

In Pursuit of Education for All

*What do the data tell us
about children with
disabilities in selected
countries in Asia and
the Pacific?*

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unicef 

for every child



Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS 6)



The **countries and territories** included in the report are:

- ✓ Mongolia
- ✓ Lao People's Democratic Republic (only 2- to 4-year-olds), Viet Nam
- ✓ Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu
- ✓ Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan (Punjab), Pakistan (Sindh)
- ✓ Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan

Washington Group (WG)/UNICEF Child Functioning Module: *A new module included in MICS6*



WG/UNICEF Child Functioning Module:

Functional domains covered

Children under 5

SEEING

Difficulty seeing



HEARING

Difficulty hearing sounds like people's voices or music



MOBILITY

Difficulty walking



FINE MOTOR

Difficulty picking up small objects



COMMUNICATION/COMPREHENSION

Difficulty understanding or being understood



CONTROLLING BEHAVIOUR

Kicking, biting or hitting other children or adults



LEARNING

Difficulty learning things



PLAYING

Difficulty playing



Children aged 5 to 17 years

SEEING

Difficulty seeing



HEARING

Difficulty hearing sounds like people's voices or music



MOBILITY

Difficulty walking on level ground



SELF-CARE

Difficulty with feeding or dressing



COMMUNICATION/COMPREHENSION

Difficulty being understood by people



LEARNING

Difficulty learning things



REMEMBERING

Difficulty remembering things



ATTENTION AND CONCENTRATING

Difficulty concentrating on an activity they enjoy doing



RELATIONSHIPS

Difficulty making friends



COPING WITH CHANGE

Difficulty accepting change in their routine



AFFECT

ANXIETY

Seeming very anxious, nervous or worried on a daily basis



DEPRESSION

Seeming very sad or depressed on a daily basis



CONTROLLING BEHAVIOUR

Difficulty with controlling their behaviour



Context: The Asia and the Pacific region * has **the largest number** of children with disabilities

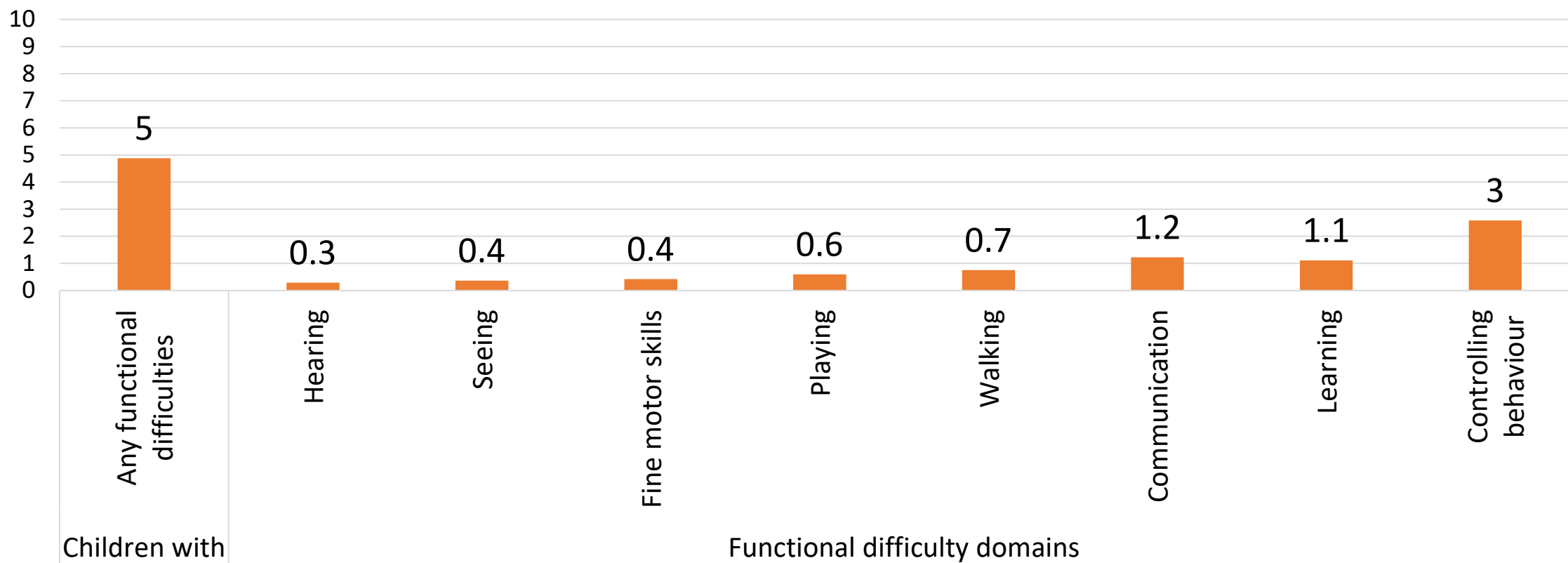
Estimated number of children aged 0 to 17 years with disabilities by UNICEF regions



Source: *United Nations Children's Fund, Seen, Counted, Included: Using data to shed light on the well-being of children with disabilities, UNICEF, New York, 2021*

1 in 20 children aged 2 to 4 have at least one functional difficulty

Share of children aged 2 to 4 with functional difficulties based on pooled data from 11 countries and 2 territories

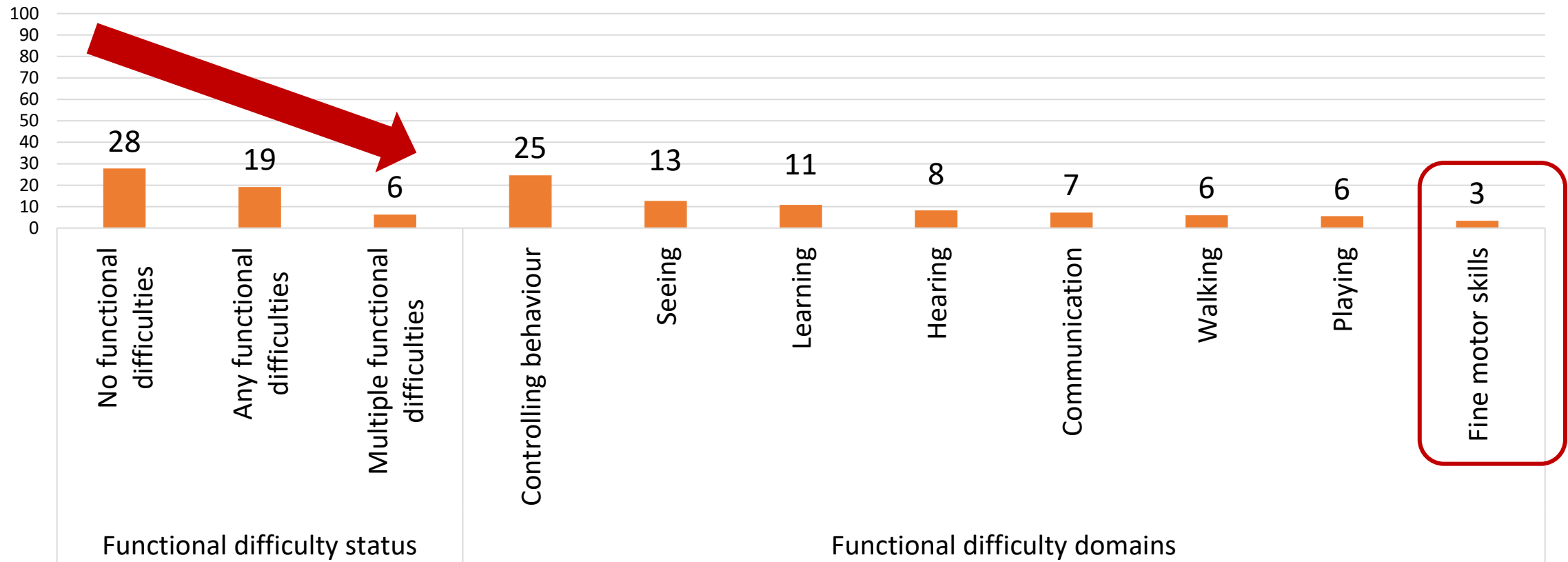


Wide variation exists between functional difficulty domains.

In fact, ten time more children aged 2 to 4 have difficulty **controlling behaviour** than difficulty hearing.

Children with any and multiple functional difficulties are less likely to attend ECE

Share of children aged 3 to 4 attending ECE based on pooled data from 11 countries and 2 territories

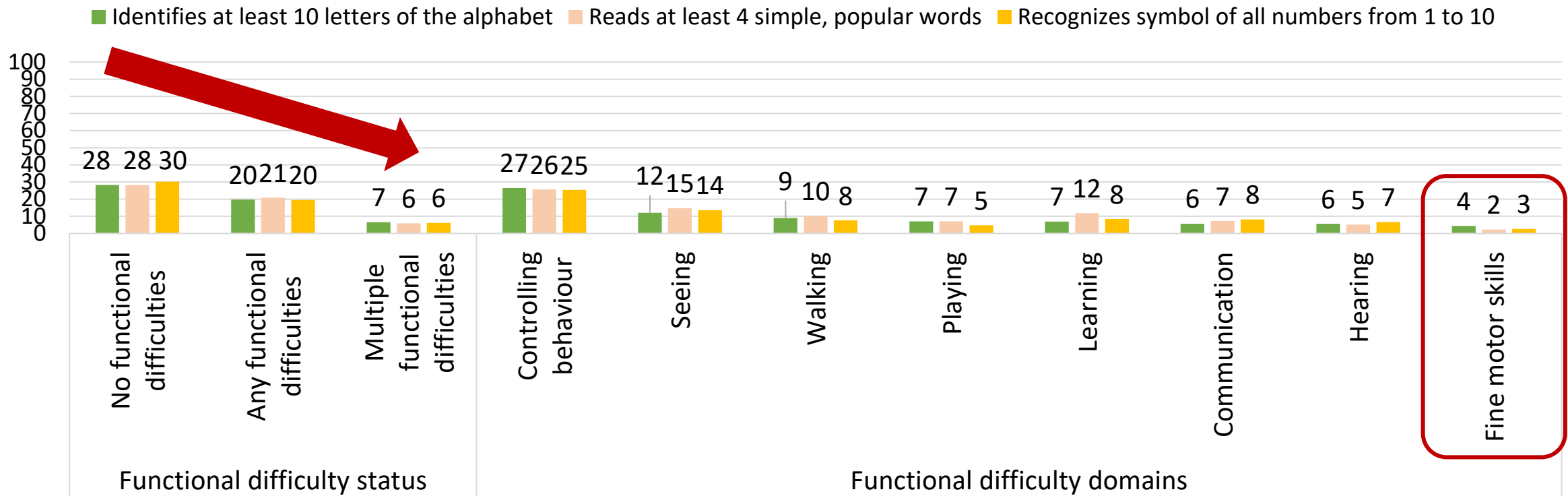


ECE attendance declines drastically for children with **multiple functional difficulties**.

Children with difficulties associated with **fine motor skills** are least likely to be attending ECE

Children with any and multiple functional difficulties are less able to do numeracy and literacy-related tasks.

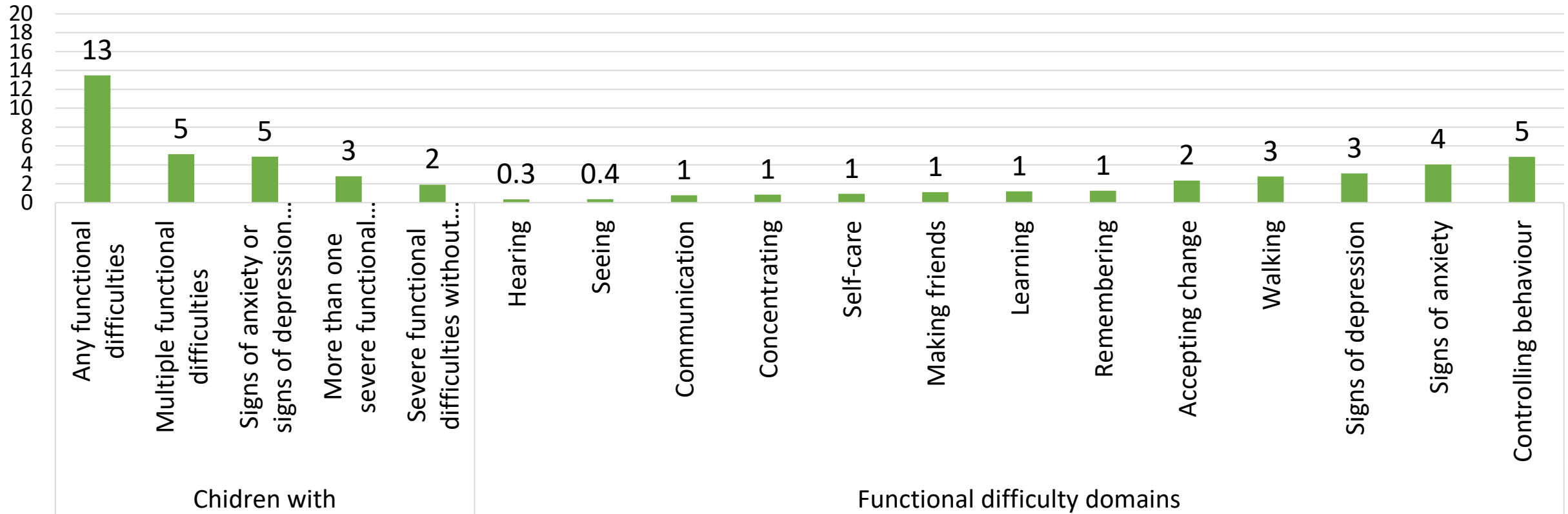
Share of children aged 3 to 4 who can do numeracy and literacy-related tasks based on pooled data from 11 countries and 2 territories



Similar to ECE attendance, children with difficulties associated with **fine motor skills** are least likely to be able to do numeracy and literacy-related tasks

1 in 10 children aged 5 to 17 have at least one functional difficulty

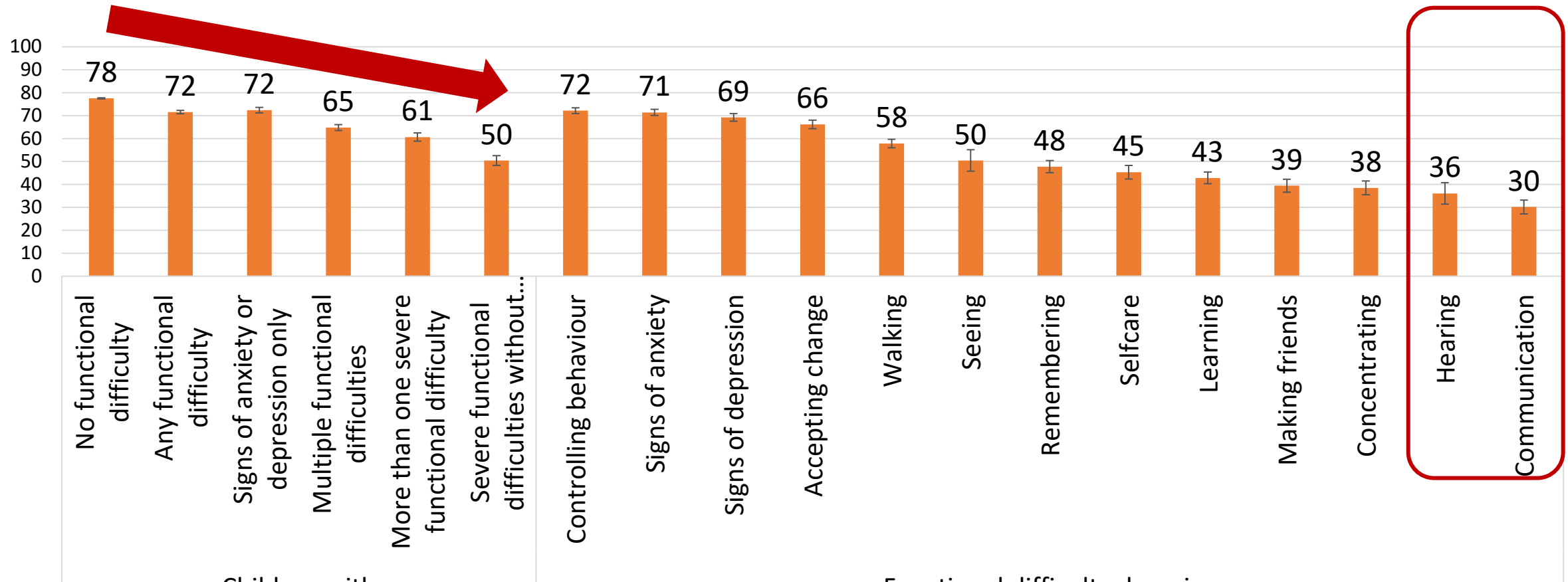
Share of children aged 5 to 17 with functional difficulties based on pooled data from 11 countries and 2 territories



1 in 20 children have multiple functional difficulties and **1 in 50 children** have severe functional difficulties without signs of anxiety or signs of depression.

Among 5- to 17-year-olds, children with difficulties **communicating** and difficulties with **hearing** are most likely to **not attend any school** levels

Share of children aged 5 to 17 currently attending school based on pooled data from 11 countries and 2 territories

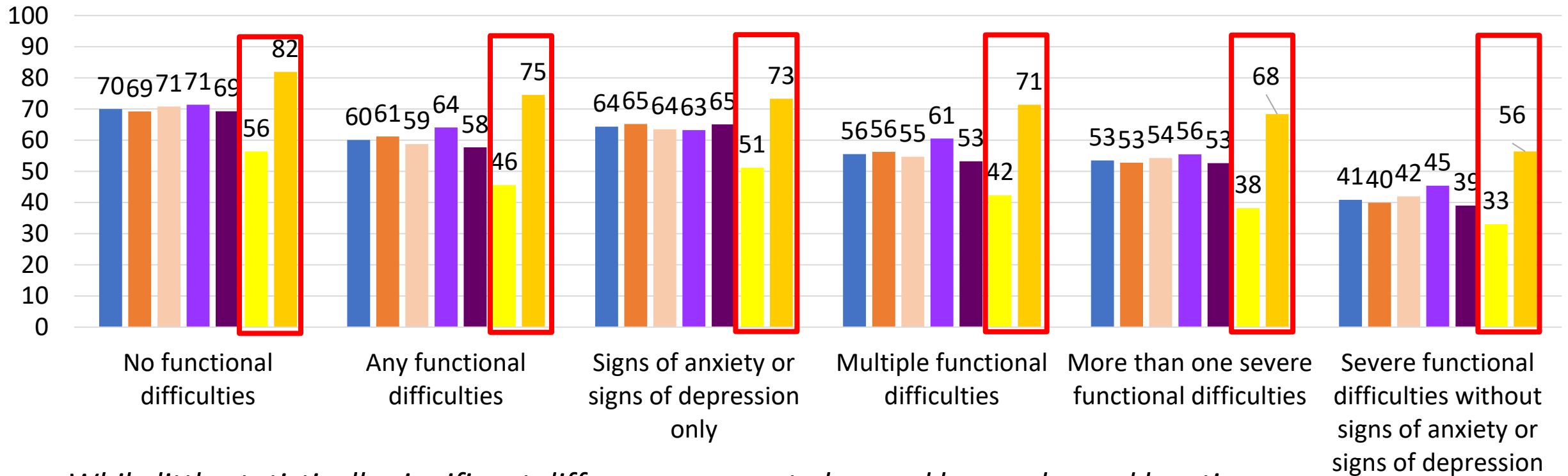


1 in 2 children with severe functional difficulties without sign of anxiety or depression are not attending any level of education.

Big gaps exist in attendance between children from **poorest** and richest wealth quintiles

Adjusted net attendance rate at primary level based on pooled data from 11 countries and 2 territories

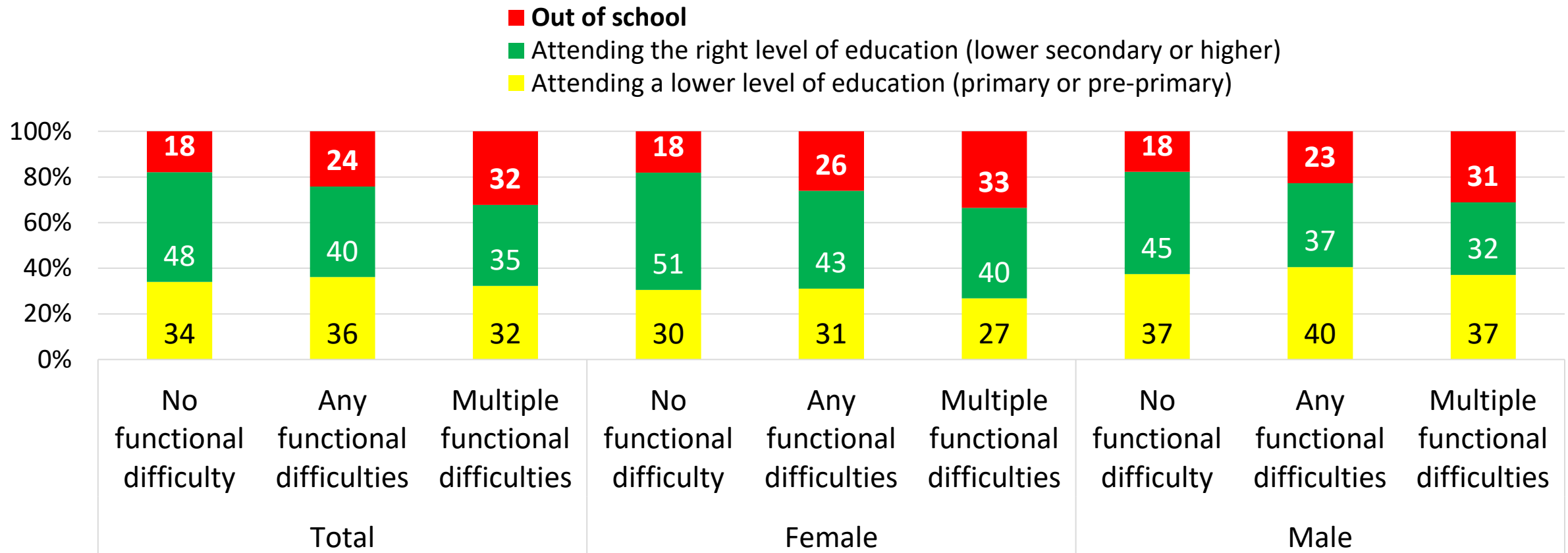
■ Total
 ■ Male
 ■ Female
 ■ Urban
 ■ Rural
 ■ Poorest 20%
 ■ Richest 20%



*While little statistically significant differences are not observed by gender and location, children from **poorest wealth quintile** face additional adversity in accessing **primary level** compared to their peers. Similar trends are observed at **lower secondary level** too.*

Essentially, children with disabilities are **not in school** or **not progressing** in education at the same rate as their peers

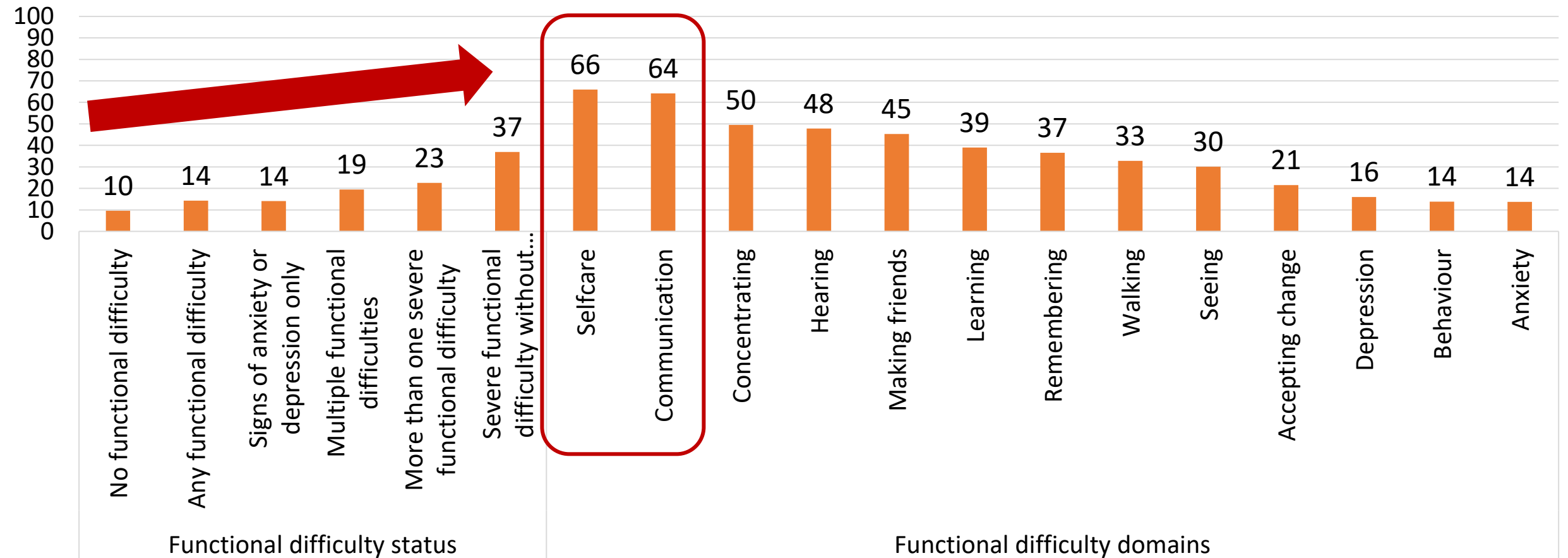
Simplified pathway analysis for lower secondary aged children based on pooled data from 11 countries and 2 territories



*Compared to children without functional difficulties, lower secondary school aged children with any or multiple functional difficulties are **more likely to be out of school** or **not attending the expected level** of education.*

In fact, many children with functional difficulties face **initial barrier to access (i.e. never attended)**

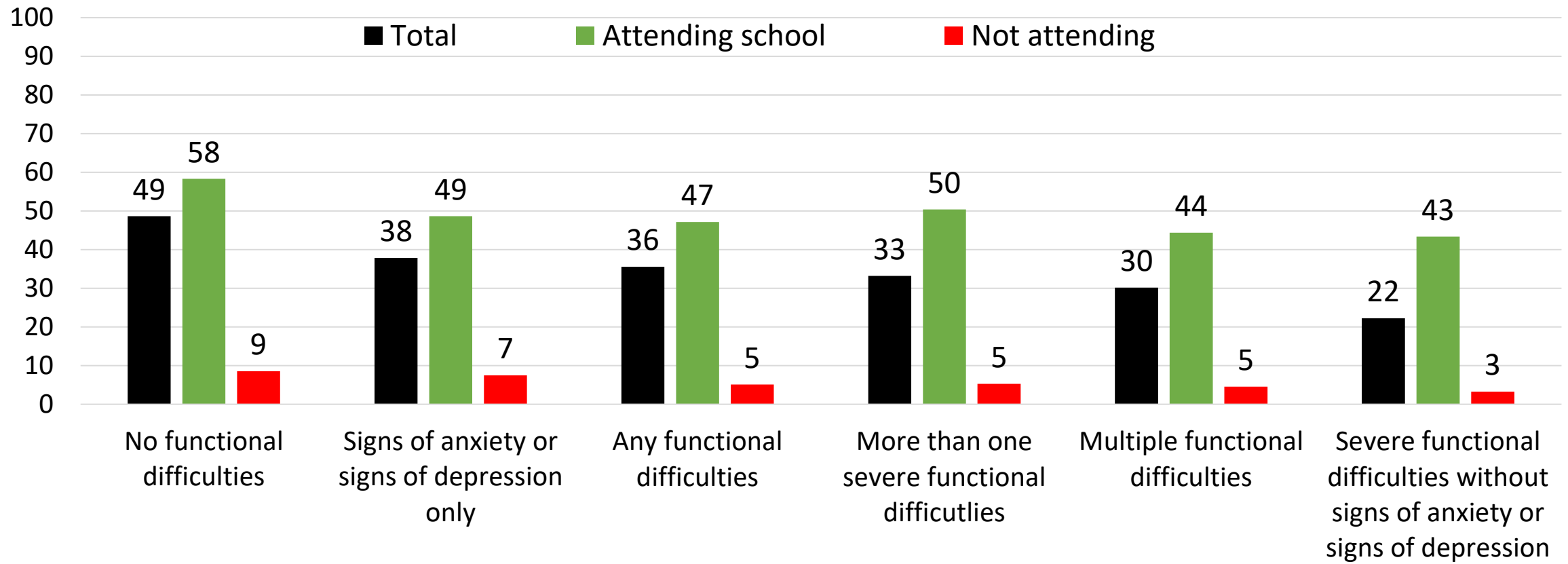
Share of children aged 10 to 17 who have never attended school based on pooled data from 11 countries and 2 territories



More than 40 per cent of children with difficulties making friends, hearing, concentrating, communication and selfcare have **never attended school** highlighting initial barrier to entry...

Children with functional difficulties are **not acquiring foundational reading skills** at the same rate as their peers

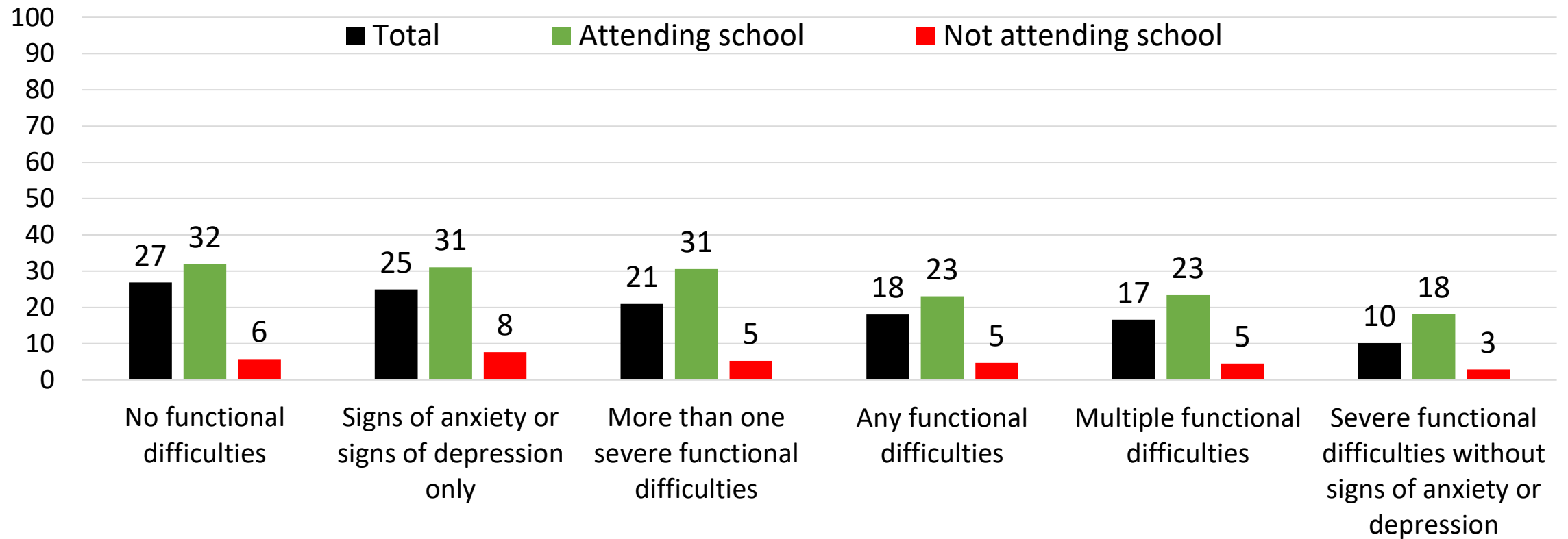
Share of children aged 10 to 14 with foundational reading skills, by school attendance and functional difficulty based on pooled data from 11 countries and 2 territories



*Very few children not attending school have foundational reading skills across all categories of functional difficulties. This shows that **school attendance** is strongly **associated with gains in learning***

Foundational numeracy skills are very low

Share of children aged 10 to 14 with foundational reading skills, by school attendance and functional difficulty based on pooled data from 11 countries and 2 territories



Students with **severe functional difficulties** without signs of anxiety or depression are the least likely to have foundational numeracy skills.

The analysis shows that there is a **dire need to improve foundational learning** outcomes for all children.

Key Reflections

- ✓ Countries in the Asia Pacific region have **unique education systems** and are on a different stage in their **journey towards inclusive education**.
- ✓ While promoting **inclusive education** as an **overarching conceptual framework**, countries should assess unique educational and learning **needs of children** who have **different types of disabilities** and develop a mechanism to provide **tailored learning support** to them.
- ✓ Regardless of this variation, **key principles** of supporting the **inclusion** of children with disabilities in **mainstream settings** are important and should inform every stage of their efforts to **transform the systems** to meet the diversity of needs of all students.

Key Recommendations



- Adopt a **whole system approach** toward disability inclusion translated through all aspects of system strengthening



- Strengthen **early identification** to support inclusion in ECE – education sector analysis to identify and **remove barriers** to inclusive education



- Strengthen **national data systems** by incorporating the social model of disability

- Incorporate child-centered and inclusive **pedagogies** and flexible **assessment** frameworks + support DPOs and teachers



- Inclusive **budgeting** to implement a twin-track approach at the outset

Thank You



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