

**ACA2K Project**

[www.aca2k.org](http://www.aca2k.org)

LINK Centre

Graduate School of Public &  
Development Management (P&DM),  
Wits University  
Johannesburg  
South Africa

**MEDIA BACKGROUNDER**

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**The African Copyright and Access to Knowledge (ACA2K) Project**

<http://www.aca2k.org>

The ACA2K project, which began in October 2007, is probing the relationship in African countries between national copyright environments and access to knowledge (A2K) – with access to learning materials, both hard-copy and digital, serving as a proxy for assessing the state of access to knowledge.

**Country Nodes:** The ACA2K study countries were chosen to represent a diversity of African contexts – diversity in terms of language, culture, colonial background, legal background and socioeconomic realities. The eight ACA2K Country Nodes are in Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Mozambique, Senegal, South Africa and Uganda. Researchers have been drawn from leading universities and come from the fields of law, information studies, library science and economics.

**Objective:** ACA2K seeks to document the evidence around the interaction between national copyright environments and access to learning materials and to enable stakeholders in study countries to pursue the attainment of copyright environments that maximise access to knowledge for all.

**Conceptual Framework:** ACA2K works from the premise that access to knowledge (A2K), particularly learning materials, is essential to human development, and that A2K and learning materials access are thus important human rights.

**Research Methods:** The two main methods at national level were a doctrinal review and qualitative impact assessment interviews. As well, a comparative review of findings across the countries. The project Methodology Guide also calls for intensive policy engagement in each study country, and in international fora, based on the research findings.

**Research Questions:** The central research question for ACA2K is this: To what extent is copyright fulfilling the objective of facilitating A2K in the study countries (with access to learning materials serving as a proxy for A2K)?

To answer this overarching question, the ACA2K research has tackled sub-questions that look at:

- copyright exceptions and limitations for learning and research;
- how copyright/education stakeholders view, interpret, and behave in terms of their national copyright legal framework/environment;
- the gender dynamics at play in the copyright environment;
- the role of information and communication technologies (ICTs); and
- national policymaking dynamics around copyright.

**Supporters:** The project is supported by the Acacia Programme of Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), [www.idrc.ca/acacia](http://www.idrc.ca/acacia), and by South Africa's Shuttleworth Foundation, [www.shuttleworthfoundation.org](http://www.shuttleworthfoundation.org). Project management is at the LINK Centre, Graduate School of Public & Development Management (P&DM), Wits University, Johannesburg, <http://link.wits.ac.za>.

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