In Mongolia, following school closures and term break from February to September 2020 affecting more than 600,000 children, the Government put learning at the heart of reopening, dedicating the first month of the new school term to the assessment of learning and remedial lessons and activities. UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education and Science in the development and distribution of teacher guidance for remedial classes covering all core subjects from pre-primary to upper secondary.

**KEY FEATURES**

- **Linking distance to face-to-face learning** – The learning assessment and remedial programme were specifically designed to build on and reinforce the TV lessons used during home-based learning when schools were closed.

- **Supporting teachers to help learners catch up upon reopening** – Resources are only as effective as those using them. Mongolia recognised the challenge faced by teachers to adapt quickly to new demands posed by the pandemic by pairing the teacher guidance with online training.

- **Prioritising core subjects** – Focus. Focus. Focus. To make remedial classes more effective, they focused on core subjects deemed critical to the current academic year.

- **Starting with learning** – Teachers used the first two classes of the year for formative assessments to gauge where children’s learning was following the school closures period. Then, there was a four-class recap of TV lessons followed by two classes tailored to the specific needs of children identified through the earlier assessments. Questions posed to children through simple Q&A boxes filled after each class were also used to tailor remedial lessons.
• **Putting student well-being alongside learning** – An earlier UNICEF-supported study found that more than 50 per cent of Mongolian children were worried about falling behind in their studies and wanted catch-up opportunities. The remedial classes specifically responded to children’s feedback and were part of an overall strategy to reduce stress and anxiety, allowing students to ease back into their learning routines.

**EMERGENT LESSONS LEARNED**

• **Prolonged school closures led to learning loss** – Results of learning assessments conducted by teachers at the beginning of school reopening indicate that 2 out of 3 children have fallen behind in their learning during school closures. Teachers reported that children have lost about a third of the expected progress as a result of the prolonged school closures.

• **Self-assessment vs. learning assessment** – Initial evidence also indicates a significant discrepancy between children’s and teachers’ assessment of learning during school closures: while 60 per cent of children evaluated their own learning as satisfactory, teacher administered assessments indicated that only 30 per cent of students were at grade level.

• **Learning disparities** – University entrance test scores from this year indicate widening learning disparities in Mongolia with significant increases in children exceeding both the maximum and minimum scores, suggesting that on the one hand some children are benfitting from distance learning opportunities, while on the other hand other children are struggling academically and falling further behind. Children living in rural areas are among the hardest hit: UNICEF’s MICS Plus survey shows that 69 per cent of the urban children followed the TV lessons while the percentage goes down to 60 per cent for children in rural areas.

• **Efficacy of distance learning** – Due to the rapid response of the Government, children in Mongolia were able to continue their education through TV lessons, which started shortly after school closures. However, a UNICEF study of this remote learning strategy revealed it may not have been as effective as initially hoped. Slightly less than 50 per cent of the respondents followed the lessons regularly, and slightly more than 20 per cent of children did not watch TV lessons at all. Interestingly, 16 per cent of these children did not follow TV lessons even if they had access to necessary equipment and devices. While the content was positively received in general, quality would have improved had the lessons been more engaging and interactive.

• **More time for remediation is needed** – Teachers consulted by UNICEF indicated that remedial classes in the first month of reopening were much needed and helpful but noted that the time allocated to each subject was not adequate to fully address learning gaps.

**OTHER RESOURCES**

• For other resources, including more case studies, please click [here](#) and filter by “Area of Work” (Education).