



## African School Curriculum Survey

Joint initiative of the African Curriculum Association (ACA), CESA Curriculum Cluster and ACQF project

### Description of the Approach and Scope of Work

Version: 7<sup>th</sup> April 2021

#### 1. Introduction

##### Leading and involved institutions and projects

The African Curriculum Association (ACA) coordinates the Curriculum Cluster of the African Union's Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16–25) and is a member of the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) Advisory Group (ACQF AG). The third ordinary session of the African Union Specialised Technical Committee on Education, Science and Technology (STC-EST 3) recognised the important role and efforts of the ACA in supporting member states to review and develop their national curricula to meet the demands of the twenty-first century and urged the ACA to work with member states to reform their curricula and professional development for teachers, to develop appropriate learning resources, and improve learning outcomes. The ACA and the CESA Curriculum Cluster are cognisant that improved transparency of school curricula and growing interaction with the principles, objectives and level descriptors of qualification frameworks (national/regional) have the potential to contribute to qualitative leaps in education attainment, credibility of qualifications and the African integration and human development agenda (national, regional, continental).

Qualifications frameworks, learning outcomes, and curricula (standards, content, assessment) are fundamental components of robust and coherent systems of education and training, and of qualifications systems. The interaction and alignment of these components are not always clearly designed and effectively implemented, resulting in inconsistencies and inefficiencies, which affect the quality and transparency of learning outcomes (intended and achieved) and of the qualifications people acquire.

Therefore, as part of implementing CESA, the ACA, in collaboration with the African Union-European Union Skills for Youth Employability/Skills Initiative for Africa – Technical Cooperation project, Developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework, aims to undertake a mapping exercise to take stock and update evidence on the state of play of curriculum frameworks and practice in the African Union member states.

##### Brief information in the ACQF project

Skills and qualifications of the people in Africa are at the heart of African renaissance. Therefore, the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) is a vital policy initiative of the African Union (AU). Development of the ACQF is underway. The ACQF-development process is supported by a dedicated component of the programme African Union (AU)-European Union (EU) Skills for Youth Employability / Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA), Technical Cooperation, implemented in partnership (EU, GIZ, European Training Foundation – ETF).

The ACQF is strongly anchored on AU policies and strategies, especially:

- [Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want](#)
- [African Continental Free Trade Area](#) (AfCFTA)
- [Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment](#) (AU Free Movement Protocol);
- [Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016–2025](#) (CESA 16–25).

Three main outputs of the ACQF project (2021–2022):

1. Output 1: Analysis of options/scenarios for the ACQF as a sustainable and fit-for-purpose policy instrument. Studies on themes of interest for the ACQF are planned in 2021. The survey on school curricula (jointly with the ACA and the CESA Curriculum Cluster) aims to shed light on linkages with the principles and levels of national qualifications frameworks (NQFs).
2. Output 2: ACQF policy and technical document with action plan to support the African Union Commission (AUC), the countries and regional economic communities (RECs) in disseminating, enabling and implementing the ACQF.
3. Output 3: ACQF capacity development programme.

## 2. Description of the African School Curriculum Survey initiative

### 2.1 Summary of the initiative

- **Objective of this initiative:** Conduct a survey to map the state of play and developments of school curricula, so as to identify the different curriculum policies and practices, to compare their application, trends, similarities and divergences, and the interactions of curricula with NQFs. The conclusions and findings of the mapping study will underpin and inform the design of the future African Continental Curriculum Framework (ACCF) to be recommended to member states. The insights and conclusions of the survey will also inform development of the ACQF. This joint initiative is a demonstration of synergy between the CESA Curriculum Cluster, coordinated by the ACA, and the ACQF project and a confirmation of their common interest in better aligning and informing curricula (development, content, assessment) and the key principles and descriptors of qualifications frameworks (national, regional and continental).
- **Outputs:**
  - survey instrument, database;
  - analytical report based on the survey data;
  - synthesis-Infographic; and
  - webinars to present and disseminate the findings and discuss the way forward.
- **Approach:** This mapping study is based on an online survey addressed to respondents identified by the ACA and the CESA Curriculum Cluster. Desktop research and analysis of relevant document sources will complement the survey. This study is conceived and carried out in partnership with the project Developing the African Continental Qualifications Framework.
- A **survey steering group** will support quality and implementation of the survey; in particular: facilitate contacts with the countries' institutions, propose a list of main respondents, review and validate the draft instruments and reports, organise the planned webinars/meetings with stakeholders, and assure the linkage with CESA Curriculum Cluster activities and goals, as well as with the ACQF project activities and strategy. This survey steering group is an informal group composed of representatives of the CESA Curriculum Cluster, coordinated by ACA, the ACQF project and the AUC's Division on Education Science Technology and Innovation (ESTI).
- **Timeline of the school curriculum survey:** May to November 2021

### 2.2 Comprehensive description of the African School Curriculum Survey initiative

The objective of the African School Curriculum Survey is to generate evidence and understanding regarding policies, frameworks and practices in the areas of curriculum development and implementation in African Union countries, and to develop an analytical overview on how curricula interact and/or are informed by NQFs and/or descriptors of levels of qualifications.

The African School Curriculum Survey will engage with as many countries as possible, including those that do not have an NQF (adopted, in implementation), and those without qualifications frameworks in the sub-

sector of school education. The survey instrument will be adaptable to take into account different country profiles and education systems.

**Scope of the survey:**

- curriculum of primary, secondary and certificate-giving technical-vocational education and training (TVET) institutions; and
- curriculum policies supported/recommended by regional bodies, with a focus on the policies of RECs.

**Specific objectives of the African School Curriculum Survey:**

1. to identify the different types of frameworks (conceptual, policy, others) underpinning curriculum development and implementation in African Union countries;
2. to identify and map important features, trends, new developments, and challenges in curriculum development and implementation in African Union countries;
3. to examine the alignment/interaction of school curricula with NQF principles and descriptors;
4. to contribute with qualitative information relevant for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and
5. to generate evidence and insights to inform and support policies on curriculum development in African Union member states.

**General outcomes:**

1. contribute to the discussion and design of the future African Continental Curriculum Framework (ACCF) through the disseminated survey's findings, data and insights. The future ACCF will be developed by the CESA Curriculum Cluster as a general guideline for all curriculum development work in Africa and take into account of the principles and strategy of the ACQF;
2. contribute to improving the quality of education in Africa at critical levels of education;
3. contribute insights and recommendations to create a common ground and a degree of alignment between the ACCF and the ACQF;
4. to disseminate good practice and generate mutual trust among education and qualifications institutions and stakeholders in Africa and beyond; and
5. ultimately, contribute to transparency of learning outcomes and qualifications, and contribute to enhancing portability and mobility of skills and qualifications from one country to another for the 'Africa we want'.

**Research questions**

The survey will collect information addressing the main research questions listed below. The selected research team will translate these research questions into adequate formulations for the online survey questionnaire. The research team will design the questionnaire in collaboration with the survey steering group. The survey instrument will be digital, administered online, and take into account country and system diversity on the continent. A generic draft questionnaire and plan for the survey administration (first invitation, reminder, closure) will be included in the survey concept.

**Main research questions – orientation for development of the survey questionnaire:**

1. Which frameworks (conceptual, policy, technical) inform/underpin school curricula in school education (basic, secondary, TVET-certificate awarding) in African countries?
2. What are the definitions of 'curriculum' in African countries?
3. Application of 'learning outcomes' approaches in school education: state of play, different contexts, similarities and divergence, developments.
4. Interplay between school curriculum and teachers' training. Changing teachers' roles and learner-centred approaches in implementation of school curricula.
5. To what extent do school curricula include and develop new knowledge and skills, related to mega-trends (such as digital, ecologic transformation, citizenship, employability, response to Covid-19) and to African cultures and values?
6. What are the differences, adaptation, flexibility in curriculum – main traits and trends?

7. Alignment of learning outcomes of school curricula (different levels and cycles) to principles and descriptors of the NQF or to descriptors of qualifications (certificates, diplomas) of the basic, secondary education and certificates of TVET schools: state of play, trends, challenges, achievements.
8. Quality assurance of school curricula (development, implementation)
9. What are the main trends, developments and opportunities – a comparative perspective?
10. What are the main challenges – a comparative perspective?

#### **Respondents:**

The ACA/CESA Curriculum Cluster will prepare a valid list of main respondents and inform them beforehand of the objectives, approach and time plan of the African School Curriculum Survey. These preparatory actions are essential for the success and ownership of the survey.

#### **Outputs and activities in the frame of the African School Curriculum Survey**

1. **Milestone 1 – Inception report:** Brief description of the approach, instruments, involved research team, indicative outline of the final report, administration of the online survey, plan of pre-survey information sessions and dissemination webinars, timeline of all activities, approach to interactions with the survey steering group and respondents.
2. **Milestone 2 – Survey instrument:** Develop the complete questionnaire (full, modules), to be administered as an online survey (travel to different countries is not required).
3. **Milestone 3 – Launch survey:** Conduct at least two information webinars with respondents before the launch; send survey information to all contacts of the respondents' list provided and agreed with the survey steering group. The list will be provided and agreed during the inception phase. Strict respect for data protection and data privacy regulations must be followed in managing the survey data.
4. **Milestone 4 – Desktop research:** Messages from relevant documentary sources (national, regional, continental) complementing the data collected via the survey. No report required – findings to be integrated in the mapping survey report.
5. **Milestone 5 – Mapping survey report:** The synthesis report will be uploaded on the ACQF website and linked with the AUC and ACA websites. Estimated: 50–70 pages.
6. **Milestone 6 – Synthesis report:** In the form of an extensive infographic brochure (estimated extent 4–8 pages); in English, French and Portuguese; professional layout and design; in Word and PDF. The synthesis report will be uploaded on the ACQF website and linked with the AUC and ACA websites.
7. **Webinars:**
  - Information and guidance on the survey (objectives, approach, methodology, timeline) for the recommended respondents (one webinar of at least three hours duration): April 2021.
  - Presentation and dissemination of the survey findings (two webinars, of at least four hours each): upon completion of the analytical report and synthesis.

In addition, a number of project consultation meetings (online) will be organised with the steering group to follow up on progress of the survey; to discuss, review and validate technical and methodological questions, and to monitor the main milestones. These meetings can be conducted via existing secure platforms/technologies (Zoom, MS Teams, others).

#### **3. Pre-survey webinar**

To inform the countries on the objectives and plan of the School Curriculum Survey, and motivate respondents to contribute, a pre-survey webinar is planned for **4<sup>th</sup> May 2021, 12.00-14.00 (GMT+3)**. **Simultaneous interpretation: EN-FR-PT.**

#### **4. Contacts on matters related with the school curriculum survey:**

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