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MINISTERIO
DE EDUCACIÓN,
CIENCIA Y
TECNOLOGÍA

USAID MONITORING, EVALUATION & LEARNING INITIATIVE

Education Rapid Assessment - El Salvador

Final Results Presentation

March 15th, 2022

Assessment Objectives

- I. The Education Rapid Assessment aimed to provide:
 - An understanding of the impact and ownership of education measures taken during the pandemic of COVID-19
 - The adaptation of teachers, students and their families to the new educational model (Multimodal).
 - How social factors, such as migration, social violence, and poverty, have impacted student retention over the period of the pandemic

Methodology for the assessment

1. Desk review
2. Qualitative data collection at the national level (14 departments)
 - Interviews with MINED authorities
 - Interviews with MINED local representatives
 - Interviews and focus groups with school principals and teachers
 - Focus group discussions with students and student relatives.
3. Quantitative data collection: short survey for teachers
4. Workshop with local actors (Local Education Group)

Timeline

Activity	Time frame	Coverage
Workplan discussion and finalization	Oct. 27 – Nov. 15	
Instrument and sample definition and revision	Nov. 12 – Dec. 7	
Interviews with education authorities	Dec. 9 – Feb. 7	5 interviews
Interviews with local MINED representatives	Dec.1 – Jan. 7	16 interviews
Interviews and focus group discussions in schools	Jan. 10 – Feb. 3	20 schools 57 sessions
Workshop	Jan. 25	31 participants 19 organizations
Teacher survey collection	Feb. 10 -19	3,584 surveys

School attendance during the pandemic

- Attendance rates decreased in 1.7% of the school age population from 2020 to 2021.
- A major decline in attendance rate is observed in preschool, and a moderate one in early primary school, mainly in first grade.

Table 1: gross attendance rate, beginning of year

	Gross attendance rate		
Nivel	2019	2020	2021
Preschool (4-6 yr)	65.7	64.8	58.3
Grades 1-3	97.8	96.3	94.3
Grades 4-6	90.4	90.7	89.8
Grades 7-9	80.0	80.4	81.0
Grades 10-11	62.0	62.8	63.3
All levels	80.1	79.9	78.2

School dropout during the pandemic

- Dropout rates decreased during the pandemic on average, but increased for early grades and in upper high school (bachillerato).
- Dropout was minimized due to MINED's efforts to keep students in school lists even if they did not participate fully in school activities during the lockdown

Table 2: dropout rates before and during the pandemic

Grade	2019-2020	2020-2021
Grades 1-3	4.8	5.0
Grades 4-6	7.0	3.1
Grades 7-9	10.1	5.8
Grades 10-11	11.5	14.0
All levels	7.8	6.3

School retention and dropout

- 200,185 children and teenagers ages 7 to 17 were out of school at the beginning of 2021, this is an increase from 198,617 over the previous year (this takes into account a decrease in population figures for this age range)
- During the pandemic, 59,290 students did not register for the next school year (2021). This is a decrease from 71,720 students at the beginning of 2020.
- 32,870 students graduated from high school in 2021, out of a population of 117,494

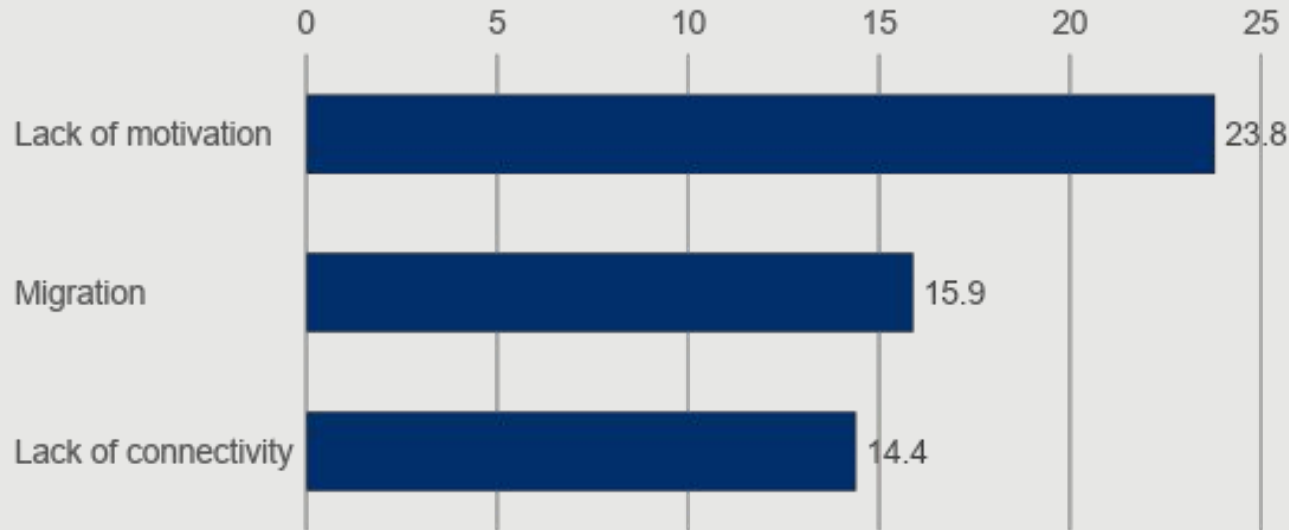
School retention and dropout

- Dropout rates are higher for males than for females (5.9% vs 3.8% in 2020-2021)
- Dropout rates are also higher in rural áreas (9.7%) than in urban áreas (1.6%). Part of the difference is due to migration to urban schools in 7th and 10th grades.

Reasons for school dropout

- Most students and teachers report lack of motivation as the main driver for school dropout, but migration and lack of connectivity rank closely.
- Another reason is child work, mostly in family businesses, and care work for family members.

Reasons quoted for student dropout



Migration and schooling

- Migration is reported to continue among students and their families.
- Data from Customs and Border Patrol show an increase in encounters in the Southwest Border, especially for unaccompanied minors.
- The pull from migration has impacted dropout, especially for secondary school.

Fiscal Year	Total	Families traveling together	Unaccompanied minors
2019	92,351	58,357	12,161
2020	17,165	4,579	2,373
2021	98,690	37,490	15,529
2022 (oct.2021-jan. 2022)	34,128	12,347	5,700

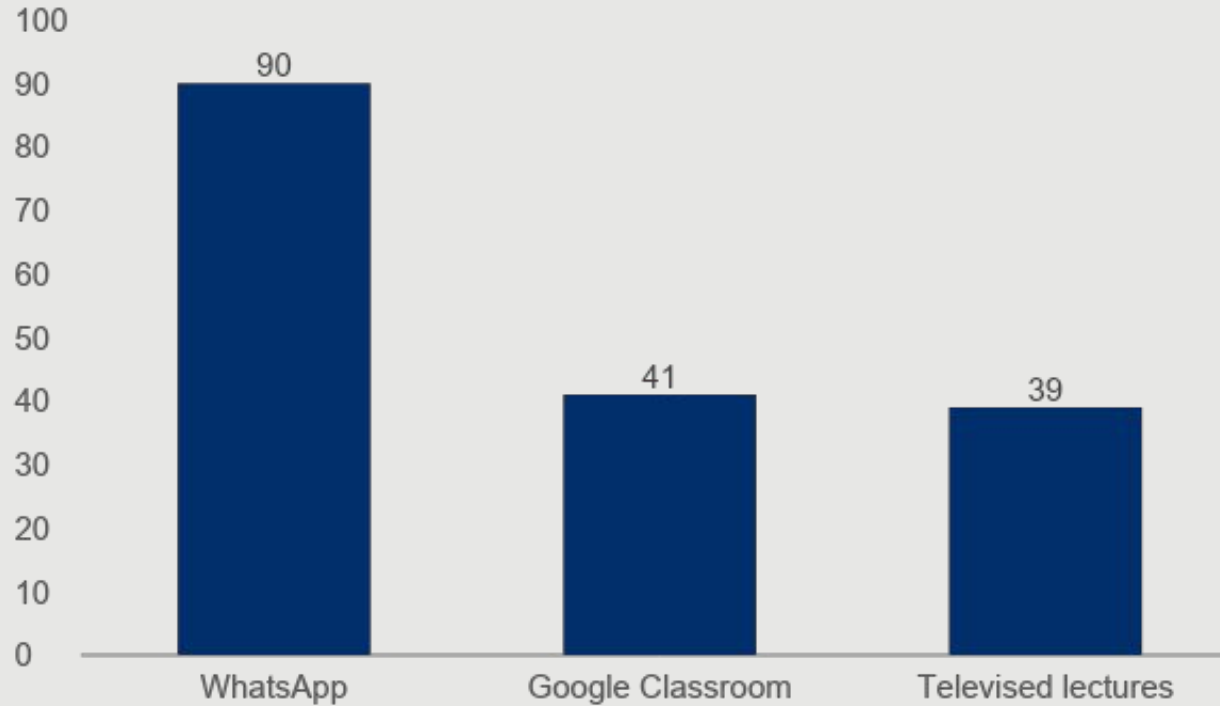
Migration, violence, and schooling

- In 68% of schools, teachers reported student dropout due to migration, limited to around 5% of all attendants.
- International migration occurs at all ages, motivated by family reunion, social violence, and economic reasons.
- Migration rates have increased beginning in the second semester of 2021
- Internal migration is also a factor for school dropout. Usually driven by social violence (threats and/or extortion).
- Social violence is also reported to have increased in the last quarter of 2021.

Effects of the pandemic on the learning process

- The educational model moved from in-person lectures to a self-learning model based on printed or digital learning guides.
- MINEDUCyT deployed other tools such as televised lectures and digital platforms (“modalidades”), but their reach was limited due to lack of connectivity, lack of equipment, and lack of relevance to the curriculum.
- Teachers faced challenges adapting to the new model but settled in a model that involves sending learning guides, collecting solved exercises, and communicating over instant messaging applications with students and tutors to follow up student progress.

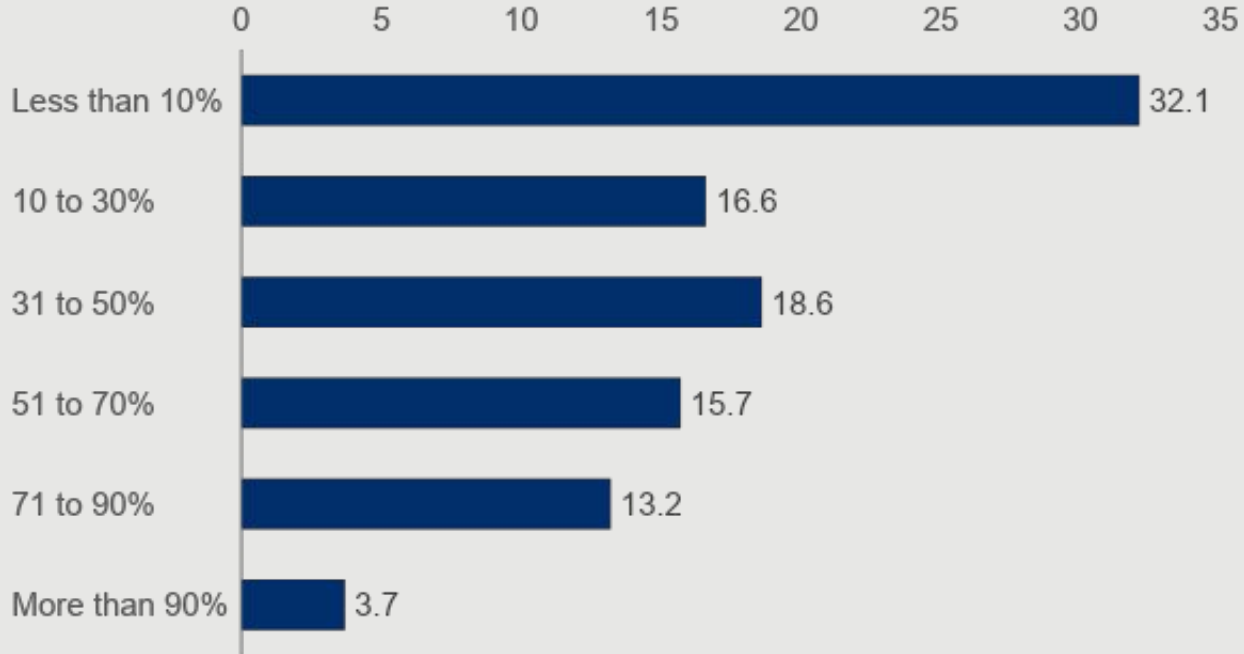
Most used digital tools during the pandemic (percentage of teachers using each tool)



Student adaptation to distance learning

- The degree of continuation of learning activities varied significantly across students, depending on the following elements:
 - Access to internet, depending on income and geographic location
 - Access to equipment (smartphones, computers)
 - Income to buy airtime and print materials
 - Parent support in the self-learning process
- Students in rural areas, poorer urban areas, with parents that work long hours, single-parent families, and those without access to a Smartphone faced greater challenges and could not complete their activities and have greater likelihood of dropping out of school.

Student connectivity (percentage of students in each classroom)



- Only 3.7% of classrooms have at least 90% of students with good internet connectivity. This precludes widespread adoption of digital platforms.

Student adaptation to distance learning

- During the pandemic, emotional issues surfaced, with an increased prevalence of depression and anxiety.
- The partial return to in-person learning has ameliorated these issues.
- Fear of contagion has kept a percentage of students in a full distance-learning model.
- Learning outcomes are expected to have been impacted because the curriculum was reduced in terms of content and instruction time has decreased significantly, even with the partial return to in-person learning.
- At this time, no standardized evaluations allow comparison between years.

Implementation of multimodal strategies

- Google Classrooms and other platforms weren't widely adopted because of teachers lacking training and absence of student connectivity.
- Televised classes are reported to lack integration with the school curriculum, as represented in learning guides. Mountainous and border areas have no reception of Channel 10 signal.
- Radio classes are seldom followed, except for preschool children.
- Digital learning guides are printed and used as workbooks. This is an additional financial burden on families and in some cases, schools and teachers.
- ESMATE textbooks have been highly successful with students and teachers, given the books' orientation towards self-learning.

Investment in computers and digital equipment

- Most students in the study had not yet received their computers, or received them at the end of 2021, so these had no impact on their learning up to that point.
- Teachers and families fear that, without proper training and new methodologies, computers will not be integrated in learning activities and consequently, be of little impact in terms of learning outcomes.
- All participants agreed that without internet connection, computers would do little to improve the learning process.

Conclusions

- Family involvement in the learning process greatly increased during the pandemic.
- Teachers became remote guides in the process of self-learning.
- A high degree of heterogeneity in access to internet and computer equipment, family support, and cultural capital, generated significant variations in learning.
- Learning guides will continue to be the main educational resource. Accordingly, these should be expanded and adapted to better promote self-learning.
- Teachers require significant training in the integration of digital tools in the learning process, and in evaluation for remote and in-person models.

Policy recommendations

- Invest in developing and providing detailed blended-learning models to teachers, that could be implemented in the current context of teacher capabilities and student resources.
- Invest in an efficient network for the delivery of printed learning guides.
- Gradually improve and adapt learning guides to promote self-learning and reduce dependence on the family's cultural capital
- Expand successful initiatives such as ESMATE textbooks to other subjects (ESLENGUA texts are already being distributed)

Policy recommendations

- Enhance tutors' participation in the learning process through guides and meetings that help them define their role in education.
- Invest in accelerated learning programs to recover learning losses from two years of disruption in the education system.
- Develop mechanisms for the follow up of students and teachers in terms of their utilization of digital tools and learning guides, in order to provide responses in cases where students are reducing their participation in the learning process.
- Invest in internet connectivity at the national and local level.