

2021 Papua New Guinea Report / Get to know / Schools & their leaders / Are there any barriers to quality teaching? /
School closures & continuity of learning measures

School closures and continuity of learning measures

School closures were common throughout the region in 2020 and 2021, including during the pandemics, epidemics and natural disasters referenced in the questionnaire. School leaders were asked to indicate how long their school was closed due to, respectively, a pandemic, epidemic, natural disaster, or other reason in these years. Durations for school closures were collected separately for each of these categories.

School closures

Table SLT3.3 shows the average school closure durations by reason for the closure.

Two out of three students attended a school which experienced disruptions due to a pandemic (66%), 26% of these students attended schools that were closed for more than eight weeks in 2020 and 2021. A minority (34%) of students attended schools that were not closed for a pandemic.

While pandemics were the single biggest factor in school closures from external factors, natural disasters and epidemics also had an impact – affecting 13% of students.

Table SLT3.3

Regional percentage of students attending schools that were closed for various reasons in 2020 and 2021 by school closure duration and reason for closure

Duration	Pandemic	Epidemic	Natural Disaster	Other
0 days	 31% (1.6)	 62% (1.6)	 33% (2.1)	 43% (1.9)
Less than 1 week	 7% (0.8)	 25% (1.4)	 29% (1.7)	 27% (2)
1-2 weeks	 12% (0.8)	 6% (1.4)	 32% (1.8)	 8% (0.9)
3-4 weeks	 17% (1.2)	 4% (0.5)	 4% (0.6)	 19% (0.7)
5-6 weeks	 8% (0.9)	 2% (0.4)	 2% (0.4)	 1% (0.2)
7-8 weeks	 5% (0.5)	 0% (0.1)	 0% (0.1)	 1% (0.7)
More than 8 weeks	 21% (1)	 2% (0.5)	 1% (0.3)	 1% (0.3)

Regional average percentage of students attending schools that were closed for various reasons in 2020 and 2021, by school closure duration and reason for closure, PNG, PILNA 2021

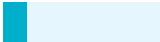
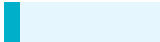
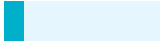
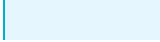
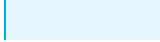
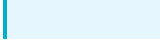
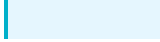
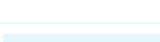
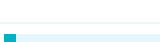
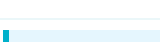
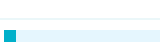
() Standard errors appear in parentheses.

Continuity of learning measures

Along with the school closure information, school leaders were asked to indicate what measures were in place to provide continuity of learning during school closures. The measures that were asked about focused on the provision and availability of learning materials and communication with students and parents. Table SLT3.4 shows the percentage of students in Papua New Guinea in PILNA 2021 who attended schools with specific continuity of learning measures being implemented, available but not implemented, and not available.

Table SLT3.4

Percentage of students attending schools that had measures to provide continuity of learning during school closure

Measures	Yes, implemented	Yes, but not implemented	No
Learning materials physically delivered to student's home	 15% (1.8)	 10% (2.0)	 75% (2.6)
Learning materials available for pick up from school	 48% (3.7)	 13% (2.2)	 38% (3.2)
Learning materials emailed to students or parents	 1% (0.4)	 2% (1.0)	 97% (1.1)
Learning materials available to download from a website or portal	 2% (1.1)	 3% (1.3)	 96% (1.7)
Learning materials broadcast on radio	 0% (0.0)	 8% (1.8)	 91% (1.8)
Learning materials broadcast on television	 4% (1.4)	 8% (1.3)	 88% (2.0)
Communication with students or parents by email or social media	 3% (1.7)	 8% (2.0)	 89% (2.2)

Percentage of students attending schools that had measures to provide continuity of learning during school closure, PNG, PILNA 2021

() Standard errors appear in parentheses.

On average, 48% of students in Papua New Guinea attended schools where learning materials were made available for pick-up from schools during closures. A further 13% of students attended schools where this measure was in place but not implemented. Providing learning materials for pick-up was the most common learning measure adopted by schools.

The next most available measure for students was a step up from having learning materials available for pick-up; this was physically delivering learning materials to a student's home. This measure was implemented in schools attended by 15% of students. A further 10% of students attended schools where this measure was available but not implemented. These are both continuity of learning measures that involve physical learning materials, such as workbooks.

The other measures surveyed were used incredibly rarely. Only 3% of students attended schools where communication with students or parents by email or social media was implemented as a measure, with 8% of students attending schools where this was a measure that was present but not implemented.

Measures to provide non-physical learning materials – emailed materials, materials available on websites, materials broadcast on radio, and materials broadcast on television – were also equally rarely implemented by schools.

Less than 5% of students attended schools where these measures were implemented. The proportion of students attending schools that implemented email distribution of learning materials was 1%; the proportion for having materials available for download from a website or portal was 2%; and for broadcasting learning materials on television this proportion was 4%. No students attended schools which reported using learning materials broadcast on the radio as a learning measure.

What does this mean?

School closures affected large numbers of students across the region during 2020 and 2021. Pandemic-related school closures were the most common. On average, only one-third of students attended schools that did not close for pandemic reasons. Countries experienced different levels of school closures for pandemics, epidemics, natural disasters, and other reasons.

To provide continuity of learning during these closures, measures were made available for students in the region. These nearly exclusively involved physical learning materials, although there were efforts by a minority of schools to provide learning continuity through social media and email.

The finding that physical learning continuity measures were implemented over the largest proportions of students may speak to the challenges of implementing learning measures through social and other electronic communication media in the Pacific region. It is also the case that, in many countries, physical learning materials are still key to the learning experience. Local context is needed to fully understand the reasons behind the various learning continuity measures.