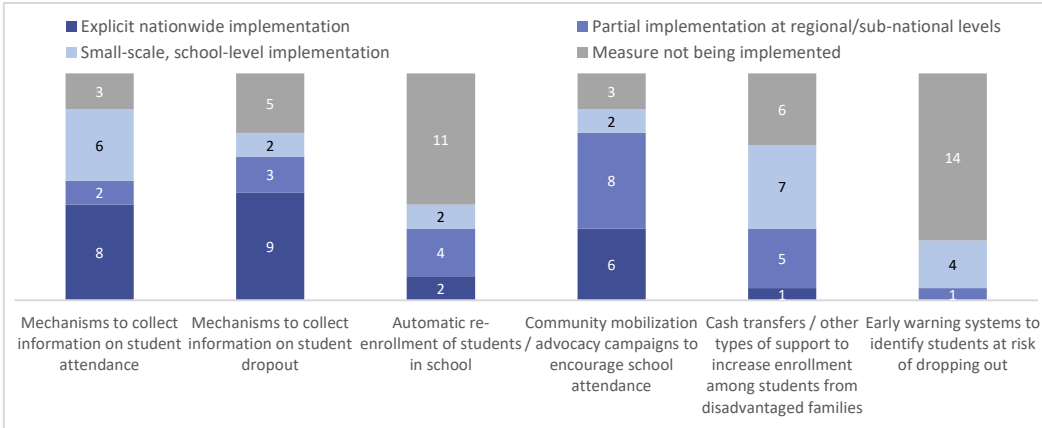


West and Central Africa

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

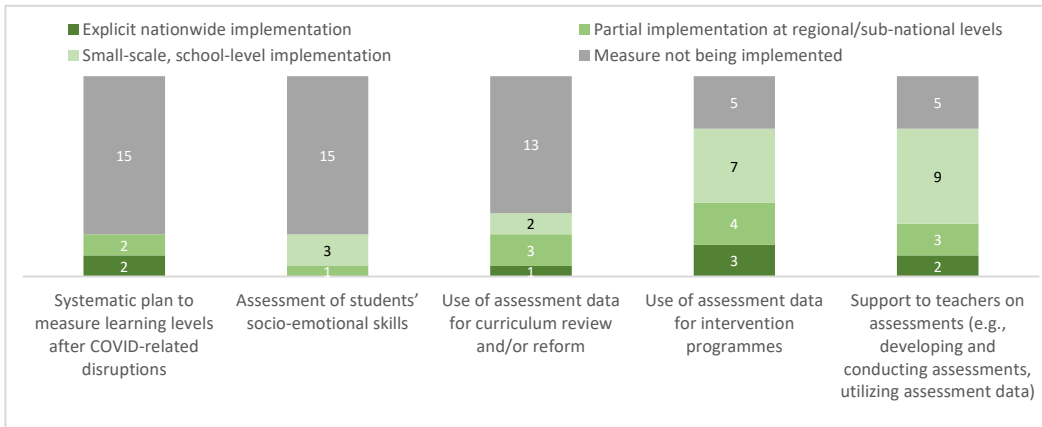
This brief presents regional results from the Foundational Learning Action Tracker, an initiative by UNICEF and the Hempel Foundation to monitor progress and foster knowledge sharing on achieving foundational learning for all children. The results reflect data from UNICEF's 2023 pulse survey with low- 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



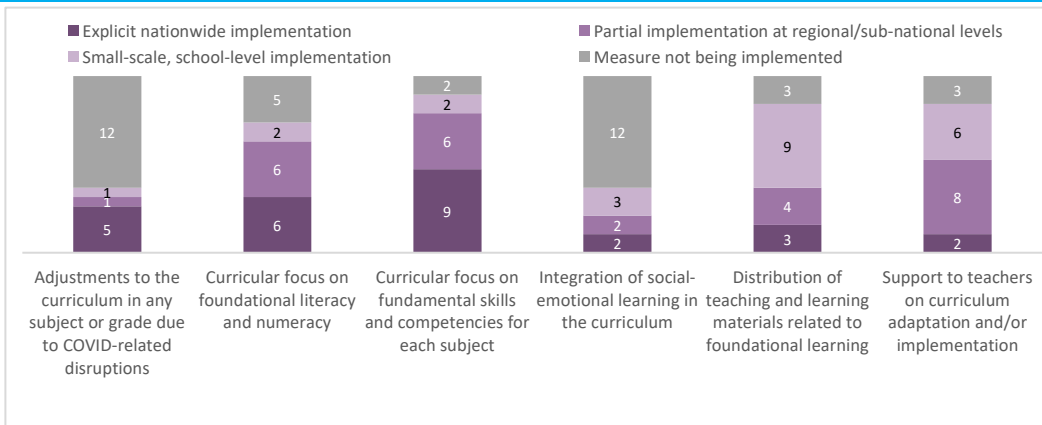
Among the 19* countries responding to the survey, about half of the countries reported that mechanisms to collect information on student dropout were being implemented on a nationwide scale. In contrast, fewer than half of countries reported the implementation of measures such as automatic re-enrollment or early warning systems on any scale.

Assess learning levels regularly



Seven countries reported the use of assessment data for intervention programmes on a nationwide or sub-national scale, while only five countries reported the same for teacher training on assessments. There is still room to improve the assessment of foundational skills, particularly socio-emotional skills: only four countries reported assessing socio-emotional skills on any scale.

Prioritize teaching the fundamentals



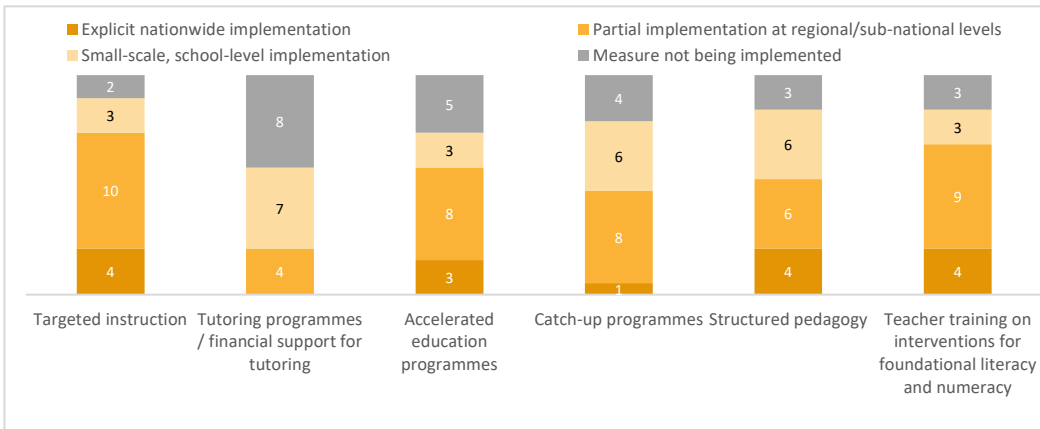
Most countries reported nationwide or sub-national curricular focus on foundational literacy and numeracy. However, only about a fifth of countries reported nationwide or sub-national integration of social-emotional learning in the curriculum. Social-emotional skills have been shown to be associated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

*Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone and Togo.

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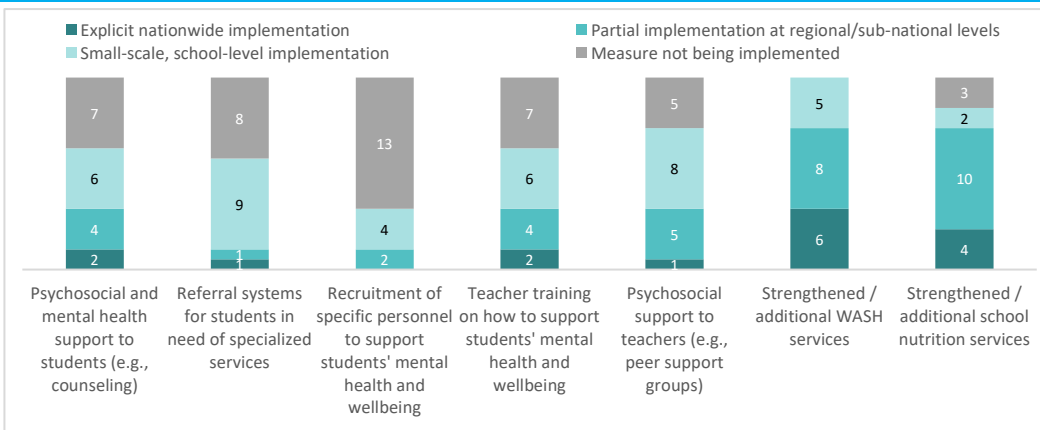
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Increase the efficiency of instruction, including through catch-up learning



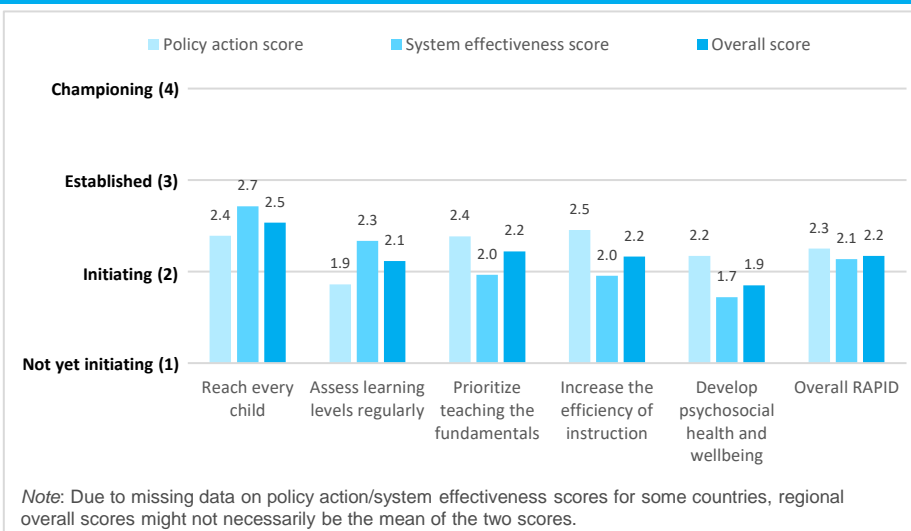
At least half of the countries reported nationwide or sub-national implementation of teacher training on interventions for foundational literacy and numeracy, structured pedagogy and accelerated education programmes. Encouragingly, 14 countries reported the same for targeted instruction, which is one 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) and school nutrition services. Six countries also reported nationwide or sub-national measures to provide psychosocial and mental health support to students and psychosocial support 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 24 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, suggesting a need to reinforce implementation of measures at scale to assess learning levels regularly. Regional average system effectiveness scores were lowest for Develop, indicating a need to strengthen enabling environments to support, coordinate and sustain the implementation of measures related to children's overall wellbeing.

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How is the RAPID Framework being implemented?

To reach every child, in Cameroon, the Government and its partners are providing financial support for the most vulnerable families, along with supporting the distribution of school materials and the establishment of school feeding to promote the schooling and retention of vulnerable children. In Côte d'Ivoire, as part of scaling up the [recycled plastic bricks project](#), 159 new classrooms were built with plastic bricks, contributing to increased school enrollment through the construction of classrooms with a full package of WASH facilities, school equipment and furniture, teaching and learning materials, and teacher training. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, informal and alternative learning opportunities have been put in place for out-of-school children.

To assess learning levels regularly, in Equatorial Guinea, a second national learning assessment for Grades 3 and 6 will be implemented in 2023; moreover, a comprehensive study to identify gaps and challenges in the teaching and learning process is being planned to advocate for education reform. In Liberia, a national learning assessment policy focusing on Grades 3 and 6 has been developed, with a pilot assessment implemented, along with numerous assessments at sub-national levels (e.g., Early Grade Reading Assessment). In the Central African Republic, with UNICEF support, 11,173 children successfully received birth certificates in 2022 to promote participation in end-of-year examinations.

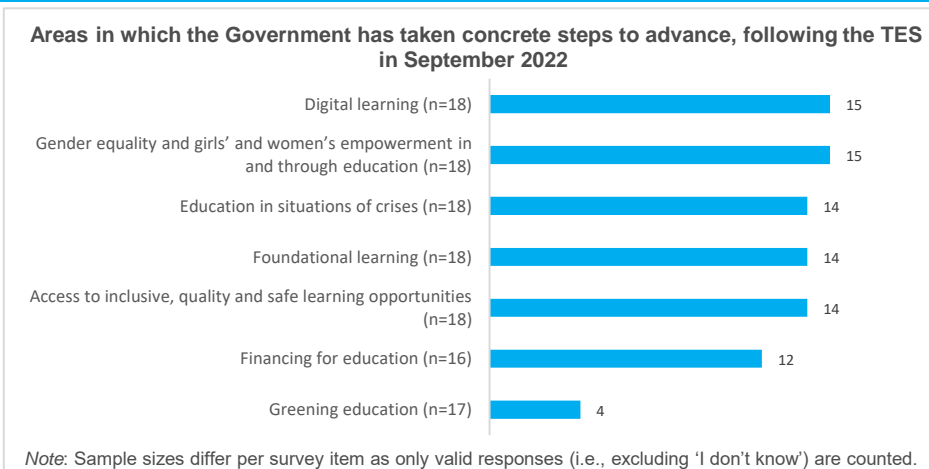
To prioritize teaching the fundamentals, in Gabon, the competency-based approach is being implemented, with curricula being revised in this direction. In Senegal, the Government's efforts to modernize *daaras* (Quranic schools) were supported through the introduction of literacy and numeracy in the schools, benefitting 6,721 learners in 2022. In Sierra Leone, teaching and learning materials were provided in select districts to promote active learning, critical and creative thinking for reading and numeracy.

To increase the efficiency of instruction, in the Congo, teachers receive training on the practice of curative pedagogy in French and mathematics to improve the basic skills of students. In Ghana, the Government has approved the Differentiated Learning approach, benefitting 36,518 learners (18,432 girls) with improved foundational skills in English and mathematics. In Nigeria, the [Teaching at the Right Level \(TaRL\)](#) approach has been operational across various parts of the country, along with the implementation of other early learning interventions such as the [Reading and Numeracy Activity \(RANA\)](#). In Senegal, teachers were provided with training on differentiated pedagogy, foundational literacy and numeracy teaching skills, remedial and catch-up strategies, and innovative approaches to formative assessment and remedial education.

To develop psychosocial health and wellbeing, in Cameroon, the first ever national school feeding strategy is currently being developed with the support of partners. In the Gambia, a national Safe School Programme has been established, focusing on social workers, police and education officials to address child protection and rights issues in schools. In Sierra Leone, a cost-benefit analysis of mental health and psychosocial support in education is ongoing, with technical support from RTI International.

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. Fourteen of 18 countries with valid responses identified foundational learning as an area in which governments have taken concrete steps to advance. The most frequently cited areas in which governments are taking action were digital learning as well as gender equality and girls' and women's empowerment in and through education, while the least frequently cited was greening education.