

**ADEA INTER-COUNTRY QUALITY NODE ON TEACHING AND LEARNING  
BOOKS AND LEARNING MATERIALS SECTION  
IN COLLABORATION WITH THE HUMAN RESOURCES, SCIENCE AND  
TECHNOLOGY (HRST) DIVISION OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION (AUC)  
&  
THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, KENYA**

**ADEA/USAID GLOBAL BOOK ALLIANCE PARTNERSHIP**  
**High Level Regional Seminar on National Book and Reading Policies in Africa**  
**June 17 - 19, 2019 – Nairobi, Kenya**  
*Supported by the Global Book Alliance (GBA)*  
&  
*United States Agency for International Development (USAID)*

## CONCEPT NOTE

### Introduction

Education is one of the fundamental factors of development. It raises people's creativity and productivity and plays a critical role in securing social and economic progress. Yet, according to the 2018 World Development Report on "Learning to Realize Education's Promise," millions of children globally are unable to read, write and solve basic math problems after several years of schooling. The crisis is more severe in Africa. The January 2016 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report, Policy Paper 23, observes that "next to an engaged and prepared teacher, well-designed textbooks in sufficient quantities are the most effective way to improve instruction and learning."

The 2017/18 Global Monitoring Report recognises that, "Ambitious education outcomes, such as those in SDG 4, rely on multiple actors" for their success. The publishing industry is a key actor in the sustainable provision of quality learning materials. The publishing industry actors across Africa have consistently identified the lack of national book and reading policies as a major impediment to the creation of a robust publishing industry that meaningfully supports academic achievements across the school system, especially in the primary and secondary school levels.

The African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want is the 50-year vision that echoes the aspirations of the continent's founding leaders. Among others, the founders aspire for an Africa that is prosperous based on inclusive growth and sustainable development; where development is people-driven, unleashing the potential of its women and youth; an Africa that is strong, united and influential in the global arena as both player and partner, among other aspirations.

The comprehensive realisation of these aspirations requires the nurturing of quality human capital. The Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025 (CESA 16-25) is the vehicle that the African Union is using to deliver the necessary human capital for the realization of the African Union's vision of a "peaceful and prosperous Africa, integrated, led by its own citizens and occupying the place it deserves in the global community and in the knowledge economy." CESA 16-25 has dedicated its sixth strategic objective to the promotion of literacy through launching of "comprehensive and effective literacy campaigns across the continent to eradicate illiteracy". This entails, among others, expanding existing literacy campaigns; developing curricula and pedagogy to meet specific learner needs; and promoting the teaching of languages and the use of ICT in literacy programs. The strategic objective also advocates for promoting reading and writing by revitalizing and expanding African book fairs, school and community libraries and through awards to best writers in national languages; and supporting existing public and national libraries and building additional ones.

The Books and Learning Materials (BLM) section of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)'s Inter Country Quality Node on Teaching and Learning (ICQN-TL) has been focusing, for a number of years, on National Book and Reading Policies formulation and implementation in their annual work plan. At the heart of this effort is the need to create awareness among governments and all key stakeholders on the essential roles of a National Book and Reading Policy and a National Book Development Council (NBDC) with the primary mandate to regulate the book industry and promote literacy and a reading culture, in meeting the ambitious overall goals of education. Studies have shown that except for South Africa and Ghana, other African countries south of Sahara do not have functional National Development Book Councils. Unfortunately, even for these two, the Councils do not operate optimally as they do not receive the necessary support from government.

With the support of the USAID under the Global Book Alliance, the ADEA ICQN-TL BLM section, in collaboration with the African Union's (AU) Education Division, is organising a high-level book industry stakeholders' seminar to help build a strong and inclusive framework for National Book and Reading Policies in Africa. The Africa Union Commission has developed a framework that will guide the discussions. The stakeholders include books and reading specialists, namely writers, publishers and booksellers; government officials, renowned educationalists, relevant regional and international organisations. This regional seminar hopes to bring a strong awakening for all ministers of education in Africa, to work closely with ADEA and the African Union Commission (AUC)'s Education Division in ensuring that countries formulate and enact a National Book and Reading Policy that is implementable in collaboration with the National Book Development Councils, fully funded by respective governments.

## Background: The book industry and overall quality in education

Book industries across the world are similar and face challenges of a unique nature because they consist of various professions that tend to have conflicting interests. The various professions form what is commonly referred to as the book supply chain which comprises of authors, publishers, printers, booksellers, librarians, readers and archivists, and of course, the special interest group – government – represented by Ministries of Education, Culture, Finance and Trade. The relationships between these interest groups are often characterized by friction and lack of harmony, primarily due to weak coordination.

The Foreword to the UNESCO's *National Book Policy: A guide for users in the field*<sup>1</sup> acknowledges that,

“In this age of electronic networks and global satellite media, the printed book today constitutes more than ever an essential tool for the defence of the individual’s independence and the civic conscience. It is also a vital tool for the economic, social and cultural development of societies. It is an irreplaceable means of information transmission, critical reflection and education, and underpins the ceaseless construction of democracy, human rights and fundamental liberties.”

Given this strategic role of the book sector, it is incumbent therefore for every nation to ensure that all stakeholders’ roles within the industry are recognised, developed and nurtured. This way, each of them would perform optimally in support and realisation of quality education. UNESCO further states,

“Book publishing is a powerful agent of dialogue that transcends both national and language borders. Thanks to translation and together with the educational system and the ensemble of the cultural industry, it provides the cornerstone upon which each country builds and develops its identity and self-image, as well as its views on life and the world in general. The book also plays an important role in terms of material welfare, given its capacity as an instrument for the sharing and updating of knowledge. Beyond its function within the specific domain of publishing, the book can serve as a pivotal point for the economy as a whole.”

The African Union drafted a continental book policy framework in 2009<sup>2</sup> whose vision is "to establish Africa’s book industry as a key sector in contributing to development of culture, information and education." With the mission of providing "providing developmental and legal guidelines on the production and distribution of books, and promoting reading and book trade", the framework's overall goal is "to serve as a model for development, enactment and application of national book policies in Africa: to guarantee production, availability and accessibility of relevant, quality, affordable books by all citizens."

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<sup>1</sup> National Book Policy: A guide for users in the field, First edition. 1997. UNESCO. Paris

<sup>2</sup> AU - Draft Framework for Continental Book Policy 27-March 2009, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

The development of the draft framework was in response to the recognised need, at the launch of the AU Second Decade of Education for Africa's Plan of Action in 2006, for a home grown education system for Africa, placing greater value on local knowledge, and the realisation that focussing on human resource development necessitates the development of comprehensive national book policies relevant to the needs of expanding education and training programmes. Apart from having curriculum, teaching and learning materials development as one of the seven areas of focus of the Plan of Action, the draft continental book policy framework was a key outcome of the AU's First Pan African Conference, following the recommendation of COMEDAF II, on Rebuilding Education in March 2009. It focussed on four key themes: African languages, curriculum, reading, writing and book sector development.

This High Level Book Industry Stakeholder Workshop is organised within the framework of the global 2030 Agenda comprising 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) with an emphasis on Goal No. 4, and the Africa Union Agenda 2063 and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025 (CESA 16-25). The ADEA ICQN BLM section therefore seeks to bring together renowned experts (writers, publishers, Ministry of Education's representative, educational researchers, major education NGOs, and strategic international partners) to explore pathways for developing National Book and Reading Policies and devise ways to sensitise African governments on the need to support the book publishing industries towards meeting the national development goals. ADEA, in collaboration with the Education Division of the African Union Commission's Human Resources, Science and Technology Department, the USAID/Global Book Alliance, and other partners, seek to create synergy and come up with resolutions that member countries would adopt and implement. The ultimate goal would be to set up a strong and inclusive framework for National books and reading policies in Africa.

### **The role of the Ministries of Education in book and reading policy formulation and implementation**

National Book and Reading Policies are at the core of educational quality, literacy development, lifelong learning and sustainable development. Conversely, there is an inextricable link between books, literacy, lifelong learning and sustainable development. Without access to a wide range of relevant books and reading materials, especially those in national languages, literacy skills – which are the basis for lifelong learning – cannot be developed and sustained. The role of Ministries of Education (MoEs) is critical in the quest for creating a reading culture in schools – essential for encouraging students' engagement and motivation as lifelong readers. Developing a reading culture takes time and requires sustained commitment and investment, hence the need for a national book and reading framework. MoEs are key actors in achieving the ambitious outcomes of SDG 4 and CESA 16-25. Given their strategic role as custodians of countries' goals of education, the role of MoEs in the development of National Book and Reading Policy is essential.

According to UNESCO,

“a National Book (and Reading) Policy is a coherent set of regulations and indicators set by the national authority to govern the development, production, printing, distribution and dissemination of books and other reading materials, with the aim of promoting a reading culture. The backing of the highest national authority is essential since it is not only a question of the allocation of sufficient resources, but also of giving official status to the book and reading policy to ensure that it will be implemented.”

The multiple actors in education have distinct and specialized roles. However, there are often conflicting interests among them. With such dynamic and specialized stakeholders, the ensuing mistrust, misunderstanding and rivalry demands for a mediator. The general guidelines of the Book law can guide this mediation through an independent regulatory body like a National Book Development Council (NBDC). That Book law would mandate NBDC to have representation of all stakeholders and can deal with each stakeholder firmly and fairly. In the case of mediation, the council would discuss and resolve any ensuing matter and a binding decision made for purposes of harmonious relationships for the good of the industry and by extension of the education sector as well. Another major objective of a NBDC would be to harmonize and regulate the book industry in order to promote books and the culture of reading.

## Strategy

The organization of this regional high-level experts' workshop is through ADEA's USAID/GBA partnership with AUC and the Kenya Ministry of Education, and under ADEA's High Level Stakeholders Forum strategic initiative. The four-day workshop set for Nairobi, Kenya, will discuss, review and agree on a framework for all MoEs in African member countries. This framework aims to guide the formulation of National Book and Reading Policies. It will also provide the steps necessary for enactment of a bill that establishes a Book law or a National Book Development Council with executive powers and having the full support of national authorities. The workshop will also produce resolutions that will guide MoEs in formulating and enacting their National Book and Reading Policies as a matter of priority.

ADEA ICQN TL BLM section's Focal Points will work with experts in the book industry in selected countries (Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Ivory Coast, South Africa, Senegal, Uganda and Tanzania) and consult with other selected known specialists in book development and reading. The experts will present key issues relating to book and reading policies and agree on a framework for MoEs as well as other relevant and supportive stakeholders. Technical documents will help actors in each country to ably formulate National Book and Reading policies and enact bills to establish National Book Development Councils. Finally, AUC will officially launch the Africa Reading Culture Cluster at the workshop.

## Aim and Objectives

The aim of the seminar is to create synergy among practitioners, governments, technical and financial partners, and all relevant stakeholders to work together in formulating and implementing their National Book and Reading Policies, with a special focus on national languages, to support quality education for national development. Specific objectives are to:

- Discuss a harmonized approach in formulating and enacting national book policies.
- Agree on an inclusive framework for National Book and Reading policies.
- Develop a set of principles to guide in National Book and Reading Policy formulation.
- Disseminate a framework for National Book and Reading Policies.
- Nominate Book Policy Champions from each country represented.
- Launch the CESA Africa Reading Culture Cluster proposed by the Africa Union Commission.

## Expected Outcomes

The expected outcomes are:

- Clear understanding of the strategic role the book publishing industry and a public reading sector play in national development.
- Clear understanding of the need for National Book and Reading Policies (NBRP).
- Clear understanding of the place, role and importance of books in national languages in the development of a sustainable literate environment.
- Ownership by delegates of the proposed framework for NBRP.
- Validation of harmonized guidelines for NBRP formulation.
- Agreement on a set of principles for the support of the local publishing industry.
- Nominated Book Policy Champions
- CESA Africa Reading Culture Cluster launched.
- Resolutions for adoption and implementation by member countries and development partners.

**Dates:** 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2019

**Venue:** Nairobi, Kenya

**Organizers:** Ministry of Education, ADEA, African Union Commission

**Funder:** USAID/GBA

**Local Hosts:** Ministry of Education, Kenya Publishers Association, Kenya Booksellers & Stationers Association and other local book industry actors.

**Partners:** Ministries of Education, USAID/GBA, WIPO, IPA, Regional offices of UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, DfID, JICA, Reading NGOs, etc.

## Brief information about the Organizers, Partners and Local Hosts

**Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)** is the voice of education in Africa and has played a significant role in the education space for the past 30 years as a convener, knowledge creator, and forum for policy dialogue. ADEA's vision is to ensure "high quality African education and training geared towards the promotion of critical knowledge and skills for accelerated and sustainable development in Africa". Its mission is "to serve as an open and flexible pan-African organization that informs and facilitates the transformation of education and training to drive Africa's accelerated and sustainable development. By promoting innovative policies and practices through pooling and disseminating ideas, experiences, learning and knowledge among actors through its Inter-Country Quality Nodes (ICQNs), ADEA seeks to empower African countries to develop education and training systems that respond to their emergent needs and that drive Africa's social and economic transformation sustainably.

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**The Global Book Alliance (GBA)** is an international effort involving multiple stakeholders working to transform book development, procurement, distribution, and use to ensure that no child is without books. Our mission is to guarantee that children everywhere have the books and learning materials they need to learn to read and read to learn. The lack of reading materials is so severe that it cannot be solved without new and innovative solutions. New and innovative solutions are needed to solve the learning crisis, and the Global Book Alliance is taking the lead on identifying and implementing these solutions.

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**Africa Union's** objective is to rid the continent of the remaining vestiges of colonization and apartheid; to promote unity and solidarity among African States; to coordinate and intensify cooperation for development; to safeguard the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States and to promote international cooperation within the framework of the United Nations. As a continental organization, AU provides an effective forum that enables all Member States to adopt coordinated positions on matters of common concern to the continent in international fora and defend the interests of Africa effectively. **Website:** <https://au.int/>

**Kenya Ministry of Education:** The Ministry of Education's constitutional mandate is to ensure that children's right to free and compulsory basic education, including quality services, are safeguarded. The functions of education and training are shared between the national and county governments.

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**The Kenya Publishers Association:** Kenya Publishers Association is the umbrella body for book publishers in Kenya. This Association encourages the widest possible spread of printed and digital books throughout Kenya and beyond.

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**Kenya Booksellers and Stationers Association:** The Kenya Booksellers and Stationers Associations is a membership organization that brings together bona fide distributors, wholesalers and retailers of books in Kenya. **E-mail:** [Kenyabooksellersassociation@yahoo.com](mailto:Kenyabooksellersassociation@yahoo.com)