



Harnessing cultures to advance education in sub-Saharan Africa: Review of education policies and practices

Terms of reference for the preparation of case studies

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1) Research Overview

Despite appreciable progress over the past decades, the level of economic and social development in Africa still remains low and lags behind all other regions. Challenges relating to low human development, poverty, gender inequality and exclusion persist in most African countries, which are also vulnerable to health, environmental and social risks (AfDB, OECD, UNDP 2015).

Cultural values were identified by some academics and practitioners as factors that may explain the low level of social and economic development of some countries and regions and have a determining impact on the performance of educational systems and student learning in different social contexts.

There have been several theoretical assertions on the potential of cultural values and traditional knowhow that can be better leveraged for education development in several parts of Africa. However, African thinkers and practitioners deplored the failure of African modern education systems to integrate positive African values and proposed to build intrinsic knowledge systems based on African traditional values.

Many recent attempts to deepen the understanding of the role of cultures (e.g. Confucianism) in the performance of educational systems and student achievement (OECD, 2011; Schenck 2015) exists. But it appears that no serious studies have been conducted to document and build regional evidence on what cultural assets have actually been harnessed for enriching education and learning systems across Africa and how to leverage them to further enhance education policies and practices and to enrich policy dialogue on the education models and knowledge systems that could be more relevant to African countries.

The purpose of the research study ‘Harnessing cultures¹ to advance education in sub-Saharan Africa: Review of education policies and practices’ is to document and compile the concrete examples of cultural assets² and traditional values that have been leveraged and harnessed in practice to enrich education policies and practices in sub-Saharan African countries in order to derive a number of reflection points, policy options and recommendations. These would be disseminated for consideration by countries (policy makers, managers and development partners) in the region in the process of reviewing their education policies and strategies in light of the SDG4-Education 2030 goal and targets which calls for building education systems that promote inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all by means of society-wide participation and through all channels - formal, non-formal and informal settings.

The Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) 2016-2025 that is issued “in the bid to ‘create’ a new African citizen who will be an effective change agent for the continent’s sustainable development as envisioned by the AU and its 2063 Agenda” will also guide the course of the research and reflection.

¹ This study uses the commonly used definition of culture from the English Anthropologist Edward B. Tylor in his book, *Primitive Culture* : “ complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by [a human] as a member of society” (Tylor, 1871).

² There are numerous interpretations as to cultural assets. For the sake of this study, cultural assets will be used to mean traditional cultural resources that evolve over time and contribute to the vitality of community’s livelihoods and its environment. These assets can be material, immaterial, socio-emotional or environmental, which shape the way of thinking and living of the majority of community members, and if properly valued and tapped can positively influence and advance the shaping of economic, social and in our case knowledge systems of the societies.

This research is jointly coordinated between UNESCO’s Section for Partnerships, Cooperation and Research and the UNESCO Regional Office in Dakar, and conducted in collaboration with UNESCO regional offices in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).

UNESCO is hiring consultants, group of consultants or entities (here called ‘contractors’) to conduct five case studies focusing on experiences of cultural levers in education policies and strategies under the supervision of the relevant UNESCO Regional Office in SSA.

These terms of reference intend to outline the following main areas that contractors will consider in preparing the case study proposals and conducting the case study (methodology, report structure, presentation of findings, referencing and timeline) as well as application modalities.

2) Scope of the case studies

In the framework of this research, up to 5 case studies are expected to be conducted independently in the Sub Saharan African region, covering a group of countries and/or a certain geographical space (or a specific country on an exceptional case), one within each UNESCO Regional Office’s coverage grouping of countries (see table 1) and in agreement with the UNESCO research team (Paris and Dakar).

Each case study will focus on the way the cultural assets were leveraged to strengthen education systems and improve access and learning covering to the extent possible all the guiding questions in the annex, e.g. how education policies are formulated, education and learning systems and institutions managed, curricula are made relevant and education processes/approaches designed and implemented.

The scope of the case study can be sector-wide, focusing on the areas and levels of pre-tertiary education and learning, including formal, non-formal and to a limited extent informal dimensions and ways of learning.

Table 1. UNESCO Regional Offices and their Coverage

UNESCO Regional Office	Countries covered
Abuja (8)	Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Togo
Dakar (7)	Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal and the Gambia
Harare (9)	Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe
Nairobi (13)	Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda
Yaoundé (10)	Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Congo, DRC, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and Sao Tome & Principe

3) Case studies Methodology

Each case study will consist of essentially two strands - i.e. a desk review and empirical study - that will lead to the formulation of options and suggestions for policy consideration by SSA countries.

The specific purposes of the desk review are the following:

- To provide an overview of traditional cultural values and assets used to promote education and learning in traditional societies in the targeted group of countries/geographical area
- To document relevant experiences integrating conducive cultural levers into education policies and practices in in the targeted group of countries/geographical area.

The purpose of the empirical study is to get the perceptions of experiences of increasing access to education and improving learning by leveraging the cultural assets of value in educational practice in SSA, from a range of stakeholders.

Data collection methods will include document review, semi-structured interviews, focus discussion groups and surveys (including online), as well as any other methods which the contractor deems appropriate.

When required, sampling shall be randomly processed, while ensuring representation of both female and male's perceptions as well as different socioeconomic backgrounds and residence area (e.g. urban/rural).

4) Case study report structure

Each final case study report will be a comprehensive, analytical review in French or English with no more than 30 pages excluding bibliography and annexes (single-spaced, Times New Roman, Size 12 Font), consisting of:

- **Acknowledgements** (max. 0.5 page): this shall include anybody involved in supporting the case study that the contractor wish to be acknowledged e.g. government officials, those involved in data collection, as well as the individual(s) involved in producing the report/author(s) (names and affiliation).
- **Table of Contents** (max. 1 page): including the sections of the report as well as a list of annexes, figures, boxes and tables.
- **Executive Summary** (max. 2 pages): brief summary of the entire report, and highlight the key findings, analysis and policy suggestions/conclusions.
- **Introduction** (max. 1 page): brief background to give context to the report, as well as present the main research questions that the report seeks to explore and the objectives.
- **Case study methodology and limitations** (max. 3 pages): general overview of the research framework and methodology used and specific methods used for data collection (number of stakeholders involved, time frame and geographic

representation naming locations) and rationale as well as any limitations in the methodology

- **Chapter I Context** (max. 3 pages): description of the context and key issues with a focus on education in the targeted group of countries/geographical area.
- **Chapter II Cultural levers in selected countries of sub-Saharan Africa:** this chapter aims to provide an overview of traditional cultural values and assets used to promote education and learning in traditional societies in the targeted group of countries/geographical area
- **Chapter III Experiences of cultural levers in current education policies and strategies:** this chapter will document and analyze relevant experiences integrating conducive cultural levers into education policies and practices in the targeted group of countries/geographical area.
- **Chapter IV Policy options and recommendations and conclusions:** this final chapter should include policy options and recommendations based on the findings of the case studies and the contractor's own analysis and perspective. In addition, a short conclusion will be included at the end of this chapter.
- **Bibliography/References:** list all references used.
- **Annexes:** overview of the results of data collected (the complete raw data shall be provided in a separate document), list of individuals/institutions interviewed/consulted/surveyed, copy of questionnaires and interview questions, etc. and any additional relevant information that cannot be included within the text of the report.

5) Expected deliverables

The contractor will be expected to:

- Submit for validation by the UNESCO contract supervisor and research team (cc: c.collin@unesco.org) by September 30 a detailed data collection plan including the scope of the study, geographical coverage, the methodology (document review, semi-structured interviews, focus discussion groups and surveys – including online-, as well as any other methods), relevant details and justification on collection methods and sampling as well as any questionnaire, guiding questions,...
- Collect and analyze relevant data according to the validated methodology
- Submit a draft case study report for UNESCO's comment by 9 December 2016
- Submit the final version of the case study report including comments for UNESCO's approval by 17 February 2017.

6) Timeline

Each case study will be implemented between August 2016 and February 2017 according to the following timeframe:

Date	Task	Observations
<i>August-September 2016</i>	Desk review of policy and other relevant documents	This will include documentation suggested by UNESCO, as well as contractor.
<i>October 2016</i>	Additional data collection	This will involve employing surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, as well as any other methods which the contractor will deem appropriate
<i>November-December 2016</i>	Report writing and submission	The contractor will write the draft report based on the desk review and additional data collected and submit the draft report to UNESCO for review
<i>January-February 2017</i>	Finalization	Based on feedback from UNESCO, the contractor will review and finalize the case study

7) Qualifications

- Be an individual consultant, a group of consultants (with necessary coordination and appointment of a lead consultant) or entity (consultation agency, research center, etc.) active in the area of education
- Proven experience in research study on culture and education in Sub Saharan Africa, including in data collection methods through surveys, focus group discussions, interviews, etc.
- Proficiency in French or English
- Knowledge of main national languages of the targeted country/group of countries/geographical area is an asset
- Excellent analytical and report writing skills

8) How to apply

Please submit a short case study proposal (no more than 7 pages) accompanied by a CV or the institutional profile (in case of an agency), as well as the list of previous relevant research studies conducted to the relevant UNESCO Regional Office Staff by 15 August 2016:

- Abuja and Dakar: Catherine Collin (c.collin@unesco.org)
- Harare: Carolyn Medel-Anonuevo (c.medel-anonuevo@unesco.org)
- Nairobi: Saba Bokhari (S.Bokhari@unesco.org)
- Yaounde: Bruno Dzounesse (b.dzounesse@unesco.org)

The case study proposal should include the following informations:

- Justification on the candidate's assets for this assignment
- Targeted scope (countries covered or geographical area) among the five UNESCO groupings (table 1)
- Methodology and planning : data collection, analysis and reporting
- Composition of the case study team members
- Expected fees and other related costs
- At least two references

Please contact Catherine Collin (c.collin@unesco.org) for any further information.

Annex: Indicative guiding questions for case studies

1. Cultural levers in selected countries of sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)
 - a. What are the traditional cultural values and assets that are perceived to be compatible with universally accepted human rights?
 - b. How these traditional cultural values and assets were used to promote education and learning in traditional societies?

2. Experiences of cultural levers in current education policies and strategies:

This involves analysing relevant education policies, programmes, initiatives and/or projects and using other methods (e.g. interviews, surveys and/or Focus Group Discussions) in order to capture relevant experiences, such as ensuring rapprochement between education institutions and communities and integrating conducive cultural levers into education policies and practices from a lifelong and life-wide perspective, in terms of:

 - a. Increase of access/participation in education and training (including school building, supply and demand-side interventions, etc.³)
 - i. What cultural values and assets have been effective to increase access and participation in education and learning? Was it the use of “proximal” language, the relevance of curricula, locally-relevant pedagogical approaches, the leverage of traditional governance system, community involvement in education and school organization, or other cultural assets?
 - ii. How are these efforts and experiences reflected in national education policies and programmes? What are the perceived benefits, success factors and lessons learnt?
 - iii. What could be the opportunities for these experiences to be further leveraged and scaled up to advance education and learning in line with countries’ development contexts, needs and aspirations and in pursuit of the SDG4 (education)?
 - b. Improvement of teaching and learning
 - i. What cultural values and assets have been effective to improve teaching and learners’ acquisition of knowledge, skills/competences and also values (e.g. resilience, responsible citizenship, etc.)⁴? Was it the use of local language, the relevance of curricula, locally-relevant pedagogical approaches, the leverage of traditional governance system, community involvement in education and school organization, or other cultural assets?
 - ii. How are these efforts and experiences reflected in national education policies and programmes? How do beneficiaries perceive these

³ Some examples include initiatives 3E (Espaces d’Eveil Educatif) and non-formal vocational training centres in Burkina Faso; Nomadic education in Nigeria; community involvement in school construction in Rwanda; use of local languages in e.g. Mali, Niger, Botswana, etc.

⁴ Ref. Sustainable Development Goal 4, target 4.7. Please also refer to relevant paragraphs of the Education 2030 Framework for Action.

- experiences? What are the perceived benefits, success factors and lessons learnt?
- iii. What could be the opportunities for these experiences to be further leveraged and scaled up to advance education and learning in line with countries' development contexts, needs and aspirations and in pursuit of the SDG4 (education)?
- c. Governance of education systems and institutions (including involvement of community and other stakeholders in policy design and management)
 - i. What cultural values and assets have been effective to improve governance in education? Was it through leveraging traditional governance system, community involvement in education and adaptation of school organization, or other cultural assets?
 - ii. How are these efforts and experiences reflected in national education policies and programmes? How do beneficiaries perceive these experiences? What are the perceived benefits, success factors and lessons learnt?
 - iii. What could be the opportunities for these experiences to be further leveraged and scaled up to advance education and learning in line with countries' development contexts, needs and aspirations and in pursuit of the SDG4 (education)?
 - d. Education for the disadvantaged (girls, minorities, disabled, etc.)
 - i. What cultural values and assets have been effective to improve inclusion and equity in education? Was it the use of local language, the relevance of curricula, locally-relevant pedagogical approaches, the leverage of traditional governance system, community involvement in education and school organization, or other cultural assets?
 - ii. How are these efforts and experiences reflected in national education policies and programmes? How do beneficiaries perceive these experiences? What are the perceived benefits, success factors and lessons learnt?
 - iii. What could be the opportunities for these experiences to be further leveraged and scaled up to advance education and learning in line with countries' development contexts, needs and aspirations and in pursuit of the SDG4 (education)?
3. Options and suggestions for policy consideration for scale-up (that could be shared with policy-makers, managers, practitioners and development partners including reflection on the implication and applicability of the experiences reviewed in the case study in light of the Education 2030 agenda not only in the countries reviewed and also in other countries and/or contexts)