

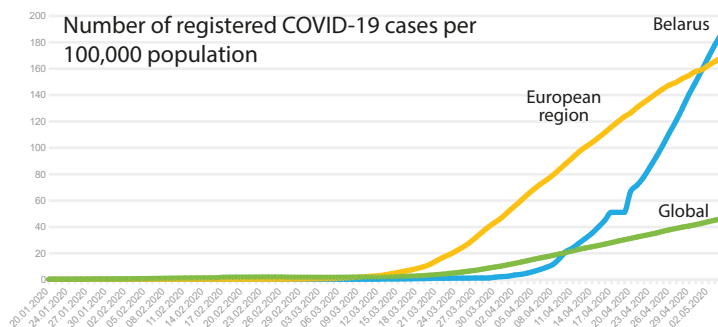
NEWSLETTER #1

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TRENDS IN THE NUMBER OF COVID-19 CASES AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE EDUCATION



As of May 4th, the number of coronavirus cases registered in Belarus was 17,489. The infection rate per 100,000 population had increased 186-fold over the period of 39 days.

The COVID-19 pandemic has radically changed the life of children across the world. In this new reality of uncertainty, the access to computer and internet at home may determine whether the education process stops or whether children continue learning out of school. Also, the availability of soap and tap water may have effect on whether children stay healthy or fall ill.

Closing of schools has affected over 1.58 billion of children in 192 countries, which makes about 91.4% of the total number of students. 94% of the countries ensure continuous education through education response plans. Continuous education is done by means of television (76% of the countries), public internet platforms (74% of the countries), radio (55% of the countries), and SMS/mobile phones (54% of the countries).

According to MICS6 data, some differences had been observed in Belarus before the pandemic as regards the basic reading and arithmetic skills by the income groups. In Belarus, some families with children will need support for distance learning: only 81% of families with many children and 86% of single-parent families have computers. In rural areas, 85% of families with preschool-age children have a computer at home. In fact, all schoolchildren use internet (92%).

35% of children with disabilities aged 6-15 do not use internet; of them, 51% do not use internet because of their state of health, and 39% because they do not need it, which can point to their vulnerability when children are transferred to distance learning.

In response to COVID-19 and its impact on children, UNICEF set up a dashboard, containing the latest data related to children in order to be able to measure our efforts for mitigating and overcoming the pandemic consequences.

HOW UNICEF WITH PARTNERS HELP CHILDREN ACROSS THE WORLD DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

UNICEF country offices around the world work with partners to

- Support governments' crisis response plans including technical assistance, rapid risk analysis, data collection, and planning for the reopening of schools.
- Support the planning and implementation of safe school operation and risk communication including translating, printing, disseminating and implementing safe school guidelines; equipping schools with hygiene packages and circulating critical information on disease prevention; and training teachers and caregivers in psychosocial and mental health support for themselves and students.
- Ensure continuity of learning and access to remote learning programs including designing and preparing alternative education programmes through online, radio and television.
- Enhance knowledge sharing and capacity building for the current response and future pandemics.

Sources: Data from the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus, World Health Organization, the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus were used.