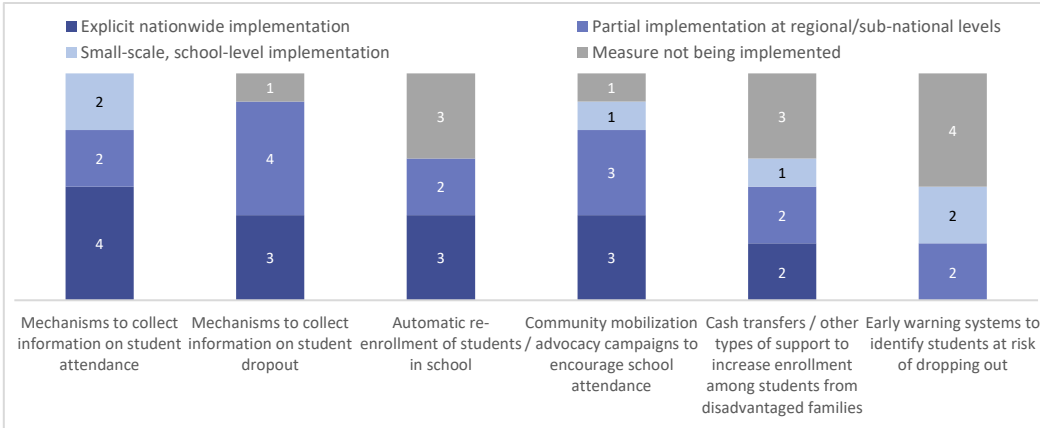


South Asia

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

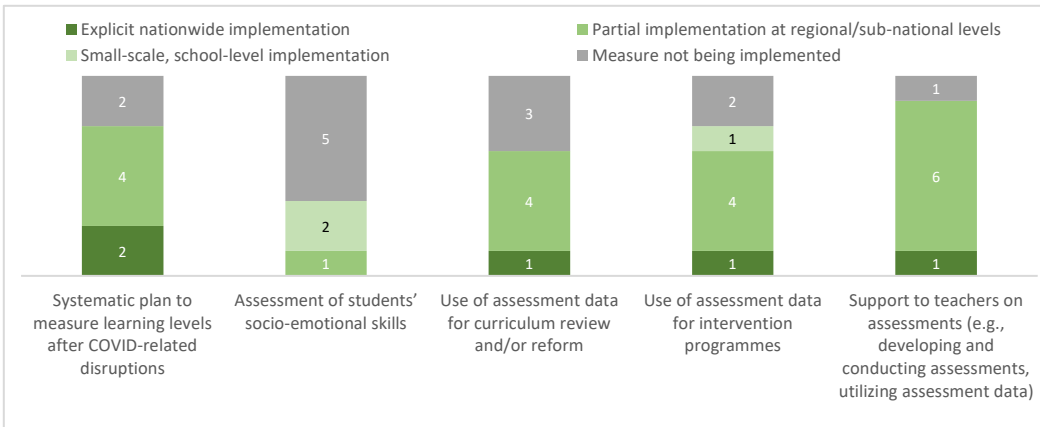
This brief presents regional results from the Foundational Learning Action Tracker, an initiative by UNICEF and the Hempel Foundation to monitor progress and foster knowledge sharing on achieving foundational learning for all children. The results reflect data from UNICEF's 2023 pulse survey with low-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



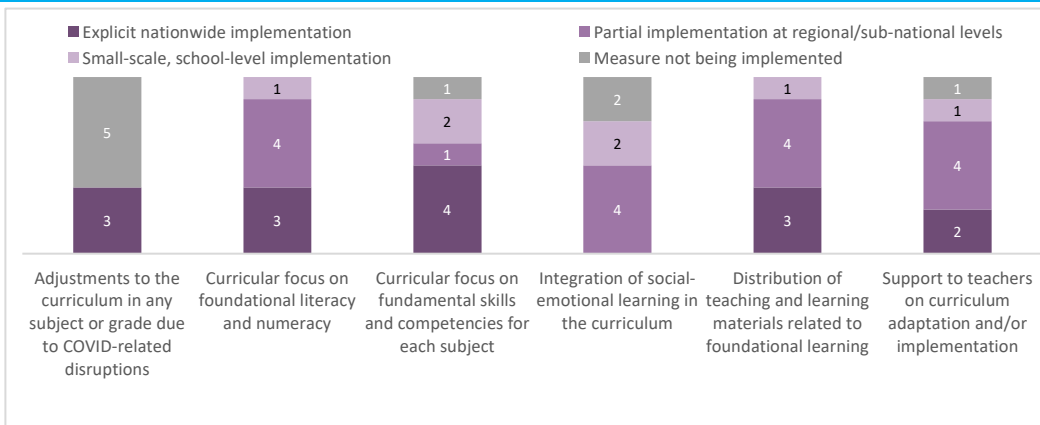
Among the 8* countries responding to the survey, half of the countries reported implementing mechanisms to collect information on student attendance on a national scale. However, only half of the countries reported that early warning systems to identify students at risk of dropping out were being implemented on any scale.

Assess learning levels regularly



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

Prioritize teaching the fundamentals

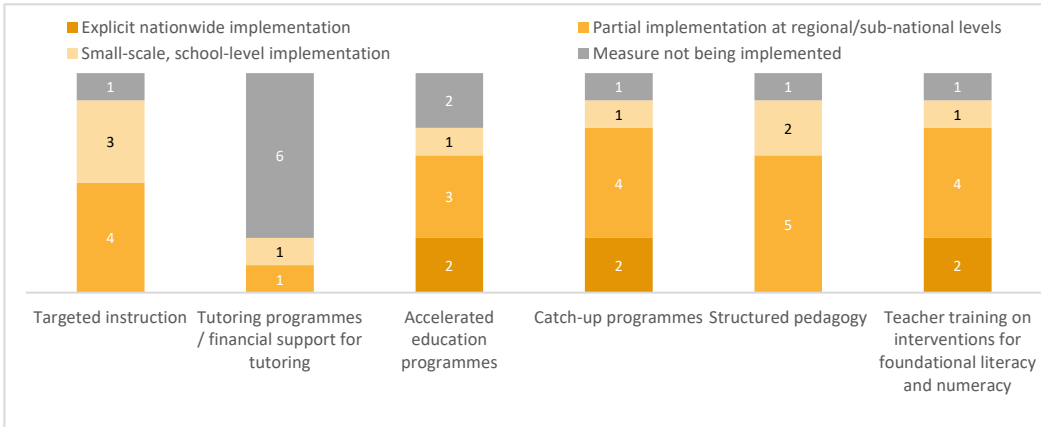


Nearly all countries reported nationwide or sub-national curricular focus on foundational literacy and numeracy. However, only half reported the integration of social-emotional learning in the curriculum on a sub-national scale, and none on a nationwide scale. Social-emotional skills have been shown to be associated with a host of positive life outcomes, and countries can consider integrating these skills into teaching plans and curricula.

South Asia

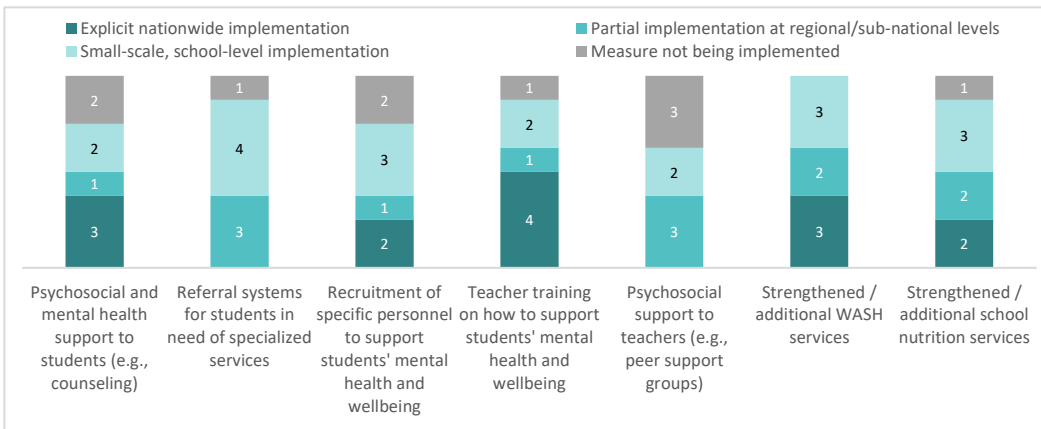
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Increase the efficiency of instruction, including through catch-up learning



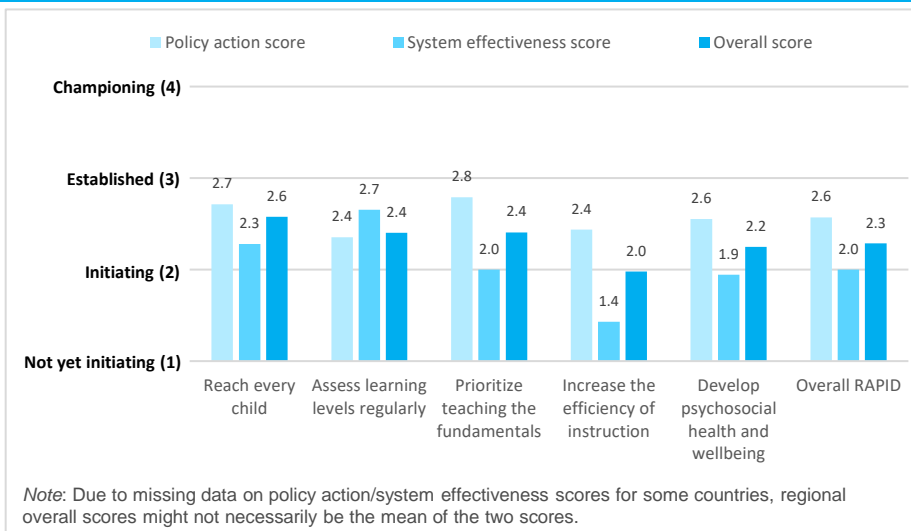
Most countries reported national or sub-national implementation of nearly all the measures, with six countries reporting so for catch-up programmes and teacher training on interventions for foundational literacy and numeracy. Additionally, four countries reported sub-national implementation of targeted 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. At least half of countries reported nationwide or sub-national implementation of strengthened water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and school nutrition services. Three countries reported providing psychosocial and mental health support to students on a nationwide scale, but none reported the same for 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 8 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, indicating a need to strengthen enabling environments to support, coordinate and sustain the implementation of measures for this component.

How is the RAPID Framework being implemented?

To reach every child, in Afghanistan, supported by increased funding and coordination with the Ministry of Education, UNICEF significantly expanded the community-based education programme in 2022 to 14,981 community-based schools, doubling the number of vulnerable children reached. In Nepal, all schools are encouraged to conduct Welcome to School campaigns at the start of the academic year to encourage parents to send their children to school. In Pakistan, the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), the national poverty alleviation programme, includes a conditional cash transfer for school-going students having at least 70 per cent attendance in school.

To assess learning levels regularly, in Bangladesh, UNICEF is supporting the Government to conduct the National Student Assessments to examine learning levels of children after COVID-19 school closures. In Bhutan and Sri Lanka, national learning assessments are conducted for Grade 3 students. In India, the [Foundational Learning Study](#) was conducted and disseminated in 2022, setting the baseline for the national Foundational Literacy and Numeracy mission and establishing the benchmark for literacy and numeracy in 20 languages. In Pakistan, a [citizen-led assessment](#) is regularly conducted, and programmes are currently underway to develop diagnostic and formative assessments, use assessment data for curriculum and textbook review, and provide support to teachers on assessment techniques and assessment data utilization.

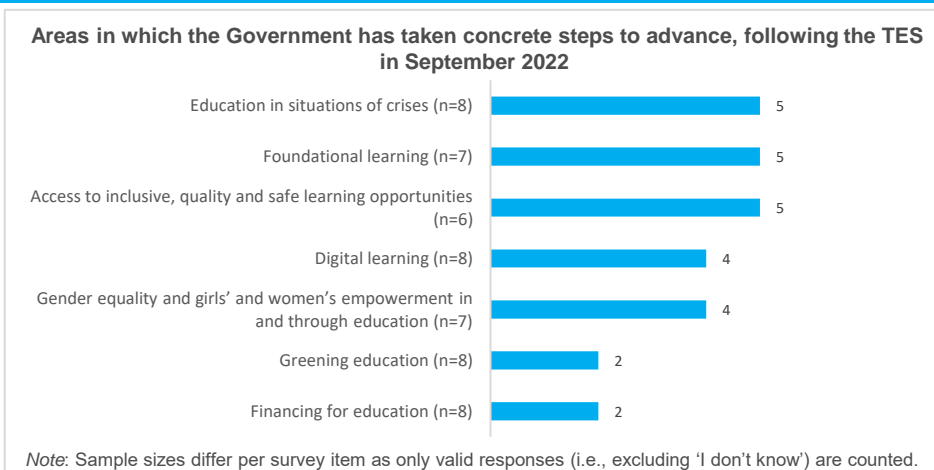
To prioritize teaching the fundamentals, in Nepal, a condensed curriculum was developed with minimum competencies, which also includes foundational literacy. In Sri Lanka, nationwide adjustments to the curriculum were implemented due to the ongoing economic crisis in the country, uncovering important lessons such as the need for guidance and support to teachers for effective implementation of the adjusted curriculum as well as the need for communication to and engagement of parents.

To increase the efficiency of instruction, in Bhutan, the Bhutan Professional Standards for Teachers has been introduced to further address the quality of education in the country. In Nepal, the [Recovery and Accelerated Learning Plan](#) aims to improve foundational literacy and numeracy by focusing on capacity building of teachers, school leadership and local levels. In Pakistan, some provinces implement interventions to prioritize foundational literacy and numeracy, especially in multigrade settings and districts with high dropout and out-of-school rates.

To develop psychosocial health and wellbeing, in India, an estimated 960,000 stakeholders were trained on WASH in Schools using the National School WASH training toolkit in 2022. In Sri Lanka, a national programme for school meals is available for both preschool and general education, albeit not fully implemented against plans due to the ongoing economic crisis in the country.

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. Five of 7 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 access to inclusive, quality and safe learning opportunities (5 of 6 countries), while the least frequently cited were financing for education and greening education (2 of 8 countries).