

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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African Union, in partnership with UNICEF, convene a Validation Workshop to Scale Proven Solutions for Foundational Learning in Africa

The Validation Workshop on Scalable Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) Practices to End Learning Poverty in Africa was officially opened today. The two-day gathering, held at the African Union Commission (AUC) Headquarters in Addis Ababa from July 22 to 23, 2025, marks a significant step forward in the collective effort to address the continent's learning crisis and ensure that every child acquires the essential foundational skills they deserve by age 10.

The workshop brings together technical experts from 25 Member States, along with representatives from the African Union Commission, UNICEF, the Gates Foundation, and other development partners. The goal is to validate the research findings constituting the mapping of scalable good practices for foundational literacy and numeracy across the continent.

"The continental Foundational Literacy and Numeracy mapping resource we are validating today is an essential step toward reversing this trend. It seeks to gather, synthesise, and spotlight what works—real, evidence-based, scalable practices that have shown success across diverse African contexts. Whether it's structured pedagogy in Uganda, mother-tongue based instruction in Ethiopia, or targeted instruction by learning level in Zambia, these are not only just case studies, but blueprints with promise for large-scale systemic change", Prof. Saidou Madougou, Director of the Department of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (ESTI).

Across West, Central, East, and Southern Africa, an alarming 9 out of 10 children are unable to read and understand a simple sentence by the age of 10. While enrollment in primary and lower secondary education has increased significantly over the last two decades, millions of children attend school without acquiring the foundational skills they need. This persistent learning crisis is more than an educational challenge; it poses a threat to future economic prosperity.

"This workshop is a significant step in creating a broader pathway of engagement for foundational learning and numeracy between educators, policy makers and practitioners to improve learning outcomes: learning from one another through the cross-fertilisation of successes, and more importantly, taking the lead in adapting scalable solutions and embedding them into national education sector plans, policies, and programmes", emphasized Dr Laila Gad, UNICEF Representative to the African Union and UNECA

The outcomes of this workshop will also contribute to the End Learning Poverty for All in Africa Campaign (ELPAf)—a four-year African Union–UNICEF initiative launched in September 2024 during the AU Year of Education. ELPAf aims to end learning poverty in Africa by strengthening foundational literacy and numeracy, which are the cornerstones of all further learning and skill acquisition. Foundational learning holds the most significant promise for overcoming Africa's education challenges, laying the groundwork for lifelong learning, and empowering African children to thrive as engaged citizens and contributors to their communities and economies.

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