

## **Developing Teacher Qualifications Frameworks**

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### **Context**

Facing the issue of teacher quality for quality education, UNESCO-BREDA in collaboration with the International Task Force on Teachers for EFA, the International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA) and the Section of Teachers and Educational Policies (ED/THE/TEP) organized in June 2012, an introductory workshop on the development of qualifications frameworks for the teaching profession in Dakar, Senegal. The meeting also received support from strategic partners such as CONFEMEN, SADC, the African Union and the Ministry of Education of Senegal. Twelve countries participated. They are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Democratic Republic of Congo, The Gambia, Guinea, Niger, Togo, Senegal and Uganda. Deliberations were backstopped by two international experts, Dr. James Keevy from South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), Pretoria, South Africa and Prof. Poonam Batra from Central Institute of Education, University of New Delhi, India.

The workshop collected and shared information on country practices regarding teacher qualifications, certifications and licensing; and explored methodological approaches in defining teacher competence frameworks, and in developing national and regional qualifications frameworks (NQF/RQF).

Among the lessons learned from this workshop, it was noted that participants were confronted with two types of problems that should reinforce UNESCO and its partners in their determination to continue the project of development of national and regional qualifications frameworks for teachers in Africa. Firstly, almost all the countries attending the workshop had undertaken reforms to professionalize their teachers, but the differences in practices in the process of professionalization was an indicator of the need for a dialogue between countries to better understand educational, socio-political, economic issues, or even the critical question of teacher mobility, that are linked to qualifications frameworks. Secondly, semantic difficulties emerged because of the colonial educational legacy in different linguistic areas represented, which were likely to affect certifications practices.

Given the importance of socio linguistic impact on teacher qualifications frameworks and as a follow up to June 2012 workshop, UNESCO is organizing, in the first instance, a roundtable for partners and francophone countries in the ECOWAS and ECCAS regions on 30 and 31 July, 2013 in Dakar. They are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, Cape Verde, Mali, Niger, Togo, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo.

### **How to move forward with national and regional qualifications frameworks for teachers in Africa**

UNESCO aligns with education related international agendas like the African Union Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015) whereby one of its focus areas relates to teacher development, and the goal of which reads:

*To ensure the provision of sufficient teachers to meet the demands of education systems and to ensure that all teachers are properly qualified and possess the relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes to teach effectively. Teachers should also be properly supported and adequately remunerated, to ensure high levels of motivation.*

Furthermore, UNESCO was among the partners that the AUC mobilized to initiate Pan-Africa Conference on Teacher Development (PACTED) held in Lome, Togo, in April 2011. The ensuing roadmap was adopted at the Fifth Ordinary Session of the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union (COMEDAF V) in Abuja, on 27 April 2012. Its very first goal is to “**Define standard-setting characteristics for teachers in Africa**” which amounts to “*Setting and promotion at all levels of the education system of the professional qualifications, knowledge, skills and competencies required, under minimum standards, to teach effectively and keep abreast of recent developments in the profession*”

As the lead agency for EFA goals’ progress monitoring, UNESCO’s commitment to the right to Quality Education for All Children spurs the Organization to carry forward with the issue of setting teacher professional standards and to support Member States and regional efforts in designing NQF/RQF.

### **What literature review indicates**

#### **a) The concept of qualifications framework**

A qualifications framework is an instrument for the development and classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for levels of learning achieved. This set of criteria may be implicit in the qualifications descriptors themselves or made explicit in the form of a set of level descriptors. The scope of frameworks may be comprehensive of all learning achievements and pathways or may be confined to a particular sector for example initial education, adult education and training or an occupational area. (OECD Directorate for Education, October 2005)

#### **b) Defining teacher competences and related areas, as well as competence-based teacher education curricula** (Education International and Oxfam Novib, *Quality Educators*, 2011)

#### **c) Teaching job entry requirements and the impact on recruitment rates**

Where recruitment rates are high, such as in Angola and Malawi (22% and 18% respectively), it is difficult to hire sufficient numbers of trained teachers, especially at the tertiary level. Meeting the demand for the quantity of teachers may have been achieved at the cost of the preparedness of teachers. High numbers of untrained teachers have been recruited in Mali, where teacher training requires a secondary education qualification. Although the reported attrition rate is relatively low (3%), more than one-half of new teachers are untrained (UIS, 2012)

#### **d) Role of NQF/RQF and appeal for partnership**

National and regional qualifications frameworks basically aim at the harmonization of teacher qualifications. There is a global interest in this quality assurance area and a call for harmonization of qualifications by ILO, ADEA, SADC, ECOWAS, COMESA, CARICOM, EU, AU, the Commonwealth and UNESCO, to mention but a few. Qualifications frameworks come to the fore as the most obvious tool to achieve this goal (*Coles, 2006:4*). UNESCO appeals to partners to join efforts and meet the challenges lying ahead.

**e) ILO report (2010)** on the implementation and impact of National Qualifications Frameworks exposes case studies in 16 countries among which 4 in Africa: Botswana, Mauritius, South Africa and Tunisia.

#### **Ways forwards**

UNESCO's next roundtable for partners and countries on NQF/RQF mentioned earlier aims to achieve the following:

- Identify generic and specific competences required for teacher initial preparation and continuous professional development programmes (cf. generic skills and specific competences defined by Tuning Harmonization project)
- Discuss a methodological framework proposed by UNESCO for the development of national and regional qualifications frameworks for teachers
- Design a pilot mechanism for the development of NQF/RQF.

Three English speaking countries will then be targeted for their interest, among which Kenya as one of the PACTED countries for a case study on the situational analysis of competence-based teacher education: entry requirements in teacher training institutions and in the teaching job, professional standards and qualifications systems. Finally, Tunisia could be placed in the position to spearhead the process in Northern Africa.

#### **Political support needed**

Policy responses will be needed and will require that:

1. Quality teacher preparation be both responsibility of teacher training institutions and Colleges or Faculties of Education at university level
2. Teacher professionalization go beyond competence-based teacher education and embrace socio economic choices for quality education and education for sustainable development
3. Countries promote institutional arrangements for the creation of qualifications authorities that are empowered to design qualifications systems, qualifications frameworks, competence standards, assessment and accreditation.