

2021 Global Survey

The voices of 8,000 children

The Right to Education and Participation post-COVID-19 explained
by children from around the world. An exploration from the
listening and wellbeing perspective of children and adolescents.

TECHNICAL REPORT

Title: 2021 Global Survey: The voices of 8,000 children. The Right to Education and Participation post-COVID-19 explained by children from around the world. An exploration from the listening and wellbeing perspective of children and adolescents.

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“

- *I think there is always (something) better. In everything. We can be better than we are, that's how it would be with school.*

Adolescent boy aged 12-18, Guatemala

- *You have to listen to children like you would like to be listened to.*

Adolescent girl aged 12-18, Burkina Faso

- *Lots of people ignore what we say, they act like they are listening but they are not.*

Adolescent boy aged 12-18, Nicaragua

Letter from the director

“

I miss the feeling of waking up early to get ready for school, I miss the relationships with my classmates.

Adolescent girl aged 12-18, India.

This is one of the many ideas that we have collected after listening to almost 8,000 children from 12 countries in Asia, Africa, Europe and America that Educo works in.

At Educo we are convinced that education is the most powerful tool for building a more equitable society to ensure the rights and wellbeing of children around the world. But we also believe that we must ensure that education is broad in scope, incorporating all the stages, all the actors and all the contexts that influence children's education. An education that challenges and transforms the current system, that recognises that the first step towards change is to listen to its protagonists. An education that promotes participation and listens to children as rights holders. An education that takes their opinions into account, because they have a lot to tell us and there is a lot to do.

Our aspiration is to create spaces that ensure such participation and listening. This is what we have done in the report we are now publishing: we have asked questions, opened up opportunities and channels for children to express themselves, done so in a close, friendly way, gathered everything we have heard and we now share it to ensure, not only that these voices are the cornerstone of our actions, but that they can influence families, communities, schools, governments... the key actors in advancing the rights of the children we have heard.

Children tell us how the pandemic has affected their lives, and more specifically how it has affected their education. They have shared with Educo that a large number of them were unable to study due to the closure of schools and because there were either no alternatives or the alternatives offered did not adapt to their circumstances.

In a context in which many countries still have closed or partially closed schools, children and adolescents are telling us that they prefer to study at school, that it is a space that allows them to learn more and better, that they value the relationships they develop with their peers and teachers, and that they find more opportunities to play there. 80% have missed going to school, and girls even more so. They want to go back, but they also want to go back to a school that offers them everything they had before and improve it. They want “greener” schools, more connected to their surroundings, but they also are very

aware of the advantages of digital education, when it is of a high quality, and want to be able to combine the best of both methods. They know exactly what kind of school they want.

The participation of children, adolescents and young people during emergencies is often overlooked, and in this pandemic, this has happened again. If we want to solve problems we need to do this from the root, and the best way to get to the root is to ensure a deep understanding of how children and adolescents experience, think and feel; of what affects and moves them; of their assessments and aspirations; of their ideas and opinions for searching for and setting up, alongside them, the most robust and durable solutions.

This report reflects what the protagonists of our work have to say about their education and participation during the pandemic. We do this with the excitement that their personal and unfiltered testimonies transmit to us, but also with the responsibility and commitment of ensuring that their demands shape our work and the work of those who have the obligation and responsibility to work for children's rights around the world.

Pilar Orenes

Executive Director



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pilar Orenes". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Acknowledgements

To the thousands of children and adolescents who have made themselves heard through their honest responses and proposals.

To all the Educo staff and our supporters who were in charge of sharing the survey in each country and finding alternatives to reach those who did not have easy access. We have shown a great willingness to do all we can to make sure that we listen to children.

To those who read the document, or are aware in some other way of what children have told us. Listening to them enables us to get to know them and recognise them as subjects of value who have something to say and contribute, and to allow this relationship to change us, enrich us and lead us to action.





Executive Summary

Educo has activated its listening to find out how children and adolescents from different parts of the world have experienced their rights to education and participation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The study is based on an [online survey](#), in order to guarantee the security of the population and Educo staff and supporters. There were also opportunities to respond by telephone or directly with children where this was possible. In all cases the answers have been individual and included in the online form. Non-probability random sampling based on the convenience sampling technique was applied, and the results are valid for the surveyed population.

Between 18th July and 23rd August 2021, we have actively listened to 7,538 responses from 12 countries in Asia, Africa, Europe and America. More girls have made their voices heard (53.66%) than boys (45.81%); 50.73% were aged 12-18, 44.75% between 6 and 11, and 4.52% of responses from other ages were received.

The general results show that 85.36% of those who have participated in the survey have been able to continue their studies using different methods, as perceived in a previous Educo study: *Schools are shut, but learning is on!* Just over 11 per cent have been unable to study during the pandemic, with girls, and those aged 6-11, reporting a slightly higher percentage. They were mainly unable to study because of school closures and because the alternatives did not adapt to their possibilities or because there were no options.

In the majority, children prefer to study at school. The reason for this is that **school allows them to learn more and better**, they highly value the relationships they develop (between peers and with teachers), they have the opportunity to play and to have more support for their learning, and they were not prepared to substitute it for other alternatives. There are also some who prefer to study from home, but this was a much smaller group than the one that preferred attending school.



More than 80% of those who have been partially or completely unable to go to school said they missed it. The survey shows that girls are more likely to miss school. There are also those who do not miss school, but this is a much lower percentage.

A better school in the future is a strong wish for both girls and boys, and especially for those aged 12-18. On the other hand, the 6-11 age group favours going back to school as it used to be, but their explanations are very much in line with those who wish for a better school.

The school they wish for has been described in great detail. In summary, it is a school where they can learn more and better, but one which allows them an educational experience where relationships, play, leisure and enjoyment of the school experience are also possible.



School is the most interesting place, to play, enjoy and learn lots of things from teachers and friends. That's why I want to go back to school.

Girl aged 6-11, Bangladesh.

Regarding the Right to Participation during the pandemic, just over **48% feel that they have been listened to and taken into account.** However, other responses and the open responses make us think that it is possible that the understanding of what this right means is less clear or profound for children, compared to other rights such as the Right to Education. In this respect, there is a significant group that did not understand the question or preferred not to reply.

The proposals from children about improving participation are noteworthy, especially in relation to the family, school, community and local government areas, but the high frequency of responses saying that they did not know what to answer or did not suggest anything to improve their participation, warns us of the importance of activating listening and analysing the data according to each context in order to find the right answers.

Based on the results it is recommended that, if we want to promote education from the root, it is necessary to promote a school where they can be and do what they have reason to value. This report describes, based on the children's statements, what conditions are necessary to achieve this.

Regarding the Right to Participation, in order to change what hinders the enjoyment of this right, it is necessary to go to where the children are, in order to understand their context, and to accompany them so that they can participate in what they have reason to value. Therefore, it also involves **educating from the root in participation issues.**

Lastly, we consider it necessary to analyse these results in accordance with the context in each country, to explore the most important issues in ways other than through the survey and ensuring the safety and best interests of children at all times. This would be a good way to further activate our listening, educate ourselves, influence other actors in a better way and be able to improve our actions in favour of children, their rights and their wellbeing.

Introduction



As an organisation, we work with an approach based on children's rights and wellbeing. Wellbeing means "the fulfilment of children's rights and opportunities so that all children can be and do what they value, in the light of their abilities, potential and skills¹". This means knowing the fundamental reasons that prevent this wellbeing, and educating from the root in order to bring about change.

At Educo we understand wellbeing in three dimensions (3D approach). The first is the material dimension, which refers to "the resources children have available". The second is the relational dimension, which refers to "what children can do with the resources they have available", as well as their ability to be part of the social and political life and influence it. The third dimension is the

subjective one, which includes "what children think, feel and value in relation to what they can do with the resources available to them". It includes perceptions, expectations and evaluations of their lives and the realities they live in, and the social and cultural aspects which determine how they construct these assessments.

In this respect, at Educo we are concerned about what children, adolescents and young people are experiencing during the current COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020, we carried out the study [Schools are shut but learning is on!](#), which allowed us to observe that children greatly missed the routine activities that constituted their relational wellbeing, such as going to school, seeing their friends, and so on. Their main concerns were the fear that they

¹ Summary from the Educo *Global Impact Framework (2020-2030)*.



or their family members would catch the virus, and that livelihoods would be affected. The future scenarios fluctuated between uncertainty and optimism; however, the messages they wrote were mostly positive, optimistic, encouraging, inspiring, and showed that they had a lot to contribute.

One year after the study we are still in the midst of the pandemic. While the context has largely evolved towards less restrictive measures and a major global vaccination campaign has been launched, infections continue, new variants of the virus bring new challenges, the economy in general continues to be hard hit and the situation of children in this context is not being assessed and addressed with the urgency and comprehensiveness it deserves.

Because of all this, Educo has decided that **it is necessary once again to find out how children and adolescents are experiencing the current COVID-19 pandemic, their perspectives and recommendations for the present and the future and that way be able to place their voices at the centre of the debates and decision-making so that the current crisis becomes an opportunity for improvement in key issues that affect them directly.**

This report is a summary of the general results regarding the rights to education and participation, with an emphasis on the last few months. In addition, an analysis according to gender, age groups, countries and key influencing factors is included for the responses of those who participated between 17 June and 23 August 2021.

Methodological note



Scope and limitations of this study

In this report, we try to understand how children have experienced the pandemic in the last few months. We focus on key issues

related to exercising the rights of education and participation; although the survey applied includes other issues that will be analysed in another report. The following table summarises the elements included in the online survey:

Table 1. Summary of the thematic scope of the study

Education during the pandemic	Continuity of studies in the last few months. Opinions about distance education methods. Reasons not to have continued studying. What they miss most about school (in the event of total or partial closures). How they would like their school to be after the pandemic.
Participation during the pandemic	Perceptions about their participation. Proposals for improving their participation
Other issues to be analysed subsequently	Protection during the pandemic. Play and free time. Messages for the world.



According to the possibilities offered by the online platform used (Microsoft Forms), the survey was shared in three languages (English, Spanish and French) in the countries Educo works in, without preventing responses from elsewhere.

The response options included multiple or single choice questions, depending on the nature of the question. These were agreed with staff from the Advocacy and Social Research, Communication and Programs departments, and were validated with children. In the questions where it was relevant there was the possibility to expand more freely on their answers.

The context of the COVID-19 pandemic, during the period in which the survey was conducted, did

not include such restrictive measures in as many countries as at the beginning of this situation, but some restrictions² have been maintained and the population has also been adopting measures of its own accord, so the option of an online survey was the most viable option for guaranteeing the safety of the population and of Educo and its partners' staff. Non-probability random sampling based on the convenience sampling technique was applied, and the results are valid for the surveyed population.

In order to reach remote populations, or those with difficulties in accessing equipment or adequate internet connection, or those who could not answer the survey in the three available languages (English, French and Spanish), the survey has also been answered by telephone, or by direct interview using appropriate measures. It was also translated into various local languages and all the responses were included in the online form. In general, a very broad communication strategy was used, taking advantage of the fieldwork that has been carried out by Educo staff and local partners in the different countries we work in. In all cases the responses have been individual and are part of a single database.

Given Educo's programmatic priorities, the issues and the consultation method, the population groups consulted were children aged 6-11 years and adolescents and young people aged 12-18 years, with the possibility of adult accompaniment where necessary, so there could be some bias in this regard.

Therefore, the combination of the extent and relevance of the restrictive measures in the months prior to the survey and at the time of the survey response, the possibility of an internet connection, the level of the participating population in the languages available and the quality of the

² On 10 August 2021, according to Educo monitoring in 13 countries it is present in in Africa, Asia, America and Europe, 71% still maintains certain restrictive measures, 14% were in the process of lifting restraint measures and 14% of the countries were not applying any restraint measures. On the other hand, 50% had their schools open, 21% partially open and 29% still had their schools closed.

translations into local languages, as well as the differences in the ability to respond to an online survey, the real possibilities of support from our staff and partners, and how successful we have been in sharing the survey, have all determined the quality and quantity of the responses received by countries.

Why Education and Participation during the pandemic?

Education has been one of the issues that has generated, and will continue to generate, the most public debate, during the COVID-19 pandemic. A report by the Inter-American Development Bank, covering the period up to April 2021, has ranked Education as the number one trend in the digital conversation³, with Health coming in second place.

And, as usual, the participation of children, adolescents and young people during emergencies is overlooked. In general, emergencies tend to deepen the existing gaps regarding this issue and the social perception we have of this life stage.

At Educo we believe that another world is possible, and that Education and Participation are children's human rights, and are also an opportunity to change societies. We believe that we have to go to the root of problems in order to find solutions that help cure them. But **how do we get to the root of the problem? How do we change or cure this root?** Our response is to educate from the root, and we do so from a Child Rights and Wellbeing perspective. This involves **educating ourselves in a consistent and continuous way from a deep understanding of how children and adolescents experience, think and feel; of what affects and moves them; of their assessments and aspirations; of their ideas and opinions for searching for and setting up, alongside them, the most robust and durable solutions.**

From this perspective, learning makes sense as something that is needed, and in fact happens, throughout life. It is extremely important that adulthood must not be a limit to the possibility of continuing to learn. We adults should free ourselves from the heavy burden of believing that we know everything, and we should therefore learn and educate ourselves. Education is necessary both for children and for the communities, families, governments and the societies they live in.

According to the above, when we talk about the Right to Education in this report, the starting point is how children have been experiencing the pandemic and, through their stories, we also aspire to continue to educate ourselves, as an organisation and a society, about what is happening.



³ BID (2020). *Trends that shape society during the coronavirus*.

Getting to the root, finding out, understanding, learning, educating ourselves; all this will happen if we listen. That is why at Educo we promote “Activating our listening” and believe it is essential.

We do not understand working with and for children without working alongside them, without listening to them actively, without empathising and learning with them every day.

When we talk about the Right to Participation we do not just put an emphasis on them being able to express themselves, we also emphasise active listening, because without it, it would be impossible to get to the root of what needs to be changed or improved, or those things we can learn from.

Going to the root, finding out, understanding, learning, educating ourselves, expressing ourselves, and acting. At Educo we believe that all this is achieved, and takes on its full meaning, when we act. And acting with children means seeing ourselves as equals, dedicating time to things that are important and beneficial to everyone, accompanying ourselves, generating more empathy, guiding, letting ourselves be guided, listening again, building limits together, negotiating, conversing, learning, educating ourselves.

The pandemic has brought many concerns and uncertainty, but also lots of opportunities to act from active listening and educate ourselves from the root. **In times of pandemic, education also cures.**

Who has participated?

As can be observed in Graph 1, we have actively listened to the responses of **7,538 children, adolescents and young people in 12 countries in Asia, Africa, Europe and America** (99.9%); there was participation from other countries, but the number of responses is low (0.1%), because they were not places the survey was shared in.

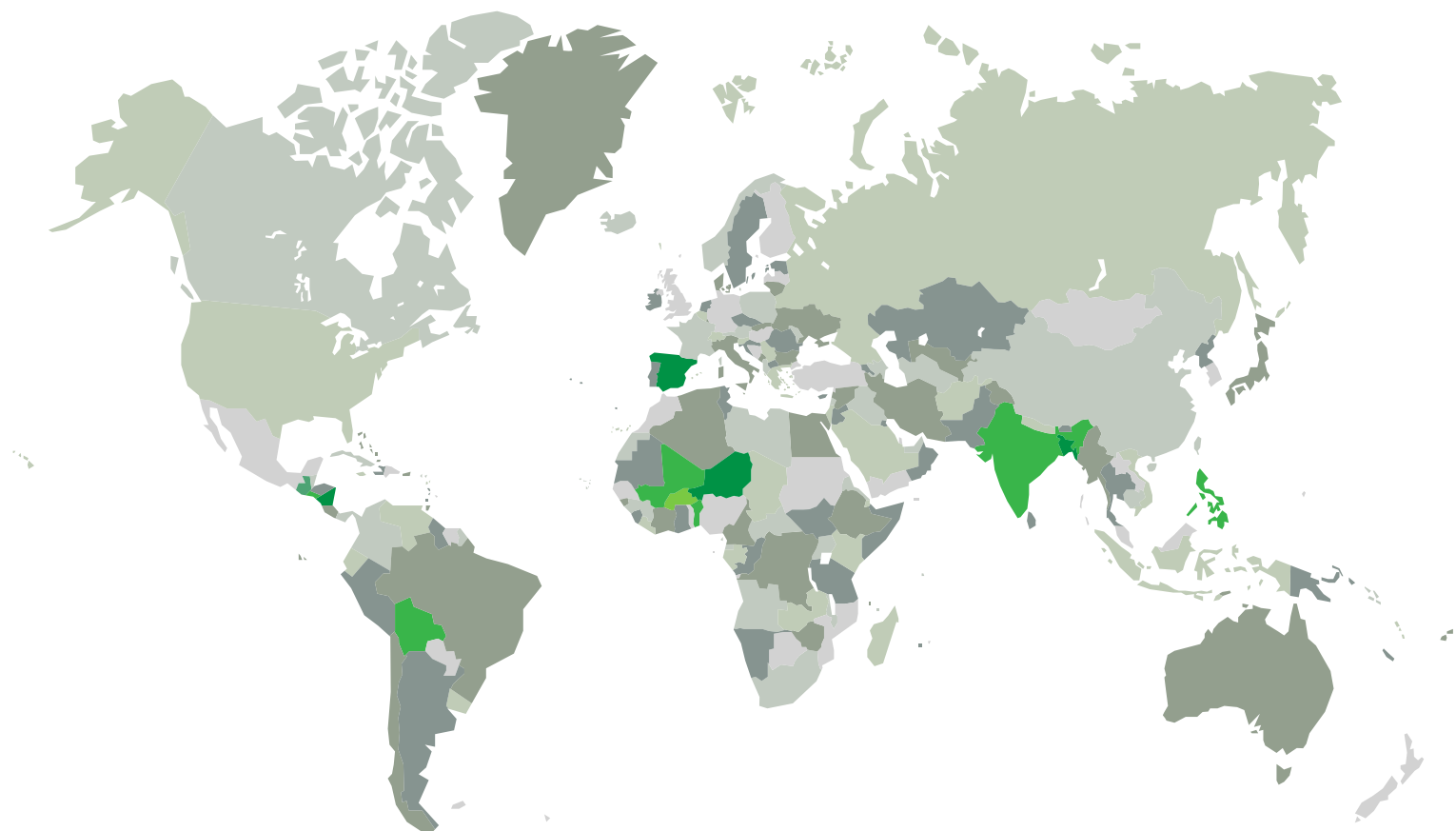
An attempt was made to achieve a homogenous participation, with an aspirational goal of 500 surveys in each country. The quantity of responses is summarised in Table 2. The highest number of responses come from Mali, Bolivia and India..

Table 2. Participants by country

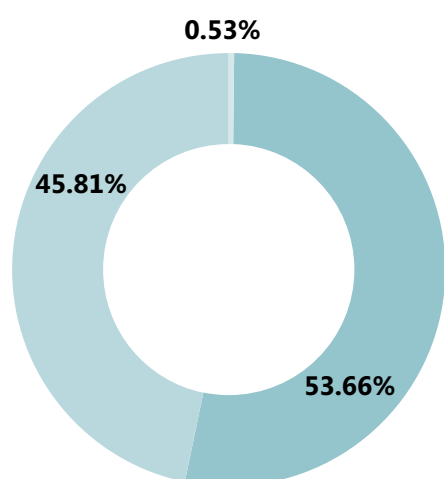
Total surveys: 7,538	
Countries	% of total surveys
Mali	17.3%
Bolivia	12.5%
India	12.4%
Nicaragua	9.0%
Burkina Faso	8.4%
Bangladesh	7.6%
Spain	7.0%
Niger	6.8%
Guatemala	6.9%
El Salvador	5.2%
Philippines	3.7%
Benin	2.9%
Others	0.1%

More girls have made their voices heard (53.66%) in relation to boys (45.81%). In terms of age range, 50.73% were aged between 12 and 18, 44.75% between 6 and 11, and 4.52% were received from ages outside of these ranges.

Graph 1. Main participating countries

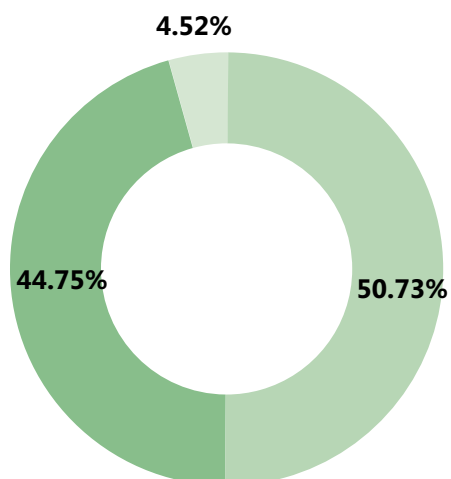


Graph 2. Participants by gender



- **Female**
- **Male**
- **I prefer not to reply**

Graph 3. Participants by age



- **Between 6-11**
- **Between 12-18**
- **Other ages**

Methodology for analysing the results

Resources available to the organisation have been used to carry out the survey, summarise the information in a database, analyse it and share it. The online survey was created with Microsoft Forms and the results were exported to an Excel database, and this was uploaded and analysed with Power BI.

At the first level of analysis, the results are ordered according to the logic followed in the survey, the responses to each question are analysed in general, as well as the coincidences or differences using filters to differentiate behaviours by country, sex and age groups. This gives us a first approximation of how children are feeling during this pandemic situation and, from this, we try to understand and explain the reasons for it.

At the second level of analysis, the content of the open responses is assessed taking into account the key words and ideas in order of relevance according to the number of times they are mentioned, which has enabled the categorisation of the main ideas illustrated using phrases from those who have participated. This is complemented by the use of the “Key influential factors” tool from Power BI, which helped to see what had a significant influence on each issue that was analysed according to the information available (country, age and sex) and compare its relative importance. In the case of the country they live in, which has been the most influential factor, we refer to the social, political and economic contexts that children live in and the responses their governments had to the pandemic.

All the above has been summarised in an [interactive table](#) which users can use to filter more specific information and make other analyses depending on their interests. However, in this report the results have been summarised in two types of tables:

- Results summary (tables 3, 5, 7, 9, 11 and 13): these are the results of the response options for each question and for the total of those who have participated in the survey. Additionally, this data has been disaggregated by sex and by age group.
- Main key influencing factors (Tables 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 14): for each response option a list of a maximum of three key influencing factors has been made in order of importance (from highest to lowest). These influencing factors are presented for the total number of respondents and, in addition, for data disaggregated by gender and age groups. In order to understand these tables better, each of them has an explanation about how to interpret them and includes an example using the relevant data.



Results



Education during the pandemic

Have you been able to continue with your studies during the last six months?

While there has been a gradual return to school, it has not been possible for many children. On 23 September 2021, [UNESCO reported that 127,959,411 students were affected by total or partial school closures](#), which represents 7.3% of the total number of enrolled children, and 17 closures at a national level.

Continuity of studies overall

The data from this study (see Table 3) shows that in the six months before responding to the survey carried out by Educo, 45.49% of children had been

to school, followed by those who had only studied from home and those who had mixed methods. Overall, and including the three methods, 85.36% have continued studying in some way, but studying only from home was still the only option for 24.67% of the students.

On the other hand, 11.46% of the children surveyed responded that they have not been able to continue studying, and this value is higher than the global figure reported by UNESCO (7.3%). The reasons given by girls and boys are detailed later in this report.

Table 3. Have you been able to continue with your studies over the last six months?

Responses	% of the total	% of responses for each gender			% of responses for each age group		
		Girls	Boys	NR	6-11	12-18	Other ages
Yes, I have been attending school	45.49	46.13	44.95	27.50	47.70	45.24	26.39
Yes, I have attended school, but also from home	15.20	14.81	15.67	15.00	11.71	17.68	21.99
Yes, but only from home	24.67	24.77	24.30	47.50	28.46	20.74	31.38
I haven't been able to study	11.46	11.25	11.79	5.00	8.54	14.28	8.80
Other answer	1.35	1.29	1.42	2.50	1.39	0.65	8.80
Summary of Other responses							
Private teachers/tutors; reading at home only; automatic promotion to the next grade; through modules/guides/assignments given and answered at home; with mother's support.							
I don't understand the question or prefer not to reply.	1.82	1.76	1.88	2.50	2.19	1.41	2.64
Total	99.99	100.01	100.01	100	99.99	100	100

Among those who responded to the survey, 3.17% did not identify with any of the response options or stated that they did not understand the question. In addition, many responses correspond to the question about the reasons for not having been able to continue their studies. All this is taken into account in this analysis. According to the answers that did answer the question posed (other options for studying), it could be seen that a considerable number reported methods such as private teachers or tutors, reading content at home, answering modules, guides or homework assigned by the school, support from their mothers and being automatically promoted to the next grade (although the latter does not imply that they had studied as such).

Continuity of studies for girls and for boys

The analysis by gender, considering the three methods, indicates that girls have been able to continue their studies at a slightly higher percentage than boys (85.71% and 84.92% respectively). The

general pattern (only at school, only at home and mixed; in this order) is also maintained when the information is disaggregated by gender.

Although the differences are small, girls report a higher percentage of school attendance and studying only from home (46.13% and 24.77%) than boys (44.95% and 24.30%). It is boys who have studied slightly more with the mixed option (15.67% versus 14.81% for girls).

Continuity of studies by age

The analysis by age also reflects the general pattern and only changes among those who have ages different to the ones prioritised in the study. In general, those aged 6-11 have had a higher chance of continuing their studies than those aged 12-18 (87.87% versus 83.66%).

Therefore, it is the older age group who report a higher proportion of not being able to study by any means (14.28%) and also the highest figure in relation to the general population and the gender

distribution. This difference may be due to the fact that this age group has had the least possibilities to benefit from distance learning, as they are also the least able to continue studying entirely from home. Also, in a normal situation and in relation to younger children, it is usually the age group with the highest number of children out of the school system⁴.

What are the key influencing factors in the result of the continuity of studies?

For this and all the other aspects included in the survey, the key influencing factor is the country they live in and, more than the country itself, **the institutional context of education and the government response during the pandemic**. To a much lesser extent the influence of age and gender, in that order, is evident. In the case of the continuity of studies, a summary of the main influencing factors for each response option can be found in Table 4.

They have been more likely to go to school if...

Overall, those who **live in Nicaragua**, a country which never officially closed its schools, have had more opportunities (more than twice above average) to continue with in-person classes in the six months before the survey. This is true regardless of gender or age, and there is only a small exception in the case of Benin, for those who have an age different to the age ranges prioritised in the study (aged 6-11 and 12-18). Mali, followed by Spain and, to a lesser extent, Burkina Faso, are also countries that present results that are much higher than average with regards to the possibility to continue studying in person.



⁴ "Globally, one in twelve children of primary school age (59 million), one in six adolescents of lower secondary school age (61 million) and one in three young people of upper secondary school age (138 million) are out of school. From: UNESCO, 2020. [Global Education Monitoring Report, Everyone and Everywhere, Inclusion and education](#).

Table 4. What has influenced the result of the continuity of studies in the last six months? (probability of times in relation to the average)

How to interpret the data

This table summarises those factors included in the study that have had the greatest influence on the results of continuity of studies. They have been calculated based on the % overall, by gender and age. The values shown here indicate how these factors behave in relation to the average. Example: Nicaragua, 2.07; this means that children living in Nicaragua have been 2.07 more likely to be able to continue with their studies at school in relation to the average of children in general.

General influencing factors		Influencing factors according to gender ⁵				Influencing factors according to gender					
		Girls		Boys		6-11		12-18		Other ages	
For those who have attended school											
Nicaragua	2.07	Nicaragua	2.12	Nicaragua	2.01	Nicaragua	2.06	Nicaragua	2.10	Benin	2.32
Mali	1.92	Mali	1.97	Mali	1.86	Mali	2.02	Mali	1.80	- *	
Spain	1.77	Spain	1.78	Burkina Faso	1.83	Spain	1.94	Burkina Faso	1.58	-	
For those who have attended school, but have also studied from home											
El Salvador	2.25	El Salvador	2.45	Guatemala	2.13	El Salvador	3.03	El Salvador	2.18	Nicaragua	2.36
Guatemala	1.95	Guatemala	1.82	El Salvador	1.97	Guatemala	2.94	Spain	1.85	Mali	2.28
India	1.54	India	1.79	Other ages	1.59	India	1.61	Guatemala	1.57	-	-
For those who have only studied from home											
Bolivia	4.22	Bolivia	4.22	Bolivia	4.27	Bolivia	5.18	Bolivia	3.41	Philippines	2.55
Guatemala	2.19	Guatemala	2.35	Philippines	2.41	Guatemala	1.84	Philippines	2.88	Bangladesh	2.32
Philippines	2.06	Philippines	1.85	Guatemala	2.01	Philippines	1.77	Guatemala	2.60	Guatemala	2.06
For those who have not been able to study											
India	3.31	Bangladesh	3.62	India	3.28	India	5.96	Bangladesh	2.67	Niger	7.47
Bangladesh	3.23	India	3.31	Bangladesh	2.82	Bangladesh	4.40	India	2.32	Burkina Faso	4.80
12-18 years old	1.67	Burkina Faso	1.78	12-18 years old	1.71	Burkina Faso	1.45	Burkina Faso	1.53	Male gender	2.80
For those who chose the option Other response											
Other ages	8.80	Other ages	7.64	Other ages	9.42	Bangladesh	3.61	-	-	Philippines	3.28
Philippines	3.43	Guatemala	4.66	Philippines	3.11	India	3.32	-	-	-	-
Guatemala	2.91	Philippines	3.36	Bangladesh	2.59	Guatemala	2.75	-	-	-	-
For those who did not understand the question or preferred not to respond											
Niger	5.43	Niger	7.34	Niger	3.52	Niger	5.92	Benin	8.39	-	-
Benin	3.52	Bangladesh	3.64	Benin	3.48	Bangladesh	5.69	Niger	5,71	-	-
Bangladesh	2.70	Benin	3.57	Burkina Faso	2.35	Burkina Faso	2.85	-	-	-	-

* dash means that in all the cases there is no information to report.

⁵ For this table, and all those that follow the same type of analysis, those who responded "I prefer not to answer this question" when they were asked to identify their gender have not been included in the summary for "Influencing factors according to gender". The reason is that it never appears as a key influencing factor at this level. However, it does appear when the "influencing factors according to age" are analysed and in this case, it is included..



It is more likely that they were able to combine attending school alongside distance learning options if...

It was possible to do this to a greater extent if **they live in El Salvador, Guatemala and India**. This behaviour is similar for girls, but there are changes in the case of boys, for whom the main influencing factors have been living in Guatemala, El Salvador or being from an age group outside the priority groups that were surveyed. If the mixed method is analysed by age, the general pattern (El Salvador, Guatemala, India) is the same for those aged 6 to 11, and for those aged 12 to 18, living in El Salvador remains the main influencing factor, followed by Spain and Guatemala.

Studying alone from home is more likely if...

This has been a very relevant option for girls and boys **living in Bolivia**, both in general and by

gender or age (more than four times the average). This country has had a long period of total or partial closure of its schools due to the pandemic, which also coincided with a profound political and social crisis. Guatemala and the Philippines are also places with very relevant values and only change their position when analysed by gender or age. For example, in the Philippines, boys and those aged between 12 and 18 were more likely to study from home; if you were from Guatemala, this increased likelihood was for girls and for ages 6-11.

Not having studied was more likely if...

It has particularly affected those **living in India and Bangladesh** (three times the average) and those **aged 12-18**. This order only varies when analysed by gender. When analysed by age, Burkina Faso also emerges as a place with significant restrictions on the continuity of studies.



However, this may not necessarily be a product of the pandemic because, overall (see Table 7), 7.06% of participants in the study were not studying before (this is discussed in more detail below).

Having an alternative response about continuing their studies or not has been more frequent in...

The “Other response” option, which shows that the general patterns for continuing studies did not fit their realities, tells us that this is especially true for those who were of a different age than those prioritised in the study and for the Philippines, Guatemala, India and Bangladesh.

What do you think about the experience of studying from home?

The Educo study *COVID-19, Impact of the pandemic and its consequences for education* states that “Distance learning for millions of children has been an insurmountable obstacle course, especially for those who, due to their socio-economic origin, geographical location or other factors, have been excluded from the educational solutions that have emerged during the pandemic”. This new study allows us to explore this in greater depth, based on children’s opinions about whether to study at home or at school.

It is preferable to study at school because...

According to what is summarised in Table 3, 85.36% of children surveyed have been able to continue their studies and almost 40% have been able to do so totally or partially from home. Of this total that has been able to continue studying, **the majority (69.63%) prefers to study at school**, and this is true regardless of gender or age.

The reasons for preferring school have been many, and can be grouped into four broad categories. The main one is that, according to children, **at school they learn more and better** and the **distance learning methods have not allowed for the same level of support from teachers**. In second place, there were lots of comments about the importance of school for their relational wellbeing and they highly value the interaction with their friends and classmates in general, whether that be for the simple fact of being able to be in contact, able to play, able to receive support for their learning, and how important it is to interact with teachers and have their doubts resolved more easily and quickly.

Table 5. What do you think about the experience of studying from home?

Responses	% of the total	% of responses for each gender			% of responses for each age group		
		Girls	Boys	NR	6-11	12-18	Other ages
Studying from home has been better than going to school	11.48	10.43	12.61	17.00	11.44	12.19	6.04
Why is studying from home better than going to school?							
Because they see advantages in relation to the quality of education and the overall learning experience; it is a way to protect themselves from COVID-19; they have more time for other personal things and support at home; they do not see it as being so different from studying at school; because they get the support of their family to study at home; and because it is a good opportunity to use and enjoy technology for learning.							
Studying from home is the same as going to school	10.91	11.31	10.36	17.00	11.22	10.89	8.79
Why is studying from home the same as going to school?							
Because there are also advantages in relation to the quality of education and the overall learning experience; it is a way to protect themselves from COVID-19; they receive support at home from their family or tutoring; they do not see it as being so different from studying at school; and it allows them to make better use of their time.							
I prefer studying at school	69.63	70.14	69.28	57.00	70.18	69.09	69.78
Why do they prefer studying at school?							
Because at school you learn more and better and the distance learning alternatives do not include support from the teacher like at school; because they value the interactions with their friends, or classmates in general, or with teachers; because of difficulties accessing the adequate technology (equipment, connection quality, no family resources to do so, they have to share equipment with siblings and adults) and distance learning is tiring and boring; and because there is not always support from family members at home.							
I don't have an opinion about that	5.76	5.68	5.80	9.00	5.09	5.58	12.09
Other response	1.20	1.50	0.87	-	1.25	1.09	1.65
Summary of Other responses							
They think that both models have advantages and disadvantages.							
I don't understand the question or prefer not to reply.	1.03	1.09	0.94	-	1.25	1.16	1.65
Total	100.01	100.15	99.86	100.00	100.43	100.00	100.00

A third category of reasons for preferring school is that online and other distance learning alternatives (study guides, homework, study modules, etc.) involve having access to technology at home that is not available to many of those who responded to the survey (material wellbeing). **The lack of equipment, the low quality of the internet connection, the lack of access to data or fixed**

networks, not having resources in their families to pay the costs involved in online education, and having to share equipment with siblings and adults, who are also studying or working from home, were all mentioned repeatedly.

In fourth place, the children surveyed also indicate that **studying online can be boring, tiring and does not enable them to learn to the same level as they do at school**, evidence of a reason attributable to relational and not just material wellbeing, as technology does not replace the value of face-to-face relationships for learning. They also highlight that studying from home implies more family support, and this is not always available, either because adults do not have the time, skills or interest to support them, so again, their relational wellbeing is affected.

“ —

Studying at school is better because...

- *If I go to school, the teacher helps me to prepare the lesson and even my classmates help to explain it. This opportunity is not available at home.*

Boy aged 6-11 years old, Bolivia

- *Because at school I can play with my friends and be with my teacher.*

Unidentified participant, 12-18 years old, Bolivia

- *Because internet access is scarce and printed materials are limited.*

Adolescent boy aged 12-18 years old, Philippines

- *Parents work, they are both tired when they get home. It is better to study at school.*

Adolescent girl aged 12-18 years old, Philippines

The experience of studying from home has been...

The option of studying from home is the second most voted option overall (11.48 %), and this only changes in the case of girls, who put it in third place.

The reasons for this preference may be explained by the fact that studying from home may also offer advantages in relation to the quality of education and the overall learning experience, however, the scope of the study does not allow for a conclusive answer.

The children surveyed also frequently mention that it is an effective alternative to protect themselves from COVID-19; that they have more time for other personal things and for support at home; that they do not see it as being so different from studying at school; and that it is **a good opportunity to use and enjoy technology for learning.**

According to these reasons and, above all, based on the comments justifying their preference, we can conclude that two essential elements

influence their responses: they are children who probably have a higher socio-economic level that allows them to access technology of a higher quality more easily (material wellbeing), and they live in households where they receive more support from their family (relational wellbeing), which allows them to have a much more positive perception of this method (subjective wellbeing). This contrasts with those who prefer school, because they resent, among other things, the lack of these conditions in order to cope with **the challenges of distance learning**.

There were also 10.91% overall who believe that school and distance learning can be equally important and this is the third most voted option. Girls are again the exception, and this response option is their second most voted.

The reasons for not seeing a difference between studying at home or at school are very similar to those given by those who prefer to study at home and they often state that they cannot decide between one option or the other because they see advantages and disadvantages for both.

What are the key influencing factors in the outcome of whether it is better to study at home or at school?

Studying at school is a wish with a high level of agreement

If you live in Bolivia, this wish is more than 2.5 times greater than the average; Guatemala and the Philippines also have very high levels (see Table 6). This trend remains the same when the data is analysed by gender and varies only for those aged 12 to 18, because in this age range the highest preference for studying at school is found mainly in Guatemala. All these countries have had severe restrictions regarding in-person classes.



Studying from home is valued in particular if...

Studying from home has been particularly valued by those living in India, Bolivia and El Salvador; there is very little variation in the data disaggregated by gender, with children in Guatemala particularly valuing this option and breaking with this trend. By age range, there is also a high influence from India,

“

Studying from home is better because...

- *That's how I understood better, because my mum helps me and explains when I don't understand.*

Boy aged 6-11 years old, Bolivia

- *Because you are protecting yourself from COVID and protecting other people, my grades have gone down, but it is more important to look after your health.*

Adolescent girl aged 12-18 years old, Bangladesh

- *This way I have more time to practise music.*

Girl aged 6-11 years old, Spain

- *Both methods have their advantages and disadvantages and after trying the two types I can't say if one is better than the other.*

Adolescent girl aged 12-18 years old, El Salvador

- *Using a phone and the video camera is really nice.*

Boy aged 6-11 years old, India

Bolivia, El Salvador and Guatemala but the most important influencing factor for those aged between 6 and 11 years of age has been those who preferred not to answer the question about their gender.

There are no differences between in-person education and other alternatives if...

There are no major differences between studying at home or at school, again, for those from Bolivia, El Salvador and India, but it appears that living in Bangladesh is a key influencing factor, with particular relevance for both genders and for ages 12-18. The Philippines is also a key influencing factor here, and especially for girls and those aged 6-11.

If you have been unable to continue your studies, why is that?

Not attending school and dropping out of school are multi-causal problems that are very difficult to reverse, and a health emergency, such as the one we are facing due to COVID-19, often has a high impact in aggravating them further. In August 2020, UNESCO estimated that “around 24 million students at all levels, from pre-school to university, ran the risk of not going back to school. Of those, 10.9 million were studying at primary and secondary level and of them, 5.2 million were girls. The largest proportion of possible dropouts (almost half) referred to countries in south and west Asia (5.9 million) and Sub-Saharan Africa (5.3 million)⁶”.

⁶ According to the Educo 2021 study *COVID-19 Impact of the Pandemic and its Consequences for Education*.

Table 6. What influences the outcome regarding whether it is better to study from home or at school? (probability of times in relation to the average)

How to interpret this data

This table summarises those factors included in the study that have had the greatest influence on the outcome regarding whether it is better to study from home or at school. They have been calculated based on the overall %, by gender and age. The values shown here indicate how these factors behave in relation to the average. Example: India, 2.84; this means that children living in India think that studying from home is better than going to school and this is a ratio of 2.84 times greater than the average for girls and boys in general.

Overall influential factors	Influential factors related to gender		Influential factors related to age		
	Girls	Boys	6-11	12-18	Other ages

For those who studying from home is better than going to school.

India	2.84	India	3.08	Bolivia	3.01	NR gender*	5.50	India	4.12	Bangladesh	4.03
Bolivia	2.80	Bolivia	2.48	India	2.66	Bolivia	4.20	El Salvador	1.97	-	-
El Salvador	1.80	El Salvador	2.25	Guatemala	1.85	El Salvador	1.92	Bolivia	1.83	-	-

For those who studying from home is the same as going to school.

Bangladesh	3.23	Bangladesh	2.59	Bangladesh	4.17	Bolivia	3.03	Bangladesh	4.36	India	3.62
Bolivia	2.36	Bolivia	2.57	El Salvador	2.48	Philippines	2.63	El Salvador	3.90	Guatemala	3.42
El Salvador	2.32	Philippines	2.24	Bolivia	2.20	Bangladesh	2.43	NR gender	3.36	-	-

For those who prefer studying at school

Bolivia	2.56	Bolivia	2.62	Bolivia	2.50	Bolivia	3.12	Guatemala	2.38	Bolivia	1.93
Guatemala	2.31	Guatemala	2.39	Guatemala	2.25	Guatemala	2.30	Bolivia	2.19	Guatemala	1.75
Philippines	1.72	Philippines	1.68	Philippines	1.81	Philippines	1.79	Philippines	1.85	Female gender	1.33

For those who do not have a problem with it

Other ages	3.08	Other country	7.48	Benin	3.54	Bangladesh	3.09	Bolivia	4.40	Benin	3.38
Bangladesh	2.75	Bangladesh	3.31	Other ages	3.43	El Salvador	2.35	Bangladesh	2.66	-	-
El Salvador	2.25	Other ages	2.83	Bolivia	2.36	India	2.06	El Salvador	2.51	-	-

For those who chose the option Other response

No data available

For those who did not understand the question or preferred not to respond

Other ages	3.08	Other country	7.48	Benin	3.54	Bangladesh	3.09	Bolivia	4.40	Benin	3.38
Bangladesh	2.75	Bangladesh	3.31	Other ages	3.43	El Salvador	2.35	Bangladesh	2.66	-	-
El Salvador	2.25	Other ages	2.83	Bolivia	2.36	India	2.06	El Salvador	2.51	-	-

* Refers to those who chose the answer option "I prefer not to answer this question" when asked about their gender.

Unable to study primarily because of school closures

Given the importance and timeliness of the subject, we have included an analysis of those who have not been able to study during the pandemic in order to try to understand the phenomenon from the perspective of children themselves.

“ I stopped studying because schools were closed and...

- *Our school didn't offer online classes.*
Adolescent boy aged 12-18 years old, India
- *I don't have more equipment for continuing my studies, so I am reading with my parents and other members of the family.*
Girl aged 6-11 years old, Bangladesh
- *Because we can only study online and it is too expensive for my parents because they have limited financial means.*
Boy aged 6-11 years old, Guatemala
- *I didn't have anyone to help me.*
Girl aged 6-11 years old, Niger

We have taken as a starting point the data included in Table 3, which indicates that 11.46% have not been able to continue studying by any means in the six months prior to the survey. Table 7 summarises the causes of this situation and it can be seen that the closure of schools, combined with the absence of other alternatives that matched their possibilities, was the main cause (67.25% of those who did not study). This is true regardless of gender and age, with the sole exception of those who preferred not to answer the question about their gender and who identify in equal parts that they didn't study because they didn't want to or because they were no longer doing so before the pandemic.

The overall comments for this situation reaffirm what the school closures have meant, as well as resentment about the lack of technological and economic resources (material wellbeing) required to take advantage of the alternative education options that were available.

How being a girl, a boy or your age influences not being able to study

Beyond the general data, it can be observed that the closure of schools, and the lack of adequate alternatives, has had a slightly higher impact on girls than boys. Similarly, those aged 6-11 years have been slightly more affected.

There are those who did not want to continue studying

The second cause for not continuing to study has been that they didn't want to (11.23%), and it continues to occupy second place when the data is disaggregated by gender. However, the analysis by age reflects that, for the younger children, the second most voted cause was "Other answer".

Table 7. If you have been unable to continue your studies, why is that?

% of the total	% of responses for each gender	% of responses for each age group			% de respuestas por cada grupo de edad		
		Girls	Boys	NR	6-11	12-18	Other ages
Schools were closed and there was no other way for me to continue my studies.	67,25	68,79	65,85	-	71.18	66.85	36.67
Comments on this situation							
School closures with no other options; lack of technological resources, basically mobile; poverty, lack of economic resources; lack of support from family or school; disinterest.							
I didn't want to continue my studies	11,23	8,79	13,76	50,00	5.56	13.00	33.33
Why didn't you want to keep studying?							
Disinterest in school and in studying in general, discouragement, rebelliousness; school failure: belief that they do not have sufficient ability or memory, failing exams, not understanding subjects; poverty or lack of financial resources; lack of internet access or device for receiving online classes; by choice; drug-related situation; fear of going to school; closed schools; lack of family support; marriage; need to go out to work.							
I wasn't studying before the pandemic	7,06	6,37	7,62	50,00	5.90	7.33	13.33
Why weren't you studying?							
Poverty or lack of financial resources; lack of interest in school or studies in general; lack of support or interest from family to study and even opposition to it; working children; lack of internet connection; not understanding online classes; terrorist attacks or wars.							
My father, mother or another adult decided I couldn't go to school	6,02	7,25	4,67	-	6.60	5.86	3.33
Why did they decide you couldn't go to school?							
Safety/fear of COVID-19, getting sick and making the family sick; helping the family at home, in the field or being able to work; economic problems; lack of support for education, family disinterest.							
Other response	5,44	6,59	4,18	-	7.64	4.21	6.67
Summary of Other responses							
Not enrolled before, lack of technological resources in rural areas; lack of financial resources and need to work to support the family; not yet of age; health problems; pregnancy/marriage; lack of family support due to work.							
I don't understand the question or prefer not to reply.	3,01	2,20	3,93	-	3.13	2.75	6.67
Total	100,01	99,99	100,01	100	100.01	100	100

An analysis of the reasons for which they did not want to continue studying includes, from most to least frequent, disinterest in school and in studies in general, not feeling encouraged to study, and a way of expressing their rebellion. It also includes academic failure caused by the belief that they do not have sufficient capacity or memory, failing in

exams, and not understanding the subjects. There are several mentions of poverty or a lack of financial resources; a lack of internet access or devices to receive online classes; because it was their own choice; because of a drug-related situation; fear of going to school because of the pandemic and because they were closed; lack of family support;

marriage and the need to work. Some of these reasons could be classified under other response options, but we have respected the places where they have been expressed. The comments about the impossibility of studying due to marriage and

work, that school/studying is not a motivation and that it is a place where they have not been able to show their potential and they feel that it is not for them, are very relevant aspects closely linked to subjective wellbeing.

Some of them were not studying since before the pandemic

In addition, overall the third main reason for not continuing to study is that they had not been studying since before the pandemic (7.06%), and this is true for boys and for those aged 12-18. However, girls, and those who are aged between 6 and 11 years old, have expressed that the third reason for not studying has been that their father, mother or other adult decided they couldn't, which could be motivated by the fact that the adult reference people make decisions heavily influenced by social patterns related to gender and age, but this cannot be categorically stated because of the scope of the present study.

The open responses indicate that the motivations expressed have been due to safety/fear of COVID-19, because they could get ill or make their family ill; that there was a need to help at home, or in the fields, or having to work because of financial problems; and because, overall, there is a lack of support due to family disinterest.

What are the key factors that influence the outcome regarding why they have not been able to study in any way?

For the continuity of studies, school closures have had more of an effect in...

In Bangladesh, school closures, and the lack of other options that could be taken advantage of, have been identified as the main reason for not



I didn't want to continue studying because...

- *Because I turned rebellious and got discouraged.*
Adolescent woman aged 12-18 years old, Nicaragua
- *I have no memory for understanding.*
Adolescent boy aged 12-18 years old, India
- *My parents don't want me to continue studying.*
Girl aged 6-11 years old, Bangladesh
- *I stopped studying due to drugs.*
Adolescent boy aged 12-18 years old, Nicaragua
- *Because I was too scared to go to school.*
Adolescent woman aged 12-18 years old, Mali
- *My family arranged my marriage.*
Adolescent woman aged 12-18 years old, Bangladesh

continuing their studies, four times more than average. Living in India and Burkina Faso also heavily influences the possibility of not studying for this reason (See Table 8).

How school closures have affected girls, boys and by age group

The information disaggregated by gender shows the same behaviour, except that being aged between 12 and 18 years old is the third key influencing factor for male survey participants. The data by age groups always indicate the influence of the countries mentioned above, and Niger appears as the main influence on those belonging to an age group other than 6-18 years old.



Table 8. What influences the outcome for not being able to study at all? (probability of times in relation to the average)

How to interpret this data

This table summarises those factors included in the study that have had the greatest influence on the outcome regarding why they haven't been able to study. They have been calculated based on the % overall, by gender and age. The values shown here indicate how these factors behave in relation to the average. Example: Bangladesh, 3.92; this means that children living in Bangladesh have missed out on education and this is at a ratio of 3.92 times the average for children in general.

Overall factors	Influential factors related to gender					Influential factors related to age					
	Girls		Boys			6-11		12-18		Other ages	
Schools were closed and there was no other way for me to continue my studies											
Bangladesh	3.92	Bangladesh	4.02	Bangladesh	3.76	India	6.96	Bangladesh	3.37	Niger	14.93
India	3.45	India	3.29	India	3.60	Bangladesh	4.84	India	2.28	Burkina Faso	6.72
Burkina Faso	1.81	Burkina Faso	2.19	12-18 years old	1.64	-	-	Burkina Faso	2.13	-	-
For those who did not want to continue studying											
Benin	3.86	-	-	Benin	4.13	-	-	Benin	4.59	India	7.97
India	3.80	-	-	Nicaragua	4.02	-	-	Nicaragua	3.42	Niger	7.47
Nicaragua	3.49	-	-	India	3.89	-	-	India	1.91	-	-

Note: for the rest of the response options it was not possible to establish key influencing factors.



I hadn't studied since before the pandemic because...

- *I don't like school.*
Adolescent boy aged 12-18 years old, Niger
- *I didn't want to study, I didn't have anyone who could help me.*
Adolescent boy aged 12-18, Nicaragua
- *My parents haven't enrolled me.*
Boy aged 6-11 years old, Niger
- *I didn't understand when the teacher was teaching subjects like mathematics and English.*
Adolescent boy aged 12-18 years old, India
- *I am a servant.*
Girls aged 6-11 years old, Niger
- *Because of the war .*
Girl aged 6-11, Burkina Faso

The desire to not continue to study is greater for...

Children living in Benin, India and Nicaragua most often expressed the desire not to continue their education. It is important to stress that this includes places with total and partial school closures as well as in places where there have been no school closures.

It was not possible to establish key influencing factors in the case of girls and for those aged 6-11. For children, and for those aged 12 to 18, the three countries mentioned above remain, but Nicaragua would be second and India third. Living in India and Niger is a key influencing factor for those who did not want to stay in school and were of an age outside the 6-18 age range.

If you have stopped attending school altogether or partially, is there anything you miss?

In the Educo 2020 study *Schools are shut, but learning is on!*, it was found that, overall, children missed the ability to "go to school" and "see my friends". These responses were the same when the data was analysed by age and by gender and displayed the high level of concern children had for their relational wellbeing during the pandemic.

The above coincides with a brief [list of repercussions written by UNESCO](#), which includes effects on learning, nutrition, protection, etc., but also warns that "school closures increase social isolation, as schools are centres of social activity and human interaction". When schools close, many children and young people miss out on social contact that is essential to learning and development".

Yes, school is missed by those who have been unable to attend

Considering the high importance of this issue, this study has delved into those aspects of school that are missed when children have not been able to attend school either fully or partially. A summary of the responses is gathered in Table 9.

Table 9. Is there something you miss about school?

Responses	% of the total	% of responses for each gender			% of responses for each age group		
		Girls	Boys	NR	6-11	12-18	Other ages
I don't miss anything about school	8.47	7.17	9.81	20.83	6.65	9.75	10.70
Why do you not miss anything?							
I can continue to study at home and keep in touch with my classmates and teachers; I don't like school or going to school; having problems at school with classmates or teachers; prioritising health; having more time to spend at home or with the family; being new to school due to change or age; having to work; keeping friendships close to home; not going to school is something that happens to everyone, not only to some, that's why I don't miss anything.							
There are things I miss about school	81.42	82.64	80.09	75.00	84.15	79.67	76.47
What do you miss?							
Friendship and companionship (this is a very popular opinion); teachers; play/recreation; learning/education; space for freedom, to be and do things they like.							
Other response	3.00	3.07	2.95	0.00	2.04	3.49	5.88
Summary of Other responses							
Reaching school age during the pandemic; not being enrolled in school; changing schools due to moving or a change in educational level; supporting their families.							
I don't understand the question or prefer not to reply.	7.11	7.12	7.15	4.17	7.16	7.09	6.95
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

According to Table 3, 51.33% of the children participating in the study were unable to attend school, either totally or partially, in the six months prior to the survey. 81.42% of these children generally responded that they miss something about school.

Missing school according to gender and age

There is no notable distinction in terms of gender and age regarding missing school, although girls miss school slightly more than boys, and those who chose not to answer the question about their gender miss school the least (75%), although it is still the first choice of response to this question. This finding coincides with other questions where this group of survey participants tends to break

with the patterns of others, but it is not possible to elaborate on the reasons for this in this study due to methodological limitations. Nevertheless it is an issue that concerns us, in addition to others found in this report, and that can be taken into account for further studies.

According to the age analysis, 6-11 year olds miss school much more than children of other ages, and any other way of analysing the data.

They miss school because...

The arguments given to illustrate what they miss about school are equally compelling, as they have a high degree of common ground. An adolescent from India sums it up masterfully: "Schools are closed, I miss my friends, the teachers and the games". This

I miss going to school because...

- *My friend in my class, the school playground I love so much, the face of my teacher and the gossiping with my friends.*
Boy aged 6-11 years old, Bangladesh
- *The classes, homework and compositions.*
girl aged 6-11 years old, Benin
- *Being with my friends, playing at playtime, sharing, talking to the teachers, buying sweets.*
Girl aged 6-11 years old, Bolivia
- *Being able to share with my classmates, being able to ask and having a teacher who can resolve my doubts immediately.*
Adolescent boy aged 12-18 years old, Philippines
- *My teachers and classmates and especially the after-school activities.*
Adolescent boy aged 12-18 years old, Burkina Faso
- *I miss the activities we used to do because there was more joy.*
Adolescent girl aged 12-18 years old, Guatemala
- *I miss the feeling of waking up early to get ready for school, I miss the relationships with my classmates.*
adolescent girl aged 12-18, India
- *Interacting with other people, and also having genuine fun as you learn, although it can be difficult at times.*
Girl aged 6-11 years old, Niger
- *Dedicate time to myself at school to distract myself.*
Unidentified participant aged 12-18 years old, Nicaragua

sentence covers the main categories into which the open-ended responses to this question can be classified, but we will analyse them in detail and therefore activate listening on such relevant issues.

In thousands of responses, children prioritise, first and foremost, that they miss the relational aspects of school that affect their wellbeing, such as **friendships and companionship, meeting, being together, sharing, studying and playing**. Next they mention that they miss the teachers, listening to them and being able to ask questions and receive their support.

They describe a school that is not only an academic space, but also a space for socialisation, without neglecting the quality of learning. The children surveyed miss places such as libraries, laboratories, exploratory activities, reading, competitions and so on. They even miss exams, homework, the school bell, the blackboard, the food and other subtle and valuable details that often escape adult perceptions of school.

Lastly, **school appears as a space of freedom, a place of one's own, in which they can be and do things they like, such as playing at playtime, sport, singing, dancing, buying something for themselves with their own money and being free to decide what to spend it on, being free, enjoying the school environment, etc. They even miss the walk to school.**

Overall, all the things they miss are aspects that they have not been able to find or replace when they have been forced not to study at all or to do so with non-face-to-face alternatives.

There are some who do not miss school

The contrast with those who answered that they do not miss school at all is very interesting, and they represent 8.47% of those who answered this



question, and it is also the second most voted option when we differentiate the data by gender (7.17% for girls vs. 9.81% for boys). Again, those who chose not to answer the question about their gender are those who show a very different value from the rest, as 20.83% do not miss school at all.

On the other hand, it was not the second most voted for those aged between 6 and 11 years old (6.65%), as 7.16% of this age group put that they did not understand the question or preferred not to answer as the second most voted option.

Those who do not miss school say...

The reasons given for not missing school is what shows the aforementioned contrast in relation to those who think differently, as it is clear from their responses that studying using distance learning methods has allowed them to enjoy the experience or to attend to matters that they believe are more important than school. Above all, they point out that not going to school has not prevented them from continuing their studies at home and staying

in contact with their classmates and teachers, i.e. it has not meant a break in their relationships and has not prevented them from learning.

On the other hand, there are those who do not like school as such, or have problems with classmates or teachers in general, or have experienced violence at school. Their experience does not correspond with the positive aspects highlighted by those who miss school, and therefore the fact that they do not have to go to school is positive for them in this situation.

There are also those who do not miss school because it is a time to prioritise health, an opportunity to spend more time at home and with the family, because they are just starting school or have prioritised work. There are those who have managed to maintain friendly relationships in their neighbourhood, because the restrictions have not prevented them from doing so, and because not being able to go to school was a general thing and not an exception in their case, it has not affected them to the point of missing it.



I don't miss going to school because...

■ *Because I can see my teachers on the screen and also my colleagues.*

Boy aged 6-11 years old, Guatemala

■ *I don't like school.*

Adolescent girl aged 12-18 years old, Burkina Faso

■ *Teachers are always hitting.*

Adolescent boy aged 12-18 years old, India

■ *I don't like to be with other classmates, they are very hateful.*

Adolescent boy, 12-18 years old, Guatemala

■ *Because the government declared that all educational institutions must close due to COVID-19, I put health before everything else, if we are alive, when everything is OK again it will be possible to make up for the studies we have missed.*

Adolescent boy aged 12-18 years old, Bangladesh

■ *Because I share more with my parents.*

Boy aged 6-11 years old, Bolivia

■ *I want to look for work.*

Boy aged 6-11 years old, Burkina Faso

What are the key influencing factors for the outcome of whether they miss school or not?

Missing school is mostly expressed in...

In Bolivia, they are just over twice as likely to miss school on average (see Table 10). Children in India and Guatemala also have a high likelihood. In all cases, we can see that they are places that had severe restrictions regarding in-person meetings. This holds true regardless of gender and for those aged 6-11 years old. However, India, Bangladesh and Guatemala are, in that order, the places that most influence this result for those between 12 and 18 years old; as well as Guatemala and Bolivia for the other age ranges outside those prioritised in the study.

Mostly, school is not missed if...

According to the overall data, the outcome of not missing anything from school has been influenced mostly by **living in India**, having chosen the option "prefer not to answer" when asked about gender, and living in Bangladesh, in order of the highest number of responses.

In the case of girls, being from El Salvador, Bangladesh and between 12 and 18 years of age have been the main influencing factors. For boys, being from India, being under 6 years old or over 18, and being from Bangladesh, have been key influencing factors. The analysis by age shows that living in India was a key factor, which is the only finding for those aged 6-11 and other ages not prioritised in this study, and second choice for those aged 12-18..

Table 10. What influences the outcome regarding whether they miss school or not? (probability of times in relation to the average)

How to interpret this data											
This table summarises those factors included in the study that have had the greatest influence on the outcome regarding whether they miss school or not. They have been calculated based on the % overall, by gender and age. The values shown here indicate how these factors behave in relation to the average. Example: India, 3.29; this means that children living in India miss school much more and this is at a ratio of 3.29 times in relation to the average for girls and boys in general.											
Overall factors		Influential factors related to gender				Influential factors related to age					
		Girls		Boys		6-11		12-18		Other ages	
For those who did not miss something about school											
India	3.29	El Salvador	1.88	India	3.47	India	4.83	NR gender	3.60	India	4.29
NR gender	3.06	Bangladesh	1.85	Other ages	1.79	-	-	India	2.47	-	-
Bangladesh	1.69	12-18 years old	1.50	Bangladesh	1.58	-	-	Bangladesh	1.89	-	-
For those who did miss something about school											
Bolivia	2.03	Bolivia	2.08	Bolivia	1.99	Bolivia	2.57	India	2.18	Guatemala	1.75
India	1.95	India	2.02	India	1.88	Guatemala	1.84	Bangladesh	1.61	Bolivia	1.59
Guatemala	1.72	Guatemala	1.71	Guatemala	1.74	India	1.73	Guatemala	1.59	-	-
For those who chose the option Other response											
Bangladesh	6.92	Bangladesh	5.37	Bangladesh	9.04	-	-	Bangladesh	9.07	Bangladesh	4.03
Other ages	2.35	Other ages	3.53	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Guatemala	1.98	Guatemala	2.47	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
For those who did not understand the question or preferred not to respond											
Bangladesh	2.32	Bangladesh	2.23	Bangladesh	2.42	Bangladesh	3.69	Bolivia	3.34	-	-
Bolivia	1.69	Guatemala	1.95	India	2.01	Guatemala	2.07	Bangladesh	1.79	-	-
India	1.63	Bolivia	1.75	Bolivia	1.57	-	-	India	1.67	-	-





What would you like school to be like when the pandemic is over?

A post-pandemic world, without the COVID-19 virus, a return to “normality” or “a new normality”; all these are, without a doubt, global longings at the moment. But it seems that the future will be neither the same as it was in the past, nor an improved past, nor an ideal where everything will be better.

So, what will the future be like? What will education look like in the future? What kind of school do we need?

In this study, we focus on this last question, aware that it also depends on what the future will be like in general and that the main answers must come from children and those who study, since we believe that “Education is a fundamental human right that is exercised throughout life, and as such, for Educo, it represents an end in itself, but it is also a means to enable and reinforce the exercising of other rights, the enjoyment of wellbeing and a dignified life⁷”. We are also aware that “It is necessary to start to perceive all students as actors within education and take their opinions into account, because that is where the “hows” and the answers for building educational spaces will come from⁸.”

⁷ Educo (2020). *2021-2025 Global Programmatic Framework*.

⁸ According to the Educo study (2021) *COVID-19, Impact of the pandemic and its consequences for education*.

Table 11. What would you like school to be like when the pandemic is over?

Responses	% of the total	% of responses for each gender			% of responses for each age group		
		Girls	Boys	NR	6-11	12-18	Other ages
Same as before	42.27	44.03	40.20	42.50	46.84	38.83	35.48
Why the same as before?							
Normality, return to normality, study without fear; reconnect with friends from school; continuity of what went before, return to what we had, continue preparing for the future, return to study as before, recover the atmosphere that existed at school; reconnect with teachers, recover the ability to play at school and relationships in general; health, study without masks but take hygiene and care measures; mental health, study with less stress, as it was before.							
A better school	49.19	47.66	51.03	45.00	44.89	52.51	54.55
What would you like to be better or different?							
Better infrastructure; new ways of studying; better quality teaching; better equipment; skills for a digital world; better sanitary conditions; better coexistence at school.							
Other response	1.38	1.14	1.65	2.50	1.01	1.62	2.35
Summary of Other responses							
Schools better prepared for illnesses; schools better prepared for online education; teachers more patient and supportive of pupils' readjustment to studying; increased risk of being left out of the school system and drop-out; blended learning.							
I don't understand the question or prefer not to reply.	7.16	7.17	7.12	10.00	7.26	7.03	7.62
Total	100	100	100	100	100	99,99	100

A better school is wished for

The children surveyed prefer above all a better school (49.19% of the general responses, see summary in Table 11).

The wish for a better school is also present in girls, boys, those who prefer not to identify themselves in these two categories, those aged 12-18 and those of a different age than those prioritised in the study. The only exception is children aged 6-11, who have responded that they primarily want the school they had before, which may be influenced by the fact that the total or partial closures have affected them much more than those who are older, but we cannot give a conclusive answer at this point because of the scope of this study.

But why a better school?

For the children surveyed a better school includes: better infrastructure, a school with an adequate building, appropriate lavatories; more spaces such as classrooms, libraries, labs, playgrounds, sport fields; more nature, more trees, a garden or a park; and better investment by the government. Ultimately, they refer to **an infrastructure that allows them to fully experience school, learn and enjoy a wide range of relationships, and the environment.** In previous studies by Educo we have seen that this is a significant part of what children understand as wellbeing⁹.

⁹ According to the Educo study, *Child Wellbeing: their views and their voices*, carried out in collaboration with the Instituto de Ciencias del Comportamiento at the Universidad Católica Boliviana "San Pablo".



I wish for a better school because...

- I think there is always something better. In everything. We can be better than we are, that's how it would be with school.

Adolescent boy aged 12-18, Guatemala

- Good teachers like the one I had this year, good people, no problems in the walls, no leaks, no broken things and more space for activities.

Boy aged 6-11, Spain

- Warmer classrooms, more gardens and trees, and computers.

Girl aged 6-11, Bolivia

- Because the current situation is a pandemic one, we continue our study process from home using the internet. This way, we obtain more recent information about the internet. I believe that when the pandemic situation is over, our education authorities should pay more attention to this issue, as we live in a global village.

Adolescent girl aged 12-18 years old, Bangladesh

- I would like all the teachers to be polite when talking to their students.

Boy aged 6-11 years old, Benin

- At school the ones in sixth grade always push us, hurt us, and sometimes they even make us fall over, and we don't like that because we get hurt, I would like that to improve.

Girl aged 6-11 years, Bolivia

- I want to be given clean water and books.

Girl aged 6-11 years old, Burkina Faso

- I think schools should work more on teaching children and adolescents about mental health and managing emotions.

Adolescent girl aged 12-18 years old, El Salvador

- I would like to improve the way in which my teachers teach the lessons and how they integrate them into real life so that we understand them better.

Boy aged 6-11 years old, Philippines

- Because it is the place that enables me to flourish.

Boy aged 6-11 years old, Mali

- I would like my classroom to have ventilation or a fan, it is very hot and this does not help me to concentrate, I would like them to teach the classes, many teachers at my school only come to sit down, I would like them to do sports activities.

Adolescent boy aged 12-18 years old, Nicaragua

- I want our school to be useful, peaceful and educational.

Adolescent girl aged 12-18 years old, Niger

A better school for them also includes **new ways of studying, more practical activities, outings, projects, catching up on learning and the pace lost due to the pandemic, fewer students per class, combining in-person and online education, being part of a global citizenship (connecting to the world), less homework and less tasks.**

There is a clear attempt to improve by adding new aspects, but also by taking advantage of what has been done during the pandemic. There is also a clear questioning of banking and theoretical education. Another significant wish is for **higher quality teachers, who are more motivated, more cooperative, who support them more, treat them better and, are generally better prepared.**

In addition, among the most frequent wishes of the children surveyed were **that schools should be better equipped, that new technologies should be present, that there should be more books, materials and games, and** that these would help them acquire the **skills for a digital world.** There is a clear connection between needs for material wellbeing, but in terms of serving a higher purpose of enjoying the educational experience and learning for the world they live in (relational wellbeing).

The health issue is an important one, as something very necessary with or without a pandemic, but made all the more relevant by what has been experienced. They ask **for hygiene materials in order to apply sanitary measures, and have access to clean water and vaccinations.**

“ —

I wish for a school the same as before because...

- *Because school used to be very good. A place for learning. A place to play and meet up.*
Adolescent boy aged 12-18 years old, Niger
- *School is the most interesting place, to play, enjoy and learn lots of things from teachers and friends. That's why I want to go back to school.*
Girl aged 6-11, Bangladesh
- *Because it is much better in person, it is more human rather than without seeing our faces.*
Adolescent girl aged 12-18 years old, Spain
- *Without school, there is no education.*
Girl aged 6-11 years old, Benin
- *My school is the best and I don't complain about that, because in my school the teaching is very good and you learn a lot.*
Girl aged 6-11 years old, Bolivia
- *Because we have a good time at school.*
Boy aged 6-11 years old, Burkina Faso
- *I would like everything to go back to normal so that I can go to school without a mask and without fear of being infected.*
Boy, 6-11 years old, El Salvador
- *I am used to having class(es), playtime, class(es), lunch, class(es) and leaving.*
Adolescent boy aged 12-18 years old, Guatemala
- *I don't want anything to change, I love how it was.*
Adolescent girl aged 12-18 years old, India
- *Going to school regularly like before.*
Girl aged 6-11 years old, Mali
- *Because that way we can hug each other, play, not use a mask.*
Girl aged 6-11 years old, Nicaragua
- *Because attending school like before helped me learn more and gave me experiences and memories.*
Adolescent girl aged 12-18 years old, Philippines

Lastly, the children surveyed wish for **better coexistence and relationships at school, they ask for respect, for teachers to treat them better and without using physical violence, for no violence between peers, that something be done to overcome the loneliness and isolation they have experienced, and that work be done to improve mental health.**

All these requests show what children have learned as a result of what they experienced during the pandemic. They express new wishes, as a result of this experience, without abandoning more typical and always necessary demands. It is also worth noting the points of overlap with initiatives such as those of UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank (*Mission Recovery Education 2021*) which proposes prioritising that:

1. All children and youth return to school and receive the tailored services needed to meet their learning, health, psychosocial wellbeing, and other needs;
2. All students receive effective remedial learning to help recover learning losses; and
3. All teachers are prepared and supported to address learning losses among their students and to incorporate digital technology into their teaching.

Children go into great detail about how this can be achieved and mention essential elements that would make the educational experience one of learning and enjoyment in an adapted and prepared school.

But, there are also those who prefer a school like the one before the pandemic

The second most voted option is that schools be as they were before (42.27% of the total responses for this question). This is true regardless of the way the data is analysed, however as has already been mentioned, it is the first choice for those aged 6-11, although the difference is less than 2%.

Why do they wish for the same kind of school?

An analysis of the reasons allows us to conclude that many of the answers coincide with the wishes for a better school, so they may be conditions that they already had to some extent and they just want to recover them, or else the experience of studying away from school has not fulfilled their expectations and returning to what they had is therefore perceived as something very positive.

The wish to return to “normality” is mentioned frequently, for things to be as they were before and with a certain level of idealisation. The children surveyed express that they want school to be the same as before and emphasise the word normal.





Positive evaluations of school emerge, but they are always linked to the past. The comments range from “I liked it the way it was” to “My school is the best!”. Another expression of this normality is the emphasis on not being afraid of getting sick and, in line with what has already been said about preferring school to study, the return to “normality” implies recovering friendships, companionship, camaraderie, the need to resume studying, playing and also hugging (relational and subjective wellbeing).

A second category of wishes is the continuity of what they had before, with frequent mentions of what has already been said about the return to “normality”; although here the emphasis is on resuming in-person study, the rhythm of classes and other activities, the possibility of interacting and the idea of distance learning is presented as cumbersome, more complex, an interruption that must be overcome in order to recover what has been lost. It also adds to the idea of continuity the theme that **education will help them to “be somebody”, to get a profession, a job, a way that will help them to make their lives better than they are at the moment.** Finally, the

school they used to have is valued positively, but in terms of the learning environment, because of higher levels of concentration, and the feeling of comfort and happiness.

Being able to return to the school they used to have is very clearly linked to the issue of relational wellbeing: **connecting with teachers, engaging in dialogue, having closeness and understanding.** Another relational element they wish to recover is play, as **online education is seen as a way that deprives them of spontaneous play at break times, and prevents the enjoyment of after-school activities and informal gatherings. To return to the classroom is to return to coexistence, to being with others, to debating, to asking questions, to conversing.**

A final category also includes elements related to the health sector. The return to “normality”, to continue with the life they had, involves getting rid of the masks, which emerge as representing distance and something very annoying. However, they recognise that hygiene must not be overlooked. They ask for



more hygiene to be integrated than was previously the case and to take care to protect themselves. They also refer to mental health, with repeated mentions of stress and the need to address it.

In short, one can speak of a return to a “normality”, in line with their testimonies and/or continuity, but which has to be improved in some way. Many aspects coincide with the elements of improvement expressed by those who have said that school needs to be better.

In relation to those who preferred the *Other response* option, as in other questions, many of the elements qualify to be included in the responses already analysed, but where they have placed their responses is respected. The elements that differentiate this group of responses are the warning about the possible increase in school drop-out rates and that blended learning should be implemented.

What are the key influencing factors in the outcome of what they would like the school to look like when the pandemic ends?

A better school is wished for in particular if...

Starting with the most voted option (a better school is desired), the most influential factors have been marked by the countries and, therefore, by the measures that have been implemented in each place to deal with the pandemic (see Table 12).

The countries that have most influenced the outcome are Nicaragua, Benin, Burkina Faso and Mali. In all cases, these are places where the duration of restrictive measures on in-person education has been below average. According to monitoring done by UNESCO (at 9 September 2021) the partial/total school closures in all these countries had lasted in the range of 11-20 weeks or less (from a maximum of 41 weeks to more). .

Table 12. What influences the outcome regarding what they would like school to look like when the pandemic is over? (probability of times in relation to the average)

How to interpret this data											
This table summarises those factors included in the study that have had the greatest influence on the outcome regarding what they would like school to look like when the pandemic is over. They have been calculated based on the % overall, by gender and age. The values shown here indicate how these factors behave in relation to the average. Example: Spain, 1.72; this means that children living in Spain prefer school as it was before the pandemic and this is at a ratio of 1.72 times relative to the average for girls and boys in general.											
Overall factors		Influential factors related to gender				Influential factors related to age					
		Girls		Boys		6-11		12-18		Other ages	
For those who prefer school the same as it was before											
Spain	1.72	Spain	1.62	Spain	1.87	Spain	1.70	Spain	1.71	-	-
Guatemala	1.24	Guatemala	1.31	El Salvador	1.25	Mali	1.11	Guatemala	1.46	-	-
6-11 years old	1.22	6-11 years old	1.21	Bolivia	1.22	Female gender	1.09	Philippines	1.28	-	-
For those who prefer a better school than the one they had before											
Nicaragua	1.20	Nicaragua	1.22	Benin	1.24	Nicaragua	1.47	Burkina Faso	1.24	Mali	1.55
Benin	1.19	12-18 years old	1.19	Mali	1.19	Male gender	1.12	Mali	1.17	Benin	1.34
12-18 years old	1.15	Burkina Faso	1.13	Nicaragua	1.18	Bolivia	1.10	Bangladesh	1.12	-	-
For those who chose the option Other response											
Niger	2.85	-	-	Niger	3.42	Bangladesh	6.35	Niger	3.96	Burkina Faso	9.60
Bangladesh	2.04	-	-	Guatemala	2.20			Nicaragua	2.08	-	-
-	-	-	-	Bangladesh	2.16					-	-
For those who did not understand the question or preferred not to respond											
Bangladesh	4.04	Bangladesh	4.29	Bangladesh	3.80	Bangladesh	4.64	Bangladesh	3.93	Bangladesh	3.96
Niger	2.00	Burkina Faso	2.12	Niger	1.85	Burkina Faso	2.83	Benin	1.96	India	3.54
Burkina Faso	1.94	Niger	2.10	Burkina Faso	1.78	Niger	2.49	Niger	1.68	-	-

Therefore, **all this suggests that having continued to study in person during the pandemic has influenced their desire for a better school, as they have had to deal with the good and the bad aspects of their schools and, according to the testimonies received, they greatly resent the use of the mask, the distancing measures, not being able to interact as before, the small groups, the lack of games, etc.** All of this reinforces the idea already put forward earlier that having had more

time away from school, followed by unsatisfactory non-face-to-face experiences, may have made them long for the school they used to attend, and vice versa. And as has already been explained, the ideal of the school that is constructed (based on the one they have had or the one that they wish for) coincides in key aspects such as enjoyment, relationships, play, learning, etc., so that in the end these differences are not so great and this facilitates action.

Bolivia and Bangladesh also appear as key influencing factors for the wishing for a better school outcome, and both are classified (according to UNESCO) as the group that has limited in-person classes for the longest period (41 weeks or more), which shows that **the wish to return to a better school goes beyond having been affected by closures** or having attended in person. In the case of Bolivia, it is mentioned in the 6-11 age group; Bangladesh is mentioned in the 12 and 18 age group. We believe that this may be a warning that each age group mentioned by each country has a level of dissatisfaction with their school experience and that having been away from the classroom has not meant that they have forgotten it despite their wish to return to the classroom. It was not possible to explore other possible causes by analysing the data collected in both countries, but this may be material for further studies.

How age and gender influence the wish for a better school

Returning to the key influencing factors, it is striking that, overall, 12-18 year olds rank third among those who prefer a better school. This age group is also the second most influential factor for girls. We cannot argue that this age group has a more pronounced level of dissatisfaction with the current school system due to the scope of this study, as it is necessary to delve deeper into their reasons, with a particular emphasis on what adolescent girls think. It would also be necessary to see if there is any relationship with the fact that older children are more dissatisfied with their school experience, which would coincide with the fact that as they grow older they tend to have a more negative outlook on life, as has been shown in a previous Educo study about children and COVID-19.¹⁰

Another interesting finding in relation to the desire for a better school and which goes beyond the countries they live in, is that being male is key to the

outcome for those aged 6-11 years old, something we need to explore more thoroughly.

They are more likely to wish for the same school if.....

The main factor is the countries they live in, and the contexts and responses to the pandemic. Children in Spain and Guatemala express a wish to go back to the same school more, but much less so if they are from El Salvador, Bolivia, the Philippines and Mali. All these countries, except Mali, have had fairly long-lasting total/partial closures according to the UNESCO monitoring cited above. This therefore confirms what has already been said about longing to return to what they already had when there has been a significant move away from school and vice versa.

In the case of Mali, a country in the midst of a very complex conflict, but with less pronounced closures, it also appears as a key influencing factor for a better school, which is why we conducted a separate analysis for this case only. The factors that have influenced the desire for the same school are being aged between 6 and 11 years old and being a girl, with a high incidence (1.35 and 1.23 above the average respectively). In their open responses, in general, there is a strong trend to highlight that their school is a good place. However, we confirm the limitations of this study and rather than offering conclusions, what we can do is highlight those nuances that merit further exploration in order to better understand the reality of children and provide them with more adapted support.

Returning to the findings of those who want the same school as before, another key influencing factor is being aged between 6 and 11 years old (third overall and for girls). This again seems to be influenced by the age factor and life outlook; in this case, the younger the age, the more positive the outlook, and this may be related to the school experience they are having.

¹⁰ According to the 2020 Educo study. Schools are shut but learning is on!



Participation during the pandemic

How do you feel in terms of your Right to Participation during the pandemic?

Children's participation, as a right and a principle, should not be affected in emergency situations. The General Observation N°12 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (The right of a child to be listened to) includes that "the participation of children affected by emergencies in the analysis of their situation and future prospects should be encouraged and facilitated. Children's participation helps them to regain control of their lives, contributes to rehabilitation, fosters organisational skills and strengthens a sense of identity".

So, let's actively listen to how children have experienced their Right to Participation during the pandemic. The total number of participants in the survey responded to this question and the results are of great interest to have an approximation of

the understanding (or not) of this right. They raise many questions and show that there is much to be done on this issue, both in the most personal and family spheres, as well as in public life.

Participation? I have, but...

According to Table 13, in general, 48.14% responded that they felt listened to and that they had been counted on to make decisions during the pandemic. This response option is the first response option regardless of whether the data is disaggregated by gender or age. Girls report a slightly higher level of participation than boys and, similarly, those aged 6-11 in relation to the older age group.

The analysis of the reasons for feeling like this include, first of all, that participation has been assumed in the context of the pandemic rather than in a broader sense of all areas of their lives as well as the understanding that they may have

had with regards to the question, we believe that the pandemic has had a significant influence as an event that has marked their lives in all areas.

Involvement in family and close environments to protect themselves from the virus is exemplified, which has made them feel that they are valuable agents of awareness and care. There is a mention of school in its social role, where they have learned about the security measures and the progress of the pandemic and, from there, they have taken these messages home to their families. However, there is no mention of health services in this point. When adults follow these guidelines, they perceive it as listening, that they are being taken into account.

In other cases, children manifest that they have accepted and complied with the hygiene measures for COVID-19, and they consider it as a way of participating, being part of society, and contributing to caring for everyone.

There is a second category of examples related to what participating has meant. The mentions are very varied, both in terms of their complexity and implications, and can range from the most personal to the family in general. Due to the scope of this study, it has not been possible to evaluate the quality of this participation, but we consider very positive that they acknowledge all these areas and have a fairly broad concept of the issues that affect their lives.

Table 13. How do you feel in terms of your Right to Participation during the pandemic?

Responses	% of the total	% of responses for each gender			% of responses for each age group		
		Girls	Boys	NR	6-11	12-18	Other ages
I have felt listened to and I have been counted on to make decisions.	48.14	49.30	46.77	50.00	48.38	46.81	60.70
Can you give at least one example?							
Participation in the campaign for protecting against COVID-19 (they have understood the question as what they have been able to do during the pandemic); participation in family life; participation in institutions not including school (this survey, NGOs, churches, communities, town councils, municipalities); participation at school.							
I have not felt listened to and I have not been counted on to make decisions	18.32	17.95	18.77	17.50	16.25	20.69	12.32
Can you give at least one example?							
Reference to the pandemic and health measures and restrictions; there have been differences in levels of participation; reasons for non-participation are given; own decision not to participate; but there is recognition of areas for participation; consequences of non-participation are also identified.							
Other response	2.89	2.74	3.07	2.50	2.58	3.06	4.11
Summary of Other responses							
They highlight that participation is unequal in different areas and depending on the type of issue to be addressed; more listening, but less being part of the decisions; lack of spaces/places to participate because of the pandemic; not knowing the right or lack of understanding of it; by choice or believing that they have no ideas; same as always, same as before the pandemic; feeling happy, feeling listened to, sharing in the family; feeling fearful, stressed, worried.							
I don't understand the question or prefer not to reply.	30.64	30.01	31.39	30.00	32.79	29.45	22.87
Total	99,99	100	100	100	100	100,01	100

Decisions about daily life are included, such as being consulted about what meals are going to be cooked, about activities to develop such as family walks and the distribution of housework, about very personal aspects so that they can decide (clothing, materials, celebrating their birthday, going out or not). They also give examples of family communication issues, moods, feelings, ideas. They have felt that their fears and doubts about the pandemic were listened to, or they have simply been asked “how are you?”, which for them has been important in order to feel listened to. There are references to special family decisions, such as selling a car or a television, moving house, going on holiday, etc. They have also been able, according to them, to express personal wishes other than the family choice, such as asking for a change of school or even not getting married, and they have succeeded in doing so!

The third category of responses refers to participation beyond the family and school, such as, for example, the power to express through the survey conducted for this study (all countries do this to some extent). They also mention spaces that other NGOs have opened, in places of worship, their communities and local councils and municipalities. However, there are not examples of participation actions as such in these spaces.

Finally, according to the frequency of responses, the children surveyed mention school participation and give as examples feeling listened to by teachers, being able to participate in class (being encouraged to ask questions or give their opinion) and proposing activities or projects.

As in the previous cases, it is not possible to assess the quality of this participation, but, in general, it is important to remember that these answers were given by choosing the statement “I have felt listened to and have been counted on to make decisions”, so it is assumed that all these examples, regardless of their magnitude, make them feel that way.





I have felt listened to and I have been counted on to make decisions because...

- *I gave my parents advice about what I had learned on the television (in relation to COVID-19)*
Adolescent girl aged 12-18 years old, Bangladesh
- *What you just allowed me to do referring to responding to the survey for this study)*
Adolescent girl aged 12-18 years old, Benin
- *My teacher... sometimes she does a survey to see how she can improve the online classes*
Girl aged 6-11 years old, Bolivia
- *I wanted to attend a conference that lots of people were supposed to attend. My parents initially didn't let me participate. I explained that it was important to me. And to reassure them I promised to respect distances and distancing measures. Finally, they accepted and I was able to participate.*
Adolescent girl aged 12-18 years old, Burkina Faso
- *When I say that when we go out we must always use a mask and practise social distancing.*
Girl aged 6-11 years old, El Salvador
- *On the social media account for the council in the village I live in I can express my opinions.*
Adolescent girl aged 12-18 years old, Spain
- *In our community, I proposed carrying out an activity to teach children to read, write and do basic maths. The Council supported my decision and helped me to do so.*
Adolescent girl aged 12-18 years old, Philippines
- *For example, if I want to continue studying, that is my decision, even if my parents say no, that decision is mine.*
Adolescent girl aged 12-18 years old, Guatemala
- *The family listened to my opinion to stop my marriage. What I don't want to do!*
Adolescent girl aged 12-18 years old, Philippines
- *Because of the lessons at school, my mother believed me and bought hand gel and masks for the children.*
Adolescent boy aged 12-18 years old, Mali
- *When I wanted to change schools, my parents listened to the reasons why I wanted to change and enrolled me in another school.*
Adolescent boy aged 12-18 years old, Nicaragua



Participation? I don't understand or I don't want to answer

The second response option in relation to the Right to Participation is very revealing of the state of this right among those who have responded to the survey. It is also the only time that it is the second most voted option and includes a very significant percentage of responses.

30.64% of participants overall chose the option “I don't understand or prefer not to answer” in relation to how they feel about their Right to Participation during the pandemic. It is also the second most chosen option when taking into account the data analysed by gender and age, and there are no major differences between population groups for this reason; although, males, and those aged 6-11 years, have a slightly higher preference for this response option.

Due to the nature of the question, there are no comments on this issue, and there is no doubt that it is necessary to go deeper, as it seems that a good

part of the respondents to the survey are **unaware of what participation implies both as a right and as a principle.**

Participation? I haven't, but...

This is once again a very interesting response option, particularly in the light of the comments made. Although children state that they have not participated, it is evident that they are aware of this right, which allows them to be critical of what they have experienced.

18.32% of participants believe that they haven't felt listened to and haven't been taken into account in decision-making during the pandemic. Boys, and those between 12-18 years old, have a slightly higher percentage than the others.

The examples that illustrate their lack of participation are also more frequently about issues that have to do with the pandemic itself and are measures that have gone against their Right to Participation. They mention



that they wanted to leave the house and have not been able to; that families, schools and governments have taken measures without asking children and adolescents, that they have not allowed them to express their opinions or have not given them explanations about the reasons behind the measures. It is the only time that the children who participated in the survey referred to accountability as part of participation.

In addition, they have stated that they were aware of the health protocols and could have been agents for their proper implementation, but that they were not listened to. There were even those who proposed cautionary measures to friends and family, but these people did not follow them.

In the open responses, the different levels of participation, from listening to making decisions about what is rightfully theirs, can be seen. There are phrases like “they don’t listen to us”, “they don’t ask for our opinions or allow us to have an opinion”, “they don’t take what we say into account”, “we don’t participate in the decisions”.

They also give reasons for non-participation that demonstrate how far we are from seeing children as social subjects and subjects of rights because of prevailing social norms. They even justify their non-participation in the name of protecting themselves from the virus, because they are underage, or because adults know more, have more experience, want what is best for them, they do it for their wellbeing, fathers and mothers work or are busy, or don’t have the time.

In a more questioning sense, children argue that adults act this way because they think they don’t know or are wrong, or don’t believe them and don’t trust them.

To a lesser extent, there were also those who argued that not participating was their own decision, sometimes accompanied by feeling overwhelmed by the pandemic and not being able to go out. In other words, they had concerns that they thought were more important than participation and could not see that being able



I have not felt listened to and I have not been counted on to make decisions because...

■ *When you are a poor boy you don't count.*
Adolescent boy aged 12-18 years old, Niger

■ *I am a young boy, so nobody counts on me.*
Boy aged 6-11 years old, Bangladesh

■ *In our country, children should not speak in front of their parents.*
Adolescent boy aged 12-18 years old, Benin

■ *Especially at school, all the measures that were taken were done and imposed without any participation on my behalf. It was too abrupt and harsh.*
Adolescent girl, aged 12-18 years old, Benin

■ *In the online classes the teacher allows those who shout to speak, there is no healthy and equal participation, and Zoom keeps cutting out.*
Girl aged 6-11 years old, Bolivia

■ *They listen to me and talk to me, but I can't make decisions because I am only six.*
Girl aged 6-11 years old, Bolivia

■ *I am never good at saying how I feel, but during the pandemic this has got worse.*
Adolescent girl aged 12-18 years old, El Salvador

I haven't been asked my opinion at school, in my free time, or in the physical activities I do, everything has just been imposed.
Adolescent boy aged 12-18 years old, Spain

■ *They don't trust me.*
Adolescent girl aged 12-18 years old, Philippines

■ *Nobody has bothered to find out how much the children have really learned, the teachers just send homework and don't know if we are doing well or badly... in the end they get paid and we don't understand anything.*
Girl or adolescent from another age group, Guatemala

■ *I don't like the fact that each person just receives instructions all the time.*
Girl aged 6-11 years old, India

■ *I have never been asked to make decisions.*
Girl aged 6-11 years old, Mali

■ *Lots of people ignore what we say, they act like they are listening but they are not.*
Adolescent boy aged 12-18, Nicaragua



to participate could have helped them deal with these issues and try to look for solutions.

Based on the above responses, the areas for participation most often called for were primarily the family, which is logical given the measures implemented. They also mention school and, to a lesser extent, society. They also comment on how participation has declined due to online classes or how difficult it is to do so in that space, and that the pandemic has been a moment of setback in terms of being able to express oneself.

Finally, they mention the consequences of non-participation, such as feelings of worthlessness, isolation, lack of interest from others towards them, "it feels ugly", "it offends", "they are not interested". In this way, they show that participation is also a way to improve their subjective wellbeing in order to cope better with material and relational deficiencies, as a result of the measures taken and/or the situation of the family.

Participation? We have a different opinion

Although it represents a smaller percentage, the list of textual responses summarises the extent to which they are aware of this right very well, as well as how they feel at this point in their lives.

¿What are the key influencing factors regarding their Right to Participation during the pandemic?

I feel more listened to and taken into account when...

Table 14 summarises the factors that have had the greatest influence on the perception of the Right to Participation. In general, according to the results, where they live is the most influential factor. Those who live in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Bolivia have shown higher than average chances of being able to participate. The data for girls are exactly the same and, in the case of boys, Bolivia is no longer the third option and it is replaced by Guatemala.



I have an alternative response option about my right to participate during the pandemic because...

- *My parents listen to me, but at school they don't.*
Girl or adolescent from another age group, El Salvador
- *I have felt listened to by my family, but not at all by society and the educational community and teachers.*
Adolescent boy aged 12-18 years old, Spain
- *I decide about by toys, food and clothes, but my parents decide my name, school fees and when to go or not to go to parties.*
Girl aged 6-11 years old, El Salvador
- *I have felt listened to, but we as children have not made any of the rules.*
Adolescent boy aged 12-18 years old, Spain
- *I have been listened to, but my proposals have not been taken into account (such as tutorials with a reduced number of students).*
Adolescent girl aged 12-18 years old, Nicaragua
- *Everything is closed. Where can I participate? Even my school is closed.*
Adolescent boy aged 12-18 years old, Bangladesh
- *I felt listened to but the activities right now are limited in comparison to before the pandemic.*
Adolescent girl aged 12-18 years old, Philippines
- *I don't think I even have rights.*
Boy aged 6-11 years old, Niger
- *I don't know what I could participate in.*
Adolescent boy aged 12-18 years old, Spain
- *I didn't feel involved enough.*
Girl or adolescent from another age group, Burkina Faso
- *The truth is I don't participate because I don't want to participate.*
Adolescent boy aged 12-18 years old, El Salvador
- *I feel that my communication, with my parents and siblings, is the same as it was before the pandemic.*
Girl aged 6-11 years old, El Salvador
- *Because I am happy to be closer to my family.*
Adolescent boy aged 12-18 years old, El Salvador
- *I have felt stressed, but my family helped me.*
Girl aged 6-11 years old, Bolivia

Table 14. What influences the outcome for the perception of the Right to Participation during the pandemic? (probability of times in relation to the average)

How to interpret this data

This table summarises those factors included in the study that have had the greatest influence on the outcome regarding the perception of the Right to Participation during the pandemic. They have been calculated based on the % overall, by gender and age. The values shown here indicate how these factors behave in relation to the average. Example: Nicaragua, 1.58; this means that children living in Nicaragua feel more listened to and taken into account and this is at a ratio of 1.58 times relative to the average for girls and boys overall.

Overall factors	Influential factors related to gender		Influential factors related to age		
	Girls	Boys	6-11	12-18	Other ages

For those who have felt listened to and taken into account in decision-making

Nicaragua	1.58	Nicaragua	1.58	Nicaragua	1.59	Bolivia	1.61	El Salvador	1.68	Philippines	1.30
El Salvador	1.57	El Salvador	1.57	El Salvador	1.55	Philippines	1.58	Nicaragua	1.68	Female gender	1.22
Bolivia	1.43	Bolivia	1.46	Guatemala	1.47	Nicaragua	1.54	Guatemala	1.49	-	-

For those who have not felt listened to and taken into account in decision-making

Benin	1.93	Benin	2.17	Benin	1.76	Benin	2.22	Benin	2.35	-	-
India	1.67	India	1.87	Mali	1.60	India	2.19	Mali	1.49	-	-
Mali	1.44	Mali	1.31	India	1.45	Burkina Faso	1.51	India	1.45	-	-

For those who chose the option Other response

Niger	2.88	Other country	6.12	Niger	3.75	Niger	2.24	Niger	3.20	Niger	11.20
Philippines	2.04	Philippines	2.14	-	-	Guatemala	2.15	Philippines	2.05	-	-
-	-	Niger	2.08	-	-	-	-	Bolivia	1.95	-	-

For those who did not understand the question or preferred not to respond

Bangladesh	1.84	Bangladesh	1.89	Bangladesh	1.78	Niger	1.96	Bangladesh	1.84	India	2.75
Niger	1.71	Niger	1.71	Niger	1.72	Bangladesh	1.92	Niger	1.48	Bangladesh	2.56
Burkina Faso	1.50	Burkina Faso	1.70	Mali	1.43	Burkina Faso	1.63	Mali	1.47	-	-

By age, the highest possibilities of participating have been in Bolivia, the Philippines and Nicaragua (6-11 year olds). However, those aged between 12 and 18 years of age have been able to participate much

more when they are from El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala. Those of an age than the ones prioritised in the study had being from the Philippines and being a girl as key influencing factors.



Not understanding the question or preferring not to answer it has been more likely when...

Here, once again, where they live has the greatest influence. Overall, if you are from Bangladesh you are almost twice as likely to have chosen this option, followed by Niger and Burkina Faso. This trend is the same for data disaggregated by sex and age, and in some cases those living in Mali and India are added.

I feel less listened to and taken into account when...

Being from Benin means being almost twice as likely not to be listened to than the average. India and Mali also have very significant values. A reading of the open responses to this question shows that these are countries where there are very strong social norms that hinder the Right to Participation and, when examples of participation are given, it is at very basic levels. "They are the ones who decide

and we do it," a girl from Benin told us about adults; "Because you are a child, you don't know anything," commented an adolescent girl from India.

What do you propose to make people listen to you more and count on you to make a difference during and after the pandemic?

How can participation be improved? What is it?

As has been intuitively evident from the previous question, this research is confirming that a large part of the participating children is not fully aware of what is defined as the Right to Participation and its scope, summarised in the survey as listening and being taken into account in the decisions that are taken on issues that concern them. All this is more difficult when they live in contexts in which the social perception of being a child makes them invisible or refers to children being "well-behaved", "obedient", etc.



My participation could improve if...

- *I behave well, not talking back and saying things in a nice way.*
Adolescent boy aged 12-18 years old, Nicaragua
- *I can be kinder, more affectionate and more respectful.*
Adolescent girl aged 12-18 years old, Guatemala
- *Children can also contribute to the change.*
Adolescent boy aged 12-18 years old, Burkina Faso
- *My classmates change and stop discriminating against me for being autistic, if they change they will see that I can help.*
Adolescent girl aged 12-18 years old, Bolivia
- *That we listen to children speak their mind.*
Girl aged 6-11 years old, Mali
- *That our opinion not only be taken into account, but that there are plans that involve children and adolescents in public policies that benefit us.*
Adolescent boy aged 12-18 years old, Bolivia
- *Have a platform where the opinions of children can be listened to and raise awareness of the authorities to take action.*
Adolescent boy aged 12-18 years old, Philippines
- *Let me talk on the radio and on television.*
Adolescent girl aged 12-18 years old, Benin
- *Raise parents' awareness so that they listen to their children.*
Adolescent girl aged 12-18 years old, Mali
- *Take into account the comments of children and monitor the promises made.*
Adolescent girl aged 12-18 years old, India
- *When conducting surveys or baselines for projects that do not only take into account two or ten people from the community as we all have different ways of thinking.*
Adolescent girl aged 12-18 years old, Nicaragua
- *Put my hand up and give my opinion at the school assembly.*
Girl aged 6-11 years old, Spain
- *That teachers ask each child how they feel (and) what they need.*
Boy aged 6-11 years old, Bolivia
- *I want to make a robot that can give the vaccine to everyone, and to children too.*
Girl aged 6-11 years old, India
- *Ask my teacher and classmates to let me say what I think, even if I don't know as much as the others.*
Girl aged 6-11 years old, Bolivia
- *To talk more with them, to trust them and that they also trust me and that they can count on me for whatever they need and that they also do their part to change many things that affect us and that worry us.*
Adolescent girl aged 12-18 years old, Guatemala

Therefore, it is not surprising that the category of responses that is most frequent regarding proposals for improving their participation is that they cannot think of anything or that they do not understand. It is a huge paradox as these are the same children who have responded *en masse* to questions about how they have experienced their Right to Education during the pandemic and how they envision the school of the future.

Beyond this category of opinions, there are other responses to advance the exercise of the Right of Participation and note the capacities of those who have a better understanding of the issue.

Participation and agency capacity during the pandemic

The second category of responses for improving Participation talks about an immediate future with the COVID-19 pandemic still in our lives. The children participating in our survey propose becoming more active and recognised agents, to share and help with the fulfilment of the health measures. They don't want to simply be on the receiving end of measures no one has consulted them about. This offers us a great opportunity for them to be agents of change on issues that are often very difficult and have to do with behavioural changes to help deal with the current pandemic, but which are also useful at any time because of the impact they have on disease prevention and health in general. Their responses once again refer to also looking after mental health..

Participation in the family, simple solutions for activating listening

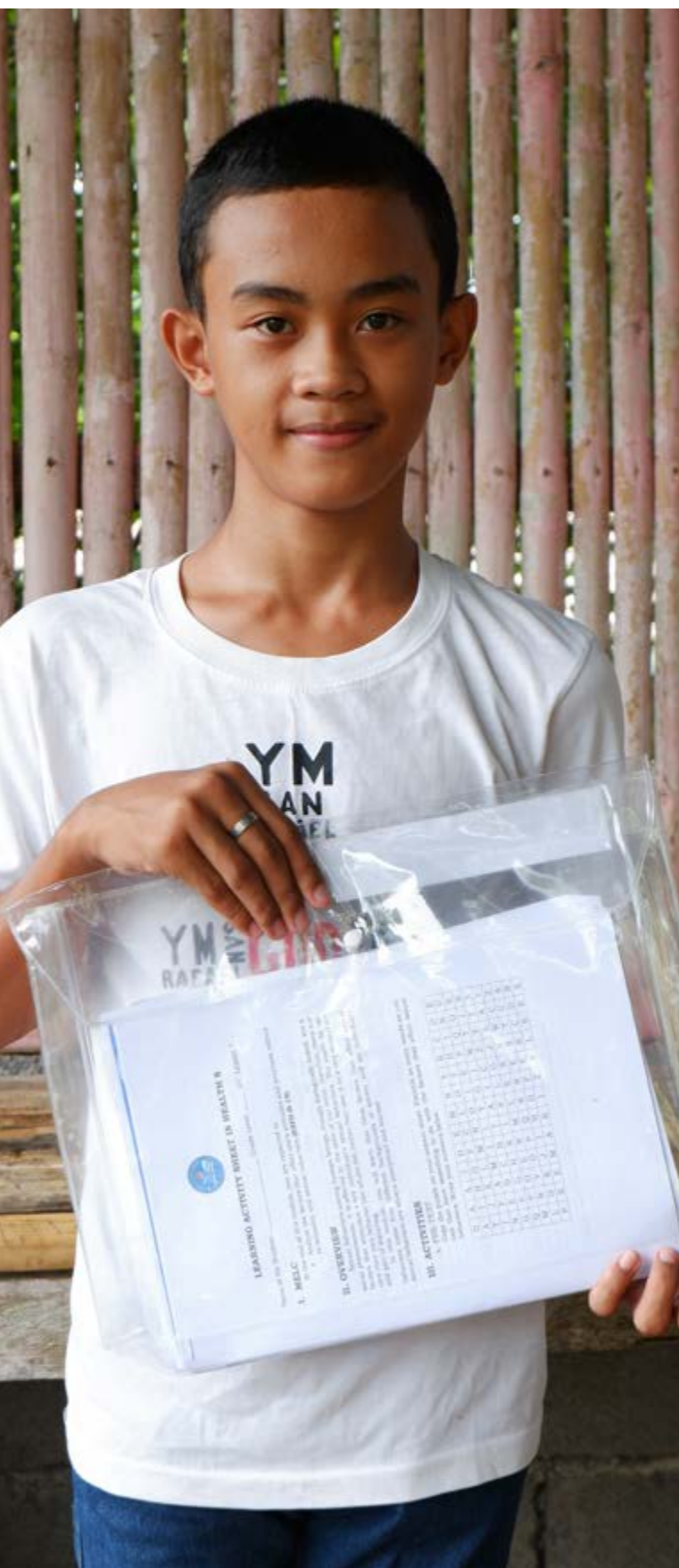
Another category with a high number of responses refers to aspects that would help to create the right conditions to make the family a space where they are taken into account: they want to get to the root. Therefore, they ask us to support them in achieving together the great challenge of spending more time as a family, talking, doing things together, playing.



They also place a lot of emphasis on being listened to and they are aware that to achieve this **there is a need to raise the awareness of and educate parents, who also need to learn about their rights.**

Education with Participation

There is again an emphasis on highlighting the importance of Participation for the Right to Education. The proposals made have a lot in common with what has been mentioned in the chapter on this issue. They want to be taken into account to assess the quality of the educational process and to be concerned about how they feel (subjective wellbeing). It is important that they are aware of the importance of properly integrating these two aspects and that they come to the same



conclusion, regardless of whether they start from one right or the other.

Participation, what they need to do

They also talk about how Participation should be improved by the things they need to do, the skills they need to develop. They mention that they need to **be empowered, start changes themselves, recognise themselves for who they are in order to have more of a voice, communicate more and better, raise their hands and express their opinions, get to know their rights and educate others** about them. They attach importance to **being able to learn about methodologies and ideas that help them to achieve this, to organise themselves, to have their own spaces, to have access to others where they are not, to learn among peers and to be able to participate in better conditions.**

Included in their responses are requests to change children's attitudes towards other children, to stop teasing, to understand and accept differences, to give them opportunities to express themselves and to be listened to. This includes above all the issue of Participation in school.

Participation is also an issue in the public space

After improvements at the family, school and individual level, they mention what needs to be done to be able to participate in the public space. Government, mayors and public administration are mentioned, as well as projects in their communities. **They ask to be listened to, for plans that involve them, offer ideas for their community, opportunities to speak out and change paradigms.**

Participating will influence a better future

Although less frequently than the other responses, the desire for the future has emerged from asking them about what to do so that they can participate more and better. They talk about solidarity, looking after the planet better, that **if we change we have been doing badly today the future will be better, free from violence, living healthily and in harmony.**

Finally, and beyond the categories mentioned above, there is little or no mention of accountability as an important part of the Right to Participation, even among those who have a more complete idea of it.

Participation, beyond these results

Very valuable contributions have been received in the form of very direct comments. But activating listening also means listening in silence, paying attention to what is “unknown” or to things that are expressed in non-verbal language. At Educo we are aware that there are lots of paradigms that prevent us from listening to what children say out loud, and so it is therefore much more complex to do so from the perspective of what is apparently “not said” or “unknown”. And this has been the first response option in relation to how to improve participation.

If we really **want to get to the root of what prevents child participation, and change the world** from there, **we cannot continue to disregard the fact that the silences and “unknown” are also a way of expressing how children experience their rights** and, in this case, the Right to Participation. This apparent lack of responses is also an opportunity for improvement; therefore, our level of listening, complemented by action, would be expanded in a very relevant way.

Therefore, the “I can’t think of anything” and “I don’t understand” should be listened to in the same way as a very important way of participating. They are telling us that it is essential that we do something

as a society, as adults, and alongside children. We have to start, for example, from understanding how we have achieved so much awareness and knowledge about the Right to Education and how we are not achieving the same level of awareness and knowledge about Participation. In fact, and as summarised later in the conclusions of this study, children have a much more advanced understanding of what education and schooling should be than adults in general, so we are not dealing with a lack of capacities, but with barriers and inadequate paradigms that we must change at the root of our societies, something that cannot be postponed, because there will be no real and lasting changes in any other children’s right if the right to Participation is not included. The responses from those who proposed doing something to improve their Right to Participation confirm that.

Another important element to consider, although it may seem unrelated to this study, is that the Right to Participation does not only face great challenges due to age (for children). In many societies participating is distorted and goes from being a right to the privilege of a few. There are still many barriers to participation for reasons related to gender roles, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, political or religious beliefs, etc.

Finally, we are aware that this result requires further elaboration in each context in order to understand the general reasons already mentioned and to grasp the very particular nuances.



Conclusions

According to the logic of this survey and the analyses that have been carried out, it is concluded that:

Education during the pandemic

On continuity of studies:

- 85.36% of those who participated in the survey have been able to continue their studies, either at school, at home with alternative methods, or a combination of the two. There are no significant differences in continuity of studies related to gender or age.
- Those living in Nicaragua, Mali and Spain have been more likely to go to school, either because there have been no school closures or because the duration of school closures has not been as long.
- Given the school closure situation, studying from home has been a very relevant option in Bolivia, Guatemala and the Philippines.
- Combining the school with other alternative modalities has been particularly relevant in El Salvador, Guatemala and India.

On those who have not been able to study:

- Just over 11% have not been able to study during the pandemic. Girls, and those aged 6-11, have a slightly higher percentage.
- They were unable to study, mainly because of school closures and the fact that the alternatives that were available did not fit their possibilities or there were no options. School closures have been a particular cause for not studying in Bangladesh, India and Burkina Faso.
- Not having equipment, or not having enough at home, or the equipment available not being adequate enough, difficulties accessing the Internet, and not having sufficient financial resources, were mentioned among the reasons for not being able to study online or to take advantage of other alternatives.
- There are those who have not wished to continue studying by choice, with higher numbers than average in Benin, India and Nicaragua; it is also more relevant for boys and those aged 12-18.
- Another reason is that they have not studied since before the pandemic, but the information available was not sufficient to indicate where this has been most likely.



There is a clear preference for studying in school:

- They prefer to study at school and this is true for girls and boys, and all different ages.
- School is preferred because it allows them to learn more and better, they value the relationships (between peers and with teachers), the possibility to play, to have more support for their learning and that they were not prepared to substitute it for other alternatives.
- In Bolivia, Guatemala and the Philippines, the desire to study in school is much stronger than the perceptions of children in the other countries consulted.

But there are those who prefer to study from home:

- It was a much smaller group than those who prefer school, but it was the second choice.
- They think that studying from home also has advantages for the quality and is effective in protecting them from COVID-19.
- It allows them to have more time for themselves and for their families and is an opportunity to use and enjoy technology.
- From the type of answers, it is likely that they were those who had the best possibilities to study online (equipment, connection, financial resources) and who also had family support.
- Studying from home is particularly valued in India, Bolivia and El Salvador.

Going beyond going to school or studying from home:

- Some see no clear difference between the two and think that they could coexist.
- Having had long periods of school closure seems to influence the choice of face-to-face attendance as the first option for study. The same influence is also noticeable to the contrary.

They miss school a lot:

- More than 80% of those who have been partially or completely unable to go to school said they miss it. Girls missed school a bit more and also in Bolivia, India and Guatemala.
- They miss the school because of what it offers them in terms of their relational wellbeing, spending time with their peers and the relationship with teachers. They see school as a space for socialising and learning.
- They miss the libraries, laboratories, the opportunity to explore, etc.
- They feel that school is a place that belongs to them.

There are some who do not miss school:

- It is a much lower percentage and there is a tendency for it to be an above-average opinion in India, for those who did not answer the question about their gender, and for those living in Bangladesh.
- Girls from El Salvador, Bangladesh and those who are aged 12 to 18 are outside the general pattern for this response, therefore these places and ages have a higher than average likelihood of not missing school.
- By the type of response, those who have had good conditions at home do not miss school. Also, because they have not lost the possibility to interact with their friends.
- There is a group that claims that they don't like school because of violence, bad relationships, etc.

Those who wish for a better school in the future:

- This is the majority option in general, for children aged between 12 and 18.
- Where there have not been such severe restrictions on attendance, such as in Nicaragua, Benin, Burkina Faso and Mali, there is a greater desire for a better school and therefore less longing for what was there before the pandemic.
- They have described a better school in great detail:
- Better infrastructure, more spaces for learning and playing, emphasis on the quality of the WC and they also mention plants, gardens and nature.
- A better school is a place for learning and enjoyment.
- They wish to regain the learning and pace of study they used to have.
- They would like there to be less students in each class.
- To have the possibility to combine in person learning with online education.
- To have fewer tasks.
- Better quality teachers, who are motivated, who are more cooperative, who treat them better, who are better prepared.

- More and better technological equipment and more school supplies.
- Better health and sanitary conditions at school, including mental health.
- Better school coexistence (among peers and with teachers).
- It is noteworthy that there is complete overlap with the above-mentioned UNESCO/UNICEF/World Bank initiative called *Mission: Mission Recovery Education 2021*. But children have abounded in very relevant details and give an added value in terms of school also being a place of meaningful relationships and enjoyment.

But there are those who want a school the same as before the pandemic:

- It is the second most desired option and the first option for those who are aged 6-11.
- The desire for school to be the same as before is higher than average especially in Spain and Guatemala, followed by El Salvador, Bolivia, the Philippines and Mali. Except for Mali and Spain, all are countries with long-term restrictive measures.
- The return to school as it used to be has many points in common with what was said about a better school, so it is not a contradiction as such. There is a combination of the aforementioned longing to return to what has been lost, but also because there are those who believe that their school was good as it was.
- It is also influenced by the fact that going back to school is seen as a return to life without masks and social distancing, aspects that are largely resented. It would represent a return to normality.
- There is also an emphasis on the fact that returning to school as it was before would mean returning to their friendships.





Participation during the pandemic

They feel they have participated:

- Just over 48% feel they have been listened to and taken into account in the pandemic period. This feeling is strongest in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Bolivia.
- However, based on other open responses and opinions, it is clear that there is not as deep an understanding among many children about what this right means in the same way as there is for the right to education.
- They feel they have been involved mainly because of what they have done in relation to the pandemic, and much less so in other areas of their lives. They participated by protecting themselves and their families, by following the measures and encouraging others to do so.
- There are also mentions of decisions in everyday life, but due to the scope of the study it is not possible to assess whether this amounted to real participation.
- The survey for this study is used as an example of participation. Reference is also made to spaces with other NGOs, churches, communities, local governments and in school life, but without specific examples.

There is a significant group that did not understand the question or preferred not to reply:

- It is the second most voted option, which is unusual in the survey and seems to have been influenced by the understanding of the question, especially in English and French-speaking countries, but also by the understanding of the Right to Participation.
- In Bangladesh, Niger and Burkina Faso, they have been more likely to not understand or not want to answer this question than the average.

There are those who think that they have not participated:

- Generally speaking, boys and those between 12 and 18 years of age are more likely to express this opinion.
- The feeling of non-participation is higher in Benin, India and Mali. The open-ended responses show that these are countries with very strong cultural patterns that make it difficult for children to participate.
- Although they resent not having participated, in their responses they show that they know more about this right, therefore they are able to be more critical.
- They are more critical of having had to follow measures during the pandemic without prior information and without being given the possibility to contribute to sharing and implementing them.
- They complain a lot that they are not listened to and question cultural patterns.
- Their responses mention key areas for their participation: family, school, community, local government.
- They see the pandemic as a setback for participation, especially in schools.
- They identify negative feelings caused by not participating, they don't like it, it affects their self-esteem.





Proposals for improving participation:

- There was a high frequency of responses saying that they did not know what to answer or that did not say anything at all. A reading has been made from this situation in order to recognise all that needs to be done for the understanding of the Right to Participation, starting from activating listening even when there are no answers.
- Beyond this finding, there is a whole series of responses that include very valuable proposals referring to participation and agency during the pandemic, participation in the family with simple solutions to activate listening, education involving participation, what they need to do to improve on their behalf to improve their capacities, take advantage of and generate spaces and attitudes of listening among children without discrimination, that participation is also an issue in the public space and that it will influence a better future.
- There has been little mention of the issue of accountability.

June 2021

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$$\begin{array}{r} 2 \times 2m = 4 \\ 5 \times 8m = 40 \\ \hline 44 \end{array}$$



Recommendations

About the Right to Education based on the experiences during the pandemic

As societies, it is imperative that we take advantage of the current spotlight on improving education and integrating the wishes of children. They are guiding us in a masterful way, they also include what experts in the field recommend, and they have their own valuable interpretations and emphases. To improve would therefore be to educate from the root bearing in mind that:

- It is about going back to school, but to a better school. There is a very strong demand for this, but the 12-18 year olds are more vocal about it.
- The description of the desired school is very much the same for those who aspire to the same school as before and those who clearly want a better school.
- This better school is to improve learning, but also a place for becoming and being, a space of freedom to develop and one where there is leisure and play.
- A school where learning and quality, non-violent relationships go hand in hand, both with peers and adults.
- A school where participation is natural, learning requires reasoning and it is impossible to do so by following rules without questioning them.
- A school integrated in the digital world, the use of technology has not substituted the school experience, but adds value to the experience of in person learning. They should no longer be seen as options that replace each other according to the context, they should coexist and enrich each other.
- That school requires teachers who are more competent, stimulating, empathetic and capable of fostering positive relationships.
- A school where health/hygiene has to continue to be present, not only because of COVID-19, but because they are always necessary issues and there is more awareness about this, including mental health. Children want to educate themselves and others on these issues.
- A school that does not move into the home, and not just in times of pandemic, but every day with endless homework for students who have schools that somehow give them equal opportunities to learn, but who on returning home find themselves in very different conditions. School and home can complement each other really well, one does not substitute the other and they need to coexist and enrich each other.
- A school that has to be made better without ignoring the fact that there is a lack of resources everywhere, but the resources that are available, and those that are sought additionally, need to be used thinking also about what children are telling us. They give importance to what is mostly prioritised: infrastructure, but expand it by talking about adequate lavatories, libraries, spaces for play, sport, recreation and environments connected to nature.
- If we want to promote education from the root, it is necessary to promote a school where they can be a do what they have reason to value.

About the Right to Participation based on the experiences during the pandemic

In a world with so many challenges, where we need everyone to contribute, the failure to encourage the participation of a large part of the population is not only a violation of their rights, but also an invaluable loss of opportunities. It is also necessary to educate from the roots in order to change what prevents children's participation, this cannot be postponed and must take into account that:

- It is necessary to educate in the Right to Participation from childhood, life stages and their contexts. This does not have to mean renouncing the scope of what is established by law, but rather a construction and understanding from the root of the matter and from the subjects of this right.
- Goals must be set to advance child participation according to each context, understanding the deeper social and cultural factors that prevent and/or facilitate its implementation. In such a perspective, what in some places may be seen as major breakthroughs, in others would be already resolved issues and they would work towards higher goals. The Right to Participation is one, but there is a reality for every child who has to participate.
- Society must be taught to listen actively to what children tell us, including what they communicate to us through their silences and when they prefer not to express their opinions. This involves a society that is much more empathetic, educated in its rights and in children's rights. Key spaces and agents for listening would be the family (mothers, fathers, other adults and children in the family environment); school (teachers and peers); communities and local government (community and government authorities).
- It is necessary to accept that listening leads to action and accountability, which receives too little recognition and is too little enforced.
- It is necessary to support children to improve their abilities, recognise themselves as subjects, learn about participation and rights, take advantage of existing spaces and open new ones, organise themselves, and change attitudes among peers that perpetuate discrimination and violence and do not help participation.
- Children must be supported to exercise their agency, to show society that their participation generates benefits for all, just as during this pandemic, some children have been successful in educating their families and supporting them in understanding and applying prevention measures.
- Child participation must be made visible at all levels. A lot of resources tend to be devoted to creating and promoting what is being done at national and international level, but the same is not done in the closest and most priority areas (family, school, community). It will then transcend from these spaces to these other spaces.
- If we want to educate from the roots to change the status of children's Right to Participation, we must go to where they are, understand, and accompany them in order to change what prevents them from participating in what they have reason to value.

About the implications for Educo

Educo needs to analyse these results according to each country's context and explore the most important issues in more ways than just the survey. This would be a way to further activate our listening, educate ourselves, influence other actors in a better way and be able to improve our actions in favour of children, their rights and their wellbeing. Here are some general and additional issues of what needs to be done at the country level:

- Bearing in mind the 3D Wellbeing approach Educo applies, and with the involvement of experts in the issue, it would be very useful to know which of the current school issues are connected to improvements in wellbeing and which are not and, on this basis, to improve the work done on the Right to Education by considering key interests of children.
- There is a need to know whether there really is a higher level of dissatisfaction with schools today, with an emphasis on 12-18 year olds and adolescent girls. To know what their motivations might be, and it would even be important to know how much this is influenced by the level of life satisfaction¹¹ in general and what is motivated by the school experience as such.
- There is a need to know much more about, and take action on, the school experience and academic performance of those who are in some way uncomfortable with the binary sexual system and/or traditional gender stereotypes. From this, we can improve our work on school inclusion in a subject that is underexplored, especially in some contexts.
- In addition, given the importance of schools in children's lives, more work could be done on schools as promoters of spaces and times for meaningful child participation. This would not only help the exercise of the Right to Participation itself, but also the Right to Education on issues that are of great importance to children. A way to make a reality of what the philosopher and teacher Marina Garcés sums up as "An ideal school is a school that listens"¹².
- The analysis of the key influencing factors conducted in this study has shed some light on the reasons behind the results. However, it is necessary to go deeper by considering the context in each country and listening to children with tools that help understanding beyond what is possible with a survey (focus groups, in-depth interviews, etc.).
- Lastly, Educo had to rapidly adapt its way of working, and the projects it implemented, due to the pandemic. This has generated very valuable experiences that would be worth documenting in order to better benefit the organisation and society at large. It would also be a way to see how we at Educo have experienced the pandemic and, together with the children's experiences, improve our internal and programmatic work.

¹¹ Life satisfaction, the judgement that each person makes about the quality of his or her life.

¹² Interview carried out by David Porcel Dieste, philosophy teacher and collaborator with the magazine *Revista Ábaco* about the book by Marina Garcés *Escuela de aprendices* (Apprenticeship School, published in Spanish by Galaxia Gutenberg, 2020).

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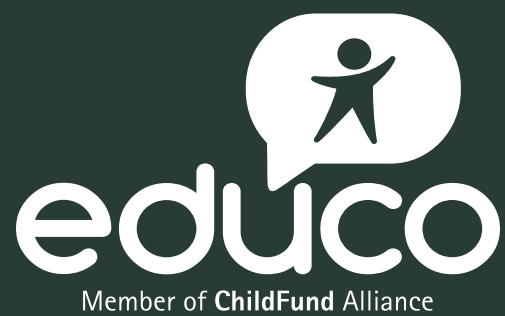
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