Where Do West African Countries Stand on Professional Standards and Competencies for Teachers and School Leaders?

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**Where Do West African Countries Stand on Professional Standards
and Competencies for Teachers and School Leaders?**

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Abstract:

This paper investigates the state of professional standards and competencies for teachers and school leaders in West Africa. It was conducted against the backdrop of guidance from international best practice, including instruments developed by UNESCO, Education International, and the African Union Commission. Apart from an introduction on the need for professional standards and competencies for teachers and school leaders, the core of the paper is structured into three sections devoted respectively to: (1) frameworks of professional standards and competencies and their implementation; (2) teacher education, both pre-service and in-service; and (3) the working conditions of teachers and school leaders. The analysis relies on a mixed quantitative and qualitative approach and data. The paper was presented in May 2023 at a training session organized by UNESCO's International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa at the 10th international conference of the African Federation of Teaching Regulatory Agencies.

Keywords: Teachers, School leaders, Professional standards, Competencies, West Africa.

Introduction

Sub-Saharan Africa is facing a deep learning crisis (World Bank et al., 2022; see also Bashir et al., 2018 on Africa). Up to nine in ten children may be learning poor, i.e., not able to read and understand a simple text by age 10. Estimates are based on (i) the share of children aged 10 who are out of school, with all those children considered as learning poor; (ii) the share of children who are in school but still not able to read and understand a simple text (those children are considered "learning deprived"); and (iii) the overall share of children who are learning poor[2]. Among the countries for which estimates are available, learning poverty affects from 56 percent of children in Benin to 95 percent in Mauritania. Four of the eleven West African countries for which data are available have learning poverty rates at or above 90 percent, with also systematically high rates of learning deprivation among children in school.

Improving learning is key for increasing human capital and countries' development prospects. A country's assets base is what enables its population to be productive. This assets base includes natural capital, produced capital, and human capital, itself defined as the present value of the future earnings of the labor force. In sub-Saharan Africa as a whole, estimates from the World Bank (2021; see also Lange et al., 2018) suggest that 60 percent of the countries' wealth consists of human capital. This shows the importance of investing in people for the future development of countries. To increase human capital wealth, and thereby create conditions for gains in standards of living, improving educational opportunities and learning in school is a priority. This requires a focus on professional standards and competencies for teachers and school leaders since while many factors may contribute to high levels of learning poverty, one the most important is the fact that the quality of teachers and school leaders remains too low[3].

Better teachers and school leaders are needed to improve learning, but West African countries face major challenges. School enrolment is rapidly rising in part due to population growth, leading to a shortage of (qualified) teachers. In some countries, more than a third of current teachers are considered 'untrained and unqualified' based on their education. Pupil-teacher ratios are often high, with pupil-qualified teacher ratios being even higher. There is also a persistent gender gap in the teaching force across countries. While research suggests that female teachers and school leaders are associated with better learning outcomes, only a small share of teachers and an even smaller share of school principals are women, especially at the secondary level (women account for most teachers at the pre-primary level).

Improving learning requires better teaching, but while progress has been made towards establishing professional standards and competencies for teachers and school leaders, much remains to be done. This paper provides a comparative analysis of professional standards and competencies across ECOWAS countries, plus additional analysis related to teacher education and working conditions for teachers. The analysis relies on a mixed quantitative and qualitative approach that includes results from nationally representative household surveys as well as a survey implemented among key informants from Ministries of Education and Teacher Service Commissions in West Africa. Apart from a brief introductory review section on the need for professional standards and competencies for teachers and school leaders, and a section on data sources, the paper is structured into three sections devoted respectively to: (1) national frameworks of professional standards and competencies and its implementation; (2) teacher education, both pre-service and in-service; and (3) the working conditions of teachers and school leaders.

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[2] Formally, among children who are in school, define LD (learning deprivation) as the share of students not proficient in reading. Define OOS as the share of children out of school who are all assumed to be learning deprives. Learning poverty is defined as LP = OOS+[(1−OOS)×LD].

[3] Another issue is that of teacher shortages in part because the teaching profession may not be sufficiently attractive (on shortages, see International Teacher Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, 2021, 2021).

Background: Teaching as a Profession

Professionalizing teachers and school leaders through a competencies-based standards is a necessity. *"Teacher professionalism is not negotiable. Just as we would never want unqualified surgeons operating on our children, we do not want our young people to be taught by unqualified teachers"* (UNESCO and Education International, 2019). This statement in the Global Framework of Professional Teaching Standards points to the importance of professional standards and competencies for teachers and school leaders. In too many low-income countries, teaching remains seen as an activity open to "all-comers", without candidates for the profession necessarily having the competencies required (African Union Commission, 2017; Nwokeocha, 2018; UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018). There is an urgent need to adopt standards and provide the training that teachers need to become more effective.

The tenets of professionalism include standards and ethics, quality pre-service and ongoing professional development, and career paths (Artur, 2018; Association of Accredited Public Policy Advocates to the European Union, 2022; Nwokeocha, 2017)[4]. The need to professionalize teaching is now well recognized. Some 57 years ago, Scotland, UK (1965) became the first jurisdiction to enact a law to legalize teaching as a profession, making it a crime for an individual to practice without registration and licensing. It also incorporated teacher professional ethics and standards in the law and created the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) as a professional regulatory body. A year later, UNESCO and ILO (1966) came up with *Recommendations concerning the status of teachers* which were followed later by *Recommendations concerning the status of higher education teaching personnel* (1997) as standards-setting instruments. The 1960s witnessed a renaissance in the professionalization of teaching.

More countries have started to adopt professional standards and competencies for teachers and school leaders, including a few in Africa. The Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) Decree (Nigeria, 1993) is one of the first laws to legalize teaching. TRCN was created to determine who should be a teacher, set standards for teaching, and raise those standards from time to time as circumstances permit (Section 1[1]a-c). The law mandated TRCN to register and license qualified teachers, accredit teacher education programs, regulate ongoing professional development, and prosecute any breach of professional standards. Other African countries have enacted similar laws and created a professional regulatory body for teaching with the mandate to develop and implement standards and competencies for teachers. Apart from TRCN in Nigeria, these regulatory bodies include the Council for Educators (South Africa, 2000), the Teaching Service Commission (Kenya, 2012), the National Teaching Council (Ghana, 2008), the Teaching Professionals Council (Botswana, 2019), and many others.

The idea to professionalize teaching was at the core of the creation in 2017 of the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 which commissioned research on "Teaching: A Profession," a phrase used as the theme of the 10th Annual Policy Dialogue Forum (International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 & International Forum of Teaching Regulatory Authorities, 2017; International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, 2017a). The research, conducted on behalf of the Task Force by the International Forum of Teaching Regulatory Authorities (IFTRA), the world body of the national authorities that regulate teaching, investigated "the state of the professionalization of teaching across the regions of the world." The Outcome Statement of the Policy Dialogue Forum (International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, 2017b) brought professional teaching standards to the fore. It declared that *"at its core, professional teaching standards should define the knowledge, skills, and competencies required for effective teaching."* The standards and competencies are the set of knowledge, skills, values,

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[4] As defined by the Australian Council of Professions (2003), a profession is *"a disciplined group of individuals who adhere to ethical standards and who hold themselves out as, and are accepted by the public as possessing special knowledge and skills in a widely recognized body of learning derived from research, education and training at a high level, and who are prepared to apply this knowledge and exercise these skills in the interest of others."*

attitudes, and orientations that a teacher must have to be seen as qualified and fit to teach (Nwokeocha, 2017; Southern African Development Community, 2018). The Outcome Statement also emphasized the governance of the profession, stating that *"governments need to legislate for a dedicated professional body to have the legal power to regulate and exercise professional leadership for teachers, such as a teaching council"* (International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, 2017b).

In Africa, existing national teaching standards and competencies published in a few countries are a foundation to build upon[5]. At the level of the Economic Communities, the *Professional Standards for Basic Education Teachers in West and Central Africa* are noteworthy. They were developed by the UNESCO Regional Office for Dakar (2016) in partnership with UNESCO Abuja Office, UNESCO IICBA, International Task Force on Teachers for EFA, CONFEMEN and other partner agencies. Another reference is the *Regional Framework for Teacher Professional Standards and Competencies* by the UNESCO Regional Office for Southern Africa with the Southern African Development Community (SADC, 2018). A year later, UNESCO and Education International (2019) released a *Global Framework of Professional Teaching Standards* and UNESCO and the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (2019) developed the *International Guidance Framework for Professional Teaching Standards*.

A critical point is that teachers must be at the center of the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of professional standards. Teacher unions must be given the latitude to work with the government and other education stakeholders in this process to ensure teacher well-being. As stated in the 2019 report by UNESCO and Education International, *"teaching practice must be evidence based and student focused. Teachers must have access to continuous professional learning and development throughout their careers… Improving teacher salaries and working conditions is absolutely essential, but the status of teachers is not just about pay and conditions. It is also about empowering and supporting teachers to stand at the center of what they do – the teaching and learning process"* (UNESCO and Education International, 2019). The report warns against 'de-professionalization' and calls for *"an end to the "precarious status of teachers," and recommended that the teacher unions and government should use the framework of standards and competencies to "strengthen their national teaching standards and teaching and learning practices in order to ensure equitable, inclusive, free, quality education for all."*

As for school leadership, it is critical and requires preparation, standards, and competencies. It used to be that teachers assumed leadership roles without adequate preparation as there were no clearly stated standards for school leaders[6]. Yet school leadership also requires training. As noted in OECD (2008), while management may mean 'doing things right,' leadership implies 'doing the right thing.' Leadership is unique and refers to the capacity of individuals or groups to exert influence on others, thereby shaping their attitudes, motivations, and behaviors. School leadership is the art and capacity to positively influence others – including students, teachers, and other personnel and stakeholders, to accomplish exceptional goals for the school and education system. This art and capacity have hitherto been compromised when school leaders are appointed based merely on the length of years spent as a teacher, political, or other interests. As noted by the Wallace Foundation (2013) recalls that school leadership used to be *"noticeably absent from most major school reform agendas."* According to the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, NSW Department of Education (2020), *"high-performing school systems proactively identify candidates and place them on a leadership development track"*. The Centre argues that principals make the second biggest impact on student outcomes, after the quality of teaching in the classroom.

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[5] Some of the most prominent standards are those for Nigeria, Namibia, Ethiopia, and South Africa (Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria, 2010; Namibia Qualifications Authority, 2012; Ministry of Education, Ethiopia, 2013; and South African Council for Educators, 2017).

[6] See for example Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Limited (2015); Asia Society Partnership for Global Learning (2012); Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, NSW Department of Education (2020); Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2008, 2011); and Wallace Foundation (2013).

Building on this body of work, the African Union Commission (2019a) developed the *African Continental Framework of Standards and Competencies for the Teaching Profession*, introducing additional features not in the global frameworks. This includes standards for school leadership, provisions for the career path for teachers and school leaders, and modalities for implementation and other critical matters. The Africa Union Commission supported the professional standards and competencies by developing two other continental frameworks that same year: the *African Continental Teacher Qualification Framework* and the *African Continental Guidelines for the Teaching Profession* (African Union Commission, 2019b, 2019c). The *African Continental Guidelines for the Teaching Profession* encourage the professionalization of teaching, calling on countries to adopt legislation making teaching a profession, create a professional regulatory agency, and develop national teaching standards in line with continental standards as well as institutionalize other recommendations to give teaching a strong foundation as a profession. The *African Continental Teacher Qualification Framework* deals with issues around pre-service teacher education; teacher education curricular frameworks; teacher education accreditation; induction, internship, professional registration, and licensing of teachers; and continuous professional development, as well as progress across the career path for both teachers and school leaders. The African Union Commission (2021) further issued a Note Verbale to member states requesting governments to implement the African frameworks, which it collectively called the *Teacher Professional Guidelines*.

The guidelines explain in some details what is expected of teachers. For example, they stipulate that a bachelor's degree or another degree with a Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) is as a minimum qualification. They outline exit competencies of any initial (pre-service) teacher education. Other provisions include curricular frameworks and quality indicators for pre-service training and requirements and processes for the professional accreditation of teacher education programs. The Teacher Qualification Framework also prescribes induction and mentoring for newly qualified teachers; continuous professional development and credits required to move from one career stage to another; teacher competency assessments and other requirements for teachers. They introduce a Diploma in School Leadership and Management as a prerequisite for entering the leadership track. For stages of the career path of school leadership, they also provide a framework for induction and mentoring; continuous professional development and credits; competency assessment; and other aspects of the career.

Standards and competencies provide a framework for accountability, for teachers and school leaders but also for the education system. A successful accumulation of professional development credits should result in rewards not only in terms of rising through the career path, but in terms of monetary and non-monetary incentives. When teachers know that their efforts will count and be rewarded, they are more likely to work harder to unleash their potential. This model is in contrast with a setting where standards and competencies are neither clearly stated nor endorsed. The pre-standard regime treated teachers as a homogenous group. What led to career progression was the mere number of years spent on the job. This is not the case anymore under a standards approach. Promoting professional standards and competencies for teachers and school leaders can transform an education system.

Professional standards and competencies relate closely not only to pre-service and in-service teacher education, but also to the working conditions of teachers. Whether a country's teachers and school leaders achieve expected standards and competencies depends in part on that attractiveness of the profession, and thereby on teachers' working conditions. Said differently, like a coin, teaching standards and competencies have (at least) two sides, which are teacher education and working conditions. Teacher education comprises pre-service education and continuous professional development. An individual cannot give what s/he does not have, hence a teacher cannot achieve standards and competencies that have not been nurtured. Similarly, no matter the standards and competencies that a teacher comes with, working condition affect how much of those the teacher can impart upon learners and the school system. These working conditions affect teacher motivation, but they

also matter for the health and safety of the teacher. When the safety of teachers is threatened by insecurity, natural disasters, conflicts, and other emergencies, they cannot offer their best.

Objectives and Data

This paper assesses the current state of professional standards and competencies for teachers and school leaders in West Africa, relying in part on the African frameworks as benchmarks. As mentioned earlier, the paper considers (1) national frameworks for teaching standards and competencies; (2) pre-service and in-service teacher education; and (3) the working conditions of teachers. The paper is adapted from a larger study (Nwokeocha et al., 2023) on teachers and school leaders (i.e., head teachers and principals) and is part of a broader work program at UNESCO's International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA) funded by a Shanghai Trust-in-Fund project. The work was undertaken within the context of Target 4.A under the Sustainable Development Goals (increase the supply of qualified teachers in developing countries) and the African Union's *Continental Education Strategy for Africa* (CESA 2016-25) and *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*. More detailed work was also conducted for two county studies for Sierra Leone and The Gambia, but that work is not discussed as part of this paper.

The first area of focus for the analysis is the national frameworks of professional standards and competencies for teachers and school leaders. Questions considered include: Which laws and key policies support the standards and competencies adopted in various countries?; What are the institutional frameworks for the regulation of the standards and competencies?; What are the content and structure of the standards and competencies?; What is the level of implementation of the standards and competencies?; How are the standards and competencies aligned to the UNESCO and Education International (2019) and African Union Commission (2019a, 2019b) frameworks of professional standards?; and How is the regulation of the teaching profession aligned with the African Union Commission (2019c) *Continental Guidelines on the Teaching Profession*?

The second area of focus is teacher education. Questions considered include: What are the critical pre-service teacher issues?; What is the type/profile of the teaching qualifications required?; What are entry requirements, duration, and curricular framework for teacher qualifications?; What is the system of accreditation of teacher education programs and other quality assurance best practices?; Is there a national framework for continuous professional development (CPD) and what is the quantity, quality, and regularity of in-service training being provided?; Does CPD counts for teacher advancement?; Are teachers being mentored, especially after the initial induction?; Is there a mandatory course for School Leadership and Management?; What are some of the teacher quality issues encountered in the school system; and How is teacher education aligned with the provisions of the African Union Commission (2019b) *Continental Teacher Qualification Framework* and other frameworks based on best practices*?*

The third area of focus is the working conditions of the teachers and school leaders. Questions considered include: What are some of the key issues as expressed by teachers and school leaders that affect their working conditions?; What are the levels of wages for teachers and do they benefit from various benefits?; How do teachers compare to other groups in terms of their standards of well-being?; and how are policies and practices aligned with the *Recommendations on the Training, Working and Living Conditions* of *Teachers* (African Union Commission, 2017) and *Teacher Support and Motivation Framewor*k" and other guides? (UNESCO IICBA, 2017).

The paper relies on a blend of qualitative and quantitative approaches. Apart from a brief literature review, the analysis is based on a wide range of data including Nationally representative surveys available for multiple West African countries: The surveys (*Enquêtes harmonisées sur les Conditions de Vie des Ménages or EHCVM*) are comparable across countries and used to assess the standards of living of teachers and their education level, as well as other characteristics. These household surveys were implemented in 10 countries by the World Bank as part of a collaboration with the West African Economic

and Monetary Union. Another key source of data was an online survey on policies and practices for West African countries. Data on policies related to professional standards and competencies were collected for West African countries using an online survey. Questionnaires were sent to senior officials from Ministries of Education and Teacher Service Commissions (in the countries with such Commissions). In countries with no national commission or similar agency, two different Departments (whose functions pertain to teacher education and regulation) from the same Ministry were asked to complete the survey, so that the two responses per country could be checked for consistency. In total, twelve officials completed the survey yielding data for eight countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and The Gambia). Key informants interviews were also conducted first in Sierra Leone and The Gambia, and subsequently at the sub-regional levels with participation from Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, and Nigeria, as well as the Acting Head of Education at the ECOWAS Directorate of Education, Science and Culture for information on ECOWAS' work in the areas of focus of the paper.

Professional Standards and Competencies

The regional analysis of professional standards and competencies is based in large part on key informant interviews and the online survey filled by senior officials of Ministries of Education and Teacher Service Commissions. At the time of writing, officials from eight of 15 ECOWAS countries had responded to the online questionnaire. In four countries, responses were obtained from both the Ministry of Education and the Teacher Service Commission or its equivalent, yielding 12 observations (eight countries with two observations for four countries). The analysis is conducted for all 12 observations, even though this gives a higher weight to countries with two observations. For some Tables, the analysis is however conducted at the country level. While illustrative, results should be considered as preliminary. They may change as analysis is being extended to a larger set of countries based on responses to the online survey.

Most education officials in West Africa are not familiar with the UNESCO/Education International and African Union frameworks on professional standards and competencies. Officials were asked about their level of familiarity with the UNESCO/Education International and African Union Commission (AUC) frameworks. As shown in Figure 1, most officials were not familiar with these frameworks, but Sierra Leone and Nigeria were exceptions as officials from the Ministries and the Teacher Service Commissions stated that they were either familiar or very familiar with the frameworks[7]. Officials were also asked whether they had read key documents listed in Table 1. Again, while most officials had not read those documents, officials from Sierra Leone indicated that they had read quite a few of them.

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[7] Outside of Nigeria and Sierra Leone, knowledge of the international frameworks and related documents was limited. For instance, the interviewee from Burkina Faso responded that "*due to the poor dissemination of the provisions at the national level, the international frameworks are unknown in the country.*" The interviewee from Benin stated: "*I don't know the mentioned documents, here in Benin we just have some rules created by the government in order to regulate the sector.*" The interviewee from Côte d'Ivoire stated that he "*only had contact and/or knowledge of the existence of the international frameworks in the course of the invitation to participate in the interview.*" Similar views were expressed by the interviewee from Liberia.

Figure 1: Familiarity with International Frameworks, West Africa (Online Survey)
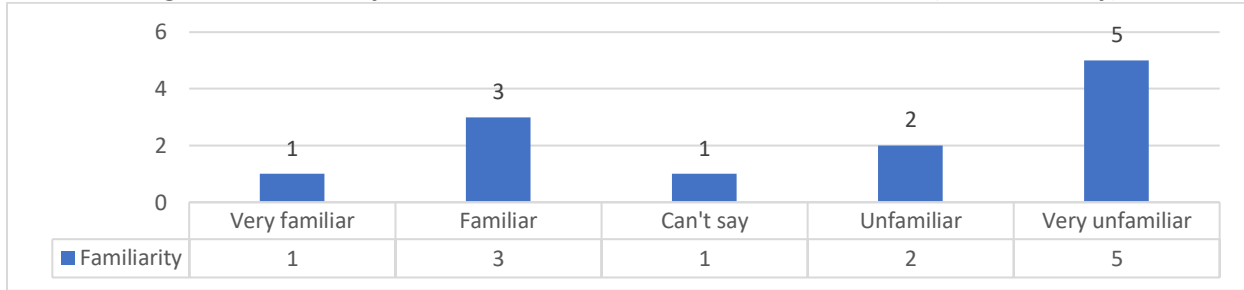
	Very familiar	Familiar	Can't say	Unfamiliar	Very unfamiliar
■ Familiarity	1	3	1	2	5

Source: Authors' estimation with West Africa online survey (survey still on going – preliminary results).

Table 1: Respondents Who Read the Documents Listed, West Africa (Online Survey)

Framework	Yes	No
UNESCO & EI (2019) - Framework of Professional Standards and Competencies	4	8
AUC (2019) - Framework of Professional Standards and Competencies	3	9
AUC (2019) - Continental Teacher Qualification Framework	5	7
AUC (2019) - Continental Guidelines on the Teaching Profession	2	10
AUC (2017) - Study on Teacher Training, Working, and Living Conditions in Member States	3	9
UNESCO IICBA (2017) - Teacher Support and Motivation Framework for Africa: Emerging Patterns	3	9

Source: Authors' estimation with West Africa online survey (survey still on going – preliminary results).

Countries are at different stages of the development of standards for teachers and school leaders. When asked if they believed that teaching is a profession, all officials responded in the affirmative. Similarly, when asked if their country had laws and policies to empower the professionalization of teaching, all but one official again responded in the affirmative. At the same time, countries art at different stages of the development of standards for teachers and school leaders. This is shown in Table 2. For teachers, five countries have completed their standards, while for school leaders, only three countries have. In terms of dissemination of the standards, countries that have completed their standards typically have posted them on the web, but they have not distributed the standards to schools, or to individual teachers and school leaders. Nigeria is the exception as officials have distributed copies to schools and teachers/school leaders[8]. the country is a bit of an outlier in that the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) issued in 2022 its globally renowned ISO Certification to the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria[9].

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[8] Nigeria is an exception for the use and dissemination of frameworks aligned with the African Union Frameworks. In other countries, locally drawn professional standards are used to regulate the teaching profession. The interviewee from Côte d'Ivoire asserted that "*the National professional standards are also used for qualification, for employment of new staff, as well as for the appointment of school leaders…*". The interviewee from Burkina Faso stated that "*in Burkina Faso, there are norms, which candidates for teaching in a primary and secondary levels must respect in order to be employed by the Ministry.*" The representative of Benin indicated that the country has *"some rules approved and adopted by the Ministry to recruit teachers into public sector as a teacher*". Liberia has adopted a National Teacher Training Management Policy and National Teacher Professional Performance Standards.

[9] The Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria stands out as the first teaching regulatory authority in Africa to be certified by the ISO with reference to the regulation of teaching. This explains also why Nigerian teachers licensed by the Council are receiving prompt registration and licensing abroad to teach overseas.

Table 2: Stage of Development of Professional Standards by Country, West Africa (Online Survey)

Stage of development	Not started	Preliminary (first draft)	Advanced (final draft)	Completed (published)
Professional standards for teachers	-	The Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire	Benin	Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, Liberia
Professional standards for school leaders	Benin, Senegal	Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire	-	Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia

Source: Authors' estimation with West Africa online survey (survey still on going – preliminary results).
Note: No response for teaching standards was provided by Senegal.

While standards have been (or are being) developed for teachers and school leaders, they do not always align with recommendations from international frameworks. The African Union Commission framework of standards and competencies has five domains for teachers, and seven domains for school leaders. As shown in Figure 2, most respondents (9 out of 12) note that their country has included the domains "Professional knowledge and understanding" and "Professional skills and practices" in their standards for teachers. But only half of the respondents indicate alignment with respect to "Professional values" and "Professional leadership", and few (2 out of 12) have included "Partnerships" (many respondents also indicate that their standards include domains not listed in the African Union framework). On school leadership, there is good alignment for two domains – "Leading professional knowledge, practice and conduct" and "Managing resources of the school," and less alignment in other areas. For both teachers and school leaders, Nigeria and Sierra Leone are the two countries in alignment with the African Union[10]. Of note, except for Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Burkina Faso, the other countries do not participate actively in African and global federations of teaching agencies, reducing their exposure to good practices.

Figure 2: Alignment of Domains for Standards with the African Union Frameworks, West Africa (Online Survey)

(a) Teachers (out of 12 responses)

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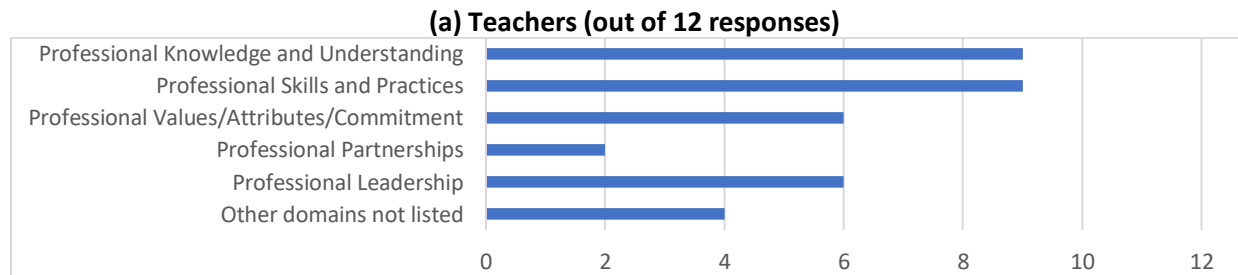
[10] On the domains for standards and competencies, interviewees from Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire stated that "*there is no clarified content*", there are "*only the basic requirements to become a teacher, such as vocational and professional training - initial and in some cases continuing training*". The recruitment to teach simply depends on the performance at teacher training institutions. The interviewee from Benin stated that standards and competencies are governed by National Council norms and policies of Ministry of education to regulate the teaching profession. The interviewee from Liberia pointed to again to the "*National Teacher Training Management Policy*" published in 2022 and the "*National Teacher Professional Performance Standards for Liberia*" being developed.

(b) School Leaders (out of 12 responses)

Source: Authors' estimation with West Africa online survey (survey still on going – preliminary results).

There are also differences between country approaches to career stages versus the recommendations of the African Union. The African Union frameworks have four career stages for both teachers and school leaders. Table 3 indicates the number of career stages at the county level. In many countries, the small number of career stages may be indicative of a lack of career path, acknowledging however that career stages do not refer to the public salary structures in the civil service. Rather, they are professional levels of proficiency to be attained by teachers and school leaders based on their professional growth and development. The qualities associated with different stages must be demonstrated by teachers and school leaders, and examined and certified by the competent authority, whether this is a teaching regulatory authority or the Ministry of education for countries without teaching regulatory authorities. Nigeria and Sierra Leone are again the countries aligned with the African Union framework.

Table 3: Number of Career Stages for Teachers and School Leaders, West Africa (Online Survey)
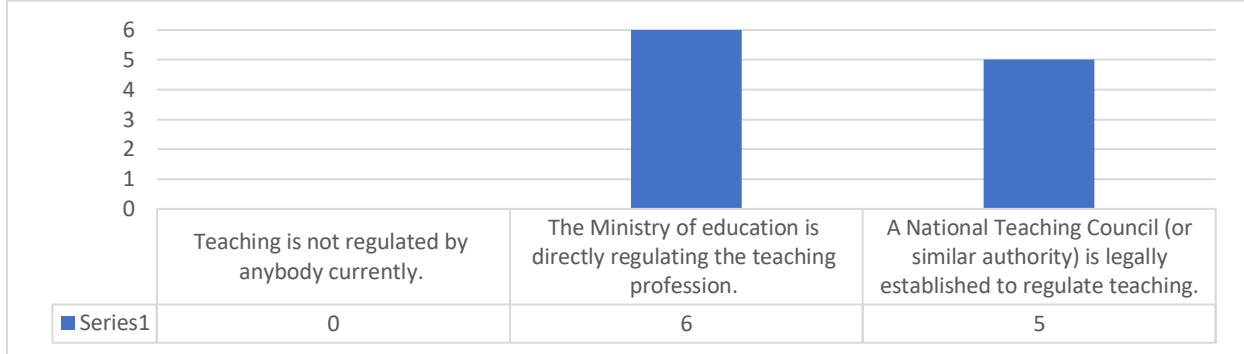
Career stages	Teachers	School Leaders
0	Senegal, The Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire	Senegal, The Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin
1	-	-
2	Burkina Faso	Burkina Faso
3	Liberia, Benin	Liberia
4	Nigeria, Sierra Leone	Nigeria, Sierra Leone

Source: Authors' estimation with West Africa online survey (survey still on going – preliminary results).

Another question in the survey pertains to regulatory frameworks for teachers, with Ministries of Education performing this function in half of the countries, and Commissions in the other half. Figure 3 shows that in half of the countries, Ministries of Education serve as regulator, while in the other half specialized commissions do so (for Senegal no answer was provided). However, only Nigeria and Sierra Leone have a teaching regulatory authority clearly established by law and functioning as an independent professional regulatory authority. Respondents were also asked if they have registration, licensing, and licensing examinations for teachers and school leaders. In about half of the responses, teachers were said to be registered and licensed, but licensing examinations are observed for only one in four respondents[11].

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[11] Only Nigeria has a National Teaching Council (the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria). Liberia intends to establish a Bureau of Teacher Education that will exercise the powers of a National Teaching Council. The representatives of Burkina Faso and Benin made references to their *"national teachers' councils"* responsible for overseeing the teaching profession under the direction of the Ministry of Education, but these Councils are not established by law to function independently as regulatory agencies for the teaching profession. The representative of Côte d'Ivoire was clear in stating that there is no National Teaching Council in the country, although there is

Figure 3: Type of Body Regulating the Teaching Profession, West Africa (Online Survey)

	Teaching is not regulated by anybody currently.	The Ministry of education is directly regulating the teaching profession.	A National Teaching Council (or similar authority) is legally established to regulate teaching.
Series1	0	6	5

Source: Authors' estimation with West Africa online survey (survey still on going – preliminary results).

Figure 4: Teacher Registration, Licensing, and Competency Examination, West Africa (Online Survey)
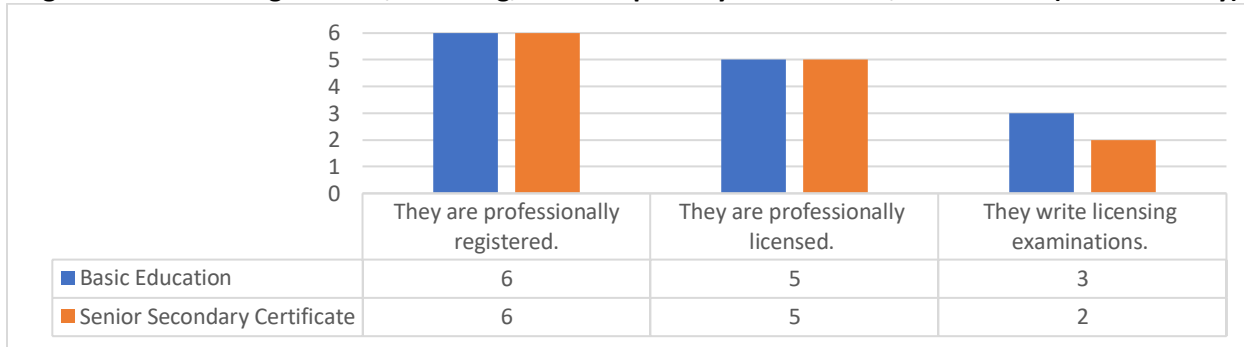
	They are professionally registered.	They are professionally licensed.	They write licensing examinations.
Basic Education	6	5	3
Senior Secondary Certificate	6	5	2

Source: Authors' estimation with West Africa online survey (survey still on going – preliminary results).

Teacher Education

The second objective of this paper is to assess teacher education in West Africa. Teacher education, both pre-service and in-service, is the foundation of teacher quality. Teacher education matters for teaching standards and competencies – they are like two sides of the same coin. Accordingly, this section reports the situation of teacher education in the country, considering first pre-service education, then continuous PD. Pre-service education is the first course of preparation for teachers. Factors affecting the quality of pre-service education are complex (e.g., Chalmers, 2008; Sanyal 2013; Nwokeocha, 2018). For example, Chalmers (2008) lists five dimensions – assessment, engagement and learning community, diversity of teachers and students, and institutional climate, and systems that may affect the quality of the training received. He also pays attention to the quality of relationships at various levels such as an institution, its faculty, departments and programs, and teachers or individuals. Sanyal (2013) notes similarly that the quality of training may be affected by a learner's characteristics as well as by various inputs, contexts, and outcomes.

Quality assurance is indispensable in teacher training. A useful framework for quality assurance with a focus on pre-service training was designed by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council & Commonwealth of Learning (2007a, 2017b, 2017c). This framework provides five key dimensions, 25

Pedagogical Council in charge of reporting to the Ministry issues affecting the teaching profession in the country. He further stated that school heads/leaders oversee reporting of issues or difficulties faced in their area.

aspects of quality, and 75 indicators to benchmark a teacher training program. The key dimensions are curriculum design and planning, curriculum transaction and evaluation, research development and extension, infrastructure and learning resources, and student support and progression. In a similar vein, African Union and European Commission (2018a) developed the *African Quality Rating Mechanism* (AQRM) and *African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education* (ASG-QA). Also relevant is the Harmonization of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation (HAQAA) Initiative (African Union and European Commission, 2018b). The idea is to assess higher education programs against AQRM and ASG-QA standards and criteria. The criteria of the AQRM are governance and management; infrastructure; finances; teaching and learning; research, publication and innovation; and societal engagement. As to the ASG-QA, it provides criteria for internal and external quality assurance.

Pass rates in basic and secondary education remain low in most West African countries probably in part due to low educational qualifications among teachers. Questions were asked in the online survey for officials from Ministries and Teacher Service Commission about pass rates for students taking the Basic Education Certification Examination (BECE) and the Senior Secondary Certification Examination (SSCE). The estimates are provided in Figure 5 (recalling that the total number of observations across countries is 12, as mentioned previously). Many countries have low pass rates, especially for secondary school certification examinations. Given that many children drop out of school before taking these examinations, educational achievement and as a result attainment in the sub-region remain among the lowest in the world, in part because of low educational qualifications among teachers.

Figure 5: Pass Rates in Basic Education and Senior Secondary Certification Examinations among the Sub-set of Students Taking the Examinations, West Africa (Online Survey)
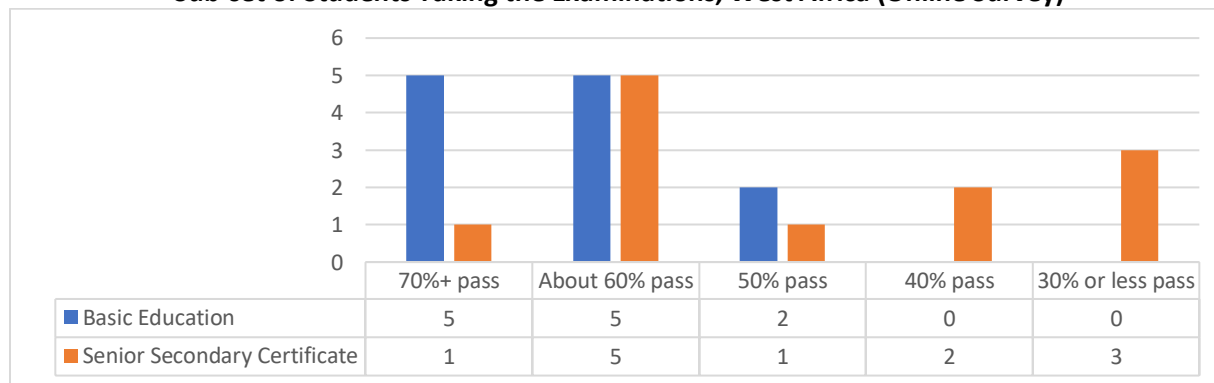
	70%+ pass	About 60% pass	50% pass	40% pass	30% or less pass
Basic Education	5	5	2	0	0
Senior Secondary Certificate	1	5	1	2	3

Source: Authors' estimation with West Africa online survey (survey still on going – preliminary results).

Teacher training is key to improve learning, but most countries face challenges in achieving quality pre-service education, including in terms of the minimum requirements for teaching. As shown in Table 4, norms suggest that one or two years of training are sufficient in most countries, with three years required in Nigeria (one respondent mentioned four years as minimum qualification but this could not be validated). In practice too, teachers often have only one or two years of pre-service training. As to the number of credits at ordinary level (completion of senior secondary school) required for admission into teacher education programs, four countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Benin, and Burkina Faso) admit candidates without such credits. Sierra Leone requires three credits, The Gambia four, and Nigeria five. This suggest that teacher quality is likely low. Respondents were also asked to rate the quality of candidates with Teachers' Certificates or Higher Teachers' Certificates or equivalent, which are mostly one, two, or three-year programs. On a scale of 1 to 5, respondents rated the quality as 3.3 on average, which is low. Similarly, respondents rated the quality of graduate teachers (with B.Ed. or bachelor's with Post Graduate Diploma in Education) at 3.3 on average, confirming challenges with teacher quality.

Table 4: Norms and Practice for Teaching Qualifications by Country, West Africa (Online Survey)

Teacher Education Programme	Norms	Practice
One-year teacher education	Senegal, Liberia	Senegal
Two-year teacher education	Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Benin	Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin
Three-year teacher education	Nigeria	Nigeria, Liberia
Four-year teacher education	-	-

Source: Authors' estimation with West Africa online survey (survey still on going – preliminary results).
Note: the categories are: One-year teacher education program; Two-year teacher education program (Teachers' Certificate/Diploma); Three-year teacher education program (Higher Teachers' Certificate/Higher National Diploma/Certificate in Education); and Four-year teacher education program (degree or equivalent).

While countries have quality assurance mechanisms in higher education for pre-service teacher education, many have a large share of unqualified teachers. Asked about the existence of a quality assurance agency for higher education, all respondents answered in the affirmative. Asked whether teacher education in the country is accredited by the Higher Education Authority, again all but one respondent responded in the affirmative. As to gaps in qualified teachers, Table 5 provides data for a few indicators, including the share of teachers on the government payroll, the share of unqualified teachers and the pupil-teacher ratio as well as the pupil-qualified teacher ratio. Several countries have a relatively high share of unqualified teachers, and in part as a result a relatively high pupil-qualified teacher ratio.

Table 5: Teachers on Government Payroll, Unqualified Teachers, and Pupil-Teacher Ratios, West Africa (Online Surveys)

Public payroll	1-20%	21-40%	41-60%	61-80%	81%+
% teachers on public payroll			Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire	Benin	Senegal Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Liberia
Unqualified	**1-10%**	**11-20%**	**21-30%**	**31-40%**	**41%+**
% unqualified teachers in basic education	Burkina Faso The Gambia	Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia	Nigeria, Benin	Sierra Leone	-
% unqualified teachers in senior secondary	Burkina Faso, The Gambia	Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia	Senegal, Nigeria	Benin	-
PTR and PTQR	**1-20**	**21-40**	**41-60**	**61-80**	**81+**
Pupil-teacher ratio	Liberia	Nigeria, The Gambia	Senegal, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Benin		
Pupil-qualified teacher ratio	Liberia	The Gambia	Senegal, Nigeria Burkina Faso. Sierra Leone	Côte d'Ivoire, Benin	

Source: Authors' estimation with West Africa online survey (survey still on going – preliminary results).

Data from household surveys also suggest that many teachers have low levels of educational qualifications. Table 6 provides data from the 2018-19 Harmonized Survey on Household Living Conditions, a household survey implemented in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali and Niger, Senegal, Chad, and Togo (data are also available for Guinea but not used due to an issue with

household weights). Information is presented for teachers in the public sector and those in the private sector (Male and Wodon, 2023). At the secondary level, in public schools 75.7 percent of teachers have a higher level of education, but the proportion is only 32.8 percent at primary level. The differences between public and private schools are generally small. Other statistics included refer to location: 33.2 percent of teachers in public schools live in rural areas, compared to 25.6 percent for the private sector which is slightly more concentrated in urban areas. The share of teachers in rural areas is lower for secondary schools than for primary schools, and hence internet access is higher for secondary than primary teachers. At the primary level, access is low, which can pose problems for distance or hybrid teacher training initiatives, as well as the ability of teachers to benefit from digital resources.

Table 6 also shows that in public schools, women represent 38.3 percent of teachers in primary schools, but only 13.7 percent in secondary schools. The proportions are slightly higher in the private sector. Research suggests that students with a woman as teacher or head of school perform better academically. Thus, increasing the proportion of women teachers could help improve learning. More female secondary school teachers could also serve as role models for young girls and encourage their schooling, which would help combat child marriage and early pregnancies. For family status, most teachers are married and heads of household, although with slightly lower proportions (especially for marriage) in private schools. This could be partly because teachers in the private sector are slightly younger. The average age of teachers is 38.8 years in public schools and 35.6 years in private schools.

Table 6: Education and Other Characteristics of Teachers, West Africa (WAEMU Household Survey)

	Public schools			Private schools		
	Primary	Secondary	All	Primary	Secondary	All
Sex						
Men (%)	61.7	86.3	69.6	58.4	81.4	68.1
Women (%)	38.3	13.7	30.4	41.6	18.6	31.9
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100
Family status						
Household head (%)	86.9	87.9	87.2	72.5	79.8	75.6
Married (%)	80.6	80.3	80.5	65.1	56.4	61.4
Household size	6.2	5.9	6.1	6.6	4.8	5.8
Age						
Mean age	38.2	39.9	38.8	35.8	35.3	35.6
18-24 years (%)	3.3	2.1	2.9	10.9	6.4	9.0
25-34 years (%)	34.7	30.9	33.5	40.7	53.7	46.2
35-44 years (%)	38.4	38.0	38.2	27.2	20.5	24.4
45-54 years (%)	18.0	23.7	19.9	16.1	13.3	14.9
55-65 years (%)	5.3	5.2	5.2	4.4	5.3	4.8
66+ years (%)	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.7	0.9	0.8
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100
Education level						
Primary (%)	9.5	9.3	9.4	18.0	8.8	14.1
Lower secondary (%)	13.6	2.8	10.1	17.9	2.6	11.4
Upper secondary (%)	44.1	12.3	33.9	43.2	14.8	31.2
Higher education (%)	32.8	75.7	46.5	20.9	73.8	43.3
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100
Location						
Rural (%)	40.2	18.3	33.2	31.5	17.5	25.6
Access to the internet (%)	69.5	82.0	73.5	52.9	79.7	64.3

Source: Male and Wodon (2023).

Half of the countries struggle in generating enough teachers to meet their needs, although for various reasons. Respondents to the online survey of Ministry and other education officials were equally divided when asked if the teacher education institutions of their country were producing enough teachers to meet their needs. As shown in Figure 6, when asked about factors leading to shortages of qualified teachers, seven respondents mentioned that teacher education institutions produce enough teachers but only a limited number can be recruited by government, probably because of budget constraints. Two other reasons were chosen by five respondents each: (i) many graduates of the teacher education institutions do not want to teach; and (ii) the teacher education institutions are not producing enough teachers. The option that limitations from government policies on hiring across regions or from other countries was a factor was not chosen by any respondents, but two respondents mentioned the issue of the recruitment of unqualified teachers for political reasons.

Figure 6: Factors Contributing to a Lack of Qualified Teachers, West Africa (Online Survey)
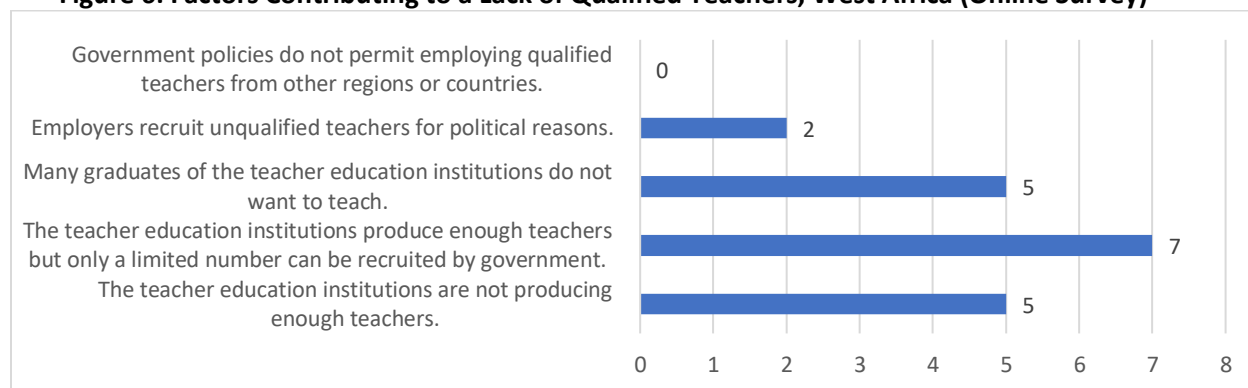
Source: Authors' estimation with West Africa online survey (survey still on going – preliminary results).

CPD is as critical as pre-service education to improve learning, but few teachers benefit from CPD and many countries either do not have a CPD framework or do not use it for promotions. CPD consists of various forms of training, education, and development spanning the career of a teacher or school leader. Sometimes these are broken down into further studies to earn higher or professional certificates, diplomas, and degrees; induction and mentoring; capacity building workshops, seminars, and conferences; and self-development that comes through individualized efforts and search for knowledge. No matter how excellent the quality of pre-service education is, CPD is indispensable for the teacher and school leader to keep abreast of required teaching standards and competencies. As shown in Table 7, half of the respondents attest that their country has a national framework on teacher CPD, but fewer attest that credit units are attached to specific teacher CPD and that these credits must be earned to be promoted. In other words, in some countries there may be a national framework, but it may not be used to guide promotions, which in turn may discourage teachers and school leaders to invest time in CPD. In most countries, Ministries of Education coordinate CPD, although in Nigeria and Sierra Leone this is done by teaching regulatory authorities. Across countries however, as shown in Figure 7, the share of teachers that benefitted from CPD over the last three years is low since half of the respondents indicated that less than 20 percent of teachers were such beneficiaries. Respondents were also asked to rate the adequacy of CPD to address teacher quality. The average rating on a scale from 1 to 5 was 3.0, which is low. Finally, only seven respondents indicated the existence of (or planning for) a national training program for school leaders, suggesting a lack of such programs in many countries.

**Table 7: Existence of a CPD Framework and Utilization of CPD, West Africa (Online Survey)**

Question	Yes	No	NR

Is there a national framework on teacher CPD?	7	5	-
Are there credit units attached to specific teacher CPD?	3	8	1
Are there specified credit units a teacher must earn to be promoted?	4	7	1

Source: Authors' estimation with West Africa online survey.
NR: No response

Figure 7: Share of Teachers in Public Basic and Secondary Schools Trained in Last Three Years, West Africa (Online Survey)
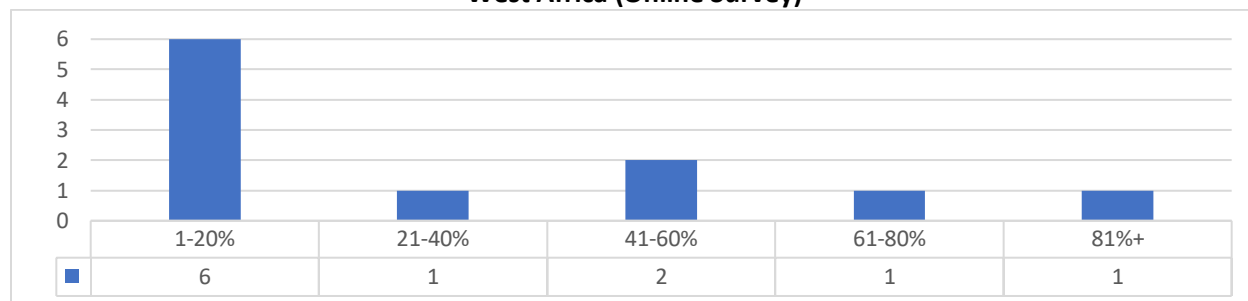
	1-20%	21-40%	41-60%	61-80%	81%+
■	6	1	2	1	1

Source: Authors' estimation with West Africa online survey (survey still on going – preliminary results).

Working Conditions

Teacher motivation, and therefore the working conditions of teachers, is key for their performance. The literature suggests – not surprisingly, that teacher motivation matters for teacher effort, which in turn can lead to gains in learning for students. As noted in UNESCO IICBA (2017), there are multiple layers and approaches to understanding of what drives teacher motivation, but it clearly has an impact on teachers' behaviors and their teaching practice. As teachers have varying degrees of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, quick generalizations are risky, but a variety of factors affect motivation. This includes teacher salaries, including whether salaries are paid on time, and benefits as well as broader working conditions and the teachers' perceptions of the respect (or lack thereof) for the teaching profession. Whether teachers believe that they have a realistic and rewarding career path ahead of them also matters. This section considers the working conditions of teachers. The analysis is based on data from the WAEMU integrated household surveys in which teachers can be identified. In addition, data from the online survey of Ministry and other education officials are used. A discussion is also provided on the value of Best Teacher Awards to recognize outstanding teachers. These awards can raise the appreciation of teachers in society while demonstrating that hard work pays. The impact of such recognition is hard to measure, but it may boost confidence in the value of the teaching profession and inspire teachers.

Household surveys can be used to provide a profile of teacher well-being in West Africa. Table 8 provides data on various aspects of teacher well-being based on data from the 2018-19 Harmonized Survey on Household Living Conditions used previously (Male and Wodon, 2023). Information is again presented for teachers in the public and private sectors. The average annual salary of teachers is much higher in public schools (FCFA 2.1 million, or about $3,540 at the current exchange rate) than in the private sector (FCFA 0.9 million, or about $1,450). Compared to teachers in the private sector, those in the public sector are also much more likely to receive benefits (paid leave, sick leave, pension fund contributions, maternity leave, bonuses, and other benefits). Within the two networks (public and private), secondary school teachers are better paid than primary school teachers, especially for the private sector, but the differences are not large and the same is true for other job-related benefits. For both private and public schools, just over one teacher in five has a second job. The workload is similar in public and private schools, with teachers working on average for 20 days per month and 7 hours per day. Estimates are also provided

for the share of teachers in poverty and higher order poverty measures (for the definition of these measures, see Coudouel et al., 2002). As expected given differences in salaries, poverty is higher for teachers in private than in public schools (13.6 percent of teachers in the private sector live in poverty versus 6.7 percent for those in the public sector). Poverty measures are also slightly higher for primary than secondary teachers. Nevertheless, in terms of quintiles of well-being, most teachers have consumption levels that place them in the highest quintile. Data are also provided for the share of teachers who have had a recent illness and whether they benefited medical coverage in terms of insurance. Finally, data are provided on access to financial services. Compared to teachers in the private sector, those in the public sector are more likely to have a bank account, including a savings account. They are also more likely to have benefited from credit. Conversely, teachers in the private sector participate a little more in tontines. These results are logical given the differences in salary and resources between the two groups.

Table 8: Teacher Wages, Benefits, and Well-being, West Africa (WAEMU Household Survey)

	Public schools			Private schools		
	Primary	Secondary	All	Primary	Secondary	All
Salaries and Benefits						
Salaries (FCFA, thousands)	2.047	2.322	2.134	706	1.109	877
Second job (%)	22.4	24.3	23.0	23.2	18.3	21.2
Days worked per month	19.7	19.8	19.7	20.0	18.6	19.4
Hours worked per day	7.3	6.8	7.1	6.9	6.6	6.8
Paid leave (%)	97.9	97.5	97.8	26.4	21.5	24.3
Sick leave (%)	69.8	65.1	68.3	24.8	29.2	26.7
Pension (%)	73.1	70.0	72.1	14.3	14.9	14.5
Maternity leave (%)	54.6	40.9	50.2	22.4	9.6	17.0
Bonus (%)	25.0	30.5	26.7	4.5	6.3	5.3
Other benefits (%)	27.3	26.7	27.1	4.6	6.5	5.4
Food received (%)	0.8	0.4	0.7	3.3	2.0	2.7
Household Poverty						
Incidence (%)	8.3	3.0	6.7	18.3	7.2	13.6
Depth (%)	1.3	0.5	1.1	4.7	1.2	3.3
Severity (%)	0.4	0.1	0.3	1.7	0.3	1.1
Quintile of Well-being						
Poorest quintile (%)	1.4	0.5	1.1	6.7	1.5	4.5
Second quintile (%)	5.5	2.5	4.6	9.5	3.8	7.1
Third quintile (%)	11.2	7.4	10.0	12.0	9.1	10.8
Fourth quintile (%)	18.4	16.6	17.8	25.4	14.0	20.6
Richest quintile (%)	63.5	73.0	66.4	46.4	71.5	57.0
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100
Health Status						
Sick, ill, or injured (%)	32.9	34.1	33.3	36.8	34.0	35.6
No health insurance (%)	74.9	72.2	74.0	94.7	90.1	92.8
Financial Services						
Banking account (%)	83.5	91.4	86.1	60.0	84.8	70.5
Obtention of credit (%)	20.8	24.7	22.0	4.2	7.4	5.5
Savings account (%)	56.9	65.3	59.6	33.3	53.1	41.7
Savings group (*tontine*) (%)	15.6	13.9	15.0	20.2	17.5	19.1

Source: Male and Wodon (2023).

The West Africa online survey of education officials did not have many questions on the working conditions of teachers, but data were gathered on Teacher Awards and the perceived social status and satisfaction of teachers. Two thirds of respondents mentioned such awards (as noted earlier, the African

Union Commission provides for teacher awards since 2017). As to the social status of teachers, on a scale from 1 to 5, the average rating from respondents on their perceptions of the status of teachers was low at 2.6. Similarly, when asked to rate job satisfaction among teachers on the same scale, the average rating was 2.7. These ratings suggest that teacher social status and job satisfaction are insufficient, hindering the full realization of professionalization of standards and competencies for teachers and school leaders.

Qualitative feedback from key informant interviews also suggests that working conditions are often sub-optimal, but with countries trying various approaches to improve those conditions. The representative from Benin made references to the cost of living and how salaries are not sufficient to meet teachers' basic needs. The representative from Burkina Faso pointed to the public salary scale which has many cadres but limitations for teachers to attaining the highest cadre (for the teaching profession, National Inspector is the highest cadre, but it is difficult to attain because of the requirements). The emergence of terrorism was also mentioned as a challenge faced by teachers and school leaders: "*we share a border with Chad, and in these regions Jihadist attacks do not cease. Sometimes teachers want to do their work, but … attacks in the regions where they are assigned make them unwilling to perform their duties, even though the government allocates risk and longevity allowances, they fear for their lives*." The representative from Côte d'Ivoire pointed to poor training as an issue affecting the quality of teachers. He stated: "*Here in Côte d'Ivoire, we don't have many trained specialists in the area of training teachers, so I think this makes the quality of our education lower and lower.*" The Liberia representative stated that remuneration has been regular though may not be adequate to meet the needs of the teachers, especially in the context of the recession and inflation arising from the devastation of the war, Ebola, and most recently Covid-19. He admitted that teachers are less professionalized, but the country is developing frameworks to get them more professionalized, including through registration and licensing. The representative for Nigeria mentioned packages approved for teachers by the Presidency including an increase in retirement age from 60 to 65 years and additional payment of 27.5 percent of basic salary as professional allowance to registered teachers. However, the key issues currently being discussed are related to the implementation of the career path for teachers and school leaders, related policies, and other requirements arising from the adoption of international frameworks.

Conclusion

While progress is being achieved towards professional standards and competencies for teachers, a lot remains to be done, including for teacher education and the working conditions of the teachers. This paper was conducted against the backdrop of guidance from international best practice, including instruments developed by UNESCO, Education International, and the African Union Commission. The analysis relied on a mixed quantitative and qualitative approach that includes analysis of nationally representative household surveys, online surveys, and key informant interviews. While results should be considered as illustrative and preliminary, they are instructive to provide a comparative perspective.

On professional standards and competencies, all countries face challenges, but some are more advanced than others in confronting them. Most countries have legal or policy provisions that support the establishment of a national framework of teaching standards and competencies, but they are at various stages of this process and have often not aligned their frameworks with the recommendations from the African Union Commission and UNESCO and Education International, Nigeria and Sierra Leone being exceptions. Except in those two countries and Ghana, Ministries of Education continue to regulate the teaching profession. Practices such as professional licensure examination, registration, and licensing of teachers and school leaders tend to be absent in most countries. Career paths and mandatory school leadership training for school leaders are yet to be implemented in most countries. Except for Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Burkina Faso, countries also do not participate actively in African and global federations of teaching agencies, which reduces their ability to benefit from exchanges of good practices.

On teacher education, analysis of household survey data for WAEMU countries suggests (1) a low proportion of women among teachers; (2) low levels of education, particularly for primary school teachers, but with little difference between public and private schools; (3) a minority but nonetheless significant proportion of teachers in rural areas with limited internet access. In addition, data from an online survey of Ministry of Education and other officials also suggests that the qualifications required of teachers are often limited (one or two years of post-secondary school training, typically), with significant issues for continuous professional development and a large contingent of "unqualified" teachers in many countries (those teachers do not meet the required qualifications in their country).

On working conditions, estimates from household surveys were shared on the salaries, benefits, and levels of poverty among teachers. Among the main results, we can note (1) higher annual salaries and other benefits in public schools than in private schools; (2) correspondingly, a higher proportion of teachers in poverty for teachers in the private sector than in the public sector; (3) a lack of medical coverage in the event of an illness or injury that requires medical care; (4) nevertheless a high position of teachers located in the top quintile of well-being compared to the population as a whole; and (5) a more modern financial profile for teachers in the public than private sector. In addition, data from an online survey of Ministry of Education and other officials suggests that the teaching profession is not well perceived in terms of social status, with job satisfaction likely to be low for many teachers.

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4 QUALITY
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