



Sensitisation of policymakers on the Teacher Qualifications Framework

An activity report



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Background:

Over the past two months, ACRES has supported the policy development process of the Teacher Qualifications Framework (TQF) with evidence. Over this period, ACRES has developed two Rapid Response Briefs, and held two citizen panels on the Teacher Qualifications Framework. The two Rapid Response Briefs were titled.

1. Considerations for a professional teachers' competencies framework for Uganda.
2. Considered roles of different stakeholders in supporting teachers to acquire, maintain or enhance their competences.

The two citizen panels were also arranged along the same topics. We invited two different sets of teachers for the citizen panels i.e. Primary School Teachers and Secondary School Teachers. We separated the two categories of teachers during the engagement as the experiences and expectations of the two are different.

The evidence we provided from the two Rapid Response Briefs and the citizen panels was used to inform the development of different sections of the first draft of the TQF. Working with the lead consultant employed by the British Council, we organised a sensitisation and discussion engagement meeting with key stakeholders on the first draft of the framework. We also used this opportunity to sensitise the invited stakeholders on what ACRES is and our work in supporting the policy making process with evidence.

Workshop Objectives

1. Introduction of ACRES to relevant policymakers contributing to the development of the TQF
2. Engagement of stakeholders on the evidence that informed the draft TQF
3. Engagement of stakeholders on the draft TQF

Approach

a. Workshop venue

We conducted the workshop at Esella Country Hotel, in Kiira, Wakiso District. We chose this option because it is outside the boundaries of Kampala, and, therefore, the invited policymakers would have enough time to engage with the draft policy, with minimal to no interruptions that come along with being in Kampala, the capital City of Uganda.

b. Identification and invitation of policymakers

Working with the British Council Consultant, we identified key ministries that would be affected or would participate in the implementation of this policy. These included Ministry of Public Service, Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development, and the Office of the Prime Minister. The invitations came from the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Sports.

c. Preparation of materials for the engagement

The draft policy was the major document to use during the engagement workshop. This was compiled by the British Council and had incorporated evidence from earlier Rapid Response Briefs and the Citizen panels.

d. Workshop proceedings

The workshop was moderated by Madam Rose Izizinga, one of the consultants under the British Council who were very crucial in drafting the policy. The workshop followed the introduction of ACRES, background to the policy process, evidence used to support the policy process, and the discussion of the draft policy

The workshop

a. Introduction of ACRES

We introduced ACRES as a center of excellence in Rapid Evidence Synthesis. The Rapid Evidence Synthesis mechanism is one of several concepts that can be used to provide policy/ decision makers with evidence to support the policymaking process. The uniqueness of the mechanism is its ability to provide timely, relevant and context specific evidence to meet the policymakers' urgent needs for evidence. Using the example of the briefs we provided for TQF, the policy we were engaging the policymakers on, we explained how we approach the process of providing evidence and used the same to detail

possible impacts of the RRM and of the use of evidence to inform policies and decisions. We further detailed the incorporation of citizen voices into the policy making process through citizen panels, and policymaker engagement through policy dialogues. We stressed the point that ACRES does not charge for the services we offer and therefore, a lack of a dedicated budget line in the budgets of different government institutions should not be a deterrence to the policymakers reaching out to ACRES for evidence.

b. Discussion of evidence that informed the draft policy

The moderator discussed the sources of evidence, which include the evidence provided by ACRES, evidence from a survey that was conducted by the consultants, considerations of best practices from the region and considerations of other policies of the land. This information was compiled into a report and later informed the draft policy.

c. Discussions on the draft policy

The workshop then deliberated on the draft policy that was presented. The documents of the draft policy, and the Rapid Response Briefs had been shared with the policymakers invited prior to the workshop to allow them to engage with the evidence. The discussion was therefore evidence informed. The deliberations from the workshop are presented in the next section.

Deliberations from the workshop

The deliberations were as follows.

1. Defining a teacher – There was a comprehensive discussion on who a teacher in Uganda should be, and what kind of competencies and initial training they should have. This was a key starting point as it forms the background of the TQF. There were no changes to the competencies framework that was presented in the TQF.
2. There was a discussion on the implementation of the TQF, stemming from the relevant government bodies that have to be involved, and what their roles would be. From this, it was pointed out that the policy had missed out the key stakeholders such as the Office of the Prime Minister; the Ministry of Local Government; the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development; District Service Commissions; and different assessment bodies in Uganda. In addition, the workshop expounded on the expected roles of the already included stakeholders. These considerations would allow for the policy to not get stagnated during its implementation.

3. There was a note that the TQF should also be informed by the National Qualifications Framework. However, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is currently under development and therefore the TQF should be silent on the NQF. The current considered strategy is for the TQF to partly inform the NQF. The workshop also recommended that there is a need to explore how the ongoing processes of the NQF affects or could potentially affect the TQF.
4. The workshop noted a need to clearly expound on the career paths for career educators who do not necessarily want to join administration. This is especially important for teacher motivation as they would be working towards a clearly defined target careerwise.
5. There was a discussion on technical subjects offered within the secondary school curriculum. The draft policy, just like the National Teachers Policy, points to the minimum qualifications of a teacher as a degree. However, this might not be feasible for the teachers of technical subjects as there are no university courses for the same. Therefore, there would be need to upgrade the diploma courses to degree courses or to introduce degree courses of technical subjects at universities.
6. We also had a discussion on the potential risks to the successful adoption and implementation of the policy, how likely it is for these to occur and the strategies of mitigating these risks. Some of the risks raised were.
 - a. Limited stakeholder engagement in the policy development process
 - b. Limited political buy-in
 - c. Lack of sufficient public financing for the policy implementation process
 - d. Limited dissemination of the policy
 - e. Other ongoing policy development processes within the sector
 - f. The multi-sector nature of the policy would pose challenges in clarification of the roles and mandates of the different stakeholders expected to be involved in the implementation of the policy
7. There is a need to develop the Monitoring and Evaluation framework for the policy to allow for the next stage of costing the policy.

Suggested immediate action points

1. Address the points raised in the workshop
2. Get external review of the policy. To this, the moderator indicated that UNESCO was onboard to provide the needed review which would add more legitimacy and authority to the policy development process.

3. Develop the M&E framework of the policy. The M&E expert from the Ministry of Education and Sports offered to take on this task.

Conclusion

This was a fruitful workshop which offered an opportunity for ACRES to meet and sensitise policy and decision makers on Evidence Informed Decision Making, using an ongoing policy process that they are involved in. It also provided ACRES with an opportunity to witness, first hand, the way the evidence we provided was used and the potential impact it has so far had on the policy development process.

