



COMMUNIQUE FROM THE VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT ON HANDS-ON TEACHING AND YOUTH SKILLS DEVELOPMENT HELD ON 15TH JULY, 2025

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Practical Education Network (PEN) convened a **Virtual Engagement on Hands-On Teaching and Youth Skills Development** on 15th July 2025, with the participation of educators, education leaders, curriculum developers, NGO partners, and other key stakeholders from Ghana, Liberia, and Rwanda:

1. **Profoundly appreciate** the active involvement of all participants, including representatives from Ministries of Education, teachers, curriculum leads, and NGO partners, who contributed to the insightful and solution-oriented conversations during the engagement.
2. **Note and commend** the spirit of collaboration and innovation that characterized the engagement, and encourage sustained regional dialogue to promote youth-centred and skills-based education reforms.
3. **Acknowledge the urgency** of transforming education systems to align with the fast-changing aspirations of African youth and the evolving global economy. The discussions affirmed that traditional approaches are insufficient and that practical, hands-on learning must be mainstreamed.
4. **In line with the theme of the engagement**, participants underscored the conviction that hands-on teaching can unlock learner potential, enhance employability, and accelerate national development through empowered youth.
5. **Express strong support** for governments and stakeholders committed to integrating experiential learning into national policies and call for increased investment in the resources, training, and systems needed to support this shift.

6. Underscore, based on the three thematic sessions and breakout discussions, the need for:

- Practical education systems rooted in real-world skills,
- Cross-country collaboration for innovation and capacity building,
- Youth voice and agency as central pillars of education reform.

7. We, the participants, recognising the outcomes and regional insights generated through this engagement, call on stakeholders to:

i) Bridge Practical Education with Employability by:

- a. Expanding competency-based and TVET curricula that align with labour market needs and youth aspirations;
- b. Engaging local industries to provide mentorship, internships, and product development support to students;
- c. Encouraging science and innovation fairs at municipal and national levels to promote project-based learning and youth-led innovation.

ii) Promote Low-Cost, High-Impact Innovation in STEM Education by:

- a. Creatively repurposing local materials to model STEM concepts and ensure learning is accessible and contextually relevant;
- b. Establishing a regional online hub where educators share lesson plans, instructional videos, and classroom innovations;
- c. Supporting periodic exchange programs and study tours across Ghana, Liberia, and Rwanda to promote peer learning and inspiration;
- d. Developing national and regional STEM centres to support teacher development and learner exposure to applied science and technology.

iii) Integrate Youth Aspirations into Skills Development by:

- a. Training teachers to act as facilitators, mentors, and career guides rather than solely content transmitters;
- b. Embedding structured time in school timetables for exploration, reflection, and student-led project work;
- c. Establishing platforms for learners to showcase innovations, receive feedback, and collaborate across borders.

iv) Promote Regional Collaboration and Policy Alignment by:

- a. Facilitating joint curriculum development and educator training across participating countries;
- b. Supporting education ministries to embed experiential and skills-based learning approaches in national policy frameworks;
- c. Mobilising development partners, civil society, and the private sector to scale successful models and resource innovative practices.

v) Strengthen Teacher Professional Development and Support by:

- a. Ensuring ongoing professional learning for educators, with emphasis on digital tools, local resource utilisation, and active pedagogy;
- b. Providing digital platforms for continuous sharing, mentorship, and co-creation of teaching resources;
- c. Recognising and incentivising teacher innovation and leadership in skills development.

8. We note with sincere appreciation the shared commitment among educators and partners to reimagine classrooms as spaces for doing, building, questioning, and creating. We urge all stakeholders, including ministries of education, development agencies, private sector actors, and civil society, to champion and invest in this transformation.

Conclusion:

This communiqué affirms our collective vision for an Africa where education is active, empowering, and future-ready. We call upon all stakeholders to support teachers, listen to youth, and co-create systems that enable every learner to thrive.

Let this serve as both a record and a rallying call to action, for classrooms that spark curiosity, students who dare to dream, and education systems that believe in their limitless potential of hands-on learning.

Signed on behalf of participants,

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