

Media Update

16 September 2021

ILO

MEDIA ADVISORY

WHO/ILO joint estimates of the work-related burden of disease and injury reveal numbers of deaths related to work

Launch of the first joint estimates of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) on work-related disease and injury burden.

Speakers

- WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
- ILO Director-General, Guy Ryder
- Director, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Health, WHO, Dr Maria Neira
- Director, Governance and Tripartism Department, ILO, Vera Paquete-Perdigao
- Technical Officer, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Health, WHO, Dr Frank Pega
- Statistician, Labour Administration/Occupational Safety and Health, ILO, Balint Nafradi

When

Friday 17 September 2021, 14:00 CEST

Where

Virtual press conference via zoom. Accredited journalists should email press contacts below for login details.

The event will also be live streamed on WHO's social media channels [Facebook](#) ; [Twitter](#) ; [YouTube](#) ; [Instagram](#) .

To receive the embargoed material please contact [Ceridwen Johnson](#) or mediainquiries@who.int .

Please note that the embargo lifts at 14:00 CEST on Friday 17 September 2021.

For more information please contact:

- [Ceridwen Johnson](#) , WHO Geneva, World Health Organization, Tel: +4179/5789678
- [Andre Muchnik](#) , WHO Geneva, World Health Organization, mediainquiries@who.int
- [Rosalind Yarde](#) , ILO Geneva, International Labour Organization, Tel: +4122/7997697, newsroom@ilo.org

UNICEF

PRESS RELEASE

Schools still closed for nearly 77 million students 18 months into pandemic – UNICEF

UNICEF and partners' digital channels to close down for 18 hours to mark 18 months of school closures and send one message to the world: Reopen schools as soon as possible

NEW YORK, 16 September 2021 – Eighteen months into the COVID-19 pandemic, schools for nearly 77 million students in six countries continue to be almost completely closed, according to an updated data analysis released today by UNICEF.

According to the analysis, Bangladesh, the Philippines and Panama are among the countries that kept schools closed the longest. In total, an estimated 131 million students in 11 countries have missed more than three-quarters of their in-person learning. Around 27 per cent of countries worldwide continue to have schools fully or partially closed.

“As classes resume in many countries around the world, millions of students are heading into a third academic year without stepping foot in a classroom,” said UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore. “The losses that students are incurring from not being in school may never be recovered.”

To call attention to the 18 months of lost learning, deferred potential and uncertain future, and to urge governments to reopen schools as soon as possible, UNICEF and partners will close down their digital channels today at 13.00 GMT for 18 hours.

School closures have created a shadow crisis for children. Beyond falling behind on their education, many children are missing out on school-based meals and routine vaccinations, experiencing social isolation and increased anxiety, and being exposed to abuse and violence. For some, school closures have led to drop out, child labour and child marriage. Many parents have been unable to continue with their employment while balancing their children’s care and learning needs. Some have lost their jobs entirely, pushing their families into poverty and creating a deeper economic crisis.

While remote learning has been a lifeline for millions of schoolchildren, access to the technology and the quality of the curriculum have been uneven even within communities and school districts.

Experience shows that schools are not the main drivers of transmission and that it is possible to keep them open for in-person learning. UNICEF urges governments, local authorities and school administrations to reopen schools as soon as possible and take all possible steps to mitigate against transmission of the virus in schools, such as:

1. Implementing mask policies for students and staff in accordance with national and local guidelines;
2. Providing handwashing facilities and/or hand sanitiser;
3. Frequently cleaning of surfaces and shared objects;
4. Ensuring adequate and appropriate ventilation;

5. Cohorting (keeping students and teachers in small groups that do not mix); staggering start, break, bathroom, meals and end time; and alternating physical presence;
6. Establishing information sharing mechanisms with parents, students and teachers;
7. While not a prerequisite to reopen schools, teachers should be prioritised to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, after frontline health workers and those most at risk, to help protect them from community transmission.

To support these efforts, UNICEF contributed to a multi-agency [Framework for School Reopening](#) to provide practical and flexible advice for national and local governments and aid their efforts to return students to in-person learning.

“The education crisis is still here, and with each passing day that classrooms remain dark, the devastation worsens,” said Fore. “This is a crisis we will not allow the world to ignore. Our channels are silent, but our message is loud: Every community, everywhere must reopen schools as soon as possible. Schools must be the last to close and the first to reopen. We have to start putting the best interest of every child first. In all but the most extreme cases, this means getting students back into the classroom.”

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Notes to editors:

The Government of Bangladesh commenced the reopening of primary, secondary, and higher secondary educational institutions in the country as of 12 September 2021.

The Government of Panama commenced the reopening of primary, secondary, and higher secondary educational institutions in hybrid mode in the country in June 2021.

Access the report [here](#).

Download multimedia content [here](#).

About UNICEF

UNICEF works in some of the world's toughest places, to reach the world's most disadvantaged children. Across more than 190 countries and territories, we work for every child, everywhere, to build a better world for everyone.

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For more information please contact:

Sara Alhattab, UNICEF New York, Tel: +1 917 957
6536, salhattab@unicef.org