



## experts seminar for the icqn/tvsd on "education and training continuum"

7 & 8 november 2016 in Abidjan

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

#### **The context : The Node's continuing commitment to cooperation in the field of TVSD**

Since its inception in 2010, the Inter-Country Quality Node on Technical and Vocational Skills Development (ICQN / TVSD) has as its main objective to support African countries in the formulation and implementation of policies and education and training systems capable of qualifying the largest number of youth in order to enable them to successfully integrate into the world of work. In so doing, the Node has carried out an in-depth situational analysis of the TVSD field in Africa and, in the process, identified ways and means of achieving this objective. For instance, the Node has analyzed the policies and practices of more than twenty countries in the following areas:

- training, integration and youth employment;
- recognition and validation of knowledge and skills acquired in non-formal and informal training sectors;
- Investment of countries in the training of trainers and entrepreneurs;
- financing of vocational training.

The analysis thus conducted was used to compare the different TVSD contexts of African countries and, more importantly, to promote exchange and pooling of resources and experiences between countries in order to put them on the path to regional cooperation. The analysis also found that efforts to train young people faced a number of obstacles and chief among them is the lack of a continuum between education and training.

## **2016 Priority : establishing an effective continuum between education and training at all levels**

### ***Fighting discontinuity between education and training***

While much progress has been made towards EFA goals since 2010, especially in sub-Saharan Africa where the primary education net enrollment rate (NER) grew from 59% in 1999 to 72% in 2012, the fact remains that the school dropout rate remains a concern in most countries. The 2015 EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) estimated that at least 20% of children enrolled in primary school will not complete it. It also notes that just over half of out-of-school children worldwide live in sub-Saharan Africa. The net result of this situation is that between 30% and 40% of African youth may find themselves at the end of primary education without any education and training opportunities. This greatly reduces their chances of successful social and professional integration and calls for building pathways between the end of primary school and the onset of one's working life for young people.

The absence of such a continuum lies in a multidimensional reality. It is first and foremost an indicator of the inability of existing education and training systems to prevent large numbers of young people from leaving school early before they have acquired a minimum and common core of knowledge and skills. Secondly, it is an indication of the difficulty, if not impossibility, of these systems to provide access to knowledge and competencies by all, at different ages and throughout life (lifelong learning). Finally, it is a sign of the inexistence at the national level of mechanisms/systems for recognizing and validating non-formal and informal knowledge and skills acquired outside of the formal system. There is now a common agreement **that the primary objective of a comprehensive national education and training is precisely to educate and train the unschooled, out-of-school and the dropouts of different ages and social conditions.**

### **Promoting continued access to education and training throughout life for young people and adults**

It is now recognized that subsistence jobs are tendentiously held by young people and adults with low level of education and training and that access to jobs that would earn them a decent living is greatly facilitated by elevating their levels of knowledge and skills. From this observation, it becomes clear that countries should put in place reforms that provide the opportunity for all and at any age to access education and training systems and pathways supporting the consolidation of their knowledge, skills and life skills, and more generally their ability to become actors in their own personal social and professional development. This is why it has become essential **to create a continuum between initial training, general education, vocational training and all life situations that allow the acquisition of non-formal or informal knowledge and skills.**

## **Recognizing all forms and mechanisms of acquiring knowledge and skills**

There are different forms of responses to the failure of the current universalization of basic education which leaves behind too many people along the way as well as to the great weakness of vocational training which enrolls a very tiny minority of young people. The universal declaration that literacy as an inalienable right of every person to be able to read, write and count and the adoption of the concept of Technical and Vocational Skills development (TVSD) as a way to recognize all non-formal and informal forms of qualifications share the common objectives of creating new forms and systems of accessing various forms of knowledge and skills for the benefit of those who have been initially excluded. But these new forms and systems of accessing education and training can only be part of a continuum if, and only if, they require the recognition, at equal value, of educational and professional knowledge and skills acquired by those who benefit, regardless of the periods of time, places and the procedures of acquisition.

## **The objectives of the 2016 seminar: analyze and pool the country experiences to achieve the education and training continuum**

In accordance with the methodology used for the 2014 Abidjan Conference and the 2016 Kigali one, national experts will be required to write a report on how they are implementing the education and training continuum in the following three areas:

1. What policies/strategies are being used to reduce school dropout at the end of primary school or during the first cycle of secondary education (junior secondary education) so as to provide opportunities for young people to be in school or apprenticeship / training or in a job?
2. What policies/strategies are being used to create, for out of school or those who have never been schooled, the means to acquire basic education and vocational training so as to increase their chances of making a decent living?
3. What reforms are being put in place to enhance and certify all forms of educational and professional knowledge and skills that give more access to lifelong learning opportunities?

The various country reports will be analyzed, synthesized and categorized before the seminar and a compendium of country experiences will be put together. This compendium may be used to exchange material and analysis between experts. Furthermore, it will facilitate the identification of areas for inter-country cooperation in terms of good practices in promoting and achieving the education and training continuum.

## **The expected outcomes of the 2016 seminar: deepen and pool, within the framework of inter-country cooperation, the successful experiences of the education and training continuum**

It will be important that the seminar prepares an action plan for inter-country cooperation to promote experience-sharing that will be submitted to the ICQN/TVSD Ministers in the participating countries. In this regard, it should aim at achieving the following results for the 2016/2017 period:

1. Making a choice of three or four fairly successful experiences to be disseminated and, if possible, implemented in a number of countries;
1. Propose around each identified experience, the creation of a working group composed of countries wishing to deepen and / or implement the experience;
2. Develop the contours of a virtual forum for information, collaborative work and publication of the results obtained by the various inter-country working groups;
3. Defining the content, at the level of the ICQN, of a research study on the conceptual and operational modalities of registering successful experiences in national and regional policies for education and training;
4. Develop a dissemination plan for the entire post-conference work at regional, national and international levels.

### **The main stages of the Conference preparation process**

The literature review on the concept of education and training continuum has served to identify how the concept has been translated into policy, research and practice and will help the preparatory process.

The next steps will be structured as follows.

#### ***1. First step: writing country reports***

The success of the seminar will hinge on the ability of the experts who will participate to take the measure of life situations and problems in Africa vis-à-vis the promotion of the education and training continuum and advise their Ministers accordingly in the course of designing the education and training systems in order to provide opportunities for a maximum number of youth and adults to acquire a minimum common core of knowledge and skills, either academically or through lifelong learning and training, that can be recognized and certified and used to secure employment. Such analytical and advisory capacity presupposes that each participating country appoints an expert who will accept to report, in the most concrete way possible, policies and practices that his/her country is implementing to achieve the various dimensions of the education and training continuum. Every country will be asked to produce the report based on a common outline/structure.

#### ***2. Second step: the comparative analysis of country reports***

All reports will be analyzed so as to identify the main obstacles to achieving an education and training continuum both at the level of access to basic education as well as access by the poorly educated and trained to knowledge and skills which young people and adults need to earn a decent living and more broadly to succeed in their career, personal and social lives. This analysis will identify at the same time the experiences that are being put in place to overcome these obstacles and the pathways that are being built between the end of primary schooling and entry into vocational training in order to reach the least educated and less educated and

provide them with a minimum core of knowledge and skills and better still recognize and certify knowledge and skills that they have acquired outside the formal education and training system.

### **3. Third step : making a compendium of country experiences**

All seminar participants will receive, prior to the seminar, a document containing the following:

1. The main findings of the literature review on the various meanings of the concept of education and training continuum and how they are understood and implemented;
2. A two-page summary of each country report. It will report the specific context of each country and the policies and practices implemented to address the various forms of discontinuity identified as part of the literature review;
3. It would be opportune to share a selection of country experiences within the framework of enhancing cooperation between the countries.

The compendium will serve as a working document to fuel discussions at the seminar and to provide the basis for proposals for studies / research and action that experts will submit to their Ministers to extend and deepen inter-country cooperation.

The compendium will be sent along with the comparative analysis of country reports.

#### **Tentative timeline for the seminar preparation process**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Deadlines</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
Drafting of country reports	1-31 August 2016	National teams of experts
Final draft of the comparative analysis	17 September 2016	Experts /NORRAG
Final draft of the Compendium	17 September 2016	Experts Pôle/NORRAG
Dispatching of seminar documents	27 September 2016	Coordination of the ICQN/TVSD
Date of the seminar	7-8 November 2016	Coordination of the ICQN/TVSD