



13th Policy Dialogue Forum and Governance Meetings of the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (TTF)

Event Report

Session Title: *Ensuring a systems' approach in innovative teacher policymaking and education development amidst emerging issues: Experiences and lessons learnt in Africa*

Organizer: Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) Africa 19 Hub at the UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA)

Date: December 3, 2021, 14:00 - 15:30 Rwanda Time (local)

Venue: Kigali, Rwanda, and online (hybrid format)

Recording: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GJyD8KvDrXI&list=PLbVVV7krdTXd_J8fRCvhuxD-sFvZSUj5z&index=15

Introduction

On December 3rd, 2021, the Global Partnership for Education's (GPE's) Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) Africa 19 Hub held a break away session at the 13th Policy Dialogue hosted by the UNESCO International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (TTF). The two-day policy dialogue on December 2nd and 3rd, 2021 revolved around theme of innovation in teacher policy and practice for education recovery, and was held in hybrid format both online and in-person in Kigali, Rwanda. The conference featured dozens of discussions and perspectives on innovative teacher education, professional development, and policymaking in Africa and beyond, from ministers, decision makers, development actors, professors, and practitioners from the government of Rwanda, regional ministries of education, UNESCO offices, the World Bank, and universities. Several hundred audience members from around the world attended virtually and physically.

The KIX Africa 19 Hub's hybrid break away session during the policy dialogue was titled "Ensuring a systems' approach in innovative teacher policymaking and education development amidst emerging

issues: Experiences and lessons learnt in Africa” and featured perspectives from The Gambia, Kenya, Uganda, and Zambia. The discussion was organized for policymakers, education experts, and researchers to exchange critical knowledge on innovate strategies teacher development for continuous professional development and lifelong learning for all.

This report is a summary of the proceedings and the points arising during the KIX break away session.



A session at the TTF Policy Dialogue on December 2, 2021.

Background

The Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) Africa 19 Hub is a joint endeavor between the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and the International Development and Research Centre (IDRC). The purpose of the hub is to collect, generate, exchange and facilitate the effective use of data, knowledge and innovation for education policy formulation and implementation among 18 Anglophone African countries¹ in six thematic areas. These areas include (i) strengthening learning assessment systems, (ii) improving teaching and learning, (iii) strengthening early childhood care and education, (iv) achieving gender equality in and through education, (v) leaving no one behind, and (vi) meeting the data challenge in education. The hub is managed by a consortium of three partners: the UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA), UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO), and the African Union Commission.

Since the project’s inception in March 2020, the hub has been instrumental in facilitating dialogical platforms and creating a shared understanding among the 18 member states in Africa to gain knowledge and skills for innovative, forward-looking, and research-oriented education strategies towards strengthening national education systems and accelerating educational progress amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and other related challenges.

This break away session at the TTF Policy Dialogue was one of dozens of knowledge-sharing events the

¹ The 18 countries of the KIX Africa 19 Hub are Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, The Gambia, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

KIX Africa 19 Hub has held in 2020 and 2021 for the purpose of exchanging existing regional knowledge and promising practices and defining priorities in the thematic areas to improve policy development and implementation in Africa.

**THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION
KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION EXCHANGE (KIX)**

**13th
Policy Dialogue Forum**

**Innovation in teacher policy
and practice
for educational recovery**

2-3 December 2021
Kigali, Rwanda, and on-line

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Please join us for our session on:

**"ENSURING A SYSTEMS' APPROACH IN INNOVATIVE TEACHER POLICYMAKING & EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT
AMIDST EMERGING ISSUES: EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS LEARNT IN AFRICA"**

Dec 3, 2021 | 3:00PM-4:30PM East African Time

GPE KIX KNOWLEDGE INNOVATION EXCHANGE
IDRC | CRDI International Development Research Centre
unesco International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa
unicef for every child
African Union

Opening

Mr. Saliou Sall, Senior Program Manager at UNESCO IICBA, opened the break away session, introduced the speakers, and served as moderator throughout. Mr. Sall called on Dr. Yumiko Yokozeki, Director of UNESCO IICBA, to deliver opening remarks.

Dr. Yokozeki welcomed participants to the session and set the tone by encouraging them to explore “African solutions to African issues using African knowledge”.



She then introduced the theme of innovative policymaking: “Today, we will think about how innovation impacts our education systems – how our education systems change when people across the education sector innovate to improve learning outcomes. Studies and promising practices from Africa show that education systems can be resilient in the face of unprecedented challenges like COVID-19,” she continued. “Policymaking itself can and should be an innovative, collaborative, resilient process.”

Dr. Yokozeki also stressed the importance of listening to teachers, a practice which is often neglected as policies are made for teachers, not with or by teachers. “We also need to listen to teachers, the best innovators,” she said emphatically. “Teachers and school leaders innovate every hour of every school day. The strength of our education systems depends on our ability and willingness to do these things: listen to teachers, experiment, reflect, think critically and creatively, and research our own actions.”

Next, Ms. Joy Nafungo, Senior Program Officer at the IDRC, delved deeper into the theme of innovative teacher policymaking. She also emphasized the importance of teachers, saying, “Teachers are the backbone of the education system; teacher effectiveness is the most important indicator of student learning.” Ms. Nafungo laid out three angles of effective teacher development: 1.) quality of systemic support for teacher development; 2.) quality of teaching development and learning materials; and 3.) systems for recruiting teachers and managing the teaching profession. She explained that governments must find ways to attract and retain the best teachers and deploy them where they are most needed in order to improve student learning outcomes and reduce learning poverty. Like Dr. Yokozeki, she also encouraged participants to strategically listen to teachers by involving them in policy dialogues and reform. The overall message of Mr. Nafungo’s speech was that teachers’ effectiveness depends on whether they are supported and prepared by their education systems.



Country Presentations

After the opening remarks, Mr. Sall called on four national representatives to comment on dimensions of innovation in teacher education and policymaking from the vantage point of their countries and organizations.

Kenya

Mr. Gabriel Mathenge, assistant to and representing Commission Secretary Dr. Nancy Macharia of the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) in Kenya, spoke about encouraging and sustaining innovation and experimentation across the educational system through teacher policies and coalitions in the COVID-19 era in his country. Mr. Mathenge described how Kenya responded to the pandemic by

A presentation slide titled "The innovation" with a blue header. The slide contains two bullet points: "The Commission adopted remote learning methodologies and virtual learning as alternative methods of curriculum implementation" and "All teachers on all levels all were encouraged to conduct classes online and use Radio and TV lessons." Below the text are two images: one showing two young girls in a classroom looking at a book, and another showing a group of children sitting on the floor in a classroom. On the right side of the slide is a graphic for "REMOTE LEARNING METHODOLOGIES" with the subtitle "MANUAL FOR TEACHERS" and a logo at the top. The slide has a decorative border at the bottom.

striving to ensure continuity of learning and work for 12 million learners and 330,000 teachers on the payroll of the TSC. The TSC, he explained, prepared 163,938 teachers in remote learning methodologies, and since the pandemic, has been implementing teacher professional development (TPD) programs for teachers to learn how to integrate ICT in various subjects.

Though its responsive teacher training during the pandemic, the TSC learned that TPD should focus on building teacher online communities, providing opportunities for teachers to exchange reflections and experiences, and offering enough novel and rigorous teachers' learning resources. "Accepting and adapting to a new normal is the fast step to getting back to normalcy," concluded Mr. Mathenge. "We call upon Africa to focus more on continuity in learning and equity so all students can access learning."

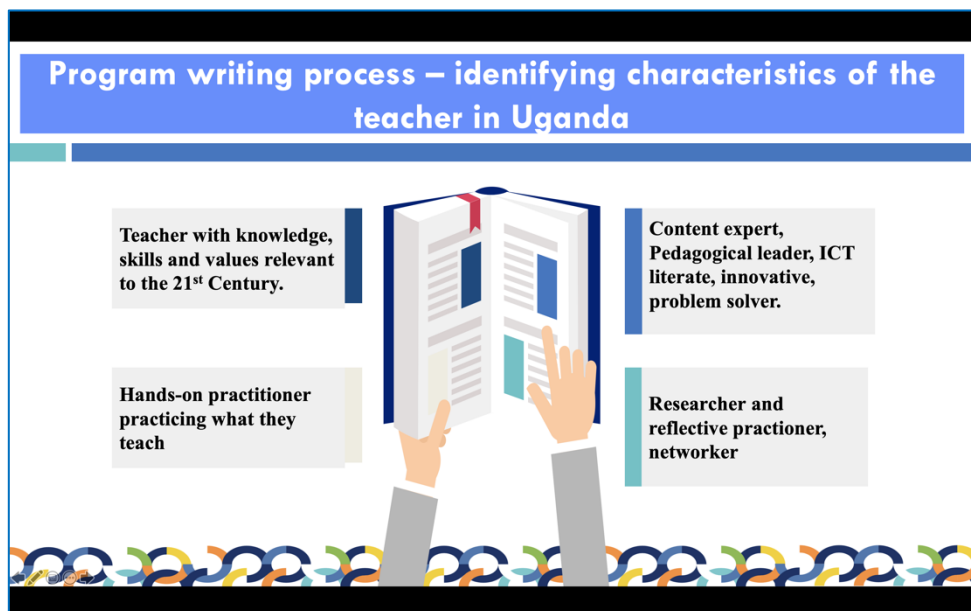
Uganda

Then, Professor Betty Ezati shared Uganda's recent experience of reforming pre-service teacher education. Professor Betty Ezati is the Chairperson of the Task Force of the Establishment of the Uganda National Institute for Teacher Education (UNITE), as well as Dean of the School of Education at Makerere University. In her presentation, Prof. Ezati explained how UNITE has been set up to ensure quality of education by nurturing competent, innovative, effective, and professional teachers as informed by the Teachers Initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa (TISSA) Report of 2014 and Sustainable Development Goal 4. By reforming teacher education and standards, UNITE seeks to raise student learning outcomes.

Crucially, UNITE is changing the nature of the teaching profession through teacher education by "moving away from the teacher knowing it all, and embracing learning-focused competence-based interactive methodologies," said Prof. Ezati. "The teacher should research on his or her practice to continuously improve," she said, redefining the teacher as a reflective and hands-on practitioner practicing what they teach.

The UNITE teacher education program has been recently written by experts and universities are already adopting it. There are high expectations from UNITE, and also some anxiety amongst teachers about whether they will be able to cope with the requirements. Prof. Ezati explained that existing teachers will have up to 10 years to upgrade their qualifications. On this point, she described the balance between earning

the buy-in of current teacher educators from the former certificate and diploma-awarding institutions, and obliging them to improve their pedagogical practices. Stakeholder participation from the start, she said, is key.





Mr. Alpha Bah (right) of the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education in The Gambia explains the importance of quality data for teacher and school development. Also seated are Mr. Saliou Sall, UNESCO IICBA (left) and Prof. Betty Ezati, UNITE Task Force and Makerere University (center).

The Gambia

Next, Mr. Alpha Bah, Head of ICT and Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) at the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education in The Gambia, spoke about ensuring quality and encouraging innovation in education systems through data. Mr. Bah clearly laid out the problem with current data and its inability to drive education reforms in The Gambia. “Since the 1980s, we have been producing data that is too general,” he said. “You cannot have better policies if you don’t have better, more granular data. The process of data collection has always been from the central planning office, at the macro level. But how do you get to the micro level?” Mr. Bah explained that data has been too focused on central inputs like enrollment and access, but has been missing chances to capture data on inclusive education needs and students’ learning outcomes. “The data is not there. The system is not ready,” he said emphatically. “Teacher education development is hampered by data gaps and we can’t see what students need.”

Not only is data itself insufficient in highlighting what works and what does not work, but head teachers and local leaders are also often not using data in reforms. Encouragingly, Mr. Bah gave examples of the government working with school managers at the micro level to put together a plan for the developmental needs of their school, linking EMIS data with minimum standards. They developed a school report card and a community report card to benchmark and track schools’ resources, performance, and efficiency through participatory performance monitoring, classroom observation, and mobile phone-based attendance data. These efforts have led to data appreciation, integration, and utilization.

Linking to the theme of teachers, Mr. Bah concluded that “we need to involve teachers. They give us data; we don’t give them data.” Citing previous presentations at the overall TTF Policy Dialogue, he said, “Yesterday, we heard that you cannot make an innovation and give it to teachers. Similarly, you cannot design your school improvement plan and give it to teachers and expect them to do it.”

Zambia

Lastly, Mr. Alfred Chilala, a Primary School Class Teacher and Zonal In-service Coordinator under the Teacher Education Department at the Ministry of Education in Zambia, spoke. Mr. Chilala described the qualities of his program, Catch Up, situated under the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) initiative by J-PAL and the Pratham Foundation. The need for TaRL arose from the low literacy skill level in Zambia credited to inadequate pre-service teacher education, misaligned and outdated curriculum for the early grades, and poor provision of reading materials. Since November 2016, the Catch Up remedial program has been bringing about a paradigm shift in literacy and numeracy teaching by working with teachers to master four principles: planning, teaching, assessment, and remediation. Teachers are using locally produced learning materials and creative activities like play and peer interaction to assist learners in grasping content, and they are tracking individual learners' progress.

Catch Up's pilot period was considered successful enough to warrant scaling up the program to reach more than 1,800 schools. From January to July 2020 across these schools, the program witnessed an 11% boost in the number of students who can read at least a simple paragraph, and a 13% increase in the number of students who can do subtraction.

As a teacher and teacher trainer in the program, Mr. Chilala was well suited to represent these achievements and shed light on the role of civil society organizations in supporting innovations in teacher education. He explained that Catch Up supplemented the government's efforts by providing services like printing of learning materials; building the capacity of teachers and the coaching skills of mentors; collecting and analyzing data about which schools, zones, or districts needed mentorship the most; and reaching marginalized groups in ways the government could not.

Mr. Chilala concluded by recommending that "governments have clear policy directions on school curricula" and that they help "educators to unlearn certain old teaching habits seen not to be helping learners in achieving specific learning outcomes in order for them to learn new innovations that would be of help to learners."

Question-and-Answer Session

In the ensuing discussion, several participants in the in-person and virtual audience brought up points and raised questions.

Dr. Emmanuel Sibomana from the Wellspring Foundation for Education in Rwanda asked Prof. Ezati, "What kind of support do pre-service teachers get in their programs? In many countries, many programs do not give teachers the practical capacity they need. Does the teaching experience in Uganda prepare teachers?"

Prof. Ezati responded by describing the one-year in-school internship that pre-service teachers embark on, under the mentorship of a professor. Practical application, hands-on learning, and reflection are key to UNITE's teacher education program.

Ms. Michelle Corby from Your Montessori Guide asked Mr. Alfred Chilala, "How are teachers taught to innovate in their teaching?" Mr. Chilala responded by explaining the Catch Up program's mentors' approach towards innovation. Mentors encourage teachers to be innovative, creative, and responsive and go beyond the content and activities in their textbooks.

Conclusion

At the end of the break away session, Mr. Saliou Sall referenced key points in each of the speakers' presentations and called upon Ms. Yvonne Mboya to conclude. Ms. Mboya, representing the KIX Africa 19 Hub as the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Consultant at UNESCO IICBA, briefly closed the break away session by thanking the speakers for sharing their experiences, acknowledging the probing questions from the audience, and encouraging the group to continue engaging in dialogue about the theme of innovation in teacher education and policymaking.

Agenda

Time	Agenda	Facilitator/Presenter
5 minutes	Session Introduction and Introduction of the Speakers	Mr. Saliou Sall, Senior Program Manager, UNESCO IICBA
15 minutes	Welcome and Opening Remarks on the Theme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNESCO IICBA Director, Dr. Yumiko Yokozeki (Virtually) IDRC Representative (Virtually) 	Dr. Yumiko Yokozeki, Director, UNESCO IICBA Joy Nafungo, Senior Program Officer, IDRC
45 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speaker 1: Encouraging and sustaining innovation and experimentation across the educational system through teacher policies and coalitions in the COVID-19 era in Kenya, Dr. Nancy Njeri Macharia, Commission Secretary/Chief Executive Officer, Teachers Service Commission, Kenya Speaker 2: Making the development of teacher policies and pre-service teacher education curricula more innovative, evidence-driven, and inclusive in Uganda, Prof. Betty Ezati, Chairperson of the Task Force of the Establishment of the Uganda National Institute for Teacher Education, and Dean of the School of Education, Makerere University Speaker 3: Ensuring quality in education systems while embracing innovations at scale in The Gambia, Mr. Alpha Bah, Head of EMIS and ICT, Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, The Gambia Speaker 4: The role of civil society organizations and funding agencies in supporting innovation in teacher education and mentorship to accelerate learning in Zambia, Mr. Alfred Chilala, Primary Class Teacher and Zonal In-service Coordinator, Muzoka Primary School, Zambia 	Mr. Saliou Sall, Session Moderator Speaker 1: Dr. Nancy Njeri Macharia Speaker 2: Prof. Betty Ezati Speaker 3: Mr. Alpha Bah Speaker 4: Mr. Alfred Chilala
20 minutes	Question-and-Answer Session	Session Moderator Online Chat Moderator
5 minutes	Session Wrap-up	Ms. Yvonne Mboya, KIX Africa 19 Hub Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Consultant, UNESCO IICBA

For more information on the KIX Africa 19 Hub, please visit [our website](#) housed on UNESCO IICBA's website, and visit [our digital repository](#) to access national and regional policies, research, and resources on assessment, teaching and learning, early childhood education, gender equity and inclusion, and the data challenge in education.