

Research Application Summary

Untangling the Complex Training and Qualifications System in Kenya

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Abstract

A national qualification framework (NQF) is an instrument used to classify a country's qualifications at different levels. Each level is defined by a set of learning outcomes expected at that level. NQFs are an extremely useful tool when carrying out educational and training reforms as they are vital reference points for lifelong learning and comparing qualifications across different levels in the same country and across borders with other countries. The Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) is an instrument that has been used to classify Kenya's qualifications following enactment of the KNQF act in 2014. The Sessional Paper of 2005 and the Policy framework for education of 2012 highlighted the urgent need both to better coordinate and clarify Kenya's qualification system. The current multiplicity of qualifications and awarding bodies (over 300) makes it difficult for employers to understand what competences they can expect the holder of a qualification to possess. The KNQF is intended to address this situation by establishing a common regulatory system for the development, assessment and award of qualifications. The KNQF is a central register of Institutions that have been accredited to award Qualifications, the qualifications that they award and the learners that are awarded the qualifications. The Framework sets out clear criteria for all qualifications and aims at developing and implementing a harmonized national accreditation, quality assurance, assessment and examination systems to ensure that qualifications awarded meet the national standard and are internationally benchmarked. The system is also used to develop and implement national policies on recognition and equation of local and foreign qualifications (REQs), recognition of prior learning (RPL) and a credible and reliable credit accumulations and transfer (CATs) system; in order to create an efficient and effective training and qualifications management system that meets the needs and requirements of local and international employers as well as industry. This paper enumerates the important role that qualification frameworks play and shares Kenya's experience in developing and implementing the KNQF with lessons for Africa and the rest of the world.

Key words: Accreditation, credit accumulation, efficiency, equation, frameworks, prior learning, Qualification, Quality assurance, recognition

Résumé

Un cadre national de certifications (CNC) est un instrument utilisé pour classer les

qualifications d'un pays à différents niveaux. Chaque niveau est défini par un ensemble de résultats d'apprentissage attendus. Les CNC sont des outils extrêmement utiles pour la mise en œuvre des réformes d'éducation et de formation, étant des points de référence pour l'apprentissage continu et la comparaison des qualifications à différents niveaux dans un même pays et au-delà des frontières. Le CNC du Kenya (CNCK) est un instrument qui a été utilisé pour classer les qualifications du Kenya après la promulgation de son acte en 2014. Le document de session de 2005 et le cadre politique pour l'éducation de 2012 ont souligné le besoin urgent de mieux coordonner et clarifier le système de qualification du Kenya. La multiplicité actuelle des qualifications et des organismes d'attribution (plus de 300) rend difficile (pour les employeurs) la compréhension des compétences attendues de leurs détenteurs. Le CNCK vise à remédier à cette situation en établissant un système réglementaire commun pour l'évaluation et l'attribution des qualifications. Le CNCK enregistre les établissements qui ont été accrédités, leurs qualifications, et les détenteurs de ces qualifications. Il établit des critères clairs pour toutes les qualifications et vise à mettre en œuvre des systèmes nationaux harmonisés d'accréditation, d'assurance qualité, d'évaluation et d'examen pour garantir que ces qualifications satisfont à la norme nationale et sont internationalement référencées. Le système est également utilisé pour élaborer et mettre en œuvre des politiques nationales sur la reconnaissance et l'équivalence des qualifications locales et étrangères, la reconnaissance des acquis et un système crédible et fiable d'accumulation et de transfert de crédits. Ceci permettra de créer un système efficace et efficient de gestion des formations et qualifications qui répond aux besoins et aux exigences des employeurs locaux et internationaux. Ce document décrit le rôle important que jouent les cadres de qualification et présente l'expérience du Kenya dans le développement et la mise en œuvre du CNCK avec des leçons pour le continent et le reste du monde.

Mots clés: Accréditation, accumulation de crédits, efficacité, équation, cadres, acquis, Qualification, Assurance qualité, reconnaissance

Introduction

Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 on policy framework on Education, Training and Research (MoE, 2005) highlighted the need to coordinate and clarify Kenya's education and training system (Figure 1). A multiplicity of qualifications and awarding bodies make it difficult (Figure 2) for employers to understand competences expected of holders of various qualifications. Hence, there has been need to establish a common regulatory system for the recognition of attainment of knowledge, skills, competences, values and attitudes that are derived from qualifications in the country. In this regard, the KNQF Act No. 22 of 2014 was enacted and led to the establishment of the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA, 2019) which has developed and is implementing the KNQF (Kerre and Hollandeer, 2009).

The KNQF has created 10-levels (Figure 1) of qualifications; which are in tandem with

the system developed by the East African Community (EAC) qualifications framework (EAQF). Internationally countries are adopting the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED, 2011) proposed by UNESCO which creates 8 levels of qualifications. Globally, Qualification Frameworks seek to facilitate improved mobility of learners and workers across regions (Kerre and Hollander, 2009). To complement the KNQF, the KNQA has developed and is currently promoting the use of the Kenya National Qualifications Classification Standard (KNQCS), which has assigned unique codes to each of the qualifications awarded in the country with the basic, TVET and University sectors.

Sub-frameworks developed within the KNQF have the basis of academic and vocational training which are meant to realize theoretical knowledge, competences, skills and provide for progression within the framework as shown in figure. The structure of the KNQF cuts across the basic, TVET and university levels and seeks to create better harmony and/or integration/coordination within the education and qualifications awarding system of the country (Mukhwana *et al.*, 2017e).

The KNQF needs to be understood in the context of the reforms that are currently being made to Kenya's education and training policy, which occurred in 2005, 2012 and 2019 (MOE, 2019). The objectives of the KNQF are to: (i) establish the Kenyan National Qualifications Authority; (ii) establish standards for recognizing qualifications obtained in and outside of Kenya; (iii) develop a system of competence, lifelong learning and attainment of national qualifications; (iv) align qualifications obtained in Kenya with the global benchmarks in order to promote national and transnational mobility of students and workers; (v) strengthen the national accreditation, quality assurance, assessment and examination systems for national qualifications; and (vi) facilitate mobility and progression within education, training and career paths.

As shown in figure 1, students have two main pathways through which they can attain qualifications in Kenya. These include the academic and vocational sub-frameworks. Levels 1 and 2 of the frameworks falls under basic education, while levels 3 to 6 (including government trade tests, GTT and industrial training) fall in the TVET sector and levels 7 to 10 are within the university sub-framework. The KNQF has also outlined entry requirements (including RPL) that learners require in order to qualify for admission all levels of the educational system. The system also allows for credit accumulation and transfer from one level to another for nationally recognised and registered qualifications.

Regulated qualifications. The KNQA is the chief advisor to government on qualifications issued by all qualification awarding institutions (QAIs) in the country. The Authority recognizes and accredits all qualifications awarding bodies operating in Kenya; and regulates the qualifications they are mandated to award. It also works with professional bodies and external quality assurance agencies (ETQAs, such as CUE and TVETA) in the country to ensure that qualifications awarded meet the national standard and are internationally competitive (MOE, 2014). The Authority also assesses and issues certificates of Qualifications Equivalence (CoQE) for all foreign qualifications awarded in the country that meet local standards. Figure 2 shows the elements of a credible qualification awarded in Kenya.


KNQF STRUCTURE

KNQF Level	General and Further Education and Training Sub-Framework		Notional hours (minimum)
10	Doctorate Degree		3600 after KNQA level 9
9	Master's degree		2400 after KNQA level 7
8	Post-Graduate Diploma	Professional Bachelor's Degree	1200 after KNQA level 7 or 6000 after KNQA level 2
7	Bachelor's Degree		Master Crafts Person -I or Management Professional 4800 after KNQA 2 or 2400 after KNQA level 6
6	National Diploma		Master Crafts Person -II or Professional Diploma 2400 after level 2 or 1200 after KNQA level 5
5	National Certificate		Professional Certificate or Master Craft Person III 1200 after KNQA level 2 or 600 after level 4
4	National Vocational Certificate-IV		National Skills Certificate -I GTT-I 600 after KNQA level 2 or 300 after level 3
3	National Vocational Certificate-III/Artisan Certificate		National Skills Certificate -II / (GTT - II) 300 after KNQA level 2
2	Secondary Certificate	National Vocational Certificate-II	National Skills Certificate -III / Government Trade Test (GTT-III) Primary Education (Level 1)
1	Primary Certificate	National Vocational Certificate-I	Basic Skills/Skills for Life Birth Certificate

Figure 1. The Structure of the Kenyan Qualifications Framework

Credible Qualification

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> Training Institutions are accredited (CUE, ESQAC, TVETA); <input type="checkbox"/> Program accredited in the institutions training for the Q (CUE, TVETA, ESQAC); <input type="checkbox"/> The Student meets the minimum entry requirement (KNQA); <input type="checkbox"/> Awarding institution has legal mandate to award Q; <input type="checkbox"/> Awarding Institution (and Q) Accredited by KNQA (KNQA); <input type="checkbox"/> Volume of learning is sufficient for the level (KNQA); <input type="checkbox"/> List of Graduates submitted to KNQA; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign <input type="checkbox"/> Registered on home NQF; <input type="checkbox"/> Certificate of Q Equivalence (KNQA); <input type="checkbox"/> Training Providers are accredited to train the Q (CUE, TVETA, ESQAC); <input type="checkbox"/> Program is accredited to the training providers (CUE, TVETA, ESQAC); <input type="checkbox"/> List of graduates submitted to KNQA;
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Figure 2. Elements of a Credible Qualification in Kenya

Progression. The Kenya Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (KCATs) is designed to facilitate progression of learners from one level of qualification to another; vertically or horizontally. The system recognizes experiential learning and volume of study in order to locate learners on the qualification framework (MOE, 2014; MOE and MOHEST, 2012; KNQA 2019). The KNQF provides a single framework through which qualifications can be mapped and located at their relative levels in a comprehensive, hierarchical, national qualifications structure. The framework also has provision for specifying knowledge taxonomy under the cognitive domain to suit basic and higher education; and the framework for TVET qualifications that emphasize skills taxonomy under the psychomotor domain. The KCATs system is meant to improve the efficiency of the education system, and support student progression (MOE, 2012), while recognizing and building on previous learning attained through various forms and formats (Mukhwana *et al.*, 2017e).

National challenges that are being resolved through establishment of the KNQF

i. Lack of a nationally accepted accreditation and quality assurance system. Although the country has several external quality assurance agencies that are carrying out institutional and program accreditation, at all levels, there is no national policy and standards on accreditation and Quality Assurance (QA) in the country (Mukhwana *et al.*, 2017e). In the Basic education sector, accreditation and QA is being carried out by the educational standards and quality assurance council (ESQAC), in the TVET sector by the Technical and Vocational Training Authority (TVETA), and in the university sector, by the Commission for University education (CUE). Several professional bodies are involved in accrediting training institutions and universities to train for professional programs such as nursing, law, medicine, engineering, veterinary medicine and psychology among others. These organizations have developed and are implementing different standards for accreditation and QA which confuses the users and makes the process very cumbersome. The KNQA is now in the process of developing national policies and standards for accreditation in the country that will be used by all players.

ii. Lack of a nationally accepted examination and/or assessment system. Assessment and examinations in the country are administered by many institutions (Figure 3). In the basic education (primary and secondary) sector, this is done by the Kenya national examinations council (KNEC); and there are also a few foreign examination bodies offering British, Germany, and American qualifications among others. In the TVET sector, examinations are done through the KASNEB, KNEC and more recently TVET CDAAC. It must be noted that in the basic and TVET sectors most institutions have been accredited (by TVETA) not train only; while assessment and awarding of qualifications is reserved for national examination bodies as outlined above. However, this rule has been widely flouted and it is not uncommon to find training institutions awarding their won qualifications contrary to the law. This is promoted by the belief that examinations and assessments by national examination bodies are hard to pass; thereby leading to an exodus of students from these mostly private colleges. To mitigate this, colleges, teach/train and examine students and awards qualifications that are not recognized within the KNQF; thereby rendering them inadmissible for use to further studies or even gain employment. This scenario has contributed to existence in the country of large numbers of fake and/or fraudulent qualifications which the KNQA is working hard to weed out.

In the recent past assessment and examinations at the TVET level have been criticized for being too theoretical and therefore not equipping students with the necessary work-related skills and competences (Mukhwana *et al.*, 2017a). Over the last 6 years, the country has been implementing reforms within the TVET sector, with emphasis being laid on the development and implementation of a competence-based training curricular. A new Competence based curriculum (CBC) for levels 1 and 2; and Competence based Education and Training (CBET) for the TVET sector has been developed and launched for use since 2018. The main emphasis now, is to equip students with practical skills that will enable them transit to the work place, with some of the training taking place in industry.

Although there have been challenges faced during the implementation of the CBC and CBET training curricular, such as lack of teaching/training infrastructure, lack of competent and qualified trainers, lack of training materials and equipment, the system is slowly taking root and it is believed that the country is moving in the right direction. This coupled with 100% transition from primary to secondary school (as experienced in 2019, following implementation of free-day secondary education, FDSE); and raising numbers of students in the TVET sector has been lauded as important steps in providing education that meets the needs of employers and industry. The TVET CDACC and TVETA are now working with employers and industry to ensure that part of TVET training and assessment takes place in industry, with attempts to introduce a dual TVET training system.

By law, all universities have legal mandate to teach/train, examine and award qualifications in all areas for which they have been accredited by the CUE (except for constituent colleges which can only award qualifications through their mentoring universities). Recent studies have shown that there is rampant duplication of programs on offer and there is a mismatch between what the market is looking for and what universities are producing. Mukhwana *et al.* (2017e) found that 74% of all students at universities in Kenya are enrolled in three main areas of study, namely, education (arts), humanities and social sciences and business management (Mukhwana *et al.*, 2017d). It has been established that while, the country is in dire need of skills in ICT, medicine, engineering, and agriculture, these courses are shunned by many students, thereby creating a situation where there are large numbers of people without jobs and jobs without people in the country. Results of recent surveys also show a lack of soft skills such as leadership, communication, ICT, and team work among graduates which makes their transition into the work place somewhat difficult (Kana *et al.*, 2017). There is urgent need for stakeholders within the university sector to reduce duplication; and improve the relevance and skill base of the university graduates to meet skill needs and competencies demanded by employers and industry. This is being informed by the fact that although industry, has raised concerns about the gap between training and employability skills, nothing systematic is being done to address the gap.

iii. Poor documentation of who has been awarded qualifications in the country. There is no central repository of institutions mandated to award qualifications, the qualifications that they award and graduates who have been awarded different qualifications. This has given way to large number of substandard and fake qualifications; with many institutions that have no legal mandate awarding qualifications to students (KNQA, 2019). It is currently estimated that 30 to 40% of all qualifications in the country are fake and/or do not meet the national standards (www.knqa.go.ke). This situation if allowed to continue will

undermine the confidence that employers and other users of Kenyan qualification have in our qualifications system. The country has recently established a qualifications verification system which although still operating manually is making progress in weeding out fake and fraudulent certificates and thereby enhancing confidence in the country's qualifications.

The country is also in the process of establishing a national repository of all qualifications that meet the national standard, are awarded legally, the institutions that award them and the learners (Kenya National Learners Record database, KNLRD).

iv. Lack of coherence and fragmentation of the qualifications system; The Kenyan Qualifications system has many bottlenecks and roadblocks leading to high rates of student drop outs. There is lack of clarity and understanding of what constitutes a national qualification, and especially so when qualifications are obtained from formal, informal and other settings (Kerre and Hollander, 2009). There is also poor understanding of the inter-relationships between qualifications, hence students wishing to further education are not clear which routes they can take; and training institutions have different rules and regulations guiding admission and progression from one level to another. The KNQF has now defined Kenyan qualifications and developed a national framework that has elaborated how qualifications relate to each other. This is in an effort to create a national system for progression through education and training in the country that is understood and utilized by all. This information however is not widely shared, and confusion remains in many places.

v. High prevalence of sub-standard local and foreign qualifications awarded and brought into the country. There are many foreign qualifications offered and awarded in the country without a clear clarification on whether they are accredited in their countries of origin, their requisite volume of learning, the skills that they impart and their equivalence to local qualifications. Because of internationalization of educational fraud, it is important that the authenticity of foreign qualifications is ascertained; and that the country only accepts and recognizes foreign qualifications that meet the national standard. Currently the KNQA is assessing and issuing certificates of qualifications equivalence which recognizes and equates foreign qualifications to local qualifications. This way the country hopes that students get quality training and education that equips them with skills necessary to work both locally and internationally. The exercise when completed will ensure that the country only accepts and recognises qualifications that meet the national standard and protects the country from an influx of fake and substandard qualifications.

vi. Lack of nationally accepted admission requirements. For a long time, there has been no nationally accepted criteria for admission into the various levels of education and training in the country. The KNQA has recently gazetted entry requirements into various levels of education. This criterion also includes recognition of prior learning, and qualifications obtained in informal settings. This way the country hopes to bring into the formal system, many undocumented skills, so that they can contribute to social economic development of the country. This will benefit the large number of informal *Jua Kali* artisans, that are the backbone of local manufacturing and industrialization. Adoption of a common admission criteria will bring order and is facilitate easy and predictable entry and exit into and out of the education system.

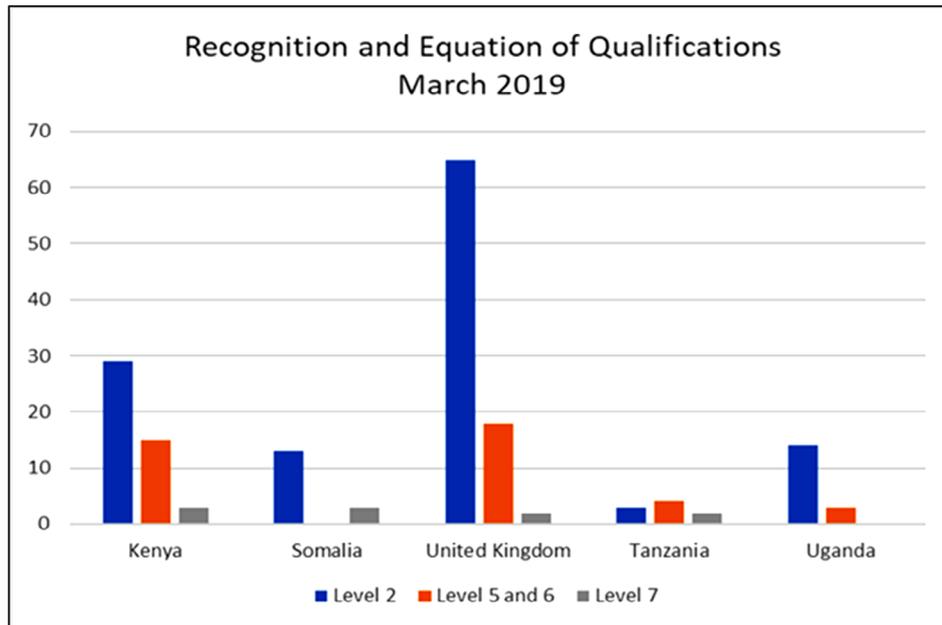


Figure 4. Data on Recognition and equation of foreign qualifications by the Kenya National Qualifications Authority during the Month of March 2019

vii. Lack of integration of curricular for different levels of learning. Curriculum development in the country is fragmented even for similar professions leading to duplication of course units at different levels of the education system. It is not uncommon for TVET institutions to develop and implement curriculum in a given area, sometimes covering exact content with an existing degree program. But the student joining the degree program is often forced to repeat the same units that have been covered at the lower levels. It has been suggested that curriculum development (KNQA, 2019) in the country be harmonized and integrated so there is efficiency and logical flow from one level of our education system to another. To achieve this objective, it will also be necessary to have a common student results grading system that normalizes students' grades, to allow for easy transition from one institution to another either horizontally or vertically. The KNQA has also developed and is now implementing level descriptors for all levels of the education system in Kenya; to ensure that learning outcomes are the same for similar levels of training regardless of who is carrying out the training.

The Authority is also working with industry and employers to develop occupational standards (OC) for all professions in the country. These will be used by all curriculum developers to guide curriculum development and ensure that training respond to employer needs and requirements and meets KNQA standards on the volume of learning for each level. Currently students that want to transfer from one learning institution to another to study for a similar course in the middle of their training, are forced to start their training courses afresh regardless of how much learning the student has taken in the previous institution. The KNQA through the KNQCs is working with ETQAs to code and map all similar qualifications in different institutions, where similar courses in different institutions will be allocated similar codes. Through this the Authority hopes to work

with all professional to create a CATs system that will allow students changing learning institutions to continue from where they have left in another institution, The system will also allow students who for some reason cannot complete studies say at the degree level to be awarded a lower level qualification such as a diploma if they meet the criteria set; in recognition of competencies gained from their duration of study at the higher level. This will go along away in minimizing wastage in the education system and create efficiency.

viii. Difficulties in getting international students to study in Kenya; The Kenyan education system is complex and not very well understood. This has undermined the country's efforts to try and internationalize its training and education programs. Frequent strikes and closure of training institutions has also discouraged many foreign students from attending college in Kenya. This coupled with lack of reasonable accommodation facilities, clear learning calendars and lack of foreign students' admission and management policies has led to the country not benefitting from training of foreign students. The country needs to develop national policies on admission and management of foreign students. It will also help greatly to have in place an efficient system for recognizing and equating foreign qualifications (Figure 4) to support easy transition of foreign students into the local training system. This will go along way in supporting the EAC and Africa Union (AU) policies on integration of Africa and the establishment of the East African Common Higher education area, as exemplified by the EAC.

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ix. High rates of student drop out. The country has a 50% drop out rate between primary and secondary schools (Mukhwana *et al.*, 2017e), and only 10 to 15% of students that have levels 1 and 2 qualifications transition to the university (Figure 6). The TVET sector, which should absorb large numbers of students that do not meet entry requirements into universities, have been neglected and blacklisted by students and parents for a long time (Kerre and Hollander, 2009). This follows many years of non-investment into the TVET



Figure 5. Stakeholder Workshops on the form and nature of the KNQF
Getting all stakeholders to agree on what works for the country is not easy

sector which has led to poor and dilapidated training infrastructure, lack of competent trainers, outdated training equipment, outdated training curricular and lack of hostel and accommodation facilities. As a result of this the potential for this sector, has largely been unexploited; leading to high levels of unemployment in the country. Over the last 5 years, there have been concerted efforts to reform and rebrand the TVET sector, which has resulted in the doubling of the numbers of students that are admitted in the system (from 90,000 in 2015 to 169,000 in 2019). However, the quality of training and facilities remains largely poor (Mukhwana *et al.*, 2017a).

Although there are now serious government efforts to revamp the TVET sector through building of new TVET institutions, hiring of new trainers, financially supporting students entering into the TVET sector and equipping Technical training institutes (TTIs), management and enrolment at the vocational Training centres (VTCs) which have been developed to county governments is still low. There is need for more stakeholder engagement (Figure 5) on the form, content and quality of TVET training that has been devolved to lower levels of government (county governments).

The country has recently (2019) reformed and introduced new competence-based education and Training (CBET) in the TVET sector. The basic education sector has also launched a competence-based curriculum (CBC) that considers students' talents and capabilities. This is in recognition of the need to modernize the education system, to equip students and learners and skills that are needed by employers and industry (Figure 6).

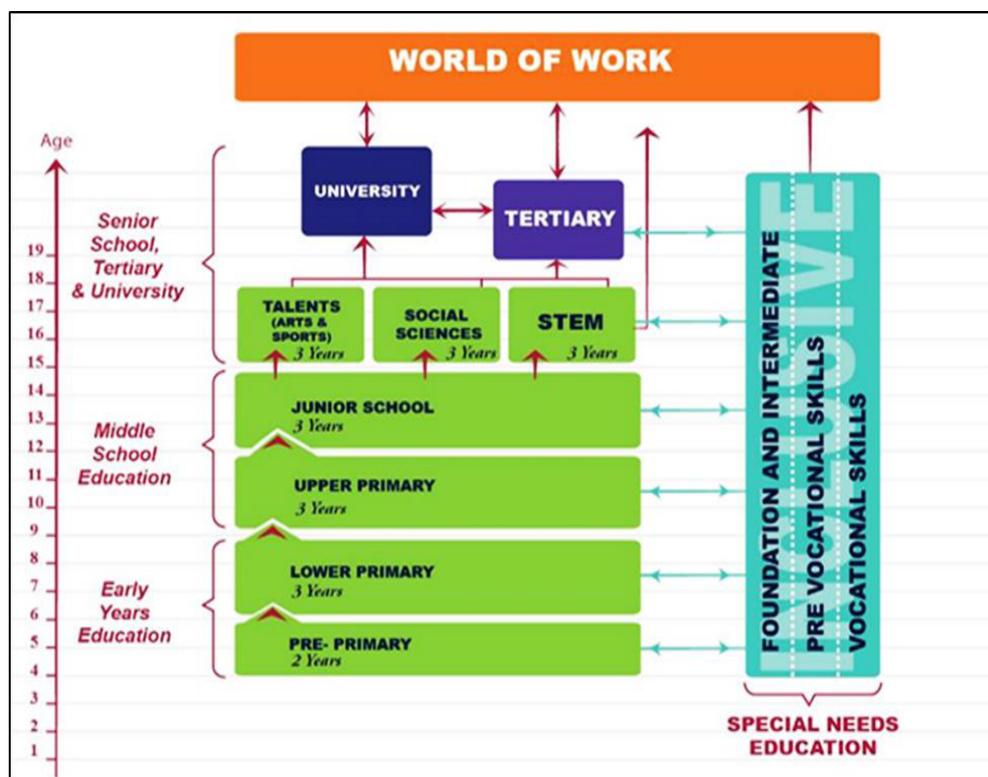


Figure 6. Structure of the New Competence Based Curriculum in Kenya

Looking ahead. The country is implementing the following in order to develop, and implement a connected and functional national qualifications framework, in line with the challenges so far documented;

- i. Developing and implementing a Nationally accepted institutional and program accreditation system and standard (s) to be used by all the regulators in the country;
- ii. Developing and implementing a Nationally accepted Quality Assurance system and standard (s) to be used by all regulators (and quality assurance agencies) in the country;
- iii. Developing a Nationally accepted Examination and/or Assessment system and standard (s) to be used by all local and foreign examination bodies in the country;
- iv. Working with sector skills councils to develop occupational standards for each in order to support curriculum development processes that respond to employer and industry needs;
- v. Establishing and maintaining a national database of institutions, qualifications and learners (Kenya National Learners Record Database, KNLRD) in the country;
- vi. Developing and maintaining the Kenya National qualifications framework specifying progression pathways; and inter-relationships between local and foreign qualifications;
- vii. Developing and implementing a National qualifications/Certificates Verification system (in order to create and build confidence in national qualifications);
- viii. Developing and implementing rules and procedures to guide management of examinations and assessments in the country;
- ix. Vetting and ensuring that all local and foreign qualifications meet the national standards (ensure that only registered and recognized foreign qualifications are offered in the country);
- x. Developing and implementing a nationally accepted admission requirements and criteria for different levels of our education system;
- xi. Encouraging and supporting integrated curriculum development for different levels of our qualifications to ensure that they facilitate student progression; and minimize duplication and wastage;
- xii. Developing and implementing a nationally accepted credit accumulation and transfer system for different categories of our qualifications (KCATs);
- xiii. Supporting and facilitating internationalization of the Kenyan education system through development of policies that are supportive of foreign students studying in the country;
- xiv. Developing and implementing policies to minimize student dropout rates from different levels of the education system;
- xv. Developing and maintaining a central register/inventory of all recognized foreign qualifications in Kenya;
- xvi. Developing and implementing policies to recognize and equate qualifications obtained using different forms of learning such as the formal, non-formal and informal learning systems;

Conclusion

The KNQF needs to be understood in the context of on-going reforms in the education and training sector of the country. The framework sets out to (a) Establish the Kenya National

Qualifications Framework; (b) Establish standards for recognizing qualifications obtained in and outside of Kenya; (c) Develop a system of competence, lifelong learning and attainment of national qualifications; (d) Align the qualifications obtained in Kenya with global benchmarks in order to promote national and transnational mobility of workers; (e) Strengthen accreditation, quality assurance and assessment/examination systems for national qualifications; (f) Support mobility and progression within the education, training and career paths, and (g); Promote confidence in Kenyan qualifications.

In accordance with the current law, no institution may award national qualifications unless it is recognized and/ or accredited by the KNQA. The 10-level KNQF is aligned with the East African Community qualifications framework (EAQF). The EAQF framework is part of the EAC common market protocol for mutual recognition of academic and professional qualifications, to which Kenya and five other countries (Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and South Sudan) in East Africa are signatories. The KNQF acknowledges two separate sub-frameworks within this overarching framework: one for academic and the other for vocational qualifications. The KNQF also develops and reviews the inter-relationships between national qualifications in consultation with stakeholders, among them professional bodies, universities, TVET Institutions, students, parents, employers and industry. The system maintains a national database of national qualifications and publishes associated manuals, codes and guidelines. It sets standards and benchmarks for qualifications and competences including skills, knowledge, attitudes and values; and provides for the recognition of attainment of competences. It also aids linkages on credit transfers and exemptions, as well as vertical and horizontal mobility at all levels (KNQA, 2019). This in turn enables entry to, return to, and exit from learning programs. Given the importance of the international comparability of qualifications, the authority also establishes standards for harmonization and recognition of national and foreign qualifications and promotes the recognition of national qualifications internationally. It builds confidence in the national qualifications system that contributes to national economic development and provides pathways that support the development and maintenance of flexible access to qualifications. The system also recognizes and validates non-formal and informal learning and learning pathways.

Through this system the country hopes to untangle and remove bottlenecks and roadblocks that hinder student progression from one level to another within the education system. It also makes it easier for international students and workers to pursue education and employment in the country (KNQA, 2019). The main benefits of the KNQF is to set up national systems for accreditation, quality assurance and assessment and examination; while ensuring that only high-quality qualifications that meet the national standards are awarded locally or brought in from outside the country. This is going along way in promoting internationalization of the education system of the country without compromising on quality.

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