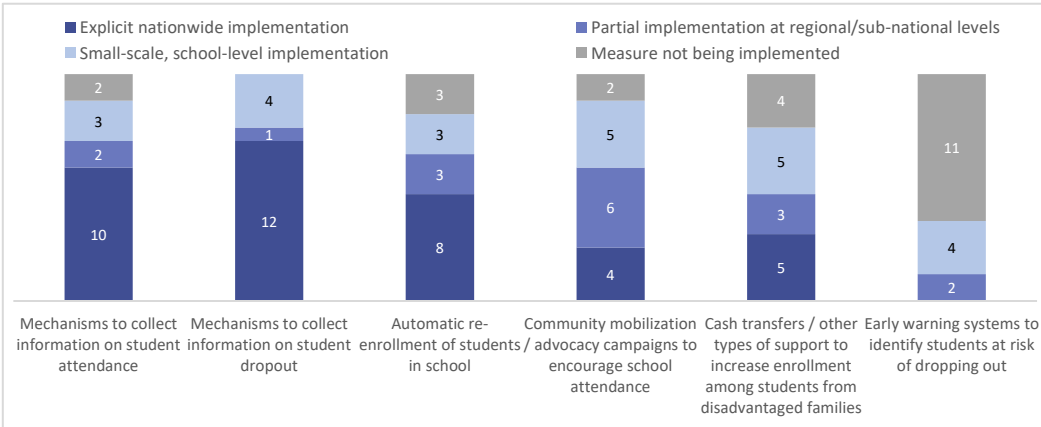


# Eastern and Southern Africa

Tracking Progress on Foundational Learning: Findings from the 2023 RAPID analysis  
September 2023

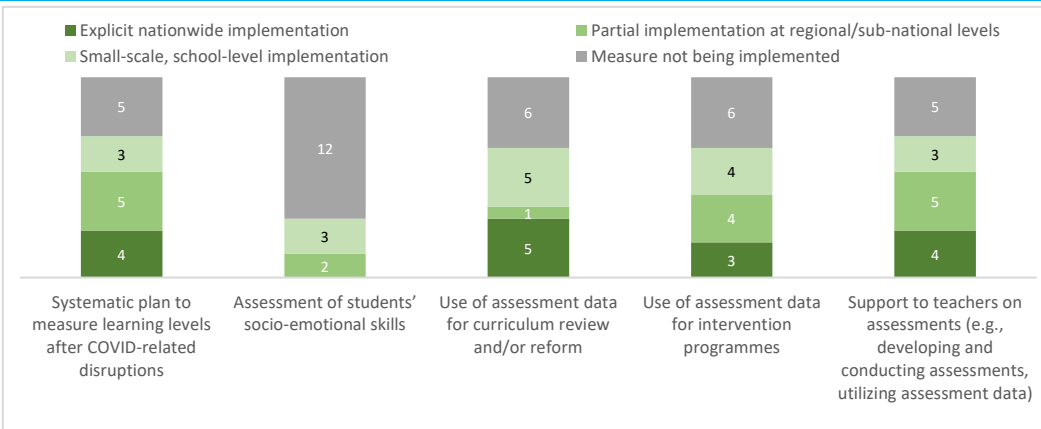
This brief presents regional results from the Foundational Learning Action Tracker, an initiative by UNICEF and the Hempel Foundation to monitor progress and foster knowledge sharing on achieving foundational learning for all children. The results reflect data from UNICEF's 2023 pulse survey with low- and middle-income countries and UNICEF's internal monitoring and reporting exercise with its country offices, organized around the [RAPID Framework](#). The Foundational Learning Action Tracker and global report are available [here](#), along with country scorecards for low- and middle-income countries endorsing the [Commitment to Action on Foundational Learning](#) as of September 2023.

## Reach every child and keep them in school



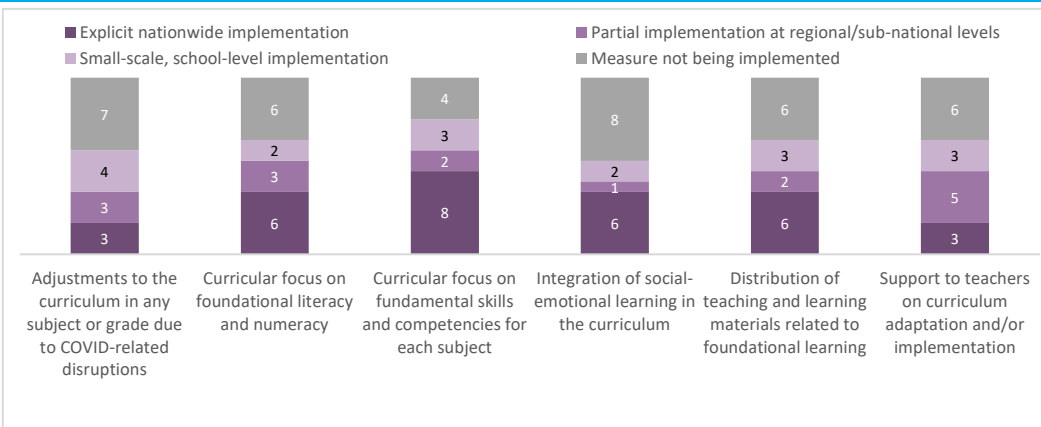
Among the 17\* countries responding to the survey, the majority of countries reported that mechanisms to collect information on student attendance and dropout were being implemented on a nationwide scale. In contrast, only about a third of countries reported implementing early warning systems to identify students at risk of dropping out, on any scale.

## Assess learning levels regularly



Encouragingly, most countries reported providing support to teachers on assessments, such as developing assessments and utilizing assessment data, on a nationwide or sub-national scale. However, there is still room to improve the assessment of foundational skills, particularly socio-emotional skills: only five countries reported assessing socio-emotional skills on any scale.

## Prioritize teaching the fundamentals



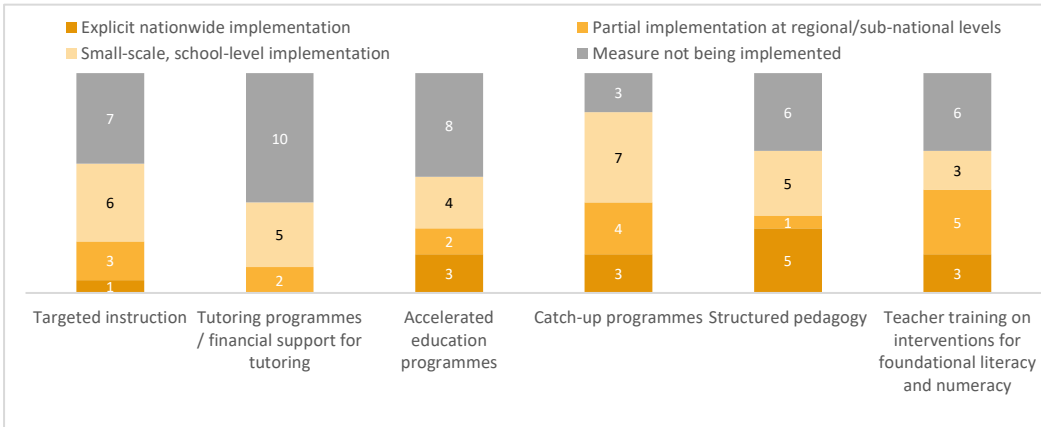
Most countries reported nationwide or sub-national curricular focus on foundational literacy and numeracy. However, fewer than half of countries reported nationwide or sub-national integration of social-emotional learning in the curriculum. Social-emotional skills have been shown to be associated with a host of positive life outcomes, and countries can consider integrating these skills into teaching plans and curricula.

\*Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

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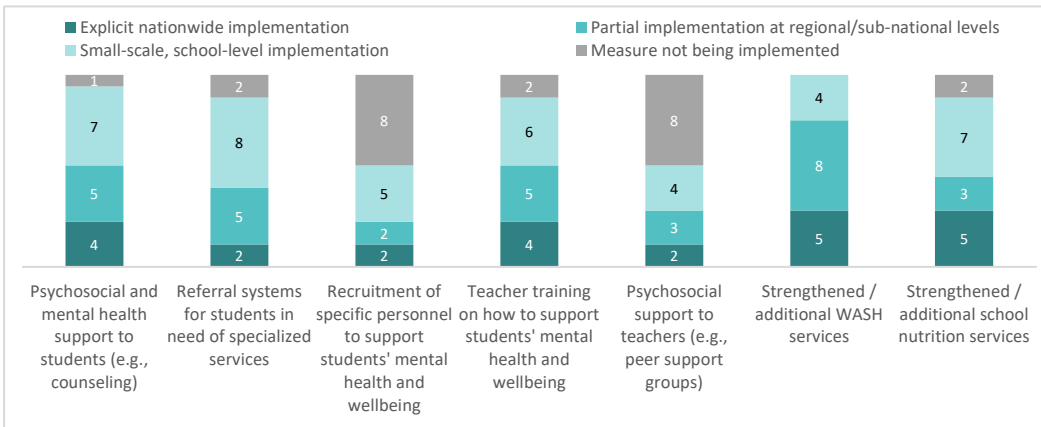
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## Increase the efficiency of instruction, including through catch-up learning



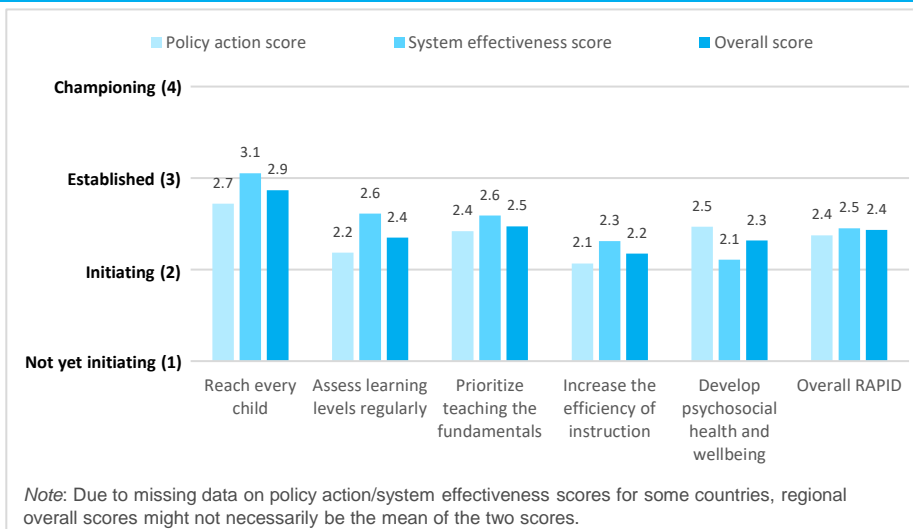
About half of the respondent countries reported implementing teacher training on interventions for foundational literacy and numeracy on a nationwide or sub-national scale. However, only about a quarter of countries reported the same for targeted instruction, despite being one of the most cost-effective approaches to improve learning outcomes.

## Develop psychosocial health and wellbeing



Essential services provided by schools can help ensure children are ready to learn. Most countries reported nationwide or sub-national implementation of strengthened water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services. About half of countries also reported national or sub-national measures to provide psychosocial and mental health support to students, but fewer reported providing the same to teachers.

## Status of RAPID progress



To describe progress on the RAPID Framework, policy action scores based on data from the pulse survey were combined with system effectiveness scores based on data from UNICEF's internal monitoring and reporting exercise. This resulted in overall RAPID scores computed for a total of 21 countries in the region. Available data suggest that progress on the RAPID is still at the **Initiating** level. Regional average policy action scores were lowest for Assess and Increase, suggesting a need to reinforce implementation of relevant measures at scale for these components. Regional average system effectiveness scores were lowest for Increase and Develop, indicating a need to strengthen enabling environments to support, coordinate and sustain the implementation of measures for these components.

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## How is the RAPID Framework being implemented?

**To reach every child**, in Eswatini, a strategy is being implemented to prevent teenage pregnancy in schools, and financing solutions have been developed to extend the scope of the Free Primary Education Act to the pre-primary level. In Rwanda, the Government has been strengthening efforts to address barriers to education, such as reducing distances between schools and homes through the construction of new schools. In Uganda, the Government has institutionalized the 'Go to school, Back to school and Stay in School (GBS)' campaigns as a strategy for mobilizing parents to take their children to school and ensure that they stay in school, with the support of School Management Committees.

**To assess learning levels regularly**, in Botswana, the Government conducted a study to assess the hindrances to learning, in preparation for the development of the national remediation and enrichment programme. In Eritrea, results from the Monitoring Learning Achievements, a large-scale learning assessment, are disseminated widely to influence practices and programming at all levels. Teacher training on assessment techniques and usage of assessment results are being implemented in countries like Rwanda and Uganda.

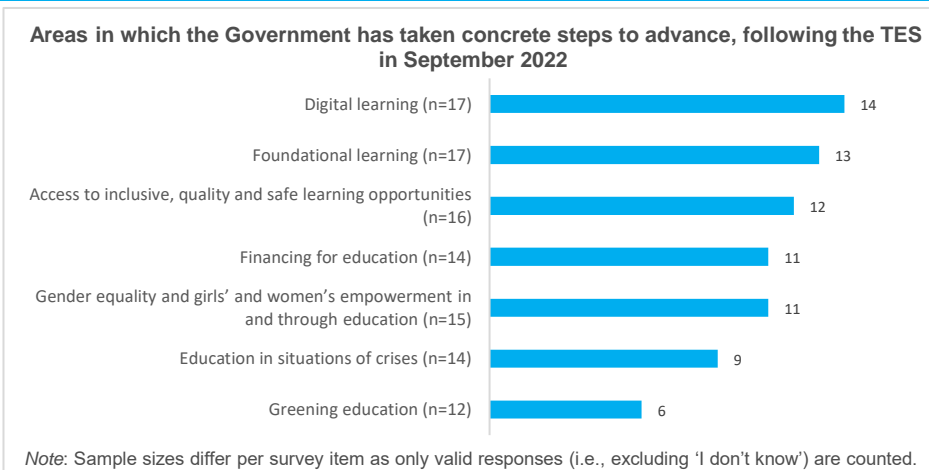
**To prioritize teaching the fundamentals**, in Rwanda, the Government has implemented the competency-based curriculum which emphasizes foundational literacy and numeracy and has invested in teacher professional development programmes to enhance pedagogical practices and instructional strategies. In Uganda, the Government is rolling out the [abridged curriculum](#) to support learning recovery and catch-up classes for learners and has also prioritized the training of primary and secondary teachers on implementing the abridged curriculum. In the United Republic of Tanzania, the national curriculum reform process is ongoing, with UNICEF support to integrate foundational learning as a core principle.

**To increase the efficiency of instruction**, in Eritrea, intensive preparations are underway to run national foundational literacy and numeracy and Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) interventions at scale, with support from UNICEF and the Global Partnership for Education. In Malawi, the Ministry of Education is developing a learning management system as part of its electronic continuing professional development programme, which will be accessible to all teachers. In Namibia, the country has adopted the Jolly Phonics teaching approach, per the 2022 National Conference on Education and in line with the Transforming Education Summit (TES) commitments on foundational skills.

**To develop psychosocial health and wellbeing**, in Comoros, the installation of water cisterns and rainwater collection systems in public primary schools has benefitted nearly 7,850 pupils, or approximately 6.5 per cent of the school population. In Kenya, preparedness plans were developed for 16 emergency-prone counties in 2022, strengthening the overall coordination on education in emergency responses and resumption of the disrupted school feeding programme by the Government. In Rwanda, psychosocial support services is integrated in schools through career guidance and the School Health and Nutrition Program.

Source: UNICEF 2023 Pulse Survey on RAPID Framework, UNICEF Country Office Annual Reports 2022.

## Transforming Education Summit (TES) country follow-up



In addition to examining progress on RAPID implementation, the pulse survey asked questions regarding actions countries have taken following the Transforming Education Summit (TES) in September 2022. Thirteen of 17 countries with valid responses identified foundational learning as an area in which governments have taken concrete steps to advance. The most frequently cited area in which governments are taking action was digital learning, while the least frequently cited was greening education.