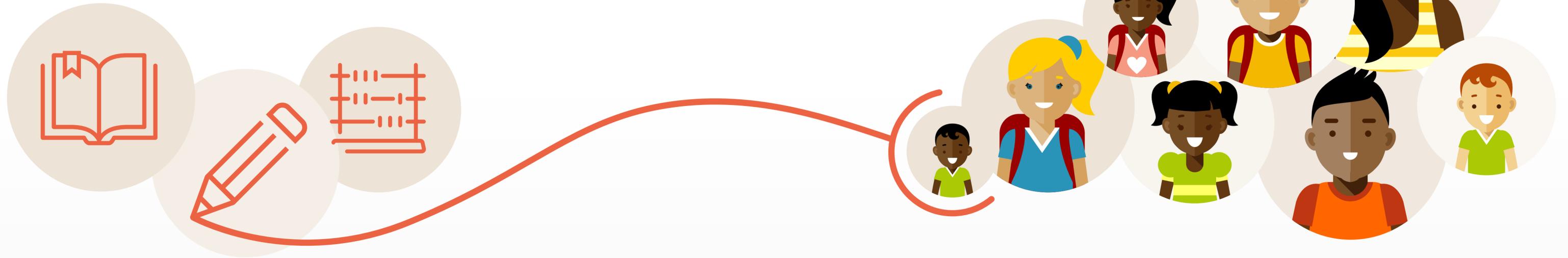


Focus to Flourish

Five Actions to Accelerate Progress in Learning

There has been tremendous progress toward ensuring that every child has access to school —and now that most children are in school, the focus must shift to ensuring universal learning, which requires fundamental changes.

The world has longstanding commitments to universal education—
which is necessary for a child’s dignity, self-worth,
and freedom to define their own destiny



“Everyone has the
right to education.”

Universal Declaration of
Human Rights, Article 26,
1948

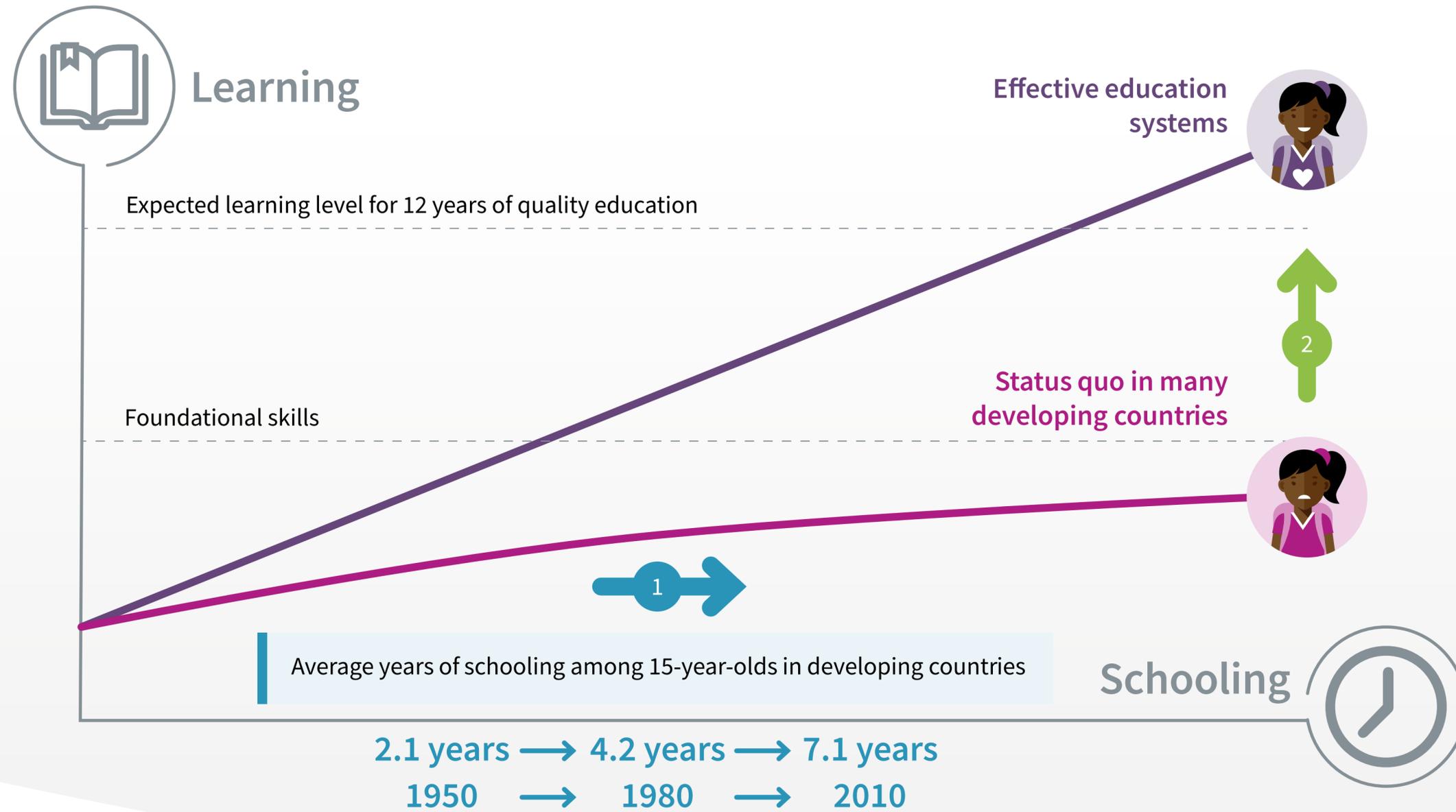
“Every person — child, youth and adult — shall be
able to benefit from educational opportunities
designed to meet their basic learning needs ...
required by human beings to be able to survive,
to develop their full capacities, to live and work
in dignity, to participate fully in development,
to improve the quality of their lives, to make
informed decisions, and to continue learning.”

World Declaration on Education for All, Article 2, 1990

“By 2030, ensure that all girls and
boys complete free, equitable and
quality primary and secondary
education leading to relevant and
effective learning outcomes.”

Sustainable Development Goal 4.1, 2015

There are two paths to improving the capabilities that youths have when they finish schooling: more schooling, or more learning per year of schooling



- 1 There has been huge progress in schooling attainment in developing countries.
- 2 However, in many countries, the pace at which children master new learning per year of schooling is just too shallow—such that many children complete basic schooling without achieving foundational learning. To overcome this, education systems need to help children learn more each year.

Most countries around the world have had fantastic success in expanding access to schooling—but must make further progress on learning



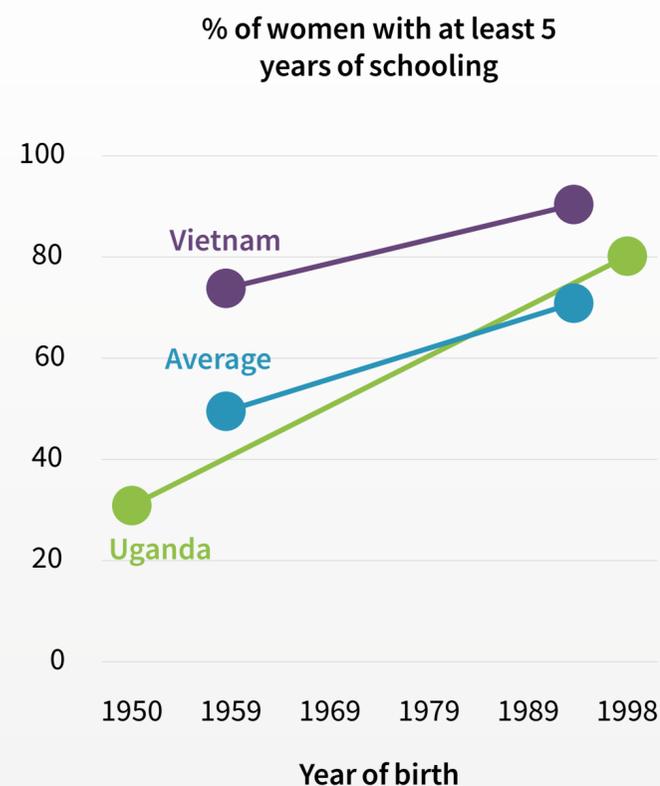
In the mid-20th century, the biggest challenge for universal foundational learning goals around the world was improving access to schooling.

Today, the biggest challenge for cultivating foundational learning for all children is helping them to learn more with each year they spend in school.

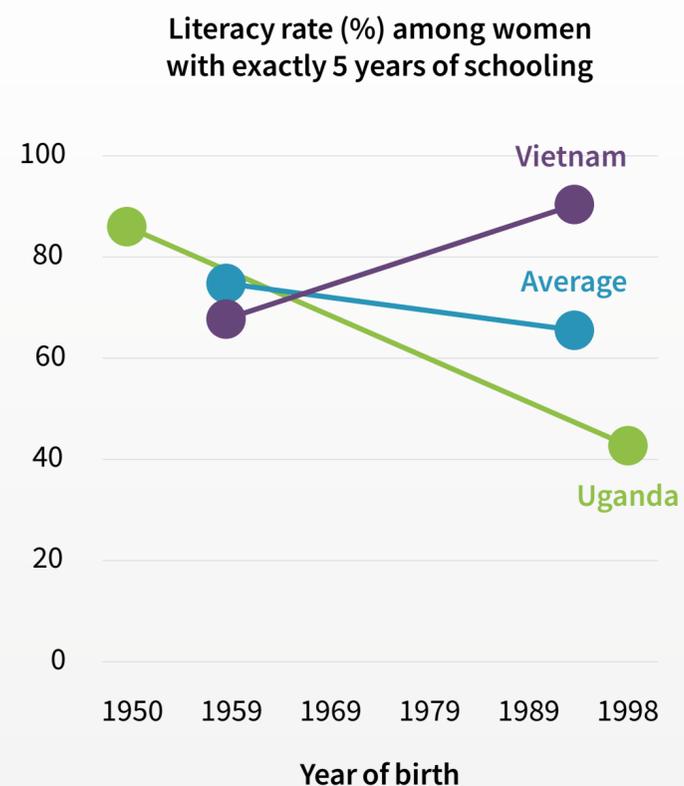
Despite great efforts worldwide to improve education—and some notable successes—most of the developing world is still experiencing a severe learning crisis in which learning levels are low and, in some cases, worsening.

In many education systems, the proportion of schoolgoing children who gain foundational learning is low—and stagnant or decreasing

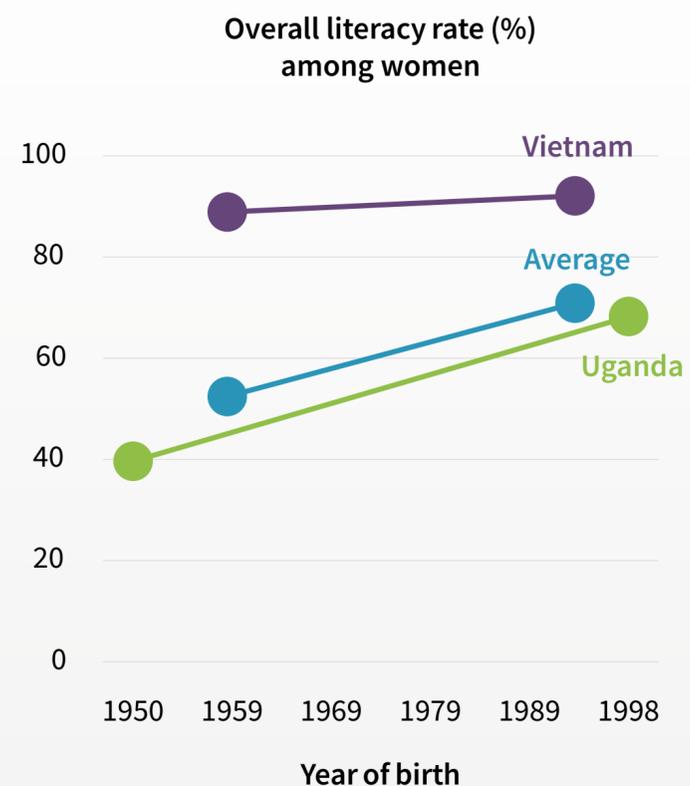
In most countries, there has been a massive expansion in school enrolment ...



... but trends in education quality have varied widely across countries ...



... such that large gains in enrollment produce mixed outcomes for learning.



In **Vietnam**, both enrolment and education quality increased, leading to an increase in overall learning levels (which were already high).

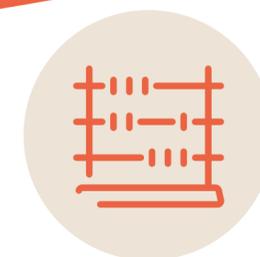
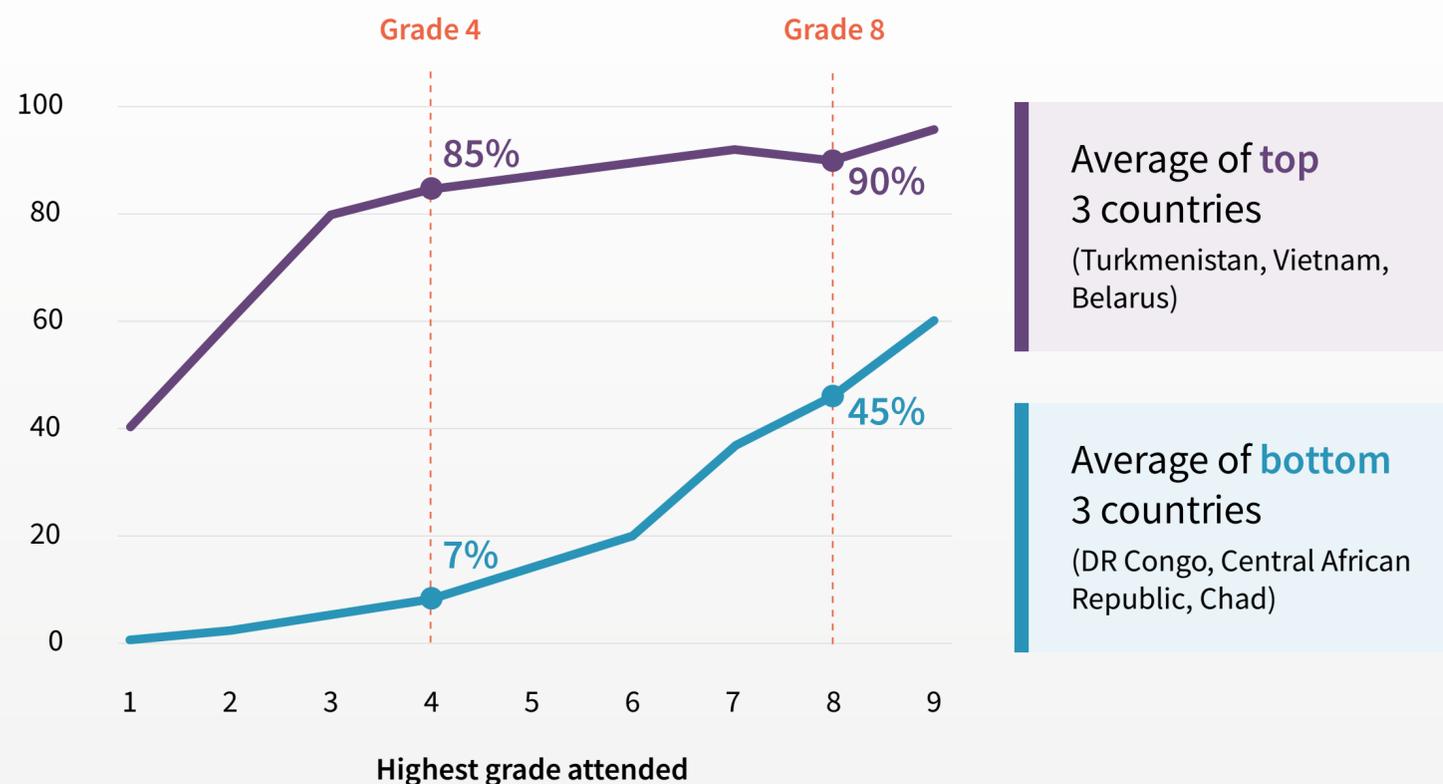
On **average**, enrolment increased steeply, but education quality declined, so the increase in overall learning levels was much smaller than the increase in enrolment.

In **Uganda**, both the enrolment gains and the quality declines were steeper than average, so the change in learning levels was similar to the average.

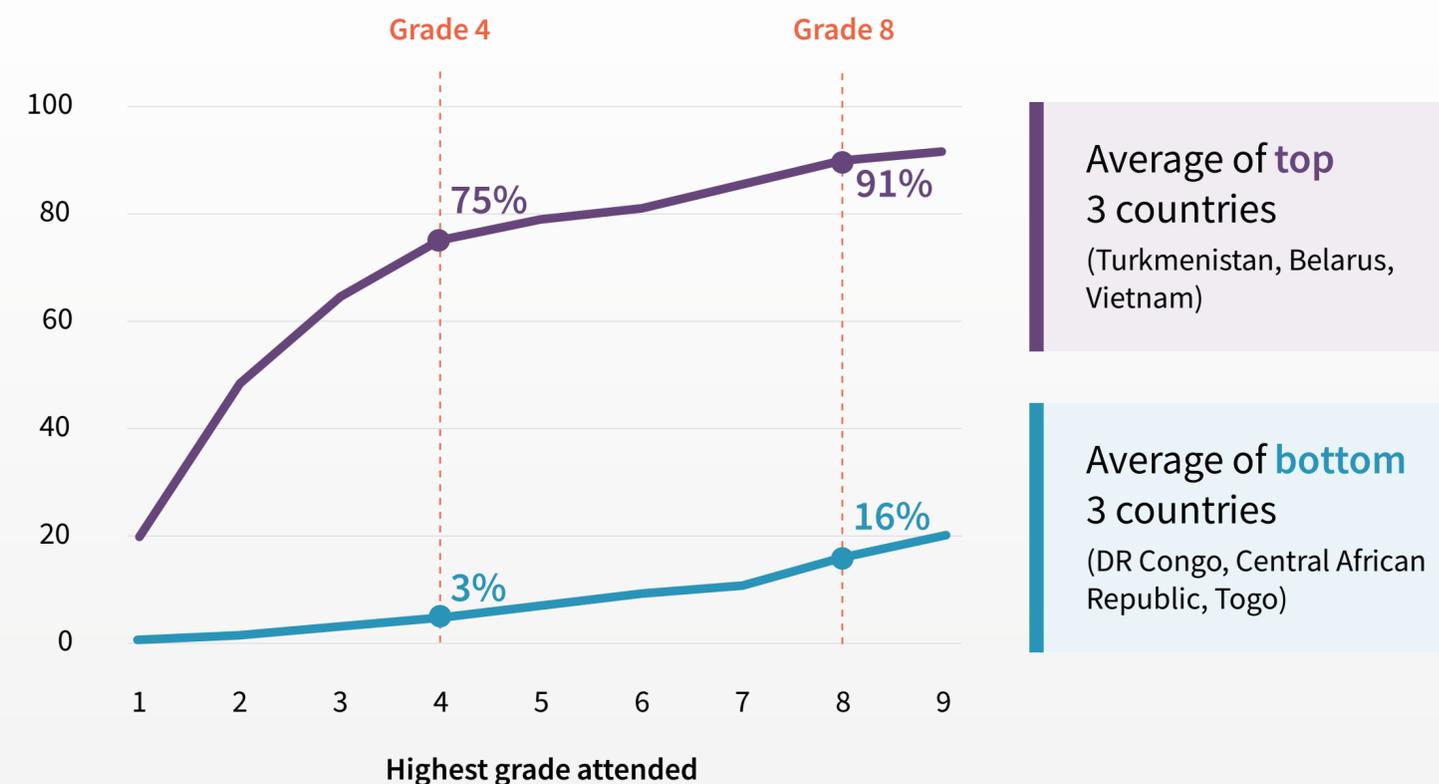
In many countries, learning trajectories for foundational skills are far too shallow, but dramatically superior performance is possible



% of children with foundational reading skills



% of children with foundational numeracy skills



Source: [Global Education Monitoring Report, 2022](#). 'Top 3' and 'bottom 3' refers to the performance in Grade 5 among countries in the MICS6 dataset for which data were available for Grades 1–8. See also [Glewwe et al., 2021](#) and [Crouch, Rolleston, & Gustafsson, 2021](#).

Five actions are needed to put every country's education system on a path to universal early foundational learning and subsequent educational goals.

Align Measure Commit Support Adapt

