

RESEARCH ON ADOLESCENCE IN THE CONTEXT OF PANDEMIC IN ARGENTINA

National survey



Fundación
INECO





The COVID-19 pandemic has significant consequences on the psychosocial well-being of the entire population, challenging, in a few months, the adaptive capacity of individuals and families. Isolation, contact restrictions and economic closure impose a complete change in the psychosocial environment of the affected countries. Different studies in the world investigated the mental health of adolescents in this context. The stress produced due to isolation leads to problems such as depression, somatization and anxiety.

This measure is believed to particularly affect, both psychologically and experientially, this population.

They also face other stressors such as school closings, changes in their routines, loss of loved ones, inadequate information, financial loss and anxiety from other members of their families.

Young people mostly express feelings of loneliness, anguish, and anxiety.

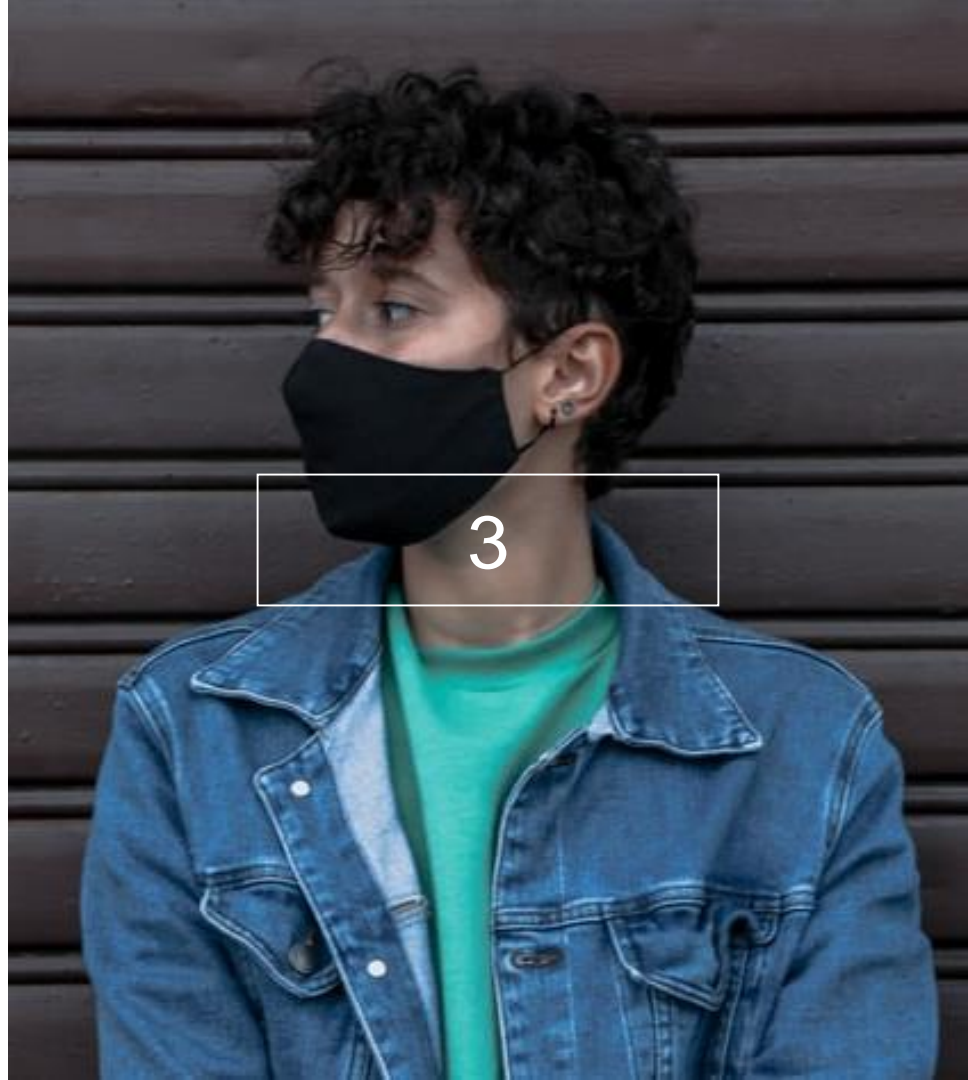
This could be related to multiple factors, including the fact that the adolescent brain is still developing. It is also a period of role changes and transitions. In addition, this period of life is characterized by a greater need for interaction with peers.

Very often, a combination of challenges accumulates in families with limited space, job loss, and other known risk factors, such as mental illness or disability of family members, or single parenting.

Additionally, with the closure of educational institutions, the need for a rapid transition from face-to-face learning to virtual education emerged. According to a UNICEF report, more than 144 million students in Latin America and the Caribbean have lost almost "five months of school due to measures taken by governments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Students from less privileged regions have experienced greater negative impacts.

As with most stressors, resilience and coping surely will perform its role for most people. The COVID-19 pandemic may worsen existing mental health problems and lead to more cases among children and adolescents due to the unique combination of public health crises, social isolation, and economic recession.



A person with long dark hair, wearing a black face mask and a grey hoodie, is looking out a window with horizontal blinds. The window glass is covered in rain droplets. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting an overcast day or evening. The person's hand is visible near the blinds.

OBJECTIVE

We set out to measure the socio-affective state of Argentine adolescents, as well as to describe the state of schooling in the context of a pandemic and of isolation measures.




5

COVID-19 is a near-unprecedented emerging problem that has significant consequences on the psychosocial well-being of the entire population. The response to stressful situations is usually resilient, however, it is common for some individuals to experience difficulties in coping with situations that occur in daily life.

The Argentine Red Cross, through its Humanitarian Observatory and the INECO Foundation, carried out this research, with the aim of knowing some of the most visible characteristics of the emotional reality and the schooling context of Argentine adolescents.

The study was developed within the framework of a descriptive design through face-to-face surveys of Argentine adolescents between 13 and 17 years of age (N = 2530).

Questions related to 3 specific areas of emotional health were included: discouragement, anxiety and resilience. Validated scales were used for each of the dimensions. Finally, questions related to the schooling status of adolescents were and the cognitive and physical difficulties of young people were added.

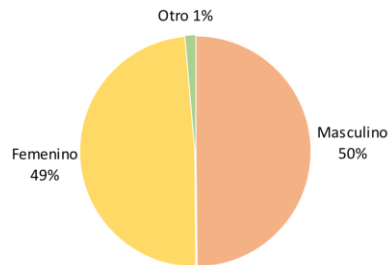
- 
- ✓ **Study population:** adolescents from 13 to 17 years old.
 - ✓ **Survey mode:** Face-to-face
 - ✓ **Methodology:** Coincidental in concentration points where there is a presence of the Argentine Red Cross. The study also had the logistical support of the Scouts of Argentina.
 - ✓ **Geographical scope:** The field operation was deployed in 20 provinces of the country.
 - ✓ **Surveys conducted:** 2530 cases. For the analyzes on the perception of emotional state and resilience, adolescents aged 14 to 17 years (2235 cases) were surveyed.
 - ✓ **Field operation date:** May 2021.
 - ✓ **Instruments:**
 - ***SDQ (socio-affective difficulties)***: a brief screening instrument that assesses psychological problems in children and adolescents, providing information about their behaviors, emotions and interpersonal interactions. The instrument is made up of 25 items grouped into five scales (Emotional Symptoms, Peer Problems, Conduct Problems, Hyperactivity and ConductProsocial).
 - ***RS-14 (resilience level)***: measures the degree of individual resilience of a person, being considered a positive personality characteristic that allows people to adapt to adverse situations. It consists of 14 items grouped in two dimensions (personal competence and acceptance of oneself and life). An adaptation of the RS-14 was carried out for this population, such as the writing in the third person and the elimination of non-applicable items.
 - ***Ad-hoc questionnaire of sociodemographic questions.***

Survey data sheet

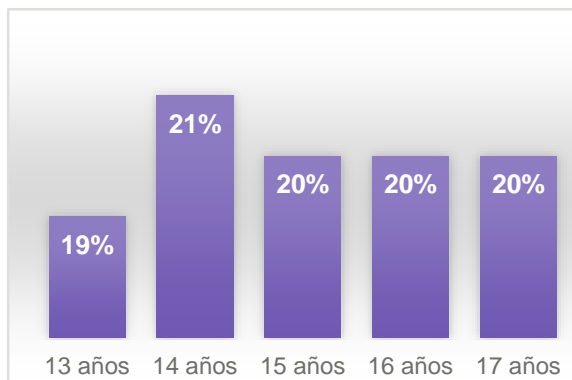
Home

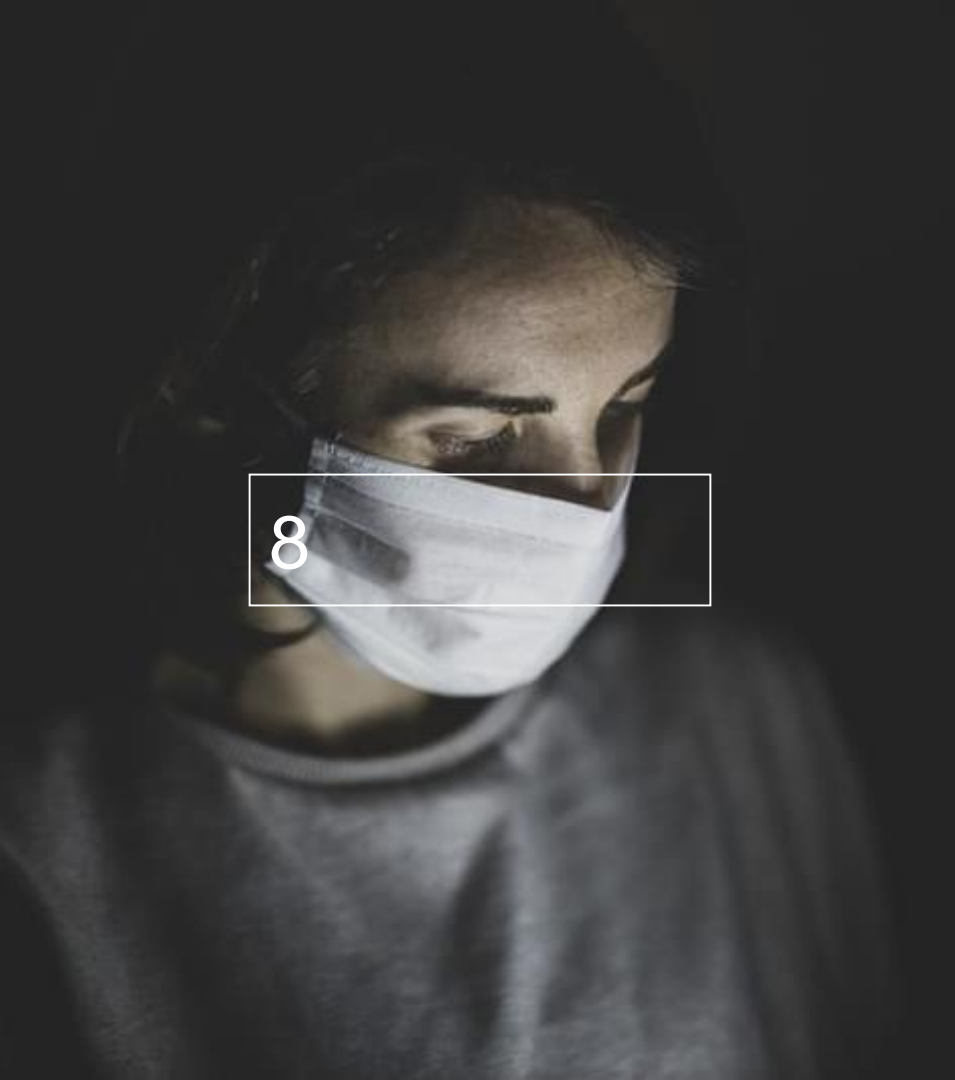
	%
AMBA	30%
Center	33%
Whose	7%
NEA	12%
NOA	13%
Patagonia	5%

Gender



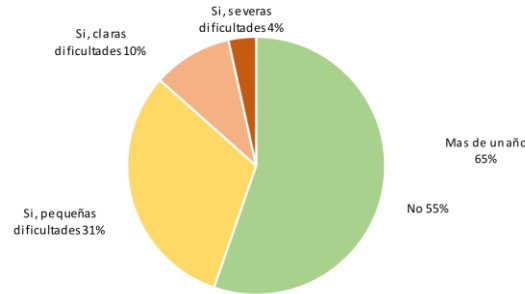
Age





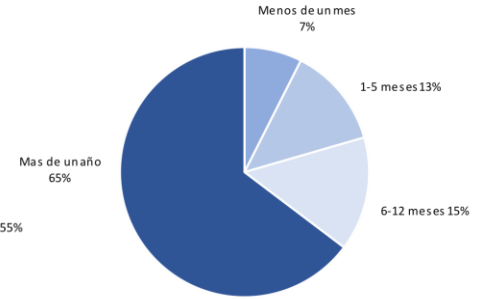
8

Do you feel difficulties in any of the following areas: emotions, concentration, behavior or ability to relate to other people? (The data correspond to percentages)



Base: Total interviewed

Since when have you had these difficulties? (The data correspond to percentages)



Base: Interviewees who have difficulties

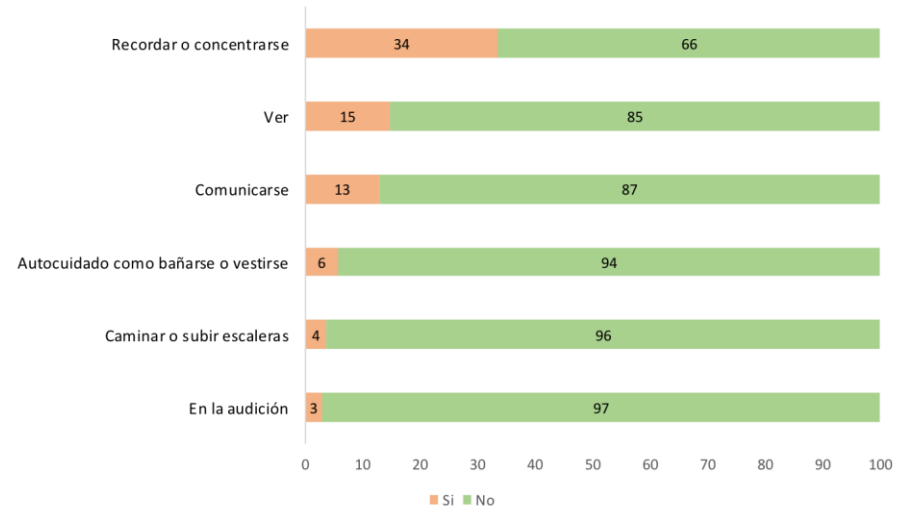
Combining both variables, adolescents are classified as follows:

Without difficulties	With difficulties since before the pandemic	With difficulties since the pandemic
55%	29%	16%



Cognitive or physical difficulties of adolescents

Do you have difficulty...? *(The data correspond to percentages)*



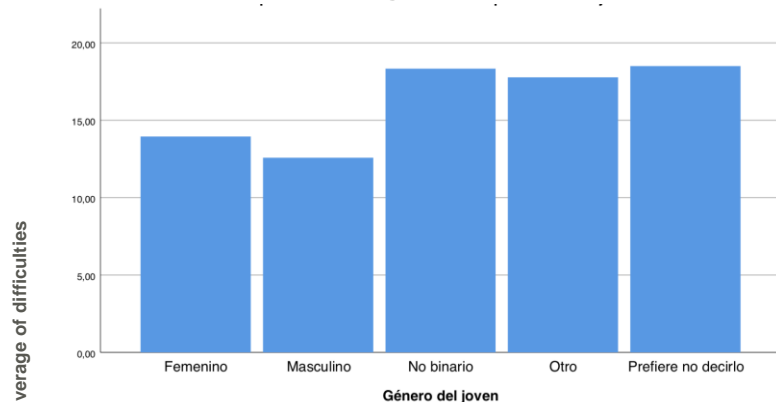
Base: Total interviewed

Socio-affective difficulties by gender and age

	Gender			Age				
	M	F	Other	13 years	14 years	15 years	16 years	17 years
Without difficulties	62%	fifty%	29%	55%	59%	54%	53%	55%
With difficulties since before the pandemic	26%	32%	fifty%	27%	24%	30%	31%	33%
With difficulties since the pandemic	13%	19%	twenty-one%	18%	17%	16%	16%	12%

Base: Total interviewed

Socio-affective difficulties and gender



Note: Average for "Other" is based on the 27 people who answered that option. Although we cannot make a comparison in statistical terms, it is relevant to report that they presented a great emotional affectation



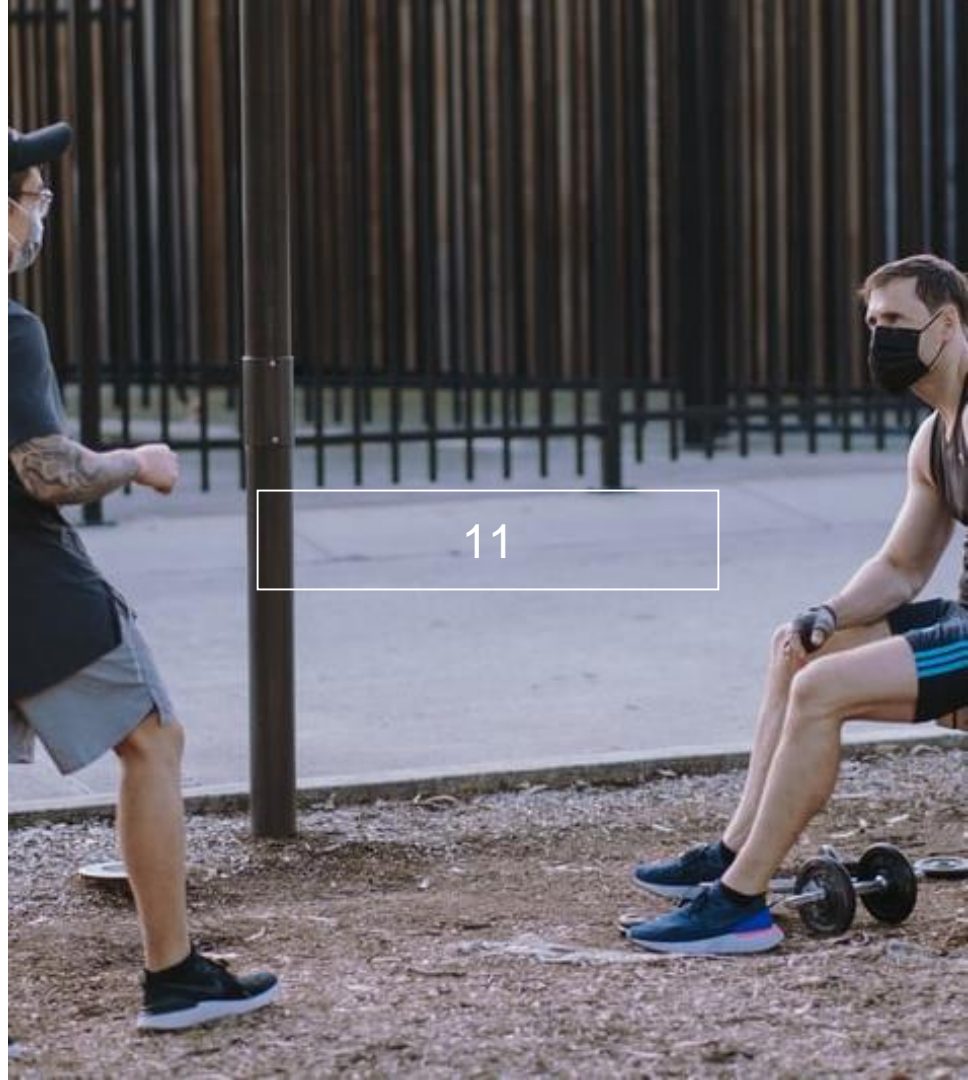
Are you currently attending school?



Schooling according to age and residence

	Age					Home NES		
	13 years	14 years	15 years	16 years	17 years	Under	Half	Medium high
I go in person	24%	fifteen %	12%	12%	12%	17%	13%	17%
I have classes virtually	33%	38%	39%	46%	fifty%	40%	42%	41%
I combine face-to-face and virtual assistance	37%	37%	38%	3. 4%	27%	31%	38%	32%
I do not have classes	4%	5%	5%	6%	5%	7%	3%	8%
I do not attend classes	1%	5%	5%	3%	5%	6%	3%	two%

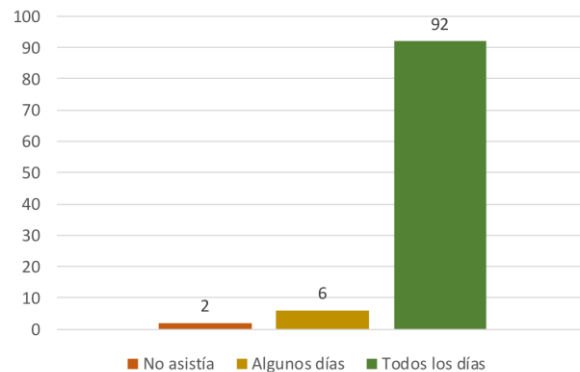
Base: Interviewees who have difficulties



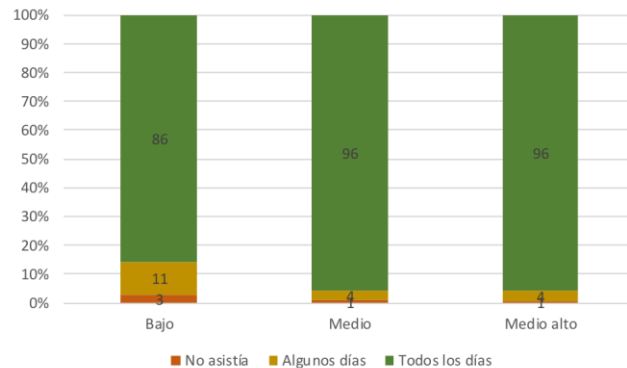


12

Before the pandemic, how many days did you attend the adolescent to class?



Schooling of the adolescent according to the highest level household socioeconomic



Base: Total interviewed

Did you repeat or stay free from school for a year?

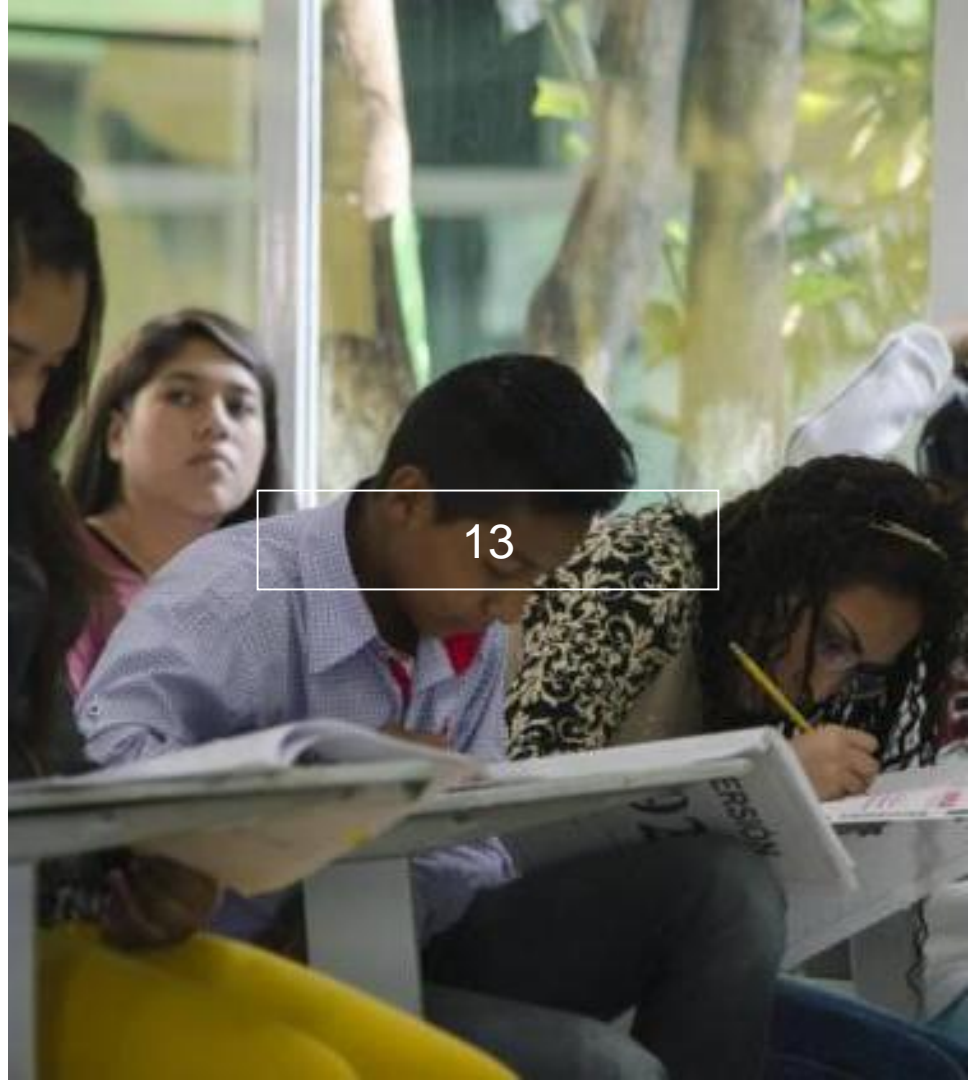
Yes: 15%

No: 85%

Why?

	%
I failed all subjects	38%
I missed classes a lot	33%
I was not interested in school	22%
I was not comfortable with my peer group	19%
I had to work and I didn't have time	8%
I was mom / dad	3%

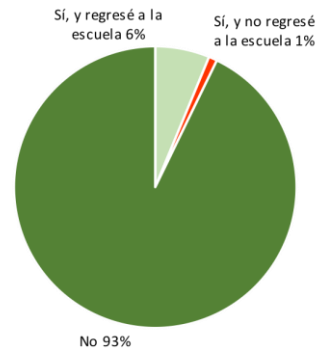
The percentages do not add up to 100% because it is a multiple question



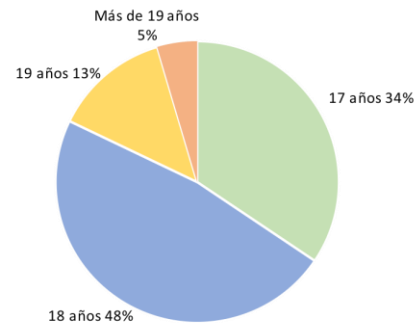


14

Did you drop out of school for any length of time?



How old do you think you will be when you finish school?



Do you want to continue studying?



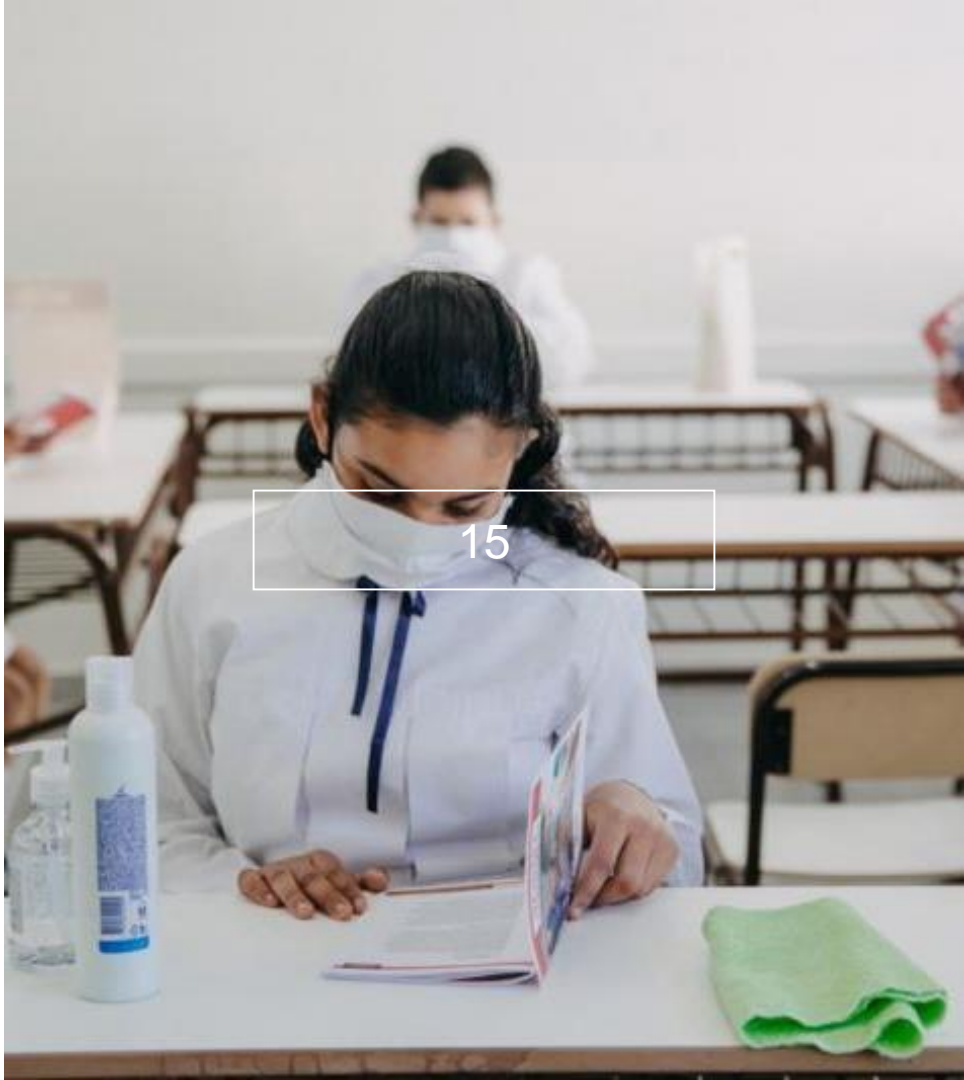
Base: Total interviewed



How do you think the school could better accompany you?

	%
The school accompanies me	37%
With workshops / extra school support	36%
With scholarships / financial aid	33%
With educational materials	17%
With snacks / meals	7%
With clothes	3%

The percentages do not add up to 100% because it is a multiple question





Which of the following devices do they have at home that the young person can use to carry out their homework or attend virtual classes?

	%
Mobile	90%
Computer	63%
Tablet	14%
Does not have technological devices	two%

What kind of connectivity?

	%
Wi-Fi	86%
Mobile data with prepaid card	14%
Free mobile data	10%
I don't have internet access	two%

The percentages do not add up to 100% because it is a multiple question

Base: Total interviewed

Which of the following devices do they have at home that the adolescent can use to carry out their homework or attend virtual classes?

	Region					
	AMBA	CENTER	WHOSE	NEA	NOT	Patagonia
Mobile	93%	89%	86%	91%	89%	81%
Computer	65%	74%	60%	41%	49%	71%
Tablet	15%	16%	9%	13%	13%	14%
Does not have technological devices	1%	1%	3%	two%	two%	1%

The percentages do not add up to 100% because it is a multiple question

Base: Total interviewed

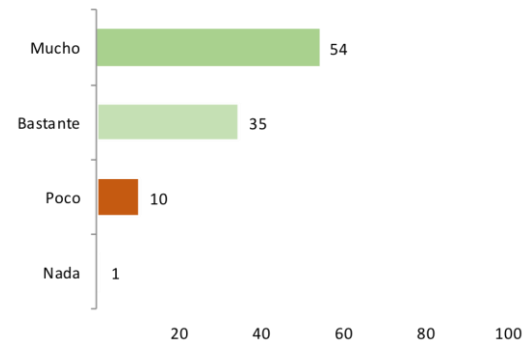




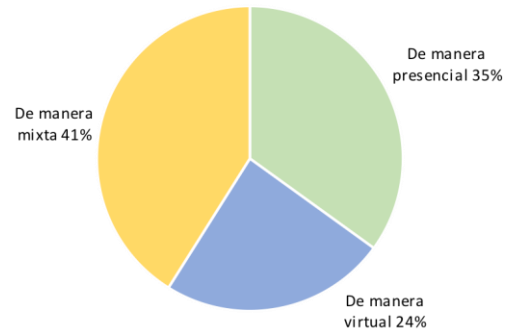
18

Base: Total interviewed

In the school where you attend, how much do you respect the security protocols against the coronavirus?



In this context of a pandemic, how do you prefer to have classes?



How does the pandemic affect school continuity? How?

	TOTAL	Home NES			Region					
	%	Under	Half	Medium high	AMBA	Center	Who se	NEA	NOA	Patagonia
The school sent a lot of homework	39%	39%	40%	35%	41%	40%	38%	3.4%	36%	37%
It was affected by connectivity difficulties	14%	twenty %	12%	7%	fifteen %	16%	eleven %	10%	fifteen %	14%
The school and / or teacher did not contact the family	7%	6%	7%	7%	6%	7%	5%	6%	7%	8%
Despite the contact, I did not keep in touch with the school	9%	10%	10%	4%	9%	10%	6%	9%	eleven %	6%
I do not attend class	two%	3%	two%	3%	two%	3%	4%	1%	two%	4%
Did not affect continuity	44%	3.4%	47%	56%	40%	44%	49%	56%	38%	Four. Five%

Percentages do not add up to 100% because it is a multiple question





20

Base: Total interviewed

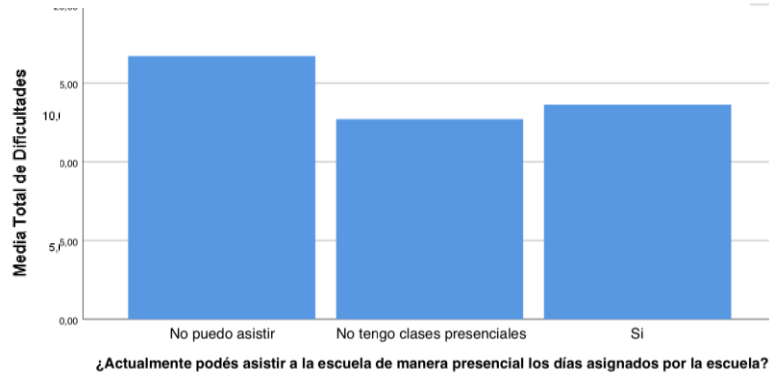
Which of the following things do you miss the most about face-to-face classes?

	%
The relationship with my colleagues	55%
Learning in the classroom	27%
The link with the teacher	6%
I don't miss classes face-to-face	12%



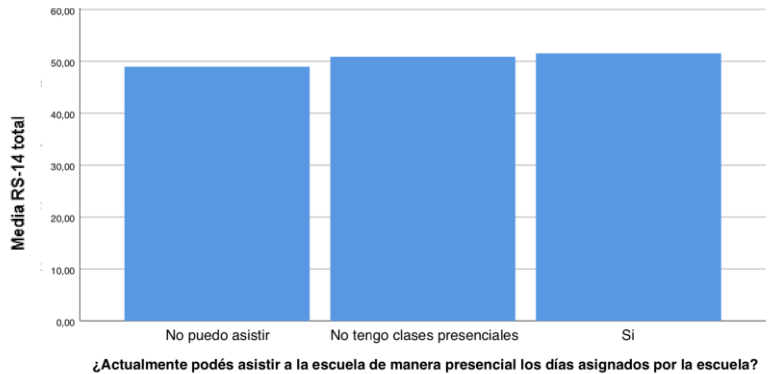
21

Socio-affective difficulties according to the impact on school continuity in a pandemic



Did the pandemic affect school continuity?

Level of resilience according to the impact on school continuity in a pandemic



Base: Total interviewed

Adolescents who are not in school present significantly more socio-affective difficulties than those who carry out some type of school modality, with no relevant differences according to this modality.

NO ASSOCIATION WAS FOUND BETWEEN THE AGE OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE PERCEPTION OF SOCIO-AFFECTIVE DIFFICULTIES.



23

✓

✓ Differences are observed in the total level of resilience between those who do some school modality and those who are not in school.

✓

✓ A third of the young people surveyed report difficulties remembering or concentrating.



24

In emergency situations, **school is a fundamental space for emotional support**, educational continuity and social and material support to students and their families.

The responses of the educational system must be adapted to the diversity of situations of each family and each community. **Schools, families and communities should prioritize the development of vital adaptive skills and emotional resilience.**

These are valuable tools to mitigate the harmful effects that the social and health crisis have on the socio-emotional health of children, and they are a necessary condition for learning in the current context.

In summary, the current COVID-19 pandemic poses significant challenges for the education system, which must be addressed in a coordinated manner. At the same time, it offers us the opportunity to rethink the purpose of education and its role in the **development of coping skills and resources that function as protective factors against the difficulties posed by the context for adolescents in Argentina.**



CRUZ ROJA
ARGENTINA

Fundación
INECO

