

# Why is learning poverty high and persistent in low and middle-income countries?

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## The Key Role of Data in Mobilizing Better Learning Outcomes

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Luis Crouch, has underscored the importance of ‘ **having good [learning assessment] data**’ as one of the key features of education reforms needed to end the learning crisis.





And I couldn't agree more!

1. How can we improve learning outcomes without knowing where they currently stand?



2. Good learning assessment data is also useful for ensuring transparency and accountability.

SDG4 obliges all countries to **ensure inclusive and quality education... for all**

*But , without good, independent learning data how could we hold governments or schools accountable?*



3. Good learning assessment data is also necessary for informing evidence-based decision making.

*How else would governments, development partners and other actors know what to prioritise and where to invest?*

**But where does good learning assessment data for mobilizing better learning outcomes come from?**





# 1. Should we depend on the official government national learning assessment data alone? (e.g. Uganda's NAPE?)

The danger of this is that if there's pressure on governments [and schools to deliver for specific targets, e.g. SDG4 targets & indicators..., the temptation of 'manufacturing' results that look good and acceptable is high!



## 2. Do Citizen-based assessments hold any promise?

I would say, yes, because of their independence and objectivity



# Role for citizen-led assessments?



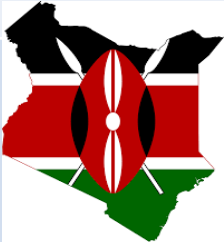
- Citizen-led assessments (CLAs) such as Uwezo in East Africa, and that of other citizen-led assessments globally united under the People's Action for Learning (PAL) Network (having been inspired by the Annual Status of Education Report – ASER – India citizen-assessments that have been conducted since 2005 - have helped to shift the attention of governments from levels of enrolment to learning outcomes.



# Key features of citizen-led assessments

- **Conducted by citizens** (who have been rigorously trained)
- **Household-based** (widens reach to include children who would be excluded by school-based assessments, e.g. absentees, never enrolled, dropouts, **those with disability\*\*\* - 2018 for visually impaired (P1-7) – 0.8% school data versus 3.6% using Washington Group qns at HH level**)
- **Large scale** (working with assessors who are in their communities make's easier to scale these assessments)
- **Have traditionally focused on basic skills (of reading and numeracy)**. They **demystify learning** and make it comprehensible to ordinary citizens.
- **Have an in-built advocacy approach** - have helped to shift the attention of governments and development partners from levels of enrolment to learning outcomes & Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN).

## Recent national programs to address learning in East Africa

#	Country	Education Program
1		<b>The Education Programme for Results (EP4R)</b> that has been implemented in Tanzania since 2014, targeting children attending public schools that constitute the majority of the children missing out on foundational learning competencies.
2		<b>Government of Uganda/UK AID/USAID programs focused on improving foundational literacy and numeracy learning outcomes</b> e.g. Strengthening Education Systems for Improved Learning (SESIL – FCDO); USAID’s: School Health and Reading Program – SHRP (2012-2019); Literacy and Achievement Activity – LARA (2015-2021) and the ongoing Integrated Child and Youth Development Activity – ICYD (2020 – ongoing)
3		<b>Primary Education Development Project (PRIEDE)</b> , operational since 2016 and funded by the Global Partnership for Education, focused on improving the teaching and learning of mathematics in Primary Grades 1-2 in Kenya.

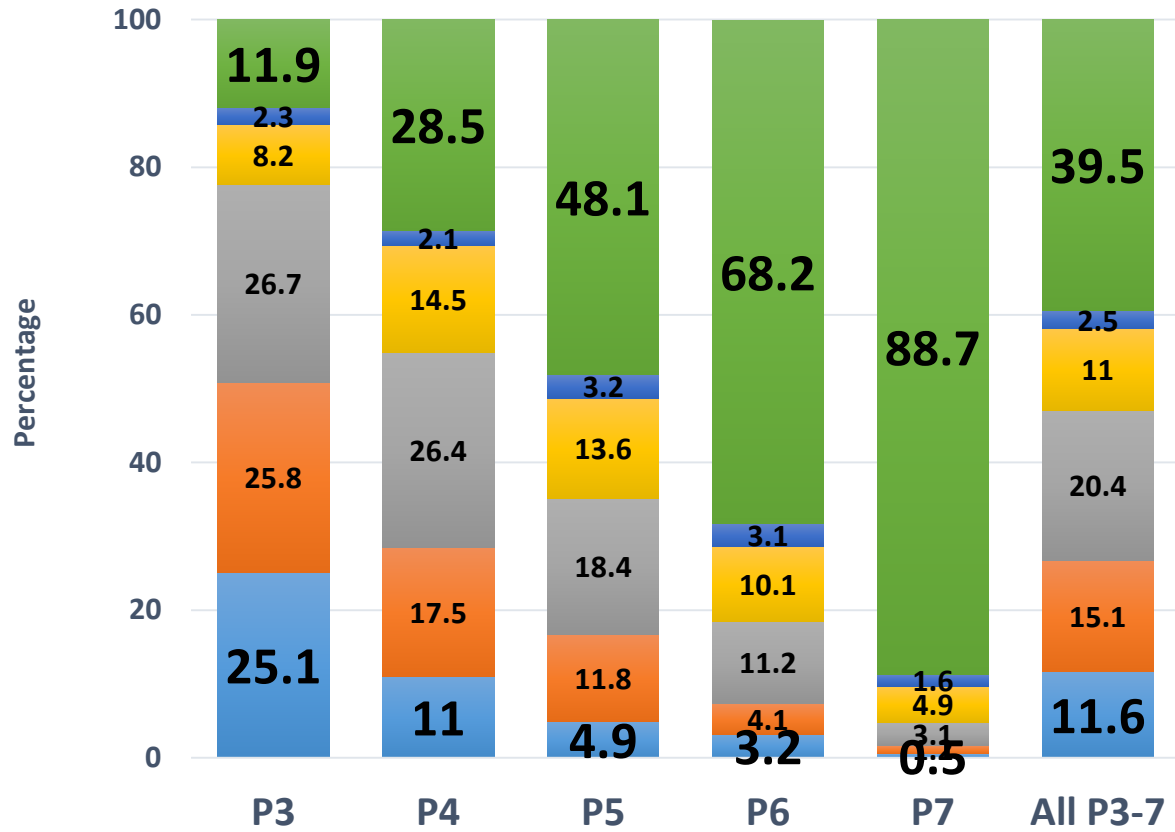
# How we have used citizen-led assessment data to mobilize for better learning outcomes





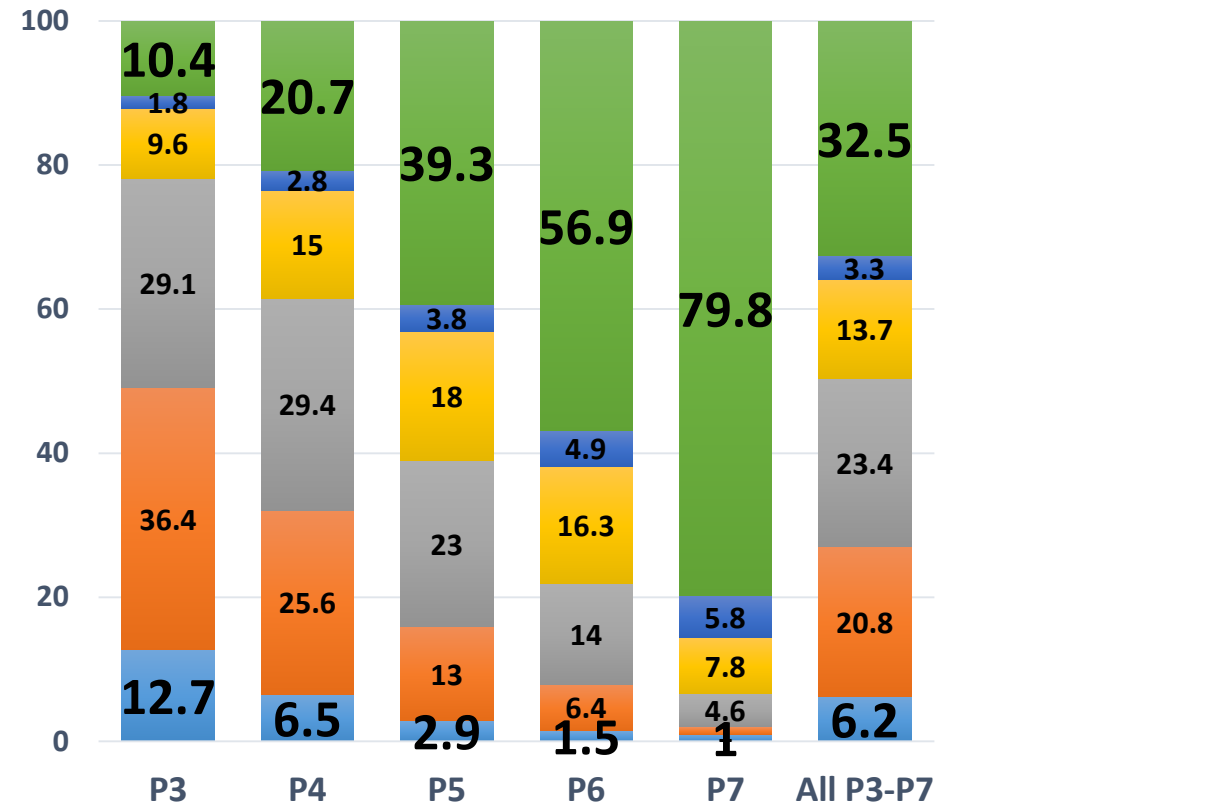
Figure 2: Levels of Reading in English by Grade, P3-7

### 2021\_Levels of Literacy by Grade



Sample size (2021): 5,906

### 2018\_Levels of Literacy by Grade



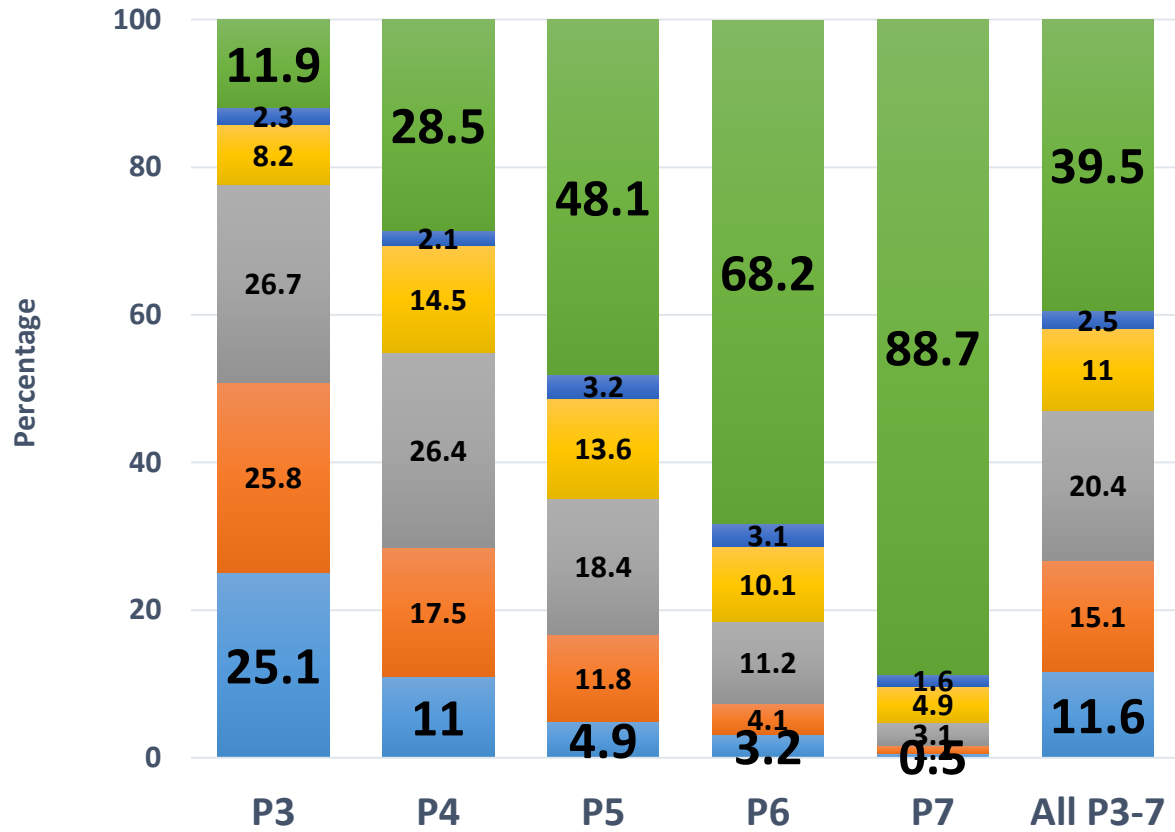
Sample size (2018): 13,652

■ Non-reader ■ Letter ■ Word ■ Paragraph ■ Story only ■ Read and comprehend



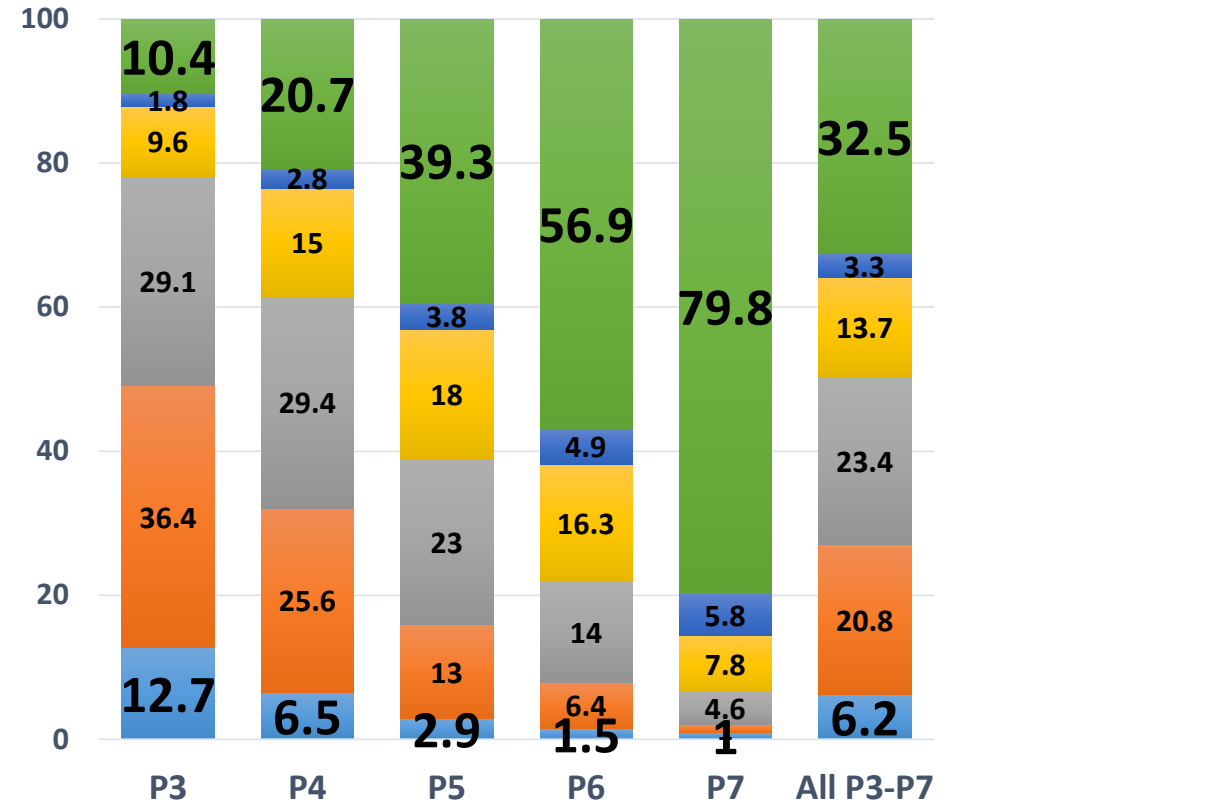
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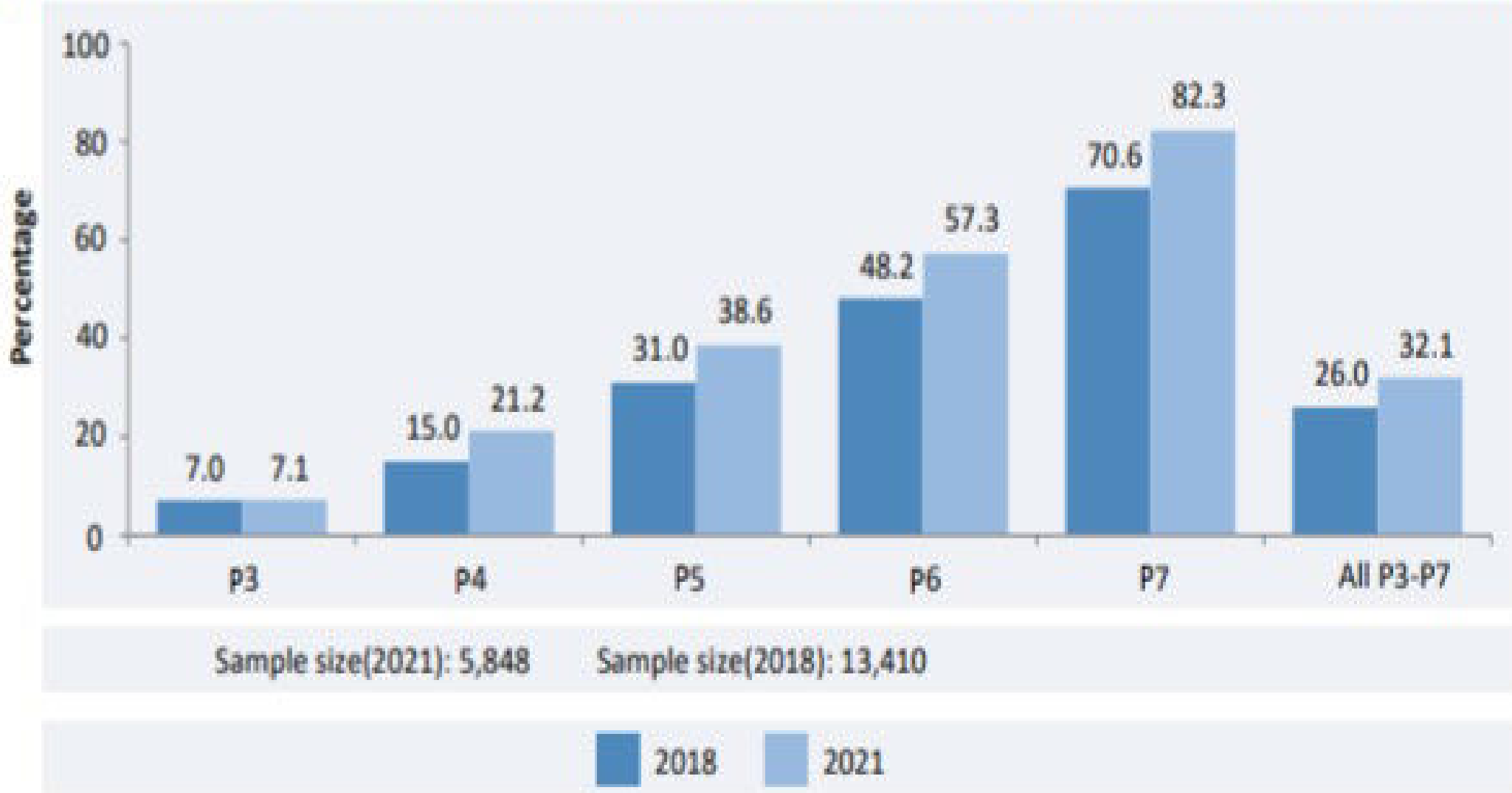


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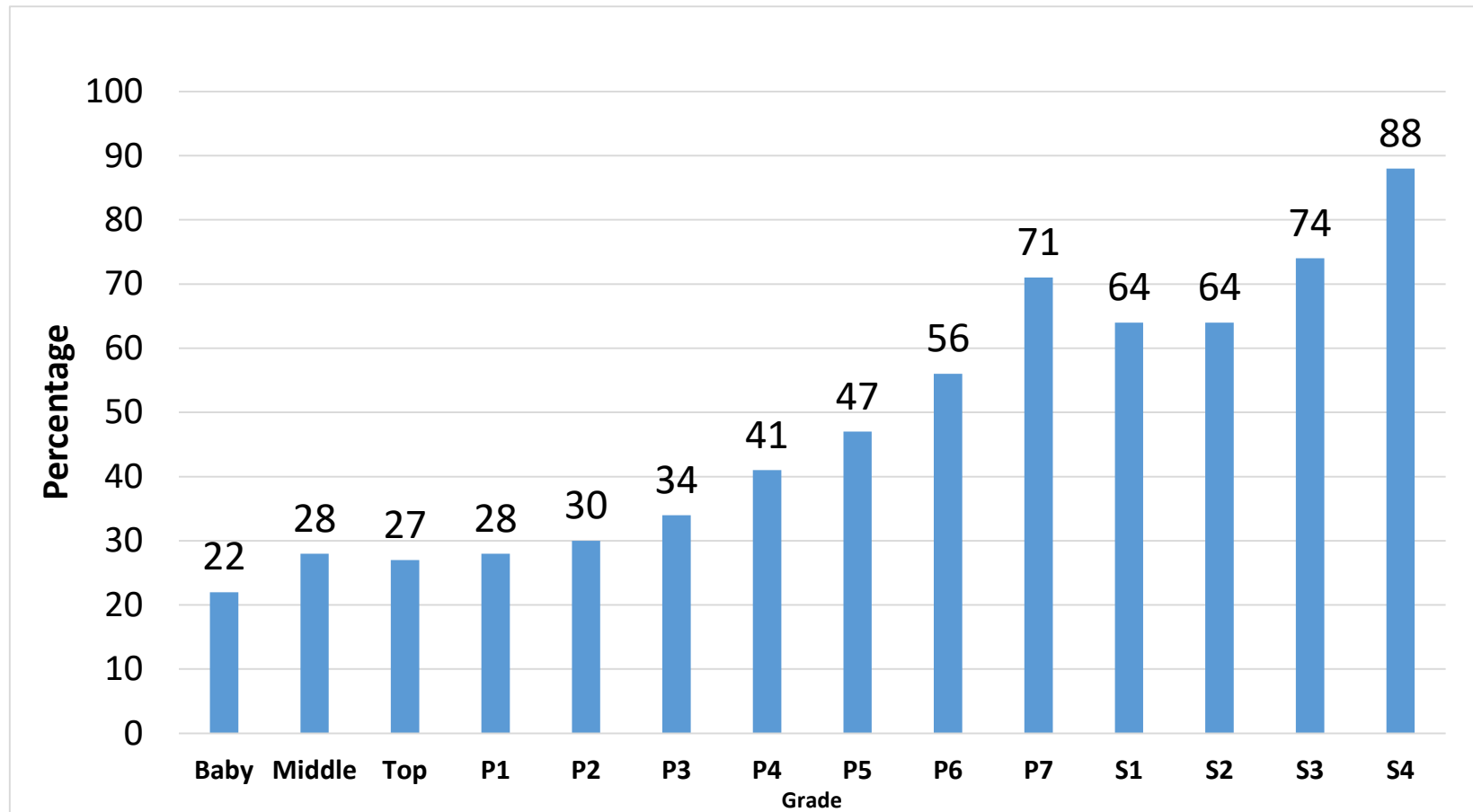
**Figure 4: Percentage rates of Combined Literacy and Numeracy Competence in P3-7 (2018 vs 2021)**



# Continued learning during school closure

3.1. The higher the grade, the more likely the child was involved in home-based learning. The increase is consistent except that being in a 'candidate class' (P7 or S4) seemed to have an influence.

**Figure 7: Pupils Engaged in Home-based Learning (Percentages)**



*Sample size: 12,790*



## Are Citizen-led household assessments without challenges?

Despite the numerous opportunities presented by the household based assessments, there are notable challenges encountered in the process. Among the challenges faced include:

1. **A traditional focus on basic skills.** Under RELI, they have been adapted to assessing complex skills e.g. life skills and values
2. **Not reached all children.** Mindful of this and frequently exploring inclusion of hard to reach e.g. refugee contexts (Uwezo in 2017) and testing assessment of the visually and hearing impaired (Uganda & Pakistan in 2020)
3. **Comparability of data at global level:** Previously each country benchmarked against each national curricula – Now ICAN and PAL-ELANA - levels using minimum proficiency levels (MPLs) agreed in the Global Proficiency Framework (GPF) for monitoring under SDG 4.1.1(a) –and having standardized Data Quality Standards Framework









*Thank you!*

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