

What is a Curriculum Framework?¹

A curriculum framework is the scaffold upon which a full curriculum is built. Having a common framework ensures consistency in content and focus across programs and allows for flexibility and creativity in the writing of program-specific curriculum. The framework can also be used to guide the process of adapting curriculum by assisting you in selecting the areas to include. Usually, a curriculum framework defines the skills, knowledge and behaviours that are to be taught and learned; in many cases, the framework is built around a set of commonly defined content or skills standards.

EDC’s work readiness curriculum framework is a general tool intended to help develop a curriculum that meets the needs and objectives of a specific program. It has four parts which are described below, with the essential element being the standards.

Part 1: Interrelated Sets of Skills, Knowledge and Behaviors

Educators and workforce development specialists in developed and developing countries agree that there are some common, cross-cutting skills, knowledge and behaviours that are foundational for success in entry-level employment in the formal sector or for self-employment or income generation in the informal sector. We identified the following skills, knowledge and attitudes by reviewing the materials that were being used in EDC’s early work-related youth programs and by reviewing international work readiness frameworks. We drew heavily on the Equipped for the Future Work Readiness Profile,² which was the basis for the development of the National Work Readiness Credential in the United States, and on the key skills identified in the profile as being essential.

Skills, Knowledge and Behaviors Covered in EDC’s Early Programs		
Knowledge and Understanding	Skills	Values, Attitudes and Behaviours
	[basic literacy and numeracy]	
Rights and responsibilities of workers and citizens	Literacy and numeracy in the workplace	Self identity and self-esteem
Health, wellness and safety	Listen and speak effectively	Respect for diversity and differences
Money management	Cooperate and work together-	Effective use of time
How the local economy and businesses work	Solve problems and make decisions	Personal initiative and responsibility
Workplace rules and regulations	Resolve Conflict and Negotiate	Honesty and integrity
Entrepreneurship	Lead and guide others	Pride in work quality
[Advanced entrepreneurship and business development]	[Technical work skills]	

¹ The Work Readiness Curriculum Framework is the intellectual property of Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) and not for distribution without prior permission from EDC.

² http://eff.cls.utk.edu/work_readiness_profile.html

Part 2: “Strands” of Skills, Knowledge and Behaviors

The ‘building blocks’ found in the chart above could be combined or organized in many different ways, but for our purposes we organized them into eight primary **strands**, or content areas, to guide the development of teaching and learning materials. In the training manuals, they are often referred to as modules (a module may cover more than one strand):

1. Personal awareness and development
2. Interpersonal communications
3. Work habits and conduct
4. Literacy and numeracy in the workplace
5. Health, wellness and safety at work
6. Rights and responsibilities at work
7. Financial literacy
8. Introduction to entrepreneurship

In the charts that follow, each strand is introduced with a statement of the expected outcomes for youth participants. This ‘big picture’ view can be adapted to meet the specific desired outcomes of the program you are designing.

In developing curriculum, program designers may decide to merge some of these strands or pull apart the content of the strand in order to emphasize one particular skill. For example, for the Akazi Kanoze program in Rwanda, leadership was an important component of the program; the curriculum writers took one standard from Interpersonal Communications strand, Lead and Guide Others, and developed a curriculum module around it. The strands are meant to be flexible as long as the standards remain intact.

Additional content areas may be added depending on the needs and interests of youth, and the demands of the local market, such as beginning intensive literacy and numeracy, advanced entrepreneurship and business development, English (or another language), or ICT. Further, depending on the length and depth of the overall program design, a program may add Technical Work Skills components, for specific crafts and trades; industries; businesses. Conversely, programs that have a strong technical work skills focus may start with this content, and add the general work and livelihoods readiness skills that fit best with the intent.

Part 3: Standards and Illustrative Activities

Standards are statements of what learners should *know and be able to do*. They reflect consensus about what should be taught and learned, and ensure that curriculum materials are consistent and comparable across programs. Using the same set of content standards, curriculum developers can take develop curricula that are very different in structure and approach; the use of standards to guide instruction does not mean uniformity.

Many of the skills standards in this framework are ‘optimal’ standards, in that they describe what proficient performance of the skill looks like; they were adapted from research-based standards for youth and adult learning.³ (See section 5 for information on levels of performance for some of the standards). Other standards, such as the ones for health and safety, managing money, or rights and responsibilities, were developed by EDC technical advisors using best practices and professional background knowledge.

Embedded throughout the standards are cross-cutting critical thinking skills, which show up as *reflect, evaluate, monitor, self-monitor, assess options, select and use appropriate strategies* – the skills that develop metacognition (or the ability to think about one’s own thinking and learning processes) and the abilities to analyse, synthesize, and understand different points of view.

The EDC work readiness content standards are organized around the 8 content areas, in order to guide the development of teaching, learning and assessment materials and activities. In the charts that follow, each standard is accompanied by several abbreviated **illustrative instructional activities**. These examples are included to bring to life the standards, and do not take the place of instructional guides. The examples included in this document are taken from materials used in EDC programs in different regions around the world.

At the end of each standards chart there is a sample **module overview** from one of EDC’s several work readiness curricula. We have added these to further illustrate how the standards relate to curriculum design. The outlines may not “match” the standards exactly as the organization of the strands is intended to be flexible.

³ Equipped for the Future (EFF) Content Standards : What Adults Need to Know and Be Able to Do in the 21st Century. For more information, go to <http://eff.cls.utk.edu>

Strand 2: Interpersonal Communications

Program participants are able to communicate and get along well with others, in a variety of settings and for a range of purposes. One-on-one and in groups, they can speak and listen actively and appropriately. They know and can use several strategies to identify and solve problems, and make decisions based on clear reasoning. If tensions or conflict arise, they know how to negotiate differences and use several strategies to manage and/or resolve the conflict.

<p align="center">Standards</p> <p><i>Teaching and learning activities are designed to ensure that participants can...</i></p>	<p align="center">Examples of Teaching and Learning Activities</p>
<p>Listen and speak effectively</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the purpose for communicating; • Pay attention and use strategies to listen carefully and with understanding; • Organize thoughts and information and speak so that others can understand; • Use multiple strategies to monitor effectiveness of communication 	<p>Brainstorm ways we know someone is listening carefully or not listening/paying attention. In small groups, develop 2 minute role plays that illustrate 'listening actively' and 'not listening well'. After all groups have performed, identify 3-4 strategies for active, responsive listening.</p> <p>Using facilitator-prepared scenario (or a newspaper article), identify two or three points of view on a current topic. Ask each participant to take a point of view and in triads, engage in a conversation on the topic. Observers use a checklist or rubric to assess the clarity and effectiveness of the communication.</p>
<p>Provide effective customer service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use listening and questioning strategies to identify the needs of the customer • Respond positively and attentively • Use problem-solving strategies to address issues and concerns • Resolve issues with difficult customers in a respectful manner 	<p>Brainstorm times when participants have been customers. Describe good experiences and unpleasant/unhelpful experiences. List the characteristics of each.</p> <p>Role play an example of poor customer service and analyse what went wrong. Turn the role play around to exemplify good service.</p> <p>Discuss levels of customer service and what makes the difference between mediocre and excellent service.</p>
<p>Cooperate with others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include others and interact in courteous and respectful ways; • Present problems and concerns in a way that others (such as a supervisor or co-worker) can hear them and act on them 	<p>Develop and agree on 'ground rules' for the Learning Center and Work Site that describe how people will treat each other. Talk about ways that clear expectations help people work together.</p> <p>Learn about group participation processes. Hold</p>

<p align="center">Standards</p> <p><i>Teaching and learning activities are designed to ensure that participants can...</i></p>	<p align="center">Examples of Teaching and Learning Activities</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek and offer opinions and ideas • Be flexible and adjust to the needs of the group and/or the task 	<p>discussions on current issues to give participants practice and opportunity to use simple strategies such as taking turns talking, asking questions, and actively listening to responses; offer own ideas and opinions, making eye contact and/or other culturally appropriate body language to help others understand.</p>
<p>Solve Problems and Make Decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipate or identify problems • Use information from diverse sources (for example, at work: supervisor, other more experienced workers, written materials), to understand a problem and its causes. • Generate and evaluate strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions • Select the solution that is most appropriate to goal, context, and available resources. • Establish criteria for evaluating effectiveness of solution or decision 	<p>Review basic steps for solving problems, such as: state the problem; think of many ways to solve the problem; choose a solution; act; evaluate.</p> <p>In small groups, read or listen to a simple story about a work situation where there is a problem. Identify the problem and brainstorm as many solutions as possible. Decide on two or three criteria for a good solution. Using a set of questions developed by the facilitator (teacher, instructor tutor), talk about the pros and cons of the solutions, and select the two that are most realistic. Compare selected solutions with those of other small groups.</p>
<p>Resolve conflict and negotiate with others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify conflict or potential for difference; • Identify areas of agreement and disagreement • Generate options that meet the interests of all involved; • Engage others in trying to reach common agreement; • Evaluate the results and revise solutions or approaches as necessary 	<p>Use activities from INEE Peace Education curriculum or other tolerance and conflict mitigation curriculum</p> <p>Take a simple survey of personal responses to conflict and disagreement. Discuss the pros and cons of responses such as: avoidance, confrontation, compromise, physical fighting, ignoring, arguing, asking for help, agreeing, etc.</p> <p>Use brief scenarios (or problem cards) to identify a constructive response to a particular situation.</p> <p>Use a real-life example (from work or from within the program) of a conflict or difficult situation. Participants work in pairs to 'name' the conflict and opportunities for agreement or disagreement. In larger groups (3 pairs, for example), try to reach an agreement that both sides agree with.</p>

Strand 3: Work Habits and Conduct

By the end of the program, participants know how to apply for and present themselves for employment. They demonstrate good time management, show up for work on time, and know how to balance work and personal life. They demonstrate behaviour that is appropriate for the workplace and know how to dress safely and appropriately for the job. They understand that workplaces have policies and procedures (both official and unofficial) and the know how to work within these. They take initiative and responsibility for their own work and know how to work under and respect supervision. They know the importance of maintaining tools and of paying attention to the quality of work, and they are ready to learn the more advanced technical skills required for specific jobs

<p align="center">Standards <i>Teaching and learning activities are designed to ensure that participants can...</i></p>	<p align="center">Examples of Teaching and Learning Activities</p>
<p>Understand and use appropriate ways to seek and gain employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify sources of information about available employment • Complete a job application • Communicate effectively during an interview • Write a CV (as appropriate) • Practice networking strategies including informational interviews • Analyze job advertisements 	<p>In small groups, brainstorm as many ways as you can to find out about jobs. Make a chart that categorizes these.</p> <p>Invite local government employment service to conduct sessions on seeking employment.</p> <p>Invite a business person to talk about what s/he looks for when interviewing a job candidate, and to conduct sample interviews with a few volunteers. Later, conduct practice interview sessions.</p> <p>Develop a list of personal work and volunteer experiences and use a template to develop a simple CV</p>
<p>Demonstrate behaviour and attitudes appropriate for the work place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and understand common workplace behaviour, policies and procedures • Manage time • Balance work and family responsibilities • Dress appropriately and safely • Follow directions and accept guidance • Use and maintain tools and equipment properly 	<p>Using descriptions of 3 or 4 different workplaces (or participants own experiences), identify specific behaviours that employers expect (arrive on time; check in with supervisor; work a full day; etc) and any company policies that must be followed.</p> <p>Discuss different concepts of time, at work, at home, with friends and in different cultures. On strips of paper, write daily or weekly activities, including work. Sort by activities for which it is necessary to be on time, not necessary. Make a weekly calendar.</p>

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	<p>Prepare a daily or weekly schedule</p> <p>Using a picture chart of tools used in a specific industry or area of work, match the tool to the appropriate task.</p>
<p>Demonstrate personal initiative and responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify work tasks and/or processes to be initiated and/or accomplished • Follow steps to accomplish a work task or process • Monitor and evaluate work progress 	<p>Divide participants into committees to help take care of the Learning Center (such as repairing the building, setting up for the day, cleaning up, assisting with snacks and meals). Participants use a simple matrix to identify key tasks for each member of the group and develop a timeline or schedule. Set aside time each week for participants to review and evaluate progress or performance.</p>
<p>Monitor and improve work quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguish between different levels of work quality and its impact on finished products or processes; • Understand personal contribution to work quality • Take steps to improve quality and job performance 	<p>Invite a worker or supervisor in a specific industry or business to show or describe examples of good and poor quality work.</p> <p>During work experience/service work, ask for feedback on personal work quality.</p>

Strand 7: Financial Literacy

Program participants understand personal and family money-management concepts, procedures and strategies. They are able to make informed financial decisions and organize and manage personal and/or family finances. They can evaluate their options for earning money, are familiar with ways to establish and maintain personal credit and can negotiate with others concerning financial issues.

<p align="center">Standards</p> <p align="center"><i>Teaching and learning activities are designed to ensure that participants can...</i></p>	<p align="center">Examples of Teaching and Learning Activities</p>
<p>Evaluate options for earning money</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how societies are organized around work • Explore one’s personal skills, interests, and attributes and become familiar with jobs that use these skills • Distinguish between self employment and wage employment • Identify pathways to both self and wage employment (skills training, required certifications, educational credentials, etc.) • Explore gender stereotypes and career choices • Assess risks associated with chosen work options 	<p>Use curriculum materials from existing financial literacy courses</p> <p>Go on a ‘business safari’—write down ways that people make money, and think of ways to do something similar.</p> <p>Assemble a panel of individuals (does not need to be experts) who are resourceful in earning money. Moderate a discussion about succeeding despite difficulty. Allow students time to ask questions.</p> <p>Group Activity—Investments and Risk Ask students to be in small groups. Have each group develop a list of five investment possibilities. When the lists are finished, have the groups exchange their lists. The groups should evaluate each list item to find out: 1) if it is really an investment 2) if it is a wise investment 3) what would have to happen for the investment to succeed 4) what could happen that would cause the investment to fail. Groups present their findings to the class.</p>
<p>Manage Money</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and assess sources of income and expenses • Distinguish between needs and wants in making spending decisions • Understand the value of saving • Develop a savings plan • Develop and follow budget or spending plan (personal or household) 	<p>Make statements about money management, students stand if they agree. Choose students to explain/discuss why they agree or disagree with given statement.</p> <p>Students complete a spending diary—either for themselves or for a fictional character that they collectively create. Students can use that spending diary to see where money goes, what are needs vs. wants, and which categories of spending are most taxing on their finances.</p>

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	<p>Peer pressure-- Have students ever regretted buying something that someone else has wanted them to buy? Small groups discussion and report back to class.</p> <p>Group discussion- working with a budget. A person had \$3 for the entire week and s/he decides to spend it all in one day. Was this the right decision? Give students a scenario—their budget for food is \$7 per week. How would they spend this?</p> <p>Put students into groups and give each one of four scenarios, and have them determine the Net Worth. Scenario 1: Mustafa has \$10, A bicycle worth \$25, and cell phone worth \$10. He owes a friend \$13. What is his Net Worth? (\$32)</p> <p>Put students in small groups and ask them to estimate an EMERGENCY FUND for themselves. An Emergency Fund is a certain amount of money that you always keep saved to use in case something happens that you don't expect. In general, students should try to estimate 1-6 months of expenses for an emergency fund; if this amount of money is saved, they can be sure if disaster strikes they have financial resources to cope.</p> <p>Pairs Activity—Conflict Resolution Put students in pairs and give them a series of argument scenarios. Ask them to resolve the conflict in a calm and reasonable manner.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Person A owes Person B money, and cannot pay. 2. Person A thinks Person B is cheating him/her on the price of something 3. Person A needs a loan from Person B, but Person B does not want to loan the money. <p>Students should work toward a solution that leaves both parties satisfied; if that isn't possible,</p>

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	<p>they should try to end the conflict on the best terms possible.</p> <p>Divide students into two groups—sellers and buyers. Give the sellers the following information about the items they sell and the price. The buyers must calculate how long it would take to pay back the debt if they pay the amount given. Have buyers and sellers switch roles and repeat the exercise.</p>
<p>Know Options for Financial Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate ways to access a lump sum of money (save it or borrow it!) • Identify and assess informal and formal savings options (e.g. keeping money at home, ROSCAs, banks) • Identify wise reasons to borrow money • Decide if they are prepared to carry the responsibility associated with borrowing money • Distinguish between sources of loans (e.g. friends, MFIs, banks) • Develop a set of criteria to use in selecting a lender • Explain the terms of credit 	<p>Have local banks or financial services (microcredit, etc) representatives make a presentation to the class.</p> <p>Put students in pairs and ask them to come up with two lists—one for bad liabilities and one for helpful liabilities. How are the items on the two lists different? Ask the question: are the bad liabilities WANTS and the helpful liabilities for NEEDS? Ask the question: No matter what type of liability, do you need a PLAN for repaying the debt? (Yes, of course). Ask some pairs to share their lists with the class and have the class say whether the liabilities are correctly categorized or not. This could turn into a group discussion. Make this point: Some liabilities can be helpful if you are careful, but most are not good and should be avoided if possible.</p>
<p>Develop confidence in negotiating financial issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define financial negotiation • Identify the possible outcomes of financial negotiation (win-win, win-lose, lose-lose) • Prepare to negotiate 	<p>Discussion: If you were going to sell an ASSET in the market, what steps would you follow? Diagram on the board. Something like 1. Research and Understanding. 2. Talk to many buyers to determine the best price. 3. Negotiate the price as much as possible. Sometimes a buyer won't offer as much as you want until you walk away!</p> <p>Act it Out – Negotiations</p> <p>Ask pairs of students to come to the front of the class and act out negotiation scenarios. One student is the seller, the other is the buyer. At</p>

Standards <i>Teaching and learning activities are designed to ensure that participants can...</i>	Examples of Teaching and Learning Activities
	the end of the enactment, students vote on who was the better negotiator and say what negotiation strategies were used. Scenario 1: Camel Market Scenario 2: Gold Market Scenario 3: Buying a Used Car

Strand 8: Introduction to Entrepreneurship

By the end of this introductory course, program participants understand the basics of starting and running a small business. They are familiar with the local economy and have assessed options for new products or services. They are familiar with the skills and attributes of successful small business owners and have evaluated their own personal fit with entrepreneurship.

<p align="center">Standards <i>Teaching and learning activities are designed to ensure that participants can...</i></p>	<p align="center">Examples of Teaching and Learning Activities</p>
<p>Understand basic business concepts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the role of businesses in society • Be familiar with economic concepts and terms (such as goods and services, profit margin, supply and demand, etc) • Be familiar with terms and concepts related to financing and microfinancing • Develop a basic business plan and budget • Set up simple financial and record-keeping systems 	<p>Participate in a simulation business activity</p> <p>Create a fictional character who is starting his or her business. Introduce basic business concepts through the steps that person takes to start up and run their own business (e.g. Bazizane’s Bakery).</p>
<p>Know the local market</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the key features of the local economy • Explore and evaluate feasibility of starting a new small enterprise • Participate in a marketplace simulation activity 	<p>Take the class to the market to observe features of the local economy and to meet with entrepreneurs.</p> <p>Bring entrepreneurs into the class setting to talk about their experiences setting up their own businesses.</p> <p>Have participants work on their own enterprise development while learning about the concepts and process. Have them write their own market plan, for example. Have them estimate the annual costs and income, etc. All of these activities could culminate in them creating their actual business plan.</p>
<p>Assess personal fit with entrepreneurship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore personal skills, interests, and attributes, and the skills, interests and attributes of successful entrepreneurs • Learn about local models of and support 	<p>Use materials from existing entrepreneurship development courses.</p> <p>Take a self assessment to determine if one has the personal attributes, desire and interest to run</p>

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<p>for development of microenterprises</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spend time with an entrepreneur/ small business owner 	<p>one's own business.</p>

How to Use the Framework to Develop Your Curriculum

1. Selection of strands: Review the content strands and standards and compare alongside program goals and the needs of your target population. Create an initial list of the strands and/or standards that may be useful in your program.
2. Determine the number of hours available for teaching and learning. Instructional time is often determined by the availability of youth, who have other responsibilities, and by the financial resources available to the program. If you need to keep classroom hours to 30, you may want to consider focusing on only three strands. If you are creating a longer program of 80 or more hours of facilitated learning, you may be able to draw on all 8 strands. *Note: The Quality Standards section will provide further guidance on this process.*
3. Determine ‘how well’ learners need to be able to perform, in order to be successful when they leave the program. Refer to Section 5 for the performance continua , or levels, for most of the standards used in the framework. The illustrative instructional activities included in the framework are geared toward Level 2.
4. Develop an outline or chart of the selected content areas, with space for the development of objectives, session topics, and ideas for specific activities. At this point, begin forming instructional modules, or sets of related instructional activities. Some programs have developed modules exactly in line with the organization of the framework (for example, Module 1 focuses on Personal Development); this is fine but not necessary. See Annex 1 for an example.
5. Flush out your matrix with as many sessions and activity ideas as you can. Involve in-country staff in this process as much as possible, to ensure relevance and appropriateness.
6. Gather teaching and learning materials that support the objectives of the modules and the sessions (or lessons) they contain. Begin with EDC curricula, and other relevant programs that you know of. The *Preparing for Work* website, developed by EDC under the EQUIP3 project contains over 30 curriculum reviews and is an extremely helpful resource. www.preparing4work.org.
7. Develop a basic schedule for course implementation: how many hours in a session, how many sessions in a day, how many days/weeks are needed? Some programs vary the length of each lesson or session, other keep the lesson to a consistent length of time. Plan time for assessments.
8. Begin to think about who your facilitators will be. Will they be former teachers? Experienced facilitators? Are they youth peer educators who have the interest but perhaps not the experience? What are their training needs?
9. Create a template for your instructional plans. Include: objectives, timing for the lesson and each activity, materials, tips for the facilitator, tips for lower literacy level students. Some lesson plans are extremely prescriptive as to what the facilitator says and does. Others allow for a greater level of freedom by the facilitator. The decision on how much written guidance to give

to facilitators depends on the level of expertise and experience you expect the course facilitators to have, and on the amount of training and practice that you will be able to provide them.

10. Make decisions about the amount and type of materials you will develop for the participants themselves. Will you have a participant's manual, containing worksheets and reference material?
11. Using the instructional plan template and the material in your master, overview matrix, write the specific guides for each module (including detailed session plans).
12. Create support materials (introductory guide, orientation, quizzes, etc.)

Creating a Work Readiness Program Package

The curriculum itself is only one part of the package of materials needed by staff of livelihoods and work readiness programs. The following documents must also be developed:

- ✓ A *Program Manual* describes the design, staffing, and implementation plan for the integrated work and learning program.
- ✓ A *Facilitators' Guide* provides support to teachers and team leaders in principles of youth development, creating and maintaining respectful and collaborative learning environments, and using sound learner-centered teaching methodologies. A list of local agencies is important for referring youth for support services.
- ✓ A *Student's Guide* includes all readings and may include worksheets. Worksheets may be handed out as separate handouts as well. Some programs have created two books (Handbook and Workbook) in order to facilitate correction and marking off assignments.
- ✓ *Assessment tools and protocols* need to be developed in order to assess student learning. This may include a pre-test and post-test. See section 4 of this toolkit for more information.
- ✓ *Forms*: Registration forms, attendance forms
- ✓ *Attendance policy* and protocols for makeup lessons
- ✓ *Certificates*: Some Work Readiness Programs issue certificates of completion. Criteria must be identified in order to receive the certificate. These standards include attendance, passing marks on quizzes, and completion of all assignments.