

## Foundational skills development is a priority of USAID's 2018 Education Policy.

USAID defines foundational skills as reading, math, and social and emotional learning. This learning agenda comprises part of a collection of prioritized learning questions developed by USAID's Office of Education. It presents USAID's key learning questions about literacy and numeracy development, from pre-primary education through adulthood. USAID recognizes that the answers to each of the questions will vary based on context. By addressing these questions, USAID will generate evidence that implementing partners, host-country governments, and other donors and partners can use to strengthen systems, and, ultimately, ensure all children have the literacy and numeracy skills to be self-reliant and successful. USAID plans to examine these questions in as many contexts as possible and then to provide clear guidance on the best use of study results for given contexts.



Photo: USAID Nigeria.

## Focus on Collaboration in Learning Activities and Utilization of Findings



The Learning Agenda includes both research questions and learning questions. Research questions are those for which there is little existing evidence in the field of international development. Learning questions are defined as those for which a substantial body of evidence exists, but for which there is a need to synthesize or better package that evidence. USAID will implement this learning agenda through a variety of methods that leverage opportunities to collaborate with USAID Missions, other donors, host-country governments, implementing partners, higher education institutions, and researchers. The findings and products that result from advancing the learning agenda will be regularly disseminated to USAID Missions, host-country governments, implementing partners, and other donors to ensure maximum use.

**We greatly welcome feedback and engagement on these questions and request that any organizations or individuals looking to conduct research in response to any of these questions, contact the USAID Office of Education for more detailed questions, sub-questions, and parameters. For more information or to share notes, research, or proposed methodologies or to propose collaboration on an upcoming research endeavor, write to [officeofeducation@usaid.gov](mailto:officeofeducation@usaid.gov).**



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# FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT LEARNING AGENDA



Photo: USAID Ethiopia.

# USAID Foundational Skills Development

## LEARNING AGENDA QUESTIONS



### Systems Strengthening

1. What are the most critical factors within a system that result in children and youth becoming literate and/or numerate?
2. What works to strengthen the financial and technical capacity of country education systems—to ensure learners gain solid foundational skills?

### Sequencing of Interventions



3. When resources are limited, what is the appropriate sequence of intervention across levels and skills to ensure learners gain solid foundational skills?



### Education Contributions to Other Development Outcomes

4. What, if any, relationship exists between learning outcomes in primary and secondary schools and positive development-related externalities (e.g., reduced gang violence, reduced migration, and reduced violence extremism) amongst youth?

### Pre-Primary Education



5. What pre-primary outcomes are most important for ensuring improved foundational skills amongst all learners in later years?

### Language of Instruction



6. How can countries most effectively address issues related to language of instruction to improve learning for all students?



### Coaching and Mentoring

7. What characteristics (dosage, frequency, method of delivery, position and characteristics of the coaches/mentors, etc.) are most associated with teacher coaching and mentoring that leads to improved teacher performance and learning outcomes?

### Books and Materials



8. What market shaping approaches are most effective for ensuring a sustainable supply of the optimal number of quality books and reading materials for all learners?



### Pre-Service and In-Service Teacher Education

9. What are the most effective ways to improve the quality of pre-service teacher training across the various contexts in which USAID works?
10. What in-service training modalities and/or content ensure the transition of improved teacher knowledge to improved classroom instruction across the various contexts in which USAID works?

### Inclusive Education



11. What inclusive instructional design practices work most effectively to improve learning outcomes for learners with disabilities in low-resource environments?



### Math

12. What instructional models for high-quality mathematics instruction for children and youth work most effectively in low-resource contexts?

### Continuous Assessments



13. Under what conditions and with what support are teachers able to use continuous assessment results to inform, improve, and differentiate their instruction?



### Teacher Incentives

14. What incentives and practices work most effectively to improve teacher performance and/or attendance in the classroom?

### Community/Households



15. What factors are critical for ensuring learners have the environment and resources necessary to practice reading and math outside of school?