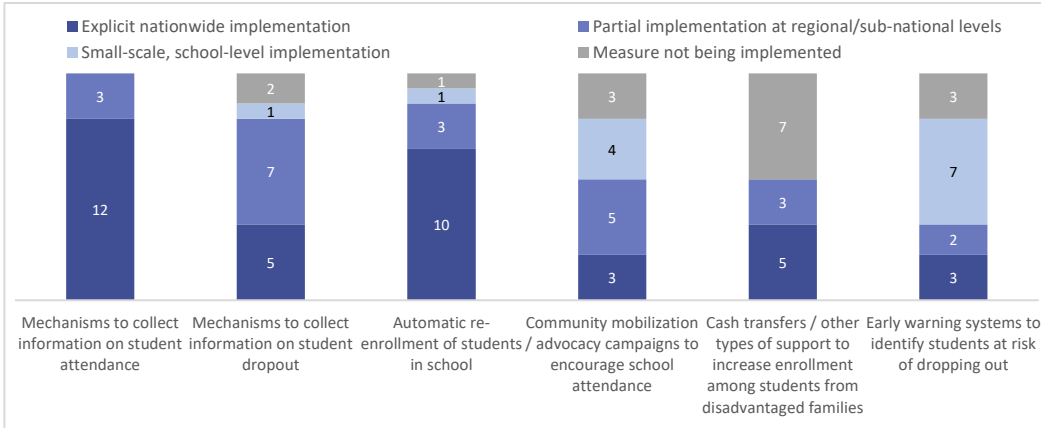


Europe and Central Asia

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

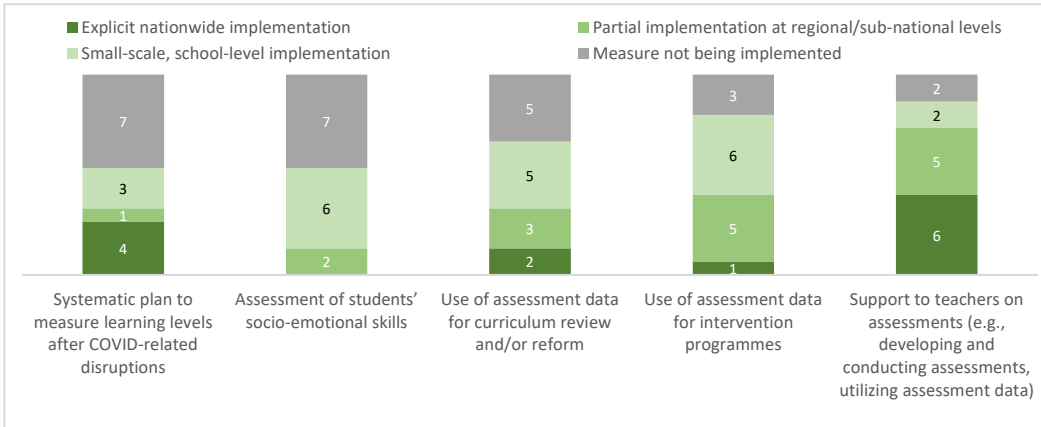
This brief presents regional results from the Foundational Learning Action Tracker, an initiative by UNICEF and the Hempel Foundation to monitor progress and foster knowledge sharing on achieving foundational learning for all children. The results reflect data from UNICEF's 2023 pulse survey with low-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



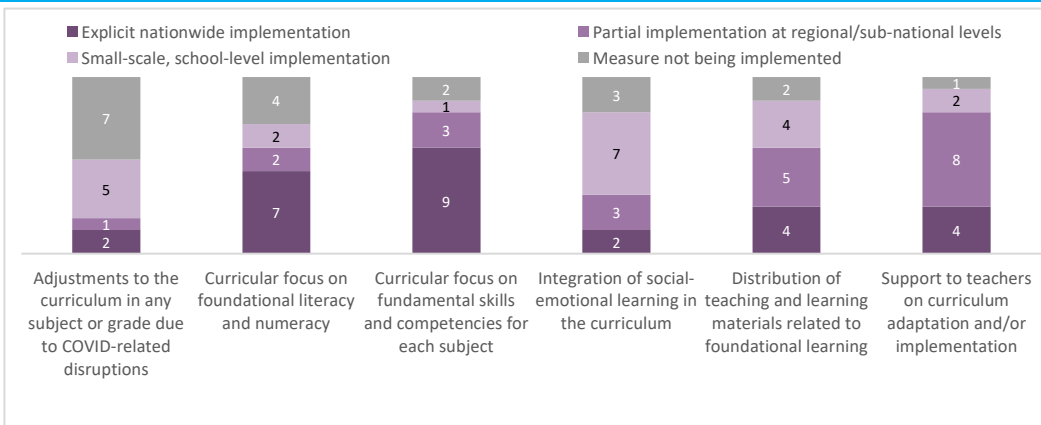
Among the 15* countries responding to the survey, at least two thirds of countries reported that mechanisms to collect information on student attendance and automatic re-enrollment were being implemented on a nationwide scale. In contrast, only three countries reported the same for community mobilization or advocacy campaigns and early warning systems.

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 eight countries reported assessing socio-emotional skills on any scale.

Prioritize teaching the fundamentals



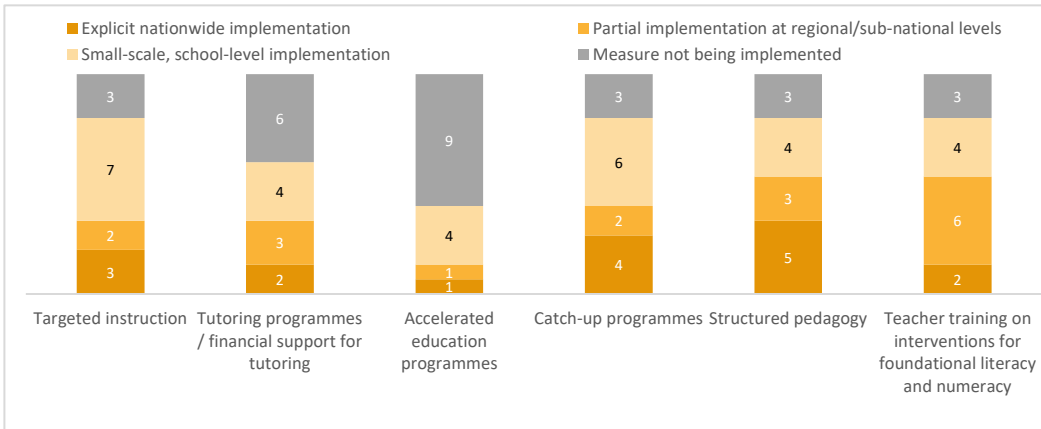
The majority of countries reported nationwide or sub-national curricular focus on foundational literacy and numeracy. However, only a third of countries reported nationwide or sub-national integration of social-emotional learning in the curriculum. Social-emotional skills have been shown to be associated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

*Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. Responses from high-income countries (i.e., Romania) are not included in the regional brief and global report but are reflected in the Foundational Learning Action Tracker.

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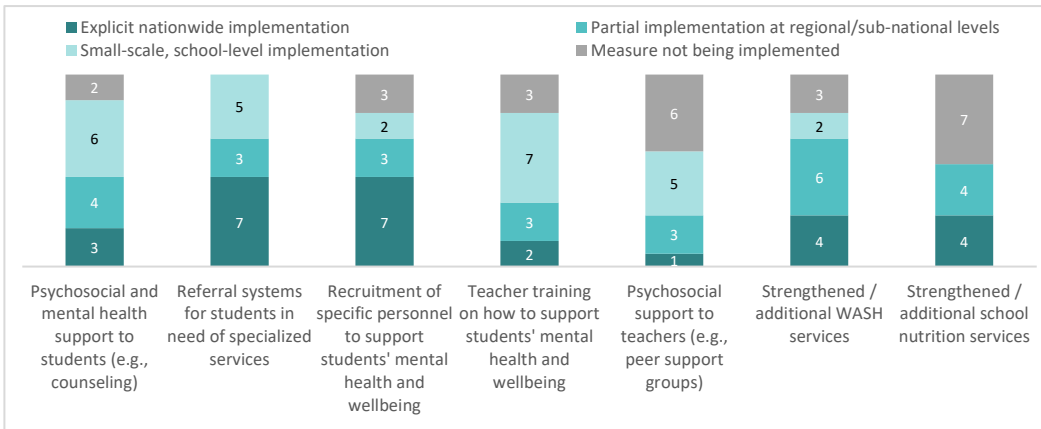
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Increase the efficiency of instruction, including through catch-up learning



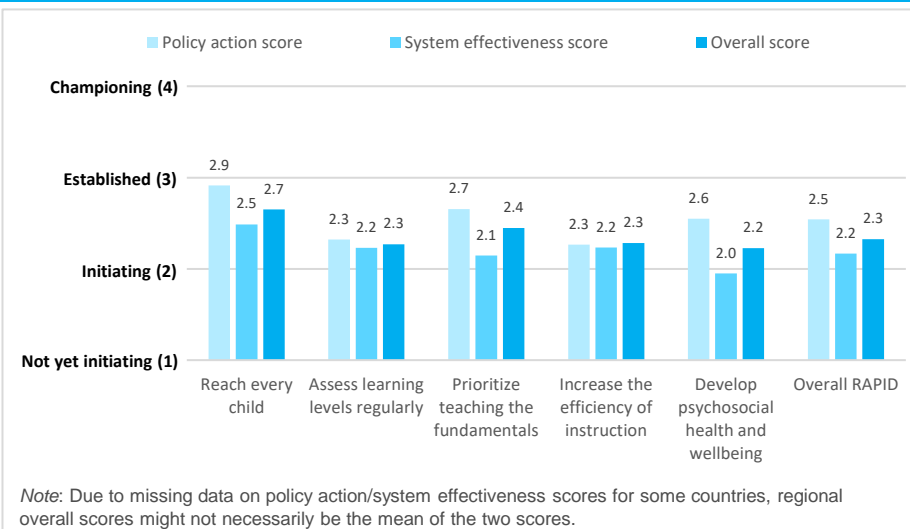
Over half of the respondent countries reported nationwide or sub-national implementation of measures such as structured pedagogy and teacher training on interventions for foundational literacy and numeracy. However, only a third of countries reported the same for targeted instruction, despite being one 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. Over half of countries reported nationwide or sub-national implementation of strengthened water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and school nutrition 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 19 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 Prioritize 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 Albania, the Out-of-school Curricula Programme was developed to bring together different sectors to create opportunities for youth in remote and rural areas. In Azerbaijan, inclusive education policies encourage access for children with disabilities, who account for one of the biggest groups of out-of-school children. In Bulgaria, there is increased investment for enhanced data management systems and developing a digital ID for every child, allowing the tracking of achievements and movements across the country. In Georgia, an inclusive education system reform aims to transform special schools into resource centres/knowledge hubs to support all public schools with improved capacity and services for the inclusion of children with special needs and disabilities.

To assess learning levels regularly, in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, UNICEF conducted learning sessions for teachers on learning assessments for Grades 5 to 6, and the Government is working on improving the national learning assessment ahead of participation in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2025. In Uzbekistan, the Government has implemented international large-scale assessments for the first time, with its data analyzed and used to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

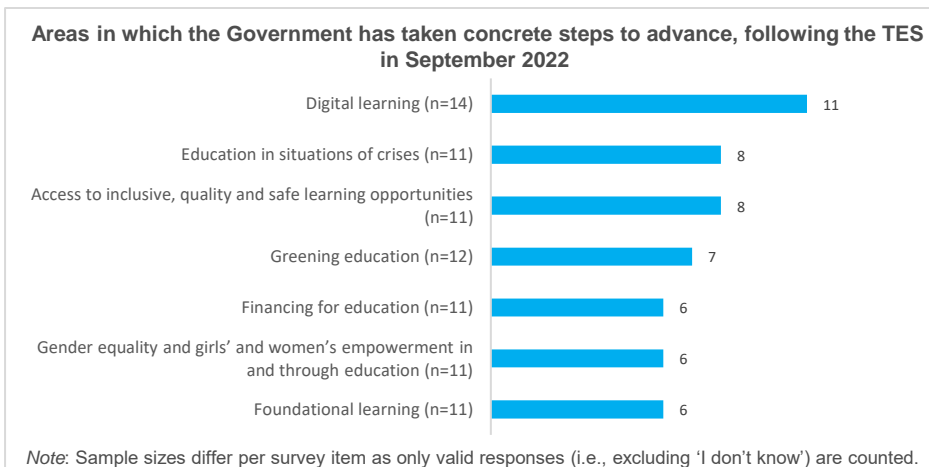
To prioritize teaching the fundamentals, in Armenia, the Government approved a new national curriculum and revised subject standards in 2021, with modernization of educational programmes focused on foundational skills and competencies for each subject. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, 4 out of 12 administrative units have started curricular reforms in the shift toward learning outcomes (including foundational literacy) rather than content-based teaching plans. In Tajikistan, UNICEF supports the Government to develop the Competency-Based Education (CBE) Roadmap to address holistic rollout of CBE reform, which will upgrade teaching practices, inform necessary revision in school curriculum and enhance national learning assessment mechanisms.

To increase the efficiency of instruction, in Kyrgyzstan, UNICEF in partnership with the Republican Teacher Training Institute is developing a teacher training package on catch-up learning, with a primary focus on foundational literacy and structured pedagogy. In North Macedonia, a tutoring programme is available for Roma children, for which schools need to apply and costs are covered by the Ministry of Education and Science. In Montenegro, a programme for developing social and emotional skills has been implemented in half of all schools, providing students with opportunities for social and emotional learning at school.

To develop psychosocial health and wellbeing, in Georgia, a violence prevention toolkit and internal supervision mechanisms has been introduced, with the support of trained school social workers, psychologists and teachers. In Kazakhstan, UNICEF's support covers mental health counseling services for adolescents through a digital support platform, mentorship support, community of practice for teachers in promoting their wellbeing, and school meals. In Serbia, the Government is in the process of preparing actions, programmes and systematic changes focused on psychosocial health and wellbeing of students and teachers.

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. Six of 11 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 were foundational learning, gender equality and girls' and women's empowerment in and through education, and financing for education.