn, it was observed that a high number of the initiatives used a multidisciplinary approach: more than half of them cover more than one subject.

From this last point, it should be noted that in several countries the need arose because of the **emotional factor as an aspect to be taken into consideration** within the monitoring of educational paths.

A person interviewed from Argentina comments on a local case in which *"some schools developed follow-up grids: with academic but also emotional issues, family situation, etc"*. In this sense, the measures adopted were extremely heterogeneous, and this is an aspect in which the interviewees agree:

> *"Yes, there was more heterogeneity, and in each school the routes and results were diverse"*. (Government official, Argentina)

> *"Decentralization: each region has its own mechanism. Efforts were made to search for students and deliver material to them*". (Government official, Peru)

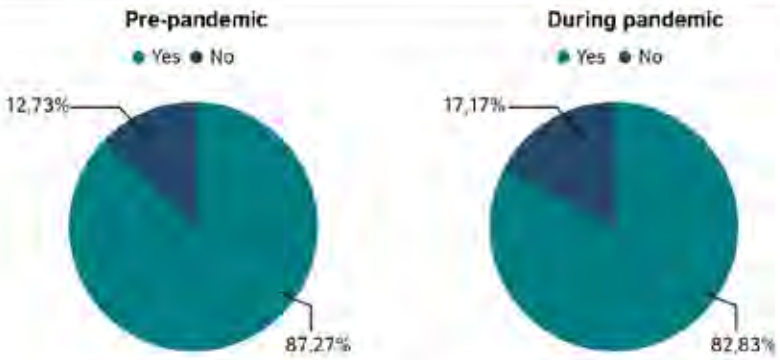
On the other hand, with regard to internal assessment, there is evidence of students who benefited from the virtual implementation. This was the case in Uruguay, which reports an increase in enrollment in second language examinations and in Argentina, where they have reported an increase in number of graduations.

> *"And in fact, there are many things that we want to have installed: for example, remote exams in high school, we had record peaks of graduations in 5th and 6th years like we never had: it makes it easier for kids who have complicated situations at home or work. They don't have time. This is to remove an obstacle so they can finish high school". (*Government official, Argentina)

Follow-up and Monitoring

The adjustments to the assessment system were supported by **other follow-up strategies** and initiatives to strengthen support for students. Just as the heterogeneity of the efforts made by governments and schools to adapt assessment is highlighted, it is necessary to point out the importance of the variety of initiatives that were created to monitor these paths, with the aim of reaching those students in risk of disengagement and prevent school dropout.

Graph N°5: Existence of personalized monitoring of academic situation of students (meetings between teachers, meetings with students and families)



Source: own elaboration based on data from teachers survey

The survey shows a reduction of 4.4% in schools that did not carry out a personalised follow-up on the academic situation of students, but that developed mechanisms during the pandemic, while, in cases where there was a follow-up prior to the pandemic, an increase of 4.5% is observed during the pandemic (Source: Teacher survey)

The need to support and monitor the most vulnerable students' performance, introduced to governments and schools the great challenge of developing **strategies to retain students at risk of dropping out.**

"Maintaining the bond, so that "something" happened in the time of confinement. The monitoring was in that line". (NGO leader, Uruguay)

This is perhaps one of the reasons why monitoring tools implemented at the national level were not identified at first.

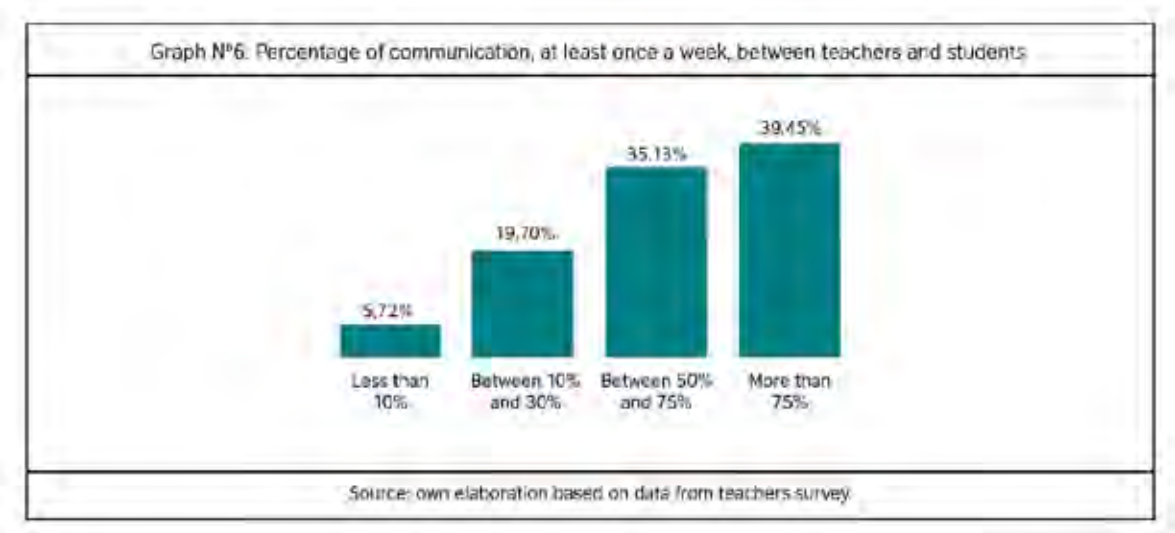
As the health emergency spread, platforms began to be implemented, and the need to monitor the available numbers of school dropouts became generalised. Such is the case of Peru, through the "School Alert" system, or the "Guri" platform implemented in

Uruguay. Another of the monitoring strategies implemented in Peru was the “Remote School Traffic Light” system, which monitored and followed up on its students through phone calls. At the same time, in countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay, surveys were conducted with parents, teachers and students, to understand how they were experiencing the distance education process, or to have a better understanding of the needs and reception of the various measures that were being implemented during school closings.

To strengthen monitoring and follow-up mechanisms, some countries as Argentina, formed alliances with organisations such as UNICEF. Along these lines, a person interviewed from Peru agrees that *"these multisectoral alliances are necessary to design alert systems and provide guidance when designing strategies for re-linking".*

It is evident that in cases where the community had devices and good internet access, the follow-up and monitoring of the students was effective. One of the examples provided by the specialist interviewed is the case of the city of Curitiba, Brazil, where 94% service was reached, facilitated by the high connectivity and by the financial condition of the population.

At a macro level, a big part of the monitoring of the students happened thanks to the communication that teachers had with students. The survey carried out with the teachers shows that while 74,5% of the teachers claim having communicated with 50% or more of their class at least once a week, the remaining 25,4% of the teachers was only able to communicate with the 30% or even less of their students.



Despite the efforts, there is a strong consensus on the part of the person interviewed about the lack of information about the status of students. This misinformation could generate further complications for students from vulnerable populations and those who are disconnected from the system.

"In a normal year, we would not know how much kids learned with the instruments we usually have. The only way we know is the kids who repeat, the children who take subjects, but we do not really know exactly. So this year was no different". (Government official, Argentina)

"I would be interested to know how many students are attending classes and how many teachers have been trained. There are no certain data". (NGO leader, Ecuador)

2.2 Challenge: planning instances of diagnosis

To a large extent**, information related to loss of learning was obtained through estimates.** This lack of information about student performance and learning has generated demand for evaluation or measurement in order to plan how to reduce the negative impact of the health crisis on student education.

Unicef (2020c) and the Education Endowment Foundation (2020) suggest the importance of making a diagnosis for the return to schools taking into account general well-being and learning. A study published by the San Andrés University (Gómez Caride, E. et Al., 2020) proposes taking these two dimensions as key inputs to design learning proposals that contemplate the diversity of routes and experiences, and anticipate strategies to accompany each student in the process.

"Everything indicates that the loss of learning is very strong and will be mixed with socio-emotional issues that can affect learning. From the basics: going back to school after spending a whole year with mom and dad every day for a year". (NGO leader, USA)

Several specialist agree with **the need to carry out a diagnostic examination in order to design a remedial intervention for the new school year.** This analysis would include pedagogical and emotional elements:

"Once presence is restored, you will have to spend a little time evaluating. How they arrive, how you receive them. From the pedagogical and socio-emotional point of view. The first thing to do is a diagnosis. (...) And based on that, design a remedial intervention. (...) What you cannot do is simply reopen schools and teach as if nothing had happened". (Government official, Mexico)

"It is vital for 2021 to have a very agile way of being able to see where the children are: in basic learning, especially in the first grades. I am not thinking about National Tests ... I am thinking about how to generate instruments for schools, so that they can quickly have an individualized diagnosis of where the children are and have the capacity to develop remedial programs quickly. Everything indicates that the loss of learning is very strong and it is going to be mixed with socio-emotional issues that can affect learning". (NGO leader, USA)

Together with the alternatives that are being evaluated to receive students who continue in the system, there is concern for those children and adolescents who have disengaged from the educational system. UNESCO estimates that an additional 23.8 million children and young people could drop out of school or not have access to it as a result of the economic repercussions of the pandemic (UNESCO, 2020c). It is necessary to establish measures for the identification and reengagement of these students and the support to design institutional mechanisms from which they can recover the lost school year and, above all, to guarantee the right to education of each of these children and adolescents.

There are some initiatives for the reengagement of those students who were left out of the system. A NGO leader interviewed from Mexico says that only 13 states in the country have explicit policies to deal with the dismissal of students. To compensate for the lack of strategies, together with an NGO, an alert system is being created to search and identify students who are in this situation:

"It is necessary to make these visits to schools and generate action maps for each community and thus guide the return to presence for those groups that need it most (staggered, in what way, with what number of students, etc.)". (NGO leader, Mexico)

2.3 Reflections

The World Bank argues that there are three possibilities in relation to learning loss: a reduction in the average level of learning of all students, an increase in achievement inequality due to the unequal effects of the crisis on different populations, or an increase in cases of very low performance due to school dropouts (Aroob Ibbal, S. et Al, 2020). In this scenario, the United Nations affirms that due to the closure of schools, 25% more of the students who were already affected by the socioeconomic gap prior to the pandemic would be at risk of not reaching a basic level of skills. (United Nations, 2020)

In turn, McKinsey (Dorn, E., 2020a; Dorn, E., 2020b) has published in its reports the risk that the pandemic poses for the most vulnerable populations. In the report published in December 2020, shows that students of color began the school year with a delay of between 3 and 5 months in learning outcomes in mathematics, while the rest of the students showed a delay of 1 to 3 months. It is estimated that students in general will finish

the academic year with a loss in learning of between 5 and 9 months. This estimated increase from 6 to 12 months for students of color.

So the great concern and the immense challenge facing all countries is **how to guarantee the access to education for all students,** especially those who are most at risk of being disengaged from the educational system.

In any case, not only students from vulnerable groups have gone through moments of anguish, depression and suffering, caused by the pandemic and its social and educational derivatives. (Unicef, 2020d). This condition affected the population in general. In a survey published by the EdWeek Research Center, which asked teachers about the mood of their students: the percentage of educators who stated that the mood of students was lower than before the closure of schools ranged from a minimum of 61% in March and a maximum of 81% in the two May surveys. As the moods of the students suffered, so their levels of commitment to class work and school. Over time, more than three-quarters of teachers consistently reported that student engagement had declined since the pandemic. (EdWeek Research Centre, 2020)

As analysed in the first chapter of this study, at the macro level measures have been taken for the expansion of digital infrastructure and the diversification of the media to ensure educational continuity (radio, TV, platforms). Together with these strategies and with a strong focus on containing the negative effects of the pandemic**, it was necessary to design and adapt tools at a pedagogical level, such as the assessment and monitoring of students**, contemplating the students' performance, as well as adjusting and adapt the curriculum.

The enormous efforts made in a short time to respond to the impact on education systems show the need to seize the opportunity to seek new ways to respond to the learning crisis and plan long-term and sustainable solutions. **These solutions should focus on responding to learning losses, preventing school drop-outs and serving the vulnerable population**. The current situation is an opportunity to reexamine the curriculum, assessment and the new dynamics that have been installed in the teaching and learning process, which could enrich the educational system, taking as a model the students' performance and their individual characteristics.

The change towards an educational model that takes into account heterogeneity and is based on the monitoring of students' school careers, poses great challenges for educational systems.

"There are two possible approaches: staying in the response of the situation, transferring the strategies, content to virtuality. It works relatively as a response, and you appeal to technological means. Or do you see in the situation the opportunity to rethink educational modes. How many countries are going to dare, from this, to have such a fragmented education, to sustain such varied assessment systems and pedagogical strategies? If that can be overcome, they will be prepared". (NGO leader, Uruguay)

Redesigning the curriculum

The pandemic has transformed the implementation and content of the curricula. The use of platforms and other means for teaching, together with the appearance or prioritsation of new content and skills, has led to the need to work to achieve the relevance of the curricula with the emergency context. Despite the fact that the demand for a curricular adjustment was already raised in the educational agenda, the pandemic has accelerated the need to respond and work to achieve an adequate curriculum that includes and prioritses basic skills and competencies.

In the first place, the emergency context has put certain skills and content at the forefront, mainly socio-emotional skills and digital competence, which must be considered as priorities in curricular restructuring. Mental health and digital skills were installed as a necessary condition for students to achieve meaningful learning and receive a comprehensive education, which considers the importance of training digital citizens, among other elements.

This demands for the transversality of content and socio-emotional skills in the curriculum stands out in the reflections of the specialist due to the generalized consensus. In turn, they agree on the need to establish a priority curriculum as a long-term initiative.

> *"I hope we continue thinking how can we integrate social - emotional - civil with academic teaching and learning. From the point of view of a teacher (my job is to teach math), now teachers and parents are always teaching social-emotional lessons".*
> (Academic, United States)

> *"What I do distinguish is an awareness of the socio-emotional issue. We are all going through a super complex situation. How is the child in the socio-emotional aspect? Socio Emotional learning, socio-emotional skills, I began to hear it much more frequently*". (Academic, Mexico)

Second, **it is necessary to work on a curricular prioritisation that acts as a bridge between the contents that were given in 2020** and those that are essential to ensure that students develop complete educational paths. In this sense, the priority curriculum should include not only content but also essential skills, to ensure the comprehensive development of students. (Gómez Caride , E et Al. 2020) For this, it will be necessary to carry out a diagnosis that completes the lack of information about the conditions and the state of the educational paths of the students, to know what was learned in this year of pandemic.

The great challenge that lies ahead is the design of a curriculum that contemplates the students' individual learning needs, taking into account the effects that educational

inequalities have had, in order to ensure the educational continuity of each student. It is essential that heterogeneity is taken into consideration when planning the return to the classroom or the start of the new school year. It is expected that this heterogeneity will not only occur in terms of the acquisition of curricular content, but also in aspects such as emotional impact. This will require individualized monitoring of each student's school path, which implies redesigning the monitoring mechanisms and assessment tools, in order to provide a personalised response.

Redesigning assessment

The adaptations and changes in the pedagogical models have generated the need to rethink assessment as tools to determine the results of learning. The context of the pandemic and the modifications that the national and local systems and schools have had to make, have accelerated the discussion on the validity of standardized assessments and have revealed more than ever **the need to reconsider the current assessment system and look for models more resilient and flexible,** that take into account heterogeneity and promote student autonomy.

There is a general consensus on the need to rethink the applicability of standardised tests. The pandemic context has further increased the gap and inequality among students throughout the education system, so there is a demand for the adaptability of standardized tests.

"Great questioning: if the standardised assessment of international tests is going to remain the same or is it really going to be adapted to different realities". (Government official, Colombia)

"It will be impossible to apply standardized tests for the different subjects due to the multiplicity of situations and factors affecting students. Too many imponderables. Applying assessments in a traditional way at this juncture is practically impossible. So perhaps for the only time in this transitory situation, more artisanal issues per school". (Government

With regard to national assessment, a person interviewed from Uruguay reflects on the need to distinguish between accreditation and assessment, since this identification generates a blockage in education:

*"Accreditation is the least important at this time, a strategy will be sought. Sometimes accreditation is very mixed with qualifying and evaluating. It is the blockage of education: we have to be able to start from the diagnosis, it is the only proxy we have ... if you feel safe, if you have the skills, etc. To accredit should be our problem, that of adults, by 2022, for those of whom they are still within the system". (*NGO leader, Uruguay)

This proposal is observed in a generalised way in the testimonies obtained and one of the proposals or possible solutions would be the formative assessment. Distance education has reaffirmed the formative function of assessment, which allows obtaining clear and reliable information about what students are learning, without neglecting the complex contexts in which the educational community finds itself (confinement, anxiety, deepening of educational gaps, among others) and the heterogeneity of contexts. Another benefit corresponds to the possibility of enhancing the autonomy of students, allowing them a greater role in the learning process. (UNESCO, 2020d). In turn, a formative assessment can be administered synchronously or asynchronously, allowing and facilitating its implementation in contexts of low resources or little connectivity.

In a context as heterogeneous as the current one, formative assessment allows the preparation of an individual qualitative report of feedback to the student, which shows what their strengths and weaknesses were, evaluating their efforts in a framework more focused on the human than on performance, in understanding and support (Rivas, A., 2020).

Tailored responses

Perhaps this is the opportunity to think and design an educational system that considers the individual needs of each student in the long term and designs mechanisms, models, and tools to guarantee the right to education for all students. **The health crisis has installed personalisation as a great challenge facing all educational systems.**

> *"I am not referring to the achievement but to the process, that is why I think something is lacking. To enter more into the process than what happened with the students. For some students, the fact of not being exposed in a class benefits them, acquiring the skills or competencies that are being developed in virtuality. Like it or not, education is going to become hybrid later on".* (NGO leader, Uruguay)

Inequality in educational terms is a fact that was made even more visible as a result of the pandemic, but which is at the base of educational systems. The effects that the 2020 educational disruption will have on all those students who saw their education interrupted are difficult to predict. As mentioned above, educational inequalities have been deepened, to a large extent, because the responses could not support the entire educational community in an equitable way, based on the fact that having connectivity or not has determined the continuity of the students. There is a consensus about the opportunity for governments, schools and teachers to meet these challenges.

Along these lines, Axel Rivas (2020) proposes working on a "pedagogy of the exception", a pedagogy that considers and acts on the basis of social inequalities. His proposal consists of becoming aware of the uncertain situation in which the entire community and the educational system find themselves, identifying the ruptures that have been generated, such as presence, time organisation, the curriculum, among others. These transformations

require a new learning dialogue at home. Along this new path, the author proposes five actions for schools and teachers to seek a meeting point between multiple realities:

1. Connect in a unique way with each student, to capture problematic situations and make contact with the pedagogical and human reality of each student.

2. Reclassify the curriculum and redesign the didactics to cover all educational paths, prioritizing students who have been disconnected.

3. Plan with inequality, understanding the context where students live

4. Give students a balanced path, planning and delivering guides with practicable sequences, making a great effort to incorporate all students to a platform to generate a controlled sequence that allows individual monitoring of the path of each student.

5. Create community, generating a collective plan to design new institutional routines.

According to the author, this pedagogical proposal will be possible if the great differences in terms of technology and connectivity are solved first. To achieve educational justice it is necessary to look ahead, working towards changes that will create a more inclusive system, and include disconnected students, personalizing the educational paths of students.

3.
Teacher responses to the crisis

3. Teacher responses to the crisis

This chapter presents a review of the resources, strategies and pedagogical proposals of remote teaching developed by educators during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the actions promoted to strengthen teacher professional development are described to provide support to teaching, both the development of teacher training at the ministerial level and at the institutional level. Finally, the potential changes to promote new pedagogies, competencies and a teacher profile for the future are analysed in this chapter too.

3.1 Strategies and proposals for remote teaching

Teacher Resources and Strategies for Remote Education

With a period of schools closed, teachers developed different strategies to guarantee pedagogical continuity. Overnight, they had to design and use a series of tools and strategies for emergency remote teaching. The following is a review of the resources used by teachers for remote education and the most effective strategies for encouraging student participation

a. Resources used by teachers for remote education

According to some authors (Elacqua et al., 2020), the definition of distance or remote teaching implied the adoption, by teachers and students separated by relatively large distances, of various resources such as online platforms, radio, television, podcast, or printed materials, synchronously or asynchronously to promote pedagogical meeting places.

This educational format involves three types of resources: accompanying materials, classes via radio, TV, and courses on virtual platforms (Elaqua, et al., 2020). Following this idea, and within the framework of government initiatives to guarantee pedagogical continuity developed in chapter 1, the teachers' adoption level of resources and strategies is described below.

The most widely used resources in the countries of the Americas are linked to materials developed by teachers themselves: printed or digital learning materials (22.8%) and audio-visual learning materials (videos or audios) (16.54%). Private or home-based interactive educational portals and platforms were also widely adopted: use of educational content from private educational portals (13%) and textbooks available at student´s home (8.11%).

To a lesser degree, educational content from state educational portals (7.81%), state radio and television content (6.04%), government distributed textbooks (5.39%), booklets provided by government (4.12%), other (1.86%), booklets provided by ONG (0.3%) were used. While there are slight differences in percentage terms in each country, these trends are replicated across the region. (Source: Teacher survey)

It is necessary to remark the progress in the use of ICT resources driven by the school closures. Despite starting from a scenario where many teachers did not have digital skills —specialists emphasize that many did not have an email account—, in a field where traditionally there was a high tech-resistance, **it is undeniable that there was an acceleration in the incorporation of digital strategies**.

Although synchronous teaching strategies such as the use of virtual platforms for videoconferences occurred to a lesser extent in the most vulnerable sectors and to a greater extent in those with the highest purchasing power, it is possible to evidence the digital leap in teachers, both public and private education, as it is marked by an academic expert from Argentina. According to the specialists interviewed in the region, the incorporation of forums, webinars, video production, virtual marathons, the use of cell phones, messaging systems and platforms for video conferencing —such as Zoom— have been intensified.

The appearance of extraordinary responses in new digital media, such as the use of LMS platforms, was one of the main characteristic of this context. One of the interviewed, an expert from an NGO in Uruguay, remarks the case of a teacher who promoted an online radio from an LMS platform. Moreover, a specialist from Ecuador mentions the experience of a teacher who developed an educational platform and opened it to share resources with all his Ecuadorian colleagues. Both teachers were awarded in their respective countries. This qualitative leap in the use of technologies and digital strategies that dynamize teaching is —for many of the experts interviewed— the path to the future of hybrid education.

“Teachers are losing their fear of technology. Little by little they stop feeling that they do not know. So, when they have to use digital tools, they identify what is truly useful for the children's learning. Now they use tools (such as Zoom) that they had never used before. They lost their fear. We must continue to accompany them, giving them tools that they can use”. (Government official, Colombia)

b. More effective teaching strategies in remote teaching

In addition to using different resources to guarantee educational continuity, teachers identified the need to expand the range of pedagogical strategies both synchronously and asynchronously. The survey data regarding the use of resources is aligned with the strategies that teachers consider to be most effective in promoting active student participation.

Following this line**, according to teachers from the Americas, the strategies that were most effective for encouraging student participation are related to asynchronous actions that required follow-up and accompaniment by the teacher and that involved materials that the teachers themselves developed.** Among the most effective strategies are designing step-by-step guides to show how to access resources (38%), motivating communication via chats or virtual meetings (33%), requesting jobs or short tasks (31%), communication of week expectations with families (29%).

Furthermore, for the persons interviewed, the teachers' social-emotional competencies played a determining role in the effectiveness of the strategies. Although it is an issue that was on the agenda at the global level, during the pandemic the implementation of this type of content and strategies in a transversal way was accelerated and more dynamic in order to carry out a more personalised accompaniment and be attentive to the particular needs and contexts.

From group dynamics, to personalised monitoring according to the particular situations of those students who faced severe problems such as depression, isolation or anguish. The implemented practices to promote positive learning environment were diverse. Such was the impact of this type of strategies that a leader from an NGO in Chile points out:

> *"I hope that in the future the socio-emotional skills that were developed during the closing of schools can be maintaine"*. (NGO leader, Chile)

Although the intervention with socio-emotional competencies depended to a large extent on the skills that each teacher already had, it undoubtedly shows the way to strengthen teacher professional development.

Besides this, according to the persons interviewed, customization in interaction and follow-up of students were another key factor in guaranteeing the effectiveness of teaching strategies. This is also verified by the survey results.

As it was developed in Chapter 2, the personalised follow-up of students acquired different formats. For instance, follow-up of class participation and follow-up of the learning achievement levels, are highlighted formats.

> *"The weight of the exam was taken away from the students, and it was given more support"*. (Government official, Uruguay)

Finally, it is possible to observe that the resources and strategies used by teachers during the closing of schools involved certain changes in the traditional teaching process, which were key to guaranteeing educational continuity during the pandemic.

Changes in traditional teaching for the effectiveness of remote teaching

In order to implement distance learning strategies, different elements emerge that were more effective at the regional level. Although the use and implementation of strategies changed according to the commitment, connectivity conditions and creativity of each teacher, from the voice of the interviewees, it is possible to highlight **certain changes in traditional pedagogical dimensions** that were decisive to accompany the distance teaching process.

The non-presential classes highlighted the **need to focus on student-centric pedagogical approaches**, to accentuate the personalised follow-up processes, to listen to the student voice, to customize the strategies, among others. This modality accelerated an aspired conceptual change, breaking the traditional paradigm for teaching, and moving towards to a model of learning facilitation. Virtuality has given this perspective a more visible role.

- **Student at the centre**

Apart from that, remote teaching strengthened student-centric pedagogical approaches and the importance of his/her learning needs. Unlike traditional teaching where it is often the student who must adapt and acquire knowledge, distance learning demanded an in-depth review of these educational methods. The persons interviewed from the region agree that, to achieve effective practices, teachers had to re-adjust the focus to re-locate the student at the centre of the pedagogical process, in the quantity and quality of interactions for the cognitive development of the students.

The imperative of trying to monitor each student prompted the need **to start teaching from the educational personalised path of each student, their needs and problems**, and from real situations where the student has the main role. In this way, the pedagogical approach was re-accentuated which starts from students' prior knowledge, their interests, and their affective world (Weimer, 2002). To do this, the persons interviewed emphasize the importance of listening to the students' voice, incorporating their perspective and needs.

> *"We see that children do not learn if we do not start from their reality and the institutional reality. Teachers had to learn that, understand it to meet student's needs. In order to reach the child, we needed to listen and know where the child was, go to the details, go find him/her".* (Government official, Colombia)

"I think educators around the world can and need to focus more on how we recognize the student voice (…) Whenever I am confused, I want to go with the students. What do you think? What would you like? I think it is really important that we also ask the children. They need to be our teachers". (Academic, USA)

Teachers who managed to involve students in the learning process were the ones who gave them opportunities to learn by doing and acquire 21st century skills such as problem solving, decision making, collaborative work and argumentation starting from their needs, interests, and inequities.

"In some cases, the tasks were redistributed between student and teacher. Like the Flipped *classrooms, it was necessary to recognize that the student has to look for the contents and make the first inquiry… The most challenging aspect is that all the teachers and the families can see the opportunities this method offers. Take advantage of the face-to-face moments for sharing, discussion, and reviewing mistakes. All active schools work like this, it is the natural way to learn… It is important to push this change, especially in public schools".* (NGO leader, Mexico)

- **Assessment versus monitoring**

Another key element was the change in the role of assessment in the teaching process, given the difficulties that the new context brought. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, many institutions and countries **decided to undertake qualitative and subjective assessment based on a formative perspective,** given the difficulties that teachers faced in conducting assessment as they had previously done.

"Teachers believe that we have the power in the grade. In the evaluation, we care more to define —from the perspective of the teacher— if the student learned or did not learn. It happened that in the first evaluation, most of the students failed and lost the year. The secretariat invited the teachers to review their evaluations, understanding that there was a pandemic. They want to go through a cycle evaluation process, breaking the 'year by yea'" format". (Government official, Colombia)

Traditional assessment has been practically impossible, which is why artisanal processes were developed per school. For instance, a Mexican specialist point out that despite the different criteria and the subjective dimension, in many cases the grades acquired different formats, either by cycles, by achievement levels, and in some cases, they used numerical grades only with students with whom they had constant contact.

In addition, **virtuality allowed teachers to match assessment to the needs of each school.** Persons interviewed from Argentina mentioned the accessibility of this strategy for

students in contexts of greater vulnerability due to demands at home and work needs, such as the case of students seeking to finish secondary school.

Finally, repeating the school year was another aspect that came into question. Most of the countries chose a path where it must be justified very well why a student did not get what he/she needed. The persons interviewed agree that accreditation has no longer weight, and it is necessary **to seek evaluation strategies that allow starting from a diagnosis in order to account for the learning and skills that are being achieved.**

- **Grouping students**

Another of the changes in strategies that were useful to teachers focused on grouping students. Remote teaching brought the opportunity for some students to respond much better by being able to work in a more personalised way and in small groups. This method was based on small and most adapted groups in time to what the students need.

> *"Digital technology allowed us to find a concrete solution. In the traditional classroom you do not have space to do it".* (Academic, Argentina)

This situation made **collaborative work** gain strength. The persons interviewed consider that, in many cases, the co-teaching process was enabled where students with great digital skills were able to facilitate or enhance the learning of their classmates through different paths.

- **Curricular Prioritisation**

As was established in Chapter 2, the selection of priority content was key. Even though in many cases the countries or districts provided the framework, the teachers who were able to identify the most relevant content observed progress made by the students regarding the planning of the school year.

Challenges of remote teaching

Although progress has been detected in the development of effective strategies for remote teaching, this brought with it a series of challenges and barriers to the teaching task that it is necessary to address to strengthen the teaching processes for the future and to anticipate the support that can be provided to teachers.

One of the most important challenges was the **exhaustion due to overwork** that the adaptation to this new teaching format demanded. The customization, monitoring, and

learning of the new formats entails an amount of extra time that was not framed in the daily routines. This posed high risks to teachers physical and mental health. In several countries, the interviewees mentioned that teachers have worked longer and under inappropriate conditions. In addition to overwork, adaptation to the use of digital tools also had its burden of stress.

A government official affirms that there were teachers who dedicated up to 20 hours of work per day. In the United States, one of the academic agrees and considers that there is general awareness about the **high level of stress** due to the use of technology because of remote teaching and stresses the need not to lose sight of this problem. For instance, in Argentina, one of the Teacher Union's leaders remarks that among the actions carried out, one of the most important consisted in providing support to those teachers who felt overwhelmed by the situation.

> *"In the union we received countless inquiries: 'I can't anymore', 'How do I do it?'. And I listened to all of them. 95% are women and are breadwinners*". (Teacher Union leader, Argentina)

Moreover, teachers **had to balance work and home life**. According to the survey, 46% of teachers affirm that household chores affected the process of teaching. In many countries, teachers live in households with school-age children with whom they shared a single computer or mobile device. In these cases, the device was divided into shifts so that the teacher dictates the class and his/her children learn, causing a shift of schedules and work in hours outside the stipulated framework. In Chile, the NGO specialist 21 considers that even in private schools where greater resources for teachers were available, problems related to teacher's mental health were evidenced by the overload caused by working from home.

> *"In this context, the social importance of the school as a place for socialization, as a meeting point, of convergence, hugs, human warmth and support makes sense more than ever. Regarding the family violence, the school is a safe place for recognition. A series of negative aspects are increased if school is not there". (*Government official, Colombia)

Following this idea, although there has been some progress regarding the changes that remote teaching demands for the performance of teachers, it is necessary to contemplate the other side of this phenomenon in order to create sustainable frameworks and strategies in the long term. The lack of support and the excessive workload that teachers face can have a negative impact on the work-life balance if massive, short and medium-term, measures are not established.

To ensure that teachers are prepared for distance education and provide support to their students, one of the first steps taken in most countries of the Americas was to offer training in different types and formats. A review of the different measures of teacher professional development and support for remote teaching is described in the following section.

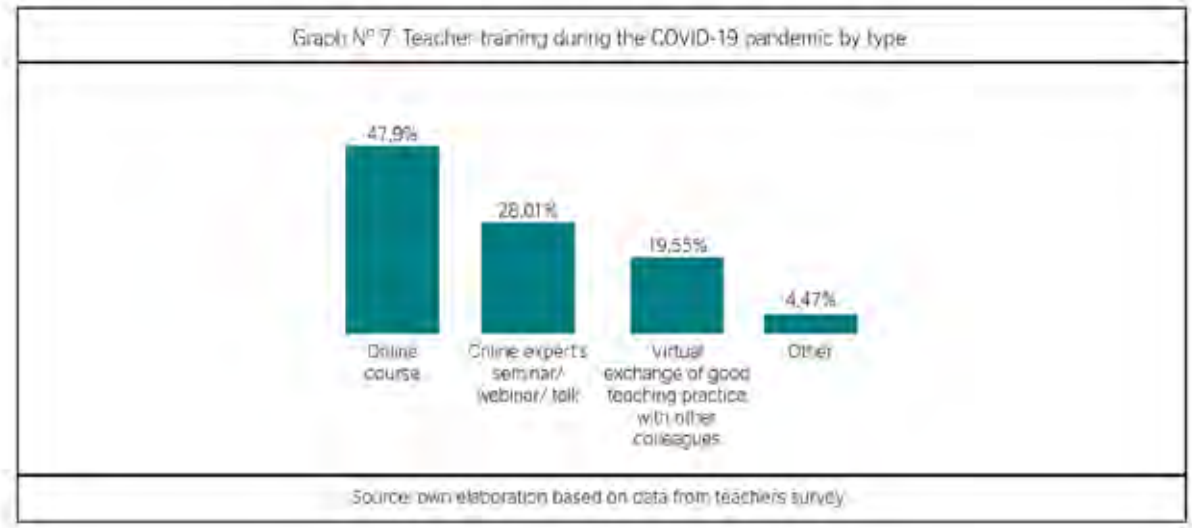
3.2 Teacher Support Strategies for professional development

The different measures of professional development, like the rest of the actions promoted, cannot be analysed in isolation from the context. The sudden closure of schools and the lack of knowledge about how long this measure would last had an impact on how the responses of the countries were developed. In cases in which the schools started the academic year at the beginning of the pandemic, and in cases in which the calendar marked the end of the academic year, **the offer of educational content for students was favored over teacher training.**

As school closures were prolonged, new measures were required to guarantee educational continuity, and teachers and school leaders assumed the leading role. During the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the rapid response by offering learning resources for students coexisted with the distribution of materials for teachers, which provided guidance to support students at the national level.

Despite the fact that in several countries teacher training is a priority on the educational agenda, **teachers were not prepared for this change in teaching modality**. In fact, the TALIS survey (IDB, 2018) that analyses the state of the teaching situation in OECD countries, including some Latin American countries, indicates that in the region 8 out of 10 teachers consider is necessary to improve the opportunities of teaching professional development. Furthermore, although teachers in the region affirm that they have received training in ICT, they also demand more proposals to develop their digital skills. In Brazil and Mexico, more than 75% of teachers require more training in ICT, a result above the OECD average (33%). As a matter of fact, the teachers and school leaders of the schools participating in the survey consider that their participation in professional development activities was limited due to scheduling problems and lack of incentives.

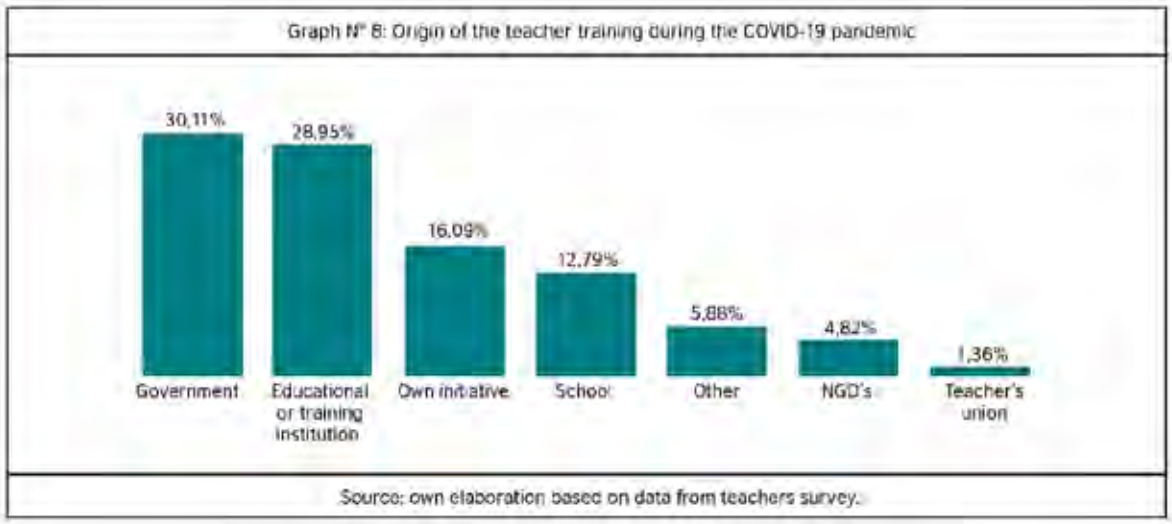
Therefore, to face the challenge posed by the pandemic, **teachers need support to strengthen student learning and promote relevant skills according to the new demands**. In the survey carried out within the framework of this research, 83% of teachers in the Americas affirm that they had participated in professional training during the closure of schools. Among these, 47,9% claim to have participated in online courses, 28,01% in virtual lectures with experts, 19,55% in exchange workspaces with colleagues and the rest of “others”.



This section reviews certain dimensions of the support strategies for the teacher professional development: modalities and contents of online training and spaces for exchange between colleagues, and the monitoring and distribution of materials.

Modalities of online training

Within the online training offer, different training proposals were developed in the region. In the survey carried out, 30,11% of teachers from the Americas claim to have participated in training organised by the Government (National or Provincial Ministries), 28,95% by teacher training centres (Universities and similar), 16,09% by individual initiatives, 12,79% by their institution and the rest by NGOs, unions, and other organisations.



The implemented formats can be classified by the level of depth or analysis of the topics developed. This is how the online training proposals implemented by the countries can be grouped into two broad types: linear or unidirectional training and interactive training.

a. ‘Linear or unidirectional’ training

On the one hand, **American countries have decided to a greater extent for "linear or unidirectional" training through multimedia educational portals** to provide guidance and updates to teachers, school leaders, and other educational actors in the technical and pedagogical use of digital tools. In most cases, existing spaces and programs for ongoing training were strengthened, and new educational portals were created that included resources for teacher training in the context of a pandemic.

This format acquired different modalities such as: cycle of talks, forums, conversations, tutorials, webinars, and other open courses regarding the use of digital tools, educational platforms, or free software. In these cases, the material that the participants receive is predetermined and defined by the instructor. Therefore, the content is static (Caldeiro, 2014), it does not change according to the level or the subject, nor it is modified based on the exchange with the participants.

The most emblematic cases were: in Argentina, ‘Escuela de Maestros’, ‘Plan Federal Juana Manso’ and ‘Educ.Ar’; in Brazil the ‘Tempo de Aprender’ program; in Chile the ‘Centre for Improvement, Experimentation and Pedagogical Research (CPEIP)’; in Colombia ‘Aprender Digital’ and ‘Contact Master’; in Costa Rica ‘Radio program of the Professional Development Institute’ and ‘UPE Platform’; in Ecuador ‘We Learn Together at Home’. Apart from this, in Mexico ‘Learn at Home’; in Peru ‘PerúEduca’ and ‘Teach Peru’; in the Dominican Republic the ‘National Program of In-Service Teacher Training for Users of Portable Electronic Devices (Inafocam)’; and in Uruguay it was strengthened the MOOCs of ‘Ceibal Plan’.

In this type of ‘linear’ training, as we call it here, the proposals consist of training given by a specialist or expert who transmits knowledge in a unidirectional way to the participants. This implies that there is no specific interaction or feedback with the students. Rather, it is a model of unilateral transmission of knowledge, from sender to receiver.

Despite this, interviewees claim to have had massive participation of teachers searching for resources to enhance their strategies in each proposal. In fact, **90.8% of the American teachers surveyed claim to have participated in some type of professional teacher training**. However, since thousands of participants have access, the evaluation or feedback to the participants becomes a highly complex task, and therefore the level of ownership is lower.

> *“We would have never before thought of having a virtual call like the one we had in the past months. We had 10,000 teachers wanting to know, connecting, the Zoom room full, YouTube full. This is very important in positive terms. We should not go back. We will hold face-to-face meetings, but we have to guarantee that we will be able to summon people through virtuality”.* (Academic, Dominican Republic)

b. Interactive online training

On the other hand, the type of interactive online training refers to training proposals that involve a higher level of structure (Cardini, 2020). This type of training tends to have limited vacancies, different instances, longer duration and score for the teaching career. **In**

the Americas, courses have been developed to a lesser extent that allowed a greater interaction between experts and participants. These formats are present in learning management platforms (LMS), although they have also been delivered through social networks and other web environments.

According to the experts interviewed, in **Argentina** the most structured face-to-face courses became virtual, and in some cases specific content was created. In **Brazil**, the 'Online course for literacy educators' was highlighted, aimed at teachers, pedagogical coordinators, school school leaders and literacy assistants. In **Colombia**, one of the academics remarked the training of the 'Leadership School', and the tutors training of the 'Programa Todos a Aprender' (PTA) with ICT and a duration of eight modules. Moreover, another strategy consisted of identifying teachers with excellent digital skills and requesting them training to other teachers.

Furthermore, in the **United States**, different states have diversified training by levels in alliance with universities, offering 10-hour courses (basic level) to 30-hours courses (master level). In **Peru**, a specific Mobile Learning program (via telephone connection) was developed to train teachers regarding the interaction with their students, and the traditional spaces of Coaching and diploma were recontextualized. In the **Dominican Republic**, it was developed the one-to-one certification specifically aimed at 650 institutions and offered support via WhatsApp.

Besides this, in **Uruguay** the 'Proyecto Padrino' was strengthened with 430 members, in which each school has a sponsor from different countries who accompanies each pedagogical team in the training update through virtual meetings. These formats not only conceive a relationship of sender and receiver between the expert and the participants, but they have enabled interactions and exchanges between the parties involved through messaging systems, feedback, evaluation, among others.

Finally, in addition to the instances offered by the Ministries of Education, **training initiatives were developed at the institutional (school) level**. There are situated learning experiences, contextualized in specific problems of the context, **which start from their own learning journey and students' paths**.

> *"In Colombia, through the institutional initiatives (both public and private schools) interactive classes were developed —such as flipped classroom—, and other tools were provided by the managers, strengthening the teaching support guides".* (Academic. Colombia)

In Argentina, one of the union leaders describes similar school situations, where the role of the principal was key to socialize different tools and promote continuous training. As a matter of fact, the case of a Primary Level school (School Number 22, District 2) stands out, which strengthened ties with teachers and families through a blog and institutional videos.

In Uruguay, there were also centres where specific training was implemented according to the situation and particular needs of each institution. Following this idea, an interviewee from the USA affirms "*Here, teacher professional development occurs a lot at the local and*

institutional level, so I cannot assure how that process was in these times since we had nothing at the national level".

Partnerships for teacher professional development

One of the most relevant aspects for the delivery of these training have been alliances with companies, public organizations or the third sector. In **Mexico**, a virtual training was developed for teachers and parents in collaboration with Google for more than 500 thousand teachers regarding the use of the GSuite platform, and with the Fundación Telefónica Movistar with the aim of increasing their experience and pedagogical capacities in the use of digital tools (Siteal, 2020). In **Brazil**, alliances were established with public institutions of the federal network. In **Colombia**, the 'Colombia Aprende' program had the support of allied companies from the private sector, such as Amazon, Google and Microsoft (Siteal, 2020). In **Ecuador**, the self-management course 'My Online Classroom' was developed between the Ministry of Education, the Central University of Ecuador and Microsoft and STEM training through agreements with Google. Finally, the **Dominican Republic**, in alliance with the NGO 'Save the children' highlighted the use of instant messaging systems to provide training especially in the most vulnerable areas without access to electricity, and therefore TV or radio.

Contents of online training

Professional development actions had different focuses. A significant percentage aimed to provide training and support regarding the use of digital tools. In almost all experiences, **the ministries tried to carry out virtual programs of continuous education or training, but essentially in digital skills.** There is a great consensus that the key is there. However, training on socio-emotional competencies to provide support to students and, in some cases, less specific training according to different disciplines also took on special relevance.

a. Technological competences

Training in the use of technology was massively organised. Virtual training was developed on how to articulate a didactic guide, how to set up virtual meetings and redesign face-to-face classes. However, according to the interviewees, teacher training in technological competences faced different challenges.

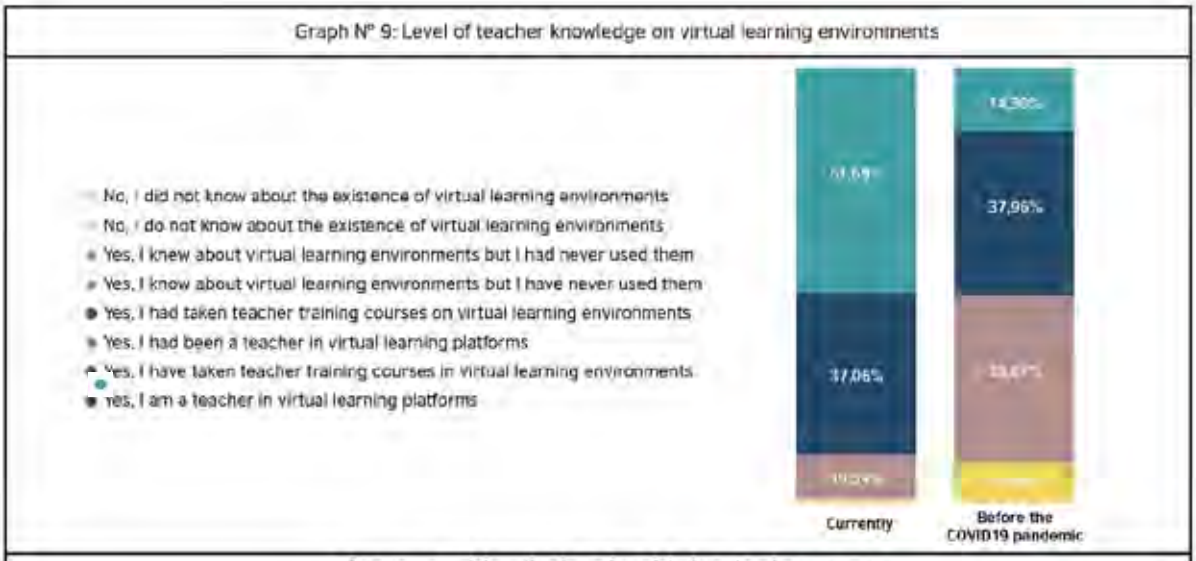
The first challenge was the difficulty of adjusting to the teacher's basic level. This is because of the heterogeneity in the knowledge and frequency of the use of tools by teachers in the region is wide. According to the interviewees, in the training sessions, the teacher's digital background was not considered. Had that been the case, those teachers with a prior digital knowledge could have obtained more benefit from the training or those who needed more support could have received it.

Secondly, **technology training was not complemented by pedagogical training appropriate to remote teaching.** The interviewees insist on the need for digital technology to serve pedagogy, otherwise forced initiatives are generated without sense.

Thirdly, although some countries already had online training resources and platforms, many of the teachers did not complete their initial professional development in an ICT-Mediated Learning Environment. Therefore, in certain areas the effort was twofold: creating and digitizing the learning platforms and then training.

What is more, in most countries traditionally ICT was not the content of preference for teachers. However, at the onset of the pandemic, **training on digital skills had a massive participation throughout the region.** This is reflected in the survey data regarding the knowledge of virtual learning environments, before and after the pandemic. Teachers in the Americas affirm that before the pandemic only 14,3% had taught through virtual platforms, today this ascends to 51,6%. In the same way, 38,67% claim that before the pandemic they knew about virtual learning environments but had never used them, and today that number drops to 10,54%. In other words, **not only there are more teachers registered using online platforms, but also less teachers are not using learning environments.**

Graph N° 9: Level of teacher knowledge on virtual learning environments



Source: own elaboration based on data from teachers survey.

"The most important transformation is the one that has to do with how the teachers appropriated, how the conditions demanded them to quickly appropriate technology. Daring to make a presentation, recording a video, using more and better technology. I do believe that we are still focused on the development of competencies that are not based on the teacher or the student, critical thinking and collaboration are still pending, that has not been resolved as such. But I do think, consequently, that we are still a long way from achieving it. Teacher training was more placed in terms of the use of Google Classroom, for example. But I don't see innovation". (Academic, Mexico)

Following this idea, it is possible to affirm that we are facing a scenario of greater tools appropriation, but with few changes in terms of how these tools can transform learning. Other pedagogical reforms that already had a long time in the field of teacher training but had not yet been made visible in a massive way in the classrooms, saw an opportunity in this crisis. Many **teachers** valued the moments of virtual synchronicity as propitious times for exchange**, managing to go from expository meetings to debates, resolution of doubts and interaction between peers.** Seen that, there was a **resignification of the concept of 'Flipped classroom'.**

One of the most asked questions among the interviewees is to what extent these trainings on tools manage to articulate with the pedagogical perspective on the teacher role, the teaching proposals, and the knowledge that it is desirable to promote in students. A different pedagogy in the distance learning modality? The analysis of this shows us that the resources appropriation has increased, in some cases from a medium level of prior knowledge, and in others from a very basic level of knowledge of how to use digital for virtual training.

"Different teacher support models were developed. The first stage based on need: from 100 thousand to 800 thousand users (almost the entire audience); there was a great clamor to use technology". (NGO leader, Uruguay)

b. Socio-emotional competencies

As mentioned in the strategies, another topic that also acquired greater relevance in teacher training was the teacher's socio-emotional competencies for interacting with their students. Countries such as Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, and Uruguay chose to offer downloadable guides with recommendations to face the new routine and psychosocial support so that teachers can support students and their families.

In addition, in **Chile** training was offered to teachers in the socio-emotional field for all subjects in a transversal way. To help teachers in the development of their socio-emotional skills, they developed a 'Teacher Log' which is part of the 'Socio-emotional Learning Plan' that the Ministry of Education developed. In **Uruguay,** ANEP and UNICEF launched online courses for educators in order to provide knowledge for the identification, detection and approach of cases of violence against children and adolescents. Moreover, fluid communication with schools allowed governments to identify this demand and adjust their proposal to offer this content. Such is the case of the School of Leadership in **Colombia** or the portal "Te escucho docente" in **Peru** (SITEAL, 2020).

Socio-emotional skills acquired greater visibility in aspects such as student self-regulation to be able to continue learning from home, as well as in teacher empathy when accompanying the emotions that during the time of social distancing generated isolation or illnesses, loss of relatives and economic crisis. So far, the relevance given to the development of programs designed to accompany teachers in health care and prevention strategies for returning to schools has been less. Furthermore, it is also a question

whether educational institutions will be granted autonomy to make decisions about their own return. The case of Uruguay is encouraging on this point.

c. Specific competencies

In many countries, training was developed on specific topics, both on certain competences and for teaching students in more vulnerable situations. In **Argentina**, for example, training on mathematics and virtuality was developed via the National Institute of Technical Education. In other cases, teachers were grouped by areas involving specific projects. Apart from this, in **Brazil** two programs were developed to support the literacy process for boys and girls. One of them —'Tempo de Aprender'— focused on teacher literacy practices and presents, in an accessible way, reading and writing teaching and learning techniques with playful, structured and scientifically validated pedagogical activities (SITEAL, 2020).

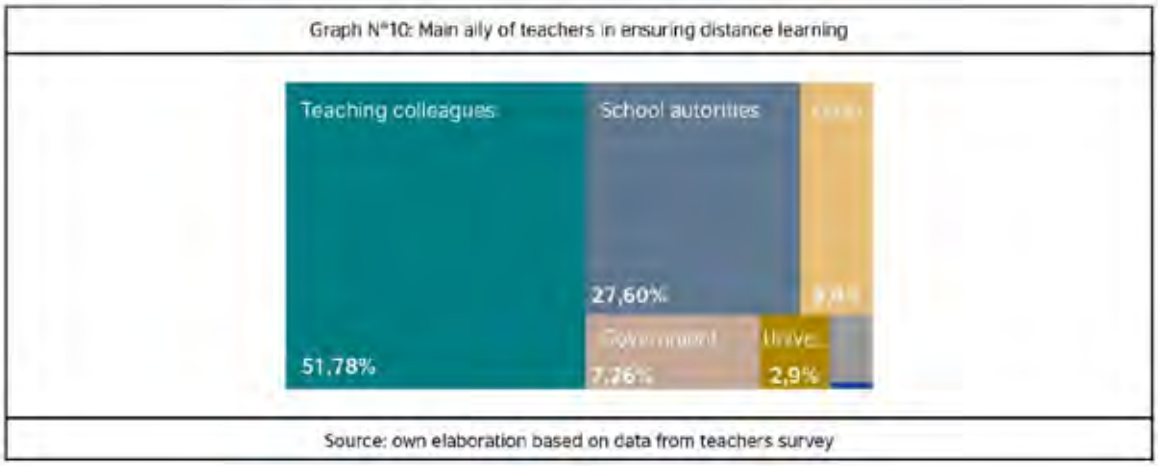
Moreover, curricular priorisation and progression have also been two topics addressed in the training proposals during the closure of schools. **Formative assessment resources and techniques, as well as curricular documents with learning progression, were the heart of dialogue and reflection in the face of the heterogeneity of scenarios that the pandemic remarked** and the need to monitor the student educational paths.

Finally, the crisis created an opportunity for more and less structured instances of teacher professional development grounded in a context of need that, although resisted, increased collaboration between peers and made it possible to implement new teaching strategies, assessment instances and modes of exchange between teachers, students and teachers, and schools and families.

> *"It is also necessary to invest in thinking about how to give autonomy to schools as a unit cell so that they can make the best decisions for the educational community for which they work. Accompanied autonomy so you can think about your own return to school. There are schools that today could return. But this 'top-down look' that implies 'if it is not all schools, it is neither'. And what you have to do is strengthen and do training programs so that schools can decide and always have a quality pedagogical response to any scenario".* (Academic, Mexico)

Places for collaboration and the exchange of good practices

In addition to continuous training, many countries opened spaces for collaboration between teachers to promote the transfer of knowledge and skills, and where to share good practices. In fact, according to the survey, **51,78% of the teachers interviewed in the Americas consider that the most important allies in training were their own colleagues** (compared to 27,6% attributed to school authorities, 7,26% to the government, and other).



These places for collaboration have been promoted from various contexts and levels, by school institutions as well as by national and local ministries, universities or third sector organisations. The different types are described below.

Meeting places for support between teachers. In **Colombia**, 'Plan Padrino' sought to promote the exchange of pedagogical capacities and experiences between Higher Education Institutions regarding the use of ICTs and the 'Pioneros Todos a Aprender' program, of teacher mentors in elementary school from low-performing institutions. According to interviewees, unprecedented collaboration channels were created, such as a network between institutions and teachers (Academic, Colombia). Following this idea, in the **Dominican Republic** internal collaboration networks were established at the school level, where older teachers have been supported by younger teachers. Furthermore, in **Uruguay,** meetings were held between teachers to discuss the consequences of the pandemic (Unicef, 2020). In **Chile**, according to interviewees, the webinars developed by the ministry offered the possibility of exchanging and consulting among teacher's common doubts regarding practice in spaces that did not exist before.

> *"I think that in education a lot is built between peers. When you bring in a great expert, teachers do not want him/her. You learn more between peers. Not talking between teachers and arrogance takes away possibilities. Learning from other experiences is what teaches the most. It is necessary to create these experiences*". (Government official, Colombia)

Places for innovative experiences systematization. Spaces were created to specifically share successful innovation lessons. In **Colombia**, the NGO Alianza Educativa developed the 'Innovation Fair' on significant experiences of the teacher's projects that were carried out as a team. In the **United States**, virtual EdCamps were implemented, participatory professional development events organised by volunteer teachers in which they show their experiences in teaching. In **Argentina**, exchanges between teachers were developed in the Atenea Experience, an initiative of the Varkey Foundation.

Spaces to share pedagogical resources. Specific spaces were opened to exchange resources and pedagogical tools. In **Mexico**, a blog 'Between Teachers' was launched, conceived as a space to share proposals, articles, research, studies, and ideas, where materials are presented weekly to promote educational experiences and strengthen the pedagogical bond of school communities. In **Peru**, the platform 'Community of Practice of Educational Management (CoP)' was launched, which works through the portal to promote the generation, exchange, and reinforcement of knowledge among authorities, managers, and public servants to distribute regional and local experiences and initiatives (Siteal, 2020). Finally, in **Uruguay**, the CEIBAL plan awarded prizes and recognized teachers for the use of the platform. Although originally it was an interface designed specifically for students, the platform made accompanying strategies, tutorials, experimental educational centres, and new technologies available. (NGO leader, Uruguay)

Spaces to listen the teacher´s voice. Finally, spaces were managed to make the perspective of those who were at the forefront of education heard during school closings. In **Mexico**, from the National Commission for the Continuous Improvement of Education (Mejoredu), reflection workshops were designed for school actors about their learning in the face of the health emergency. Topics such as 'The meaning of the teaching task in times of contingency', 'Executive leadership in times of contingency' and 'School supervision in times of contingency' were addressed.

In summary, although these proposals did not have a massive reach like the online training sessions, each country adopted a specific scheme for collaboration between colleagues. The experts interviewed have agreed that **collaboration between teachers has been one of the main allies in dealing with the closure of schools.**

"Internal collaboration networks have been established within the schools. Older teachers who have been supported by younger teachers. Teachers who were more respected due to their trajectory, now had to respect young people". (Academic, Dominican Republic)

"Teachers who quickly adopted ICTs trained the following groups. It was noticed that the teacher who adopts technology quickly is not the best one to train other teachers. A pyramid was built, and the second sector was found —those who come to adopt the technology with a little more effort—. They were the ones who could best accompany their peers. Each month, they led different initiatives, implementing different practices, and that is where it started to work". (Academic, Mexico)

Accompaniment and materials distribution

Finally, in addition to training for professional development, countries in the Americas provided guidelines to strengthen teachers' capacities in the face of school closures. They were presented in different ways.

Two types of support are observed throughout the region. On the one hand, **spaces and communication channels to provide technical and pedagogical support** in an almost personalised way, such as web or telephone consultation places and via voice notes. On the other hand, **production of both written and audiovisual documents**, such as an orientation guide for teaching or tutorial videos.

Technical and pedagogical support custom-made: In **Argentina,** communication channels were made available at the regional level for technical and pedagogical support, among which platforms for video calls were used. At the same time, in Buenos Aires specifically, the Teaching Program ATR was developed, which consisted of a system to accompany students' performance with home visits from teacher training students and those teachers without a specific school role in order to support the teaching work and the neediest schools.

Besides, in **Chile,** the Ministry of Education developed the 'Tutores para Chile' initiative to support establishments and their teaching teams in distance learning through the support of pedagogy students close to graduation (SITEAL, 2020). In the same way, in the **United States**, the National Tutoring program provides support to teachers with students with difficulties.

Guides for teaching and audiovisual material: Digital platforms were developed with audiovisual materials, modules with learning content to work according to the level and modality, and exercise guides and guidelines for the development of virtual classes. These resources are found in all countries without great differences, from **Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, the Dominican Republic and Uruguay** (SITEAL, 2020).

In **Colombia,** the 'Connected with Learning' program made guides and videos available and EDUPLAN managed guides for teachers to download and be in a position to teach. Moreover, in the **Dominican Republic** guides for teachers for all levels were developed, and the Ministry of Education of **Peru** defined a technical standard to provide general guidelines aimed at teachers, both to organise teaching and distance learning via 'I learn at home' as to provide answers to contexts with and without connectivity (SITEAL, 2020). In **Costa Rica**, a radio program produced by the Professional Development Institute (IDP) was launched.

The interviewees acknowledge that adequate materials were produced effectively and quickly, and were made available to teachers. However, they wonder if teachers could take advantage of those materials. They base their concern on the consideration that only in a few cases there were previous habits that imply consultation and the work of teachers from ministerial platforms. Nonetheless, even if it is not yet possible to identify how many of the

materials produced were consulted, these instances were complemented with more structured training proposals.

These experiences focused on strengthening teacher professional development and the strategies they have used during school closings invite us **to reflect on the profile, skills and type of support that will be essential to guarantee hybrid teaching for the future.**

3.3 Reflections on the future teaching role

In order to strengthen the teaching capacities to generate distance learning and teaching processes, it is necessary to incorporate certain topics into the **educational agenda for the future**. Specialist's different perspectives -from the Government, NGOs, and Academics- converge on three main topics: the **need to make structural changes in initial teacher training**, **a new teacher profile with remote teaching competencies**, and the **establishment of support systems for teachers in schools of vulnerable contexts**.

Review of Initial Teacher Training

The conditions for adapting to the new demands brought about by school closures were not in place so that teachers could appropriate new strategies and formats in a short period of time. Not only because of the connectivity, but especially because of the training they brought. Teachers need to be accompanied and trained to commit to a new educational model.

During the pandemic, there were teachers who managed to make minimal use of technologies and others who were able to generate meaningful interactions between students. Rethinking initial training with the transversal incorporation of technological skills is now irreversible. **The interviewees agree on the need for teachers to have an analysis framework, instruments, English language and the use of platforms at the service of pedagogy.** Otherwise, the lack of teachers with appropriate pedagogical skills will exacerbate the gap in teaching quality and learning opportunities.

Furthermore today, more than ever, the great media diversity **teachers can occupy has crystallized: TV, radio, cell phones, LMS platforms, etc. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the competencies of teacher training as a facilitator**, not as a transmitter of information. In other words, **it is necessary that the initial training includes a teaching practice that moves it from the place of "exhibitor" to the place of "facilitator with a purpose**" to generate meaningful interactions in the students and thus enhance learning.

This implies taking distance from the traditional role where the teacher is the only one who has the knowledge and defines how to teach. For this reason, **the training must provide tools for the teacher to learn to manage the use of the increasingly available material, that plans activities considering the remote format and the conditions to generate them, emphasizing the responsibility of the students for their own learning.**

This implies a pedagogical model centered on students, to put into practice skills considered necessary for the 21st century, of global citizenship, such as reflection, dialogue, argumentation. Because of this, the instrumental use of digital tools must promote and support innovative educational practices, and not the other way around.

Teaching skills for remote teaching

The lessons learned during school closures require an imminent repositioning of the **teacher as a reference, guide and facilitator**. This involves the development and strengthening of different competencies. To achieve a distance, remote or hybrid education, it is necessary to strengthen and rethink the teaching profile. The persons interviewed agree that there are certain characteristics of the teaching role that crystallized and made dynamic during the pandemic and that have been essential to guarantee educational continuity during the school closure period.

This new profile requires skills that go beyond digital. The specialists consulted affirm that, in addition to the use of ICT, teachers **divergent thinking** was key. This implies not only accepting the macro guidelines, but also being strategic and autonomous to motorize and accelerate learning, depending on the real needs of the students.

This comes hand in hand with the **capacity for autonomy** and initiatives to take **leadership in practices**. During the pandemic, many teachers were seen solving, detecting what they needed for their students, creating their own material for students with connectivity problems. In this way, teacher networks were activated to solve team problems that looked for meaningful alternatives.

This is where another of the teachers' skills comes into play that the interviewees consider essential to continue developing: the capacity for **collaborative work**. Traditionally, teaching has been a solitary role, and from the beginning their own space was well delimited by the walls of the classroom. However, the experts consulted affirm that it is necessary to change this from the root and promote training where teamwork is key to guarantee learning.

Finally, the role of teachers in this context includes the development of students' socio-emotional skills. This means teachers being able to help their students identify and manage their own emotions, such as commitment, empathy, or the ability to work in a team. Now, how to empower and support teachers in this process?

"Regarding the teacher professional development, it is necessary to understand that the teacher from present to future will be more versatile, more capable of understanding the context, being ingenious with the ability to find answers, with working on their trust, empathy, collaboration, models of collaboration, communication skills, to encourage students, ability to generate empathy with the student, the need to develop these skills, social, personal and interpersonal, and this is where this teaching versatility arises". (NGO leader, Uruguay)

Support and accompaniment to the teacher

According to interviewees of several countries, collaboration between teachers was key to be able to connect between peers and between schools. **Being aware of globality and breaking borders, being able to make synergies with other parts of the world, promoting networking was decisive in addressing local and common problems.** For this reason, one of the challenges of teacher professional development consists in defining how to accompany and strengthen teacher networks from the macro level, of schools that are being developed thanks to the use of technology. The exchange of practices, the systematization of lessons learned, the dialogues that are generated through these spaces were key to strengthening the teaching process.

Some collaborative experiences that acquired different formats were the macro-level proposals of **Argentina** ("Docente ATR") and **Chile** (Tutors Program) where a pair —another teacher or advanced student— assists teachers with the cases of students or schools with difficulties. Peer collaboration took other forms. For example, a school principal remarks the work in pairs, especially to support the emotional burden of the distance teaching task. A teacher from Chile highlights the support that was generated in a group of Latin American teachers to strengthen the process of literacy.

> *"The institutions were the ones who had to find a way to get there. So, in administrative terms, the system had to adapt to the forms proposed by the schools".* (Government official, Colombia)

In this sense, in order to provide support responses to teachers, it is necessary to get involved in the production —in a consultative way— for decision-making. In **Mexico**, one of the academics interviewed raises the importance of generating dialogues so that teachers feel listened to and accompanied, and can validate the decisions they are making at that time. Incorporating the perspective of those in the territory enhances and strengthens the design of contextualized and meaningful support strategies and responses.

4.
The link between school and family

4. The link between school and family

The closure of schools meant that students of all educational levels stopped being in the classroom with their teachers and had to continue the pedagogical process from their homes. In this context, the need to establish alternative communication channels to face-to-face interaction arose, in order to maintain the link between school and students. In the face of this new reality, the role of the family in education became even more central since it was fundamental to enable this connection, guide and sustain pedagogical continuity, especially in the case of younger students. In many cases, this meant the need for families to give pedagogical and socio-emotional support, in an unprecedented, demanding and complex situation.

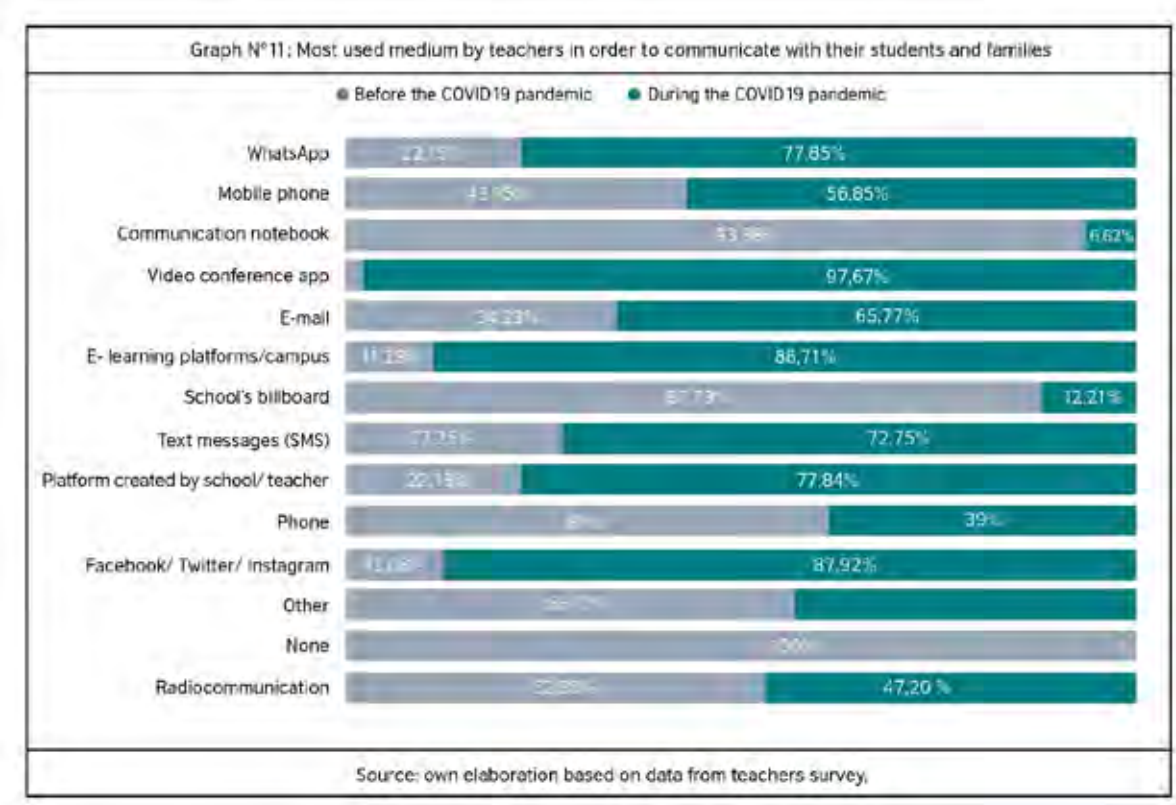
At the same time, the suspension of face-to-face classes highlighted the multiple functions that the school institution fulfills in addition to the educational one, such as feeding and caring for students. In this sense, during the pandemic, the school was a key actor to continue with the socio-emotional and nutritional support of many families by providing containment spaces and through food distribution mechanisms. Altogether, the suspension of face-to-face classes constituted an opportunity to strengthen the bond between school and family, a bond that is desirable to continue and be further strengthened in the future, for the benefit of student learning and well-being.

4.1 What happened in 2020?

Communication between school and students

The closure of schools put the bond between teachers and students at risk, given the need for channels and means of communication that are alternative to being present. There is an important variety between and towards the interior of each country. However, different investigations and survey results show that the Internet was the great ally, allowing communication through learning management platforms, video calls and email, through the use of computers and tablets. However, the results also show that **in the region, the main communication channels used were social networks and particularly the use of mobile devices.** (Mendez , C. et Al. *2020*); (Argentinos por la Educación, 2020) In turn, **in contexts of low or no internet connectivity, the data show that the priority channels were telephone calls, text messages, radio and / or sporadic interactions in the context of delivery of booklets and / or food bags.**

The results of the teacher survey show that there was a considerable increase in the use of platforms, WhatsApp and mobile devices:



Although some governments made available different communication channels to be used by each educational community, the truth is that, in general, each school institution had to resolve according to its particular context. In the case of **Chile**, for example, the government made Google Meet and Microsoft Teams licenses available to all schools in the country to enable video communication between teachers and students (Siteal, 2020). In **Brazil**, a significant majority of educational institutions also chose to communicate through video calling platforms such as Google Meet and Zoom. From a survey of families carried out by UNICEF in that country, 68% claim to have been contacted by the school to report on the academic progress of the children (71% private schools and 65% public) and 48% said that the school contacted them to find out how the students were doing and the home situation (UNICEF; 2020). In the case of **Colombia** , the "Aprende en Casa" (Learn at Home) platform focused on providing continuity to teacher-student communication, and the country saw an increase in the use of tools such as WhatsApp, email and virtual classes (OECD, 2020). In the case of **Peru**, along with the implementation of *Aprendo en Casa,* teachers received guidelines that emphasized the importance of conducting learning sessions through their preferred channel and maintaining fluid communication with students and parents. In this context, according to a survey carried out by the government to the teachers, in April, 94% of the teachers had communicated with parents and / or

students in the last week and in May, 98% of the teachers had had communication with parents, and 94% with students the week before (Munoz- Najar, 2020).

When the teachers surveyed were asked about the possible causes for which they had difficulties when communicating with the students to guarantee pedagogical continuity, an important part highlighted the difficulties of communication with the families and the consequent impediment of family accompaniment in the student paths. (Source: Teacher survey)

Pedagogical support to families

The participation of families to continue the teaching and learning process from home was essential. For this reason, the different countries of the region deployed initiatives to support families in this task.

One of the challenges that was mentioned the most in this stage of distance learning by the teachers surveyed was the lack of family support: difficulties of the family group to supervise the students' school tasks due to a lack of predisposition, interest or ignorance of the content. (Source: Teacher survey)

The main topics on which information was provided to families were regarding school support and guidance, habits and routines at home, time planning, activities, games, and organisation, healthy habits, parenting and the use of technology through digital platforms. In several countries of the region, the strategy adopted to provide pedagogical support to families was the creation of specific content, in various formats (articles, recommendation guides, videos), and its transmission through various means (digital portals, social networks, Youtube , television channels, printed material). At the local level, for example, the **New York City** Department of Education provided a family guide to address frequently asked questions from families regarding problems with technology to support learning at home, as well as socio-emotional support. Some strategies also involved the design of educational content for students, considering the voice of families, in order to facilitate the adaptation of these materials to their realities. This was the case of *the* ***Enseña Perú*** program, for example, where contributions from different family members were collected to generate a collective solution, or of “In trust with families” in **Colombia**, a space for exchange between families and educational institutions.

Likewise, some initiatives implied the direct involvement and participation in teaching and learning proposals. This was the case in **Uruguay**, through the CEIBAL Plan, where “Tiempo de Aprender” was presented, a proposal for television series for students and their families. It was also the case in this country the “Inglés sin límites” (English without Limits) program, which was designed and implemented to teach the english language at rural schools in the country and which brought students and families together around the school. During 2020, this program included the proyect "Madrinas y Padrinos en Inglés"

("Godmothers and Godfathers in English") which convened retired teachers and former Fullbright Comission fellows in order to partner with schools which requested support in the teaching of the language (ANEP, 2020a).

> *"The TV programs were addressed to the family. And in language teaching, the community was very involved.* "Inglés sin límites" *generated that the parents went together with the children to learn English. There are photos of parents who went with their children outside the schools to have internet, to have their French class with Conference. The family was also receiving training".* (Government official, Uruguay)

In **Brazil**, the "Conta pra Mim" program provided resources to support family literacy through fun activities and promoted the development of orality and contact with writing (SITEAL, 2020). The program provided a Family Literacy Guide, validated by foreign experts, and a set of 40 explanatory videos, with simple and accessible language on the practice of family literacy, as well as a playlist with narrated stories on the main platforms music and podcasts (Spotify, Deezer and SoundCloud). (MEC), 2020).

Socio-emotional support

Together with the pedagogical support, it was fundamental to ensure the process of students support at home, to provide socio-emotional support to students and families, in the face of an unprecedented, uncertain and overwhelming situation, particularly given the generalized context of isolation and social distancing. Maintaining psychological, social and emotional well-being had been a challenge for the entire educational community. To help mitigate the harmful effects of the crisis, it is necessary to support and accompany resources aimed at developing socio-emotional skills. (UNESCO, 2020)

> *"There was a high psychosocial risk, because mental health was threatened by isolation and food security problems. This had a great impact on the communities. To prevent school dropouts, one of the main strategies was to facilitate or help to emotionally process the pandemic: to respond to the impact generated by the deceased in the community, families of teachers, and students".* (Academic, Colombia)

In **Uruguay**, for example, the response of the schools included various actors who, together with the teachers, worked to support students with more complex situations. These actions included: telephone contacts with students and families, communications by email and through educational platforms, home visits and virtual workshops with parents, amongst others. According to surveyed teachers of Kindergarten and Primary Education, contact with their students was almost universal (92%), while secondary education teachers maintained

contact with 63% of their students on average and at the University contact reached 59% of the students. (ANEP, 2020b).

In **Argentina**, at the local level, the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires ventured into real-time communication channels: it set up a help desk ("Comunidad Educativa Conectada" (Connected Educational Community)) to which families could turn by phone, WhatsApp or chat to receive both pedagogical and socio-emotional support or advice. At the national level, results obtained from the survey conducted by UNICEF show that in the country, 8 out of 10 households report that they are in contact with educational institutions, of which 79% are to monitor their school progress and 25% of the cases, the school communicates to learn about the situation of the home and of the children who live there.

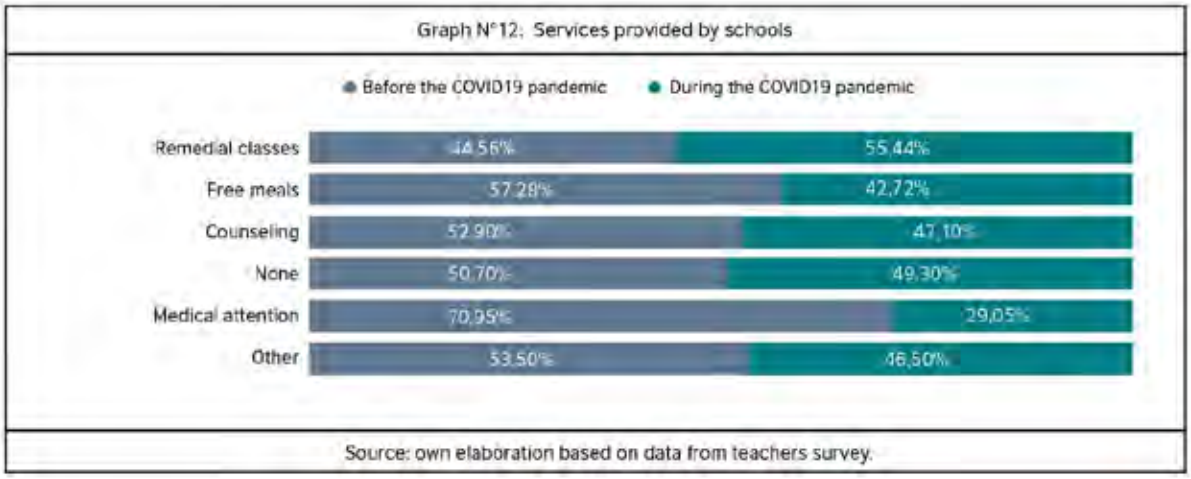
Food Support

School closures posed a huge food risk for those students who had the services provided by the schools, and in many cases it represented their only daily food ration. (WFP, 2020) Given the emergency situation, in many countries these services had to be strengthened and adapted to ensure their continuity, replacing their normal operation in school canteens, for example, by delivery mechanisms for food or food bags. In **Chile,** for example, the National Board of School Aid and Scholarships (JUNAEB) had a model in which the beneficiary family or student could withdraw breakfast and / or lunch at the educational establishment. As of March 18, a delivery system for baskets containing food products equivalent to breakfast and lunch was implemented for 10 business days. (Siteal , 2020; Universidad de Los Andes, 2020). The data suggest that around 1,600,000 boys and girls, who represent the 60% most vulnerable in the country, have benefited from this food plan (Figueroa, 2020).

In **Colombia** the "Programa de Alimentación Escolar" (School Feeding Program) (PAE) was modified to guarantee food for each student: three types of food delivery (a settled industrialized ration, a ration to prepare at home and redeemable bonus food) and The certified territorial entities (ETC) were granted the power to determine which was the one that best answered to the situation of each student. In turn, food delivery times were made more flexible, making them monthly, with the aim of maximizing social distancing (World Bank, 2020). In turn, another government initiative of the Colombian Institute of Wellbeing, *"Mis manos te enseñan" (My hands teach you),* delivered, for a period of 30 days, food rations with ingredients of local origin along with a family guide for the care and raising of the children. In the case of **Costa Rica**, the delivery of perishable and non-perishable food continued to the beneficiaries of the student canteens of the School and Adolescent Food and Nutrition Program (PANEA). At the same time, as a distinctive initiative to highlight, from the Ministry of Public Education, within the framework of the "Huertas Estudiantiles" (Student gardens) program, with each delivery of food packages to the beneficiaries of the dining room service, the schools that had gardens took the opportunity to include harvested products or seeds (SITEAL, 2020). Similar initiatives to deliver meals or food bags were carried out by the national governments of **Ecuador, Peru, the Dominican Republic and Uruguay.**

In **Argentina**, in addition to increasing allocations to assist school canteens in a scheme to deliver food in modules, they performed an adaptation of the existing plan, "Argentina contra el Hambre" (Argentina against Hunger) implemented through a "Feeding" card. This allowed certain families with children up to 6 years of age, beneficiaries of the "Universal Child Allowance" (AUH), the exclusive purchase of food and cleaning supplies (Siteal, 2020). In the **United States,** for its part, there were measures such as free food delivery, the launch of Pandemic EBT (a card through which food can be purchased) and the formation of public-private alliances to support the families of students who depend on this service. (US Department of Agriculture, 2020)

According to the teacher survey, the services that were continued during the pandemic were:



4.2 Analysis

Communication

"A theme that gained visibility was the involvement of families: parents and teachers began to establish a structure of communication and respect that did not exist before". (Academic, Mexico)

Due to the withdrawal of the school to the home, the **participation of families** in educational processes expanded significantly. In order to maintain the bond with the students, many schools had to resort necessarily to communication with the families. Precisely, one of the specialist consulted claims that the risk of disengagement of the students was greater in those cases in which there was no daily communication with

the students and that, in this sense, the families were strategic actors, mainly with the students who they did not have enough autonomy to manage their learning:

> *"If you don't communicate well with your student every two days, you lose him".* (Academic, Dominican Republic)

In some cases, communication between the school and the family was an established channel and, therefore, the strategy consisted of continuing the link and notifying parents of the new modalities adopted by the pandemic. But in the cases of vulnerable and low socioeconomic students and schools, as well as in rural schools, the need to communicate daily with parents was a novelty. This is how a teacher from Chile describes it:

> *""From their commune, the technical-pedagogical unit met to report progress and socialize their proposals with networks: establish weekly contacts with parents. For us, in the rural school, it was innovative to have permanent contact with the parents".* (Teacher, Chile)

In other cases, **the increase in communication enabled schools to include the opinion of families in this adaptation process and in the transition to a virtual school,** opening feedback channels between teachers, parents and guardians. One of the directors consulted reflects on how valuable and positive it was to take into consideration the contributions of the parents:

> *"We try to maintain very, very frequent communication with the families and we open up feedback a lot. We did a lot of surveys, groups with spaces for feedback, and we put it in our operation. At the end of the first week, some parents said that having three children and three different schedules, they asked for the schedules to be unified. And they did. We adapted the schedules, we started later, and we extended the lunch hours".* (Principal, Colombia)

> *"There is a need for parents to understand that they have an impact on the learning and education of their children. Some can see it more clearly and others know that it is important but do not know how to help or feel that they do not have the tools to do so".* (NGO leader, Uruguay)

There are several research on the effects of family engagement in school. Many of them indicate that increasing their participation has a positive effect on student learning

achievements and on social cohesion within the school and community (Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab, 2011). The INCLUD-ED project researchers have developed a typology of forms of family participation in schools and have investigated how each of the forms is associated with student learning. According to the bibliography, the models that contribute the most to the school success of all students are decision-making, evaluative and educational participation. This is because in them, families are more involved and have a greater influence on decision-making. (Valls Carol, S., 2014)

"It is necessary to provoke the complicity of families so that they become involved in the teaching and learning process". (Academic, Mexico)

In this sense**, in schools where feedback channels were opened with parents**, considering them as key actors for the transition towards virtuality, it is evidenced that **the contribution was positive and even allowed a faster and more appropriate response to the reality that was being faced.**

""And the other element of the feedback with parents is that it also gave us the opportunity to try new things, to innovate: every year we do final exams, this year we dedicated that time to something else. Parents have been fundamental in the innovation processes". (Management team, Colombia)

Pedagogical, socio-emotional and nutritional support

Sustaining the educational path of the students required not only fluid communication between school and family, but also great efforts on the part of parents and guardians in accompanying students in pedagogical proposals and activities. The educational level of adults, their cultural capital and training resources decisively influenced this possibility, in addition to other defining variables such as the socioeconomic situation, care for the elderly and people at risk, the workload and time availability, among other factors. These mainly affected students from the most vulnerable populations. In this sense, **all those initiatives that sought to support families in this context,** from pedagogical support to socio-emotional and nutritional support, were **fundamental.**

Ensuring the continuity of school feeding and supplementary social benefits, particularly family allowances, decreased the social impact of the interruption of school attendance (UNICEF; 2020). In addition, in the different countries under analysis, the different mechanisms that were proposed to continue with the provision of food also functioned as a valuable channel to allow the maintenance of the link between the school and the students, allowing the communication of the teachers with the students and the sending of educational material to their homes (UNICEF; 2020).

4.3 Reflections

The importance of strengthening the bond between the school and the families is one of the main lessons learned during this context of education in health emergencies. Faced with this, it becomes essential to **include parents or guardians as mediators in the learning process** of children and young people and consider them as **key actors in education.**

"Understand that the family is an ally and to strategically think for that audience, from the school. They are a fundamental actor to fulfill my mission as a teacher. It is no longer a political relationship, but a strategic one. It should be a win-win. It remains to be seen if this was perceived that way and was motorized in all schools". (NGO leader, Uruguay)

In the future, it will be necessary to carry out a diagnosis of the communication channels that worked so that teachers can establish regular and clear communication with families. In the opinion of some experts, the formality that was typical of this bond has changed. After the turbulence and instability that forced school closures, it has become necessary for schools to make an effort to unify the message they transmit and that - in order to overcome an emergency communication that in some cases was traditional and provisional- establish institutional channels to transmit these messages to families, and fundamentally to involve them in the teaching and learning process.

"People require a framework of analysis, a framework of thought of what is asked of them, it requires instruments, there must be an intense focus on the formation of the socio-technological capacities of families and schools as a whole". (NGO leader, Uruguay)

Likewise, it would be enriching to explore new spaces within schools where working with families and feedback are promoted. It is essential that these actions do not ignore the heterogeneity of each family. As mentioned above, in many cases parents were unable to follow the educational paths of the students due to lack of use of the tools or low level of literacy. A report published by the University of San Andrés (Rivas, A., 2020) **proposes not to forget the importance of the family cultural capital**. To this end, spaces could be proposed to socially involve families in student learning, promoting games and entertainment activities that allow students and parents to enjoy them.

The crisis generated by the pandemic brought with it the revaluation of the teaching role by families, and highlighted the essential and central place that the school occupies as a space for containment, nutrition and care for the entire educational community.

"In conclusion, this year the society claimed the role and the vocation. We hope it can be sustained". (Teacher Union Leader, Argentina)

"Some important themes were reinforced: the irreplaceable value of teachers. How complex it is to be a teacher". (NGO leader, Chile)

In the future, it would be desirable that these effects of revaluation of the teaching role and the school space -together with the strengthening of the school-family bond- be sustained and further strengthened given the wide existing evidence, prior and post-pandemic, of the positive impact of these factors in the educational paths of students.

"It is clear to me that more and more, education has become a priority. Parents have realized how valuable teachers are, and the important process that children undergo at school. After this pandemic, there must be a greater appreciation for teachers and of the need for children to be in school". (NGO leader, Ecuador)

5.

Management: decision-making in the face of the unprecedented

5. Management: decision-making in the face of the unprecedented

The role of leadership teams is key in the life of schools, and even more so in emergency contexts (UNICEF, 2020). In an unprecedented and uncertain environment due to the COVID-19 pandemic, school leaders have had to adapt and support both the institutional and pedagogical management of their institutions. In addition, they have had to face new demands and challenges arising from the health emergency. Added to the increase in their responsibilities and tasks, many management teams have seen their margins for action and decision expanded at the school level given the need for contextualized responses to achieve pedagogical continuity. This has had different effects on the school communities depending on the degree of support from government authorities and according to the leadership and strategic planning skills of each management team.

On the other hand, also due to the need for contextualized responses, opportunities have arisen for collaborative work between technical teams from ministries and schools, which has meant a greater degree of communication between these actors. In any case, it is verified that in **the different countries of the region the decision-making process and the decisions themselves have undergone adjustments and adaptations as the period of school closings progressed.**

5.1 What happened in 2020?

In the context of school closures, school leaders had to face a multitude of challenges in managing their facilities. The work of a principal is usually complex in itself since it involves, among other tasks, not only the responsibility for guaranteeing the learning of students but also guaranteeing their well-being and of their teaching teams (Nannyonjo et al., 2020). Faced with an unprecedented context of danger and uncertainty, and with the imperative of achieving pedagogical continuity, in many cases implied an intensification of tasks and responsibilities of school leaders, who also had to face with decision-making between groups with -many times- opposed interests. As one Uruguayan teacher points out:

> *"It was the worst year to be the principal of a school. (Management team) was in front of the children, teachers, families, and supervisors. And sometimes what one group asks of you is incompatible with what another group asks of you*". (Teacher, Uruguay)

School directors from all over the region had to make multiple and rapid decisions regarding the modality and organisation of distance education -including decisions on content and media- trying to contemplate the possibilities of each student and family. The same in relation to the attention to the situation of each teacher, their well-being and their

workload. Many school leaders have made great efforts to take care of the physical and emotional health of their school communities by participating or directly organizing, for example, operations to distribute food baskets to students or virtual meetings for the emotional support and mental health of their community, among others. On the other hand, some directors of privately managed institutions also had to face pressures and financial cuts, in a context of economic difficulty for many families who could not sustain their monthly school payments. Finally, many leaders also had to make decisions regarding protocols for a possible reopening, including resolutions regarding infrastructure, the purchase of hygiene materials, reorganisation of their physical spaces, etc.

School authorities are placed second (27.6%), right after fellow teachers (51.8%), as the main allies of teachers to ensure distance learning in this period (Source: Teacher survey)

At the same time, most of the persons interviewed from the different countries of the region agree that during the period of school closures**, the margin of school institutions for action and decision-making has increased**. On the one hand, this occurred because many definitions necessarily had to be given at the micro level, according to the particular context of each school and each student: "The ministry helped by giving general guidelines" (Academic, Colombia). But in other cases, this also occurred due to the inability of central governments to face the magnitude of the challenge, in an unprecedented and uncertain context:

"The governments did little to govern this. Because nobody was prepared for a situation of this massiveness. (...) The governments operated with what already existed. What I see even in developed countries was articulating what was there in the way that it was possible. What happened is that each school including each teacher ended up solving based on the availability of devices, connection and the certain level of innovation in which they were". (Academic, Argentina)

This led to the existence of a huge variety of responses and initiatives by managers and teachers throughout the territory of each country, according to their resources, skills, and possibilities:

"There was a lot of freedom, so there is a lot of variety. First the organization and management took a long time. Afterwards, there was a lot of creativity from the teachers". (Government official, Uruguay)

Likewise, due to the pandemic, countries such as **Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Uruguay** made modifications to the official forms of assessment of students, suspending in some cases numerical grades and / or reducing the mandatory curriculum by prioritizing content. In some countries, standardized assessment operations have also

been suspended or postponed, as is the case with the ENEM in **Brazil** and the SIMCE test in **Chile**. In a context of normality, the different administrative and student assessment processes can sometimes leave a narrow margin of freedom for decision-making at the school level (Netolicky, 2020). On the other hand, the aforementioned resolutions in many cases freed school leaders and teachers from external pressures and opened greater spaces for their own initiatives at the institutional level. However, these greater freedoms did not always necessarily have positive effects. On the contrary, in certain contexts in which government definitions were slow or not clear enough, these freedoms resulted in an increase in the uncertainty of school leaders and in their inability to plan, to the detriment of their decision-making processes of communication and of action.

On the other hand, the imperative of finding contextualized solutions in order to achieve pedagogical continuity in some cases resulted in an increase in communication and collaboration between macro levels of government such as ministries and secretariats, and between these with the micro level, that is, managers and teachers. According to an academic, in her country:

> *"Communication between the national and the secretariats was improved. It enabled networking and collaboration. It made good practices visible*". (Academic, Colombia)

At the same time, the presence and representation of the voice of the schools in the macro spheres increased**: many governments organised meetings and virtual dialogue spaces with directors and teachers or carried out surveys and consultations to understand the state of the situation in the territory and decide from there the course of action.** This is the case of **Argentina, Chile, and Mexico**, for example.

Likewise, the unknown and uncertain scenario motivated collaboration between ministries and schools for the development of content and pedagogical material to support distance education. In **Colombia,** for example, the different secretariats worked together with teachers to generate work guides and communication strategies for offline students (Academic, Colombia). In **Uruguay**, the direction of linguistic policies promoted the collective preparation of an electronic manual for language teaching, in which around 200 teachers from all over the country participated (Government official, Uruguay). Likewise, different ministries promoted channels and platforms to make good teaching practices visible during the pandemic and promote collaboration between schools and teachers. This is the case of the #CompartíTuExperiencia collection in **Argentina**, for example, as part of the "Seguimos educando" (We Continue Educating) program (Educ.ar, 2020) hosted on the Educ.ar platform. This repository of educational proposals is nourished by the practices of teachers from all over the country who have the possibility of sharing them through the platform. This is also the case of #EntreProfes, a network to share reflections and teaching

experiences promoted by the government of Bogotá in **Colombia**. Precisely, according to an academic in that country:

> *"An important response from the Ministry was to open windows of collaboration where teachers. (...) and the Ministry managed to create unprecedented channels of collaboration (...). A network was created between institutions and teachers".* (Academic, Colombia)

> *"We design based on the needs of the context. You have to listen to the principals, teachers, families, students".* (Academic, Dominican Republic)

> *"All the systems reacted as best they could, with the tools that were available at the time. (...) Little by little this has been corrected".* (Academic, Colombia)

Finally, the different interviewees agree that during 2020 in the different countries of the region, both from the macro level and the micro level, decisions and actions were modified and adapted over time, in certain cases in the style of a "step by step" modality (da Silveira, P., 2020)

5.2 Analysis

From the interviews with different leaders, it can be deduced that in certain cases the greater freedom for decision-making at the school level resulted **in more contextualized and therefore more effective practices**, unlike what usually happens in normal contexts where bureaucratic structures of Governance of the systems can operate with limitations not as efficient:

> *"Here the ministry of education is very absorbed in being the one who dictates the orders. Today wonders were seen, teachers solving. This should be kept. The teachers detected what they needed". (Academic, Dominican Republic)*

> *"Here the schools generated much more attractive competencies, they respond directly and specifically to the problems of the context, much better than the Ministry".* (Teacher, Chile)

By getting to know their educational communities in depth, school leaders were able to adapt the proposals and solve them according to their specific needs. However, this was possible in those cases in which the management teams **were also supported and**

accompanied in their decision-making processes, with guidelines and clear and precise information from governments, with recommendations and guides, and fundamentally with resources for action. There it is where the increase in the margins of autonomy at the school level was successful.

On the contrary, in the cases in which the decision or guidelines of the central governments were not clear and communicated in time, the management teams saw their uncertainty increased and they suffered difficulties in making decisions. As reflected by a group of Argentine pedagogues and teachers, "the worst scenario is “perverse school autonomy” in which each institution and each teacher solves problems in isolation and with very little support and accompaniment". (Concertación Educativa 2021, 2020) This scenario is one that should be avoided at all costs.

“Each institution has to find its way to get there and each system has to respond to those needs. (It should be given) more autonomy to the educational institution (...) We have to support the teachers so that they generate”. (Government official, Colombia)

Likewise, the different interviewees point out successful cases of decision-making at the school level. Specially in those in which directors showed solid leadership and management skills and were able to lead their teaching teams to face distance education in the context of the pandemic. For example in Argentina:

“Two schools that I see as rich experiences are where the principal was able to achieve team building, collaborate with teachers, guiding them. (...) Good directors organized Zoom meetings, so that teachers could share”. (Teacher, Argentina)

At the same time, on several occasions the different interviewees highlight those management teams who were able to manage interpersonal relationships between the different actors of the educational community, as well as fundamentally motivate collaborative work between teaching peers:

“At the institutional level, many good practices had to do with how the leadership team summoned the teachers to maintain that esprit de corps: very good schools are those that have managed to sustain the joint work.” (Government official, Argentina)

Surveyed teachers who indicated the educational authorities as their main allies to ensure distance learning, also pointed out that they mainly helped offering technical-pedagogical support (45.9%) and training instances (27.3%) for teaching in virtual environments. (Source: Teacher survey)

In this regard, the interviewees of the different countries point out the importance of insisting on the specific training of these actors throughout the region: “it is key to strengthen the leadership perspective in management” (Government official, Peru). The existing literature agrees that "the COVID-19 pandemic has also highlighted the **need to train school administrators on issues such as community partnerships, communication, and teacher leadership"** (Nannyonjo et Al, 2020), and insists on the generation of spaces for collaboration between school leaders and teachers: “managing a school can be a lonely task. The collaborative work between peers, the shared and critical analysis about the processes that are being carried out, the dialogues both on the achievements and on the difficulties show us that it is possible to change the school also - and even more - in a pandemic". (Eutopia, 2020)

On a positive perspective, the teachers surveyed were “strongly agree” or “totally agree” when considering that their directors had “delegated and / or shared responsibilities and functions” (86.7%), “maintained fluent communication with the teachers” (87%) and “organized and sustained a work agenda” (86.5%). (Source: Teacher survey)

5.3 Reflections for the future

Based on what happened, regarding the role of management teams in making decisions to achieve pedagogical continuity, three main reflections for the future emerge.

In the first place, from the testimonies of the persons interviewed of the different countries it becomes evident that it is impossible to think of the massive educational systems of the region in a single approach for the diverse set of schools, designed and rigidly prescribed by the central governments. **The best decisions to achieve pedagogical continuity have been those that have been taken from the context and particularities of each institution.** And in this sense, it is the school leaders of each school who are best prepared since they are the ones who know their communities best. However, this does not mean that schools can and should solve it alone. It is imperative that central governments accompany school leaders with clear guidelines, although flexible and adaptable, and fundamentally with resources for action, especially those schools which serve the most vulnerable students. School supervisors, absent at least in a large part of the bibliography consulted and in the testimonies of the different specialist, could be key nexus actors to achieve this objective.

Secondly, it is desirable and a challenge that in the future “accompanied autonomy” increases in school institutions, but not “perverse autonomy” (Concertación Educativa 2021, 2020). It is therefore **also imperative that governments accompany with serious training programs,** specifically focused on school leaders, since what happened shows the importance of the leadership and management capacities of school school leaders to face adverse situations, and therefore hence the need to strengthen these capacities.

In third place, the period of compulsory school closings has shown that **communication and collaborative work between the different levels of government of education**

systems, including schools, as well as between management peers and teachers, is not only possible but also necessary and helpful. The schools, their school leaders and teachers, must be listened to and incorporated in the decision-making processes, since they are the ones who are in true contact with the students they are trying to reach.

6.
Experiences in focus

6. Experiences in focus

This section presents different educational experiences that illustrate the themes and questions of this research. Because the pandemic, and therefore the responses adopted to mitigate its effects, are still in process, there are limitations in terms of measuring the success, results and impact of the policies and programs implemented in the different countries. However, it is of great interest to expose those initiatives that were developed in order to guarantee educational continuity and enrich the teaching and learning process, leaving open the possibility of deepening the analysis of cases in future lines of research.

The mapping and systematization of these experiences was carried out through bibliographic review, results of surveys, interviews, and deepened through focus groups.

The selection of these experiences was made taking into account the following criteria:

Pedagogical continuity: in all cases, these are experiences carried out in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Both, those that arise in their entirety as a response during the pandemic or those in which there is a prior component of development that was accompanied by contextualized actions. The specific focus of the analysis of the experiences to be studied is delimited from the five themes addressed in the previous chapters.

Innovation: responses to the pandemic establish in a certain sense a break with the traditional teaching system, however, this is not always synonymous with educational innovation, for this reason the cases that were sought where educational initiatives that broke with the traditional paradigm in relation to the positioning of the student, the concept of active learning and how they managed to alter the elements of the school order that extinguish or limit the desire to learn of the students (RIVAS, 2018).

Scale: the cases considered reach a wide scale of benefited population or experiences with the possibility of sufficient scalability to exceed an institutional / regional scope.

Primary and secondary education: cases involving primary and secondary levels, and their various modalities, are taken into account.

Available information: the educational world has offered a large number of highly innovative proposals and initiatives with the possibility of impact. Despite this, not all experiences present available data about the program and the same happens in relation to the results. In this study, The cases analysed in this study are the ones that at the date of the investigation had shared information regarding the program and its results to the population (through surveys, testimonies, measurements, statistics, program evaluation).

Finally, once the initiatives had been selected on the basis of the aforementioned criteria, these experiences were examined in depth through focus groups made up of teachers, management teams and academic coordinators who participated in them

Seguimos Educando - Argentina

Synthesis

In March 2020, the National Ministry of Education launched as an educational policy "Seguimos Educando" (We continue educating) with the aim of providing, through various channels, the necessary resources to guarantee educational continuity and respond to the right to education at the time of the national health emergency.

On the same day that the ASPO (Social, Preventive and Compulsory Isolation) was determined at a national level and face-to-face classes were suspended, the Seguimos Educando program was created, in order to ensure the production and distribution of educational resources in digital, paper, television and radio, to students, families and teachers throughout the country, during the period of confinement.

Website:

Educ.ar

Initiative type:

- Government in alliance with other organisations.

Scope

- National Initiative
- **Population involved:** Teachers, Families, and ministry.
- **Benefited population:** Students and teachers from all over the country, initial, primary and secondary level.

Observed results

- **Repair and distribution of 98,554 netbooks and 19,034 tablets nationwide.**
- **Booklets:** 9 series in 82 Booklets / 54,226,300 copies of Seguimos Educando Booklets.
- **TV programs:** 7 daily programs / 1,271 educational TV programs with a total of 1,795 hours.
- **Radio programs:** 7 daily radio programs / 1253 total programs / 1253 hours.
- **Digital library:** 1,500 e-books published / 105,000 digital readings in 6 months.

Description

In 2020, the Ministry of Education of the Nation in conjunction with the 24 provincial ministries of education implemented educational policies aimed at guaranteeing the right to education of students, both in compulsory education and in higher education. Because the realities of the country are very diverse and unequal, different analog and digital resources were deployed and multiple pedagogical continuity initiatives were implemented involving different government agencies and the educational community as a whole.

On the same day that the suspension of face-to-face classes was determined, the "Seguimos Educando" Program was created in order to ensure the production and distribution of educational resources in digital, paper, television and radio, intended for students, families and teachers during the period of confinement.

Produced by *Educ.ar*, educational resources were made available to school leaders, teachers, students and families, in digital format. The site's mobile browsing does not consume internet data.

In order to expand and improve connectivity to access virtual forms of teaching and learning, the National Ministry of Education together with ENACOM managed an agreement with the companies that provide telephony and Internet services to free the use of mobile data in student access to educational platforms. Children under 13 years of age could use the WhatsApp account of one of their parents or guardians and the adults could register in the application and use their own account. It was only necessary to send a WhatsApp message with the word "hello" to the number of the direct line and the bot made some queries to present the contents related to the class of the day. This educational line was being developed by the Botmaker company and is currently still in beta. (National Ministry of Education, 2020)

Seguimos Educando Booklets: Booklets with activities and educational material aimed at different segments of the educational system were printed and distributed throughout the country: From the cradle (0-3 years); Initial Education (4 and 5 years); Primary Education and Secondary Education. Each of the booklets organised the daily school activity for three weeks. Series 2, 3 and 4 of the Booklets were produced in alliance with UNICEF.

Seguimos Educando TV Programs: Seguimos Educando on television produces programs for the different grades and cycles of initial, primary and secondary education. The programming was broadcasted by the Public Television channel, Canal Encuentro, Paka-Paka and repeated by 63 television channels in all provinces and in the Federal Capital (21 provincial public channels, 12 university channels, and various cooperative and community television channels). It was also broadcasted on satellite television, digital and on demand platforms.

Stage 1 of the television programming began on March 16, the first day of the suspension of face-to-face classes, with 4 hours a day from Monday to Friday divided into 2 hours for primary and 2 hours for secondary. On April 1, in front of the extension of the ASPO, stage 2 of the programming was launched, changing the format to teleclasses with 14 hours a day from Monday to Friday, divided into 7 programs according to educational levels. On Saturdays, Public TV also broadcasted "Taller en Casa" (A Workshop at Home), a televised technical-professional education workshop, an entry into the world of science, technology and trades to help solve the problems of the house in times of quarantine. Starting in August, in line with the guidelines for prioritisation and curricular reorganisation established by the Federal Council of Education (CFE), stage 3 was launched, with a new curricular and pedagogical proposal through 7 hours of daily programming.

The National Ministry of Education and Educ.ar, together with Facebook -the company to which WhatsApp belongs-, developed an educational line that allowed to engage in pedagogical, private and encrypted conversations from end to end, based on the Seguimos Educando program. The service sought access to quality educational content, especially in places where connectivity was limited. This initiative was aimed at primary and secondary level students.

Seguimos Educando radio programs: They began to be broadcasted on April 1 with 7 programs organised by cycle and educational level, each lasting one hour. They are broadcasted every day by the 49 National Radio repeaters throughout the country and more than 190 university, community, school, rural and private radio stations throughout the country.

Digital libraries: they were launched in July, with the aim of accompanying the strengthening of pedagogical continuity. These libraries were free and and with free access. They presented different proposals that sought to make available various digital collections in all jurisdictions, aimed at students, families, teachers , librarian / ace, authorities, researchers and the general public. This proposal, in alliance with other organisations (CAL, CAP, Fundación El Libro) includes academic and recreational bibliography and allows reading online or downloading, from the web or mobile application.

"Seguimos Leyendo" (We continue reading) Digital Library: located on the Seguimos Educando platform, it includes digital books to read online, download, transform and republish. A library designed not only for reading, but also to promote creative reading practices and transmedia approaches. Created with the contribution of Educ.ar, the National Teacher Library, the BCN and the CONABIP.

Teachers voices

In the analysis of the experience 'We continue to Educate', two focus groups have been carried out in which teachers, school management teams and academic coordinators of primary and secondary levels of rural and urban areas participated to gather their perception in the implementation of the Program in the schools. The participants pointed out the successes, challenges, and modifications regarding their main lines of action based on their experiences in the territory.

Successes

Teachers pointed out that the 'We continue to Educate' Program contributed to ensure pedagogical continuity in the context of the pandemic and facilitate the access of students in economic vulnerability situations.

Concerning teaching resources, the inclusion of ICT in the pedagogical proposal and the use of a universal primer to organise the contents are highlighted. Regarding learning, the skills addressed in the development of the activities are mentioned, especially in the areas of Language and Mathematics Practices.

Finally, with reference to the achievements the teachers observed in their students, the greater autonomy and the better organisation in carrying out the tasks are remarked, as well as a greater family involvement in the school tasks.

Challenges

Respecting teacher training, the need to reorganise training and incorporate the use of official materials into the content discussed was expressed.

On the other hand, the importance of contextualizing the themes of the booklets was pointed out, especially in the area of Social Sciences.

Regarding the delivery of the material, the importance of distributing it directly in schools was stated to optimize the use of resources, to the detriment of the political or commercial mediation that was carried out in most cases.

Queremos aprender a Leer y Escribir - Mendoza, Argentina

Synthesis

"Queremos aprender a Leer y Escribir" (We want to learn to read and write) is an initiative of the General Directorate of Schools of the Province of Mendoza, Argentina, aimed at Teacher Professional Development for early literacy that seeks to have a direct impact in the quality of pedagogical practices and the improvement of the student learning. The isolation in the context of COVID-19 put at risk such a determining stage in the school trajectory as taking the first steps in reading and writing. This massive virtual program combines asynchronous self-paced learning with moments of synchronous interaction, such as webinars, workshops, mentoring and reflective dialogue regarding pedagogical practices, and has become a tool of great impact in terms of strengthening teacher capacity, the achievements in learning and the family accompaniment.

Initiative type

- Provincial government

Scope

- Provincial initiative
- **Population involved:** Kindergarten and First Grade Elementary School Teachers of all the public and private schools of the province (2200 teachers). Psychopedagogical Advisors (70), Principals and school technical teams (110).
- **Benefited population:** Students, teachers, and families from all over the province of Mendoza.

Observed results

- 89.9% of the participants considered that this training path should be extended to all teachers, not just those who are First Grade Elementary School Teachers (Teacher survey at the end of cohort 1).
- 38% of the mentors responded that the program had exceeded their expectations. 62% answered that their expectations had been met fully. (Mentors survey at the end of cohort 1).

Description

Given that early literacy is the key to future learning, and presents enormous epistemological, didactic, and contextual complexity, and added to the fact that the initial professional development of teachers in terms of literacy is insufficient and must be assumed by continuing professional development, since 2017 in the Province of Mendoza has been implemented the "Queremos Aprender a leer y escribir" program as an educational policy, developed by a team of researchers under the direction of Dr. Ana María Borzone (CONICET).

For its implementation, the government gives each child in 5-year-old Junior Kindergarten and First Grade Elementary School the book 'Klofky and his friends explore the world' (33,000 students every year on average), and the teacher's book together with various training proposals, such as conferences, workshops, documents, etc. The context of COVID-19 pandemic made it necessary to rethink the online teacher training through the virtual environment of the General Directorate of Schools. 5-year-old Junior Kindergarten and First Grade Elementary School Teachers were recruited, and 1,100 teachers in cohort 1 and 1,110 teachers in cohort 2 enrolled on a voluntary basis.

It is a systematic training journey with a duration of 4 months (20 weeks), in a virtual environment that combines asynchronous self-paced learning with moments of synchronous interaction, such as massive webinars and small workshops. Every week, a class is enabled on the platform, with materials prepared by experts, self-correcting questionnaires, proposals for the pedagogical practices, criteria for the documentation of the practices and guidelines for portfolio preparation. On the one hand, the program proposes an autonomous interaction of the participants with the materials shared in the platform, but on the other, it brings teachers from nearby schools together in geographical

commissions, which are led by a mentor who, through WhatsApp, encourages the teacher participation and identifies the group challenges.

The mentorship was assumed by the psychopedagogical advisors, for which they received, in parallel, accompaniment regarding the construction of their role. Biweekly meetings through an online platform (Zoom or Google Meet) were agreed for the commissions in order to share teaching experiences through dialogue, peer feedback, and metacognition, understanding that collaboration and reflective dialogue regarding pedagogical practices is a key for teacher professional development, the impact on practices and student learning. In addition to the individual self-paced learning moments and the group ones with mentoring, massive synchronous experiences were organised through webinars, which recovered the main training topics in relation to the particularities of the context of COVID-19 pandemic, their challenges, and opportunities.

One of the main challenges was to create the necessary alliance with the families, as they had to assume the role of mediators with the children. The particularities of the different contexts and the number of families with limited resources for reading and writing became visible to teachers. The multicultural approach of the program provided resources to work with families, ensuring that a semi-literate person could participate of the literacy process with their children and incorporate valuable habits for the linguistic, socio-emotional, cognitive, and motor development of boys and girls into the family dynamic.

The results of the program can be seen in different dimensions:

- Regarding the teacher professional development in the use of technology: 50% of the participants had never experienced online training. The participation in the training path allowed teachers not only to have access to content, but also to produce their own content and materials to reach children and their families through digital tools. Collaborative learning between peers and timely feedback contributed to the teacher's creativity, whose evidence is shown in the collaborative walls through videos, games, apps, etc.
- Regarding the teacher professional development in terms of literacy: Although the 'We want to learn' Program had been implemented since 2017, the complexity of literacy, added to the resistant nature of the teaching matrix, did not allow a smooth progress in the implementation. The value that was given in this program to collaboration and reflective dialogue regarding pedagogical practices, the process of pedagogical documentation, the close accompaniment by a mentor and the peer feedback gave an important role to the teachers, and because of this they got personally involved with the program, not just as a plan imposed from the government.
- Regarding to the development of general teaching skills, the program promoted peer learning, collaboration, and active listening. The opportunity of sharing the achievements of their experiences and the good results they observed in the children and their families, encouraged the teachers and stimulated their enthusiasm, proactivity, sense of competence, and empowerment regarding their role, all essential aspects for good practices. The closeness of the mentor and the colleagues in the commissions was a key to promote the assistance despite difficulties (precarious Internet connection, complexity of many contexts, vulnerability, etc.).
- Regarding children's learning, on average, 80% of First Grade Elementary School students achieved autonomous reading and writing of short texts during the year.
- Regarding the alliance with the families, the school was able, through the teachers, to give the families powerful tools for mediation. In many cases, this also meant for the families to walk the path of literacy together with their children.

As a complement to the books delivered to the children and the teacher training program, the Directorate of Planning of Educational Quality developed a daily TV program for

promoting literacy through the book's star character: Klofky, an alien who arrives on Earth by accident and audiovisual resources were created to favor the phoneme-grapheme relationship and traces.

Many of the materials of the 'We want to learn to read and write' program and its webinars are available on YouTube.

Teachers voices

In the analysis of the experience 'Queremos aprender a leer y escribir' ('We want to learn to read and write'), one focus group has been carried out in which teachers, school management teams and academic coordinators from primary level of public and private schools in urban and rural areas participated to gather their perception in the implementation of the Program in the schools. Participants pointed out the successes, challenges, and modifications regarding their main lines of action based on their experiences in the territory.

Successes

Teachers define it as a 'high impact' program in the literacy process. They highlight the relevance of the articulation between initial level and first grade to achieve good results.

Regarding the contents, the methodology and the theoretical foundation that can be applied to different types of text are remarked.

Finally, in respect of human resources, the facilitators accompaniment in the implementation process and the learning community that is generated among the participants is valued.

Challenges

The expansion of connectivity and the distribution of one book per student to improve results are considered the main challenge.

The training extension to all levels is recommended so that the program has continuity in secondary.

Meaningful testimonials

'I did not agree, until I understood the reasons during the training and came to love the book and take it as a tool.'

Comunidad Atenea - Argentina

Synthesis

Comunidad Atenea, an initiative of the Varkey Foundation launched in March 2020, is an open and free social network for the collaborative learning community of Latin American teachers, where they can be inspired, plan their classes, share good practices, access innovative MOOCs, and connect with teachers from across the region.

The #ExperienciaAtenea program is a one-week learning experience based on action, collaboration and peer feedback. Each week, these experiences propose a new theme to enrich teaching practices through a methodology focused on learning by doing. Participants design projects together and develop skills such as: collaboration, problem solving, communication and critical thinking.

Website:

www.comunidadatenea.org

Initiative type

- International Nonprofit Organisation

Scope

- National Initiative
- Target audience: K-12 teachers from 18 American countries (Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru, Paraguay, Mexico, Guatemala, Uruguay, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Honduras and US).

- Beneficiaries: K-12 students.

Observed results

#ExperienciaAtenea: opinión de los participantes

99,5%
Of the graduates would recommend this experience to a colleague.

99%
Defines the expereinces as 'Excellent' or 'Very good'

- In **9 months**, Comunidad Atenea has reached **+41,000 unique visitors from 102 countries**, 13,422 community members **from 18 countries**, and **332 best practices shared by the teachers.**

- In **32 weeks, the #AteneaExperience program** has released **35 editions** with **8,773 graduates** who have completed 4 editions on average. Furthermore, the graduates of the different editions of this program reach 415,798 students. Until now, more than 3.932 best practices in education have been implemented by the teachers as part of the practical challenges proposed each week in #AteneaExperience, and those initiatives reached +135,000 students.

- Moreover, **Comunidad Atenea was selected by the McCourt School of Public Policy at Georgetown University as a case study** to evaluate its impact and analyse its scalability to the market of Spanish-speaking teachers living in the US.

#AteneaExperience impact:

35
Editions

3.932
Best practice in education implemented by the participants

135.880
Students reached through the best practices replicated

Description

Based on its own study, the Varkey Foundation identified that the lack of confidence of Latin American teachers in the use of technology constituted to elevate an important barrier to the adoption of ICT in the classroom. Teachers feel that they are not skilled enough in using digital tools and fear making mistakes in front of their students. This fear of being wrong makes them reluctant to use technology in their classes. Likewise, another of the challenges of the region detected in the study focuses on the fact that teachers tend to work in solitude, "doors into their classroom", with few instances to share their practices among colleagues. These aspects were strengthened by the global learning crisis caused by the pandemic.

Faced with this regional panorama, Comunidad Atenea was born in April 2020 with the aim of building a community of Latin American teachers based on collaboration, peer feedback, trust and emotional support, in which the importance of learning through doing and learning from errors. In addition, it proposed to promote the meaningful and creative use of digital tools with students, within the context of a constantly changing classroom.

In this platform, which is open and accessible through any device, teachers can share their good practices. In order to safeguard quality, a personalised mentoring and curation process is carried out in which teachers receive feedback from the Comunidad Atenea team and, once this process is completed, the good practice is published and shared with the rest of the community.

The #ExperienciaAtenea program was designed with the aim of promoting an intensive one-week training based on doing, collaboration and peer feedback. Each week, these experiences propose a new educational theme, which includes the use of various open and free digital tools. Participants meet through live YouTube broadcasts, work in small group workshops on Zoom, exchange and provide feedback through WhatsApp groups. These experiences have a methodology focused on learning by doing as the participants must carry out various practical challenges with their students. These challenges can be implemented in different school contexts, taking into account the educational level of the students, the available resources and the expected impact on learning.

Comunidad Atenea and TikTok created an alliance to launch a learning challenge for Latin American teachers with the hashtag #learnontiktok (#aprendeentiktok in Spanish). Faced with the global educational crisis due to COVID-19 and the challenge of motivating students, the aim is to empower teachers as creators of audiovisual educational content, seeking to awaken the interest of students in learning from a platform that is already very used by them. For this, Comunidad Atenea is training teachers from all over Latin America in the pedagogical use of TikTok, promoting the creation of innovative and meaningful proposals within a safe environment for students. Today, #aprendeentiktok videos have more than 14 billion views and #comunidadatenea videos have more than 539 thousand views

Teachers voices

In the analysis of the experience 'Comunidad Atenea', one focus group has been carried out in which teachers, school management teams and pedagogical advisers of primary and secondary levels participated to gather their perception in the implementation of the Program in the schools. The participants pointed out the successes, challenges, and modifications regarding their main lines of action based on their experiences in the territory.

Successes

Teachers highlighted the teacher network and the collaborative learning environment created in the American countries, promoted by Comunidad Atenea. The paradigm shift that enables the platform based on peer feedback is remarked.

With references to the contents, the incorporation of ICT in the educational best practices and the quality of the experiences that can be replicated in the lesson planning were stand out.

The participants mentioned the importance of expanding this teacher network and continue sharing strategies that allow adapting the pedagogical proposals to virtuality.

Challenges

Teachers consider that it is necessary to generate smaller communities in the teachers who participate in Comunidad Atenea and promote more instances in the Atenea Experiences to multiply the impact in the schools. The main challenge that teachers manifest is the resistance of colleagues to replicate the platform strategies.

Regarding the organisation, the importance of respecting the times and schedules of participation in the experiences was presented as a challenge.

Finally, concerning to resources, connectivity is mentioned as a barrier to participating in this space.

Meaningful testimonials

‘As teachers, we need to understand that Education can change through tools that, otherwise, we were not going to use.’

Sao Paulo Media Centre (CMSP) - Brazil

Synthesis

It is an initiative launched by the Secretary of Education of the State of Sao Paulo, with the aim of contributing to the training of professionals in the state network and expanding the offer of education mediated by technology to students, in an innovative way, with quality and aligned to the needs of the XXI century.

The initiative is aimed at the production and publication of content in a multiplatform. The classes are broadcasted from TV studios installed at the Headquarters of the Vocational Education Training School (EFAPE) and can be viewed live through the CMSP website and through the APP created for this purpose. The classes can be seen through TV channels, assigned according to the level in question. Through the APP it is possible to give and participate in live classes, with interaction between teachers from the state network and other specialists. It also allows access to various education, culture and entertainment programs.

Once the APP is downloaded, it does not consume mobile data.

In the CMSP portal, teachers can access to a Menu of integrated contents, with various pedagogical proposals and resources, to be used in both synchronous and asynchronous modes.

The published contents are available for consultation by students, parents and professionals of the network of schools in the state of São Paulo.

Website:
https://centrodemidiasp.educacao.sp.gov.br/

Initiative type

- Government, in alliance with third sector organisations and the private sector.

Scope

- Initiative at the provincial state level (province).
- **Population involved:** Teachers, Families, Secretary of Education.
- **Benefited population:** Students of the initial, primary and secondary level of the state of San Pablo.

Observed results

Impact on:

5,100 Schools >>> distributed in **645** municipalities

3,500,000 Students

190,000 Teachers

200 Video lessons per week

- 7,000 classes produced.
- 250 classes per week.
- 23 hours of live content per day.

Description

Despite the complexity related to size and diversity, the state of São Paulo was the first state in Brazil to implement measures to answer to the closure of schools due to the COVID19 pandemic. This initiative Sao Paulo Media Centre was based on three pillars: agile planning, mobilization of key actors and rapid implementation. Within a few weeks, the Ministry of Education was able to take effective measures to offer continuity of learning and social support to students and their families.

There was a transition period until full closure on March 23, during which teachers, students and families received information on preventive health care and social support. After that date and for approximately 30 days, an early school vacation period was resolved in order to gain time in the planning process of strategies to guarantee educational continuity.

Alliances with companies and non-profit organisations were key to launching the educational continuity strategic plan, which included several activities, from the distribution of printed material to access to online platforms:

Printed materials: a team of curriculum experts created kits to be distributed to students, particularly first graders. These materials contained textbooks, literature, and guidelines for parents and caregivers on health and education. The police force helped to distribute them.

Online pedagogical resources: in April 2020 the Secretariat of Education of São Paulo, opened the *Media Centre* and launched a multiplatform used to transmit classes mediated by technology. From the *Media Centre,* educational content was produced and disseminated for all students in the state. In addition, an APP was created with access to various platforms that were accessible and did not consume mobile data.

In addition to this, the EFAPE (Escola de Formacao de Professores) produced videos that were published in the Teacher Training channel and that were related to the work in the state network, both at a pedagogical and administrative level. In the CMSP portal, teachers could access a Menu of integrated contents, with various pedagogical proposals and resources.

TV content. The Media Centre also produced and broadcasted educational content on open television in alliance with TV Cultura and TV UNIVESP (Virtual University of the State of São Paulo). The proposal consisted of televised classes in different TV channels that varied according to the educational level of the students. The goal of this alliance was to ensure that the classes were professionally produced and broadcasted. The Ministry of Education opened a call for teachers and identified those with experience in online teaching and invited them to produce and record their classes after a two-day training session. Towards the end of April these channels began broadcasting to all students. The classes were broadcasted from TV studios installed at the Headquarters of the Vocational Education Training School (EFAPE) and could be viewed live through the CMSP website and through the APP created for this purpose.

Towards the end of 2020, this initiative was awarded by de IBD as one of the 6 best innovative initiatives launched by subnational governments in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In mid-January 2021 the Ministry of Education of Sao Paulo launched the program “Conecta Educação” as a part of the Plan of Innovation Technology and has the support of the CIEB (Centre for Innovation for Brazilian Education). This program has investments of R $ 1.5 billions in technology that includes the distribution of 65 thousand WI-FI kits to schools, purchase of equipment (notebooks, desktops, stabilizers, TVs, etc.) to improve connectivity in the 5.1 thousand schools in the state network, in addition to the distribution of 500 thousand cell phone chips. The technological investment is also destined to the CMSP and the EFAPE TV studios and to the TV *Cultura channel*.

Initiative #PeloFuturoAgora: AprendiZap from Fundación Lemann - Brazil

Synthesis

In the midst of the Brazilian educational scenario, characterized by enormous inequalities that the Pandemic deepened, the Lemann Foundation put into action various initiatives that seek to respond to current challenges, in alliance with other third sector organizations and government agencies. The different programs focus on specific audiences, promote and take advantage of the opportunities offered by technologies, such as WhatsApp, and other easily accessible tools such as TV and educational portals. The proposal takes into account the needs of students, families and teachers as well as education systems as a whole.

In particular, the "AprendiZap" initiative makes educational content prepared by experts and aligned with the curricular frameworks available to teachers and students through WhatsApp.

Website:

www.fundacaolemann.org.br/pelofuturoagora

Initiative type

- Alliance between third sector organisations, private sector and government.

Scope

- Initiative at the national level
- **Population involved:** Teachers, students, partner organisations.
- **Benefited population:** Students and teachers of the last years of the primary and secondary level of Brazil.

Observed results

Impact on:

10.000.000
Students

1.000.000
Teachers

Description

In the context of the COVID 19 pandemic and seeking to mitigate its effects on the educational reality of Brazil as much as possible, the Lemann Foundation led a collaboration ecosystem between different social actors and launched the campaign #PeloFuturoAgora (For the future, now) that includes a set of strategic actions to meet the demands of the context. Based on the idea of responding to these challenges through collaboration, plural and cross-sectional articulation, these actions implied a coordinated effort by a large number of people and organisations with the aim of guaranteeing the right to education.

#PeloFuturoAgora aims to provide a joint response to the challenges presented by the closure of schools in a Brazilian educational scenario of great inequalities. Among the projects carried out by the Lemann Foundation to support educational continuity, in alliance with other organisations and with the government, are:

- **AprendiZap,** a strategy to support distance education that makes content and activities available via WhatsApp. Launched together with the Fundação 1BI and Imaginable Futures, it is a platform for students to learn using this tool. The contents are adapted by professionals, are aligned to the National Common Curricular Base, and offer weekly study sequences for students in the final years of primary and secondary level.

"AprendiZap Experiences" is the name used by the WhatsApp groups of teachers, where they interact and share experiences on the use of this tool with their colleagues. In addition, a chat bot "AprendiZap Brazil" is offered where, at the request of each teacher and according to the discipline and the level of their students, they can access to content and didactic sequences developed according to the different themes.

- **Aprendiendo siempre** is a portal that offers educational resources to teachers, school leaders and families. It has curated alternatives of free tools and solutions to choose from, and a host of initiatives that facilitate remote teaching. In addition to the Lemann Foundation, this proposal has the participation of the IDB, Centro de Inovação para Educação Brasileira (CIEB), CEIPE, Ensina Brasil, Fundação Roberto Marinho, Fundação Maria Cecília Souto Vidigal (FMCSV), Fundação Telefônica Vivo, Imaginable Futures, Alana Institute, Ayrton Senna Institute, Bei Institute, Natura Institute, Peninsula Institute, Rodrigo Mendes Institute, Itaú Social Institute, Sonho Grande Institute, Ismart, Globo Group, Movimento Collabora, Movimento pela Base, Nova Escola, Portal Iede, Porvir, Unicef.

- **Apoyo a los sistemas de enseñanza (Support to education systems)** for the education systems of the different states and municipalities, in alliance with Imaginable Futures, the Lemann Foundation opened a voluntary registration to participate in this initiative. Twelve public education systems participated, 2 state (Maranhão and Sergipe) and 10 municipal (Olinda, São José dos Campos, Teresina, Caruaru, Aquiraz, Francisco Morato, Embu, Jericoacoara, Itacaré, Nova Odessa), which were selected and received technical support over several months. The support they received was personalised and according to the specific needs of each system. The planning of all the actions was carried out with the participation of the teams of each subsystem.

- **YoutubeEdu**: weekly publication of video playlists with content from the Common Curricular National Base. The #FiqueEmCasa (Stay at home) and #EstudeComigo (Study with me) campaign offers complementary content for students in the last years of primary Secondary level. The playlists are based on existing content on the platform, organised by the teachers of the YoutubeEdu community under the pedagogical guidance of the Lemann Foundation.

- Simplifica: Online platform with digital resources to accompany students, teachers, directors and families in times of remote education. Developed by Amplifica and in partnership with the Lemann Foundation and Imaginable Futures, the site offers didactic sequences and complementary activities for primary education.

- **Centro de Mídias da Educação de São Paulo**: the Lemann Foundation accompanies the actions of the Centro de Mídias of the Secretary of Education of the State of São Paulo, which offers television channels and applications to diversify the distance learning process.

- **Fondo de apoyo a los Aprendizajes (Learning Support Fund).** together with Imaginable Futures, the Lemann Foundation opened a call to support projects that offer immediate support and short-term results to promote learning and well-being for students, educators and communities. The selected proposals will receive a donation of between US $ 10,000 and US $ 50,000, approximately.

- **Vamos a Aprender (Let's Learn):** In alliance with Fundação Roberto Marinho and CIEB (Centre of Inovação para a Educação Brasileira), and with the support of the União dos Dirigentes Municipais de Educação (Undime) and the Conselho Nacional dos Secretários de Educação (Consed), the Lemann Foundation developed the project "Let's Learn", which offers classes and educational programs through television, an online platform and an APP. The project offers free programs to be shown to students of all school levels: initial, primary and secondary. The content of the platform is produced in alliance with several organisations: Canal Futura, Khan Academy, MultiRio and TV Escola, which made all their educational materials freely available.

Teachers voices

In the analysis of the experience 'AprendiZap', one focus group has been carried out in which teachers, school management teams and academic coordinators of secondary level of public schools participated to gather their perception in the implementation of the Program in the schools. The participants pointed out the successes, challenges, and modifications regarding their main lines of action based on their experiences in the territory.

Successes

Teachers highlight the resources distribution and the alignment content with the Common National Curriculum Base. Concerning the content's approach, its synthetic and orderly presentation is mentioned, which facilitate student's appropriation. In this initiative, teachers especially remark the planning lessons in which the student is the main character of the learning process.

Respecting the material resources, the Internet expansion, the Wi-Fi installation in squares and traveling buses in some states, and the possibility of not requiring connectivity to access to the app are mentioned.

The municipal support is highlighted, which provided a quick response to improve the app regarding errors reported by teachers.

As a recommendation, it is proposed to continue implementing applications of these characteristics even in face-to-face programs.

Challenges

The main challenge pointed out by teachers is expanding access to devices and connectivity.

In respect of content, teachers recommend not overloading students with an abundance of educational resources from different sources.

Meaningful testimonials

'I didn't have WhatsApp when the pandemic started. I started using it with AprendiZap. We learned so many things. Parents helped me at first with WhatsApp. A student taught me how to correct the homework pictures they sent me with Paint.'

'I took advantage of all the content that AprendiZap offered, not only for my subject. I sent my students a lot of content from other subjects and they took advantage of it, they asked me questions.'

'In the neighborhood where I work, only 50% of the students have a cell phone. It is a single phone that is usually used by parents and I was only able to communicate with my students at night, when their parents returned from work'.

'I will continue using the tool when face-to-face classes return, to give my students homework to do at home.'

'AprendiZap is excellent and has extraordinary content for flipped classroom.'

Aprendo en línea - Chile

Synthesis

Aprendo en Línea (I learn online) is an educational platform provided by the Ministry of Education, open to all the dimensions of learning. Its main objective is to accompany the educational community so that each student can continue their school year and that their learning development is not limited by the circumstances that occur in the environment.

To achieve this objective, the Curriculum and Evaluation Unit has made more than 80,000 digital resources available to the educational community that accompany the development of the learning objectives of different subjects. These resources seek to be support tools to encourage students to meet the learning objectives of each level, despite the impossibility of being in the classroom and be able to achieve the objectives self-managed or accompanied by their parents.
"Aprendo en línea" has a wide variety of educational resources that make up the platform's accessibility: videos, simulations, online courses, interactive, complete lessons, apps, among others. There are also more traditional resources such as activities, experiments, readings, and recommended books.

Website:

www.curriculumnacional.cl/estudiantes/ingreso

Initiative type

- Governmental

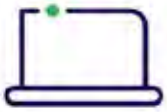
Scope

- National Initiative
- **Population involved:** Ministry, teachers, families
- **Benefited population:** students, teachers, principals, parents and families.

Observed results

- **According to ministry figures**
From 2 March to 27 December 2020 there are about 9,189,825 of active users
- 55% enter the site Aprendo en Línea as a student.
- 35% enter the site Aprendo en Línea as a teacher.
- 11% enter the site Aprendo en Línea as family member.
- On average the age of the user is 45 - 54 years old.
- Approximately 70% of users are women and 30% men.
- Compared to the site "National Curriculum" of 2019, during 2020 178% more users were registered throughout the site (Aprendo en Línea + National Curriculum).
- Total resource downloads 7,357,055

What are the main devices from which "Aprendo en Línea" can be accessed?



Computers
63,8%
↑213,0%

Mobiles
34,9%
↑275,3%

Tablets
1,2%
↑337,6%

Description

Faced with the health emergency caused by the Covid-19 pandemic worldwide, the Ministry of Education of Chile, through the Curriculum and Evaluation Unit, generated the platform "Aprendo en línea" (I learn online), making available for the entire educational community digital resources that supported the development and implementation of the curriculum. To accompany this proposal, different actions were carried out, which allowed a comprehensive and robust implementation:

Curricular Prioritsation: A reduced set of essential learning objectives was organised, based on three basic principles: safety, flexibility, and equity. In this scenario, the role of the school and teachers was fundamental. To accompany this work, in "Aprendo en Línea" a special section was created where guidelines were published to support the implementation of curricular prioritisation. In this section presented pedagogical files for each level and subject, whose function was to support in a pedagogical, didactic and sequential way, the implementation of the prioritised learning proposal. Also available on the same site were lesson plans for certain prioritised language, history, math, and science learning objectives. This didactic sequence of classes was based on a reverse planning

learning model where the learning objectives are described according to a coherent order of “sessions”, based on an integrated proposal for the assessment and development of learning based on certain objectives.

Orientations and socio-emotional skills: taking into account the situation generated by the pandemic, where the importance of the affective accompaniment of the community must be addressed, especially of teachers and students, a space and a special section were created for the work of the socio-emotional skills in establishments. There are resources, pedagogical files, videos and other content that support this objective.

Class to class "Aprendo en Línea": They made available to all students from 1st grade to 4th grade, guides to weekly Language and Communication/Language and Literature and Mathematics classes with their respective solutions and weekly assessment (Per week: 4 classes, 1 solution and 1 assessment). These classes encourage autonomous work and are based on resources that the students themselves can access.
A special site is also created with resources for designing assessment, with guidance, formative assessment strategies, feedback templates, activities, programme evaluations, etc. In that same section, "arm your assessment" was created so that teachers could create their own assessments from a bank of questions.

Access to 2020 School Texts: Through this initiative, accessibility was sought for all students, allowing the development of remote classes in a more inclusive way. In turn, from *“Aprendo en Línea”* there is a direct access to the School Digital Library and the Digital Literacy Plan.

Aprendo TV and Aprendo FM: Learning capsules were broadcasted to the community in the format of an educational program via TV, as well as educational radio programs. Week by week new episodes were published, and were also available on the *Aprendo en Línea* platform

Virtual conferences: A series of webinars were generated in which they provided information to parents and teachers, so that they could accompany their children and students in the development of their learning. Becoming a key communication channel between teachers and the ministry and between teachers among themselves.

Plan 2021: In December 2020, a space was created to deliver guidance to teachers and managers, on the planning of the 2021 school year. Following the line with what had been done, this space contained; orientations, previous conferences, related to the 2021 plan, summaries of talks held, examples of pedagogical planning, etc., to strengthen the institutions to face the new 2021 scenario. Based on this work, the **Leveling and Reinforcement Units** were presented with diagnostic evaluations and activities that worked on the objectives of the previous year and that would allow institutions to identify the work to be carried out during 2021.

#AprendoEnCasa - Latin America

Synthesis

It is a pioneering collaborative initiative that seeks to support educational communities in Latin America with content, resources, and guidance in digital formats for the development of learning.

#AprendoEnCasa is an initiative collaboratively coordinated by the ecosiSTEAM program, the Harvard regional office in Chile, Ashoka and with the support of the United States Embassy in Chile.

It involves around 50 organizations from Chile, Colombia, Argentina, Uruguay, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay and Spain.

Since the beginning of the pandemic #AprendoEnCasa works to select the most useful resources for teachers, students and families.

Website:

www.aprendoencasa.org/

Initiative type

- Ecosystem of Third Sector Organisations, in collaboration with the different governments of the region.

Scope

- Latin American Initiative to which Spain joins
- **Population involved:** civil society organisations, teachers, families
- **Benefited population:** Spanish-speaking students, teachers, and families.

Observed results

+500
Digital educational resources

Multiplatform
Web site, Open air TV, Instagram/ Facebook, other web sites

From March 2020:

- 261,000 platform users (40% teachers and principals, 32% Family users)
- 2040 Social networks users
- 1700 enrolled in our data base
- 70 organisations working together
- Presence in 7 countries
- + 70 organisations

Description

#Aprendo en casa is a collaborative initiative promoted and coordinated by several organisations: the ecosiSTEAM program, Harvard Chile Regional Office DRCLAS, Ashoka, and the United States Embassy in Chile. Each of the 50 participating organisations has an outstanding trajectory in the educational, cultural, scientific, technological and philanthropic fields and supports the change of the educational and cultural paradigm for the 21st century.

The project is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals #ODS: # 4 Quality education, # 5 Gender equality, # 8 Decent work and economic growth and # 17 Partnerships to achieve the goals. The 2030 Agenda, integrates its actions with a medium and long-term vision, in order to guarantee an inclusive, equitable and quality education, as well as gender equality and empowerment of girls; to reduce the proportion of young people who are not employed and do not attend or receive training, as well as improving regional and international cooperation and increase the exchange of knowledge and mutual innovations.

It directs its efforts to bring technology and digital content to the educational communities with the greatest needs. To do this, they publish high-quality educational resources, in a simplified and easy-to-access way. They also ensure that they are in Spanish, accessible and free. They combine educational resources that require an internet connection, along with others that can be used with less connectivity.

The proposal calls through social networks such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram and under the tag *#AprendoEnCasa* , to share resources that are examples of good practices in the region.

#AprendoEnCasa selects, orders and publishes content shared by the organisations that are part of the ecosystem and those who want to collaborate individually, attending to four fundamental areas:

- Learn with technology
- Strategies for teaching
- Culture and entertainment
- Health and Wellbeing

Added to this, the published resources can be identified by a variety of categories (Online Counseling, Webinar, Activities, APP, Website, etc.), subjects, recipients (students, teachers or families) and the suitable ages.

Within this initiative and with the support of the BHP Foundation and Reimagina Foundation, the **Aula-Lab Program** aims to train teachers and managers and, through a platform, participants access to classes and online seminars with professors from the University of Harvard, allowing them to soak up the most advanced evidence and knowledge on topics such as socio-emotional learning, hybrid methodologies, the development of skills to live in a global world, among others. The Aula-Lab model also includes practical online workshops, led by the participating organisations of AprendoEnCasa.Org, which are characterized by their leadership in Chile and the region, as well as by the diversity of areas addressed and approached: they include topics such as science, art, school improvement, early childhood development, among others.

The program seeks to collect outstanding practices and experiences that have worked in the new context and generate an interactive showcase of transformative strategies, as well as an incubator of ideas for educational change in digital contexts.

Aprendo en casa - Bogota, Colombia

Synthesis

The Bogota district implemented a plan to accompany and strengthen learning at home as an "intentional learning environment". The district summoned teachers from all schools to create educational material, and implemented different lines of action that addressed various aspects: creation of academic materials, educational and technological guidance devices, support for families. The lines of action were made possible through various technological channels: TV, radio and educational portals. Students without technological access were sent physical material for learning and support regarding food. All schools in Bogota participated in the program.

Website:

Aprende en casa

Initiative type:

- Government, state.

Scope

- National Initiative
- **Population involved:** Teachers, ministry.
- **Benefited population:** Students, teachers, counselors, families and directors of institutions in Bogotá.

Observed results

- **Number of visits to the site:** 31,738,005 of which, 17,115,426 have been to school web portals, 9,937,478 to the Learn at home portal and 4685102 to other sites.
- **Realization of 720 video capsules** segmented by school age ranges.

Description

From the pandemic unleashed by COVID-19, in response to the health emergency, the National Ministry of Education of Colombia decided to bring forward the school recess. Making use of its territorial authority, the Secretary of Education of Bogotá took a diverse path, without interrupting the school calendar, implementing the Aprendo en Casa (Learn at Home) program.

To this end, during the first weeks of March, teachers from all schools in Bogotá, both public and private, were summoned to start putting together pedagogical guides that could ensure the learning of children and young people. 91% of the teaching community participated in this event. Likewise, they worked with the teachers to train them in the assembly of their own work guides.

The action proposal of ***Aprendo en Casa*** was mainly focused on the following lines:

-*Virtual line of work*: generating a site with educational content curated by the secretariat itself. Enabling forums and virtual classrooms for teachers and generating specific training (aimed at 100% of teachers). It was possible to have a portal for each educational institution
- *Line of work via TV*: Generating an alliance with the capital channel, which offered academic content in the hours of 7 to 10 and 14 to 17.
- *Line of work via Radio*: Generating an alliance with various stations, with spaces three times a week, with an emphasis on an accompanied reading program.
- *Face-to-face line of work*: Sending materials and kits to 200,000 children and young people, delivered through family compensation funds.
- *School feeding line*: Transforming the school feeding service into a system of vouchers and food baskets. The process involved working with local markets, coordinating by geolocation of each family and accompanying of families in relation to food by the personnel in charge of this issue in the institutions.

- *Technical and Pedagogical Support Tables*: accompanying the entire educational community from 7 am to 4 pm in pedagogical and technological aspects. (Sanz de Santamaria, M. and F. Reimers, 2020)

Although by constitution each school institution has sufficient autonomy to make certain decisions, 100% of the schools participated in the program.

In turn, a section called "#Entreprofes" has been included in the portal, with the aim of sharing reflections among teachers, seeking to inspire, propose and learn together.

As the months went by after listening to the voices of teachers and managers and after analyzing the implementation, the actions were adapted, focusing the work so that schools not only implemented a strategy on the curriculum, but also contemplated a paradigm of a more flexible school, in which the entire community was involved and worked to respond to the current situation.

This new view focused on the home as the new learning space, proposing as the centre of the proposal "Strengthening the home as an intentional learning environment, of co-responsibility, autonomy and care, enriched by various proposed and oriented pedagogical mediations from school and supported by the district ecosystem of allies".

Teachers voices

In the analysis of the experience 'Aprende en Casa', two focus groups have been carried out in which teachers, school management teams and academic coordinators from primary and secondary level in public and private schools participated to gather their perception in the implementation of the Program in the schools. The participants pointed out the successes, challenges, and modifications regarding their main lines of action based on their experiences in the territory.

Successes

Teachers highlight the multichannel format that allowed greater coverage of the 'Aprende en Casa' Program.

With references to the content, the use of ICT in teaching strategies and the diversification of the pedagogical proposal based on the student's educational needs were mentioned.

In respect of the teacher professional development, training in the pedagogical use of new technological tools and reflection moments on the pedagogical processes that contributed to improving the student's learning results are remarked. In the same way, the use of the platform and ICT is considered to strengthen communication between teachers, students, and their families. Moreover, these channels enabled spaces for collaborative planning, and more challenging and stimulating projects for students.

Regarding the learning process, the relevance of planning according to the 21st century skills is exposed as a legacy of the Program.

The great family involvement is valued, which made it possible to monitor better the student's learning process in order to jointly address strategies that guarantee quality learning.

Challenges

Teachers express the need to expand the connectivity and electronic devices distribution to students in order to expand coverage levels.

With respect to the content, the challenge of working more on the development of socio-emotional skills to accompany and understand the affective student's needs is mentioned.

As a recommendation, it is proposed to make a diagnosis of the student's educational situation to generate a contextualized proposal that effectively responds to the school's educational needs.

Meaningful testimonials

'Empathy has also been promoted, beyond the teaching role and the limitations. Each of the teachers put at the service what he/she had: materials, knowledge, etc. What I have, I put it at the service of others (empathy). There are many difficulties and strengths, but if we can choose what works best for us and learn from our mistakes it would be better. To be able to respond to the needs of a changing country. In that logic, we have to look at ourselves'.

'Everyone learns something, and peer support is a great growing element. Maintaining the educator's network becomes a huge factor of educational power'.

Aprendo en casa - Costa Rica

Synthesis

In March 2020, "Aprendo en Casa" (I learn at home) was launched as an educational policy with the aim of providing, through various channels, the necessary information to guide and support the national educational community, during the period of suspension of classes, responding to the right to education, at the time of the national health emergency.

"Aprendo en Casa" offered learning spaces through television, radio and online. Which includes initiatives such as the "Plan Virtual de Fomento a la Lectura" (Virtual Plan for the Promotion of Reading), strategies for basic learning templates, curated courses for teachers, an open virtual classroom that contains autonomous work guides, resources for families and open educational resources.

Website:

http://www.recursos.mep.go.cr/2020/aprendoencasa/

Initiative type

- Government in partnership with the private sector.

Scope

- National Initiative
- **Population involved:** Teachers, Families, ministry.
- **Benefited population:** Students from all over the country.

Observed results

- 200 examples of autonomous work guides were generated.
- Almost 2 million visits to the Toolbox reached.
- From the television and radio proposal, more than 700 programs were broadcasted for the different educational levels.

→ **Regarding connectivity:**

- Over 1 million student email accounts were created.
- 86,257 computers and 9,479 tablets loaned by educational institutions were made available to students.

→ **In relation to school's trajectory:**

+95% Of the students remained within the school system

- Of the total number of students at the various levels, **87.34% passed the 2020 school year,** 7.88% are in a promotion strategy, with 1.45% being the percentage of students who have been excluded from the system.
- Out of 70,607 students in academic and technical schools (public and private) 69,954 managed to graduate and obtain a high school diploma in secondary education (Directorate of Management and Quality Assessment).
- Of this population, **6,721 are from night schools, 5,554 from private schools, 24,449 from public academics, 1,193 from subsidized schools, 1,672 from bilinguals, 184 from scientists, 8,822 from Integrated Centers for Adult Education** (CINDEAS), **2,872 from the Marco Tulio modality** (virtual for young people who had not finished high school), **13,667 from technical schools, 1,239 from the National Distance Education College** (CONED), **448 from indigenous centers, 1,432 from the Professional Institutes of Community Education** (IPEC) and **1,701 from rural schools.**

Unlike the year 2019, both the public academic, the technical college and the evening academic had a passing rate of more than 94%

→ **In relation to teacher professional development:**

+100 Training courses

+60K Trained teachers

Description

The Ministry of Public Education of Costa Rica (MEP), in the face of the health emergency circumstances, arranged an educational transition that implied going from a face-to-face class model to a non-face-to-face, distance or remote access model. To address this, the government launched *" Aprendo en Casa ",* based on the provisions of the Educational Policy and Curricular Policy in force, giving relevance to the use of technological resources,

as well as the generation of specific and contextualized actions for distance learning. The plan included 4 points of convergence to respond to the situation generated by the Pandemic: 1: Digital citizenship, innovation and social equity; 2: The transforming role of the teacher; 3: Responsible participation of families; 4: The creation of regional networks. Likewise, the plan brought together actions in different areas: one aimed at teachers, another at students, and another at families.

As part of the aforementioned strategy, the MEP provided a series of Guidelines for the support of the distance educational process considering different educational scenarios, based on the characteristics of access to technological resources and connectivity (Ministry of Public Education, 2020).
Each scenario involved a different strategy based on different tools and activities. For example, in the case of those students who did not have the Internet or a technological device, the following were proposed: autonomous work guides printed by subject, infographics with review topics, specialized readings, printed material available for families, among others.

Thanks to the support of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the "Plaza Sésamo" (Sesame Streeet) content library was available free of charge, which includes more than 120 hours of educational programming. Likewise, educational radio programs will begin to be broadcast for free through the National Radio and Television System (SINART) and the National Radio Broadcasting Chamber (CANARA) (Siteal, 2020).

Table 1: Educational scenarios of the students

SITUATION	DESCRIPTION
1.Students with internet access and a device at home	It is characterized by a pedagogical mediation that promotes autonomous learning to build knowledge using technological tools.
2.Students that have a reduced access to internet or a device	The pedagogical mediation is expected to foster autonomous learning to build knowledge using tools non synchronically consuming a minimum of mobile data.
3.Students with a device but without internet connectivity.	As in the other two scenarios, autonomous learning is promoted to build knowledge. The students with a device but without connectivity will be able to use varied digital and printed resources.
4.Students neither with a device nor internet connectivity	Autonomous learning is promoted to build knowledge. The students use printed material only.

Source: Ministry of Public Education of Costa Rica (2020)

In alliance with the State Distance University (UNED), the Open Learning Platform of the National Distance Education College (CONED) was made available to schoolchildren, in order to guarantee that, while classrooms are closed, the population of students can continue their academic process.
In turn, for secondary school students and their teachers, the Mathematics Reform Program, which was developed with the Ministry of Public Education, had more than 400 explanatory videos, 400 practice exercises, available on its website with their respective

explanations and an interactive blog. In this same site you can find practices for the national high school FARO tests.

Another option available to children, young people and their families is the " Quédate en casa y lee un libro" (Stay at home and read a book) Reading Plan, a technological plan to enhance the development of their reading skills and to contribute to the formation of independent, self-critical readers with a positive taste for books and reading. This plan was accompanied by a series of daily activities and challenges suggested from the readings that were carried out.

Teachers could also access the offer of virtual courses and free webinars taught by both the Uladislao Gámez Solano Professional Development Institute (IDP), as well as its collaborators, including the State Distance University (UNED), Association of Friends for Learning (ADA), Fundación Omar Dengo (FOD) and other open platforms. This is an online offer for teachers, forming a virtual environment for professional development

A scheduled in-service teacher training was promoted in relation to technological tools for immediate use. Direct access to telephone lines were made available to teachers for inquiries and users were created for all students. A blended education training is planned for early 2021.

Regarding the assessment of student learning, the Ministry made available the MEP 2020 digital tool: "HEDIMEP" and a manual for its use. From it, it was possible to collect information and prepare the descriptive report of achievement, for the second semester of the 2020 school year.

Another line of work of the policy proposed by the Ministry to support the *"Aprendo en Casa" program* was to support the health and nutrition of the students. For this they had to reorganise the food service, offering students a food package, with a balanced diet.

Teachers voices

'It was an implementation very focused on primary school level —first and second cycle—. It was highly promoted by the Ministry and has been a very good resource for teachers. Certain digital programs and tools for working with students have also been presented. Furthermore, these resources allowed the paper format too. Webinars and courses were offered to get to know the platform but not to deliver content to the students'.

IQ.EDU.DO - INICIA EDUCACIÓN - Dominican Republic

Synthesis

It is an initiative of INICIA Educación, a private sector organization, through its Institute 512, under the motto #laeducaciónsigue has implemented various actions at different levels, supporting the Ministry of Education of the Dominican Republic.

One of the lines of work was the opening of the IQ.EDU.DO platform to the entire high school student population. This platform, originally designed to accompany the preparation of students for the national tests, identifies the academic areas that the student must reinforce and creates their personalized "Learning Route" so that they focus on what they need. At the same time, it allows students to freely explore the contents available in the application, which are adjusted to the Dominican national curriculum.

Website:

www.iq.edu.do/

Initiative type:

- Carried out by Inicia Educación.

Scope

- National Initiative
- **Population involved:** MINERD INICIA Team Education.
- **Benefited population:** High school students from all over the country.

Observed results

- During the period of suspension of classes, the IQ platform reached the activation of 58,000 students, of which 85% belong to the public sector and 15% to the private sector.
- 57490 registered users on the platform / app
- 1993 registered schools
- A survey carried out by the organisation to approximately 500 teachers and members of the educational community reveals that the IQ.EDU.DO platform is ranked sixth among the most used virtual strategies.

Description

To face the urgency presented by the pandemic, the Ministry of Education of the Dominican Republic, articulated a commission with the role of guaranteeing continuity of learning within the crisis environment. This commission was headed by the Vice Ministry of Pedagogical Technical Services and *Inicia Educación* was part of it.

From its role, *Inicia* made its pre-existing resources available to support the MINERD and generate actions for the different levels. For Initial Level, the "Aprendiendo desde Casa" (Learning from Home) program has been designed in partnership with the state, which seeks to provide support to families and teachers, to continue learning from home. The "Aprendiendo con 512" (Learning with 512) program was also organised. A WhatsApp program was developed consisting of sending daily activities that were continually updated for the benefit of the children. For Primary Level, among other actions, a review of the EDUPLAN material (Second Cycle) was carried out, which was uploaded to the MINERD platform for the emergency period. For the Secondary Level, specifically, the IQ.EDU.DO platform of *Inicia Educación* has been adapted giving access to all students at the Secondary level.

The realization of the teaching and learning materials took into account the various scenarios that the situation presented, trying to make it accessible in various ways: 100% connected students with access to content posted online; partially connected students had access to downloadable material and complemented with access to TV programming. Students without the possibility of connection, but with the possibility of accessing TV programming received printed programming in schools through the Districts. MINERD provided with materials to address the different access points. 69 learning units were delivered to the MINERD in their Home platform to facilitate the download of content and reach not only to those students in the first group but also those who were in the second and could complement the download of material by accessing the TV programming. In turn,

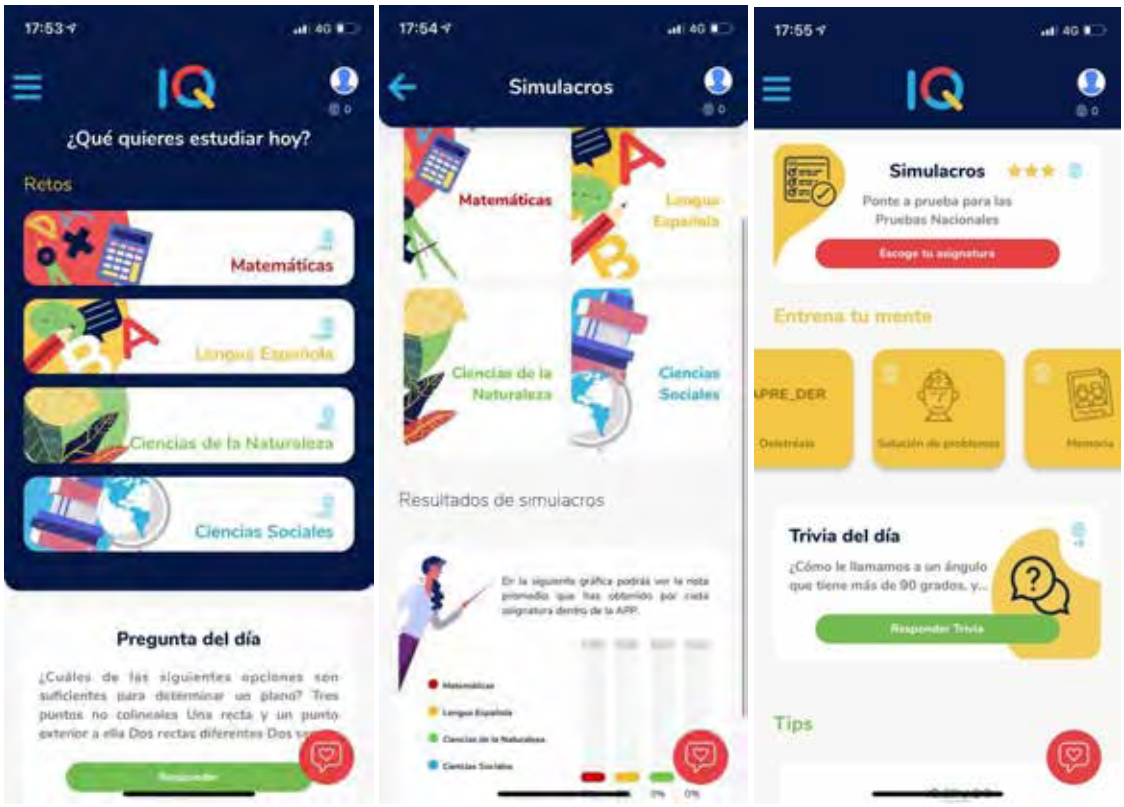
69 IQ.EDU.DO learning videos were delivered to TV Educativa Dominicana, allowing access to those students without connectivity who received the guides in printed form.

Added to the IQ.EDU.DO site, the IQ APP was created, with a friendly design for young people.

In turn, the site presented various activities such as an online OLYMPICS IQ with free access for the entire student population, which offered reviews, contests and online strategies for the preparation of tests and recovery of learning during the suspension of classes.

From MINERD itself, students were recommended to access IQ.EDU.DO, since it has an exclusive space per grade for the study of curricular contents, according to the sequence and period.

On the other hand, in relation to teacher training, since the 512 Institute, leadership and management training has continued, generating national and international webinars and three certifications were developed for the educational community.



Teachers voices

In the analysis of the experience 'IQ.EDU.DO, one focus group has been carried out in which teachers from primary and secondary levels in rural and urban areas participated to gather their perception in the implementation of the Program in the schools. Participants pointed out the successes, challenges, and modifications regarding their main lines of action based on their experiences in the territory.

Successes

Teachers mention that the IQ.EDU.DO' Program contributed to sustain pedagogical continuity despite the difficulties in its implementation. However, it is stated that better results were obtained in the Middle Level due to the greater student's autonomy in the use of the platform.

Moreover, the platform's intuitive and accessible format and the usefulness of the booklets as pedagogical resources to guarantee remote teaching stand out.

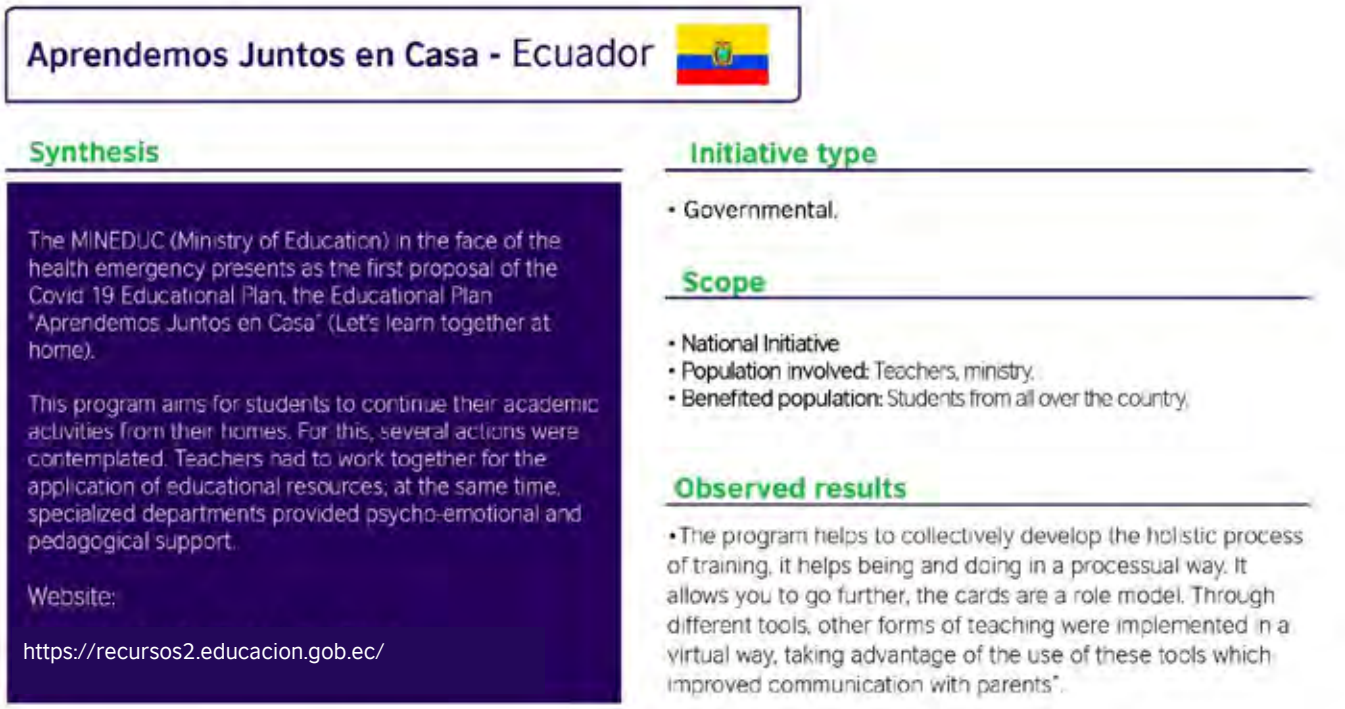
Challenges

Teachers affirm that it is necessary to expand the supply of connectivity and electronic devices to families in order to strengthen the program implementation. It Due to the lack of resources in most cases, it was not possible to apply all the tools the program offers.

With respect to the contents, it is proposed to grade the booklets with the learning objectives of each year of study. Furthermore, it is stated that it is necessary to complement its use with other didactic resources in planning to achieve good results with students.

Meaningful testimonials

'I want to work and meet my students, but face-to-face due to most of them do not have connectivity because they are from rural areas. I recognize the opportunities offered by the Program and I tried to apply them as best as possible.'



Description

The Ministry of Education, within the framework of the Covid 19 Educational Plan, designed the "Aprendamos Juntos desde Casa" (*Let's learn together at home)* program, which is characterized by being applicable in all national contexts and provides continuity to the educational process. It proposes a prioritisation of the curriculum, addressing the essential learning that can be developed through active methodologies such as Project Based Learning, Problems and Questions that promote creative capacity, imagination, problem solving, as well as the development of oral communication skills, text comprehension, written production and mathematical calculation. The plan considered the needs, interests and problems of the student who is the protagonist of learning, with the support of the teacher and families as mediators, motivators and process guides.

To achieve this objective a series of actions were proposed:

- Guides for students and families who seek to bring these recipients closer to the construction of knowledge based on interdisciplinarity and self-education. These guides seek to provide support to families regarding the learning process, so that they can accompany the learning of children and young people. At the same time, the Student Participation Program was adapted within the framework of the elaboration of Projects of linkage with the community for high school students.
- Pedagogical files were produced aimed at boys, girls and adolescents of General Basic Elementary, Middle and Higher Education and, the Baccalaureate level with content for carrying out projects for three, four or five weeks. In these files, various activities are specified to be carried out at home. Each project is related to a learning objective and includes activities that respond to specific weekly objectives. There it was recommended that they dedicated around 50 minutes a day to work on the project.
- "Teaching recommendations to work with the pedagogical sheets " in which, in addition to accompanying teachers with ideas, there were guidelines for the evaluation of projects by means of rubrics proposals.

Other lines of action found on the site were:

- Cultural Encounters " Juntos por los valores" (Together for values): These encounters sought to generate a space for artistic expression that would allow students to transmit to the educational community how they lived values through the different languages that art has.
- "Chispiola" monthly magazine: which proposes dynamic content, easy to understand and work, through which elementary and secondary EGB students reinforced learning processes.
- "Educa Contigo", a radio program that broadcasted one hour a day divided into three rotating schedules, from Monday to Sunday in 1,072 stations with national, regional and local coverage. And on national television from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. without cuts. In addition, 24 hours a day with the digital channel.

In turn, training was offered for teachers to accompany them in distance learning, providing teachers with approximately 600 thousand training sites in the use of ICTs, educational model, socio-emotional support, self-care and hygiene, to strengthen the process of teaching-learning.

Teachers voices

In the analysis of the experience 'Aprendamos juntos en casa', two focus groups have been carried out in which teachers and school management teams of primary level participated to gather their perception in the implementation of the Program in the schools. The participants pointed out the successes, challenges, and modifications regarding their main lines of action based on their experiences in the territory.

Successes

Educators mainly emphasize teacher training and professional development in the use of ICT.

The importance of integral education in terms of contents that promote student's holistic formation is mentioned (to be, to feel, to learn). At the same time, it is observed the crucial role of students and teachers emotional support within the framework of the Program.

With reference to learning, the UDAI articulation with the student involvement is remarked. This work is essential so that they continue being part of the educational institutions.

In respect of the pedagogical proposal, the project-based learning (PBL) and the playful and interdisciplinary approach are mentioned. Following this idea, the articulation contributed to teamwork, another valued aspect.

Finally, it is recommended to maintain this work style in which collective decision-making spaces and collaborative planning are generated.

Challenges

Teachers remark the connectivity expansion as a fundamental challenge to improve the program's coverage rates.

The importance of reviewing the contents is pointed out so that they can adapt to the learning objectives of each year, added to the need to contextualize the pedagogical work sheets to the Ecuadorian reality.

In teacher training, it is proposed to continue strengthening ICT training and digital skills for a better use of the platform, as well as training in socio-emotional education to accompany the student performance.

Meaningful testimonials

'The program implementation and its process were slow. Many external factors caused not being able to do a good job with the children. On the teacher's side, there was a lot of flexibility, even though they were not prepared to develop virtual classes. I was sorry for could not be near my students, not knowing how they were. If the doctors are the first line of defense, we —as teachers— are the second one and we bet on Education, applying for all the opportunities offered.'

Aprendo en casa + Recrea digital - Jalisco, Mexico

Synthesis

Faced with the health emergency caused by Covid-19, the State of Jalisco sought to guarantee the continuity of learning through an educational plan that took as a starting point resources that had been developed from the digital educational policy and strengthened it by improving the content and facilitating the access for the entire community, articulating various technological channels. This is how they bolstered the "Recrea digital" platform. This site makes available to students, teachers, family members and tutors various materials and tools to support and enhance learning. The aim was to enrich this resource, strengthen its use and facilitate its access.

To accomplish this, tt was combined with the Federal Program "Learn at home", which reaches all homes through open television (Jalisco TV) at scheduled times from 7 in the morning to 5 in the afternoon. Emphasis was placed from mass communication, on the development of autonomy to learn from home, with the involvement of families. In order to support them, they provided family aid and created counseling spaces from the schools, involving the parents themselves. The production of contextualized educational resources was promoted with a strong impulse from the leadership of teachers and principals.

Website:

www.proyectoeducativo.jalisco.gob.mx

Initiative type

- Government in alliance with public television

Scope

- National Initiative
- **Population involved:** Teachers, Families, state education secretariat.
- **Benefited population:** Students from all over the country, families, educational community.

Observed results

Progress in learning:

73% of the groups identify a medium and high progress in the learning of the students, not only curricular, but also regarding social and emotional skills.

Permanence:

50.9% of the groups have implemented face-to-face counseling with their students.

- 29.6% of the schools have made home visits.
- 1,302 schools (mostly preschool and general primary schools) used public spaces to communicate with families

Didactic intervention:

The three main didactic difficulties that teachers encountered were the evaluation of distance learning, the management of platforms and the use of apps and strategies to hold students' attention for distance work.

- 84% of schools indicate that teachers assigned activities to carry out at home, 64% promote game-based activities, 60% developed activities to investigate and organize information, 47% promoted collaborative work and 38% integrated projects Regarding the use of the CTE / CAV cards, 45.6% of the groups report that they have been very supportive in facing the pandemic.
- 63% of the groups report that their teachers had received advice from peers, 49% have self-trained and 43% have received advice from the heads of the school.

Accompaniment at home:

80% of the groups recognize that communication and family support has favored the remote work*

* **Source:** Information provided by the State Commission for Continuous Improvement in Jalisco

Description

The secretariat of education of the state of Jalisco, Mexico, has managed to guarantee the pedagogical continuity taking as its axis to ensure the organisation and communication of the contents. For this, a series of pillars can be identified that were fundamental to sustain this path : on the one hand, a connectivity policy that seeks to bring fiber optics closer to each of the schools in the state; on the other hand, the collegiate work, which has been sustained from the so-called “Comunidades de Aprendizaje para la Vida” or CAV (Learning Communities for Life), which seek to achieve collective, dialogue and critical learning promoted by the community itself, while giving rise to the configuration of new ways of “being”, “being and belonging” to the life in each particular community.

This allowed that, prior to the preventive isolation, 13,000 CAVs could work on how they were going to communicate with students and parents. As well as putting emphasis on the substantial contents for life (substantive learning for life) and what activities and tools they were going to use. The platform created its own content, and curated the existing ones. Study guides were put together for the different sections of schooling: high school, primary and preschool.
A platform called Recrea Digital was created and content was also generated for TV that was articulated with the material offered by *Aprende en casa*, the federal proposal.
These resources were presented, remaining at the disposal of the different educational actors, giving rise to the autonomy of the schools.
Jalisco is a very large territory, which has different scenarios. That is why home visits were implemented in remote communities. In them the students were summoned one by one to offer them guidance. A protocol was defined for these *face-to-face meetings*, stipulating that they could not exceed 50 minutes and that the meetings had to be held between: teacher-student or teacher-family-student, without more people and one at a time. In September, 5% of the consultancies were carried out, and in August with 23% of the schools. Right now, 50% of schools use face-to-face counseling.

In relation to communication, after carrying out a cross survey, taking into account the information provided by the schools and by the families, it was identified that up to that moment, on average 5 communication channels were used: social networks remained at 13 % because there was a great migration towards tools such as Meet (36%), ZOOM (32%), Moodle (2.5%), Recrea digital platform (12%), and the classroom that was already used in half of the schools. Instant messaging was always high, around 74% contributed by schools and 70% reported by families,

When it comes to identifying what facilitated the work, the secretariat of education identifies that the key was collegiate work, at different levels of action. On the one hand, they integrated an education table with 47 members representing teachers' unions, private teachers, parents, universities, health authorities, and the collegiate community.

Recrea digital , allowed the creation of webinars, conferences, courses, training all in digital format. Although there is a 30% of the population that could not access the content due to internet connection, it was possible to work with the 70% that could do so, and they tried to answer to the the rest in another way. Books, supplies, and backpacks provided by the government were delivered with great protocol and care. The collegiality and communication channels were very good. There were conferences for teachers in December with a large digital call, instances to which many teachers were able to join.

Recrea familia was also opened, adding a place to help parents and support them. In 50 municipalities the network of family schools was developed, with workshops and courses: Biosecurity, psycho-emotional care, Conflict resolution, etc. The courses were given by the parents themselves, who through reading cases were able to implicate the whole of society.

Satisfactory processes can be observed: almost 80% of students are showing progress. 15% received no grade for intermittent communication. And 5% do not have communication with the school, a situation that is of great concern. 4.5% of young people are generating content at home.
The great current concern is directed towards that 5% of students with whom communication has not been achieved, as well as the intermittent.
School leaders and teachers met in January and December, and decided that they would work on specific strategies to reach those students.

Teachers voices

In the analysis of the experience 'Recrea Jalisco', two focus groups have been carried out in which teachers, school management teams and academic coordinators from primary and secondary levels participated to gather their perception in the implementation of the Program in the schools. Participants pointed out the successes, challenges, and modifications regarding their main lines of action based on their experiences in the territory.

Successes

Teachers highlight the intuitive and flexible format of the Recrea Digital's platform that allowed the grades administration. With reference to teacher professional development, the training courses and the permanent updating offered by the Program are remarked.

Concerning to the resources, the quality of the didactic material and the diversified methodology that allow responding to the student's educational needs are pointed out.

Participants enhance the orientation and training aimed at families in 'Recrea Familia', as well as the communication with students and their families mediated by the platform. In this sense, the approach between the families and the school is crucial, as strategic allies in education.

Challenges

Teachers mainly remark the gap in digital infrastructure. Although in the second stage of implementation of the program a survey regarding the availability of electronic devices was carried out to strengthen their distribution and provide specific training, it is considered that it is still necessary to improve the rates of family access to equipment and technological resources to expand program coverage.

With respect to teacher training, participants mention the need to have access to socio-emotional education workshops and the strengthening of learning communities among teachers that enable collaborative professional learning.

As for the contents, it is suggested to design educational models that involve the use of ICT as part of the pedagogical proposal and the development of a specific program for included students.

Finally, it is recommended to modify the assessment form so that it is formative and integral to the student's learning process, as well as the realization of a diagnosis that allows the effective implementation of the Program based on educational needs.

Meaningful testimonials

'With the 'Recrea Digital' Program it is possible to know the children trajectory and there is training support for families. The platform began to be used after the suspension of the face-to-face classes, in March 2020. I prepared a survey to find out which type of Internet connection my students had. Only two or three had a computer that was for family use, all had a cell phone, and a few had WhatsApp. It was a strong problem; I took advantage of the fact that the Recrea platform had some work sheets that could be implemented according to the themes you had to work with the students. The works came and went. In August, we had sessions with the school Technical Council to learn how to work with the students. They provided us a list of substantive learning. At that time, face-to-face consultancies were allowed with protocol of up to forty minutes in schools and we use that space to make the diagnosis. It has been a process of great experiences and learning, of sharing with

colleagues, being empathetic with students and their families. I teach in sixth grade and it is a transition grade to secondary school, because of the distance it has been difficult to maintain an emotional and educational bond. I have been able to take advantage of tools, programs, teaching cards. I currently have meetings with students to answer questions via WhatsApp'.

Aprendo en casa - Peru

Synthesis

I learn at home Peru is a strategy that aims to contribute to the learning of students throughout the country. It is a multichannel distance education service for television, radio and the Internet. The short-term objective is that students of basic education (initial, primary and secondary), special basic education (Prite and Cebe) and alternative basic education advance in the development of their classes from a variety of activities that can be carried out from home, all freely accessible and at no cost, through the website **www.aprendoencasa.pe,** National Radio, and TV Peru, as well as a large chain of regional radio and television stations.

The medium and long-term goal is to complement the lessons taught by teachers in the classroom, with a special focus on students from rural and remote areas to reduce learning inequalities.

Website:

Aprendo en Casa

Initiative type:

- Government in alliance with third sector organisation.

Scope

- National Initiative
- Population involved: Teachers, Families, and ministry.
- Benefited population: Students of all levels and educational modalities of the country

Observed results

Teachers:

Families:

Description

In response to the context marked by the health emergency and the need for social isolation, the Peruvian Ministry of Education proposed the national strategy "Aprendo en Casa", in which a set of learning experiences, materials and resources were presented with the aim of promoting learning of the students through the distance modality.

The Learning at Home strategy worked through three communication channels: web, television and radio. Guidance for families and students as well as resources and activity guides could be accessed on the web. Said content was added week by week and was focused on each student doing the activities proposed for each day. The television proposed programming transmitted through the signals: Tv Peru or channel 7, América Televisión, ATV.pe, Latina, Panamericana Televisión and Global TV, its grid is available in the "Aprendo en Casa" web site. In this proposal, during the program the students were oriented to develop learning experiences aligned to the National Curriculum. Then there were a series of instructions to carry out activities during the day, with the aim of helping them to consolidate their learning. On the radio, 1000 stations nationwide broadcasted learning sessions of between 15 and 30 minutes depending on the level, particularly, for bilingual contexts in native languages, the sessions were broadcasted through 44 regional and local radio stations. Like the TV proposal, on the "Aprendo en Casa" *home page* you can find the proposed work grid

Likewise, in order to strengthen the teaching practice and its pedagogical leadership during the non-face-to-face period, guidance, tools and resources were provided to the teaching teams and management personnel.

The *Aprendo en Casa* strategy was viable thanks to the work of the Ministry in three key areas: (1) connectivity and infrastructure: it was possible to agree with the telecommunications companies that the resources of *Aprendo en Casa* do not use mobile data from the users' plans; (2) content: a pedagogical team curated the materials and resources and produced new material; (3) platforms: alliances were generated with the various television and radio signals.

The *Aprendo en Casa* strategy also had a monitoring and evaluation process that began to be carried out after the first week of implementation of the program, and started in August specifically through the Remote School Traffic Light (SER). Through a monthly telephone survey, aimed at teachers and families throughout the country, it sought to have the voices of the key actors in the strategy: students and teachers. The results can be accessed through the site where data from March to July is presented regarding the coverage of the survey, access and habit of use of resources, how was the teaching support and the role of the families, their well-being and satisfaction and their intentions regarding a possible return to face-to-face classes. As of August, the data was presented through SER. The data showed high rates of access to the Aprendo en Casa strategy, both by teachers (97.6%) and by families (93.1%), with the satisfaction index for the contents for the first group of 83.3% and for the second of 73.1 %. Regarding the feedback process, 81.3% of families reported that at least one teacher had sent comments on the work done by students. Regarding the return to face-to-face classes, although the percentage of positive responses grew from October to November, only 48.3% of families would agree that their children could return to school the following month.

At the same time, a line of work has been developed to ensure the continuity of the teaching of the English language, for which a specialized team has been organised to create resources. This program aims to contribute with inclusive education in Perú, laying the foundations for the incorporation of mechanisms and ecosystems that contribute to the improvement of the English language at a national level. It mainly focuses on the secondary education level.

The British Council carried out an investigation in order to evaluate the effectivity of “Aprendo en Casa” in the English language area. According to the results of a survey carried out to teachers and students that implemented the strategy and according to their perception:

- 91.29% of students can do more with the English language today than before the pandemic. Out of this group, 66.07% can do “much more” or “more” than before and 25.22% report that can do “some more things” than before the implementation of this strategy.
- In relation to the learning of students, 78% of teachers perceive that the majority or some of their students have achieved new learnings and only 20% perceive that just a few students have improved.
- This evidence supports the claim that despite how challenging the context may hve been, “Aprendo en Casa” has been a successful strategy for the teaching and learning of the English language.

Teachers voices

The teacher's voice

In the analysis of the experience "Learn at Home", two focus groups have been carried out in which teachers, school management teams and academic coordinators of primary and secondary levels of rural and urban areas participated to gather their perception in the implementation of the Program in the schools. The participants pointed out the successes, challenges, and modifications regarding their main lines of action based on their experiences in the territory.

Successes

Materials and resources delivered by radio, television and Internet were highlighted as they allowed content diversification.

Regarding teacher professional development, teacher training was mentioned in strategies that allow responding to a hybrid model of virtuality and face-to-face classes. Following this idea, spaces for exchange and teacher strengthening were considered as a key instance of collaborative professional learning.

In respect of the students learning process, the development of competencies and the evidence of learning were weighed in the student monitoring that was part of the Program proposal.

Finally, the radio and television programming was remarked as it allowed the family involvement and brought them closer to the school in order to value the teacher's work.

In conclusion, the teachers also pointed out that it is necessary to continue strengthening the training in technological tools, the sustained use of digital resources and the access to devices for all students, the virtual and the face-to-face training, the development of national and international alliances and the collaborative work between the schools, families and teachers.

Challenges

Teachers mentioned the digital access gap in many students as the main challenge, due to there are areas that do not have Internet service or there is a lack of electronic devices to connect. It is pointed out that rural communities and the population with the highest rates of economic vulnerability were those that presented the greatest difficulties in maintaining pedagogical continuity because of the lack of resources. In these cases, teachers played a key role in the students' personalised monitoring.

With respect to the learning resources provided by the Program, difficulties were exposed in adapting the format to the students age, especially in the development of literacy in the first grade. Moreover, a restructuring of the contents was requested for the 2021 cycle in which teachers have access to resources in advance to facilitate their incorporation into planning.

Finally, in the transmission of the contents by radio and television, the importance of an active teacher participation in the educational programs was mentioned, in order to contribute a didactic approach to the curriculum.

Modifications

The participants indicated that the Program was successful in guaranteeing pedagogical continuity, but it has yet to increase the level of coverage of 'Aprende en Casa' to reach a greater number of students depending on the resources available and the heterogeneity of educational paths.

In the same way, it is stated that the high burden of bureaucratic tasks in this context created difficulties in focusing on the learning objectives. It is proposed to give greater importance to the pedagogical approach to generate better academic results.

Meaningful testimonials

'Teachers always come across different realities, especially in the virtuality, so we sought support from other professionals to do teamwork in order to adjust good practices and enhance communication skills, for example".

"The positive thing was the opportunity of staying afloat. The concepts were learned cognitively, and we also learned to focus on the human aspect and treating students from that point of view.'

EdCamps - United States

Synthesis

Edcamps are free public events organised in a conversational, non-academic style, where educators have the opportunity to support each other, identify, share and discuss similar challenges, and expand best practices and resources.

At Edcamps, educators create the agenda themselves, lead the session topics, and learn from the experiences and knowledge of others. These events started to take place in 2010. During the pandemic, they were organised in an online version, which made it possible to reach teachers from all over the United States, and involved them in a network of peers that promotes debates on the most important challenges for that community.

Website:

www.digitalpromise.org/edcamp/

Initiative type

- No gubernamental - Foundation

Scope

- National Initiative
- **Population involved:** Digital Promise and Edcamp Foundation teams and the teaching community that is part of Edcamp.
- **Benefited population:** +7.200 educators from all over the country

Observed results

- More than 20 virtual Edcamps made.
- Surveys conducted by organisers indicate that teachers want and appreciate the opportunity to share concerns and peer learning.

Description

Edcamps are presented as innovative learning spaces: the structure of a traditional educational method in which there is an expert who trains the participants is replaced by an Open Space dynamic, where the same members are the ones who choose the topics to work on, create the sessions, moderate the common spaces, and generate new processes among the entire community. Since 2010, in the United States, the Edcamp movement has created training spaces for teachers through this modality brought to the world of education.

In these collaborative workspaces, teachers can learn and inspire each other, share their knowledge and good practices, and be part of a community in which conversations are the basis for the collective knowledge construction.

Part of the success of this methodology is based on its great difference with the practices that teachers commonly experience in their initial training. Instead of having an expert telling them what to learn and how to implement it in the classroom, in Edcamps, teachers create, propose and decide in community what to learn and share, and what are the best ways to bring this learning to their daily work.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Edcamps —which were commonly carried out in person— turned their methodology into virtual. Protocols are shared on the Digital Promise web site for those who want to put this '*dis-conference*' —called like this because it is not a traditional conference— into practice. This change to virtuality allowed teachers from different parts of the country to share their learning, fears, challenges, and ideas in an agile way. This response allowed an accompaniment and support to the needs of educators in this very particular situation.

During the pandemic, dozens of online Edcamps were organised to accompany teachers in their learning and to offer a space to share experiences regarding remote teaching challenges in times of pandemic. Particularly in the United States, Digital Promise promoted a series of online Edcamps called 'Edcamp: Powerful Learning at Home', a space for teachers to identify and discuss common challenges experienced during these times and share good practices, tools, and resources to improve their classes with their students, thus generating a community that spreads with the ease that virtuality enables. Specifically, the virtual editions have reached thousands of teachers from different US states who, thanks to the remote modality, have been able to meet through the platforms chosen to carry out the events.

In the face of the pandemic, the Edcamps are presented as effective and scalable training proposals for educators that transcend geographical limits, being able to generate a large international learning community, at low cost, self-managed and with great scope.

Teachers voices

A teacher participating from the United States identified the value of connecting with peers at Edcamp, "Talking and asking questions to other teachers and knowing that I am having the same problems was what I needed to stay motivated and keep on trying. I am not alone and I needed help. Many of the technological tools were very helpful and the fact that the other teachers explained how they used them was very helpful. I'm not that skilled in using technology but now I'm not afraid". (Modica, 2020)

"I can say without a doubt that these experiences changed my teaching for the better and have put me in touch with many like-minded colleagues. While the pandemic seemed to thwart all attempts to make authentic connections, these experiences were the solution I needed. The resources I learned and the teachers I met have given me more confidence in powerful digital learning. Now I am much more resilient and I am also open to change. As a result, I am a better teacher. I feel like I also understand my students better. I have raised the bar, not only for my students, but also for what I expect of myself as a teacher-leader of the 21st century ... (Manus, T. 2020)

Plan CEIBAL in English - Uruguay

Synthesis

Within the framework of the CEIBAL Plan (government plan that supports national educational policies with technology) launched in 2007 in Uruguay, CEIBAL in English plan was put into action in 2016, for the teaching of English in public education centers of primary and secondary level of all the country. The program includes the technology-mediated presence of a native speaker alongside the classroom teacher.

Faced with the context of a pandemic that made it impossible to implement it as it had been, its programs were redesigned to continue to meet its objectives. In this way, the traditional class style was transformed into challenges for the students who must complete week by week and encourage motivate in them an autonomous work. The program emphasizes teacher teamwork, mentoring, and professional development

Website

www.ceibal.edu.uy/

Initiative type:

- Governmental

Scope

- National Initiative
- Population involved: English teachers from Uruguay and other countries.
- Benefited population: Public school students from all over the country, primary and secondary level; teachers.

Observed results

Ceibal Plan :

Devices

- **2 million laptops and tablets delivered** between 2007 and 2018.
- **550,000 devices,** updated, reaching all students and teachers of Primary and Secondary Education.
- **20,000 laptops** in library mode to support teachers and students.

Connectivity

- 100% of educational centers (2,931 institutions) with Wi-Fi network as of June 2020.
- 98% of the enrollment (734,000 users) accessing the Internet with broadband as of June 2020.
- 100% of urban public educational centers (1,416 institutions, 57 of them with two rooms) with videoconferencing equipment and 170 videoconferencing rooms for Teaching Points in five countries as of June 2020.
- 45 educational venues and 3,750 users accessing the videoconference network via mobile network as of June 2020.

Micro:bit

- 52,093 plates delivered / assigned between 2018 and 2019.

Digital Labs

- 50 CEILAB implemented until September 2019.
- 4,891 teachers and students participating in the Robotics, Programming and Video Games Olympics.

Platforms

- CREA
- 690,000 users as of June 1, 2020.
- Mathematics (PAM and MATIFIC)
- 221,000 users of math platforms as of June 1, 2020.

Country Library

- 133,000 users as of June 1, 2020.
- More than 343,000 loans, downloads and views made on the platform as of June 1, 2020.

Teaching

- CEIBAL in English
- 95% of the urban school groups of 4th, 5th and 6th grade of Primary Education have English classes.
- 70% of students learn English via videoconference.

Description

"PLAN CEIBAL" is a state policy. It is a program created in 2007 as an inclusion and equal opportunities plan with the aim of supporting Uruguayan educational policies with technology. Since its implementation, each student who enters the public educational system throughout the country has access to a computer for personal use with a free Internet connection from the educational centre. In addition, Plan CEIBAL provides a set of programs, educational resources and teacher training that works to transform the ways of teaching and learning.

Since 2011, the platform has a digital library where users can access free textbooks. In 2013, the CREA platform and the PAM (Adaptive Mathematics Platform) were launched together with the Digital Technologies Laboratory Program for the teaching of robotics, programming and 3D modeling.

Through this program, Uruguay is part of the Global Learning Network of which 7 countries around the world are part, which seeks to create a space for discussion and implementation of new pedagogies supported by the use of technology.

This program was monitored through data analysis and a survey conducted with a representative sample of teachers. "***CEIBAL en casa" (CEIBAL at home)*** had a range of between 85% and 90% among students at both levels; 95% of teachers, who use the platform as a teaching resource and also as a training space. Access to CEIBAL's online educational resources increased by 2,452% in March 2020 compared to the same period in 2019. According to the results of the survey, CEIBAL's resources were the most used to support teaching activities in public education (93%).

Plan CEIBAL plans to use the information gathered and lessons learned through the implementation of *CEIBAL at home* to design a "Response protocol for mass migration to distance and blended learning" and propose a transition from an emergency phase solution to a normal and systematic time expansion regarding the integration of digital learning in classroom education.

Plan CEIBAL in English

"Ceibal en Inglés" (CEI), launched in 2016, is Plan Ceibal's program for the teaching of English in public schools of primary and middle level (Secondary and UTU), with a national scope, covering all educational centres in the country. It is a government initiative in partnership with the British Council. The CEI network integrates more than 900 educational centres throughout the country, 12 English teaching institutes, more than 150 teaching points, 22 mentors and more than 300 teachers.

This program seeks to promote the learning of English as a foreign language at all levels of public education to improve its quality, promote interculturality and favor greater inclusion and personal growth using technology to achieve this purpose.

The program combines classes by videoconference, platform activities and activities mediated by the classroom teacher. Students inside their classrooms in their educational centres and together with their classroom teachers, receive the presence of a remote teacher who "enters the classrooms" once a week through the videoconference system.

In Primary Education, a solution was sought to the lack of English teachers, while in Secondary Education –where there are English teachers in the classrooms– the work focuses on orality skills, through the Conversation Class program, in contact by videoconference with a native speaker of the language who may be in Uruguay or abroad. For the Secondary Education program, the remote teachers must be native

speakers of the English language, so the project addresses both the orality and cultural enrichment needs and experiences in interculturality.

CEIBAL in English is an example of combined education, which proposes articulating the face to face class with analog (unplugged) and digital (online) activities.

The health emergency situation made it impossible to continue with this system and thus, CEIBAL en Inglés then redesigned its programs -especially in primary education- and transformed teaching based on traditional lesson plans into challenges for boys and girls, called “missions”. To fulfill these "missions", each week remote teachers uploaded four videos to the CREA educational platform. From their homes or their educational centres, boys and girls watched the videos, practiced the foreign language and completed the “missions”, whether in video format or written text. Classroom teachers inspired their students to work week by week and established the link between the remote teacher, children and families, thus encouraging commitment and continuity as fundamental elements for learning.

It is worth noting the importance of teaching in pairs, that was made up of a classroom teacher and a remote teacher: the coordination and teamwork of each pair to achieve the common goal and the commitment of the teachers who are part of CEIBAL in English made the program successful. The teaching role within CEIBAL in English is fundamental and aims at their professional development, offering support and accompaniment, as well as training and exchange opportunities, for example through panels for the educational community.

CEIBAL in English accompanies the teachers of the program through mentors, quality managers, invited specialists, workshops and educational support materials

This initiative was awarded at the British Expertise International Awards 2020

Teachers voices

In the analysis of the experience ‘Ceibal Program’ and ‘Ceibal English’, one focus group has been carried out in which teachers of primary level of the urban area participated to gather their perception in the implementation of the Program in the schools. The participants pointed out the successes, challenges, and modifications regarding their main lines of action based on their experiences in the territory.

Successes

Educators highlight the program as innovative due to the platform characteristics and the teacher training in the area of English.

With respect to the learning, the computational thinking developed by the Ceibal and ‘Ceibal Inglés’ Program stands out.

In ‘Ceibal Inglés’ the importance of the mentor's accompaniment and the access to information through the platform is mentioned.

Concerning the alliances, the merger of ‘Ceibal Inglés’ with ‘Crea’ is valued, since it contributes to the teacher appropriation of the platform.

Challenges

The flexibilization of the platform’s format is presented as a challenge due to it is structured according to the units content. It is considered necessary for the program to provide autonomy spaces for teachers in order to adapt their planning according to the groups’

characteristics. In addition to this, the diversification of the pedagogical proposal is requested to adapt the learning strategies to the student educational needs.

Meaningful testimonials

'It was good to go from a known proposal in one way to implement it in another one. The children learned differently. There is still much to do.'

FINAL COMMENTS

The COVID-19 pandemic put the Americas' education systems in check and changed the basic structures on which teaching and learning activities functioned. Although the magnitude of the effects on educational results is still unknown, everything points to the fact that this crisis will have great consequences on learning, mainly in those children and adolescents in vulnerable situations. The closure of schools could generate a deepening of the pre-existing gap, also increasing the risk of these students dropping out.

From the analysis resulting from the bibliographic review, the interviews, surveys, as well as the focus groups carried out, a series of findings and recommendations for decision-making in educational policy emerge, which are described below.

On infrastructure, connectivity and resources:

- In order not to interrupt classes, the first initiative of a large part of the governments of the countries under analysis was to immediately make available a large volume of educational resources and content through various media: digital platforms, web pages, radio programs and educational television and delivery of paper materials. A general consensus values positively these efforts to sustain educational continuity. However, the fact that, as school closings have been prolonged longer than expected, the contexts and specific needs of teachers and students have not been taken into account is questioned. On the contrary, when there was participation of teachers and school leaders in instances of diagnosis and reflection that allowed adapting government decisions, it was possible to provide proposals adapted or adaptable to the different contexts, allowing measures and initiatives to be more efficient and effective.

- The unequal access to connectivity and digital infrastructure by teachers and students has not only been maintained, but in many cases has worsened. Although governments have made notable efforts to expand and guarantee access for the entire educational community, it is evident that many students have interrupted their schooling or are at risk of dropping out. In this sense, the pandemic introduced a new vulnerability classification, which includes those students, teachers and families who do not have connectivity and / or digital skills and who, therefore, have been left behind or completely disconnected from the system. Connectivity, from the pandemic, gained relevance and began to be recognized as a fundamental right to guarantee access to education.

On pedagogical strategies and teacher professional development:

- During the school closure period, teachers used a wide variety of resources, strategies and tools in multiple formats, mainly of their own creation. Among the most effective strategies, those that made follow-up and accompaniment possible and that allowed to "customize" teaching to the needs or situations of the students stand out. Therefore, it is suggested to involve teachers in the design and elaboration of resources, strategies and tools to obtain contextualized materials, which are useful to the reality of these actors and their students.

- The transfer of face-to-face to distance education largely implied the incorporation -in some cases unprecedented- of digital technology to the teaching and learning process. In this sense, many teachers went through frustrating and demanding situations. However, through a wide range of distance training offer that included online courses, forums, videoconferences and meeting spaces between peers, many teachers achieved a greater integration of technological tools. Resistance or difficulties in some cases continue, but at the same time many teachers show a greater willingness to use these tools in relation to what had happened before the pandemic. This means a window of opportunity to deepen the integration of digital technology in school education, though this necessarily needs to be complemented with pedagogical support.

- The evidence indicates that collaborative professional learning spaces were highly valued by teachers and that they played a fundamental role in their training, support, and containment, particularly in the face of an unprecedented teaching context and with the need to adapt their practices. For this reason, it is recommended that governments generate and promote this type of spaces, as well as sustain and institutionalize those that already exist, to facilitate collaboration and the exchange of good practices and lessons learned among peers.

About School Management, Curriculum and Assessment

- The experience and perspective of teachers not only strengthened teaching practices among peers, but also enriched the decision making at macro level. Faced with the closure of schools, the need to provide contextualized responses in many cases fostered communication and collaboration between the schools and the technical teams of the ministries. It is desirable that this exchange and collaborative work between the different levels of government and the educational system continue and be strengthened, insisting on the use of tools for consulting teachers and creating spaces to dialogue with them.

- Another finding of this research consists of the increased autonomy of the school management teams. However, it is observed that school autonomy by itself is not synonymous with success. It must be accompanied by clear- yet flexible and adaptable government guidelines- that provide predictability and allow strategic planning in each school, as well as resources for action. This requires that management teams receive training, continue to develop their leadership and management skills, and be able to account for the strategies implemented, as well as their implications and results.

- Regarding the curriculum, the most applied strategies were the prioritisation, adaptation and incorporation of essential content that became more relevant during the crisis context. The incorporation of socio-emotional content and digital tools stands out, and the greater prominence that the skills and capacities are necessary to answer to the new context took on. This can be seen as a baseline and a starting point, which should be continued and considered in the reforms of national and regional curricula.

- The assessment of learning was a challenge at both the micro and macro levels. On the one hand, standardized assessments at the national and international level had

to be suspended or rescheduled due to the impossibility of ensuring the reliability and equity of their results. This results in a significant lack of information regarding the learning achieved by the students during this period. Consequently, a pending challenge is the design of assessment instruments that can provide comparable information while considering the specificity of the crisis as well as the heterogeneity of situations that students have gone through.

- At the same time, at the micro level, the heterogeneity in the forms and possibilities of interaction between teachers and students raised a greater interest in developing instances of formative assessment. On the other hand, the imminent return to classes introduces challenges in terms of diagnostic assessment and calls into question the summative assessment present in the current accreditation systems paradigms.

On the actors of the educational community

- The crisis has made visible and strengthened the link between the school and the families. The latter became strategic actors when providing support to the students' performance and support to teachers in their effort to ensure pedagogical continuity at a distance. At the same time, the complexity of the context helped to install the appreciation of the role of teacher and the school space as key elements for the education of students. Based on these findings, it is recommended to continue promoting the strengthening of the school-family bond, generating spaces for dialogue and interaction, and including parents and guardians in the teaching and learning process of students.

- The crisis has made visible the importance of working with other actors in the community, such as third sector organisations and the private sphere. A strong existence of alliances of this type is identified to carry out the different measures and programs promoted by the governments. This leads to the importance of continuing to work in collaborative ecosystems between different social actors that allow accelerating the necessary changes.

Finally, it is essential to mention those areas of information vacancy that could motivate future lines of research and thus favour the design of educational programs and policies that allow an adequate response to the challenges of future education.

- One of the motivations of this report was to recover the voice of the different actors of the educational systems to complement with their testimonies the estimates regarding the effects of school closings in the region and the strategies used to mitigate them. This analysis was nourished by the experiences of teachers, managers, government leaders, unions, academia and the third sector. Two fundamental actors of the educational ecosystem, whose perception was not investigated in depth in this study are families and students. Even though they have been identified, and contemplated in the report, surveys and documents that present and analyse what happened during the pandemic from their perspectives; there is much development ahead and it could be the focus of a future research.

- In terms of learning outcomes, there is still no conclusive evidence, but general perceptions of what happened. It is estimated that the loss of learning will be even greater in students in a state of vulnerability, thus increasing the risk of desertion and disengagement. There is also little research regarding the results of the crisis in terms of gender. Estimations indicate that female students are at a higher level of vulnerability due to the time they spend on housework and housekeeping, as well as the risk of violence to which they are exposed. For this reason, it becomes crucial to insist on personalised monitoring and follow-up of students to have accurate information about the impact of the crisis on their educational paths and thus be able to make appropriate decisions.

- Regarding the modalities that the distance training adopted, the survey implemented, the interviews, focus groups and the bibliographic review allowed to identify some evidence regarding good practices. However, a greater systematization of data is still pending to understand what the characteristics of the interaction between students and teachers were, what were the most effective channels for each stage and objective of the training, content or age of the students.

- There is a broad consensus on the need to move towards a formative assessment path. However, there are still great difficulties on the part of teachers and educational institutions to get hold of the tools and implement them effectively.

- Although it was not the objective of this study, the need to restructure initial teacher training is evident. The need to offer pedagogical tools for remote teaching arises, English language, the design and preparation of resources, and the planning of activities within the framework of a model that breaks the traditional structure and is centred on students. In addition, it is paramount to add tools of emotional containment to accompany students in situations of crisis.

The findings and recommendations, as well as the information gathered in this report, are expected to be of use to governments, schools, and all actors in the education system, in times when innovative solutions are urgently required to respond to an unprecedented situation.

Education has taken on a preponderant role during this time, from its presence in the public debate, its constant appearance in the media and the incorporation of new actors to a task that must always summon the whole of the society. The repositioning of education in this new scenario confirms the importance of its function for the development of any society.

The transformative role that the school plays in the 21st century is evident and therefore it must be prioritised in the global agenda to guarantee a better quality of life, for people and for societies.

The new school of which we are all part will be the starting point for the education to come, which is expected to include and fulfil the wishes of millions of people who, being already involved in education, can give their best in the search for educational justice and the integral development of students.

Appendix - Extended information by country

ARGENTINA

ARGENTINA SCHOOL IMPACT OF COVID19

National School closing:
March 15, 2020
(López-Calva & Meléndez, 2020)

11,061,186
affected students
(López-Calva & Meléndez, 2020)

PRE-COVID-19 SYSTEM PREPAREDNESS

Connectivity: 52% of households had internet access (TCDATA 360, 2016). Inequality between provinces and by socioeconomic sector (Cardini et al, 2020).

Devices: 69% of households had access to a computer (TCData360, World Bank, 2017) 40.1% of students (private sector) 19.5% of students (state sector) have a device for homework (AX, 2020). 2/5 Teachers have a computer for exclusive use. 1/10 Teachers do not have a computer (AX, 2020)

Digital Programs / Platforms: : "Conectar Igualdad" (2010-2018) - Distribution of netbooks among primary and secondary level students (OLP) and "Aprender Conectados (2018 - Present)" - Digital education, programming and robotics for students and teachers and distribution of equipment to schools. Platforms " Educ.ar " (State), "Mi Escuela" (CABA), "Escuela Digital" (Mendoza), "Guacarari +" (Misiones), "Aprendizajes 2.0" (Neuquén) and "Educational Campus" (Santa Fe).

Teacher training: Scarce training resources for the use of technologies in distance education (AX, 2020).

RESPONSE TO SCHOOL CLOSURE DUE TO COVID19 PANDEMIC

1. ANSWERS TO ENSURE EDUCATIONAL CONTINUITY

To expand connectivity, the National Ministry of Education signed agreements that allowed the free use of mobile data for navigation on national educational platforms. Computers and tablets were delivered to students from families in situations of economic vulnerability. In addition, through the Banco de la Nación (National Bank), credits were offered at a subsidized rate so that teachers could buy computers (Molina, 2020). Recently, the National Government launched the "Juana Manso Federal Plan", a national program of connectivity, equipment, and teacher training together with an educational platform with virtual classrooms, content repository and a monitoring and research module based on the production of open data. On the other hand, the national government and all jurisdictions made available content portals, which offered educational resources organsed by level of study and area of knowledge. The Ministry of Education of the Nation launched the platform "Seguimos educando" (We continue to educate) hosted on the Educ.ar portal in conjunction with the production of content for television, radio and printed material (guide booklets) (World Bank, 2020). The provincial ministries also developed their own portals and complementary materials that they distributed in various ways (pick-up at the school, pick-up at nearby shops, or home delivery).

The Federal Council of Education (CFE) resolved that there will be no numerical grading and that the asessment would focus on the accompaniment, monitoring, recording and return to families and students of the teaching and learning processes. Additionally, the CFE determined that all the apprenticeships that took place during 2020 would be evaluated and accredited. Those levels of achievement that are accredited will represent moments in a progression of learning that will cover the 2020 and 2021 cycles as a single pedagogical unit.

In some provinces, initiatives were carried out with the objective of strengthening educational trajectories, some examples are the case of Buenos Aires with "Acompañamiento a las Trayectorias y Revinculación" (Accompaniment to the trajectories and Re-linking (ATR) "and Mendoza with"Red de Apoyo de las Trayectorias Escolares (RATE)" (Support Network for School Trajectories).

2. TEACHING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The National and Provincial Ministries of Education prepared and distributed documents for the teachers that detailed the prioritization of learning objectives, selection of contents and possible ways of evaluating. In some provinces, communication and advice channels were established via telephone or video call. Continuous online training was also provided in various formats such as conversations with specialists, speaking cycles, courses and tutorials on the use of educational platforms and softwares.

Examples of educational experiences

- **"Comunidad Atenea" (Athena Community)** - (Latin America) Virtual community for Teaching and collaborative learning
- **"Queremos aprender a leer y escribir " (**We want to learn to read and write) (Mendoza) - professional teacher training device.

3. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND COMMENTS

As a result of the federal structure of government of the educational system, responses were observed at the national level implemented by the National Ministry of Education, as well as a disparate variety of responses at the provincial level that were unmanageable for this study. In the first group, the suspension of face-to-face classes in simultaneity in all jurisdictions, the suspension of the numerical score to evaluate in qualitative terms together with the recommendation of curricular prioritization, and the options of educational contents that are part of the comprehensive plan stand out "Seguimos Educando". It was also highlighted as one of successes of the Argentine case the multiple formats to reach students (digital and paper format, synchronous and asynchronous), the pre-existing base of sites and educational media ("Educ.ar", "Paka Paka") and a program for the distribution of devices and / or digital infrastructure ("Conectar Igualdad", "Aprender Conectados").

BRAZIL

SCHOOL IMPACT OF COVID19

Schools Closing focused on March
(López-Calva & Meléndez, 2020)

44,326,926 affected students
(López-Calva & Meléndez, 2020)

PRE-COVID-19 SYSTEM PREPAREDNESS

Connectivity: 60.8% of households with internet access (TCData360, World Bank, 2017)

Devices: 46.3% of households with access to a computer (TCData360, World Bank, 2017)

Existing Programs / Platforms: "Prouca" - Student Computer Distribution Program (OLP)

Teacher training: Approximately 51% of teachers have technical and pedagogical skills to integrate digital devices into instruction (Rieble-Aubourg & Viteri, 2020)

RESPONSE TO SCHOOL CLOSURE DUE TO COVID19 PANDEMIC

1. ANSWERS TO ENSURE EDUCATIONAL CONTINUITY

To advance in the expansion of internet coverage, the Ministry of Education (MEC) announced that through the " Programa de Innovación en Educación Conectada" (Connected Education Innovation Program) approximately 49 thousand public schools of basic education will receive, by the end of October 2020, funds for the implementation, improvement or expansion of the internet connectivity service, benefiting 14 million students from all Brazilian states (SITEAL, 2020). Also, at the beginning of November 2020, a new expansion was announced, which would involve serving some 70 thousand schools, reaching 27.7 million students. This measure aims to exceed 80% of the Internet coverage in urban schools. In the case of rural schools, it will reach 40% (SITEAL, 2020).

The national Ministry of Education made available on its website resources from the programs "Conta pra Mim" ("Tell me") and "Tempo de Aprender" ("Time to learn") aimed at teachers, families and tutors to accompany children in the literacy process (SITEAL, 2020). Most states have used television channels and online tools to broadcast the content of the classes. The material for homes without internet access has also been printed and tools such as Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, Padlet, Goconqr, Classcraft, Classdojo, Fabapp, among others, have been used (IDB, 2020; CONSED, 2020). For communication with students, the most prominent ones correspond to Google Meet, Zoom and Samba Tech (video and online learning platform).

In terms of educational asessment, the MEC and the National Institute for Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (INEP) decided to postpone the application of the National Secondary Exam (ENEM) while the application of the International Student Assessment Program (PISA) was also postponed.) from 2021 to 2022 (SITEAL, 2020) .

For the monitoring of actions and cases reported in the different educational institutions, the MEC installed an Emergency Operational Committee (COE) early and presented a monitoring platform for COVID-19 in educational institutions. The National Fund for Educational Development (FNDE) launched a survey to monitor the actions of the States and municipalities in the implementation of the National School Food Program (PNAE) during the period of suspension of face-to-face classes in public schools (SITEAL, 2020) .

Regarding the measures to mitigate the effects of the pandemic in the most vulnerable sectors, progress was made in the readjustment and strengthening of existing food programs, replacing their usual operation - in school canteens - with different mechanisms for the delivery of viands or food bags.

Examples of educational experiences

- **State of Amazonas - "Aula em Casa" –** Multiplatform solution for the distribution of educational content.
- **Project " Un Computador Nota 10"** (Federal University of Campina Grande (UFCG) & Department of Education of Campina Grande (Seduc) - Technical and pedagogical cooperation for the recovery and donation of computers (MEC, 2020)
- **#PeloFuturoAgora Initiative** (Lemann Foundation)

2. TEACHING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Different courses for teacher professional development were made available with an offer of more than 122 thousand free distance professional qualification courses from the MEC, in alliance with public institutions of the federal network. On the other hand, the MEC signed a technical cooperation agreement with the Ministry of Economy with the aim of offering professional and technological education through the "Bolsa Formación" (training bag). The new strategy interacts with the initiatives that had already been initiated by the "Novos Caminhos" ("New Paths") program so that the offer of vocational and technological training was in line with the real demands of the world of work. (SITEAL, 2020)

Examples of educational experiences

- **"Curso en linea para alfabetizadores"** (Online course for literacy teachers), part of the "Tempo de Aprender" (Time to Learn) program, aimed at teachers, pedagogical coordinators, school principals and literacy assistants. The course had the participation of 60% of the Brazilian municipalities.
- **Sao Paulo Media Center**

3. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND COMMENTS

As a result of the federal government structure of the educational system, a great variety of responses were observed for the most part at the state level, as a result of the federal government structure of the educational system that were completely unattainable in the present study. Although the national government and the State Secretariats of Education gave prompt responses to guarantee educational continuity, there are still no official data in terms of the learning acquired by students during these months. According to data provided by an investigation carried out by UNICEF, 91 percent of Brazilians living with children or adolescents, ages 4 to 17, who were enrolled in school before the pandemic, declared that they continued to carry out school activities in their homes during it. However, there are 9 percent of students who were in school before the pandemic and who were unable to continue their activities at home (UNICEF, 2020). On the other hand, according to World Bank estimates, the closure of schools due to Covid-19 will increase learning poverty by 2.6 percentage points, reaching 44.8% of children. For the international organisation, the pandemic will make Brazil regress the equivalent of a year of the recent advance in education (Lautharte, 2020).

CHILE

SCHOOL IMPACT OF COVID19

National closin
March 13
(López-Calva & Meléndez, 2020)

3,652,100
affected students
(López-Calva & Meléndez, 2020)

PRE-COVID-19 SYSTEM PREPAREDNESS

Connectivity: 53.9% of households with internet access (TCData360, World Bank, 2016)

Devices: 60.2% of households with access to a computer (TCData360, World Bank, 2017)

Existing Programs / Platforms: "Yo Elijo mi PC "(YEMPC) - Computer distribution program, one-year mobile Internet plan and digital educational resources to those students from subsidized private schools who are studying 7th grade and who are in a vulnerable condition (Minedu, 2020)

Teacher training: 77.3% of teachers stated that they can support student learning through the use of digital technology (TALIS, 2018)

RESPONSE TO SCHOOL CLOSURE DUE TO COVID19 PANDEMIC

1. RESPONSE TO SCHOOL CLOSURE DUE TO COVID19 PANDEMIC

The Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications and the Ministry of Education (Minedu) launched the project "Connectivity for Education 2030" with the aim of delivering high-speed internet at no cost to more than 10,000 basic and secondary education establishments throughout the country. The term of completion of the initiative is 10 years. In addition, Minedu agreed to various alliances for the expansion of the digital infrastructure. Together with the Asociación de Telefonía Móvil de Chile (MobileTelephone Association of Chile) (Atelmo), it launched an initiative to make the download of texts and school guides from the national educational platform for free (Figueroa, 2020). It also made an agreement with Google for free G-SUITE Accounts for the different public educational institutions in the country. In addition, free access to Microsoft Office 365 was agreed for all public and private schools in the country (SITEAL, 2020).

As a national strategy, the remote learning program was designed through the "Aprendo en Línea"(I Learn Online) platform with educational resources for students from 1st grade to 4th grade, where the "School Digital Library" repository was also available with content for students. teachers of establishments received state subsidies. For initial education, the website of the National Board of Kindergartens (Junji) and "Integra" (a non-profit private law educational organisation) (Figueroa, 2020; Universidad de los Andes, 2020) was used . Other channels used for the dissemination of educational content were the TV and radio, through the program "La TV educa en Chile" (The TV teaches in Chile), an initiative of the Mineduc, together with the National Television Council (CNTV) and the National Television Association (Anatel) . Printed materials were also delivered to support those who had difficulties with internet access (these were distributed to 3,700 establishments) (Figueroa, 2020).

The Curriculum and Asessment Unit made available to the educational system a curricular foundation that covers all levels of basic schooling, establishing a differentiated plan for Professional Technical training, as well as for the education of young people and adults. In addition, the syllabi were updated establishing those fundamental contents that must be addressed for the good performance of students in higher education and a new system of access to higher education was adopted (SITEAL, 2020)

Regarding monitoring and asessment, it was decided to implement the SIMCE tests with a diagnostic character, to learn about the situation of each establishment through questionnaires on matters related to the educational and socio-emotional impact of the pandemic. The Minedu also implemented the survey "Leo y Sumo Primero" to analyse the state of learning in the areas of reading and mathematics of students of 1st and 2nd grade.

To ensure the well-being of students and teachers, the food delivery service offered by JUNAEB was modified by a model in which the beneficiary family or student can pick up breakfast and / or lunch at the educational establishment. Likewise, a food basket delivery system was implemented (SITEAL, 2020). In addition, within the Economic Emergency plan developed by the government, the COVID-19 Bonds were created by the State as an economic aid to the most vulnerable sectors (Universidad de Los Andes, 2020). On the other hand, other strategies for prioritizing vulnerable groups included the continuation of the payment of subsidies for subsidized public and private establishments, the establishment of " ethical shifts " in educational establishments for students who cannot count on adult care in their homes, and the preparation of a document with guidelines for managers and teachers on inclusive educational communities, foreign students and their families. (Government of Chile, 2020; General Education Division, 2020).

Examples of educational experiences

- **Comprehensive Assessment of Learning** (Educational Quality Agency)

2. TEACHING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Ministry of Education, through its Center for Improvement, Experimentation and Pedagogical Research (CPEIP), has established a new digital platform for teacher development that seeks to respond to the training needs experienced by teachers, educators and managers in the context of a health emergency. There, free courses are offered focusing on three axes: curricular prioritization, socio-emotional learning and digital tools. Likewise, the Minedu developed the initiative " Tutores para Chile" (Tutors for Chile) aimed at pedagogy students close to graduation so that they can carry out their professional practices and, at the same time, support the establishments and their teaching teams in learning remotely (SITEAL, 2020).

3. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND COMMENTS

Chile made important efforts to ensure educational continuity. Among them, the "Aprendo en Linea" strategy stands out due to its multi-format and the various agreements signed by Minedu with private sector organisations to expand the digital infrastructure of students and teachers. The different initiatives focused on vulnerable populations such as food and care aids are also highlighted. The Minedu, in conjunction with the World Bank, has developed a tool to estimate the effects of the health emergency on the learning of Chilean students. Despite the efforts made, the estimates made using the data collected by the SIMCE student questionnaire indicate that at the national level, in a scenario with the closure of establishments during approximately 60% of the school year, students could lose 15 % (for the richest quintile) to 50% (for the poorest quintile) of the learning that occurs annually within schools. In the event that school closings take place throughout the school year, the loss of learning would range from 64% to 95% depending on the income quintile. Although in both cases the estimates do not show great differences according to the sex and nationality of the student, the administrative dependency of the establishment they attend is significant in determining the level of learning lost in each scenario. Regarding the results in PISA, the simulations carried out indicate that, if normally 31% of the students that were evaluated do not achieve satisfactory results (below level 2) in the international PISA asessment, in a scenario B this percentage could grow up to 45 %. (Centro de Estudios MINEDUC / Banco Mundial, 2020). These data, although estimated, indicate the importance not only of continuing but of even increasing efforts to guarantee the educational continuity of Chilean children and youth.

COLOMBIA

SCHOOL IMPACT OF COVID19

National closing March 15
(López-Calva & Meléndez, 2020)

10,434,248 affected students
(López-Calva & Meléndez, 2020)

PRE-COVID-19 SYSTEM PREPAREDNESS

Connectivity: 49.9% of households with internet access (TCData360, World Bank, 2017)

Devices: 44.3% of households that have access to a computer (TCData360, World Bank, 2017), 62% of the students had a computer, 78.1% had a smartphone, but only 29.2% used mobile internet (World Bank, 2020; IDB, 2020).

Existing programs /platforms: *ETIC @ Strategy* - diploma in ICT competences through Blended Learning - "Colombia Aprende" - educational portal launched in 2004, with more than 80,000 digital educational resources available for teachers and students - *"Computadores para Educar"* - delivery of devices and training for teachers, parents and schools.

Teacher training: 75% of teachers reported that the use of ICT was included in their education and 78% of teachers claimed to be able to support student learning through the use of digital technology (TALIS, 2018)

RESPONSE TO SCHOOL CLOSURE DUE TO COVID19 PANDEMIC

1. ANSWERS TO ENSURE EDUCATIONAL CONTINUITY

For the expansion of the digital infrastructure, the Ministry of National Education (Minedu) and the Ministry of ICT, through "Computadores para Educar", delivered 83,345 computers to educational centers in the country. On the occasion of "Colombia Aprende Móvil", the release of mobile data on the websites of their respective educational platforms was also agreed with the main telecommunications companies.

The Minedu promoted the creation of "Colombia Aprende", a platform with educational content to support learning at home, along with educational content programs on radio and TV, and distribution of printed material for homes without connectivity. The "Programa de Alimentación Escolar en Casa" (Home School Feeding Program) and the "Mesas de Apoyo técnico y pedagógico" (Technical and Pedagogical Support Tables) were also developed, and made available to the entire educational community.

Several monitoring instances of the "Aprendo en Casa" (I learn at Home) program were held, meetings with directors, teachers, educators and experts to receive feedback, and two reports have been prepared from the Asessment Office. For its part, ICBF designed dashboards to monitor implementation in real time.

Examples of educational experiences

- **"#BeThe1Challenge"** - Agreement between Minedu and the British Council for the development of a digital application that sought to reinforce the learning of English from grades 6 to 11.
- **Website "In trust with families" (Santillana) -** Dissemination of information to strengthen relationships between families and educational institutions.
- **Plan "My hands teach you" (Colombian Institute of Wellbeing)** Food distribution and pedagogical guides aimed at vulnerable population between 0 and 5 years old and pregnant women

- **Rural Radios** (Teach for Colombia)
- **"Aprende en Casa"** – Digital repository of educational content (Bogotá)

2. TEACHING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Minedu led several strategies through the "Aprender Digital" (Learn Digital) plan such as "Master Contact" (a platform aimed at teachers and managers that has an offer of continuous training, networks, mentoring and communities of practice); the "Todos Aprender" (Everyone Learning) Program (which offered training to almost 4,000 tutors); "Conectados con el Aprendizaje" (Connected with Learning) (makes educational content such as illustrative guides and explanatory videos available to teachers); and the "Escuela de Liderazgo" (Leadership School) (aimed at managers and teachers in order to enhance their pedagogical, administrative and personal management skills, with an emphasis on socio-emotional skills , development of collective skills and asessment). Another of the Minedu initiatives was the "Plan Padrino" (Sponsor Plan), which seeks to promote, through solidarity, the exchange of pedagogical skills and experiences between educational institutions.

3. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND COMMENTS

Colombia faced covid-19 with a national response. The monitoring of the "Learn at Home" platform has generated valuable information not only when evaluating the effectiveness of the strategy, but also the needs that arose in each phase and the adaptability they achieved (Alianza Educativa worked together with the Ministry of Education to do the monitoring). The results of this monitoring show a considerable increase in the communication of teachers with their students and families. The most used means were WhatsApp (64% vs. 45% for private teachers), email (62% vs. 60% for private teachers) and virtual classes (21% vs. 46% for private teachers). There was also a significant increase in the number of visits to the Academic Network portal (11,532,367 visits compared to 3,914,680 visits in 2019). For its part, the site "I learn at home" has received 4,641,163 visits. The monitoring also generated adjustments and improvements in teachers 'professional development, referring to ICT, and in teachers' technological skills. On the other hand, there is data that shows that, despite the extensive communication of "Aprende en Casa" (Learn at Home), it was registered that only 50% of public schools and 25% of private schools in the country were aware. Even only 40% of students in public schools watch TV programming. (OECD, 2020)

COSTA RICA

SCHOOL IMPACT OF COVID19

National closing
March 17
(López-Calva & Meléndez, 2020)

974,782
affected students
(López-Calva & Meléndez, 2020)

PRE-COVID-19 SYSTEM PREPAREDNESS

Connectivity: 68.6% of households with fixed internet access (TCData360, World Bank, 2017) - 80% of students between 5 and 18 years old who live in higher-income households have access to the Internet; while among the poorest this falls to only 37%. Furthermore, among the poorest (1st quintile), 48% access the Internet only through a cell phone and 10% do not have any connection. Most of the teachers report having access to the internet through a stable connection through a fixed telephone, coaxial or fiber optic. However, 25% of the staff report having an unstable connection (cell phone) or no type of connection (Estado de la Nación Program, 2020).

Devices: 51% of households have access to a computer (TCData360, World Bank, 2017)

Existing Programs/ Platforms: "Estrategia de Transformación Digital hacia la Costa Rica del Bicentenario 4.0 2018-2022" (Digital Transformation Strategy towards Costa Rica for Bicentennial 4.0 2018-2022) - It involves the " Red Educativa Bicentenario" (Bicentennial Educational Network), "Recursos Educativos para el aprovechamiento de las tecnologías digitales" (Educational Resources for the use of digital technologies) and " Solución tecnológica integral: Plataforma Ministerial" (Integral technological solution: Ministerial Platform) (IDB, nd). The programs "Tecnologías Móviles" (Mobile Technologies) (2007) and "Conectándonos" (connecting ourselves) (2011) were also in progress - both developed by the Ministry of Public Education of Costa Rica and Fundación Quirós Tanzi. However, according to SIGED 24, the country was not fully prepared to support the remote teaching process. In the categories of "digital platforms" and "virtual tutorials" it is at a "LATENT" level of development, in "connectivity" and "digital resource package" is at an "Incipient" level and in "digital content repository", at an "established" level (IDB, 2020)

Teacher training: 54% of the surveyed secondary school teachers stated that they had received training, while 42% did so in primary school (Programa Estado de la Nación, 2020)

RESPONSE TO SCHOOL CLOSURE DUE TO COVID19 PANDEMIC

1. ANSWERS TO ENSURE EDUCATIONAL CONTINUITY

The Ministry of Public Education (MEP) launched a strategy for pedagogical mediation called "I learn at home", based on the provisions of the Educational Policy and Curricular Policy in force, giving relevance and relevance to the use of technological resources, as well as to the generation of specific and contextualized actions for distance learning. As part of the aforementioned strategy, the MEP provided a series of guidelines to support the distance educational process (Ministry of Public Education, 2020).

Thanks to the support of international organisations such as the Inter-American Development Bank, organisations such as Pearson, Age of Learning, Microsoft, Movistar and the alliance with the National Radio and Television System (SINART), the National Radio Broadcasting Chamber (CANARA), UNED and CANARTEL, the government has also been able to provide different tools and strategies to strengthen the remote teaching and learning process. These include the content library from "Sesame Street", the virtual platform "Camino a la U", radio and television programs within the framework of the "Aprendo en Casa" strategy (SITEAL, 2020).

The MEP made adjustments to existing school feeding programs, increasing investment and making logistical adjustments, and managed to sustain the feeding of approximately 800,000 students through the distribution of food packages (MEP, 2020).

Examples of educational experiences

- **Digital monitoring tool "HEDIMEP"**

2. TEACHING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A radio program produced by the Professional Development Institute (IDP) was launched in order to accompany teachers in the implementation of the pedagogical tools that are being used. (Directorate of Press and Public Relations, Ministry of Public Education, 2020). The "UPE Platform" (virtual campus of the Omar Dengo Foundation and the Ministry of Public Education of Costa Rica) is also available. In this platform, participants have access to a wide range of online courses and learning communities, providing support in professional development and in strengthening the skills necessary for ideal performance in the 21st century. It has 15 thousand registered participants and 96 courses available. (IDB, nd)

3. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND COMMENTS

Faced with the COVID pandemic, Costa Rica decided to close schools on March 17, 2020 and in August extended the suspension of face-to-face classes until the end of the 2020 school year (Siteal, 2020 and Ministry of Public Education, 2020). The number of "lost" face-to-face days reached 137 days in August 2020. The number of affected students reached 483,770 in primary and 476,668 in secondary. (UNDP, 2020). In order to guarantee educational continuity, the Ministry of Public Education (MEP) launched "Aprendo en Casa" (I learn at home). Although this plan contemplates various strategies and alternatives that aim to mitigate the cost of learning, so far no official results have been found in terms of learning during this period. Despite the efforts to serve students digitally, it is evident that many of them have been exposed, without real and efficient access to the educational process. Of a school population of around 1 million, it is estimated that only about 43% have had access to the educational platform indicated by the MEP, while the other 57% have had to follow its process through WhatsApp, offline digital resources and print media. Likewise, between 30% and 40% of students have not had access to electronic equipment and Internet connectivity, a situation much more common in the most vulnerable and rural populations. As an aggravating factor, many of these girls and boys live in conditions of extreme poverty, affected by the lack or loss of employment by their fathers, mothers or caregivers, suffer different types of violence and are exposed to serious social problems. The MEP has reported that about 91,000 girls and boys have been lost since the pandemic began (Baiocchi, 2020).

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

SCHOOL IMPACT OF COVID19

School closings
March 19

1,800,000
affected students

PRE-COVID-19 SYSTEM PREPAREDNESS

Connectivity: Percentage of Homes with Internet access: 21% in 2015. Percentage of Internet Access in schools: 3.9%.

Devices: Percentage of households equipped with a personal computer 23% (2016)

Existing Programs/ Platforms: The Dominican Republic's "Reública Digital" (Digital Republic) program consists of a set of actions aimed at the inclusion of information and communication technologies in educational processes. Among the most outstanding actions is the "CompuMaestro" Program (OLPC Program).

Teacher training: In 2015, MINRED launched the "CompuMaestro Program ". It is an initiative that seeks to benefit the teaching staff of the Ministry of Education, to strengthen the use of ICT in planning, review, asessment and selection of materials and digital resources that allow them to carry out educational activities integrating ICT.

RESPONSE TO SCHOOL CLOSURE DUE TO COVID19 PANDEMIC

1. ANSWERS TO ENSURE EDUCATIONAL CONTINUITY

An Educational Support Plan was implemented to respond to the suspension of classes. Institutional online platforms with pedagogical resources were developed and strengthened to continue the classes with distance modality such as: official website "enlinea.minerd.edu.do", the Inicia Educación portal, IQ.EDU.DO, as well as in other platforms with free digital access. Alliances were also made with radio and television signals to provide free access to virtual classrooms and campus administration courses for the assembly of online proposals or tutorial courses on web tools and applications. The platform offers audiovisual resources, modules with didactic content to work with according to level and modality, and exercise guide.

Likewise, physical (booklets) and virtual materials were distributed to promote the continuity of education at all educational levels, and to provide support to families to maintain the rhythm of the teaching-learning process through different recreational activities.

2. HING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The " Formación en Herramientas Digitales para la Docencia" (Training in Digital Tools for Teaching) program was carried out, developed by the National Institute for Teacher Training and Training (INAFOCAM), and the General Directorate of Educational Informatics aimed at classroom teachers, pedagogical coordinators, managers and active teaching staff from public and private educational centers. The program seeks to develop skills in the use of digital tools.

The UNO a UNO Diploma aimed to train teachers from educational centers that have been impacted by the "República Digital Educación" Program. They also continued training in Educational Robotics in a virtual way for different levels. A virtual space of support for non-face-to-face education was developed, enabling a communication line for teachers and students seeking information and assistance from MINERD related to Covid-19

3. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND COMMENTS

The Dominican Republic has been one of the pioneer countries in designing an Educational Support Plan. In addition to developing pedagogical proposals, booklets with the assistance of various organisations, and socio-emotional support strategies for students, their families, it is necessary to highlight the "Training in Digital Tools for Teaching" program of the National Institute for Teacher Training and Training (INAFOCAM). Likewise, it is worth highlighting the retention experiences of students from civil and religious organisations due to their high capacity to provide follow-up and personalised support in areas of greater vulnerability (Save the Children, Fé y Alegría, Organisations of Marian, Salesian and Jesuit congregations).

ECUADOR

SCHOOL IMPACT OF COVID19

The school year of the Costa-Galapagos regime began remotely on June 1 and the Sierra-Amazonia regime on September 1, both remotely through the **Educational Plan " Aprendemos Juntos en Casa"** (We Learn Together at Home)

PRE-COVID-19 SYSTEM PREPAREDNESS

Connectivity: "Mi Compu " program, implementation of the 1 to 1 model (2011) [29] .

Devices: no data.

Existing Programs/ Platforms:"Mi Compu " program, implementation of the 1 to 1 model (2011).
Educational resource portal for teachers to assist learning from home with resources for all educational levels.

Teacher training: Since 2016, through the Undersecretariat of Professional Development, the Mecapacito virtual Moodle Platform has been implemented , where massive courses have been provided for the continuous training of teachers in the national educational system. The "Me capacito" Platform has a main site where all the information related to the teacher training of the Fiscal Magisterium is published and a virtual classroom in which they can complete the courses that the Ministry of Education offers to the Fiscal Magisterium teachers.

RESPONSE TO SCHOOL CLOSURE DUE TO COVID19 PANDEMIC

1. ANSWERS TO ENSURE EDUCATIONAL CONTINUITY

The educational Plan " Aprendemos Juntos en Casa" (We Learn Together at Home) program was broadcasted on radio and television. "Educa contigo " (Educate with you) is a space that seeks a joint relationship between the educational community and the media, in addition to addressing topics of interest to accompany the teaching and learning process in the classroom.
It was also complemented by an educational portal - Online educational planning and resources. Learning through a virtual educational platform offers advantages in terms of the environment of flexible schedules, greater diversity of resources and the possibility of collaborating and exchanging experiences in the development of digital skills.

Two norms were established that expanded the educational offer for school institutions. These new options diversify the possibility of continuing with distance education: "open education" and "home schooling". For the implementation of the first, virtual and online tools are used, which are complementary and can be used by all public and private schools that maintain traditional schooling. This format does not require regular attendance, the learning process is autonomous with the accompaniment and monitoring of one or more tutors and teachers. The second format is aimed at the levels of basic general education and high school, and implies that the family assumes the responsibility of educating their children directly or through teachers / tutors, with the support and monitoring of an educational institution. In this sense, public and private schools must request the extension of the home education service in the competent educational district.

For students who do not have connectivity present, three mechanisms were mainly put into action: the media support to use off line guides, educational resources transmitted in a thousand radio and television channels, and the coordination with the Committee for Emergency Operations (COE) cantons for the delivery of printed pedagogical guides in rural sectors that do not have access to the different types of connectivity.

Another of the measures promoted by the Ministry of Education (MinEduc) is the Covid-19 Educational Plan aimed at students in the 3rd year of ordinary education. The program consists of virtual classrooms that contain the subjects of Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry biology, Social Sciences, Language and literature, and, grade exam.

Regarding the expansion of the digital infrastructure, connectivity plans and tablets that were delivered to teachers that provide socio-emotional support in the province of Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas in coordination with the "Education Cannot Wait" Fund . The Ministry of Education presented the campaign "Connecting to the Future", which aims to provide internet services, Wi- Fi and tablets to students and teachers in priority areas , especially rural areas, to strengthen the teaching-learning process and reduce the connectivity gaps between these actors. The goverment proposed to reinforce the educational process through the use of technology and the prioritization of students from rural areas.

Regarding the contents, a priontized curriculum by sublevels was implemented for an autonomous teaching and learning process. It was plausible to be developed in person, blended or remotely, and applicable to the various educational offers and learning needs, according to the contexts. The ability to develop life skills was priontized, such as the ability to adapt to uncertainty, the development of critical thinking, analysis and argumentation considering different perspectives, empathic communication, decision-making, collaborative work and management of technology, with an emphasis on the emotional support of students and their families.

2. TEACHING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A self-learning course for teachers was developed " Mi Aula en Línea" (My Online Classroom) led by the Ministry of Education (MinEduc) with the online modality of the Central University of Ecuador with the tools and services provided by Microsoft. On this platform, teachers have access to examples of how to apply the information found on the educational resources page and the COVID-19 Educational Plan[40] Training courses were also held for tax teachers led by the Ministry of Education together with the CISCO Networking Academy and the EDUTEC Group. Teachers of the fiscal magisterium can register through the "Me capacito" platform.

3. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND COMMENTS

In Ecuador, the alliance with the third sector stands out in the great provision of digital infrastructure resources and the expansion of the educational offer for open education and home education school institutions.

The use of the educational platform "Me capacito " launched in 2016, was a key piece to provide teacher training courses virtually, in strategic alliances with the third sector.

MEXICO

SCHOOL IMPACT OF COVID19

The 2020-2021 school year began on **August 24,**
through the **distance learning program "Aprende en Casa II"**

PRE-COVID-19 SYSTEM PREPAREDNESS

Connectivity: 45.4% of households have a computer

Devices: With respect to schools, 44% of management personnel in Mexico declared that the digital technology available in their educational centers is inadequate or insufficient.

Existing Programs/ Platforms: In 2019, the national educational policy "La Nueva Escuela Mexicana" was implemented. The proposal was designed to repeal the educational reform implemented in 2013. The proposed changes were intended to lay the foundations for a new educational model[18] . Within this framework, the educational platform "Nueva Escuela Mexicana" (2019) was created, providing official study plans and programs and free textbooks. Resources are classified by level and subject.

Teacher Training: 77 3% of teachers stated that they could support student learning through the use of digital technology.

RESPONSE TO SCHOOL CLOSURE DUE TO COVID19 PANDEMIC

1. ANSWERS TO ENSURE EDUCATIONAL CONTINUITY

SThe "Aprendo en casa II" (I Learn at Home) distance learning program was promoted , with the support of private television stations, the network of educational radio and television stations in the country and public communication systems of the Mexican State. The Ministry of Public Education (SEP), through the Undersecretary of Basic Education, created a website in support of the "Aprende en Casa" program, to benefit students of basic education (initial, preschool, primary and secondary) with Internet access, in addition to the open transmission coverage offered by Televisión Educativa and Canal Once.
Also the "Back to Classes. Learn at Home II" set up a Telephone Pedagogical Support Center to provide advice, guidance and pedagogical support to basic education students, during and after educational programming broadcast on television.

As an inclusive strategy, the Radio Strategy for Indigenous Communities and Peoples was developed in different languages in coordination with radio stations from the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples (INPI).

Regarding the curricular adaptation, the asessment of the learning portfolio was implemented as an asessment alternative without an end-of- year exam for the current school period.

Examples of educational experiences:
The State of Jalisco adopted within the framework of its "COVID 19 JALISCO Plan" and in its digital policy an educational plan called "Recrea" that involved the combination of different technological resources and television to give tools to teachers, students and families to guarantee educational continuity.

Examples of educational experiences

▶ The State of Jalisco adopted within the framework of its **"COVID 19 JALISCO Plan"** and in its digital policy an educatio nal plan called "Recrea" that involved the combination of different technological resources and television to give tools to teachers, students and families to guarantee educational continuity.

2. TEACHING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The teacher training program consisted of virtual training for teachers and parents in collaboration with Google and virtual training in digital skills for teachers for the use of information, communication and knowledge and learning technologies to strengthen the processes teaching and learning.

Along the same lines, the National College of Technical Professional Education (CONALEP), in collaboration with the Fundación Telefónica Movistar, implemented a program on the pedagogical capacities of teachers in the use of digital tools.

The Blog "Entre Docentes" (Between Teachers) is also presented from the MejorEdu portal, designed as a collaborative professional development proposal for teachers of basic and upper secondary education. Weekly materials are designed and presented to promote training experiences and encourage participation and dialogue among members of the school communities. In addition, tutorials on the use of resources on educational portals were made available to teachers.

3. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND COMMENTS

In Mexico, the "Nueva Escuela Mexicana" (New Mexican School) educational platform was favorable for the implementation of the distance education program "I Learn at home". Complementarily, in terms of educational inclusion, the implementation of the Radio Strategy for Indigenous Communities and Peoples in 15 different languages, promoted by the Ministry of Public Education in coordination with the radio stations of the National Institute of Indigenous Peoples (INPI).

In teacher training, the strategic alliances with the third sector and the professional learning strategies among peers stand out, such as the blog "Entre Docentes" (Between Teachers), which operates as a professional learning community where the link between educational communities is strengthened.

PERU

SCHOOL IMPACT OF COVID19

National closing March 15

Establishment of the distance education platform (television and radio) "Aprendo en Casa" (I Learn at Home) for education students Pre-school, Primary, Secondary and alternative.

PRE-COVID-19 SYSTEM PREPAREDNESS

Connectivity: 32.9% of households have a computer.

Devices: Access to devices and connectivity required for remote learning varies across the country

- About 85% of households own a television,
- 84% a radio,
- 82% a mobile phone
- and only 24% have an Internet connection at home (data from UNICEF and the World Bank).

Existing Programs/ Platforms:

- **Program "Una laptop por niño"** (One laptop per child) General Directorate of Educational Technology (DIGETE), Ministry of Education, Regional Directorates of Education and Local Educational Management Unit.
- **"Perú Educa" Platform:** digital repository of content and virtual training. (it was necessary to develop a new, lighter platform as this platform was not set up to deliver large-scale remote education)

Teacher training: No data found.

RESPONSE TO SCHOOL CLOSURE DUE TO COVID19 PANDEMIC

1. ANSWERS TO ENSURE EDUCATIONAL CONTINUITY

"Aprendo en Casa" platform, is technologically supported by companies such as Amazon, Microsoft and Google - who offered software licenses - and telephone companies that released the access to navigate the portal without data consumption.

MINEDU partnered with more than 60 mobile applications to allow teachers and students to access to free resources related to communication, classroom management, digital libraries, content management, and online learning, among others.[4] This program included a basic connectivity kit for schools that consisted of downloading educational content and updating tablets. Free access to telephony and data plans was also provided for teachers, managers and related personnel, which is made effective through the "Recarga Minedu" program. At the same time, access to content was provided at each point of the localities and made possible the interaction with teachers at these established points, strengthening existing alliances with TV Peru and Radio Nacional, the government's radio and television platforms.

"Estrategia Formativa 360"(360 Training Strategy): To strengthen the service of technical-productive, higher technological and artistic education in the non-presence modality, free virtual courses related to employability skills were offered to students. Likewise, strategies were developed to prioritize the most vulnerable groups and provide social-emotional support. In this way, a commission was created in charge of promoting the implementation of actions for the protection of indigenous or native peoples in the framework of the health emergency. For their part, the needs of girls, boys and adolescents who

were, since the beginning of the health emergency, in a situation of abandonment or were victims of physical, psychological and / or sexual violence, among other cases that endangered their integrity and well-being. Some of these measures contemplated the transfer to "Residential Shelter Centers" (CAR) and psychological and health care in situations of risk. In addition, the Ministry of Education developed some " Protocols for the attention of violence against girls, boys and adolescents " with the aim of guiding public and private schools for the attention, from a comprehensive approach, of cases of school violence and family violence that affect students.

Examples of educational experiences

- **"Aprendo en Casa" (I Learn at Home) program:** A multichannel distance education service on television, radio and the Internet.
- **Enseña Perú (Teach Peru)**
- **Herramienta de seguimiento -** Alerta Escuela (Tracking tool - School Alert)

2. TEACHING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The "National In-Service Teacher Training Program for Users of Portable Electronic Devices" was carried out with a digital literacy course for 27,654 teachers belonging to targeted educational institutions. In this framework, the virtual course "Role of the teacher in distance teaching-learning" was launched aimed at hired and appointed teachers from all over the country. The course is hosted on the virtual platform "Peru Educa".

With the implementation of "Aprendo en Casa", teachers received guidelines to observe the learning sessions through the channel of their choice, communicate with students and parents, subscribe to online learning courses through PeruEduca, among other activities.

In addition, through the portal "I listen to you teacher" a team of psychologists offered socio-emotional support to teachers in the country to counteract the effects generated by the pandemic. Simultaneously, online resources are offered for managing emotions such as videos, infographics, protocols, readings, among others.

3. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND COMMENTS

Peru has been one of the countries that has made multiple efforts to develop specific content to deal with school closures. An emblematic resource has been the "Aprendo en Casa" Platform with the assistance of companies such as Amazon, Microsoft and Google - which offer software licenses - and telephone companies. Likewise, actions have been developed to strengthen connectivity through the "Everyone and everyone connected" in which laptops were delivered to teachers and students, mobile data for internet access were increased through the "Recarga MINEDU" plan. In addition to the support for connectivity, it is necessary to highlight the spaces for emotional support for teachers, such as **the Program "Te escucho docente" (I listen to you, teacher).**

UNITED STATES

SCHOOL IMPACT OF COVID19

Targeted closings from March
(Economic Policy Institute, 2020)

55,000,000 students affected
(Economic Policy Institute, 2020).

PRE-COVID-19 SYSTEM PREPAREDNESS

Connectivity: 77.97% of households with fixed internet access (TCData360, World Bank, 2017)

Devices: 59% of classrooms had a one-device-to-student ratio (Owl Ventures, 2020). However, digital devices were not universally available or used at home for school related purposes (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2017). The digital gap affected students from low-income families and people of color (Pew Research Center).

Existing programs/ platforms: at the district level, but were unattainable in the present study.

Teacher Education: More than 50 percent of teachers in the United States reported taking professional development online in 2019, yet the data also shows that teachers are not universally prepared to teach online. During the 2017-18 school year, about 21 percent of public schools and 13 percent of private schools offered some course entirely online. Among public schools, a higher percentage of charter schools (30 percent) offered any course completely online, compared to traditional public schools (20 percent). (NCES, 2019)

RESPONSE TO SCHOOL CLOSURE DUE TO COVID19 PANDEMIC

1. ANSWERS TO ENSURE EDUCATIONAL CONTINUITY

The lack of a national consensus on how to address the pandemic crisis has led to a chaotic transition to distance learning. For example, in 28 states with about 48 percent of K-12 students, distance learning has not been required. As a result, many students are at risk of not receiving any instruction until schools reopen (McKinsey & Co., 2020).

The main response of the US Government was to provide financial aid to students and states / districts, to face various aspects of the crisis, such as digital expansion (digital infrastructure of schools and accessibility of students and teachers) or the supply of school meals. The CARES Act (Assistance Package), for example, included $ 30.75 billion for an Education Stabilization Fund.

In the private sector, companies such as AT&T, Comcast, and Verizon supported a digital expansion, some of them in partnership with the district education departments. Most studies show that some policies were adopted regarding access to the Internet and digital devices for students from vulnerable groups. (McKinsey & Co, 2020; ECS, 2020; OWL Ventures, 2020).

In terms of teaching and learning strategies, the US Department of Education offered online resources for parents, students, teachers, and other educators, while the "CDC" offers guidance for the school environment. At the local level, 42% of high-poverty districts reported that physically distributed teaching materials were the main component of their distance learning strategy , while 85% of low-poverty districts reported that teaching materials were distributed digitally (American Institutes for Research, 2020) [21] . Other resources have included live virtual classes taught by teachers, prerecorded virtual lessons created by the district, and digital learning lessons or activities from outside providers.

Nationally, schools were allowed to waive assessments for the remainder of the 2020 school year (waivers have been approved for all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia). Some states have requested continuation of assessment waivers even for the 2020-21 school year. The American College Test (ACT) has been postponed and many colleges are adjusting their admission criteria.

Existing reports show that online student attendance tracking has been one of the main control strategies adopted. In this sense, some school districts are making attendance registration mandatory through their platforms (Unesco; Economic Policy Institute, 2020; Bellwether & Teach for America, 2020)

The continuation of food service in schools has been an important national strategy. A From a survey of Food and Nutrition Department of Agriculture US measures were adopted as allowing states to serve free meals to children and form public-private partnerships to support children who depend on meals school free and reduced price. At the local level, many states have supported strategies focused on mental health and psychological support (California, Hawaii, Los Angeles): establishing health care hotlines and, in some cases, providing support from educational facilities (Economic Policy Institute, 2020; Bellwether & Teach for America, 2020).

Examples of educational experiences

▶ **"Every Day, Every Student" Communication Strategy** (Phoenix Union High School District)

2. TEACHING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

No national strategy related to teacher professional development was identified, however, from the existing reports several local examples from education departments and other associations can be drawn. Most of these strategies consist of providing teachers with free professional development and training focused on quality instruction online and in blended learning environments. (ECS; 2020)

3. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND COMMENTS

Research on the readiness of the United States school system shows several disparities (achievement, dropouts) between white students and students of black and Hispanic descent that are likely to be exacerbated by school closings and subsequent disruption of schools, supports provided to vulnerable groups (academic engagement and achievement, strong relationships with caring adults, and supportive home environments, meals). Other negative effects of these disparities, more difficult to quantify, are the social and emotional crises produced by social isolation and anxiety. According to McKinsey & Co., most studies find that full- time online learning does not deliver the same academic results as classroom instruction. This could affect the entire educational system in the United States.

Lack of equity in online instruction is a major concern. Many sources agree that the amount of digital content and the availability of the learning management system have improved over the last decade, and that resources are available. But the difficulty really lies in the deepening of inequality, exacerbated by the crisis that the pandemic brought. Some reports show that several districts had to pause their plans to offer online education,

The lack of consensus already mentioned I when deciding how to respond to the crisis caused by the pandemic, has generated a great variety of strategies at the local level. In view of possible reopening, there are some interesting strategies that were adopted for "summer schools" in different states and that could be replicated: The State of Tennessee, for example, is recruiting 1,000 college students to tutor children at school with academic risk, and New York will run distance summer schools for 177,700 students - compared to 44,000 in 2019-). In addition, several reports highlight that the promising practices that have been adopted are relatively straightforward, requiring a rethinking of how to leverage resources and staff, but not necessarily large investments in new instruments. (American Institute for Research, 2020; US Department of Education; Bellwether & Teach for America, 2020).

URUGUAY

SCHOOL IMPACT OF COVID19

School closings
March 14

Reopening of schools:
First rural schools: April 22
All schools: June 29

PRE-COVID-19 SYSTEM PREPAREDNESS

Connectivity: Percentage of Households with Internet access: 57%.

Devices: 82% 15-year-olds in high school have access to a home computer for school work.

Existing programs/ platforms: CEIBAL Plan: Learning management platforms, Virtual Library; Didactic resources virtual classes; and other spaces for exchange. Proposals for Students and Families.

Teacher Education: Starting in 2010, the CEIBAL Plan created teacher professional development programs. Technological-educational programs were incorporated such as the Adaptive Mathematics Platform and the CREA classroom management platform; robotics, programming and 3D printing programs were created; The teaching of English was universalized and textbooks were digitized. The most recent phase of Plan CEIBAL, started in 2013. It focuses on the development of new pedagogies for the deep learning, through student-centered methodologies, the extension of teaching beyond the classroom, and the use of technology for specific purposes.

RESPONSE TO SCHOOL CLOSURE DUE TO COVID19 PANDEMIC

1. ANSWERS TO ENSURE EDUCATIONAL CONTINUITY

The initiatives and offer of Plan Ceibal, Uruguay EducA Platform, and Digital Library were strengthened: learning management platforms allow managing virtual classrooms, with content for each class, guiding discussion forums, sending and grading assignments, monitoring their students, take various types of assessments and use it as a means of communication. All the curricular contents of mathematics from Kindergarten 5 to 3rd of secondary education are available on the mathematics platforms (PAM and Matific).

A curation of digital educational resources related to the Uruguayan curriculum and Computational Thinking was also developed via massively self- administered online courses (MOOCs) on topics related to programming, computational thinking and robotics, and study material was available at the Country Library.

Examples of educational experiences

- **Plan CEIBAL in English:** This program seeks to promote the learning of English as a foreign language at all levels of public education to improve its quality, promote interculturality and favor greater inclusion and personal growth using technology to achieve this purpose.

- **Guri platform**

2. TEACHING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The CEIBAL Plan adapted its proposals so that teachers had resources, activities, training instances and tools to optimise their classes. In addition, meetings were held between teachers to discuss the consequences of the pandemic.

Technological- educational programs were also incorporated, such as the Adaptive Mathematics Platform and the CREA classroom management platform; robotics, programming and 3D printing programs; The teaching of English was universalized and textbooks were digitized. Likewise, the Plan was inserted into the teaching management itself through the online asessment system.

3. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND COMMENTS

In recent decades, Uruguay has been the only country in Latin America to develop a Learning Management Platform (Plan CEIBAL). For this reason, it has been a benchmark in the development of proposals to face the closure of schools given its long history in promoting digital and remote teaching and learning processes. It is necessary to highlight the alliances generated with actors from the business sector and the third sector. In addition, Uruguay has made efforts to develop protocols and guides to address situations of violence against children and adolescents within the framework of the care model of the Comprehensive System for the Protection of Children and Adolescents against Violence (SIPIAV). Finally, it is worth rescuing the monitoring, asessment and diagnosis system that they have put in place during the crisis to reveal the needs, results and experience of all the actors of the educational system.

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