

Education

8 Policy Recommendations

*For the advancement of Knowledge Societies
across Africa*



A Product of the African Leadership in ICT Course



Patti Swarts, Senior Programs Manager and Education Specialist, GESCI

These recommendations represent the opinions of a cross-section of mid-to-senior level managers from ministries and public sector organizations in Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zambia.

While participating in an intensive leadership course run by GESCI, for the advancement of knowledge societies, these future leaders gained a deeper understanding of the critical interplay between Education, ICT, and Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) in the development of emerging economies across East and Southern Africa. The African Leadership in ICT course, which uniquely combines key elements of leadership, knowledge society and futures thinking into six *action learning* modules, is delivered online and face-to-face over the course of seven months, culminating in a final policy coherence workshop, at which these recommendations were produced.

With a focus on the dynamics of developing education policies and plans that take account of emerging trends in teacher professional development, access to ICT and new technologies, participants were able to identify common policy gaps that need to be filled in order for their governments to create, with foresight, the educational futures that best serve their societies and economies.

We hope that the following summary of education policy recommendations will be considered an important indication of the gaps in the policy, planning and implementation processes across the education sector, as perceived by those who are engaged in policy development and implementation in Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zambia .

1. Promote Policy Coherence

Adopt a **multi-sectoral approach** to planning for future education. There is a need for departmental and sectoral policy coherence for the achievement of common goals.

⇒ The future of education is dependent on many interrelated and diverse systems and factors which need to be properly understood for effective planning to take place.

⇒ To participate in the global knowledge society there is a need to reduce perennial challenges in education and development, such as the growing number of out of school children and youths, high adult illiteracy levels, inequalities in educational opportunities relating to gender, rural and urban divides.

⇒ To build a knowledge society, we need to have a coherent policy framework that will address important elements like curriculum, ICT infrastructure, qualifications, industry-knowledge, collaboration and innovation.

⇒ There should be more internal consultations in policy development to promote more coherent planning that takes into account social - economic trends in every country.

⇒ Long term planning should focus on projections adopted that look beyond the traditional 5 year policy cycles.

⇒ Policy has to be embedded in schooling culture for the better management of schools, and distributed school leadership.

2. Promote Curriculum Reform

Promote **curriculum reform at all education levels** including Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

⇒ The needs of the individual student should be central to all reforms made to the National Curriculum Framework.

⇒ Education and training systems should equip people with the foundations to learn and develop the broad range of skills needed for innovation in all of its forms, and with the flexibility to upgrade skills and adapt to changing market conditions.

⇒ Changes to curricula and pedagogical approaches should be made to equip students with the capacity to learn and apply new skills throughout their lives - skills such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, user orientation and teamwork, in addition to domain-specific and linguistic skills.

⇒ Education institutions should continually research and update curriculum elements and ensure that they are properly reflected at all levels of the education system.

3. Promote ICT integration in Education

Put in place a policy that guides an **integrated approach to ICT use** at all levels of the education system.

⇒ Explore delivery mechanisms for ICT use in educational provision to provide access for expanding school populations.

⇒ Digitised administration/management information systems in schools should be linked to Ministries of Education.

⇒ ICT literacy or media literacy should be integrated in curriculum reform and all management strategies.

⇒ Provide ICT – competency professional development to teachers.

⇒ Parents should be able to keep track of their childrens' learning and curriculum delivery and also access a parent-teachers corner for discussions and sharing.

⇒ At tertiary level, e-learning should be intrinsic to teaching and learning model adopted by public/private institutions.

⇒ Open and distance education policies should be designed to promote lifelong learning of teachers and learners.

⇒ Digital media should enable outreach to even the most remote parts of a country to address the economic divide and barriers hindering information access.

⇒ Build sufficient ICT infrastructure and broadband internet access in schools and colleges.



4. Promote Life Long Learning

Ensure the **development of metacognitive and lifelong learning skills of learners** that can meet the demands of new knowledge intensive economies.

⇒ The post-modern environment is characterized by flux: change is the new constant; multiple perspectives should be encouraged and different learning approaches that enhance collaborative and lifelong learning should be promoted.

⇒ Skills-based education should be promoted to develop problem-solving competencies and improve learner employability opportunities to the extent that they can adapt and cope with the ever-changing workplace environments.

⇒ Institutions that provide lifelong learning need to increase in parallel with the demands for expanding education and learning needs in the knowledge age.

5. Promote a Work-Place Learning Model

Foster **work-place learning** in TVET and tertiary education institutions.

⇒ More knowledge intensive jobs are being created and labor market complexity will force a reshaping of our education systems to allow for more training and easy access to information and knowledge to meet new job requirements.

⇒ The focus of educational programs should be on student performance to develop diverse perspectives and approaches to problem solving, critical thinking skills, and the ability to work effectively in teams and to establish a pattern of continued learning in and out of the workplace.

6. Develop a new Qualifications Framework Model

Create a **well-defined framework for Technical Vocational Education and Training** that is linked to a lifelong learning and continuous professional development model.

⇒ A national qualifications equivalence framework should allow people to keep advancing their skills with a clear idea of where they are and what they need to do to progress.



⇒ Provide sufficient investment in an effective public research system including Universities and Teacher Education Institutions and ensure coherence between multi-level sources of funding for R&D in educational and training.

⇒ Education and training systems should equip people with the foundation to learn and develop the broad range of skills needed for innovation in all of its forms, and with the flexibility to upgrade skills and adapt to changing market conditions.

⇒ International scientific and technological co-operation and technology transfer should be improved, including the development of international mechanisms to finance innovation and share costs.

⇒ Government should facilitate and support international mobility of talent to encourage greater circulation of knowledge, governments should invest in public research to build absorptive capacity, open labor markets to foreign students for further training, and ensure that the tax regime does not penalize mobile skilled workers.

7. Promote a Multi-stakeholder Model of Education

Promote new modalities for education provision based on a **public private partnership model** in order to take industry perspective into account when developing curricula.

⇒ Industry should be incentivised to contribute to educational training and development in targeted skills development.

⇒ Learning partnerships should be promoted to support schooling improvements and to play a more prominent role in the education of the learner.

⇒ Decentralization of education services should be increased to ensure that local communities, parents and other monitoring and management agencies participate in education delivery.

⇒ Underfunded education sectors such as early childhood education should be backed by policies that promote the universalization of this sector to cater for early educational intervention of marginalized children.

8. Develop new Funding Models

Ensure support for all students through **longterm investment** in new technology resources.

⇒ Poverty alleviation is intrinsically linked to education and no education framework should exclude the poor and underserved. Clear mechanisms and more equitable schemes have to be worked out for adequate funding to be made available to extend education to all.

⇒ Underfunded early childhood education should be backed by policies that promote the universalization of this sector to cater for early educational intervention of marginalized children in both urban and rural communities.

⇒ ICT investment should not be a one-off investment where rapid equipment obsolescence demands massive recurrent investment to sustain initiatives.

About the African Leadership in ICT Course

ALICT is an African Union Commission initiative, supported by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and implemented by GESCI (Founded by the UN ICT Task Force).

Course Vision

Work with future African leaders in ministries and organisations to advance knowledge society development across Africa.

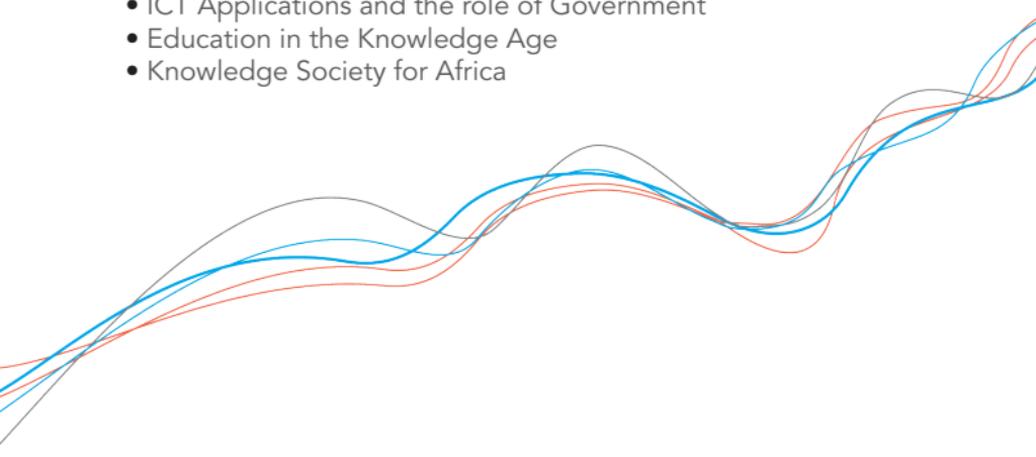
Course Objectives

- Equip future African leaders with a commanding understanding of the key elements in the development of knowledge societies.
- Build future leaders' capacities to be agents of change in their ministries, organisations and regions for the development of knowledge societies.

Course Delivery

Blended Learning Approach whereby participants learn in both online and face-to-face settings.

Course Structure

- Orientation
 - Leadership in the Knowledge Age
 - New Strategies for Science Technology and Innovation
 - Communications Infrastructures and Quality Internet
 - ICT Applications and the role of Government
 - Education in the Knowledge Age
 - Knowledge Society for Africa
- 

Target Countries

The course has been delivered to participants in Kenya, Mauritius, Tanzania, Zambia and South Africa. A second round of the course is currently being delivered to participants in Rwanda, Mozambique, Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Malawi, Botswana and Namibia.

What past participants are saying about the course.....

"The course is really comprehensive, providing a wealth of information and online resources I did not know existed. It made me realise that there is really no excuse anymore for ICT policy makers to not know what to do to enhance the lives of ordinary citizens using ICTs, as various policies and good practice case studies are only a mouse click

Johan Neethling-South Africa, Department of Science and Technology, South Africa

"This class was not what I had initially anticipated. It was so much more in terms of e-content and connecting with other ICT leaders in Africa! The level of critical thinking and networking through technology was great."

Ricaud Auckbur, Director E-Education and TVET, Ministry of Education and Human Resources Deputy Director: ICT & Service Industries

Contact us

To learn more about ALICT and GESCI please visit www.gesci.org or email us at info@gesci.org