

21 OCTOBER 2025

MINISTER OF BASIC EDUCATION CHAIRS THE FIRST-EVER IBSA AND FRIENDS DIALOGUE ON FOUNDATIONAL LEARNING AT G20 EDUCATION WORKING GROUP IN SKUKUZA

Today, the Minister of Basic Education had the privilege of chairing the first-ever IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa) and Friends Dialogue on Foundational Learning, held on the sidelines of the G20 Education Working Group (EdWG) Ministerial in Skukuza.

Led by IBSA, this landmark Dialogue brought together Ministers of Education and key global partners, including ADEA, the Gates Foundation, the OECD, UNICEF, Mauritius, the United Kingdom, and Indonesia, united by a shared goal: to accelerate progress on foundational learning so that every child can achieve their developmental milestones and acquire the literacy and numeracy skills needed to thrive in school and beyond.

The Dialogue underscored that investing early delivers the highest returns. Foundational learning – spanning early childhood education and the early primary grades – is the bedrock of all later learning and economic participation. Evidence shows that early literacy and numeracy outcomes predict long-term success in school, employment and social development.

Together, we reaffirmed our collective commitment to:

- Expand access to quality early childhood education;
- Support teachers as the cornerstone of quality learning;
- Strengthen equity and inclusion; and
- Mobilise and align partnerships and resources for measurable impact.

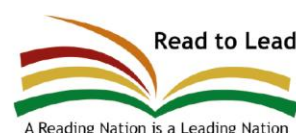
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As the President of the G20 Education Working Group, we are proud to lead efforts that place foundational learning at the heart of global education reform, ensuring that every child, everywhere, has the foundations for life.

The IBSA and Friends Dialogue agreed that challenges in early learning are solvable within this generation. Countries such as India, Brazil and South Africa are showing that evidence-based strategies, strong political leadership and coordinated partnerships can rapidly transform outcomes in early literacy and numeracy.

We thank all partners for their unwavering commitment and collaboration. By working together across the Global South and beyond, we can ensure that every child learns to read, write and count – unlocking their full potential and shaping a more inclusive, prosperous future for all.

ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

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