



ACTING NOW TO PROTECT THE HUMAN CAPITAL OF OUR CHILDREN

The costs of and response to COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the education sector in Latin America and the Caribbean

May 2021

Outline

1. LAC prior to the pandemic: A learning crisis
2. The COVID-19 crisis in LAC and its impact on school closures
3. LAC's efforts to mitigate learning losses through remote learning
4. Remote learning cannot replace face-to-face learning
5. The heavy learning losses in LAC countries
6. The pandemic is costing more than the learning loss
7. A call for action (and how it can be operationalized)
8. Key takeaway messages





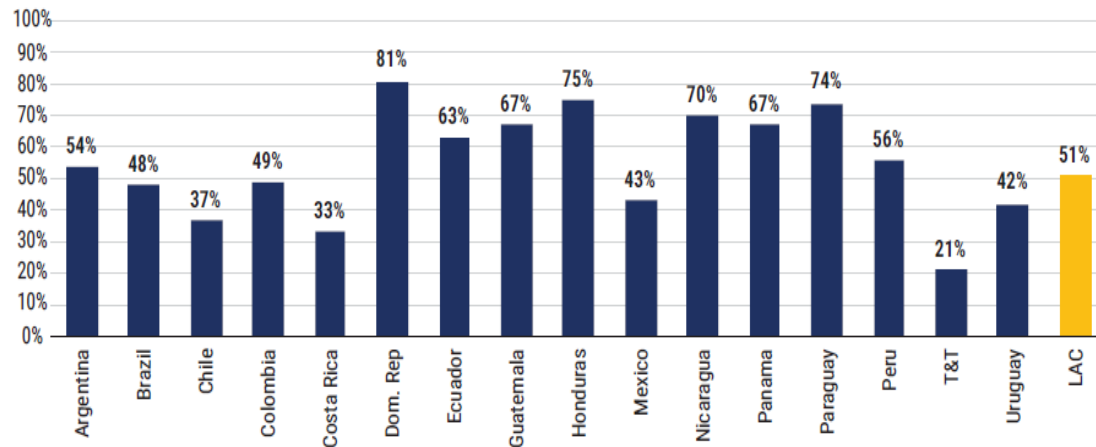
LAC PRIOR TO THE PANDEMIC: A LEARNING CRISIS



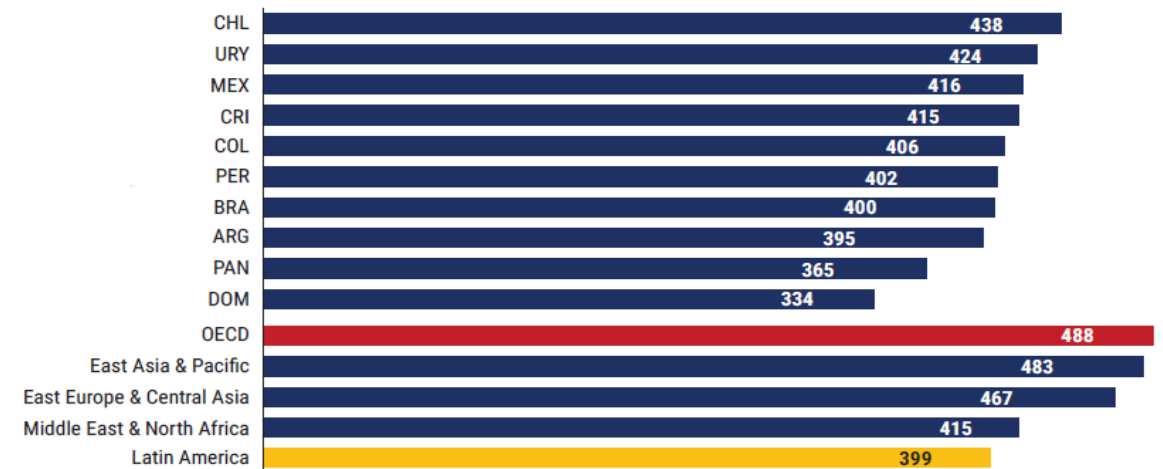
LAC prior to the pandemic: A learning crisis

Learning poverty and PISA 2018 results

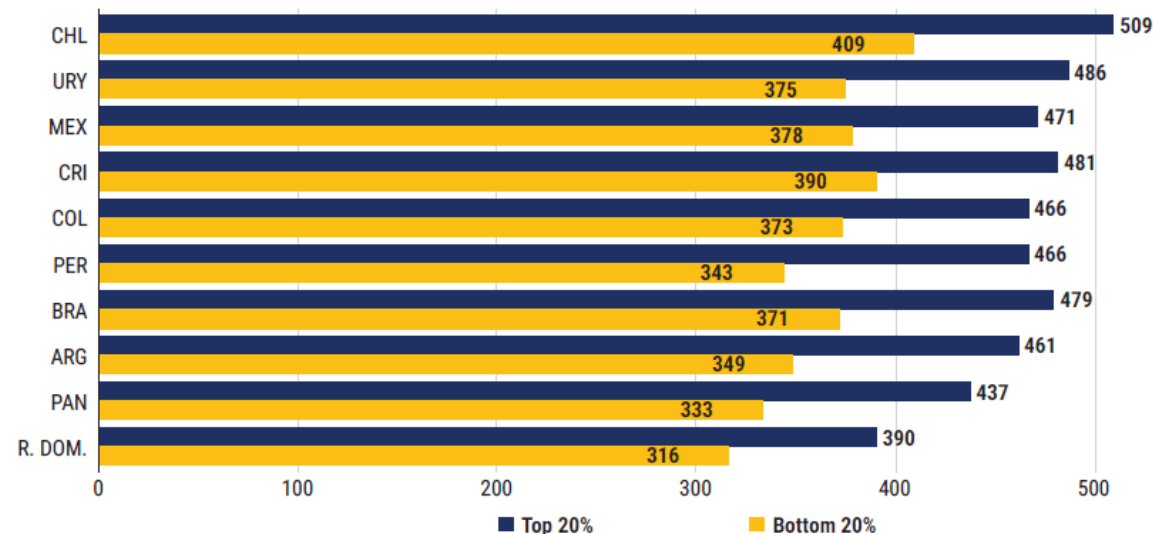
Learning poverty: **51%** of children in LAC cannot read with proficiency by the late primary age



15-year-old students in LAC are, on average, **three years behind** OECD students in reading, mathematics, and science



40 points \approx
1 grade level



Gaps in PISA scores:
Wide gaps in education outcomes reveal **regressive patterns of access and quality**

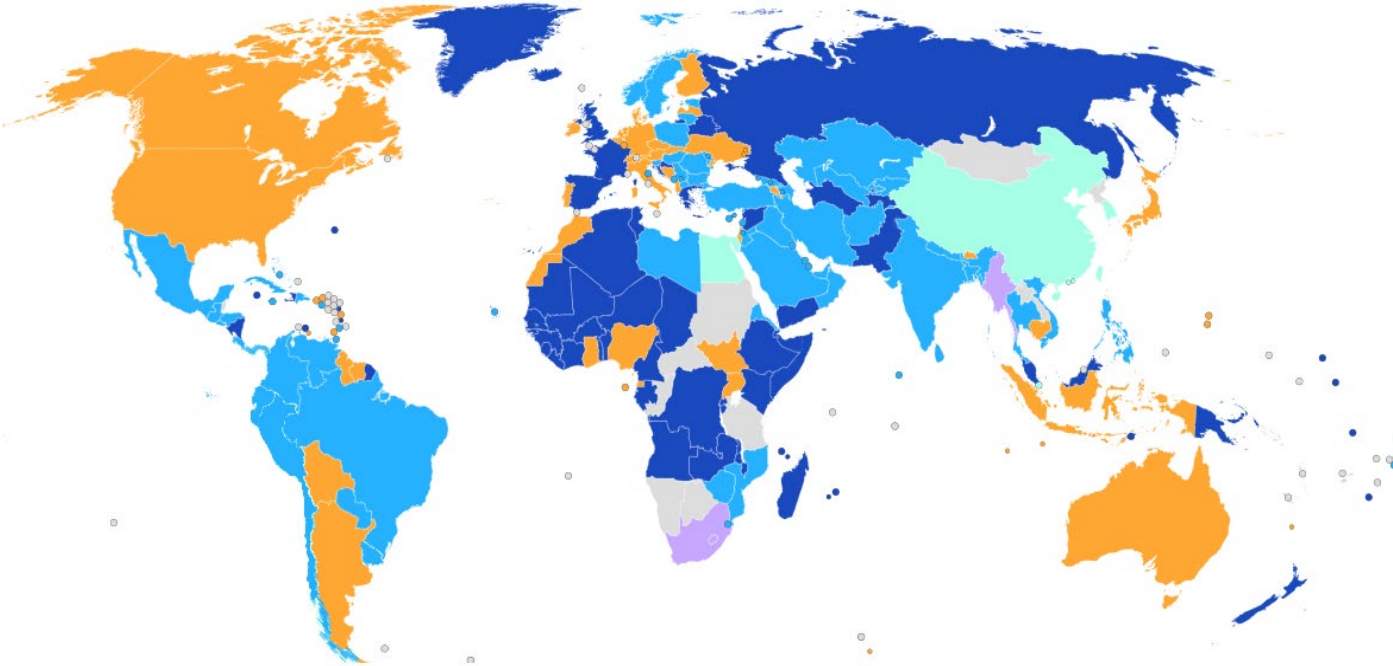
THE COVID-19
CRISIS IN LAC
AND ITS IMPACT
ON SCHOOL
CLOSURES AND
LAC'S EFFORTS
TO MITIGATE
LEARNING
LOSSES
THROUGH
REMOTE
LEARNING









The COVID-19 crisis in LAC and its impact on schools' closures

School Status / Education Modality

How is education being provided in each country?



Global Education Recovery Tracker

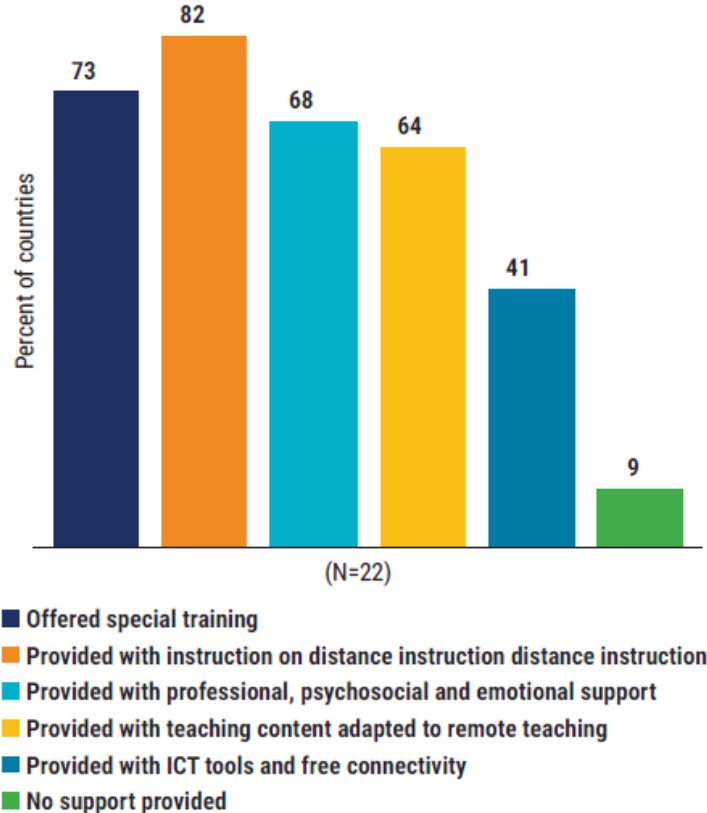
	In-person education: Schools are open, and students have returned for in-person instruction.
	Hybrid/remote education: Schools are open combining remote learning and in-person instruction and/or students are exclusively learning remotely.
	Mixed/multiple: Schools are operating with a combination of the following: in-person, hybrid, remote, and closed due to COVID-19.
	Extended Break: Schools are closed due to a regular school calendar closure (e.g., holiday).
	No instruction/closed due to COVID-19: Schools are closed due to COVID-19, and no education services currently available.
	Unknown/Data Not Available: Unable to obtain information through publicly available data.

- LAC is the region hit the hardest by the pandemic.
- COVID-19 caused school closures in all LAC countries (except Nicaragua), affecting an estimated 170 million students.
- LAC school closures are the longest in the world. Avg. of **159** in-person school days missed as of December 2020.
- Most countries in LAC remain completely or partially closed for in-person classes, with remote learning being the most widely used strategy.

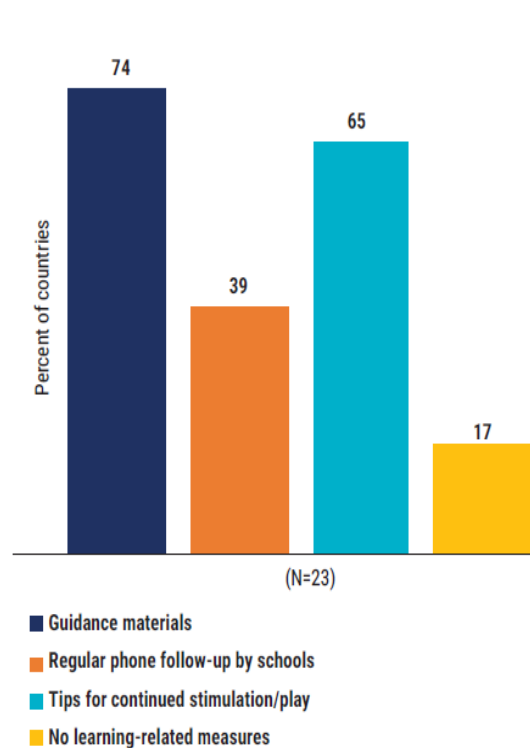
LAC's efforts to mitigate learning losses through remote learning

- Extensive efforts in LAC to set up multi-modal remote learning solutions to mitigate consequences of school closures.

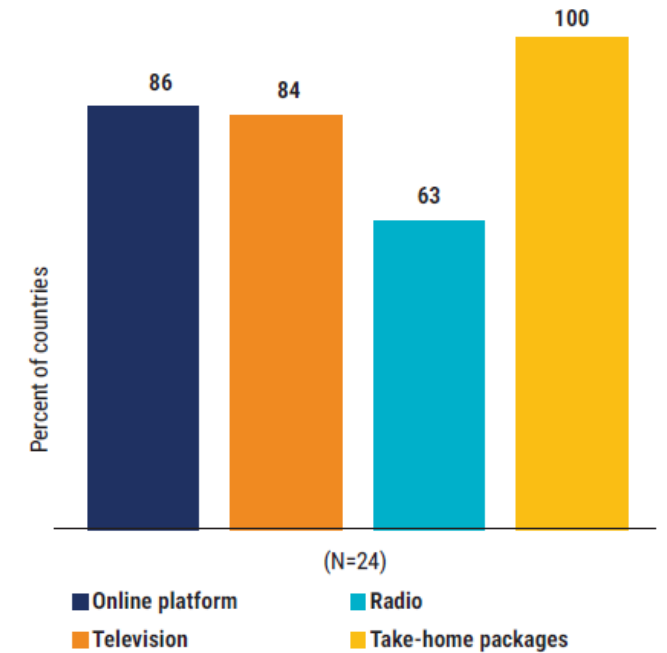
Support to teachers in LAC



Support to parents in LAC



Remote learning modalities in LAC



Source: Authors' estimates using UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank (2020)

- In LAC, 82% countries provide distance learning instructions to teachers.
- Most common support for parents is guidance material for home learning with tips for stimulation.

Source: Authors' estimates using UNESCO, UNICEF and World Bank (2020)



REMOTE LEARNING
CANNOT REPLACE FACE-TO-
FACE LEARNING

Remote learning cannot replace face-to-face learning

1. STUDENT PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE



Keeping up with routine greatest challenge – especially for vulnerable children with little family support and/or limited or no access to digital devices.

(Only 45 % of students in the bottom quintile have Internet access at home)

2. CHALLENGING FOR TEACHERS TO SUPPORT AND MONITOR STUDENT NEEDS



While most countries in LAC have set up communication lines with families, remote and vulnerable families are not being reached.

3. LIMITED EFFECTIVENESS OF REMOTE LEARNING



Online learning platforms, TV and radio perceived *very effective* for remote learning only by 36, 28 and 20 percent of countries, respectively.



ASSERTIVIDADE

ENGAJAMENTO
COM OS OUTROS

ENTUSIASMO

INICIATIVA
SOCIAL

PERSISTÊNCIA

ORGANIZAÇÃO

RESPONSABILIDADE

AUTOGESTÃO

DETERMINAÇÃO

FOCO

TOLERÂNCIA
AO ESTRESSE

RESILIÊNCIA
EMOCIONAL

AUTOCONFIANÇA

TOLERÂNCIA
À FRUSTRAÇÃO

CURIOSIDADE
EM APRENDER

ABERTURA
AO NOVO

INTERESSE
ARTÍSTICO

IMAGINAÇÃO
CRIATIVA

RESPEITO

AMABILIDADE

EMPATIA

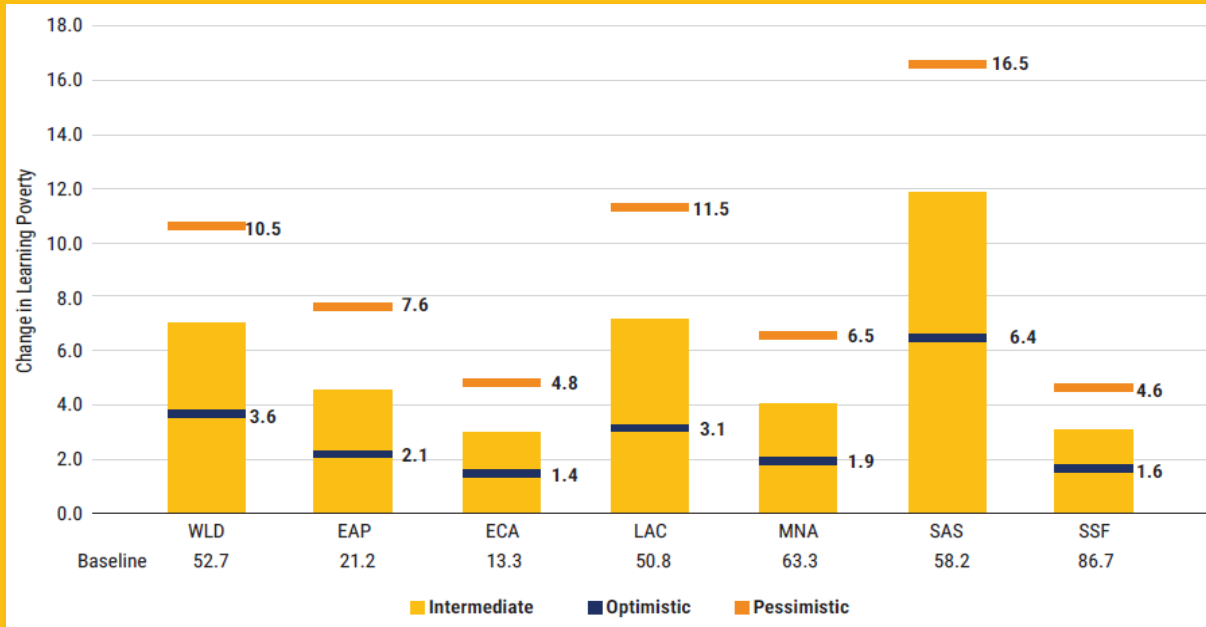
CONFIANÇA

Competências
Socioemocionais

THE HEAVY LEARNING LOSSES
IN LAC COUNTRIES AND THE
PANDEMIC IS COSTING MORE
THAN THE LEARNING LOSS

The heavy learning losses in LAC countries

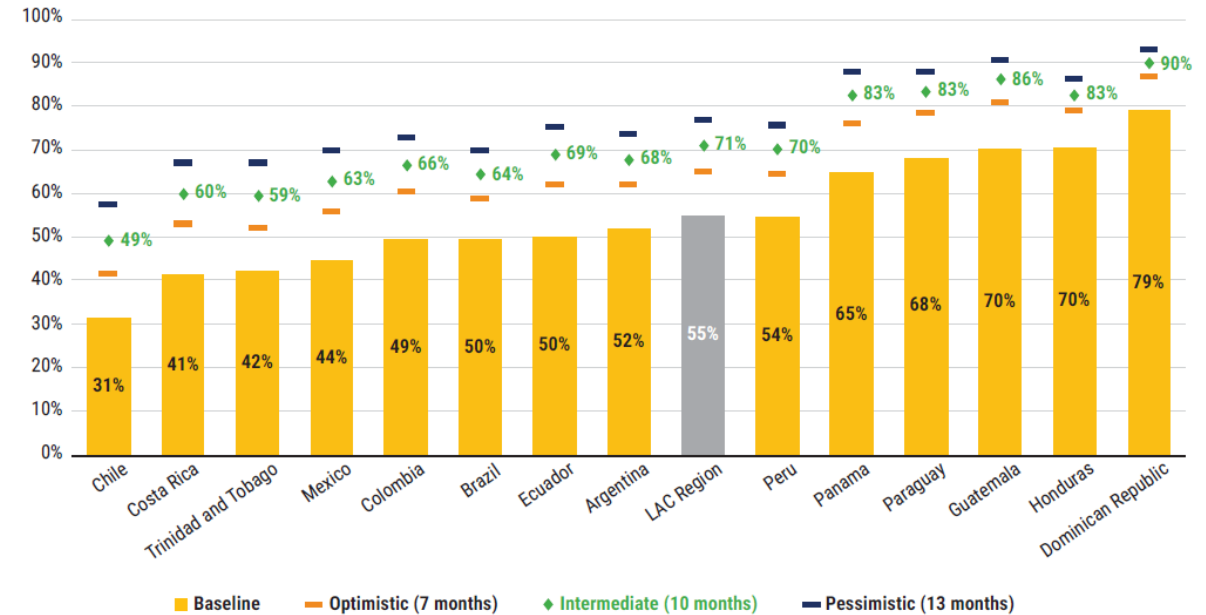
Simulated changes in Learning Poverty



Source: Azevedo (2020).

- Second largest expected absolute increase in Learning Poverty levels – from **51%** to **62.5%** - Additional 7.6 million learning poor
- The learning losses may translate into an aggregate economic cost of foregone earnings of **\$1.7 trillion** lost (16% of the regional GDP)

Simulated share of students Below Minimum Proficiency (BMP) levels



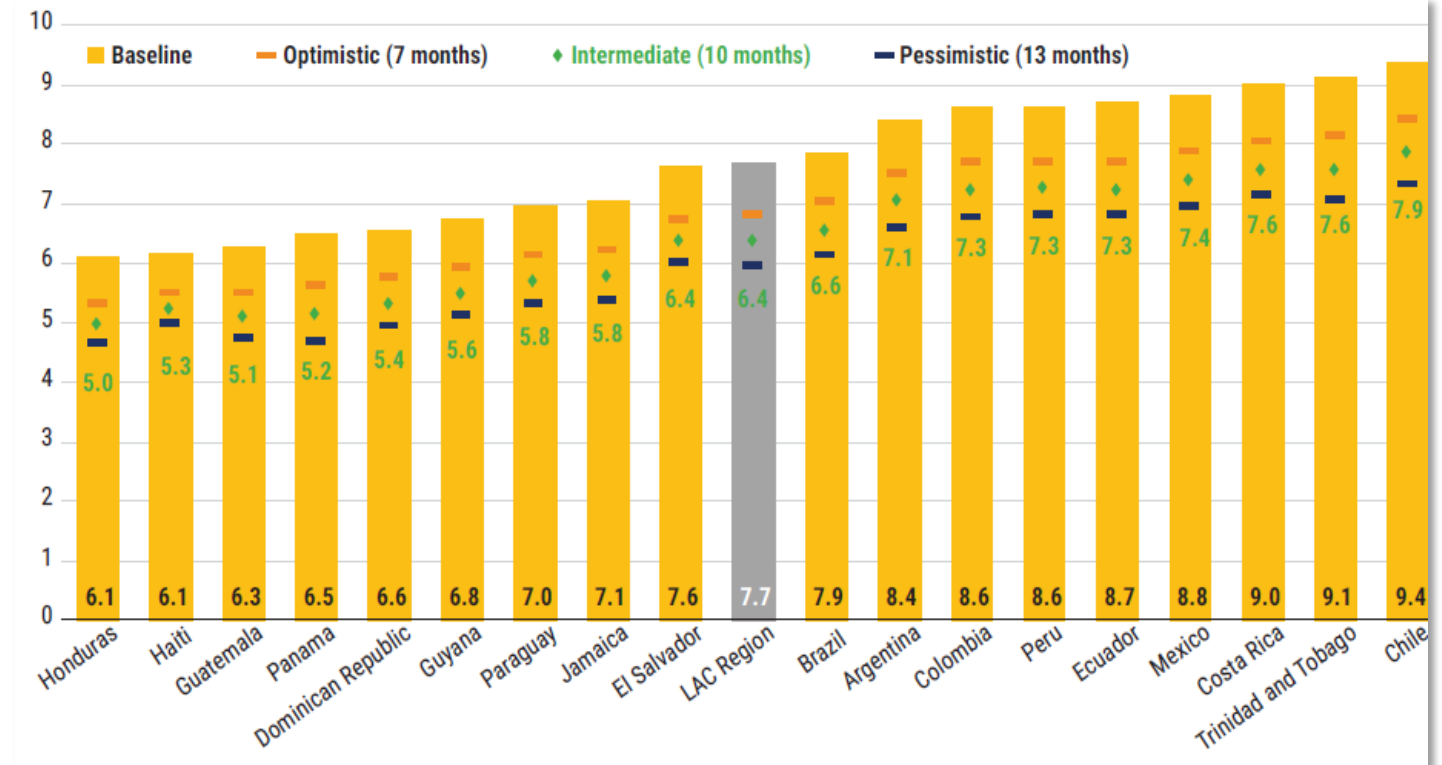
Source: Estimations made by LAC Education's COVID-19 Learning Losses Team using Azevedo et al. "Country Tool for Simulating the Potential Impacts of COVID-19 School Closures on Schooling and Learning, version 6".

- The share of students BMP in LAC could increase from **55%** to **71%** for a 10-month school closure (**over 2 in 3 students**)
- If schools stay closed for 13 months total, **over 3 in 4 students** would be BMP

The heavy learning losses in LAC countries (cont.)

- Avg. loss in LAYS for 10 months = **1.3 years**
- Countries that do not reopen in 3 additional months (13 months total) with loss in LAYS= 1.7 years
- The learning losses may translate in to aggregate economic cost of foregone earnings of **\$1.7 trillion** lost

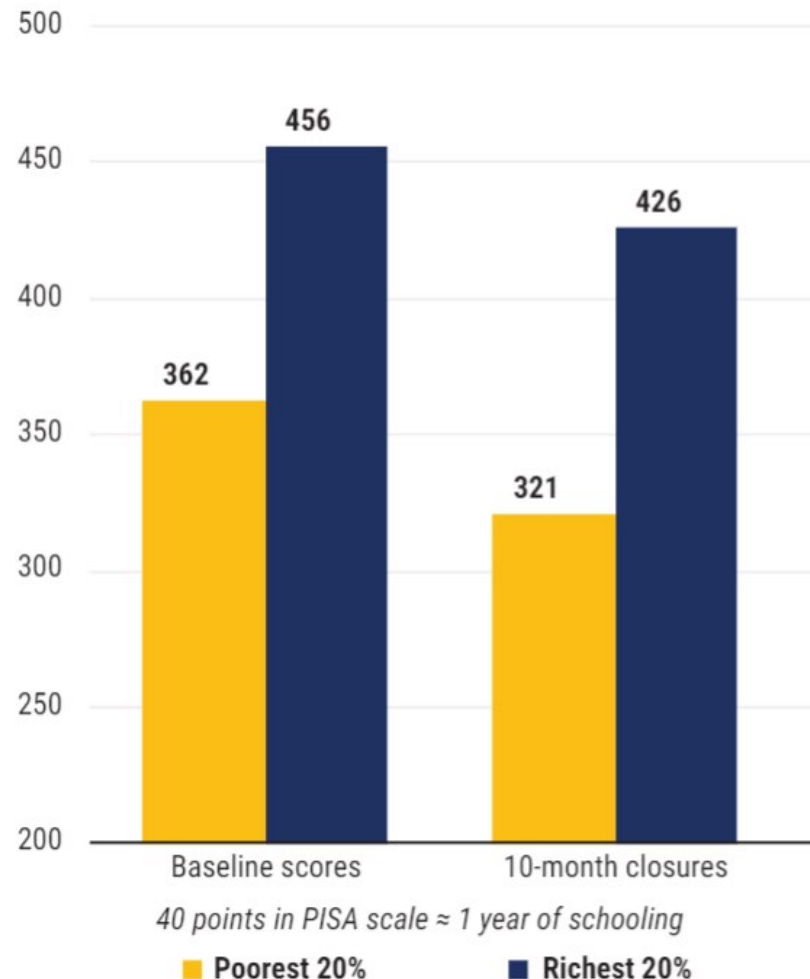
Simulated losses in Learning-Adjusted Years of Schooling (LAYS)



Source: Estimations made by LAC Education's COVID-19 Learning Losses Team using Azevedo et al. "Country Tool for Simulating the Potential Impacts of COVID-19 School Closures on Schooling and Learning, version 6".

The heavy learning losses in LAC countries (cont.)

Simulated change in mean PISA scores in reading due to COVID-19, by quintile



- The already high socio-economic achievement gap could widen by **12%**
- Wealthiest students could be 3 school years ahead of their poorest peers by the age of 15
- Inequities would be increasing in all countries



SIMULATIONS FOR CHILE show that students from the lowest income quintile could lose up to **95% of their yearly learning** if schools stay closed for 10 months

The pandemic is costing more than the learning loss



- COVID-19 is reverting years of progress in terms of coverage



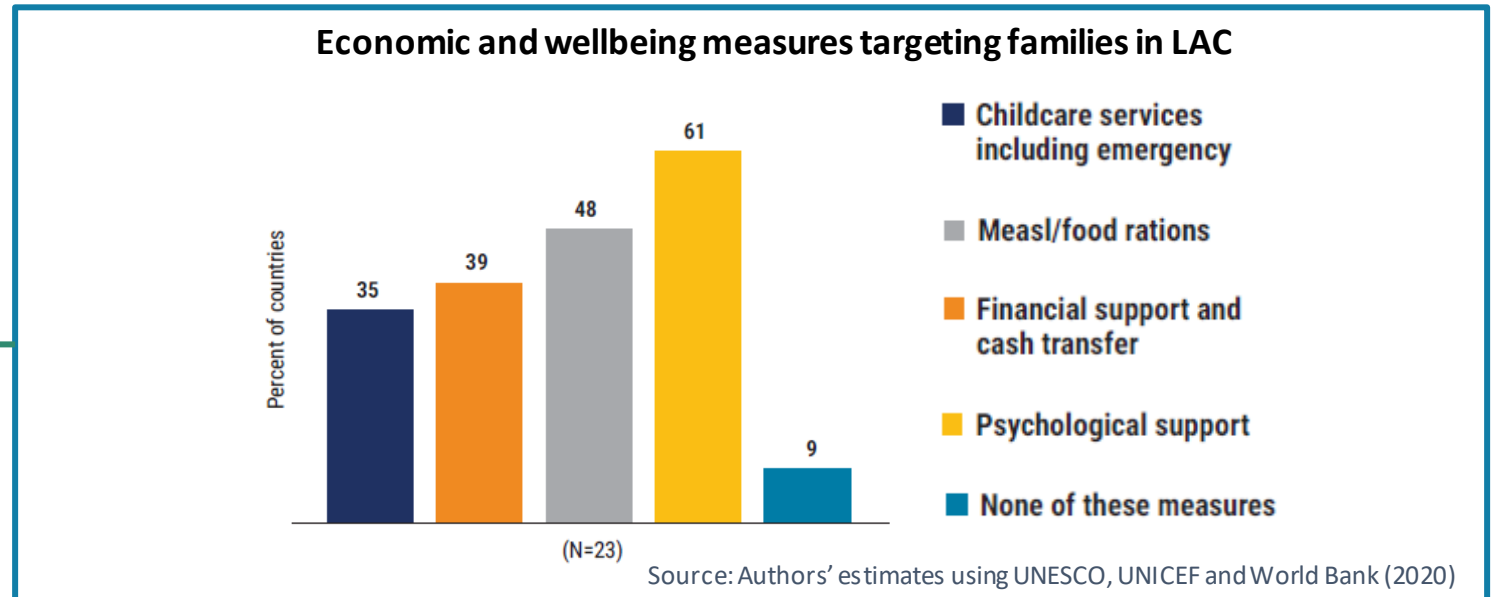
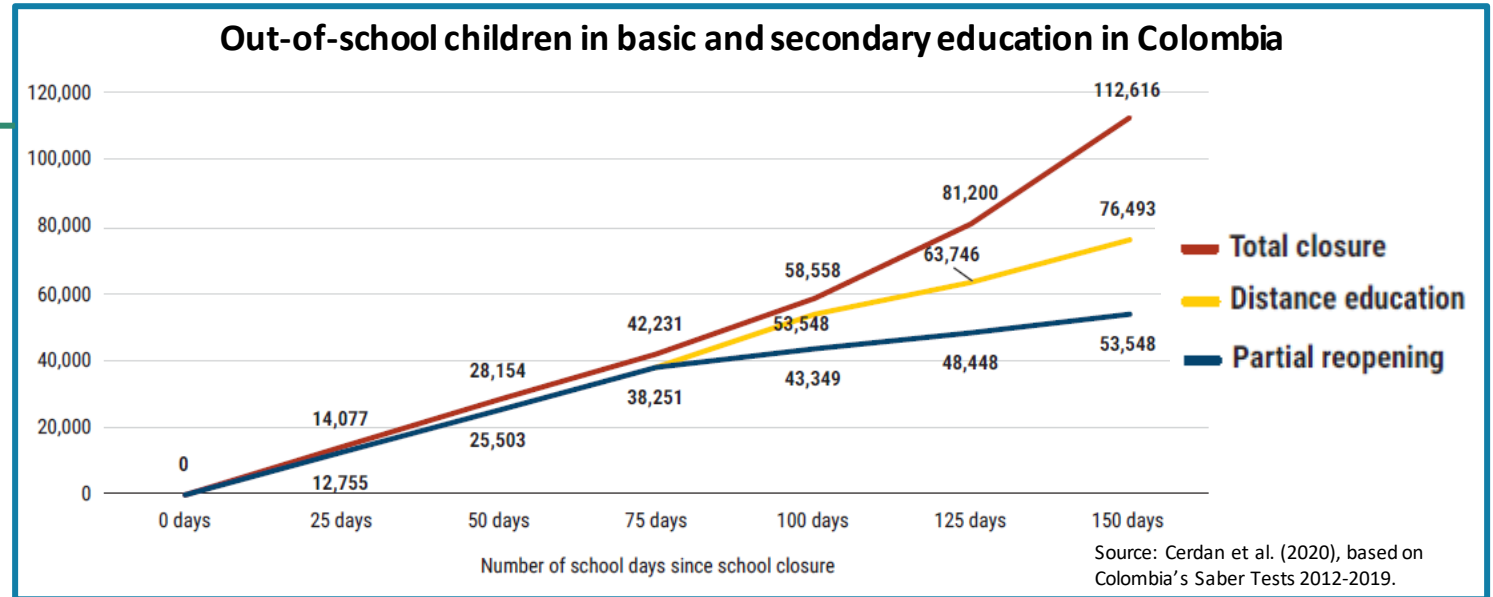
- A potential reduction of private education supply (and demand)



- Higher education is also suffering from the disruption, particularly in terms of coverage and quality



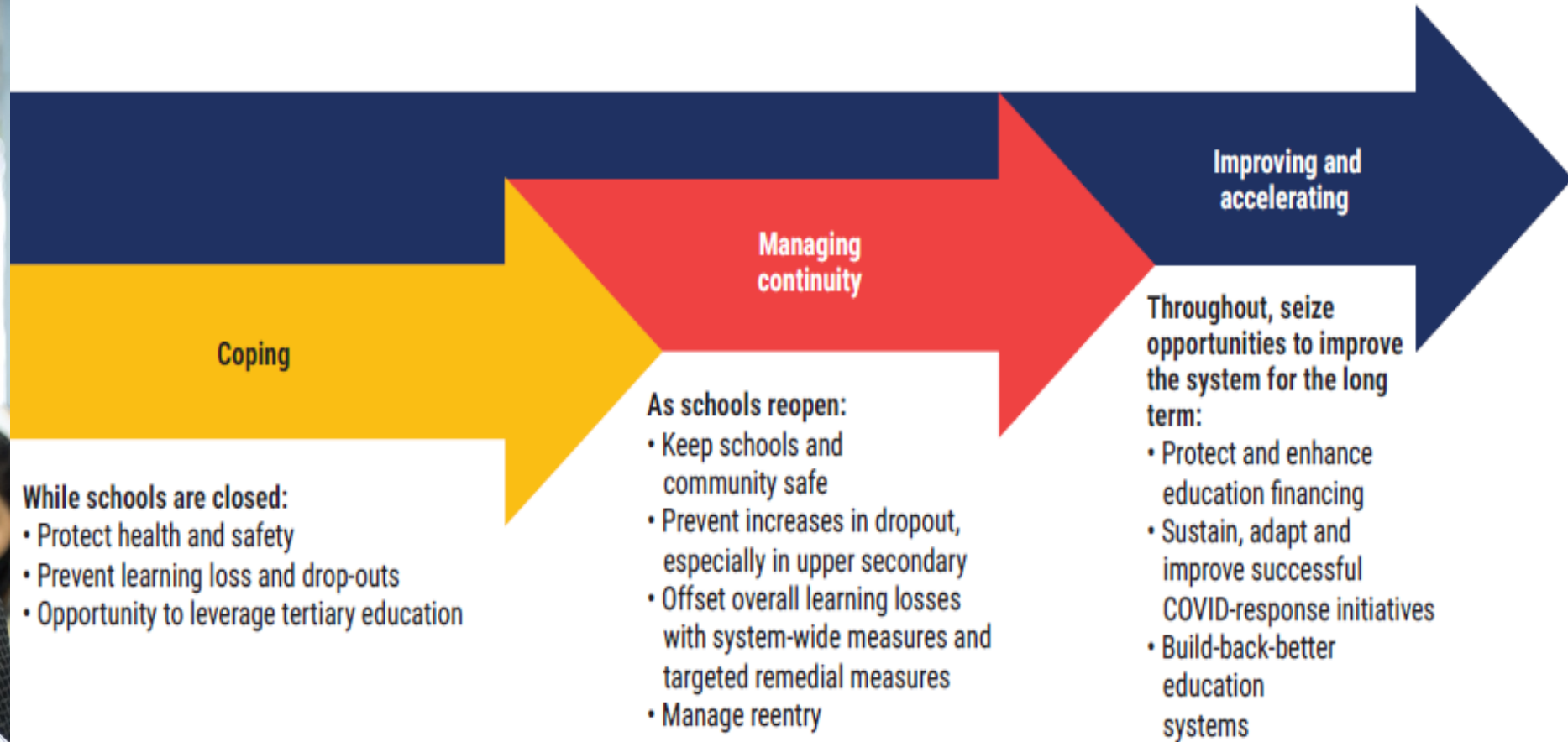
- Effects on students' physical, mental and emotional health, and vulnerability to risky behaviors



A CALL FOR
ACTION AND HOW
IT CAN BE
OPERATIONALIZED



A call for action (and how it can be operationalized)



A call for action (and how it can be operationalized)

Coping – The huge costs of the pandemic can be mitigated by retaining students in the education systems and improving the effectiveness of distance schooling (cont.)



- Student retention and distance education reach, especially for groups with risk of exclusion



- Multichannel strategy and interactive communication



- Prioritization focusing on core subjects and basic competencies; content curated and aligned with curriculum



- Teachers' skills and competences

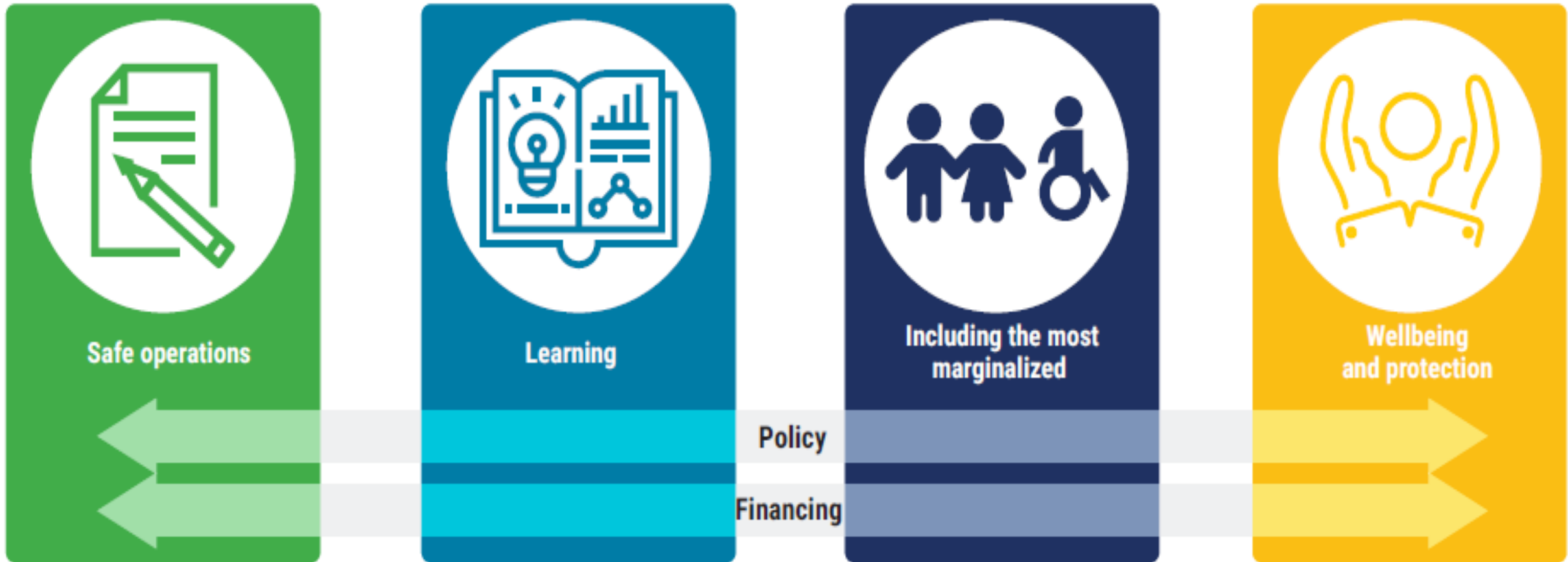


- Parents' engagement



A call for action (and how it can be operationalized) (cont.)

Managing continuity - As countries have started to transit to the phase of managing continuity, governments must take action to make sure schools are ready to reopen safely and effectively nation-wide



Source: UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank and World Food Program (2020)

A call for action (and how it can be operationalized) (cont.)

Managing continuity - Emerging lessons can guide countries on how to reopen schools safely and effectively



Safe operations and reopening process

- Schools-level **context-appropriate health and hygiene protocols**.
- **Improving schools' facilities** to comply with health and hygiene protocols.
- Early and regular **communication and support**.
- Measures to **reduce the density of people at schools**.
- **Prioritizing early grades and exam-preparatory classes** to mitigate learning losses.

Posters on safety measures for schools in Ecuador



Source: Self-care and hygiene protocols. Ministry of Education of Ecuador.

A call for action (and how it can be operationalized) (cont.)

Managing continuity - Emerging lessons can guide countries on how to reopen schools safely and effectively (cont.)



Recovering Learning

- Management and pedagogical decisions, including **systemic and targeted measures to teach at the right (post-COVID-19) level**:
 - **Simplifying the curriculum** to help deal with continued uncertainty and enable learning.
 - **Adapting the academic calendar** to compensate for the lost in-person classes.
 - **Diagnostic classroom assessments to assess learning (and socio-emotional) gaps** when schools reopen.
 - **Remedial programs to level and reduce learning gaps.** May involve significant investment.
 - **Canceling and modifying high-stake examinations and making certifications more flexible** to reflect school closure periods.
- **Well-designed blended learning models can have very good results**; teachers and principals need support in the implementation.



Including the most marginalized

- **Targeted resources and measures** can help to attract vulnerable groups back to school.
- **Adapted school reopening policies and practices** are needed for vulnerable staff and students.



Wellbeing and protection

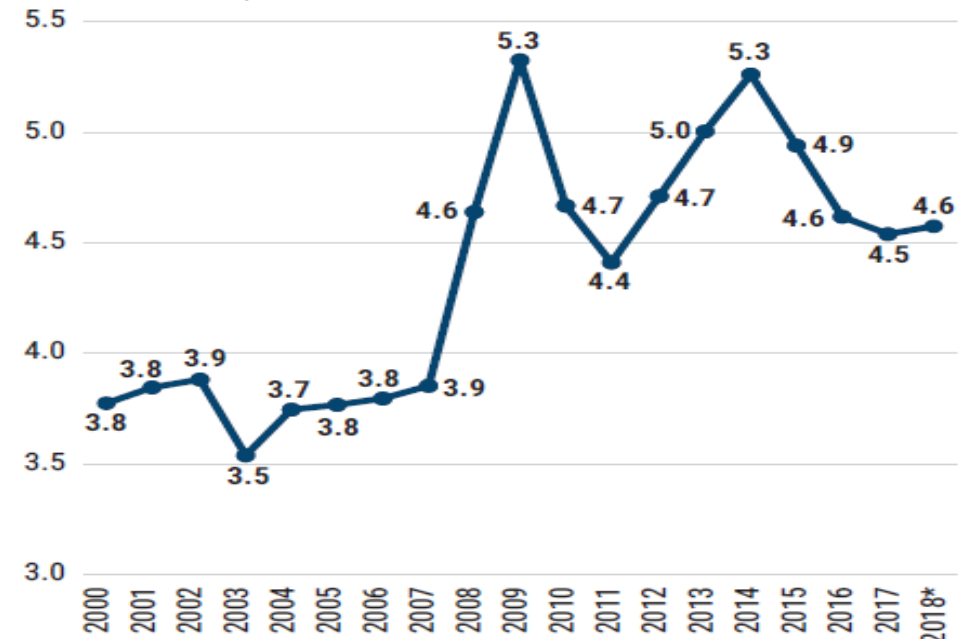
- **Increased provision of mental health and psychosocial support** can help mitigate secondary impacts.

A call for action (and how it can be operationalized) (cont.)

Managing continuity - Reopening schools requires protecting and investing more public resources in education

- School reopening could cost US\$486 per student (USA)
- Pre-pandemic LAC's education spending followed a downward trend
- Learning from past crises, countries should consider stimulus packages, new sources of funds and reallocation of resources
- Imperative to spend resources more **equitably** and **efficiently**:
 - Prioritization of additional education funding to vulnerable schools
 - In the medium term, smart use of technology and data, teacher allocation and curricular reforms

Government expenditure on education, total (% of GDP) in LAC



Source: World Development Indicators, most recent data. 2005 and 2012 are point estimates on the basis of neighboring years. Data for 2018 was calculated as a simple average of available country data (15 countries).



GOVERNMENTS ACROSS the region need to ensure priority public funding for education to support safe and effective reopening

A call for action (and how it can be operationalized) (cont.)

Improving and accelerating - With immediate needs, governments should not neglect opportunities for reforms that improve education systems for the long term

Strategies and reforms implemented during or before the crisis that are showing positive results could be mainstreamed:

- **EWS**: used to identify early students at risk of dropping out.
- Build efficient **EMIS** for continuous improvement and decision-making.
- TaRL (for example, using **adaptive technologies**): potential to remediate and accelerate learning.

Barriers to effective

access to and use of digital technologies related to socioeconomic status, geography, ethnic group, age, gender and disability need to be addressed

Peru's Alerta Escuela – share of students by risk level

YEAR 2020

STUDENTS BY DROPOUT RISK LEVEL

ADDITIONAL STUDENT INFORMATION

TOTAL STUDENTS

520

35%

10%

55%

LEGEND OF RISK LEVELS

- Students at high risk of dropout in 2020
- Students at medium risk of dropout in 2020
- Students at low risk of dropout in 2020

DOWNLOAD

GRADE	SECTION	TUTOR		
FIRST	A	Rosa Sierra		view details
FIRST	C	José Escalante		view details
SECOND	A	Zoila Alegre		view details
THIRD	A	Juan Soto		view details
SECOND	B	Erica Candela		view details
FIFTH	B	Flor Germina		view details
THIRD	B	Alexandra Cordova		view details
FOURTH	B	Mariá Collantes		view details
THIRD	C	Rocío Quispe		view details
FIRST	B	Rosa Serruto		view details
FOURTH	A	Camila Medina		view details
FIFTH	A	Camila Medina		view details
SIXTH	C	Camila Medina		view details

Source: Translation into English of snapshot from a public YouTube tutorial video by the Ministry of Education in Peru

A call for action (and how it can be operationalized) (cont.)

COVID-19 crisis: An opportunity to transform the entire education system and develop a new vision where learning happens for everyone, everywhere

Pillars for the Future of Learning



A call for action (and how it can be operationalized) (cont.)

Areas of emphasis for World Bank support in LAC

1. Enhancing the reach, use and effectiveness of technology for education

- Digital divides
- Remote and blended learning
- Long-term data and technological solutions (adaptive learning, EWS, EMIS, among others)

2. Supporting pedagogical and management reforms for recovery and resilience

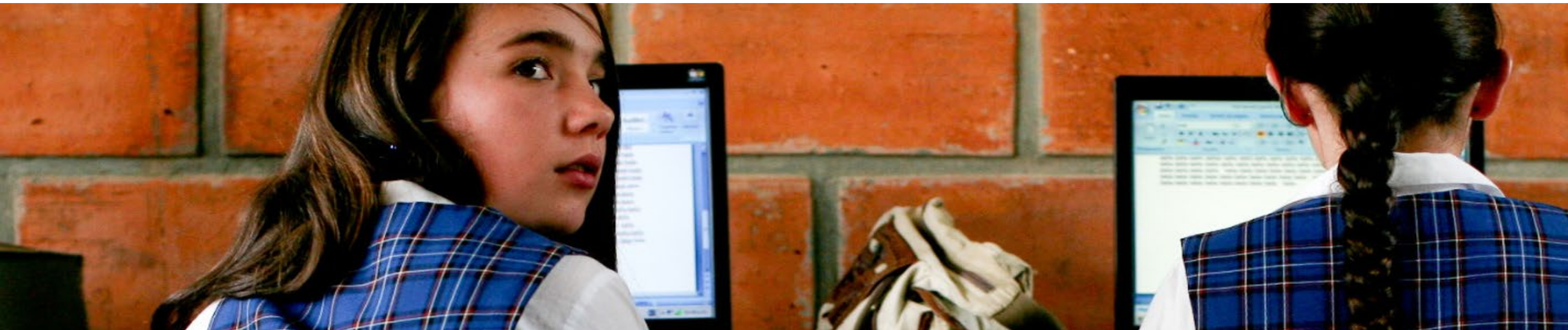
- Assessment, remediation policies, and socio-emotional support
- Personalized instruction
- Principal and teacher training, standards and support
- System management and financing reforms

3. Supporting safe schools

- Health and hygiene protocols
- Safety
- WASH investments
- Connectivity

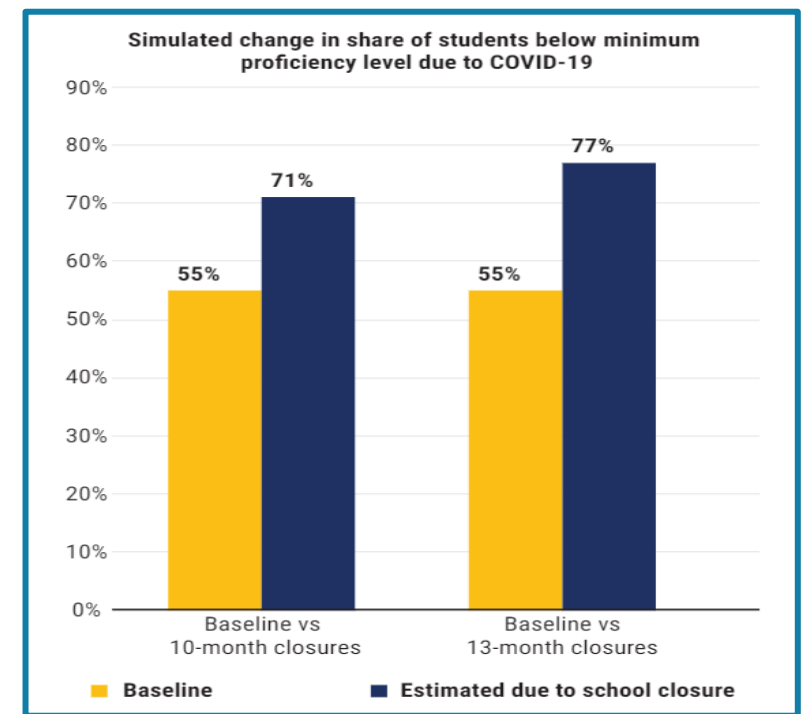
4. Developing skills for the post-COVID-19 context

- Skills in the early years
- Competency-based, flexible, and affordable secondary and tertiary programs
- Core transversal skills
- School-to-work transition



Key takeaway messages

- **Initial estimates of the school closure effects in LAC are staggering.** All learning metrics are worsening dramatically, and the effects of the pandemic also permeate many other areas of students' lives. Students from lower-income groups are the most effected.
- **Countries should get ready for safe and effective school reopening** to start the long-term recovery from the dramatic learning losses.
 - ✓ They can leverage many emerging lessons and evidence on how to do this safely and effectively.
 - ✓ Public funding needs to be prioritized and well-targeted.
- **There is a window of opportunity to build back better education systems** that prioritize student learning. There are also notable examples of innovations which could be mainstreamed.





A generation
could be lost.
**The time to act
is now!**



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