



Foundational Learning Action Tracker 2026:

RESULTS FOR AFRICA





In 2026, the Foundational Learning Action Tracker (FLAT) collected data from 123 low- and middle-income countries to monitor progress on government actions for foundational learning across the five dimensions of the [RAPID Framework](#). This snapshot presents the 2026 FLAT findings for 52 African countries with data, combining RAPID survey responses from 37 countries with systems strengthening data from UNICEF's internal monitoring and reporting exercise, available for all 52 countries.

Progress at a glance

African countries are building strong foundations for learning, including growing use of assessment data to inform policy.

Four years of FLAT data highlight the progress African countries are making in building strong foundations for learning, including clearly defined learning benchmarks, nationwide attendance tracking and growing use of assessment data for intervention programmes and education policy. The opportunity now is to turn these policies and frameworks into stronger classroom practice. Closing this gap requires systems that support teachers, including coaching, instructional leadership, formative assessment tools and capacity-building for using assessment data to inform instruction.

Year-on-year comparisons of survey responses show where progress is taking hold and where it is lagging. The comparisons are available for 14 African countries that have responded to every round of the survey since 2023.¹ Among these 14 countries:

Areas of strong progress

- Nationwide **use of assessment data to inform intervention programmes** on foundational learning – showing the largest gain of any indicator tracked, rising from 21 per cent (3 countries) in 2023 to 79 per cent (11 countries) in 2026.
- Nationwide **mechanisms to collect, report and act on information on student attendance** – growing from 43 per cent (6 countries) in 2023 to 79 per cent (11 countries) in 2026.
- Nationwide **use of assessment data to inform education policy and planning** – remaining the highest-reported indicator at 93 per cent (13 countries) in 2026, up from 79 per cent (11 countries) in 2024 when indicator tracking began.

Areas of limited progress

- **Use of assessment data to inform classroom practices** in schools nationwide – declining to 43 per cent (6 countries) in 2026 from 50 per cent (7 countries) in 2024 when indicator tracking began.
- Nationwide implementation of **proven measures such as targeted instruction** – remaining at 14 per cent (2 countries) in 2026, largely unchanged since 2023.
- **Recruitment of specific school personnel to support students' mental health and well-being** – remaining the lowest-reported indicator at just 7 per cent (1 country) in 2026, largely unchanged since 2023.



¹ Angola, Egypt, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. As trend analyses are based on a smaller subset of countries with comparable data across years, findings on changes over time should be viewed as indicative rather than definitive.

There is an opportunity to build on the policies that governments have established by strengthening the systems needed to implement, monitor and sustain them.

African countries must now build on the strong foundations they have established to accelerate progress on foundational learning. The following priorities offer a path forward to close remaining gaps:

- Strengthen the use of assessment data in the classroom by **building teachers' capacity to act on evidence** – supported by instructional leadership, coaching and formative assessment tools – so that data on student learning is translated into targeted, day-to-day support.
- Increase the uptake of proven measures like targeted instruction by **identifying and addressing barriers to implementation** – including gaps in teacher preparation, instructional materials, financing and capacity to deliver at scale – so that children are met at their actual learning levels.
- Support children's overall well-being by **embedding mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) into teaching and school routines**, with training for teachers and linking schools to specialized services where available.

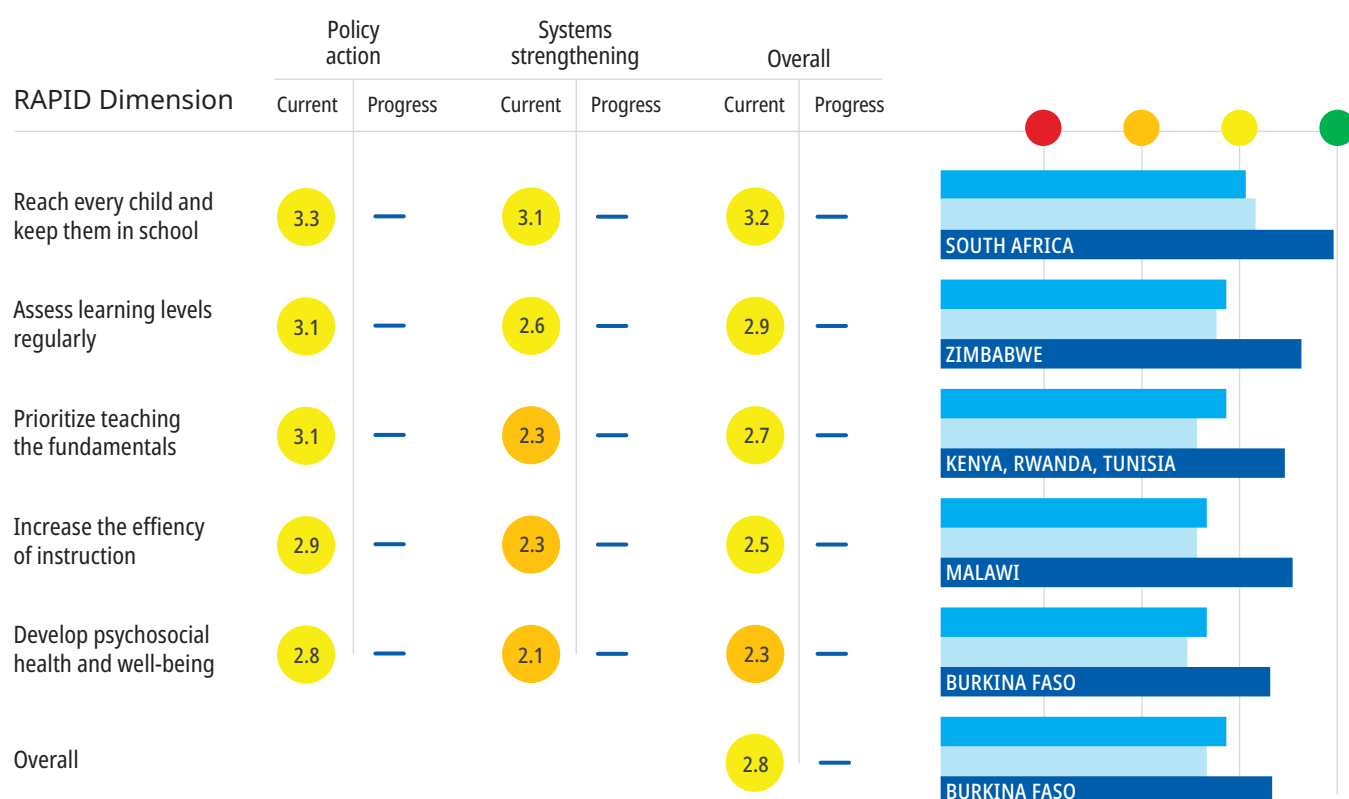
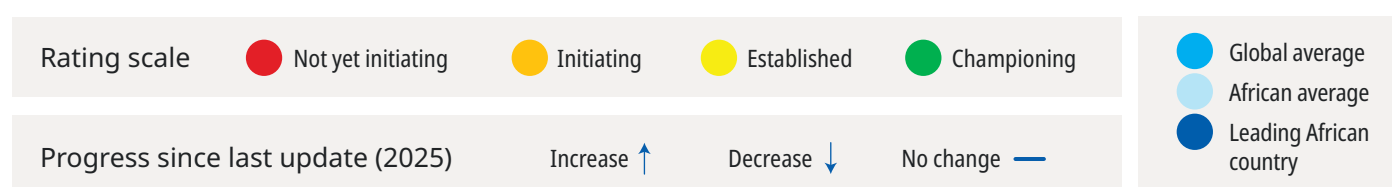
Average rating: Established

Across 52 African countries with data in 2026, the average progress on foundational learning efforts is at the Established level – the third level in FLAT's 4-point rating scale.² At this level, policy actions and systems strengthening efforts are broadly in place. The focus now is to consolidate these foundations and strengthen implementation, particularly the systems that support effective instruction and children's psychosocial health and well-being.

Among 19 African countries with comparable data across both years, 79 per cent (15 countries) maintained a stable FLAT rating, 11 per cent (2 countries) recorded an increase and 11 per cent (2 countries) a decrease. While stability may reflect gains that have held in some contexts, it may also signal stalled progress in others. Across the continent, policy action ratings tend to be higher than systems strengthening ratings, highlighting an opportunity to build on the policies that governments have established by strengthening the systems needed to implement, monitor and sustain them.

² Overall ratings for each RAPID dimension are calculated as the average of the policy action and systems strengthening ratings (or the single available rating, where only one exists). The overall FLAT rating is the average of the five RAPID dimension ratings. See the FLAT 2026 global report for the full methodology.

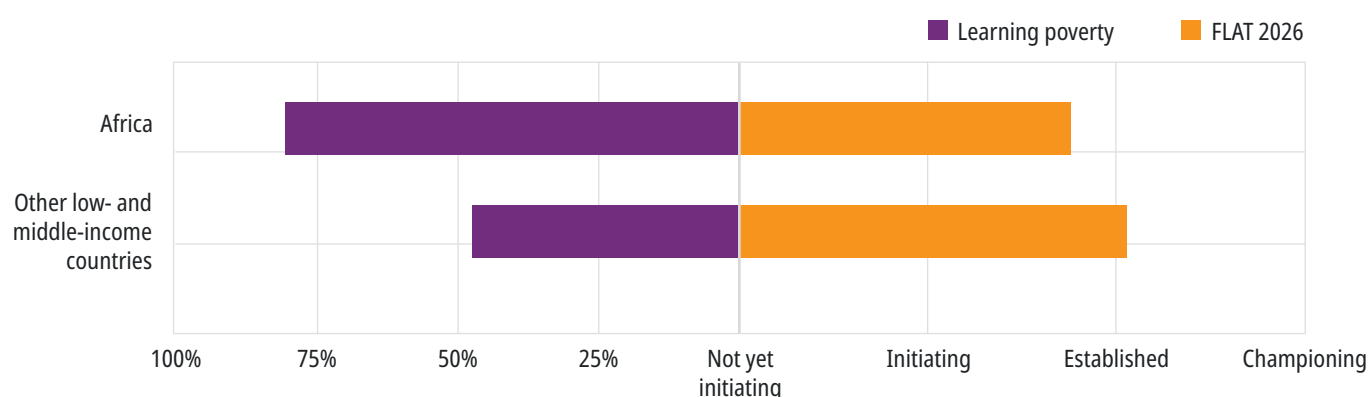




Source: Continental averages reflect all African countries with available data (actual 2026 or imputed using 2025 data). Progress since 2025 is restricted to 19 African countries with the same underlying data composition across both years, based on actual, non-imputed data wherever ratings are available. A rating change of ≥ 0.5 (≤ -0.5) is counted as an increase (decrease).

Africa's dual challenge

Compared to other low and middle-income countries, African countries lag not only in learning outcomes, as measured by learning poverty, but also in government actions to support foundational learning, as reflected in overall FLAT 2026 ratings. With most African countries' ratings unchanged since 2025, closing these gaps will require more ambitious, scaled-up action than the average level of effort currently seen in other low and middle-income countries.

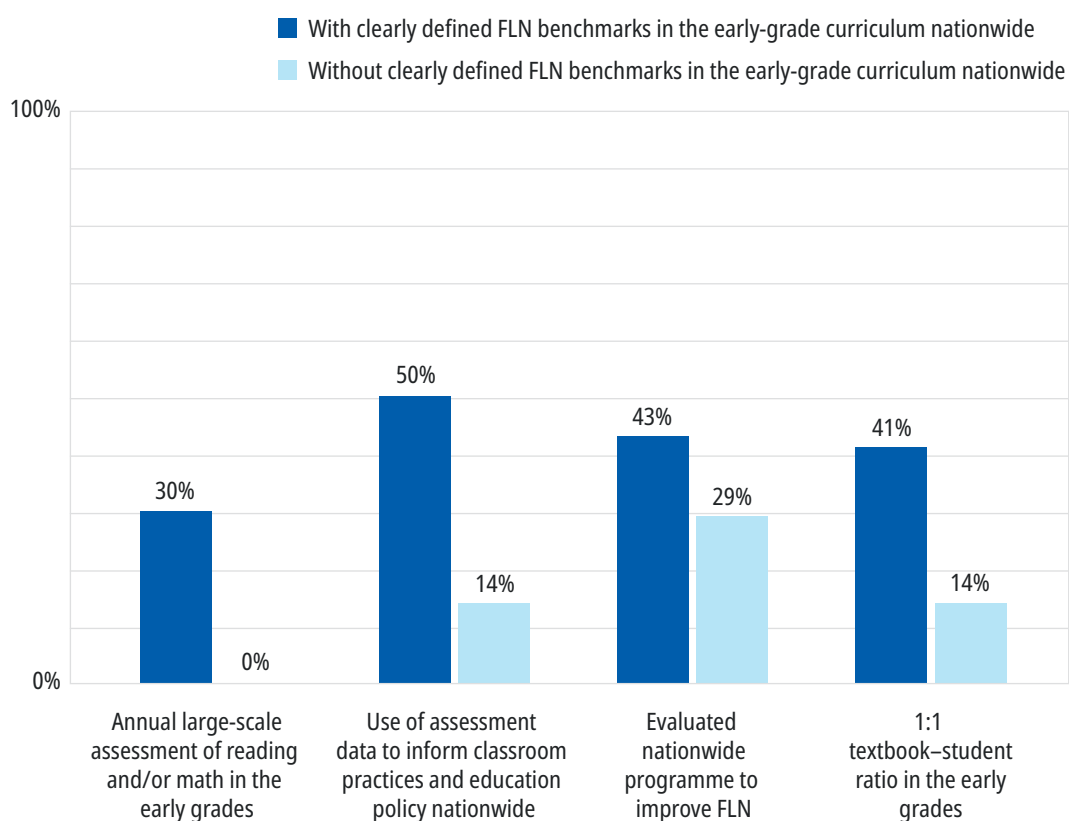


Source: World Bank Learning Poverty Database and FLAT 2026. Graph represents 72 low- and middle-income countries with both learning poverty data (weighted by population ages 10–14) and FLAT 2026 rating.

RAPID 5 indicators of foundational learning

Introduced in 2024, the RAPID 5 is a subset of indicators from the broader FLAT, representing five essential, actionable levers to accelerate foundational learning. RAPID 5 data are gathered through the annual RAPID survey.

Clearly defined benchmarks for foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) are the most widely reported RAPID 5 indicator, and countries that have established them tend to be further ahead on every other indicator. In 2026, 81 per cent of countries (30 of 37 countries) reported that FLN learning outcomes and/or benchmarks are clearly defined in the early-grade curriculum nationwide. Among these countries, progress on the remaining RAPID 5 indicators is considerably stronger than among the 19 per cent of countries without nationwide benchmarks. For example, half (15 of 30 countries) report using assessment data to inform classroom practices and education policy, compared to 14 per cent without nationwide benchmarks (1 of 7 countries). However, these comparisons show an association rather than causality and should be interpreted with caution, given the small sample size of 7 countries without nationwide FLN benchmarks.

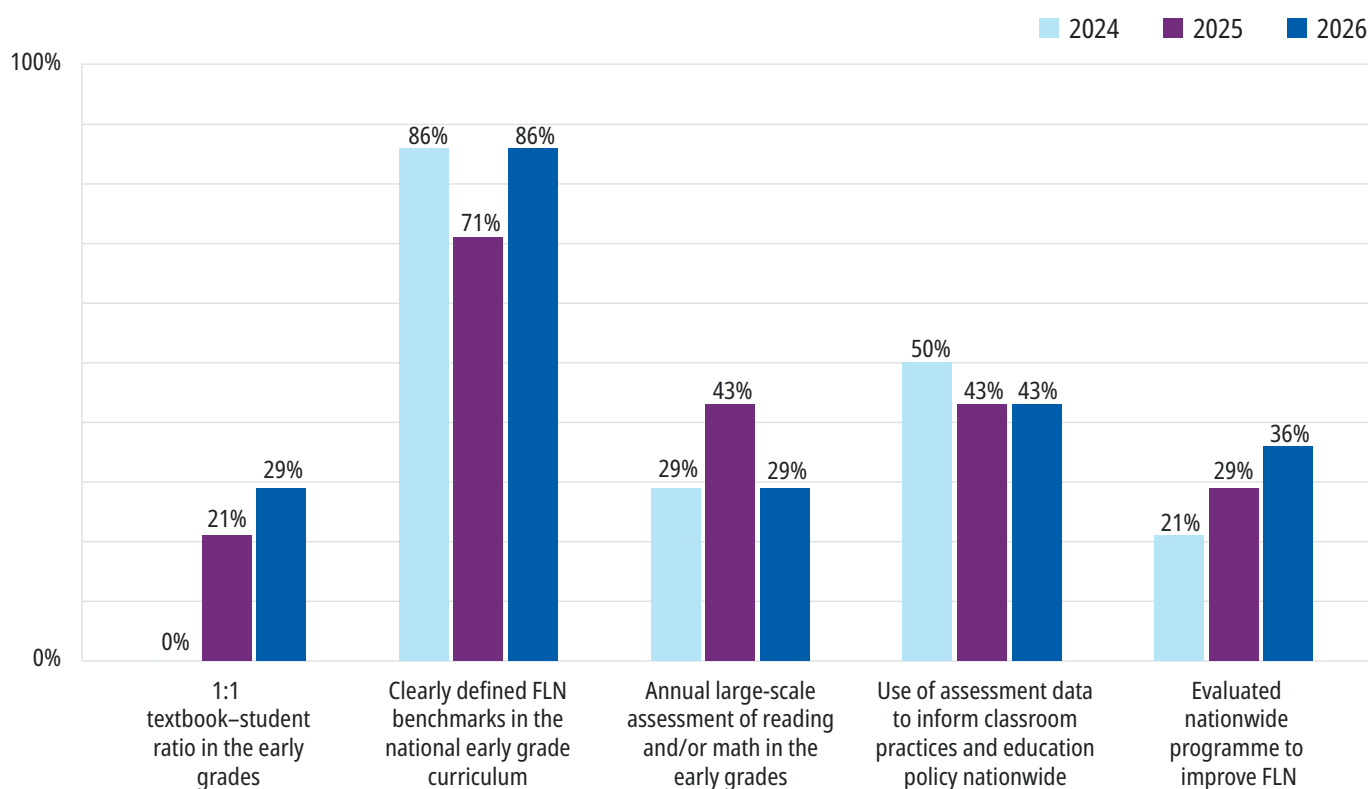


Source: UNICEF's RAPID 2026 survey. Data reflect 30 countries reporting clearly defined FLN benchmarks in the early-grade curriculum or policy nationwide, and 7 countries reporting only partial, small-scale or no implementation of the same. The findings should be considered with an understanding of current data limitations. See FLAT 2026 global report for full methodology.

Nevertheless, even among most countries with nationwide FLN benchmarks in place, regular assessment is the area with the most room to grow – just 30 per cent (9 of 30 countries) report an annual nationally representative large-scale assessment of reading and/or math in the early grades. This underscores a broader pattern across the RAPID 5: Progress has been strongest where action depends on standards and inputs – such as benchmarks and textbooks – but considerably weaker where it depends on measurement and evidence-use systems, such as regular assessment.



Among the 14 countries with RAPID 5 data across all survey years, gains since 2024 have been largest for textbook-student ratio, rising from no countries reporting a 1:1 ratio in 2024 to 29 per cent (4 countries) in 2026 – though it remains one of the lowest-reported RAPID 5 indicators, alongside large-scale assessments. By contrast, nationwide use of assessment data to inform both classroom practices and education policy declined from 50 per cent (7 countries) in 2024 to 43 per cent (6 countries) in 2025 and has not recovered, while annual large-scale assessments fell sharply over the past year.



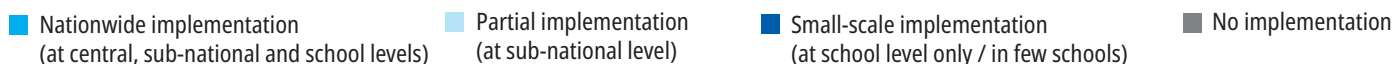
Source: Restricted to a matched panel of 14 African countries with UNICEF RAPID survey responses in 2023–2026.

RAPID 2026 survey findings

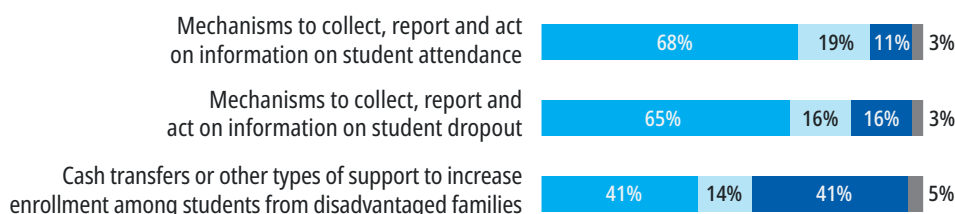
The broader RAPID survey – with data available for 37 African countries – provides insight into the extent of implementation of policy efforts across and within the RAPID dimensions. For instance, in ‘Prioritizing teaching the fundamentals’, actions targeted at FLN remain stronger than those aimed at social-emotional learning.

The survey also provides qualitative information on ongoing country actions. The examples below, selected on the basis of strong ratings, recent progress or specific promising actions reported, offer a snapshot of how policy and system efforts are being implemented in practice across the RAPID dimensions.



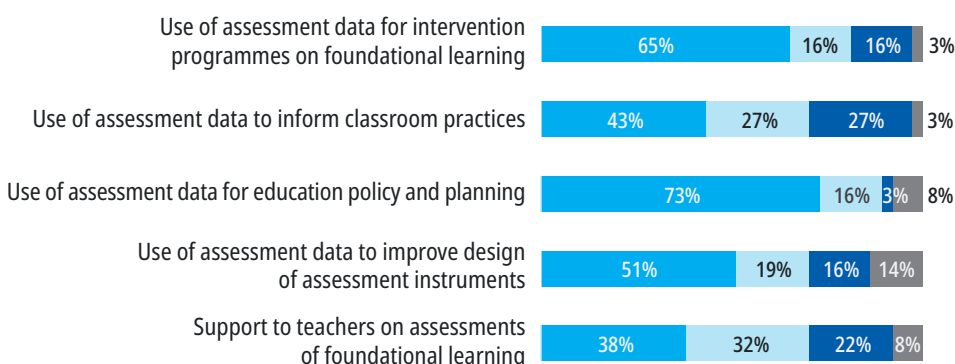


REACH EVERY CHILD AND KEEP THEM IN SCHOOL



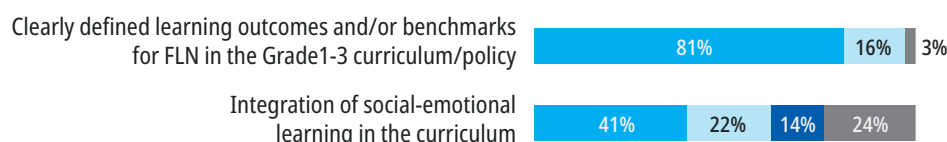
In **Mozambique**, the Ministry of Education is implementing various initiatives, including the construction and rehabilitation of classrooms in rural and hard-to-reach areas, the Free Primary Education policy to reduce barriers to access, and school feeding programmes in selected schools to improve attendance, retention and learning outcomes.

ASSESS LEARNING LEVELS REGULARLY



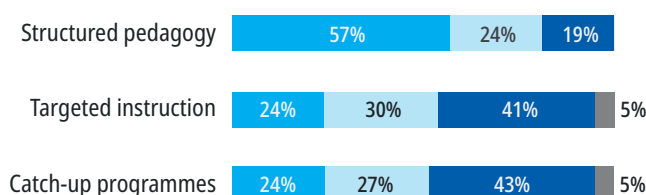
In **Uganda**, following implementation at the lower secondary level, Competency-Based Assessment is being prepared for rollout at the primary level – shifting emphasis toward learners' demonstrated competencies and continuous progress, and complementing national assessments that provide system-level evidence on learning outcomes.

PRIORITIZE TEACHING THE FUNDAMENTALS



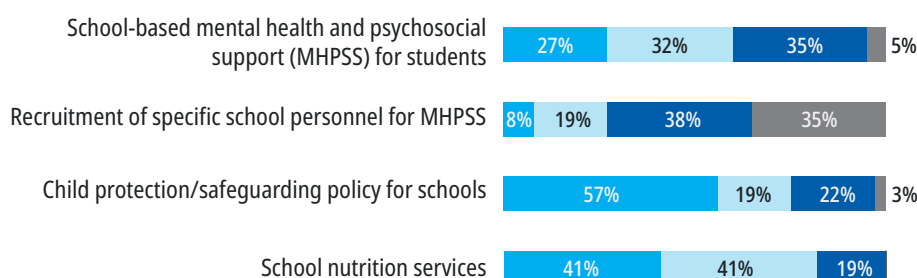
In **Kenya**, the Competency-Based Curriculum embeds foundational literacy and numeracy as the core focus of Grades 1-3, with competencies related to socio-emotional learning – such as self-efficacy, citizenship and responsibility – integrated across learning areas.

INCREASE THE EFFICIENCY OF INSTRUCTION



In **the Gambia**, the Mainstreaming Effective Intervention Strategy in Schools (MEISS) is piloted in 55 public schools using a multi-pronged approach to deliver FLN. It provides teachers with support through a structured pedagogy approach, including scripted lesson plans, continuous supervision and intensive teacher training.

DEVELOP PSYCHOSOCIAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



In **Burkina Faso**, the Government has strengthened psychosocial support, child protection and safeguarding through the Safe School approach, while developing an integrated mechanism to embed these practices more effectively.

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.



Published by UNICEF
3 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017

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