

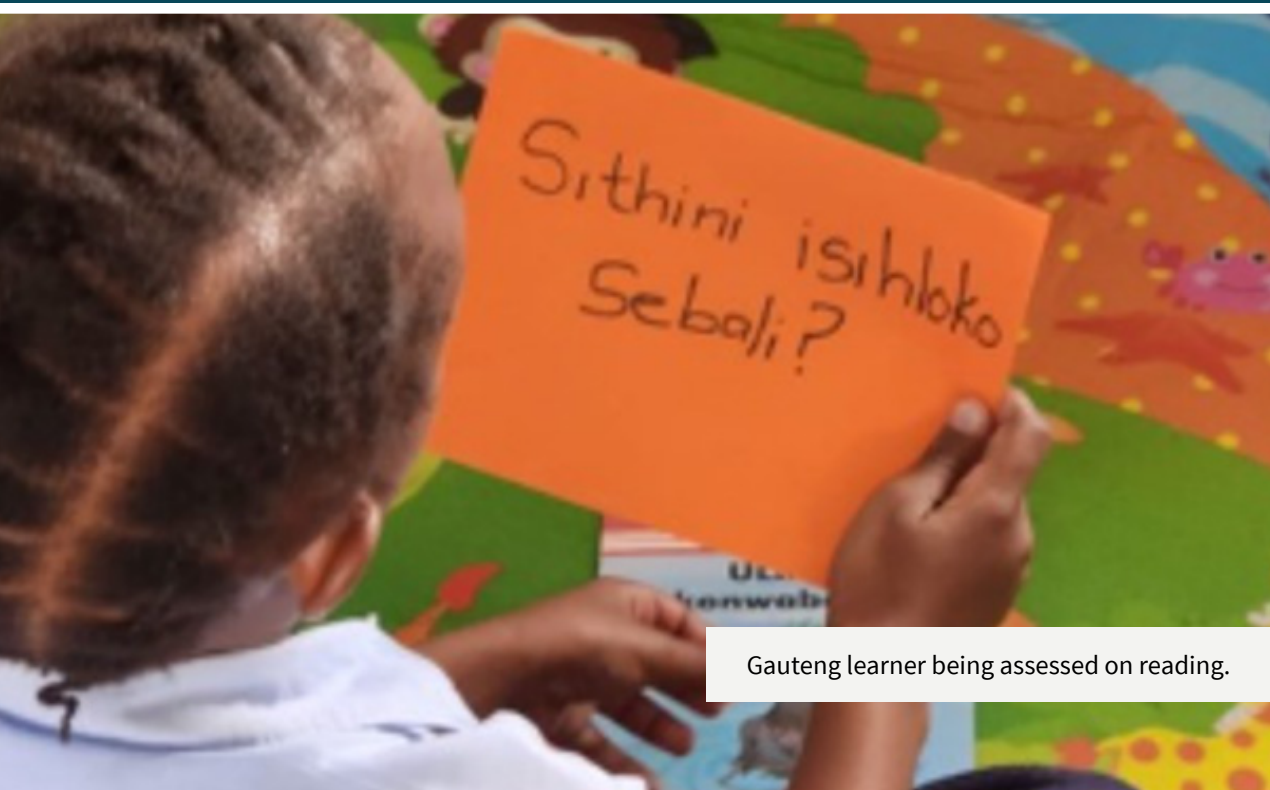


How to Lead Sub-National Reforms

A Toolkit from Haryana, Western
Cape & Gauteng
July 2026



Why this toolkit?



Gauteng learner being assessed on reading.



Haryana learner with print-rich classroom.

Why sub-national reforms?

Sub-national governments play a critical role in improving education systems. They are often responsible for adapting national policies to local contexts, strengthening schools and teachers, and ensuring reforms are effectively implemented at scale. In many countries, sub-national levels hold more power over primary schools than the national level.

Despite their importance, much of the available **guidance on education reform in low- and middle-income countries focuses on national-level strategies** (Ministerial teams), with comparatively little practical evidence on leading reforms in sub-national levels: states, provinces, counties or semi-autonomous government units (like curriculum, teacher training or assessment agencies).

Purpose of the Toolkit

In Lighthouse Coalition's work since 2024 with three Indian states, four South African provinces and a Kenyan national numeracy coalition (involving counties), linking to Brazilian states and municipalities, we have seen that sub-national leaders are eager to learn from their peers who have walked the journey.

This toolkit draws on the experiences of three **emerging sub-national exemplars** leading impressive reforms in foundational learning: Western Cape province (South Africa), Gauteng province (South Africa) and Haryana state (India). Though they all have non-state partners, they are all examples where strong government leaders committed to embark on reforms and championed the right interventions to strengthen government schools delivering stronger student outcomes (not a non-state actor delivering interventions).



Lighthouse Coalition government champions on a 2025 immersion trip to Sobral, Brazil.

The toolkit identifies **six practical pillars that helped these government teams approach the finish line of improved FLN outcomes through stronger government school delivery.** It highlights leadership practices, challenges and lessons that can support other governments to design, implement and improve sub-national FLN reforms.

We hope this toolkit is helpful to audiences of leaders in government across sub-national levels, national studios collaborating with sub-national, and non-state organisations partnering with government leaders at all levels.

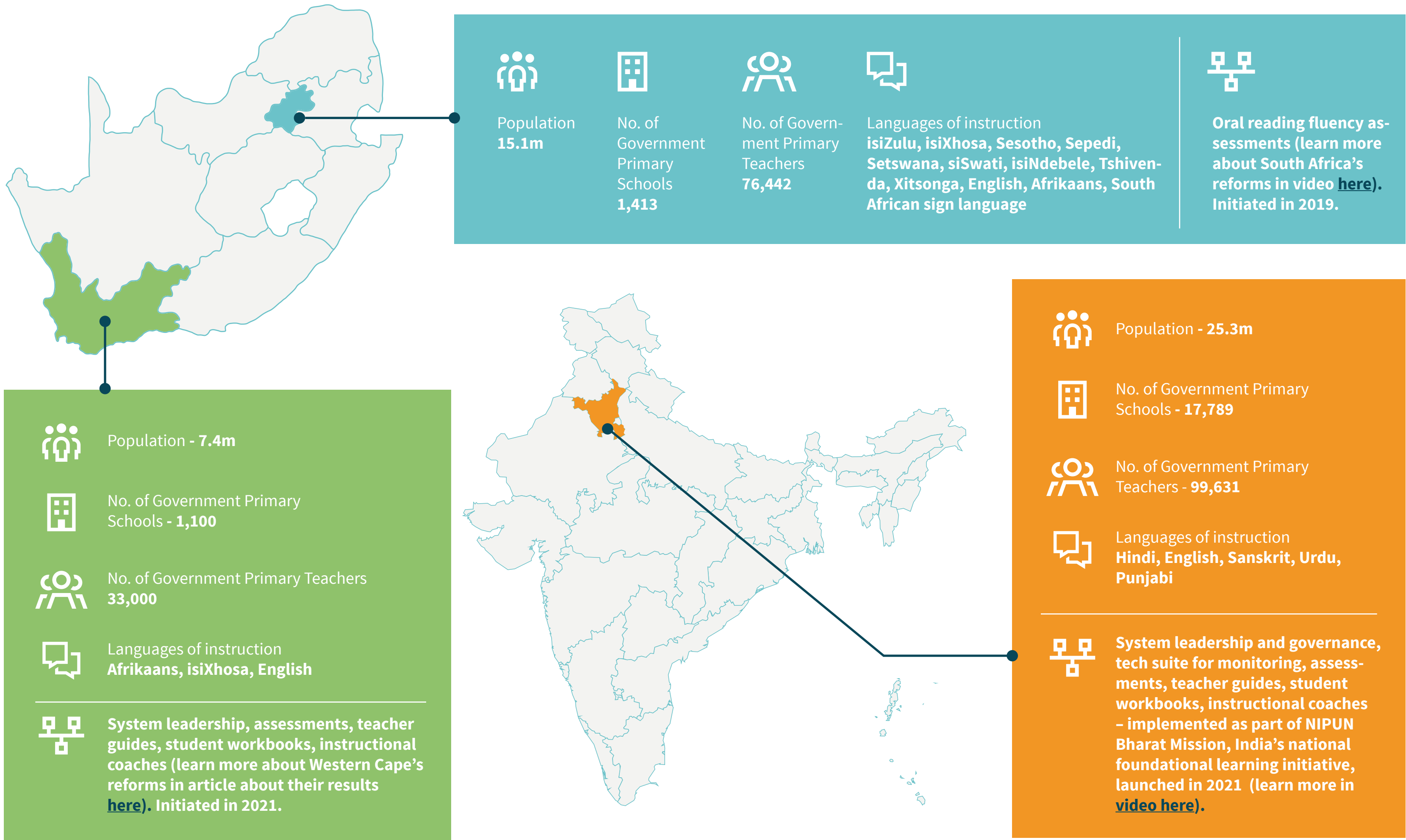
Though these case studies focus on foundational learning in primary schools, the tactics and process can be adapted for government reforms across other levels of education systems, and reforms in sectors such as public health.

This toolkit is Part 1; Part 2 will focus on Free State province (South Africa) and Uttar Pradesh state (India).

It was produced by Lighthouse Coalition at Global Schools Forum (Kathlyn Pattillo, Pamela Matta, Damilola Adeduro), with the support of Language & Learning Foundation and Binding Constraints Lab (to conduct interviews with government leaders).

About the Exemplars

This toolkit collects the experiences and lessons learned from three sub-national governments who successfully implemented and scaled up FLN reforms:



Six pillars of successful sub-national FLN reforms

These six pillars, drawn from the experience of Western Cape (South Africa), Gauteng (South Africa) and Haryana (India), form an integrated framework for to design, implement and sustain impactful sub-national FLN reforms.

Create the conditions for reform

Pillar 1: Build reforms from the bottom up

Create political commitment and two-way communication across the system. Build trust and ownership among districts, teachers, schools and communities.

Pillar 2: Build strong coalitions to drive reform

Establish cross-government leadership structures and leverage strategic partnerships with external partners.

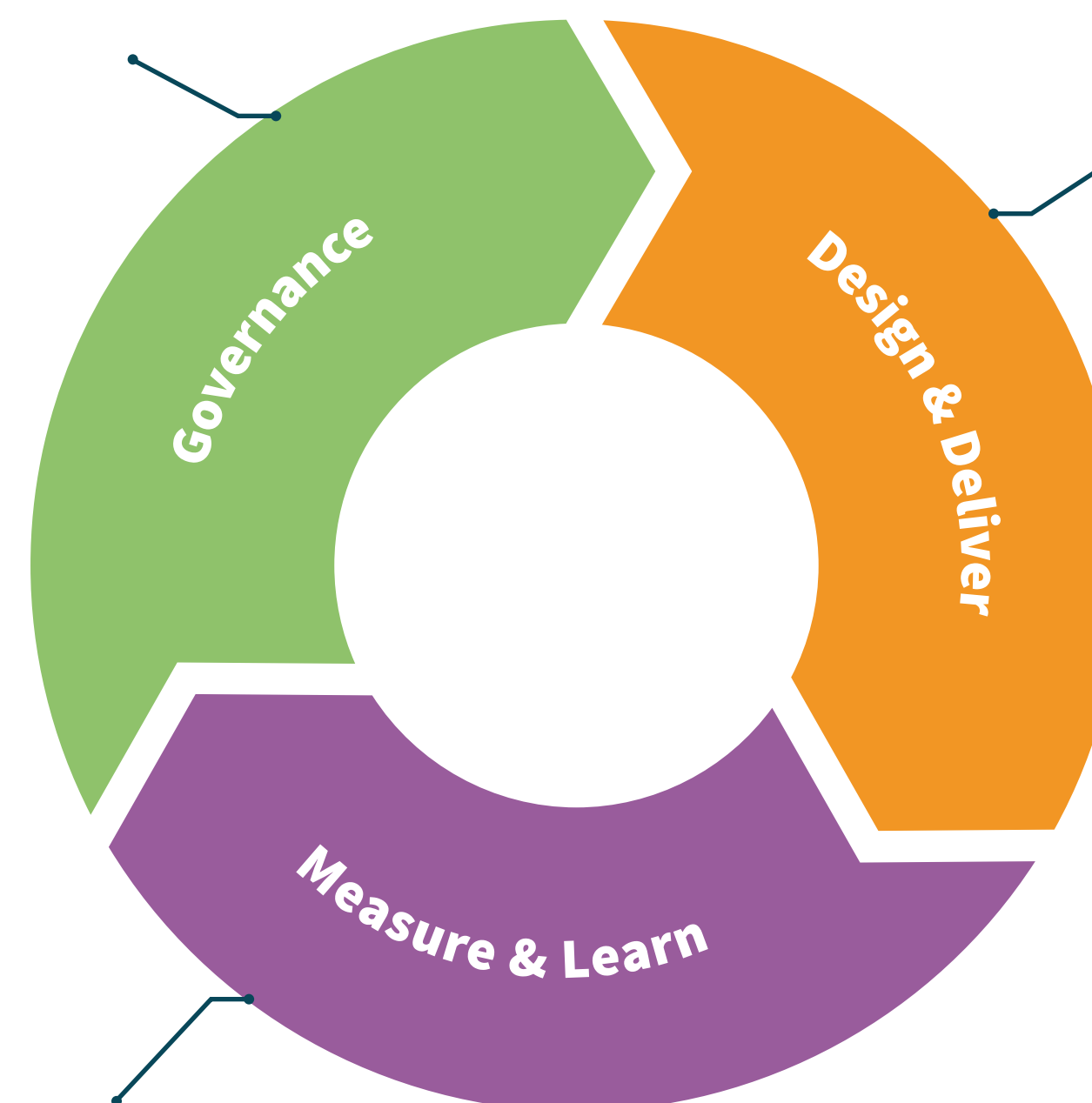
Use evidence to improve and sustain

Pillar 5: Develop credible measurement and monitoring systems

Build standardised assessments, indicators and technology-enabled systems to generate reliable data on learning and implementation.

Pillar 6: Use evidence to drive continuous improvement

Ensure data quality and use evidence regularly to inform local decision making, adapt implementation and improve learning outcomes.



Build solutions that work

Pillar 3: Design solutions that respond to local needs

Co-create and pilot interventions with stakeholders and adapt reforms to the local context, evidence and changing conditions.

Pillar 4: Invest in teacher capacity and implementation support

Strengthen capacity through continuous professional learning and equip educators with structured teaching and learning resources.

Pillars



“In 2021 our MEC told me, ‘You need to tell me what resources you need, and I’ll make it happen.’ He was bought-in and committed to making big changes.”

Almaret du Toit - Chief Education Specialist, Western Cape

Build reforms from the bottom up

Successful sub-national FLN reforms are built through shared ownership across all levels of the education system. Reforms are more likely to succeed when districts, schools, teachers and communities are actively engaged in implementation.

What does this look in practice?

1.1 Create political commitment and a shared vision

Across the case studies, both senior political leaders and provincial officials in key leadership positions made FLN a visible priority and aligned the system around a common goal.

Example from Western Cape

- Strong political will from the MEC placed foundational literacy at the centre of the provincial agenda. Senior leadership was **highly responsive to requests from provincial education officials**, providing the political backing and resources needed to implement the reform.
- Reform momentum was reinforced by committed senior provincial officials who shared a strong belief in improving outcomes for children. Senior leaders remained actively engaged throughout implementation. For example, through regular participation in implementation meetings, they demonstrated that FLN was a province-wide priority rather than a standalone programme.



Western Cape Minister David Maynier visiting Zwaanswyk Academy to observe implementation of baseline assessments.



Haryana NIPUN high-achieving learners meet the Honorable President of India – showing engagement from political leaders on foundational learning.

The province aligned districts, schools and partners around a common goal: **“All children will read for meaning by age 10”**. This shared vision provided a clear direction for implementation across more than 1,100 primary schools.

1.2 Strengthen two-way communication across the system

Rather than relying on one-way directives, governments established mechanisms for continuous dialogue between the provincial/state level and frontline implementers.

Example from Haryana

- District FLN coordinators acted as the communication bridge between the state, districts, blocks and schools.
- Feedback from schools informed district and state-level decision-making, allowing challenges to be addressed quickly and implementation to be adapted over time.

Example from Western Cape

- District roadshows created opportunities for district teams to present progress in-person directly to senior provincial leaders, strengthening accountability while ensuring local implementation challenges were heard.

1.3 Build trust and ownership among stakeholders

Successful reforms extended ownership beyond government officials by actively engaging teachers, school leaders, unions, parents and communities.

Example from Gauteng

Teacher unions, district leaders and school principals were engaged in discussions about potential provincial plans, well before new assessments began. This transparency reduced resistance, increased trust and minimised opportunities for contestation or interference during the assessment process.

“We never gave an individual school report. It was not used for punitive measures. That information was used for teacher development and support.

It is not used as a league table and I think the unions see it is not there for means of punishment.”

Raj Misser - Director: Quality Assurance, Gauteng



SADTU leader speaking after Gauteng MEC Lebogang Maile addressed the 2026 SADTU Provincial Conference ([source: Instagram](#))

Assessment data was positioned as a tool for teacher development rather than accountability, increasing trust and reducing resistance.

Example from Haryana

- Community engagement formed a core part of the reform through parent meetings, WhatsApp communication, print-rich classrooms, report cards and public awareness activities that made FLN visible beyond schools.
- Parent engagement was central to the approach, with parents supported through the NIPUN parent app, which equipped them with simple strategies to support reading and numeracy through summer holiday activities, while creating regular opportunities for home-school interaction to reinforce learning beyond the classroom.
- Inspired by Sobral municipality in Brazil, Haryana also launched the #MaiBhiNIPUN campaign to raise awareness among parents and build bold reforms.



Haryana parent engagement meeting.



Haryana media campaign to engage political leaders and parents.

Challenges and mitigation measures

Challenges

Leadership transitions

Changes in political or administrative leadership can threaten reform continuity and reduce momentum.

Stakeholder resistance

Teachers, unions and district actors may resist reforms if they perceive them as externally imposed, punitive or changing hard-fought wins for issues like teacher salaries.

Maintain engagement across multiple levels

As reforms scale, ensuring consistent communication between provincial/state, district and school levels becomes increasingly challenging.

Mitigation measures

Embed reforms in long-term strategies, budgets and governance structures. Western Cape, for example, secured budget allocations that extend beyond changes in leadership (their current budget is committed through 2030, despite a provincial Minister being transferred), while investing in developing the next generation of provincial leaders (who will take over when current leaders retire).

Create formal communication structures such as district coordinators, regular review meetings and feedback mechanisms to ensure information flows in both directions across the system. Haryana's District FLN Coordinators played a critical role in connecting classrooms with state-level decision-making.

Engage stakeholders early and transparently: Clearly communicate the purpose of the reform, involve key district directors from the outset, and frame data and accountability processes as tools for improvement rather than compliance. Gauteng's engagement with teacher unions and district leaders and the dissemination of results after the assessment period helped build trust and protect long-term relationships.

Gauteng Chief Education Specialist assessing a learner on the Bona Bala app.

Pillars



Training of Gauteng Oral Reading Fluency assessors.

Build strong coalitions to drive reform

Successful sub-national reforms require coalitions that bring together political leaders, technical teams, district officials, researchers, non-government partners, funders and implementation organisations, around a shared vision. Effective coalitions combine expertise, strengthen government capacity and create the conditions for sustained reform.

What does this look in practice?

2.1 Establish cross-government leadership structures

Successful reforms need governance structures that bring together different parts of the education system (that are often siloed) around a shared objective. Clearly defined roles, regular communication and shared accountability help ensure reforms are implemented consistently across the system.

Example from Gauteng

- Established a multi-directorate steering committee bringing together curriculum, assessment, research and knowledge management, EMIS, IT and quality assurance.
- This transformed oral reading fluency assessments from a quality assurance initiative into a shared provincial priority, with each directorate contributing to implementation and data quality.

Example from Western Cape

- Built a close leadership team composed of senior government officials, technical experts and practitioners with a shared vision for improving foundational literacy.
- Strong leadership commitment and collaboration across provincial structures helped maintain momentum throughout implementation.

“In 2020, Nic Spaull came to us and said, ‘I’ve been criticising the system. Now I want to help you solve the problem.’ And then the Funda Wandé partnership with Western Cape began.”

Karen Dudley - Director Curriculum GET

2.2 Leverage strategic partnerships with external partners

Successful reforms recognise that governments do not need to work alone. Strategic partnerships with universities, NGOs, implementation organisations and philanthropic partners can provide technical expertise, innovation, implementation support and additional resources.

Example from Western Cape

- The partnership with Funda Wandé combined government leadership with external expertise in structured pedagogy, teacher support and learning materials. Over the 5-year partnership, Funda Wandé transitioned expertise into government so that now, government officials themselves have the technical skills to lead, with less support from Funda Wandé.
- Philanthropic partners, including the Gates Foundation, Prevail Fund and Dell Foundation, enabled investments in innovation and implementation support that government could not directly finance. Government funding focused on teacher salaries, teaching and learning materials, and annual training, while external funds supported design of resources and pilot testing.
- As the reform evolved, the province adapted its partnership model, bringing in new organisations with expertise in scaling, instructional coaching and improving implementation quality.

Example from Haryana

- The partnerships with Language & Learning Foundation and Central Square Foundation brought technical expertise on teaching and learning materials and training, as well as embedded advisory support to a new state-led project management unit focused on FLN.



Western Cape team: Mr. Bertram Loriston, Deputy Director General, Ms. Albertha van der Merwe, Senior Curriculum Planner, Ms. Almaré du Toit, Chief Education Specialist, Ms. Ntsiki Nyamza, Ms. Natalie Southgate, Mr. Joey Klaasse-Salmans, (All Senior Curriculum Planners), Mr. Juan Benjamin, Chief Director, Mr. Ebrahim Peck, Chief Education Specialist, Ms. Karen Dudley, Director GET, Ms. Welekazi Ngece & Dawn Cozett, Senior Curriculum planners



Haryana leader Parmod Kumar with non-state partners Pratham and Central Square Foundation.

Challenges and mitigation measures

Challenges

Limited capacity within government

Government teams may not have all the technical expertise, implementation capacity or resources needed to deliver reforms at scale.

Changing partnership needs over time

The expertise required during the design and pilot phases may differ from what is needed to support large-scale implementation and long-term sustainability.

Mitigation measures

Build partnerships that complement government leadership. Western Cape's partnership with Funda Wande illustrates how non-state actors can accelerate reform, shifting leadership to government towards the long-term goal of **government systems delivering** rather than a non-state organisation delivering.

Regularly review coalition needs as the reform evolves. Different stages of reform require different capabilities. Governments should periodically assess whether existing partnerships continue to meet implementation needs and identify opportunities to bring in new expertise where required.

Western Cape's transition from Funda Wande (on teacher/learner materials) to partnerships focused on scaling and instructional quality (with One World and Elimu Soko) demonstrates the importance of adapting coalitions over time.



A Gauteng classroom reading corner.

Pillars



Western Cape educator teaching with curriculum planner supporting through coaching.

Design solutions that respond to local needs

Successful sub-national reforms are not designed in isolation. Co-designing interventions with practitioners and piloting new approaches before scaling helps ensure reforms are relevant, feasible and responsive to local contexts.

What does this look in practice?

3.1 Co-create and pilot interventions with stakeholders

Successful reforms engage educators, technical experts and implementation partners in the design and testing of new approaches. Piloting interventions before scaling allows governments to identify what works, refine implementation strategies and build confidence among stakeholders.

Example from Western Cape

Partnered with Funda Wandé to pilot a structured literacy approach before expanding it province-wide.

- Pilots helped identify the key components required for successful implementation, including structured teaching materials, teacher coaching and high-quality learning and teaching support materials.
- The partnership combined government leadership with technical expertise to co-design and strengthen the reform before scale-up.

3.2 Adapt reforms to the local context and evidence

Successful reforms balance consistency with flexibility, adapting interventions to reflect local languages, contexts and emerging evidence from implementation.

Example from Western Cape

- Designed differentiated literacy programmes for English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa learners while maintaining a common provincial vision for improving foundational literacy.
- Used evidence from implementation to refine teaching approaches and resources, ensuring the reform remained responsive to local needs as it scaled.



Ms. Almareet du Toit, Western Cape Chief Education Specialist and Minister David Maynier, at a school to observe the teacher training on the Bala Wandé pilot programme.



Western Cape classroom in the Funda Wandé pilot.

Challenges and mitigation measures

Challenges

Adapt reforms to diverse local contexts

Sub-national governments often serve communities with different languages, cultures and educational needs. Designing a reform that is both standardised and locally relevant can be challenging.

Example from Western Cape

Balancing multilingual instruction proved challenging. While the province expanded isiXhosa literacy provision, some parents preferred English-medium instruction because they viewed it as offering greater economic opportunities.

Mitigation measures

- Co-design interventions with practitioners and implementation partners.
- Pilot and refine approaches before scaling.
- Adapt teaching approaches and materials based on local contexts and implementation evidence.



Minister David Maynier accompanied by provincial leaders visiting Zwaanswyk Academy to observe the implementation of the baseline assessments.

Pillars



Haryana teacher using teaching and learning materials kit.

Invest in teacher capacity and implementation support

High-quality implementation depends on investing in the people responsible for delivering the reform and providing them with the ongoing support, resources and practical guidance needed to implement new approaches consistently. Effective reforms combine continuous professional learning with robust implementation tools that translate policy into classroom practice.

What does this look in practice?

4.1 Strengthen capacity through continuous professional learning

Successful reforms move beyond one-off training by providing continuous opportunities for teachers, coaches and assessors to build their skills, practise new approaches and receive ongoing feedback.

Example from Gauteng

- Trained 120 subject advisors (government staff) to be assessors, through intensive practical workshops.
- Used simulations, real learner recordings and repeated inter-rater reliability (IRR) exercises to strengthen consistency.
- Continuous calibration improved assessor reliability to almost 90%, demonstrating the importance of ongoing professional learning rather than one-off training.
- Trained language champions to lead the training in the respective home languages.

Example from Haryana

- Embedded teacher capacity building within the broader NIPUN Haryana reform through mentoring, monitoring and continuous academic support.

4.2 Equip teachers with structured teaching and learning resources

Professional learning is most effective when educators have access to practical tools that support implementation in the classroom. Structured teaching and learning resources help ensure that instructional approaches are applied consistently across schools while reducing variation in delivery.



Haryana teachers being trained on how to use teacher guides and interactive activities.



Example from Haryana

- Developed teacher guides, student workbooks, competency-based lesson plans, structured classroom routines and NIPUN Lakshya assessment apps, all aligned to a common academic plan.
- This ensured that the expectations outlined in policy were translated into day-to-day classroom practice.

Example from Western Cape

- Through the Funda Wande partnership, invested in structured literacy materials, coaching and learning and teaching support materials, which were tested through pilots before being scaled across the province.

“Build the reform as a complete system from day one. Do not work separately on training, materials, assessment, mentoring and governance. These elements must be aligned. The teacher should receive the right academic material, understand how to use it, receive mentoring support, be reviewed through a fair system, and see the same competencies reflected in assessments and dashboards.”

Parmod Kumar - State Programme Officer in the Directorate of Elementary Education, Haryana

Challenges and mitigation measures

Challenges

Maintain consistency in implementation

As reforms scale, ensuring that teachers, coaches and assessors apply new approaches consistently can be difficult. Variations in implementation may reduce the quality and impact of the reform.

Example from Gauteng

Maintaining consistent assessment practices across 120 assessors required intensive training, repeated practice and ongoing calibration to minimise differences in scoring.

Mitigation measures

Provide continuous professional learning supported by coaching, mentoring and regular feedback.

Equip educators with structured teaching and learning resources aligned to the reform.

Regularly calibrate practice to promote consistency across schools and districts.

Provide targeted masterclasses led by Subject Advisors, lead teachers and Departmental Heads to strengthen teachers' instructional practice.



Pillars



Assessment through NIPUN Haryana teacher application.

Develop credible measurement and monitoring systems

High-quality data is the foundation of effective reform. Developing credible measurement and monitoring systems enables governments to track progress, identify implementation challenges and make informed decisions.

What does this look in practice?

5.1 Develop credible and standardised measurement systems

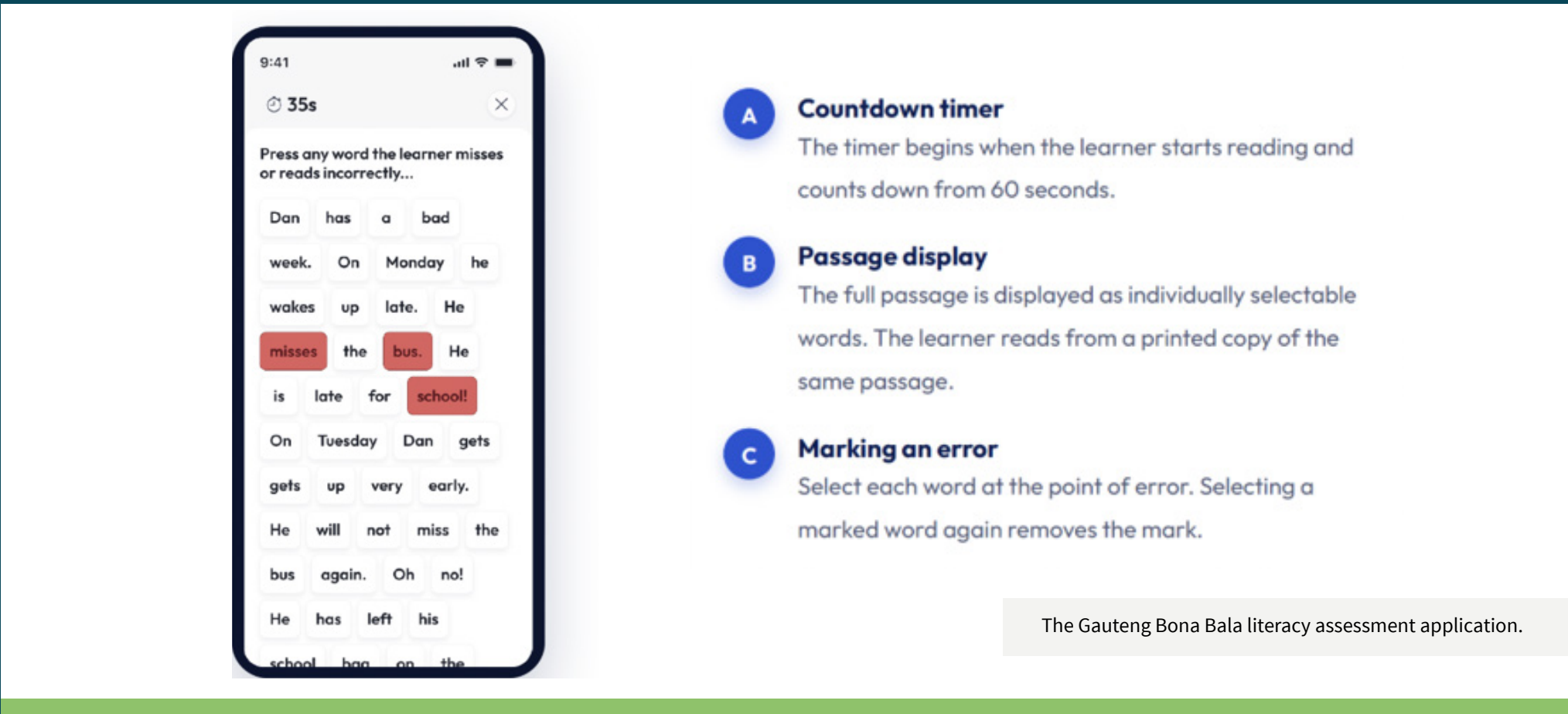
Successful reforms invest in standardised assessment tools, clear administration protocols and rigorous validation processes help ensure that data can be trusted and used to guide decision-making.

Example from Gauteng

- Transitioned from internally developed reading passages to nationally benchmarked Funda Uphumelele National Survey Oral Reading Fluency assessment tools.
- Introduced standardised administration protocols, comprehension questions and nationally benchmarked fluency measures.
- Piloted and validated assessment tools before full implementation to strengthen credibility and comparability across the province.
- Language champions reviewed and ratified all reading passages, ensuring they are aligned to Gauteng context.



Haryana Holistic Progress Card used to share student outcomes with parents.



The Gauteng Bona Bala literacy assessment application.

5.2 Harness technology to strengthen monitoring and data systems

Technology can improve both the efficiency and quality of monitoring by reducing human error, strengthening standardisation and providing timely information for decision-making.

Example from Gauteng

- Replaced paper-based data collection with tablets and developed the Bona Bala Oral Reading Fluency application.
- Automated timing and scoring, reduced manual data entry errors and enabled real-time monitoring through dashboards.
- The province is continuing to strengthen its system through AI-supported scoring and item analysis.
- Replaced paper-based data collection with tablets and the Bona Bala Oral Reading Fluency app, enabling comprehensive data capture across all sampled schools, languages and learners, while generating school-level reports.

Challenges and mitigation measures

Challenges

Ensure assessment tools are relevant across contexts

Sub-national reforms often operate across multiple languages and contexts. Assessment tools that are not adapted to local realities may reduce the validity and credibility of the data collected.

Example- Gauteng

Implementing ORF assessments across eleven official languages required careful adaptation of assessment tools to ensure they were fair, culturally appropriate and consistently administered.

Mitigation measures

- Use standardised and validated assessment tools.
- Pilot and refine measurement systems before scaling.
- Leverage technology to improve data quality and monitoring.
- Involve language and technical experts to adapt tools to local contexts.



Portia October, Western Cape Lead at Funda Wande and Almarek du Toit, Chief Education Specialist presenting together at panel at a Funda Wande function to celebrate the pilot schools.

Pillars



“Data by itself does not improve learning. Data must lead to discussion, teacher support, remediation, review and follow-up.

Similarly, apps alone do not create reform; they become powerful only when District Units, mentors, monitors, District FLN Coordinators and teachers use them for decision-making. The most important shift was from ‘data collection’ to ‘data use’

Parmod Kumar - State Programme Officer in the Directorate of Elementary Education, Haryana

Use evidence to drive continuous improvement

Successful sub-national reforms create systems that ensure evidence is routinely reviewed, discussed and used to improve implementation.

What does this look in practice?

6.1 Standardise data collection and quality assurance

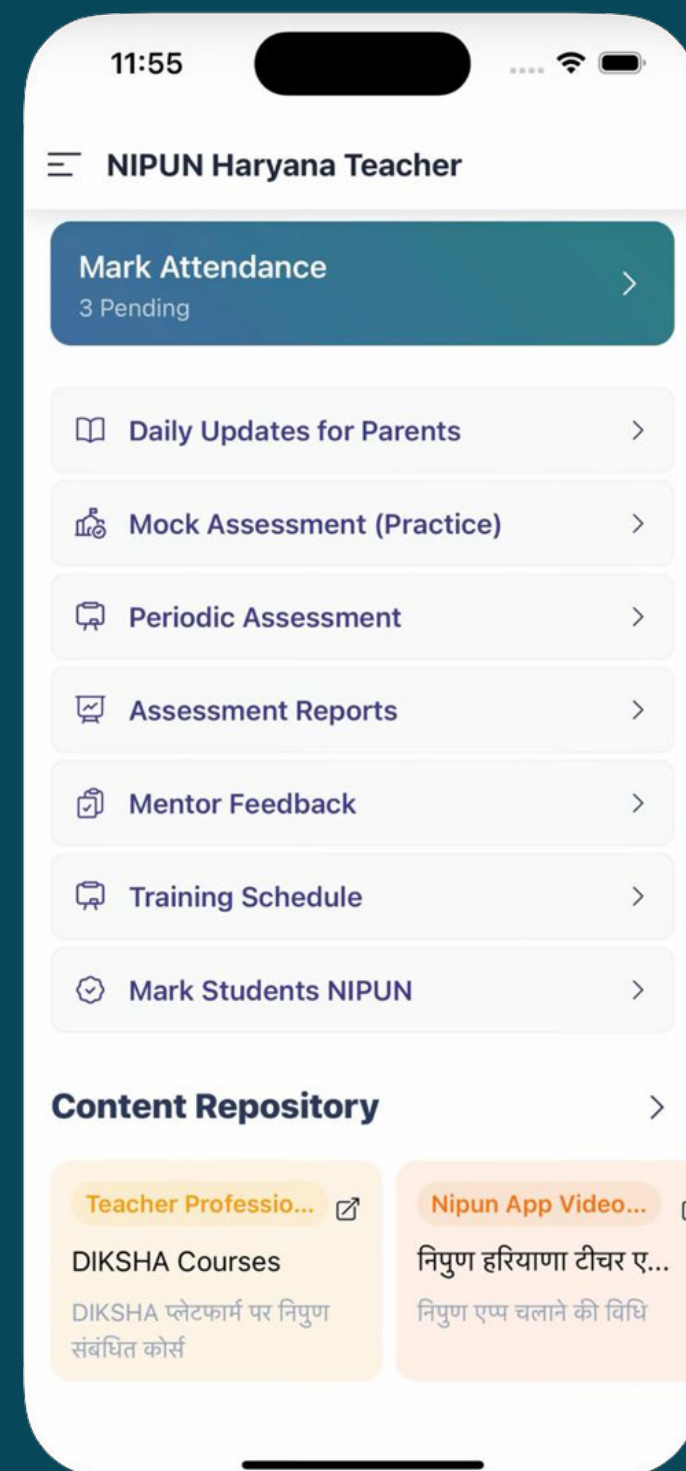
Successful reforms establish consistent processes for data collection and quality assurance to ensure that evidence is accurate, reliable and comparable across schools, districts and provinces. Embedding quality assurance throughout implementation helps identify issues early and maintain confidence in the data.

Example from Gauteng

- Introduced standardised assessment protocols, including assessor rotation across districts, language specialists and clear administration procedures to minimise bias and improve consistency.
- Embedded quality assurance throughout data collection through daily monitoring checkpoints, protocol compliance checks, duplicate record verification and real-time oversight, achieving approximately 99% data completeness.

Example from Haryana

- Developed an integrated digital ecosystem through the Teacher App, Mentor app (district teams visiting schools) and Monitor app (state leadership) to standardise classroom observations, assessments, mentoring and monitoring visits.
- Real time data enabled information to flow efficiently from schools to district and state levels, supporting timely monitoring and implementation oversight.



Haryana teacher application.

6.2 Use data to inform local decision-making and continuous improvement

Successful reforms use evidence as a tool for learning rather than compliance. Data is routinely reviewed by leaders at different levels of the system to identify implementation gaps, prioritise support and adapt strategies based on emerging evidence.

Example from Gauteng

- Produced technical reports, district reports, diagnostic reports and practical resources to help district teams interpret assessment findings and plan targeted interventions.
- Positioned assessment data as a tool for improving teaching and learning rather than measuring compliance or ranking schools. As one reform leader noted: **“You should not be collecting data and not utilising the data.”**

Example from Haryana

- Institutionalised data use through regular state unit, district unit and block unit review meetings.
- All units regularly review dashboards, mentoring data, classroom observations, school visits and student learning data to identify low-performing schools, strengthen teacher support and guide district action plans.
- Shifted the focus of review meetings from checking whether activities had been completed, to understanding what the data revealed about implementation and learning.



Data-driven state-level review meeting in Haryana, led by Worthy Director General, Elementary Education.

Challenges and mitigation measures:

Challenges

Maintain data quality and promote evidence use at scale

As reforms expand, governments may struggle to maintain consistent data quality while ensuring that evidence is actively used to improve implementation. Data collection can become compliance driven, and review processes may focus on reporting activities rather than identifying learning needs and implementation challenges.

Example from Gauteng

Managing thousands of learner assessments required robust operational systems to address absenteeism, incomplete records, technical issues and quality assurance across multiple districts.

Mitigation measures

- Use evidence to identify implementation gaps and target support where it is most needed.
- Position data as a tool for learning, adaptation and **continuous improvement** rather than compliance or accountability.
- Establish standardised quality assurance processes throughout data collection.
- Review implementation data regularly through structured governance and monitoring meetings.
- Use evidence to identify implementation gaps and target support where it is most needed.
- Sample additional learners to replace absent learners or those affected by any other contextual factors.

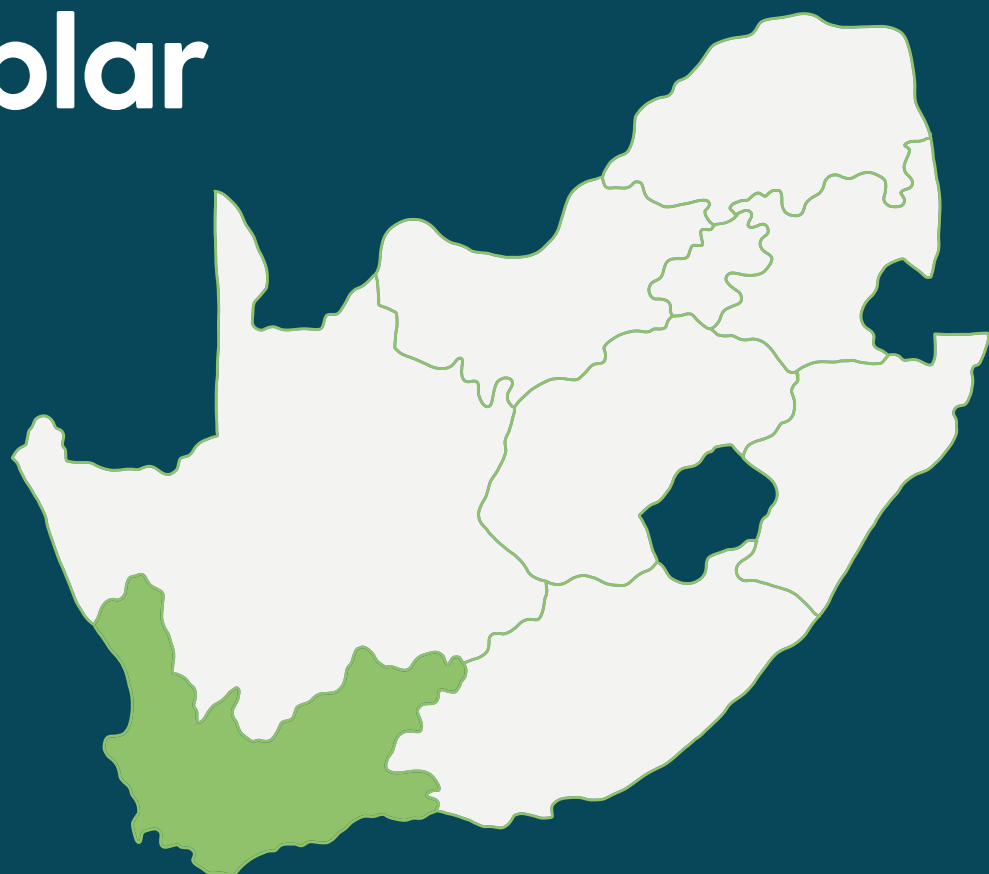
“District and block teams were expected to use dashboards, mentoring data, school visit data, student learning data, material usage data and action-taken reports during review meetings.

This helped shift the conversation from general compliance to specific learning gaps, school-wise support and follow-up action.”

Parmod Kumar - State Programme Officer in the Directorate of Elementary Education, Haryana

Key takeaways for each sub-national exemplar

Western Cape



Western Cape leadership: Mr. Brent Walters, Head of Education, Ms. Karen Dudley, Director Curriculum GET, Ms. Almare du Toit, Chief Education Specialist, Mr. Bertram Loriston, Deputy Director General

Reform focus

- Scaling a province-wide foundational literacy strategy through structured pedagogy, teacher support and system-wide leadership.

What they do well

- Strong political leadership and a clear provincial vision (“All children will read for meaning by age 10”)
- Effective partnerships with universities, NGOs and funders to strengthen government capacity
- Piloted innovations before scaling, allowing evidence to shape implementation
- Strong focus on teacher coaching, structured pedagogy and high-quality learning materials

Enablers

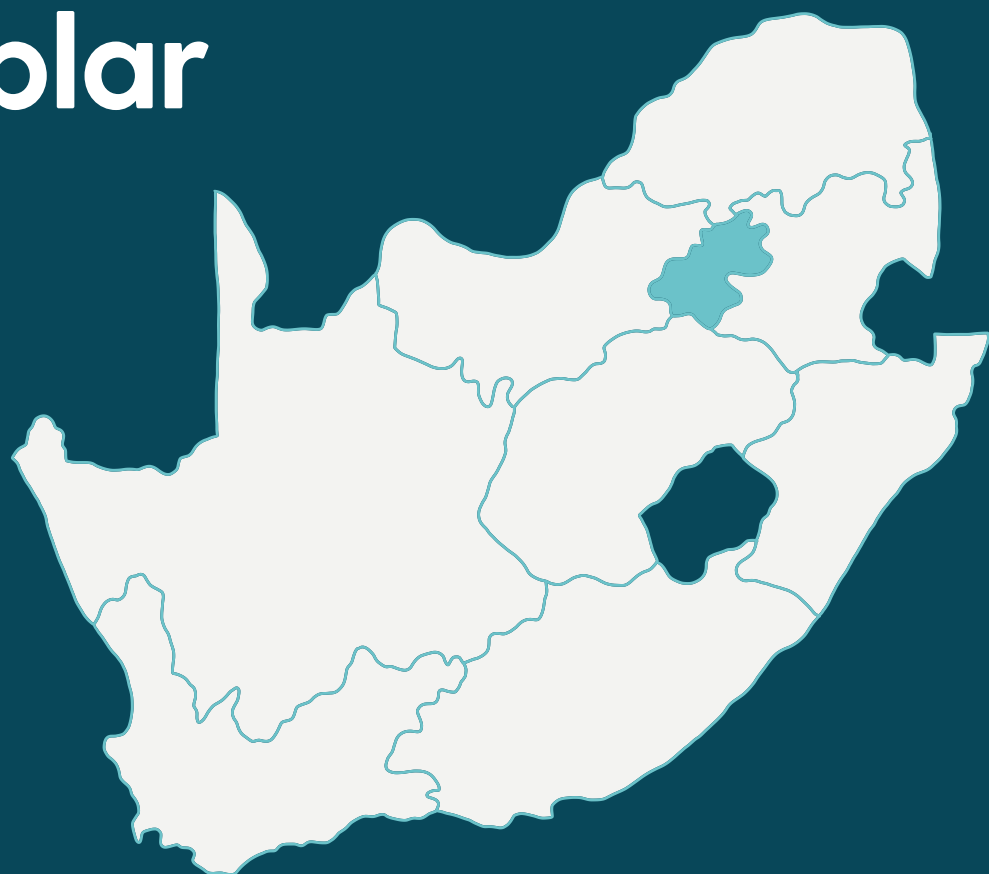
- Province with high financial resources due to high tax revenue in Cape Town.

Current challenge

- Sustaining momentum through leadership transitions while continuing to strengthen implementation at scale.
- Maintaining budget allocations for FLN post-2030.

Key takeaways for each sub-national exemplar

Gauteng



Gauteng leadership: Raj Misser, Director: Quality Assurance; Zerline Vywers, Chief education specialist; Lindiwe Rumo, Chief Education Specialist; Albert Chanee, Acting Head of Department; Alison Bengtson, Deputy Director General: Curriculum; Antoinette Nicolai, Director: Curriculum; Faith Tshabalala, Acting Chief Director: Research, Monitoring and Evaluation; Busisiwe Nkosi, Chief Education Specialist

Reform focus

- Strengthening the credibility and use of Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) assessment data across the province.

What they do well

- Developed technically robust and standardised assessment systems
- Embedded quality assurance throughout implementation
- Invested heavily in assessor training and calibration
- Used technology to improve efficiency, consistency and real-time monitoring
- Used evidence to support improvement rather than compliance

Enablers

The Gauteng government has strong relations with labor unions and South Africa’s main teacher union, which helped them advance assessments reforms.

Current challenge

- Maintaining high-quality implementation and stakeholder confidence while operating at scale across diverse linguistic and geographical contexts.
- Linking assessments to stronger accountability, teacher guides, student workbooks, and teacher training and coaching.

Key takeaways for each sub-national exemplar

Haryana



Haryana Worthy Principal Secretary School Education monitoring student outcomes during a school visit.

Reform focus

- Implementing NIPUN Haryana as a whole-system reform through strong governance, technology and continuous support.

What they do well

- Strong implementation governance linking state, district, block and school levels
- Strong leadership capacity development across all levels of the system, complemented by teacher development, mentoring, governance and community engagement.
- Use of technology for monitoring and real time decision making
- Routine use of data to guide implementation and provide targeted support

Enablers

- State reforms are enabled by India’s federal Prime Minister and Secretary prioritising

Current challenge

- Ensuring consistent implementation quality across districts while keeping review processes focused on learning and improvement rather than compliance.
- Building on student outcomes gains to reach the most marginalised students.



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