

UNESCO-IICBA and Teacher Task Force (TTF) Regional Virtual Capacity-building Workshop on Teacher Policy Development in Africa

7 July 2021 - 13h00 - 15h00 (Paris time)

Concept Note

Introduction:

UNESCO, its International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa and the Teacher Task Force, are organizing a series of seminars in 2021 for national policy-makers and other relevant stakeholders in Africa to increase their knowledge and capacity in relation to the teacher policy development process, the dimensions of teacher policy and how policy development work can be better operationalized at the national level.

Objectives of the Regional Workshop

The virtual capacity building workshop(s), organized in collaboration by UNESCO-IICBA, the TTF and UNESCO Regional Offices, aim to:

- (a) improve participants' knowledge and understanding of the teacher policy development process, the dimensions of teacher policy and how policy development work can be operationalized at the national level;
- (b) disseminate the various useful resources and tools for teacher policy development, mainly 'Teacher Policy Development Guide' (2019) and the guide on 'Teaching Policies and Learning Outcomes in Sub-Saharan Africa: Issues and Options' (2016);
- (c) identify areas of complementarity and difference between the global guide and the African contextualized guide, to demonstrate how each tool is used according to objectives and under which circumstances; and
- (d) create a platform for education specialists in regional offices and other stakeholders to share best practices and challenges encountered in technically supporting national teacher policy development.

Background

Over the past two decades, African countries have witnessed massive transformations to their education systems with significant successes recorded to make education more accessible to the great majority of its school-age population. There have been promising results achieved in gender parity in primary education in many countries, yet much work still needs to be done to ensure greater access to close gender-based gaps and reach those left behind. Moreover, some of the impetus behind broadening access to primary education will continue shifting to secondary education and other education cycles in many countries where participation remains very low. The *Education for All* movement witnessed many underqualified teachers enter the profession to support national objectives. As such, data demonstrate that too few pupils are leaving primary education with the expected basic competencies in literacy and numeracy (UIS, 2019). The SDGs therefore have increased the focus from access to educational quality across the region and improving learning outcomes.

Teachers who are at the front line of education provision have a crucial role to play to improve learning outcomes. Looking to the future, Africa needs to invest more in the preparation and continuous support of teachers and ensure their working conditions to foster quality education and teaching to improve learning outcomes. UNESCO began to call for an international focus on teachers since its establishment, which culminated in the landmark signing of the 1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers, which was then followed and complemented in 1997 with the adoption of the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel.

Contemporary global and regional policy shifts have placed teachers at the centre of reform processes that aim to improve educational quality and equity. Both the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the Education 2030 Framework for Action and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA, 2016-2025) of the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063 recognise the significance of teachers for educational transformation. For instance, one of the key priorities of AU-CESA 2016-2025 is to revitalize the teaching profession to ensure quality and relevance at all levels of education. Likewise, the SDG4 goal on education includes Target 4.c which states: “By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States”.

Holistic and comprehensive teacher policy

The prominence given to teachers in the SDG agenda and the AU-CESA strategy is in line with the findings of various studies made over the years, which highlight that investing in teachers has a meaningful impact on the quality of education. To help realise this goal, a critical area needing serious attention to ensure teachers and teaching are core players of an education

system is the preparation and development of teacher policy frameworks that clearly set their roles and determine their work. Over the last few years, the development of holistic and comprehensive teacher policies has been gaining momentum, and recently Uganda and the Seychelles have approved their new policies, which they are now implementing. Several other African countries, such as, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Ghana, Guinea, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique and Niger are currently in the process of developing national teacher policies.

UNESCO's Teacher Development Section in Paris and the International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA), in collaboration with the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (TTF), have been technically and financially supporting countries in their efforts to develop teacher policy. Besides technically accompanying member countries through the policy development process, UNESCO and the TTF have been developing and sharing various resources and tools that facilitate national teacher policy development. Two key resources that have been widely used in Africa are the [Teacher Policy Development Guide](#) (TPDG) (first published in 2015 and updated in 2019), and IICBA's contextualized guide [Teaching Policies and Learning Outcomes in Sub-Saharan Africa: Issues and Options](#), which was released in 2016. IICBA's teacher policy development guide expands and adapts some of the teacher policy issues outlined in the TPDG to the African context. Having both been effectively used in different countries during the development of holistic and comprehensive national teacher policies, the two resources complement each other.

As national teacher policy development efforts in Africa gain momentum and more countries become engaged in the process, the demand for wider dissemination of the two guides and developing the capacity of stakeholders working on teacher policy cannot be over emphasized. To respond to these needs, UNESCO, IICBA and TTF have joined together to organize a series of regional capacity development workshops from June to December 2021 covering the 5 sub-regions of the continent. Based on inputs and feedback from the first virtual session, follow up workshop(s) will be planned between September and December 2021 on specific topics of teacher policy development that are to be identified through survey and brainstorming sessions.

Workshop Modality

The first regional capacity development workshop, coordinated by UNESCO, IICBA and the TTF in cooperation with UNESCO Regional Offices, will be held 30 June 2021 via Zoom. The duration of the meeting will be approximately 2 hours. The virtual workshop will feature plenary sessions with simultaneous interpretation (English, French and Arabic) and virtual break-out room discussions, conducted in the language most frequently spoken in the identified region(s).

Information on how to connect to the platform will be communicated to all registered participants prior to the meeting. The agenda for the meeting and relevant documentation (including the guides) will be circulated in advance to give participants enough time to familiarise themselves with the information.

Participation

The regional workshops are expected to be attended by experts in teacher education, development and management within the Education Ministries in the region(s), TTF focal points, UNESCO National Commissions, and critical partners including UNESCO Staff and representatives from UNICEF, EI, AFTRA, IGAD, ECOWAS, SADC, ECCAS, EAC etc.)

Draft Agenda

ITEM				TIME
Welcome remarks	Chair: Mr Saliou Sall, Senior Program Coordinator of UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA)			4 min
Introductory remarks	Dr. Yumiko Yokozeki, Director of UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA)			4 min
	Dr. Carlos Vargas Tamez, Head of UNESCO Section of Teacher Development and the Secretariat of International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (TTF)			
Breakout Group Discussions	Breakout Group I (English)	Breakout Group II (French)	Breakout Group III (Arabic)	
- Introductions and Context/ Moderator (TTF and IICBA)	Mr Carlos Vargas-Tamez	Mr Omar Diop	TBD	7 min
- Presentation of Teacher Policy Development Guides	Mr Peter Wallet and Mr Binyam Sisay Mendisu	Mr Saliou Sall	Mr Mohamed Aloui (UNESCO)	20 min
- Country Presentation on national experience to share lessons learned	Uganda or Ghana	Mali or Burkina Faso	TBD	15 min
- Discussion of the main regional challenges and opportunities	Mr Carlos Vargas Tamez	Mr Omar Diop	TBD	25 min

<p>Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Which teacher policy guide are you using and what are the advantages for your context? 2) What are the main policy challenges in your country in relation to the nine dimensions and how have you tried to resolve some of these issues? 3) What are the challenges in terms of contextualization of the teacher policy guide (if you are using one) into the national context? 4) What bottlenecks exist during the different phases of teacher policy development and implementation? How were these resolved? 	
<p>Plenary: Mr Saliou Sall and/or Mr Carlos Vargas Tamez Reporting back from Group & Overall discussion including questions and answers</p> <p>If time allows, the following questions could be asked:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What commonalities were identified, if any, within the region and what responses might be useful to mitigate challenges? 2) What further support do countries and regions need to develop comprehensive, holistic teacher policies? 3) How can the guides be used complementarily to ensure the best possible outcomes? 	40 min
<p>Closing remarks and way forward</p> <p>Dr. Yumiko Yokozeki, Director of UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA)</p> <p>Dr Borhene Chakroun, Director for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, UNESCO (<i>tbc</i>)</p>	5 min

Anticipated Follow-up:

TTF and IICBA envision follow-up sessions in September 2021 virtually and, possibly, face-to-face at the Policy Development Forum (PDF) to be held in December 2021. This will include additional capacity-building activities on new themes that emerge during the 1st workshop. A summary report of the workshop will also be developed that will be translated and shared mid-2021 to share lessons learned with a 2nd mid-way meeting to take place virtually in September to validate its findings and ensure some continuity between the June meeting and a 3rd event during the Teacher Task Force's Policy Dialogue Forum (PDF) in early December 2021.