Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Learning Package

ILO

International Labour Office

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Learning Package

Foreword

People are always learning, everywhere and throughout the course of their lives. However, learning that takes place outside the formal education and training system is often not well understood or valued. On-the-job training, informal apprenticeships, managing a household, caring for the sick and for elderly relatives are all activities that result in learning outcomes, but which often do not come with a certificate of competencies recognizing the knowledge, skills and experience acquired. Recognition of all types of learning can result in benefits in the labour market, formal education and training, financially and in terms of self-esteem.

Across the world, countries increasingly recognize the value of informal and non-formal learning and many are establishing systems to acknowledge competencies gained through these modalities. Facilitating transitions from the informal to the formal economy as well as the growth in migration flows have led to greater calls for ILO assistance to constituents to establish, assess, and revise systems for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) across all regions. This learning package draws from this experience. It describes the key building blocks of a well-functioning and inclusive RPL system, and offers a wealth of case studies and examples of how different countries have approached this endeavour. It is directed at a broad and mixed audience, including: ILO constituents, senior government officials, employers' and workers' organizations, assessors and facilitators.

Srinivas B. Reddy
Chief
Skills and Employability Branch

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abbreviations

CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
ILO	International Labour Organization
ITCILO	International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization
LU	learning unit
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MSDE	Ministry for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (India)
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PES	public employment services
PLAR	prior learning assessment and recognition
PPT	PowerPoint presentation (or any other presentation software)
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (South Africa)
RPL	recognition of prior learning
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
TVET	technical and vocational education and training
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION TO THE GUIDE

General objectives of the learning package

This learning package on recognition of prior learning (RPL) is directed at a broad and mixed audience, including ILO constituents, senior government officials, employers' and workers' organizations, United Nations (UN) system staff and staff of other multilateral or regional organizations, bilateral agencies, relevant non-governmental organizations, public employment services and private employment agencies, senior officials of education and training institutions and RPL managers, assessors and facilitators.

The modular structure (consisting of six learning units) offers improved targeting to different groups of participants. Units can also be used as standalone sessions, depending on the participant group.

The learning package provides information, insight and learning through real-life examples from developing and developed countries. It highlights gender diversity and disadvantaged groups.

The package is designed to be used in self-organized training sessions to assist the trainers, facilitators and experts involved. It assumes that those involved in its delivery have a sound understanding of RPL, as well as some experience as a facilitator/trainer.

Learning outcomes

The aim of the learning package on RPL is to ensure that participants:

- recognize how RPL can enhance the employability of women and men, particularly those disadvantaged in the labour market

- appreciate the benefits of RPL, not only for applicants but also for governments and employers

- have a clear understanding of how to improve the links between non-formal and informal training, formal education and training systems and the world of work

- understand and appreciate the differences between RPL systems and approaches to RPL in practice

- are able to recognize the need for, plan and design, and improve RPL systems and programmes for effective implementation and monitoring.

Structure of the learning package

The learning package is structured in six learning units and includes an introductory 'Getting to know each other' session as well as a Summary, Assessment test, Evaluation and Closing session.

The six learning units (LUs) are as follows:

1. What is RPL and why is it important?

2. How to develop an RPL system: Introduction to the "building blocks"

3. Stakeholder involvement: Who is involved in RPL and what roles do the fulfil?

4. What challenges are involved in implementing RPL systems? How to address them?

5. What are the key components in assessment methodologies?

6. How do you know if the system is working?

Each LU is structured as follows:

- **Learning outcomes:** guide the trainer/facilitator in implementing the unit to allow participants to attain a given level of learning.

- **Outline:** provides an overview of the topics covered in the learning unit, training methods and allotted time, as well as training materials required.

- **Key questions:** guide the trainer on the main issues that trainees need to master by the end of the learning unit.

- **Content:** includes descriptive text and tables and background material for the session.

- **Notes for trainers:** describe the training methods, the group activities and exercises proposed within the unit. They are found in boxes next to the related content.

- **Overview of handouts:** proposes materials for distribution to trainees, also found in the Annex to the learning package.

- **Suggestions for further reading:** include publications for each unit to enhance learners' knowledge.

The **Annex** to the learning package contains:

- a glossary of key terms

- handouts

- an evaluation form.

The full learning package contains a facilitator's guide for the training coordinator and/or trainer and handouts for training participants.

A number of colour-coded boxes are used throughout the learning package as detailed below:

EXAMPLE

Practical applications of the strategies, steps and solutions discussed in the package.

REFLECTION

Thought-provoking questions on issues related to RPL for brainstorming among participants.

DID YOU KNOW?

A focus on specific issues of interest in the context of the learning unit.

TARGETING DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

RPL initiatives for various disadvantaged groups.

LINKS

Links to videos or other materials and references to other learning units.

NOTES FOR TRAINERS

Detailed description of training methods applicable to support the trainer in the implementation of the unit.
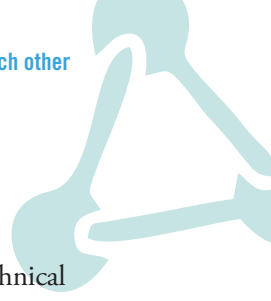
Training methods

The package proposes a combination of various training methods throughout its six LUs including: technical presentations, insights acquired through analysis, group work and discussions and peer-based development of content, reflecting on examples.

The methods for implementation encompass:

- **Presentations**, e.g. in any format for a computer-based presentation (PowerPoint or other software (PPT)) projected on a screen. These should include tables and visuals, such as graphs and diagrams or flowcharts, for the transmission of content and to provide visual support. In order to make sessions more interesting, the contents can also be presented by way of explanations on flipcharts or pinboards.

- **Audio-visuals**, such as short movies, documentaries or conference sequences used as a basis for reflection, discussion and/or analysis.

- **Structured group discussions**, through buzz groups, brainstorming to gather ideas, revisiting existing knowledge and opinion, plenary and fishbowl discussions, sociograms, as well as a "parking lot" to document open questions.

- **Structured group work**, e.g. cases to be analysed based on specific questions, including group work presentations or walking galleries, role playing and other methods. Additional graphs, tables and examples are included for analysis by the participants.

The trainer can alter the mix based on the group size, knowledge of the participants or preference for certain methods. Within the Notes for trainers, *alternatives* for methods to be applied are described. In some instances, reference is made to an "extended" version of the unit, to cater for different target groups. The extended version is directed at a more technically skilled group of participants with extensive prior knowledge of RPL systems.

The learning package and its units

Learning units
Getting to know each other
Learning Unit 1: What is RPL and why is it important?
Learning Unit 2: How to develop an RPL system: Introduction to the "building blocks"
Learning Unit 3: Stakeholder involvement: Who is involved in RPL and in what ways?
Learning Unit 4: What challenges are involved in implementing RPL systems? How to address them?
Learning Unit 5: What are the key components in assessment methodologies?
Learning Unit 6: How do you know if the system is working?
Summary, assessment test, evaluation and closing remarks

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

Successful training should always begin with a focus on participants. It is important to create an enabling learning environment for all participants and establish a good atmosphere and common rules. This learning package starts with an introductory session which helps participants to get to know each other and the facilitator, as well as the overall agenda of the training.

Learning units	Duration
Getting to know each other	
Welcome and establishing the ground rules – introduction of participants Expectations and overview of the training	1 hour
Learning Unit 1: What is RPL and why is it important?	
Learning Unit 2: How to develop an RPL system: Introduction to the "building blocks"	
Learning Unit 3: Stakeholder involvement: Who is involved in RPL and in what ways?	
Learning Unit 4: What challenges are involved in implementing RPL systems? How to address them?	
Learning Unit 5: What are the key components in assessment methodologies?	
Learning Unit 6: How do you know if the system is working?	
Summary, assessment test, evaluation and closing remarks	

Learning outcomes

After this session, participants will:

- be familiar with each other and the trainer
- have voiced their expectations and needs
- have an overview of the structure of the training, learning outcomes and training methods to be applied.

Outline of this session

Topic	Time: minutes	Methods	Materials
Welcome and introduction, getting to know each other	30	Welcome Presentation: interaction with and among participants	Projector, screen (wall), laptop, PPT, flipcharts, marker
Expectations and overview of the training	30	Expectations: visualization, discussion Agenda and outcomes rules, introduction of the "parking lot"	Flipcharts, marker, coloured cards, pinboard or whiteboard or wall, pins Prepared agenda
Total duration	60 minutes (depending on the number of participants)		

During this session, the trainer provides an overview of what the learning package covers, tailoring it to the expectations of participants. The introduction of the participants can provide an insight into their experiences, which the trainer can draw on to encourage further interaction. Depending on the organization of the training, welcome speeches might be appropriate.

NOTES FOR TRAINERS

(a) **Welcome:** Short welcome by the trainer or the representative of the organization and the trainer. Introduce yourself, providing some basic information (both professional and something personal to break the ice).

(b) **Getting to know each other:** Depending on the size of the group, ask participants to briefly introduce themselves or introduce themselves to their neighbour and the neighbour then gets to introduce the other person. Optional: Ask everybody to add a personal detail (what they like, what they are good at, something they enjoyed over the previous weekend).

(b) *Alternative:* (particularly with participants from different places and countries) sociograms – ask all participants to get up and imagine the full room to be a map (of the world or country). Ask them to position themselves in the room on the spot either where they come from now (i.e. where they reside) or where they consider home. Encourage participants to talk to each other (somebody will then take the initiative and assign north and south, east and west; if this doesn't happen, assign them yourself). Go from participant to participant and ask them to state their name, institution/organization and position briefly. An alternative sociogram – or additional one, if you have time (depending on the number of participants), to get to know about their knowledge of and involvement with RPL, is a line of knowledge and experience. For that, ask participants to form a line, assign "no or very little knowledge/experience" to one end of the line (e.g. left), and "expert" to the other end (e.g. right). Again, participants should communicate with each other in the process of finding their place in the order. Ask them to state (their name and organization, should this be the first or only sociogram, and) why they positioned themselves where they did. Also consider asking whether anyone has undergone RPL personally. This will also provide you with an idea of who you can invite to contribute information about their own experiences during the training.

Time: 30 minutes.

(c) **Expectations:** Ask participants to reflect on their expectations and to voice them. This step provides the opportunity either to manage expectations or to potentially adapt the content to the needs of the participants. Either ask them in plenary and write down the points they make on a flipchart. A more participatory method is to provide participants with cards on which to write down their expectations. As providing cards to each participant (and collecting their input) requires more time, an alternative option is to provide cards to a group of participants or per table (depending on the number of participants and the room set-up). Instruct them to discuss their expectations and write them down for the entire group, without duplication. Ask each participant or the representative of the group to briefly state them. Pin the cards on a pinboard, whiteboard or wall, clustered according to potential duplications (or by topic, training method, etc.). Then summarize and highlight the most important clusters. Alternative: combine (b) and (c). Ask participants about their expectations as part of the sociograms and have a fellow trainer write down the expectations at the same time on a flipchart or on a computer (e.g. on a PPT slide, projected on the screen).

▶▶▶

(d) **Overview of the training:** Link the expectations with the overall design of the learning package by highlighting the fact that some expectations relate to specifics foreseen in the learning package, as the agenda will reveal. Introduce the overall **learning outcomes** of the learning package (see 'Structure of the learning package' above) first and then provide a quick overview of the agenda of the learning package envisaged (best achieved with a prepared flipchart and a graphic overview showing days, structure and basic timings). Wherever possible, make a connection to the expectations voiced and point out where those expectations and the learning package match (e.g. where content is covered, a certain method is used etc.). State which expectations you will not be able to fulfil and those that you might try to accommodate additionally (e.g. as part of a particular session).

(e) **Establish ground rules with participants:** If necessary document them on a flipchart or on the computer, visible on the screen (e.g. be on time, set mobiles on silent if necessary for translation purposes, use the microphone). Highlight the different training methods that will be applied and request everyone's active participation. Also introduce a "parking lot" as a separate flipchart that remains in the room on a wall or a pinboard to record questions or "park" emerging topics for later discussion.

Invite questions and requests for clarifications, relay relevant logistics and start with LU 1.

Time: 30 minutes for (c), (d) and (e). Manage your time, particularly with a larger group of participants by prompting them and keep the pace brisk.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) • Learning Package

6

LEARNING UNIT 1
What is RPL and why is it important?

Learning units	Duration
Getting to know each other	
Learning Unit 1: What is RPL and why is it important?	
1.1 Key terms: Definitions and concepts 1.2 RPL process 1.3 Who is RPL for? 1.4 Potential benefits of RPL 1.5 RPL systems and examples	2 hours/ 2.5+ hours (extended)
Learning Unit 2: How to develop an RPL system: Introduction to the "building blocks"	
Learning Unit 3: Stakeholder involvement: Who is involved in RPL and in what ways?	
Learning Unit 4: What challenges are involved in implementing RPL systems? How to address them?	
Learning Unit 5: What are the key components in assessment methodologies?	
Learning Unit 6: How do you know if the system is working?	
Summary, assessment test, evaluation and closing remarks	

Learning outcomes: Learning Unit 1

At the end of this learning unit, the participants will be able to:

- define recognition of prior learning (RPL) and related terms
- identify why RPL is important
- identify who RPL is for: who might apply for RPL and why
- describe a generic RPL process that an applicant might undergo
- state the potential benefits of RPL
- discuss and present the specific benefits of RPL for the different stakeholders
- provide examples of how RPL is designed/anchored in various systems (extended LU).

Outline of Learning Unit 1: What is RPL and why is it important?

Topic	Time: minutes[1]	Methods	Materials
1.1 Key terms: definitions and concepts	20 (35)	Introduction, buzz groups and discussion on RPL definition, key ideas (*Alternative:* gallery of terms)	Projector, screen, laptop, flipchart, marker Handout 1.1
1.2 The RPL process	20 (40)	Video on RPL Generic RPL process: flowchart (*Alternative:* joint development with group work)	Loudspeakers, internet Handout 1.2
1.3 Who is RPL for?	15 (30)	Brainstorming and discussion in plenary (*Alternative:* input) (*Alternative:* group work)	Flipchart, marker or PPT
1.4 Potential benefits of RPL	30 (15) (40) 5	Group work/group presentations and additional input (*Alternative a*): Interactive input (*Alternative b*): Role play Video GQ Australia	Flipchart, marker, PPT Pinboard, cards, pins/PPT Handout 1.3 (or on PPT) Video, internet, loudspeakers
1.5 RPL systems and examples	30 (65)	Input: brief lecture on systems and discussion of examples (*Alternative a* and *b*)/extended: Input, group work, group presentations Summary and closing	PPT PPT, Handout 1.4 And country sheets for group work (see files in supporting material)
Total duration	120 minutes/185 minutes (extended); (times change with *alternatives* listed above)		

Key questions to be answered with the learning unit

- What is RPL and why is it important? Key terms and concepts and underlying key ideas
- Who is RPL for? Why is it important?
- What are the potential RPL outcomes?
- What are the main stages of the RPL process?
- What profiles of applicants may benefit from RPL?
- What are the potential benefits, including for the different stakeholders?
- What are the key elements in which RPL systems differ and how?

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1.   The timings given in parentheses correspond to the "extended" version of the unit.

What is RPL and why is it important?

People are always learning, everywhere and throughout the course of their lives. However, learning that takes place outside the formal education and training system is often not well understood or valued. On-the-job training, informal apprenticeships, participation in sporting activities, organizing community events, raising children, managing a household, caring for the sick and for elderly relatives are all activities that result in learning outcomes, but which often do not come with a certificate of competencies recognizing the knowledge, skills and experience acquired.

Recognition of all types of learning – an individual's knowledge, skills and experience – can result in benefits in the labour market, formal education and training, financially and in terms of self-esteem.

> **REFLECTION**
>
> What are the different ways in which individuals learn or strengthen their technical skills? How might a system work to recognize and certify learning that takes place outside the formal education and training system?

1.1 Key terms: Definitions and concepts

RPL acknowledges that learning outcomes can be acquired in different ways, forms and settings, with a distinction between formal, non-formal and informal learning contexts as follows:

- **Formal learning:** instruction given in education and training institutions or specially designed training areas, including within enterprises in formal apprenticeship systems. Training is structured and has precise learning objectives.

- **Non-formal learning:** learning taking place in activities not exclusively designated as learning activities, but which contain an important learning element.

- **Informal learning:** learning resulting from activities undertaken daily at work, in the family or in leisure activities.

RPL puts the focus on the outcomes of an applicant's[2] learning and not on the way competencies were acquired.

> **DID YOU KNOW?**
>
> **"Prior learning"** is knowledge or skills acquired in earlier study and work or through experience.
>
> **Recognition of prior learning (RPL)** is a process of identifying, documenting, assessing and certifying formal, non-formal and informal learning outcomes against standards used in formal education and training. Thus, RPL provides an opportunity for people to acquire qualifications or credits towards a qualification or exemptions (from all or part of the curriculum, or even exemption from an academic prerequisite for entering a formal study programme) without going through a formal education or training programme.

RPL is a process, which, in short, relies on an assessment of learning outcomes to formally recognize competencies. Through RPL, learning outcomes are assessed, not the learning itself (or where or how it took place).

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2. In the RPL literature, the terms "applicant" and "candidate" are used interchangeably. This learning package will refer to "applicants" throughout, including in relation to literature where the term "candidate" might be used instead.

Different names for the same basic idea

This learning package uses the term "RPL" throughout; however, various terms are used throughout the world to refer to the same or similar processes (see the box below).

DID YOU KNOW?

Terms currently in use

Examples of the different terminology used:

- RNFIL – recognition of non-formal and informal learning (OECD)
- RVA – recognition, validation and accreditation (of non-formal and informal learning)
- VNFIL – validation of non-formal/informal learning (European Training Foundation)
- APEL – assessment of prior experiential learning (United Kingdom)
- APL – assessment of prior learning (United Kingdom)
- PLAR – prior learning assessment and recognition (Canada)
- RAC – recognition of acquired competencies (Quebec, Belgium)
- RVCC – recognition, validation and certification of competencies (Portugal)
- VAE – validation des acquis de l'expérience (France)
- RLO – recognition of learning outcomes (European Commission)

Source: Adapted from Aggarwal (2015: 3); adaptation by Patrick Werquin.

LINKS

For more definitions of related terms see Annex 1: Glossary of key terms.

Key ideas relating to the concept of RPL[3]

The concept of RPL includes some key ideas which emphasize its importance, as detailed below:

(a) RPL is for unqualified competent people (for further detail see section 1.3: Who is RPL for? below).

(b) RPL is a process (see section 1.2 for more detail), during which learning outcomes are assessed, not the learning itself.

(c) Assessment is at the heart of RPL.

(d) RPL is about making competencies visible (through assessment and guidance).

(e) RPL offers a new route to qualifications (or parts thereof).

(f) RPL is therefore about equity: it is one of the most inclusive approaches to achieving a qualification (or parts thereof).

(g) RPL offers a double currency: both in the education and (formal) training system and in the labour market. Therefore RPL is useful for applicants, enterprises and society as a whole, as RPL addresses unemployment, poverty reduction, occupational promotion and decent jobs, etc.

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3. The following subsection is based on inputs provided by Patrick Werquin at the technical workshop 'Recognition of Prior Learning: From key concepts to implementation' held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in September 2017. More information on the workshop is available here.

(h) RPL is relevant in all education and training sectors: technical and vocational education and training (TVET), as well as secondary and tertiary education. It is more relevant for adults than for young people, because applicants need to prove their competencies (acquired through experience).

(i) There is no universal RPL system, rather different systems that best fit the needs of specifc countries. RPL systems differ in their design and scope.

NOTES FOR TRAINERS (LU 1: 1.1)

(a) **Introduce** the general topic of the unit, emphasizing that the focus is on building an understanding of the "What, Who and How": what RPL is and what process it entails, who it is for and what benefits it brings. (The extended version of LU 1 covers the analysis of "systems" in different countries. It is directed towards more technical staff who are already working on RPL and/or those with some prior knowledge who are seeking to work on RPL in greater depth in the future.) Emphasize the fact that the different aspects of how to build an RPL system and the processes entailed are covered in the subsequent LUs.

(b) **Buzz groups:** Ask participants to form buzz groups (two to four people in each; participants can pair up with their immediate neighbour/s). Ask them to briefly discuss the definition of RPL and identify its main elements (5 minutes). Ask participants to tell you the elements they have identified.

    Discuss the elements of the definition based on the input of the groups in plenary. Emphasize the fact that different terminology is used. Document key words from the groups on a flipchart or remember the input given.

    Show the definition with highlighted elements and additions on the PPT. Contrast with the elements named by participants, where necessary, or underline that they highlighted the same elements. **Introduce the key ideas of RPL (input)** and discuss, where necessary.

    Distribute Handout 1.1 (Key terms) for their future reference, highlighting the interchangeable use of the different terms in practice, such as recognition and validation.

Time: 15 minutes (a, b).

Alternative (for a more technical, advanced group of participants, where you would expect more content discussion on differences etc.):

(c) **Gallery of terms:** Spread five empty flipcharts around the room, each with a term (RPL and up to four related/relevant definitions, e.g. skills, informal learning, recognition/validation, assessment; see Annex 1: Glossary of key terms) as headings on the flipcharts.

    Form five groups and assign one flipchart/term to each group. Introduce the task: participants in each group will need to identify elements pertaining to their term and/or definition and write them on the flipchart. After 5 minutes, give the groups a sign to move to the next flipchart. Once they reach a new flipchart, groups will review the content written by the previous groups, and add to or comment on it. Groups keep moving every 5 minutes until they get back to their initial flipchart.

    Discuss the terms as part of the review of the flipcharts. Walk with the participants from flipchart to flipchart, distribute Handout 1.1 (Key terms) for their reference during the revision and discuss the gaps and understanding of terms with the participants.

Time: 30 minutes (with *alternative b*).

1.2 The RPL process

Since the beginning of the millennium, RPL has been receiving renewed attention in both developed and developing countries. Globalization and migration have increased the need for mechanisms for recognition of qualifications across borders. They have also increased the emphasis on lifelong learning, as people need to upgrade their skills set to keep it relevant. Attention to the informal economy has given rise to renewed interest in RPL and its potential to help in the move towards formalization. Many workers acquire workplace skills via informal means. As a consequence, they face significant challenges in gaining decent employment and furthering their education. RPL systems address competencies acquired through non-formal and informal means.

This video provides an example of the **RPL process** that an applicant may go through. Several different elements of the process are named, such as review of skills and competencies, evidence, assessment, portfolio and gap training, among others (a brief summary of the video is provided in the Notes for trainers below).

As RPL systems differ in their overall design and scope, the process applicable varies, as do the outcomes. Depending on the competencies acquired – and where RPL is applied and RPL outcomes recognized – the process might result in:

- full qualification
- partial qualification
- credits or units towards a qualification
- exemption from an academic prerequisite for entering the formal education and training system or from all or part of the curriculum
- positioning potential learners on formal learning pathways (e.g. before continuing training)
- certificate of labour market competencies or
- no recognition.

Despite the existing differences across countries and systems, a generic RPL process is portrayed in figure 1.1 and explained further in the accompanying table 1.1.

Figure 1.1: RPL process – generic flowchart

1. Awareness and information

Provision of targeted and easily accessible information on RPL. Awareness-raising about RPL, existing opportunities, where to turn to, etc.

2. Counselling and facilitation

A counsellor/facilitator guides the applicant about RPL procedures and requirements and their suitability for a qualification

not suitable

suitable

Applicant submits the application and evidence / portfolio

not suitable

suitable

Gap training

3. Assessment and certification

Assessor reviews and assesses the evidence submitted. Interviews the applicant.

not suitable

suitable

Appeal

If applicable: Assessor guides the applicant, preparing for final assessment

not suitable

suitable

If applicable: Applicant assessed against the standards for the selected qualification(s)

Applicants are informed about shortcomings, including gaps; and assisted in overcoming these through training, mentoring and other support. Applicants might appeal a decision through mechanisms in place).

Applicant is successful and obtains a certificate/credit or units

Table 1.1: Key stages in the RPL process

Stage	Steps
1. Awareness and information	• Potential applicants are aware of RPL as an opportunity • General information about the RPL system is in place, related requirements, steps to take, assistance available and where to obtain it is readily accessible • The steps of an RPL process are clear and transparent to all stakeholders, as is information for potential applicants

2. Counselling and facilitation	• Counselling is available to provide potential applicants with more detailed information about the RPL process
	• Potential applicants can obtain guidance on the specific RPL steps and their requirements
	• Counsellors/facilitators perform an initial assessment (pre-screening) of applicants and support them in preparing their portfolios (evidence)
	• Counsellors/facilitators offer guidance on skills gap training, if needed
3. Assessment and certification	• Assessor reviews the evidence/portfolio submitted
	• If applicable, the applicant might be prepared for a final assessment, test or demonstration against existing qualification standards to receive the certification/units/credits
	• Final assessment (e.g. test or demonstration)
	• Decision on the final assessment and information on shortcomings, if applicable (and potential re-skillling, mentoring etc. for another assessment)
	• Appeal, if legally applicable, by applicant against decision, if relevant
	• Award of qualification/certificate/credits/units/exemptions

Note: *This section focuses on the steps to using an RPL system. The different steps to building an RPL system, or its "building blocks", are covered in detail in LU 2.*

The graphic shown in figure 1.2, developed by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) as part of a promotional leaflet on RPL in South Africa, is a visual summary of the question this learning unit seeks to adress – what is RPL and why is it important?

Figure 1.2: Recognition of prior learning (RPL)
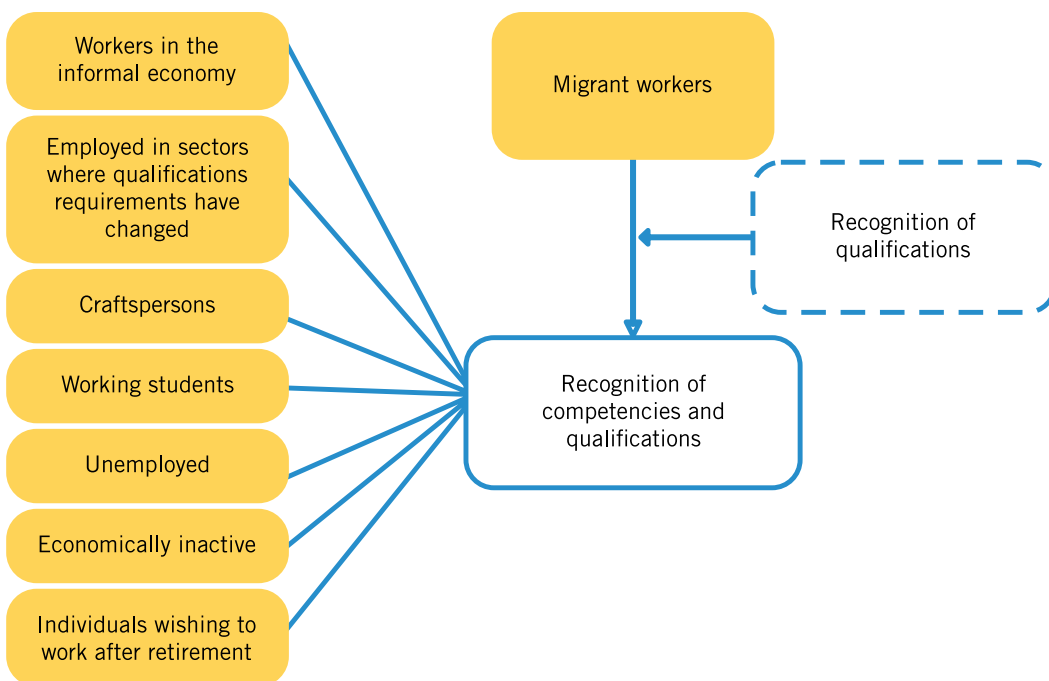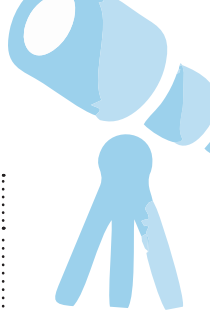
NOTES FOR TRAINERS (LU 1: 1.2)

(a) **Video:** Recognition of prior learning (GQ Australia). You can choose between Video 1 (1:38 minutes) and Video 2 (more explanatory, 4:51 minutes). Ask participants what they gathered from the video about "elements" and the process of RPL.

(b) **Process flowchart:** From the elements identified, underline the fact that RPL is a process. There are two ways the process can be developed and discussed in the unit:

    (i) Show figure 1.1 on a PPT to illustrate the overall process. Then, distribute the same figure (which you can find in an easy-to-print format as Handout 1.2) to the participants and discuss the key stages of the process and all steps within the stages in plenary, including the steps applicable if the applicant is not successful.

Time: 15 minutes (a, b).

Alternative: for a more technical group of participants instigate deeper reflection, and therefore learning, through a joint development process:

    (ii) Prepare a flipchart with the empty structure of table 1.1 (three rows, two columns). Ask participants to identify three main stages for RPL. You can also ask them to discuss their thinking first with their immediate neighbours (buzz groups) and then invite them to present their ideas. Different steps within the three key stages might be mentioned. This is not necessarily wrong; therefore you have to guide the discussion towards identifying the main stages and related steps.

    Write down the stages applicable, as they are mentioned, in the prepared table. Should the participants struggle, provide them with the three key stages (write them into the table), highlighting stage 1 as a "preparatory stage", which is nevertheless essential for applicants.

    Either develop the corresponding potential steps (second column) with the participants in plenary or form three groups and assign them the task of identifying the corresponding steps in their stage. Ask them to document the steps on blank A4 paper (which can then be stuck onto the flipchart with masking tape or glue).

    Distribute Handout 1.2 at the end of the session and highlight the process and potential steps applicable, including if the result is that the applicant is not deemed suitable. Use information offered by participants on differences in the process in their countries, without going into too much detail.

Close the exercise by highlighting that, once the generic process is understood, it is important to focus on who can benefit from RPL and who might access the system.

Time: 30 minutes with *alternative ii*.

1.3 Who is RPL for?

The beneficiaries of RPL are diverse. See table 1.2 for a range of examples.

Table 1.2: Profiles of potential beneficiaries of RPL

Profile	Why they may need RPL
A craftsperson, such as a plumber, mason, cook, electrician, hairdresser etc. (in the formal and/or informal economy)…	…who acquired competencies informally in the first place, or furthered skills on the job, but does not hold any qualification, or holds one that is not recognized by employers, or holds a formal qualification for a lower skill level than the one attained on the job
Any worker in the informal economy…	…who wants to move to the formal economy
An unemployed person…	…who realizes that formal certification is required to find a job
An economically inactive person…	…who used to work in an occupation without certification, exited the labour market and now wants to go back and find formal employment
A caretaker or a person employed in an occupation mainly conducted at home without a qualification (mostly by women, often unpaid)…	…who wants to move into a job outside the home and into the labour market
An employed person working in any job where qualification requirements have changed over the years or where qualification requirements differ across countries (such as caring for the elderly, kindergarten worker, physiotherapist, coach, etc.)…	…and who wants to remain competitive on the labour market
A student, a researcher etc.…	…who acquired relevant knowledge and skills on a job and seeks recognition of their competencies, for instance to earn credits towards a degree
A worker who wishes to continue working after retirement age…	…who realizes that they need a qualification in order to continue working, even as self-employed
A migrant worker or a returning migrant worker…	…who needs to obtain a formal recognition of competencies in the recipient country, including competencies acquired through non-formal and informal channels

Figure 1.3: Profiles of potential beneficiaries of RPL
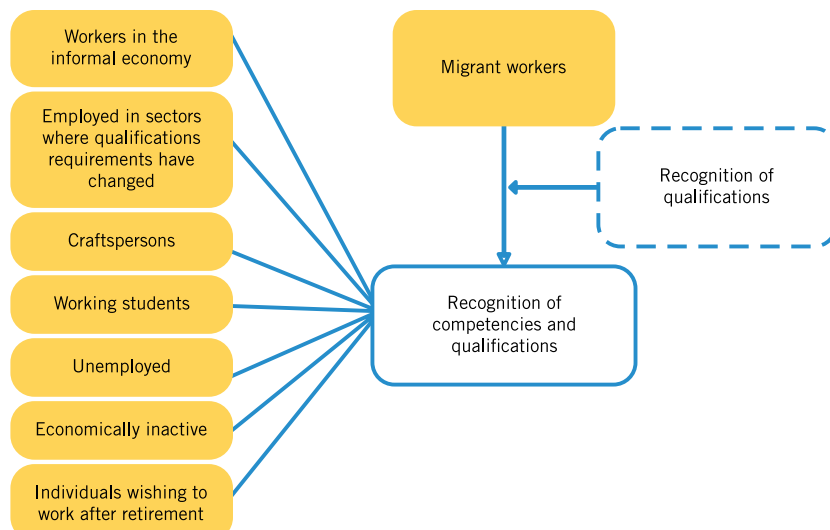
Source: Adapted from Braňka (2016a).

DID YOU KNOW?

RPL is for any applicant who has acquired relevant competencies through work experience, informal or non-formal learning, but who does not have a related qualification/certificate. RPL can allow an applicant to:

- progress within a company

- change jobs or sectors

- obtain a salary increase

- save resources (time and money) by having some units/credits recognized as part of a new qualification (including tertiary education)

- start working in a foreign country (recognition of foreign qualification), among other things.

TARGETING DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

RPL systems have the potential to significantly support disadvantaged groups. A few examples are presented here.

Women often take on vital tasks outside the formal and paid economy, e.g. as home carers, taking care of children, the elderly and the sick, whereby they acquire and apply important competencies of care work. RPL can provide an opportunity for such women to move more readily into the labour market after the situation at home has changed, or compensate for time lost in education and training. Unfortunately, RPL is more common in male-dominated trades, notably in the construction sector, again disadvantaging women. Countries should look to expand recognition processes to cover a wider range of competencies. Overall, available evidence from in-depth gender analysis on RPL is still scarce and remains a research area for the future, particularly when measuring results and impacts of RPL.[4]

Older workers might not have acquired or needed a qualification earlier in their life but worked in the same job for a long time. They may be confronted with the need for qualification to continue working or find another job. Counsellors and facilitators can make older workers aware of RPL processes and guide them though the system.

Given the magnitude of international migration, **migrant workers** are frequently victims of competencies underutilization or competencies waste, both in terms of lower employment rates and overqualification for the jobs they do. Even when migrant workers are employed, they are much more likely to be in occupations in which skills requirements are lower than their educational attainment and/or professional qualifications, compared with their national counterparts.[5]

Returning migrant workers have, in many instances, acquired additional competencies while abroad, which are not recognized in a corresponding qualification and thus impede their ability

1.4 Potential benefits of RPL

The potential benefits of RPL are not limited to the applicants. Employers, for instance, may benefit from RPL for cost-efficiency reasons. RPL allows employers to advance workers in which they have invested over the years and who possess the relevant skills and experience for a particular job. Governments, on the other hand, can use RPL to improve the educational profile of their workforce and help applicants expand their employment prospects. If RPL is integrated into the overall education and training systems, it will positive impact the labour market, as well as countries' economies, and society as a whole. Table 1.3 illustrates the potential benefits of RPL.

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4.   For further information see LU 6.

5.   See more detail on this subject in ILO (2017); International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2013); Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2014); Braňka (2016b: 34f).

Table 1.3: Potential benefits of RPL at systemic, social and personal level

Potential benefits at the economic and educational level	
Increased employability of population for a healthier labour market	Improved ability of employers to identify new hires and fill their vacancies
	Potentially reduced unemployment and inactivity
	Reduced pressure on the labour market as alternative pathways to employment become available
	Reduced skills mismatch issues
	Reduced qualification shortages (if applied specifically in sectors where qualified workers – workers with documented competencies – are in high demand)
	Eased transition from the informal to the formal economy
	Increased ability of the labour market to offer decent jobs
Increased labour mobility	Facilitated movement of individuals to a better job
	Increased ability of employed people to change career and employer
	Expanded opportunities for movements of workers from rural to urban areas and across borders
Improved access to formal education and training	Reduced time and financial resources needed to obtain a qualification, making it more affordable and accessible for applicants to further their educational attainment
	Expanded access to lifelong learning
Strengthened qualifications system	Reinforced qualifications system providing a bridge between the informal and formal economy
	Strengthened lifelong learning framework as RPL creates new opportunities for achieving a qualification
Potential benefits at the societal level	
Social inclusion and recognition	Enhanced capacity of societies to empower disadvantaged groups
	Improved visibility and use of existing human capital
	Recognized value of services, such as voluntary and unpaid work
More motivated labour force	Empowered labour force, as opportunities for decent work and lifelong learning open up to more individuals, including groups disadvantaged in the labour market
	Increased earnings of the employed
More interest in lifelong learning	Expanded opportunities for individuals to embrace lifelong learning and benefit from it in terms of labour market outcomes
Potential benefits at the personal level	
Psychological benefits	Strengthened self-esteem, confidence and motivation to work and learn, including among those formerly discouraged (Werquin, 2010a)
Higher individual returns to work experience	Improved opportunities to access jobs that match individuals' competencies
	Reduced costs of education, including in terms of time investment required to attain a qualification
	Increased opportunities to move from the informal to the formal economy

Quantitative research on the benefits of RPL is limited. There has never been a systematic effort to collect data and comprehensively track the impacts of RPL over time and on a large scale. Indicators such as financial gains, including wage gains for successful RPL applicants, are rarely measured. The available evidence tends to rely on case studies and focuses on the personal perceptions of RPL beneficiaries, which are usually highly context specific. (See LU 6 for more information on the monitoring and evaluation of RPL systems.)

LINKS

Information on how such an exercise of quantitative research could be carried out is available in Recotillet and Werquin (2009).

- **Videos:** Video 1 and Video 2 – *RPL success stories – individual level* (GQ Australia). These videos use real life examples to demonstrate how RPL can benefit applicants, impacting their lives in a positive manner.

- **More on the challenges related to measuring benefits** of RPL and existing evidence is available in LU 6: How do you know if the system is working?

NOTES FOR TRAINERS (LU 1: 1.3 and 1.4)

(a) **Brainstorming in plenary on profiles.** Ask participants to think of the various target groups that could benefit from RPL from a target group perspective. Write down their input on a flipchart. You can also ask the participants to think of more specific beneficiaries, based on the examples in **Table 1.2**. In this case, divide the flipchart into two columns, one with the heading "Profiles" and the other with "Reasons". Add to the list if key groups have not been identified by participants. Discuss the different needs in plenary. You can also show/hand out and explain **Figure 1.3** to summarize.

(b) **Group work:** Ask participants to reflect on the potential benefits that RPL can bring over time. Indicate that not only do applicants benefit but that RPL impacts at the systemic, social and personal level. Form three groups, assigning them the three categories of systemic, social or personal. Provide each group with blank flipchart paper and markers and ask them to carry out the following (writing down the group tasks on a flipchart or a PPT):

(i) Agree on a chair (to facilitate the discussion and keep time) and a rapporteur (to document and present results).

(ii) Discuss, agree and list the benefits from RPL they can identify for the level allocated to them, with short examples, if possible.

(iii) Document their results on the flipchart (with legible handwriting) (or computer to be projected on the screen).

Give them 15 minutes to complete the task. Ask each group to come forward and present their findings (maximum 3–5 minutes each). If flipcharts are used, display them next to each other. Highlight the specific importance of RPL for disadvantaged groups by providing some examples. Provide any additional information necessary with a brief input, where appropriate (e.g. using a PPT). Where possible, link your additions to ideas offered by participants. Highlight that exact measurement of benefits is still challenging, also due to the lack of systematic data collection. Refer to LU 4, relating to challenges, and LU 6, on monitoring and evaluation (M&E), where this aspect is discussed in more detail.

Time: 30 minutes.

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Alternative (a) **Input:** Particularly if you have selected the group work for (a), provide an input for (b), instead of group work. Provide an input by using a PPT or write the three categories of systemic, social and personal on cards and put them up on a pinboard or a whiteboard. Ask participants to tell you what benefits they perceive under each category, write the results down (or put up pre-prepared cards based on the content material in this section). You can also divide the room – and participants – into three groups. Assign each group a category. Ask the respective participants to briefly discuss what benefits would apply within the category assigned to them. Give them 5 minutes to discuss and to take notes. Then ask them to share in plenary what they have identified and document the results on the board.

Time: 15 minutes

Alternative (b) **Role play:** Divide participants into three groups, representing the Government, as the Ministry of Labour and/or Education, the trade union (to represent workers) and the employers' association (to represent employers). Ask for a volunteer to be Vice-President (or take the role of the Vice-President). Ask participants to change group, should they have been assigned a role they actually hold (e.g. government officials to choose employers' association or trade union). Introduce the basic facts about the situation (see Handout 1.3 or copy it into the PPT). Ask the different groups to discuss and determine their standpoints and arguments (give them 20 minutes). In the meantime add chairs or a table at the front of the room or choose one table for the meeting. Ask the Vice-President to call upon the representatives to come together and start the meeting and follow the handout: (a) opinions, (b) dialogue, (c) tripartite agreement to move forward.

Time: 40 minutes.

(c) **Video:** After the presentations of the group work on benefits you can show the video(s) RPL success stories from GQ Australia, in order to put faces and stories to what has been analysed. Emphasize that, as the videos show, RPL can apply to a wide variety of sectors and therefore to many different profiles of applicants. Invite participants' questions or comments and experiences.

1.5 RPL systems and examples

REFLECTION

What "systems" of RPL are you aware of? What are the key components of these systems?

In practice, RPL is not implemented based on one particular system and it does not apply to one economic or educational sector only. RPL systems differ widely, particularly in terms of:

- scope: the sectors covered and the legal and policy framework
- process: detailed stages and steps applicable, as well as institutional responsibilities, and
- methods that are applied, e.g. with regard to assessment.

RPL systems in different countries involve different actors and institutions – with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour being the main stakeholders in the majority of countries. From that point, however, involvement of stakeholders and the way in which the system is organized institutionally varies. Table 1.4 offers a detailed analysis of three main elements that may differ across RPL systems.

Table 1.4: Differences in RPL systems: Scope, process and methods

Scope

The scope of RPL varies on the basis of the national education and training system in place and the specific needs of the country. The major differences in scope include:

- **Coverage:** Some RPL systems offer certification in technical and vocational qualifications only, while in other cases applicants can be certified for general education as well, and tertiary education is also included. In certain cases, RPL may cover only a narrow set of qualifications, while other systems have the capacity to certify applicants in a wide range of sectors and occupations

- **Legal and policy frameworks:** RPL may or may not be reflected in education and training strategies, economic and sectoral policies, and/or overall development frameworks, and it may be given different deg**rees of emphasis in a country's legal framework**

- **Responsibility for standard setting:** Depending on the specific RPL system, this may be centralized, under the control of the Government, through the national qualification framework or system, and/or decentralized, under the control of local bodies that discharge this responsibility with the involvement of employers

Process

The major differences in processes across RPL systems relate to the following:

- **Institutional responsibilities** for the different stages and steps in the RPL process: in some cases, only national education and training institutions can run RPL, while in other cases private providers and/or employers share this responsibility

- **Stages and steps for RPL:** Not all RPL processes cover all the steps and stages that are recommended for a system to function. This is due to the fact that few countries have a well-established RPL system in place. Most are still in the course of establishing their systems, but have processes in place covering specific education and training sectors, or specific employment sectors and occupations

Methods

Each RPL stage might be using a variety of approaches with regard to guidance provided to the applicant and assessment methods.

- **Assessment:** The key stage for RPL varies across systems depending on the method adopted to validate an applicant's competencies. For instance, in some cases the assessment may be based on documentation, providing evidence of outputs produced on previous jobs, as well as certificates obtained in the past. In other cases, only a practical demonstration is required, or a combination of documentation and practical demonstration

LINKS

This section introduces different elements of RPL systems but does not go into detail, nor does it illustrate the process involved in setting up such a system. These details are covered in several units, including: LU 2 (introducing the building blocks of an RPL system); LU 4 (discussing quality assurance); LU 5 (explaining in detail the differences in assessment approaches).

1.2.1 Country examples[6]

The following section provides examples of RPL application in various countries, analysed according to scope, process and methods.

BANGLADESH	
Scope	Coverage: • RPL in Bangladesh offers certifications in TVET only • It covers recognition of formal and informal learning and competencies Legal and policy framework: • Bangladesh has a National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework (NTVQF), which establishes TVET assessment requirements and entry points. RPL is linked to the NTVQF
Process	Institutional responsibilities: • The main institution responsible for RPL is the Bangladesh Technical Education Board • Industry advisory groups and private sector are involved • Assessment centres must be accredited to operate Stages and steps: • The RPL system in Bangladesh allows for several options towards certification. These are based on a combination of credits obtained through RPL, training and assessment. The options are called the "assessment-only" pathway and the "combination" pathway • Assessors need to be trained on RPL and be registered
Methods	Assessment: • The system in Bangladesh relies on centrally set examinations (although a proposal has been made to abandon centrally set examinations and introduce a competency logbook to document competencies in the informal economy) • Assessment is based on evidence only • The decision on whether or not to certify an applicant is made following assessment against existing standards (NTVQF)
Further observations	The system is still in the process of being established

Source: ILO (2016a).

LINKS
An ILO factsheet on RPL in Bangladesh is available here. Video: Certification program helps skilled Bangladeshi workers move ahead (World Bank).

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6. These examples can be used by the facilitator as handouts for the group activities. Participants can be asked to process the information in the fact sheets and fill empty tables provided. They also serve as an "answer key" for the facilitator.

MEXICO	
Scope	Coverage: • The RPL system in Mexico covers both general education (from primary to tertiary level) and TVET • Higher education is covered by a set of national criteria and standards Legal and policy framework: • Mexico has a National System of Competency Standards • A Mexican Qualifications Framework is also in place
Process	Institutional responsibilities: • The Ministry of Education awards bachelor degrees and professional qualifications • Professional bodies are involved in designing and carrying out assessments • National Council for Standardization and Certification of Labour Competencies issues labour competence certificates Stages and steps: • Educational Model for Life and Work (Modelo Educación para la Vida y el Trabajo) covers primary and secondary education

Methods	• Different methods and tools apply to the different sectors covered:
	
	  - For primary and secondary education, credits or certification can be awarded following an assessment of learning outcomes, which is viewed as a formative and ongoing process
	
	  - For higher education (higher secondary and tertiary level), the assessment is structured in three parts and comprises an examination of specific topics
	
	• For TVET, applicants take a diagnostic test for the preliminary assessment of their level of competencies. The results of the test direct applicants to either the fully fledged evaluation process, or a skilling programme or additional work experience

Further observations	Information on the RPL process, rights and obligations of applicants, and costs, is provided to key players such as applicants and to employers' and workers' organizations

Source: Singh (2015).

NORWAY	
Scope	Coverage: • Norway offers certification on (adapted) primary and secondary education based on RPL, as well as access to higher education based on documented prior learning • RPL in Norway also covers TVET– this includes the validation of non-formal and informal learning towards national curricula, as well as the right to a trade certificate based on RPL for applicants with more than 5 years of work experience Legal and policy framework: • The country is developing a national qualifications framework for RPL

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Process	Institutional responsibilities:
	• Standards are currently set by sectoral institutions, in cooperation with Government ministries and the TVET education system
	• TVET institutions and employers are involved
	• Service centres implement RPL across the country (e.g. regional centres for quality assurance)
	Stages and steps:
	• In the case of TVET, the applicant needs to undergo the same final examination as apprentices, comprising both theoretical and practical elements
Methods	• Assessment methods are mostly dialogue-based, such as one-to-one portfolio assessment and testing
	• The system uses portfolio assessments, which are based on documentation, photographs etc.
	• For TVET, assessment entails interviews and practical testing
Further observations	RPL is most frequently used for secondary education

Source: Singh (2015).

LINKS

Video: RPL in Norway and Europe: A work in progress (Christensen, Hanne) (from minute 4:15)

The presentation is available here.

NEW ZEALAND

Scope	Coverage:
	• RPL includes formal, non-formal and informal learning
	• RPL in New Zealand covers TVET, secondary and higher education
	Legal and policy framework:
	• New Zealand has a national qualifications framework in place (NZQF) and a credit recognition and transfer policy (2002)
	• RPL is closely linked to the NZQF
	• RPL in both general education and TVET, and in all economic sectors, follows the same policy for recognition
Process	Institutional responsibilities:
	• The Qualifications Authority (NZQA) is the institution responsible for RPL
	• Assessment takes place in designated Centres for Assessment of Prior Learning
	Stages and steps:
	• The system entails a "profiling procedure", during which an applicant is interviewed about their experience
	• Support is provided to applicants to facilitate preparation for the assessment
Methods	• Depending on the qualification level sought, assessment methods vary. These may range from a panel of experts assessing evidence from prior work experience, up to what is called a "challenge" assessment, which is a demonstration of skills
	• Assessments are carried out against qualifications in the NZQF and standards in the Directory of Assessment Standards

Further observations	• TVET is the education sector in which RPL is most accepted
	• The system is known as APL (accreditation of prior learning)
	• Costs are a constraint, and they are shared between the individual applicant and the organization implementing RPL
	• The system in New Zealand is, in fact, two systems – one for the awarding of credits, and a second one for the awarding of qualifications

Source: Singh (2015).

SOUTH AFRICA	
Scope	Coverage:
	• The RPL system in South Africa covers TVET (craftspeople are called artisans in South Africa) and higher education
	• It provides recognition of formal, non-formal and informal learning
	Legal and policy framework:
	• The South African Qualifications Act 1995 includes RPL and mandates the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) to develop a policy on RPL
	• In 2013, the country introduced a national policy for the implementation of RPL, which enables RPL to be applied in the diverse National Qualifications Framework (NQF) sub-frameworks
	• The National Qualifications Framework Act 2009 states that qualifications and standards must be registered in the NQF
Process	Institutional responsibilities:
	• SAQA has issued guidelines for the implementation of RPL
	• Quality Councils are responsible for quality assurance
	Stages and steps:
	• RPL can result in qualifications and partial qualifications, credits towards certification of further education, direct access to further education, or the awarding of a new certification
Methods	• During the assessment, what the applicant knows and can do is measured against specific standards, as indicated in the NQF
	• The form and sources of evidence required by the recognition process depend on the qualification to be obtained
Further observations	SAQA guidelines include an appeal process

NOTES FOR TRAINERS (LU 1: 1.5)

(a) **Input:** Provide a brief presentation on RPL systems based on the content description under section 1.5 Ask the participants to share information about the RPL system in place in their country, e.g. when introducing the scope of systems. You can also deliberately choose participants from countries that vary substantially in their scope.

(b) **Examples:** Provide a brief overview of the different country examples using information from the content description (tables of country examples. You can also create an overview of different countries per topic, e.g. scope, methods/tools etc., for better visual comparison).

Time: (a, b) 35 minutes (inlcuding closing comments).

Alternatives for extended version with group work (for participants with technical knowledge of RPL):

(a) **Group work examples (extended):** Print the country examples from the supporting material provided with the this package. You can also choose a smaller number from the examples provided, e.g. only three, depending on the number of participants.

Form groups (depending on the number of people and examples you want to work on) and allocate each group one country to analyse. Provide them with the corresponding printed country examples.

Explain the group work task (written on Handout 1.4). Provide flipcharts and markers to the groups and ask them to discuss and document their results following the table on the handout/PPT shown. Give the groups 20 minutes for the analysis.

Ask the groups to briefly present their findings, allowing 5 minutes for each presentation: detailing the scope, process, then methods to identify differences more easily. However, this process only works if all groups have visualized their findings on flipcharts, as otherwise it is easy for clarity to be lost among all the various systems and countries.

Discuss the differences (and similarities) with all participants in plenary.

(b) Group work on own country examples: Form groups of participants, depending on the countries you have present. It might be beneficial to pre-assign distribution of countries to groups, based on the scope of the systems, their stage of development etc. There should not be more than three different countries in a group and, to allow more detailed consideration, fewer is even better.

Provide a brief summary, stating that there is no right or wrong approach but that it depends on the needs of the countries. Highlight the fact that the development and implementation of RPL systems and approaches, as well as changes to systems, is still an ongoing process.

Close the LU by introducing LU 2, where the "building blocks" of setting up a system will be dealt with more in detail.

Time: 65 minutes, including closing comments for both alternatives. The time required depends on the number of examples to be worked on. The greater the number of examples, the more time you will require for the group work presentations, so consider that aspect carefully.
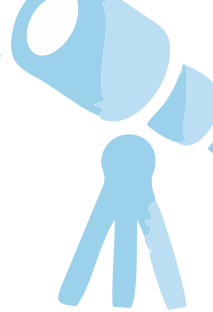
Overview of handouts for Learning Unit 1

1.1   Key terms and definitions

1.2   Generic RPL process

1.3   Role play: Benefits of RPL

1.4   Group work task: Analysis of country examples

Suggestions for further reading around Learning Unit 1

International Training Centre of the ILO (ITC-ILO). 2006. *Glossary of key terms on learning and training for work* (Geneva, Switzerland).

Werquin, P. 2008. "Recognition of non-formal and informal learning in OECD countries: A very good idea in jeopardy", *Lifelong Learning in Europe*, Vol. 3, pp. 142–149.

Werquin, P. 2012. "The missing link to connect education and employment: Recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes", *Journal of Education and Work*, Vol. 25, No. 3, July, pp. 259–278.

Videos

(For country examples, refer to links provided in the sections above.)

GQ Australia: An introductory video on RPL can be accessed here.

CEDEFOP Conference: How to make learning visible: Strategies for implementing validation of non-formal and informal learning, 28 and 29 November 2016, Thessaloniki. A video with highlights of the event is available here. Messages from participants from various countries are available here.

Supporting material for Learning Unit 1

Additional files to further support the implementation of the learning package, provided separately from the learning package:

- 1.1 PPT: Introduction to RPL – key terms and definitions
- Handouts for group work: Country sheets on RPL systems.
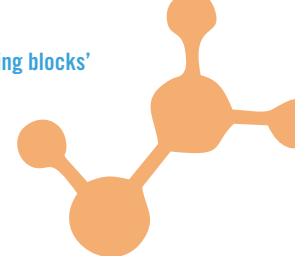
LEARNING UNIT 2
How to develop an RPL system: Introduction to the "building blocks"

Learning units	Duration
Getting to know each other	
Learning Unit 1: What is RPL and why is it important?	
Learning Unit 2: How to develop an RPL system: Introduction to the "building blocks"	
2.1 Building blocks in developing an RPL system: Overview 2.2 Regulatory framework 2.3 Institutional framework 2.4 Stakeholder ownership and commitment 2.5 Quality assurance 2.6 Financing	1.5 hours
Learning Unit 3: Stakeholder involvement: Who is involved in RPL and in what ways?	
Learning Unit 4: What challenges are involved in implementing RPL systems? How to address them?	
Learning Unit 5: What are the key components in assessment methodologies?	
Learning Unit 6: How do you know if the system is working?	
Summary, assessment test, evaluation and closing remarks	

Learning outcomes: Learning Unit 2

At the end of this learning unit, the participants will be able to:

- name and describe the main building blocks in developing an effective RPL system
- describe strategic, policy and legal frameworks applicable and how RPL can be integrated within the policy framework
- characterize different institutional arrangements for RPL – institutions and their functions
- argue the importance of and define elements of quality assurance
- name different forms of and sources of financing for RPL
- summarize and explain aspects of what steps the building blocks of RPL systems entail.

Outline of Learning Unit 2: How to develop an RPL system: Introduction to the "building blocks"

Topic	Time: minutes	Methods	Materials
2.1 Building blocks in developing an RPL system: Overview	10	Introduction to LU, input on building blocks, interactive discussion	Projector, screen (wall), laptop, PPT
2.2 Regulatory framework 2.3 Institutional framework 2.4 Stakeholder ownership and commitment 2.5 Quality assurance 2.6 Financing	20 (35) 20 40	Input and interactive discussion on each building block and steps applicable (2.2–2.6) (*Alternative*: interactive development of 2.2–2.6 and steps applicable) Group work in parallel: details and examples of 2.2 and 2.3 Group presentations and discussion Summary and closing remarks	Flipchart and cards, steps printed on A4 PPT, handout examples 2.2 and 2.3 (printed)
Total duration	90 minutes (longer with *alternative* detailed above)		

Key questions to be answered with the learning unit

- What are the "building blocks" of an RPL system?

What needs to be done with regard to…:

- regulatory framework?
- institutional framework?
- stakeholder involvement and commitment?
- quality assurance?
- financing?
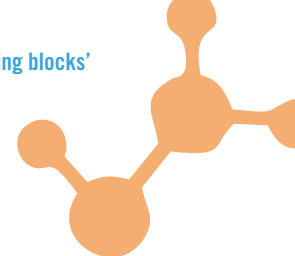
2.1 Building blocks of an RPL system: Overview

The effectiveness of an RPL system depends on the way it is built. This LU provides an overview of the building blocks and how to construct them. All the building blocks are equally important and there is no definitive way to develop a system.

Figure 2.1 shows the four building blocks of RPL systems. A fifth element, quality assurance, is placed at the centre of the four blocks, as it cuts across them all. Several of the building blocks, namely stakeholders, quality assurance and financing, are covered in more detail in the other learning units.

Figure 2.1: Building blocks of an RPL system

Key questions to address include:

- Why do we need RPL?
- Who do we need it for (which sectors of education and the economy)?
- What do the stakeholders involved need (workers, potential applicants, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour, training institutions, chambers of commerce and occupational associations, universities etc.)?
- Which stakeholders have to be involved (key actors)?
- Which stakeholders would we like to involve (to make the system work better)?

Establishing a system is based on identifying specific needs-based objectives for RPL, to help address existing challenges. Remember that an RPL system does not function in isolation, but is connected to the education and training system of a country.

Successful systems do not rely exclusively on RPL, but relate to a national qualifications framework (NQF), a TVET sector reform or a will to improve the governance of the education and training system. It is also important to note that an NQF is not a necessary precondition for RPL and many countries undertook RPL before having a NQF. However, if an NQF exists, RPL should connect with it.

Table 2.1 describes the building blocks of an RPL system and the steps needed to ensure that each building block is stable.

Table 2.1: Developing an RPL system: Building blocks and related steps

Building blocks	Steps
Regulatory framework	• Based on a needs analysis, define which educational sectors the RPL system should cover (for instance, general education and/or TVET, specific occupations/ trades only, secondary and/or higher education) • Frame RPL in the national employment policy, and make it a priority in education and training policy • Integrate RPL into existing qualifications frameworks, as well as in policies and strategies for recognition of skills and qualifications (such as credit systems) • Explore what sectoral approaches would be relevant (for instance, consider allowing a sector to design its own RPL process) • Integrate RPL into relevant sectoral, economic and development policy, including migration policy • Match occupational and qualification standards • Synchronize national regulation with regional and local regulation if needed
Institutional framework	• Define the institutions that are responsible for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all RPL processes, including awareness raising, guidance and counselling to applicants, and assessment • Assess the capacity of existing institutions in terms of the tasks that they are expected to perform to allow the RPL system to function effectively • Strengthen capacity if needed, or create new institutions if necessary, such as to provide guidance and counselling to applicants • Build capacity of RPL professionals and ensure that they will be regularly retrained
Stakeholder ownership and commitment	• Identify all stakeholders (such as government institutions, education and training providers, employers' and workers' organizations, potential beneficiaries) and make sure they are aware of the benefits of RPL and of their role within an RPL system • Keep supporting social dialogue to ensure that RPL's potential benefits to employers and workers are fully exploited • Support tripartite cooperation and collaborative approaches for RPL
Financing	• Conduct cost-benefit analysis to define the scope of the RPL system in relation to the educational and labour market needs of a country • Determine and implement equitable cost-sharing arrangements (such as Government funding, training levy or other employer contribution, applicant fees) • Ensure that funding is sustainable • Offer incentives for employers to support RPL • Ensure inclusiveness by establishing subsidies for applicants from disadvantaged groups
Quality assurance Cross-cutting measures	• Design assessment methodologies around profiles of applicants that are likely to use the system, including those from disadvantaged groups • Establish standardized RPL processes and methods at the sectoral level, including standards and quality codes • Ensure that information about RPL is available where applicants can easily access it, and that guidance and counselling methods suit applicants' needs • Clarify and ensure oversight for the quality of assessment • Establish an M&E system to regularly revise RPL processes and methods

LINKS

Selected elements of the "building blocks" are addressed more in detail in the following LUs:

- **Institutional framework: LU 4** (4.2: Matching occupational and qualification standards; 4.3: Capacity of RPL professionals)
- **Stakeholder ownership and commitment: LU 3 (Stakeholders)**
- **Quality assurance: LU 4, LU 5** and **LU 6**
- **Financing: LU 4** (4.5: Costs and financing).

2.2 Regulatory framework

A strong regulatory framework is important to ensure that RPL processes are consistent across institutions. Consistency builds the credibility of the system and determines its success. A regulatory framework guarantees that RPL outcomes are comparable across a country's regions and over time.

Regulations define the equivalency (or non-equivalency) between an RPL certification and one aquired through the standard TVET system. They also officially establish the rules of the game so that both applicants and institutions are clear about the processes.

Ultimately, a regulatory framework should support the following objectives of an RPL system:

- be an integral part of a country's education and training system
- promote alternative pathways to acquiring qualifications, by ensuring parity with formal education and training
- facilitate lifelong learning
- ensure stakeholder commitment and
- be sufficiently well-resourced to ensure that the system works effectively and efficiently.

In some cases, this regulatory framework comes in the form of a standalone RPL strategy. However, there are a variety of of approaches to regulating RPL. See Table 2.2 for a few examples.

Table 2.2: Examples of regulatory frameworks

Country	Regulatory framework
Australia	RPL is integrated into the Australian Qualifications Framework Qualifications Pathways Policy, which is built into Australia's national qualification framework and aims to maximize the credit that students can obtain from prior learning
Botswana	Botswana is in the process of developing a national RPL policy. The current pilot of RPL, implemented in 10 sectors, will inform the process of finalizing the RPL policy. The Botswana Qualifications Authority spearheads this process and was mandated to do so via the Qualifications Authority Act 2013
European Union	RPL is typically integrated within broader education strategies/policies rather than single policy documents. Only France, Finland and Spain have a standalone RPL strategy/policy, covering all education sectors
India	RPL provisions are found in: • the National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE, 2015) • the National Skills Qualification Framework, implemented by the National Skills Development Agency

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Malaysia	RPL is reflected in the Malaysian Qualifications Framework 2010, developed after lifelong learning became a primary goal within the country's National Higher Education Strategic Plan, 2007
Malawi	The RPL system in Malawi is still in development, although a form of RPL has previously been undertaken informally. Malawi has developed RPL guidelines but is still seeking to review existing legal instruments governing vocational training to capture RPL in greater detail
Mauritius	RPL is detailed in the standalone RPL Policy, 2009
Pakistan	RPL is reflected in: • the TVET policy, 2015 • the National Skills Strategy, 2009–2013 RPL is further aligned to the TVET sub-framework of the NQF – the National Vocational Qualifications Framework
Seychelles	RPL is aligned to: • the *Seychelles Qualifications Framework (SQF)* • the Seychelles Qualifications Agency's Policy Guidelines on RPL, 2008
South Africa	The RPL regulatory framework includes: • National Policy for the Implementation of RPL, 2013, a standalone policy making the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) responsible for RPL implementation and quality assurance • "Policy for the implementation of RPL" of the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO, 2016) • QCTO Assessment Policy, 2014
Uganda	RPL is integrated into: • the *Business, Technical and Vocational Training Act 2008, which officially introduced RPL* as part of the overarching 10-year plan Skilling Uganda[7] • the Ugandan Vocational Qualifications Framework

DID YOU KNOW?

In the European Union, 35 countries have set up RPL regulations oriented towards general education and TVET. As many as 22 countries have provisions in place for the so-called "third sector", which includes non-governmental and non-profit-making organizations or associations, including charities, voluntary and community groups and cooperatives. Finally, 15 countries have additional RPL regulations, mostly geared towards private sector needs, such as supporting career development.

7. UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning et al. (2015).

TARGETING DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

RPL for migrant workers: Importance of the legal framework – examples from Germany and Sri Lanka

In 2012, **Germany** passed the Federal Recognition Act to improve the assessment and recognition of professional and vocational education and training qualifications acquired abroad. It simplifies and standardizes procedures for the evaluation of foreign professional or vocational qualifications and opens up such procedures to target groups not previously entitled to pursue such a route in order to foster integration into the German labour market.

The key objectives of changes to migrant skills recognition in Germany are:

- to improve utilization of migrants' skills within the German labour market
- to reduce skills bottlenecks perceived by employers
- to make the skills recognition process for migrants in Germany easier, faster and more transparent (Braňka, 2016b).

Sri Lanka put in place a National Labour Migration Policy focusing on low-skilled migrant workers, in particular, female domestic workers with limited capacity, knowledge and access to information and services. The policy aims to ease the return and reintegration of migrant workers by creating opportunities for "skill transfer, productive employment and conflict-free social integration".

Under this policy, the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment provides services to returning migrants and their family members, including recognition of skills (ILO, 2016b).

The examples show that migration requires both countries of origin and countries of destination to implement relevant policy responses. Returning migrants often face the same problem on their return to their own country as when arriving at their destination.

REFLECTION

Reflect on your own country:

- What RPL arrangements exist and what is their legal and political basis?
- Were single or multiple legal framework(s) put in place? In which sector

The existence of a policy or strategy does not guarantee its implementation. At an ILO global technical workshop on RPL (September 2017 in Johannesburg), participants from 20 countries confirmed that RPL regulatory frameworks exist in their countries or are currently being developed. They all agreed that implementation is the most challenging factor. This is demonstrated in the following example from the guidelines on RPL in Tanzania.

EXAMPLE

Guidelines on RPL in Tanzania (Assumptions applicable for the implementation of an RPL policy):

The Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA) in Tanzania, supported by the ILO, prepared RPL guidelines (VETA, 2014). The guidelines list important assumptions behind the implementation of an RPL policy, including:

- effective involvement of employers and those involved in the design and implementation of RPL assessment
- strong coordination between Government authorities and training providers which impact the capacity of certificate holders to access learning pathways
- the existence of systems supporting standards development; assessment tools and methodologies; availability of competent assessors; and monitoring and evaluation
- a flexible qualification system and competency standards that take into consideration the possibly narrow field of skills for those working particularly in the informal economy
- development of innovative methodologies to assess skills and knowledge, in particular in the informal economy
- a clear and sustainable financing system, especially since (a) financial support may be required for the applicants and (b) portfolio-based assessment may be costly to arrange
- ensuring the validity of certificates of RPL and equating them to formal certificates (ensuring parity of esteem).

(Adapted from ILO Regional Office for Arab States, 2015: 26.)

2.3 Institutional framework

A clearly defined and functional institutional framework is critical for the success of an RPL system. The framework of institutions tasked with the planning, implementation and management of RPL have the responsibility to:

- implement the provisions in the overall qualifications framework, policies and standards in place
- assess, prove, certify and recognize competencies
- provide information and guidance to applicants
- convene and coordinate with other relevant stakeholders.

Most RPL systems have established a "recognition authority" – a body with overall responsibility for the tasks listed above. The type of skills recognition authorities and their overall scope vary from country to country, dependent on the regulatory framework. The recognition authority may be an existing public institution (such as an education and training institution, or an institution responsible for implementing an NQF), a newly created one for the recognition system, or a professional or sectoral body covering RPL.

Under the overall coordination of a recognition authority (see table 2.3 for country examples), countries often establish a series of "recognition providers" responsible for RPL in different education sectors. These providers may include:

- professional bodies that assess and recognize qualifications in their field of expertise
- employers' representatives
- industry councils
- training providers and boards
- universities/colleges
- regional/local authorities.[8]

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8.   Adapted from Braňka (2016b: 39f).

Often, the RPL process is linked to the standard assessments that institutions implement as part of formal education and training paths. However, efficient and high-quality RPL processes require specific capacity. As indicated above, this does not necessarily imply that a new or a standalone institution for RPL must be established. RPL can be integrated into the portfolio of existing institutions, and assessment methods can be adopted from those used in the standard education and training systems. However, the following aspects are crucial:

- Assess the capacity of the existing institutional framework(s) for education and training.

- Strengthen the financial and human resource capacity of institutions according to their role within the RPL process. For instance, exclusive RPL units within existing institutions may be established or additional professionals employed to implement and monitor RPL systems.

Table 2.3: Examples of recognition authorities[9]

Country	Recognition authorities
Australia	**Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Council:** Implementation of the AQF **National Skills Standards Council:** Oversight of training packages and training provider quality (including representation of industry) **National Insurance Brokers Association:** Skills recognition for insurance brokers
Belgium	**Consortium de validation des compétences:** National skills recognition system, bringing together the five most important public sector training providers
Botswana	**Botswana Qualifications Authority (BQA):** Responsible for quality assurance of RPL across all sectors. The BQA sets assessment requirements and handles accreditation of education and training providers to offer RPL assessments, who will be expected to comply with RPL assessment requirements and will be monitored regularly.[10]
Brazil	**Certific Net:** Accrediting federal system encompassing: accrediting institutions (38 Federal Institutes of Technical and Technological Education); eligible entities for skills certification purposes (such as public and private schools, unions, enterprises, NGOs); and associated organizations in education, metrology, standardization and/or inspection.
Chile	**Chile Valora:** The National System for the Certification of Labour Competency Standards in Chile, a decentralized public service connected to the Presidency of the Republic via the Ministry of Employment and Social Security. Its principal functions include the formal validation of labour competencies (regardless of how they were acquired or whether or the holder possesses an academic title or degree), the creation of opportunities for ongoing training and education, and their accreditation and evaluation by way of processes based on defined standards and validated by the productive sectors
China	**Public occupation skill testing stations:** Assessment organizations approved by the Government and set up by industries, associations and local governments
Germany[11]	**Universities:** Skills recognition in higher education **Chambers of Crafts, Industry, Commerce and Farming:** Skills recognition in the area of vocational education and training **Federal state level institutions:** Skills recognition for regulated occupations (e.g. doctors)

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9. Information compiled from Braňka (2016b: 39), Braňka (2016a: 26) and others, as indicated.

10. BQA presentation at the ILO Technical Workshop on RPL, Johannesburg, September 2017.

11. Velciu (2014); Braňka (2016a).

Ghana	**Business/trade associations:** Skills recognition of informal apprenticeships through exhibitions, trade shows and trade fairs
India	**National Skills Development Agency:** Autonomous body created to implement the National Skills Qualification Framework, now part of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship **National Skills Development Corporation:** Facilitation of private-sector participation in the skills development effort[12] **National Skills Qualifications Committee** **Directorate General for Employment and Training and National Council for Vocational Training** under the Ministry of Labour and Employment
Malawi	**National Trade Testing Services, Malawi National Examinations Board and Technical Entrepreneurial and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TEVETA):** Assessment and awarding bodies in technical and vocational education – three-pronged approach. TEVETA is also the regulatory body
Malaysia	**Malaysian Qualifications Agency:** Implementation of Malaysian Qualifications Framework, quality assurance, programme accreditation, recognition and articulation of qualifications[13]
Mauritius	**Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA):** Recognizes and validates competencies, issues certificates and trains RPL professionals. The Mauritius Qualifications Authority Act 2001 assigns to the MQA the function of recognizing and validating competencies obtained outside the formal education and training system for purposes of certification
Pakistan	**Qualification awarding bodies at provincial level:** Either trade testing board or board of technical education
Seychelles	**Seychelles Qualifications Authority:** Ascertains that courses and assessments meet the required standards, accredits providers and ensures that they have adequate capacity
Tanzania	**Directorate of Assessment and Certification, VETA (Vocational Education and Training Authority), RPL Section:** Responsible for the development and implementation of the RPL Guidelines (VETA, 2014). The authority registers assessors, accredits RPL centres and trains RPL assessors, facilitators and moderators. Facilitators have a special role to play in quality assurance of the process and overseeing assessors
Trinidad and Tobago	**National Training Agency:** Under the aegis of the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education Division, the agency serves as the awarding body for the Caribbean Vocational Qualification – the Trinidad and Tobago National Vocational Qualification in Trinidad and Tobago. Responsible for the development of TVET products and services. Conducts training for assessors and internal verifiers as well as training providers offering programmes leading to the awards
Uganda	**Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT):** In charge of quality assurance and assessment, the DIT assures employers that every individual certified against the Uganda Vocational Qualifications Framework is able to perform the relevant occupational tasks to the level of competence indicated on the qualification certificate[14] **Industrial Council:** Policymaking organ for technical and vocational skills development with representation from industry
Singapore	**Singapore Workforce Development Agency:** Skills recognition and development body
South Africa	**Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO):** Responsible for policy and criteria for assessment, RPL and credit accumulation and transfer for qualifications and part-qualifications[15]

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12. UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning et al. (2015: 156f).
13. UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning et al. (2015).
14. UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning et al. (2015: 382f).
15. QCTO (2016: 7).
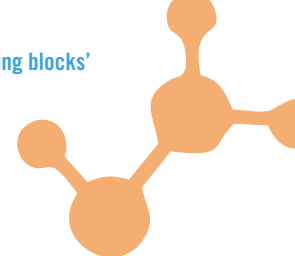
2.3.1   Capacity of RPL professionals

As discussed above, institutions involved in RPL are responsible for: awareness and information; counselling and facilitation; as well as assessment and certification. The fulfilment of each of these responsibilities requires well-trained, competent staff. RPL professionals play a crucial role in ensuring the credibility and transparency of the RPL system. Among the key functions they perform are the following:

- provision of information and guidance to potential applicants

- development and/or application of assessment tools

- counselling and facilitation for applicants throughout the RPL process

- assessment and certification of applicants

- quality assurance

- appeals.

Experience shows that even countries with an established recognition system may not be able to scale it up without sufficient numbers of competent assessment staff.[16] Therefore, it is imperative that countries carry out an analysis of existing institutional capacity, as well as future capacity needs, to identify and address capacity gaps. This analysis needs to recognize that RPL:

1. does not use the same procedures as for formal assessments and

2. requires a specific approach to guidance and counselling.

> **LINKS**
>
> LU4, section 4.3 addresses capacity of RPL professionals in detail. More information, as well as country examples, is provided there.

2.4   Quality assurance

Quality assurance essentially cuts across all RPL building blocks. It encompasses a variety of dimensions, such as ensuring that:

- assessment methodologies are in line with existing qualifications, standards and qualifications frameworks (in order to establish the appropriate level of competencies, to "match" according to existing standards)

- standards and quality codes are observed and applied

- applicants are sufficiently informed, guided and counselled

- results of RPL are monitored, evaluated and traced – and the information used to upgrade the system.

A tried and tested **assessment methodology** is a critical factor in the successful implementation of any RPL system, as it will provide legitimacy to the actual certification. Credibility and confidence in an RPL system relies on the quality of the assessment and the capacity of those assessing, as covered in the previous section.

The European guidelines for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning observe that there are high levels of trust in formal learning and scepticism towards non-traditional qualifications, as RPL is frequently regarded as inferior to the formal learning pathway. Evidence suggests that, too often, qualifications achieved

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16. Werquin (2008: 147).

through recognition of non-formal and informal learning are rarely socially accepted (Werquin, 2008: 146). Quality assurance paves the way to greater acceptance of RPL outcomes.

Some education providers and assessment bodies have little faith in an assessment-only approach for awarding qualifications. Certain higher education institutes are also apprehensive about accepting RPL qualifications as equivalent to formal education and training. The potential beneficiaries themselves often prefer learning in a formal setting, interacting with their peers, as they are unconvinced of the acceptability of RPL (Aggarwal, 2015).

This all uncertainty underlines the importance of quality assurance to build confidence in RPL among all potential beneficiaries – employers, education and training institutions, applicants and governments.

TARGETING DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

The low levels of acceptance of RPL have a particularly severe impact on those who are disadvantaged and with little or no access to formal education and training.

Parity of esteem is therefore highly desirable and is more likely to be achieved if a quality-controlled process of assessment is followed.

Formal education and training systems in most countries have some kind of quality assurance system or procedures in place. With regard to quality assurance for RPL, two main options emerge:

1. establish a quality assurance framework exclusively for RPL (mainly applicable if RPL is implemented as a standalone process and not integrated into the educational or training sector activities and standards) or

2. integrate quality assurance for RPL into existing quality assurance systems for education and training codes or guidelines.

The main "guarantors of quality assurance" are institutions that either implement assessments according to the standards set by the system (or themselves) or certify other bodies to do so. The quality assurance process is set according to relevant curricula and methods covering existing standards.

The type of institutions tasked with quality assurance depends on the systems that countries establish to recognize non-formal and informal learning outcomes:

- Where recognition is geared towards employability and the labour market, stakeholders in the market are responsible for quality.

- Where recognition focuses on getting people to return to formal learning, it is the bodies responsible for quality in the formal system of education and initial training.

Accreditation of institutions tasked with assessment, whether public or private training centres or specific RPL centres, is an important quality assurance measure. Table 2.4 provides some country examples.
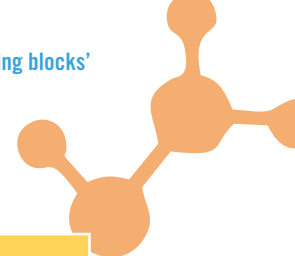
Table 2.4: Quality assurance for RPL in the Netherlands and Tanzania

The Netherlands	Tanzania
The Government of the Netherlands has put greater emphasis on quality assurance of RPL to increase transparency and accessibility. Part of these efforts was the establishment of the **National Quality Code** in 2006 as an instrument to create control of and promote trust in RPL providers. The National Quality Code (revised in 2012 after broad consultations across stakeholder groups) outlines the quality procedures and criteria for certified RPL procedures. The standards for RPL procedures are connected with the requirements in both vocational education and training and higher education, and all RPL procedures result in an "Ervaringscertificaat" (certificate of experience), describing the competencies. RPL providers are registered and listed in a database. They have to abide by the quality code and are evaluated every 18 months. A Knowledge Centre on Accreditation of Prior Learning (Kenniscentrum EVC), established in 2001, supports implementation, knowledge management, dissemination of information on RPL and quality standards. (Duvekot, 2014, http://www.nationaal-kenniscentrum-evc.nl/werknemers/english#c)	Tanzania has prescribed comprehensive quality assurance for RPL in its Guidelines (VETA, 2014), which detail the following provisions: • policy, legal and regulatory framework • institutional framework • active engagement of employers and workers • RPL guidelines • development of competency standards, assessment tools and methodology • portfolio of evidence • accreditation of providers (RPL centres) • grading of skills of applicants • moderation of assessment • training of facilitators, assessors and moderators (RPL professionals) • support services to the RPL applicants (provision of information and skills upgrading) • international cooperation • research, monitoring and evaluation. (VETA, 2014: 4f)

Setting up an M&E system that can measure and track inputs, outputs and outcomes of RPL is important. It provides relevant information to identify potential challenges and, if the information is acted upon, enables steering and management of the process for greater effectiveness and efficiency.

> **LINKS**
>
> Quality assurance in RPL is a major challenge and is therefore dealt with in detail in LU 4: What are the challenges in implementing RPL systems? Further coverage on M&E, which is also relevant to quality assurance, is provided in LU 6, where country examples are given.

2.5 Stakeholder involvement: Ownership and commitment

Various stakeholders are involved in RPL and an RPL system including:

- Government authorities
- education and training providers (public and/or private)
- employers, industry
- trade unions
- potential RPL applicants.

The stakeholders have different responsibilities and functions with regard to making the system work. Ensuring and facilitating the involvement and effective participation of stakeholders (especially employers'

and workers' organizations) in education and training systems is essential in establishing an effective RPL system and to ensure that training matches the needs of the labour market.

Stakeholder participation depends on both the institutional set-up chosen and the overall coverage and positioning of RPL (in terms of education and training, labour market, higher education).

The ways in which stakeholders take part in validation activities vary across the different (sub)sectors. Government and national organizations are normally the main bodies responsible for validation, covering a wide range of functions but mainly acting as coordinators. Training providers are in charge of carrying out the process, providing the four stages (identification, documentation, assessment and certification) of RPL. Employers, trade unions and chambers of commerce need to be encouraged to take part in RPL, especially with regard to coordinating with education and training initiatives (CEDEFOP, 2017a).

In many countries, the level of stakeholder participation is still insufficient; even more markedly in those countries with a large informal economy. Establishing collaboration with informal sector enterprises has, in itself, proven problematic. Accordingly, it would appear that the involvement of social partners in RPL is impacted by their overall involvement in the education and training system. Consequently, a low level of participation in RPL by stakeholders is impacted by structural factors within the country and does not necessarily reflect disinterest in or perceived low importance of RPL.

LINKS

The analysis of stakeholders involved in RPL, as well as their main functions for RPL, is covered in detail in LU 3.

2.6 Financing

Effective functioning of a system requires a policy environment that enables sustainable and equitable funding for RPL from the design stage onward. Many countries have education or skills development levies, a part of which could be assigned to RPL (CEDEFOP, 2017b).

Different **financing models and sources** of RPL funding are detailed in figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2: Financing models and sources
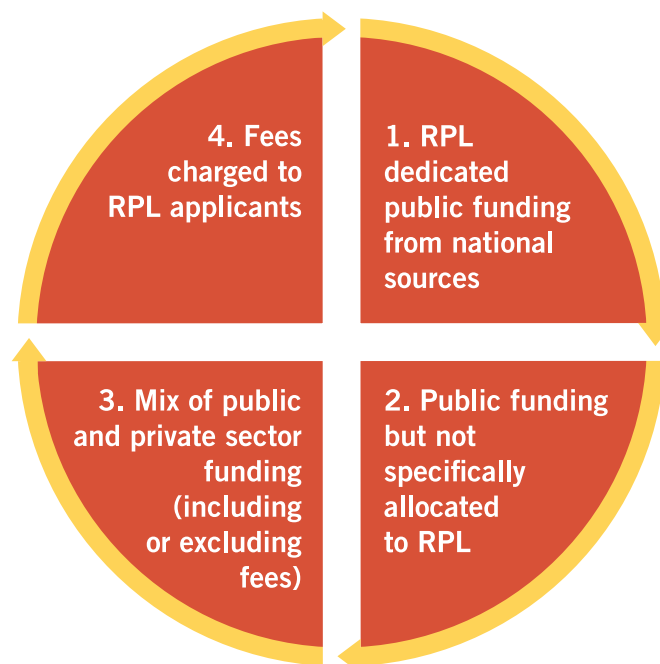
An additional source of finance might be provided by external funding, such as dedicated project funding, donor funding in developing countries or funding from a regional block, e.g. the EU (CEDEFOP, 2017b).

The cost of RPL depends on the methodology that a country adopts, the level and type of qualification and the extent of the support needed by applicants. It also depends on the availability of pre-existing competency standards and assessment tools within the country, and which institutions are responsible for RPL.

Overall, obtaining qualifications through RPL is economical, compared to the costs of formal education and training. Nonetheless, it is much more expensive than the relatively straightforward process of assessment and certification of formal training, as RPL requires intensive, personalized counselling and assessment. In some countries, for example Mauritius and Tanzania, a panel of assessors examines an applicant and may also conduct a site visit to observe the applicant at work (this occurs in the Seychelles). Such requirements necessarily increase the cost of assessment.

To date, little evidence is available on the full costs of RPL, making a wider cost-benefit analysis of RPL impossible.

LINKS

As financing remains a challenge in RPL systems, it is covered in more depth in LU 4 on challenges (LU 4: 4.5 Costs and financing), where more information, as well as country examples on de facto financing of RPL, is provided.

NOTES FOR TRAINERS (LU 2: 2.0, 2.1 and 2.2)

(a) **Introduce the learning outcomes and the topic of the learning unit briefly to the participants.** Highlight that the purpose of this unit is to provide an overview on how to develop an RPL system with a focus on the regulatory and institutional framework (including group work with examples as part of this unit). Explain that the rest of the different building blocks will be further unpacked in the following LUs (e.g. LU 3 on stakeholders etc.).

(b) **Input/interactive presentation:** Develop a PPT on the building blocks by asking the participants to identify them beforehand.

Time: 10 minutes.

(c) **Input and discussion:** Introduce more details and related steps. When presenting or developing the building blocks (see Alternative below), highlight the fact that they are not happening in sequence but rather in parallel. Also point out that the steps might vary from country to country due to the specific context and pre-existing structures for education and training.

(d) **Alternative:** You can also develop the table detailing the steps interactively with the participants, either by putting up an empty table on the PPT or by using a flipchart or pinboard with pre-prepared cards for the building blocks and the printed steps on A4 paper after asking them questions to elicit their active involvement (e.g. "What do you think are the necessary steps to establish a regulatory framework for RPL? Which models of financing are you aware of?").

Time: 20 minutes (35 with the Alternative step).

(e) **Group work** on handout examples 2.2 and 2.3. Organize your participants into three groups and designate the groups 2.2, A and B and 2.3. Distribute the corresponding Handouts 2.2 A and B and 2.3 to the groups, together with an empty flipchart and markers. Explain the tasks (refer to the group tasks written on the handouts). Give the groups 15–20 minutes to complete the task.

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(f)   **Group presentations and discussion:** Ask each group to briefly present their results to all participants (support the groups by putting the figures up on the screen or on a PPT). Add or correct, where necessary. At the end of each presentation, allow for a Q and A session.

(g)   **Summarize and close** the session by highlighting that the subsequent LUs will cover those building blocks not dealt with in this unit, including examples, starting with stakeholders in LU 3.

Time: 40 minutes.

Overview of handouts for Learning Unit 2

2.2   Examples: Policy and legal framework for RPL

(A)   National policies and strategies

(B)   Legislation linked to RPL for migrants – Germany and Sri Lanka

2.3   Examples: Institutional framework

Providers for recognition

Suggestions for further reading around Learning Unit 2

UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning et al. 2012. *UNESCO guidelines for the recognition, validation and accreditation of the outcomes of non-formal and informal learning* (Hamburg, Germany).

UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning et al. 2015. *Global inventory of regional and national qualifications frameworks. Volume II: National and regional cases* (Hamburg, Germany).

Werquin, P.; Wihak, C. 2011. *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) research reveals "islands of good practice"* (Leicester, NIACE).

Links/country documents

India:
Framework for RPL, National Institute of Open Schooling: http://www.nios.ac.in/media/documents/Framework%20for%20RPL%20combined.pdf

South Africa:
Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO). 2016. *Policy for the implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):* http://www.fpmseta.org.za/downloads/QCTOs%20%20RPL%20Policy.pdf

South African Qualifications Agency (SAQA). 2013. *National policy for the implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):* http://www.saqa.org.za/docs/pol/2013/natpol_irpl.pdf

SAQA. 2004. *Criteria and guidelines for the implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning:* http://www.saqa.org.za/docs/guide/2004/rpl.pdf

Australia:
Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). 2013. *AQF qualifications pathways policy:* https://www.aqf.edu.au/sites/aqf/files/aqf_pathways_jan2013.pdf

Germany:
The Recognition Act 2012: https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/media/bqfg_englisch.pdf

LEARNING UNIT 3
Stakeholder involvement:
Who is involved in RPL and in what ways?

Learning units	Duration
Getting to know each other	
Learning Unit 1: What is RPL and why is it important?	
Learning Unit 2: How to develop an RPL system: Introduction to the "building blocks"	
Learning Unit 3: Stakeholder involvement: Who is involved in RPL and in what ways?	
3.1 Key stakeholders	1 hour
3.2 Roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders in RPL	
Learning Unit 4: What challenges are involved in implementing RPL systems? How to address them?	
Learning Unit 5: What are the key components in assessment methodologies?	
Learning Unit 6: How do you know if the system is working?	
Summary, assessment test, evaluation and closing remarks	

Learning outcomes: Learning Unit 3

At the end of this learning unit, the participants will be able to:

- identify the different groups and stakeholders involved in RPL
- explain their roles and responsibilities.

Outline of Learning Unit 3: Stakeholder involvement: Who is involved in RPL and in what ways?

Topic	Time: minutes	Methods	Materials
3.1 Key stakeholders	5	Introduction	Flipchart, marker,
	10	Stakeholder "mapping": interactive discussion	Handout 3.1, flipchart, marker/ cards, pinboard, pins
3.2 Roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders in RPL	0	Group work on stakeholder functions	Handout 3.2
	20	Group presentations and discussion	
	(20)	(*Alternative/addition:* role play on interaction of stakeholders)	
	10	Input on country examples of stakeholders	
	5	Summary and closing remarks	
Total duration	60 minutes (around 10–20 minutes longer with *alternative/addition* detailed above)		

Key questions to be answered with the learning unit

- Who are the key stakeholders in RPL?
- What are their roles and responsibilities?

3.1 Key stakeholders

In order to make RPL work, a number of stakeholders need to be actively involved. Their cooperation and interplay is crucial in making RPL effective. The key stakeholders in RPL are detailed in figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Key stakeholders

Government — may include different authorities: Ministries or Departments of Education, Labour, TVET and others; national and/or regional, local level

Education and training providers — may be public and/or private

Employers/private sector and associations

Trade unions, social partners, NGOs — which oversee and advocate for rights of workers

The Individual — as the potential applicant and main beneficiary

The interaction between the key stakeholders and their overall involvement in the system are depicted in figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: Interaction between key stakeholders in RPL

Employers/private sector and associations

Trade unions, social partners, NGOs

Government: Regulated jobs, priority occupations, etc.

Government: Skills development frameworks, qualification frameworks, etc.

Recognition for working

Framework for recognition

Individuals

Recognition for learning

Education/training providers

Government: Accreditations, learning pathways, certifications

Source: Adapted from Braňka (2016b).

3.2 Roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders in RPL

The various stakeholders involved in RPL have different roles and responsibilities, as depicted in table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders

Stakeholder		Role and responsibilties
Government	Ministries, Departments (Labour, Education, TVET)	Through its departments or ministries, Government: • provides the main framework for RPL at different levels • drives the political agenda and determines how RPL is integrated into the education and training systems • ensures that (the right to) RPL is integrated into the policy and legal framework, linking to education and labour market policies at macro and meso level, qualification frameworks etc. • determines (in cooperation with other stakeholders) learning pathways and creates favourable conditions for lifelong learning (Yang, 2015: 39) • regulates assessment of applicants and accreditation of institutions • has a role in identifying key sectors for RPL, considering available human capital (competencies and experience) and the labour market • determines whether the RPL system implementation is centralized (through national level institutions) or decentralized (through local institutions) • secures funding for RPL and establishes a sustainable funding model. In a shared funding model all stakeholders, e.g. enterprises, Government and applicants, contribute.
Education and training providers	Public and/ or private	Education and training providers may: • offer services such as information and RPL guidance, facilitation • carry out assessment (validation), which can only be done by accredited providers, in relation to the qualification framework and standards in place • provide facilitators and/or assessors, depending on the assessment methods chosen and applied • support and implement lifelong learning measures and often also provide guidance on, or implement training for, meeting the standards.
Employers/ private sector and associations	Employers providing training and qualifications, associations overseeing qualifications	Depending on the system, they may: • be involved in designing ad hoc standards, when no other standards exist • set or adjust competence frameworks within their own industry as well as internal frameworks related to RPL, e.g. human resource and training systems, including lifelong learning strategies as part of their human resource management (Singh, 2015: 42) • implement assessments for RPL, including within their industry/ company • oversee assessment processes, act as an assessment and validation entity (mainly for TVET, often for associations, chambers). This applies predominately in industry-based recognition models.

▶▶▶

Trade unions, NGOs, social organizations		Trade unions, social partners and NGOs/community organizations should be included in the design of the RPL system. They may: • support the process of RPL in different ways throughout its development • shape the system and guard the interests of their constituencies • be represented in relevant entities, such as sectoral councils for qualifications and others
The individual	The potential applicant and main beneficiary	Undergoes the process to obtain all or parts of a qualification. Applicants: • gather relevant information • apply and present the relevant evidence • receive recognition of their competencies, if successful, for learning and for work by either education and training providers or by employers and/or their associations.

DID YOU KNOW?

Governments provide and set the ultimate frameworks for recognition of prior learning – best tackled via a multi-stakeholder approach or "social partnership" model (Singh, 2015: 101). Governments facilitate collaboration of government entities, education and training institutions, employers and their associations, as well as trade unions, NGOs and voluntary organizations (e.g. community organizations).

Table 3.2: RPL social partners' involvement

RPL social partners' involvement

- In South Africa, employers' and workers' organizations participate in the design and implementation of RPL through their respective sector education and training authorities; employers also directly promote RPL in many sectors, including insurance, banking, agriculture and the media.

- In Brazil, the SENAI certification (RPL) system aims to actively involve enterprises right from the design stage, and to promote human resources policies that favour the recognition of competencies for developing a career. The system considers occupational profiles, prepared jointly with representatives from enterprises and workers in the sectoral technical committees, as the reference for assessment (Vargas, 2004).

- PETROBRAS, Brazil's largest corporation, has established a certification system for its employees, especially for those working in the areas of quality control function, in order to ensure competent personnel for safe installations and operational continuity (Vargas, 2004). One of its governance principles is: "We invest in our employees because we know it is impossible to achieve excellence without valuing people". For more information, see www.petrobas.com/en/about-us/.

- In Iceland, RPL is a priority for employer and employee organization (Velciu, 2014) and in the United States, enterprises work with colleges and universities to determine how workers can gain access to, or credit within, college courses. In New Zealand, Industry Training Organizations, mostly funded by industry, have developed industry-based RPL models and carry out or supervise the assessments within the framework for quality assurance prescribed by the New Zealand Qualifiactions Authority (Dysan and Keating, 2005).

- A report for the European Trade Union Confederation notes that trade unions in some countries, for example, Great Britain and Romania, train some members to become "activists", who then provide information and guidance to workers. The same report as recommends that collective bargaining take up the issue of RPL (Damesin, Fayolle and Fleury, 2012).

Source: Aggarwal (2015: 15).

DID YOU KNOW?

Regional stakeholders

Within the overall advancement of RPL worldwide, regional blocks become important stakeholders, as they push the political agenda forward at regional level. The EU and its Commission have taken a role in advancing RPL within Europe, as has the Secretariat for the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the ASEAN Secretariat for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

The EU has furthermore put in place the 2012 European Council recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (Council of the European Union, 2012).

Both the EC and SADC Secretariat have developed Guidelines for RPL (or validating non-formal and informal learning, as it is called in the EU Council Recommendations) to guide their members in the advancement and adoption of more unified approaches and exchange experiences on RPL. Several institutions at regional level or programmes financed by the EC, for example, contribute to RPL within the regional block. CEDEFOP is one such institution at EC level.

The examples presented in table 3.3 demonstrate the roles and responsibilities of a range of RPL stakeholders in the EU, the Netherlands and South Africa.

Table 3.3: Roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders in RPL

	Who is involved?	**Example of main functions**
European stakeholders	• EU Commission and Council • EU agencies, Cedefop and the European Training Foundation • European programmes • European social funds • European social partner organizations • European employers • European projects • European non-governmental organizations • European youth organizations	• Provide common guidelines • Provide common EU tools for validation • Support transparency and portability • Support policy learning and best practices transfer
Public national stakeholders	• Ministries (of education, labour, etc.) • Education, training and qualification authorities • National projects • Public employment • Social services • Social partners	• Provide adequate legislation • Establish procedures • Determine role and responsibilities • Coordinate institutional actors • Provide national guidelines • Establish quality assurance mechanism
Public regional and local stakeholders	• Regional public authorities in education and training, labour and social services, etc. • Local public authorities in education, employment and social services • Regional and local projects	• Provide support to institutions establish procedures • Adapt guidelines to local environment • Coordinate among regional actors • Provide information and support carry out identification, documentation, assessment and certification

Education and training institutions	• Vocational schools universities • Private education institutions • Assessment centres and specialist recognition centres • Projects	• Carry out assessment and certification • Provide support for identification and documentation, including information and guidance • Support individuals

CEDEFOP (2015: 25).

EXAMPLE

The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) carried out an inventory of RPL mechanisms in European Union countries in 2016

(CEDEFOP, 2017a).

EXAMPLE

Stakeholder involvement in the Netherlands: Good practice

The main stakeholders involved in RPL in the Netherlands are:

• national authorities, which facilitate the development and implementation of RPL (in fields such as law and finance)

• social partners, who encourage organizations to use RPL (through sectoral regulations and training funds)

• schools, which provide access to standards by using RPL procedures

• companies and organizations, which guide their employees towards RPL

• citizens who can, with or without support from RPL providers, build up their personal portfolio for RPL procedures.

The Government, schools/colleges/universities and social partners focus on creating favourable conditions in the RPL development phase in as many contexts as possible: work, voluntary work, reintegration, jobseeking, education and training. The Dutch Knowledge Centre for RPL (Kenniscentrum EVC) is the umbrella organization for this approach. As a result of dialogue with the stakeholders, three components of RPL were adopted.

In 2000, a national working group (comprising government ministries and social partners) on Validation of Prior Learning (VLP) formulated a broad vision on VPL and the implementation process. VPL had to bridge the gap between the education supply and the demand on the labour market side.

Three groups of stakeholders have key responsibilities for VPL:

1. Providers of VPL: When registered in the Quality Code for VPL, any organization may offer VPL procedures that can lead to a formal "Ervaringscertificaat" (certificate of experience). This registration process entails a number of steps concerning the quality of the process offered, the quality of the staff involved and the independence of the organization.

2. Formal education and training sector: Any official VPL procedure results in an Ervaringscertificaat. This certificate describes the value of an individual's skills portfolio. The applicant can use this report to ask the examination committee of an institute (school, university or training institute) either for access to a learning programme, to obtain exemptions or to receive a full certificate/diploma.

3. Private sector: In almost all sectors, recruitment and selection of personnel is increasingly also covering target groups without formal requirements. VPL is also used to address formative issues, such as retention of personnel or outplacement (from "work to work") and employability. The role of the private sector is related to activities such as financing and raising awareness within sectors and companies or acting as VPL providers.

Source: From Braňka (2016a: 18), using Duvekot (2015).

EXAMPLE

Stakeholders in South Africa

RPL in South Africa involves a number of stakeholders:

- Department of Higher Education and Training
- South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)
- Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) and other quality councils and professional bodies responsible for establishing standards and qualifications
- National Artisan Moderation Body
- NGOs
- regulators
- training providers
- employers
- trade (workers) union and
- the applicants themselves (students, workers, artisans).

Since 2003, QCTO has been instrumental in the development of an occupational recognition system as a sub-framework of the NQF.

The QCTO tasks include:

- development of qualifications acceptable to industry
- effective roll-out of the newly constructed qualifications
- accrediting, supporting and monitoring training providers
- reviewing qualifications to determine their appropriateness
- accrediting Assessment Centres and
- certification of those applicants who successfully complete qualifications.

Source: Adapted from Braňka (2016b: 99).
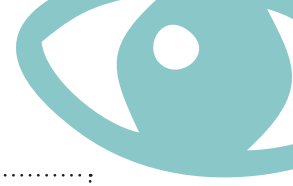
NOTES FOR TRAINERS (LU 3: 3.1 and 3.2)

(a) **Introduce** the learning outcomes and the topic of the learning unit briefly to the participants. Highlight that this unit will continue to develop the building blocks, as this unit covers the key stakeholders, their functions within the RPL system and the benefits they reap from RPL.

(b) **Stakeholder "mapping":** Invite the participants to think of and name the main stakeholders of RPL (you can also ask people to get together in buzz groups of four or, if participants are sitting at tables, to briefly discuss with the occupants of their table who these stakeholders are). Ask participants to name them and write their results on a flipchart, creating a list of stakeholders, or on cards, pinning them on a pinboard or whiteboard (try to create an overview similar to Handout 3.1). Add any missing elements, where necessary.

(c) **Group work on roles and responsibilities:** Introduce the group work by stating that it is important to examine the different roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders in greater depth. Form three groups and assign the following entities to them: (1) the Government, (2) education and training institutions and (3) trade unions, NGOs and applicants. If you have started with a list of stakeholders under (b), provide each of the participants with cards or with a flipchart and markers. Ask them, in their groups, to discuss and determine the roles and responsibilities of their allocated stakeholder with regard to RPL, i.e. to answer the questions: "What do they do?", "What do they/should they take care of?". Give the groups 10 minutes to complete the task. You can distribute Handout 3.1 as supporting material.

(d) **Group presentations:** Ask each group to nominate a representative to present their results. Fill the Stakeholder mapping from (b) above with roles and responsibilities by adding the cards. Add in an interactive discussion with all participants, where necessary, asking the group to write additional cards (if you provided cards) or adding to their flipchart. Distribute Handout 3.2.

Close the LU by summarizing the key points. Tell participants that the next LU will focus on different challenges in implementing RPL systems.

Overview of handouts for Learning Unit 3

3.1   Figure: Key stakeholders in RPL

3.2   Functions of the key stakeholders in RPL

Suggestions for further reading around Learning Unit 3

Andersson, P.; Fejes, A. 2012. *Effects of recognition of prior learning as perceived by different stakeholders*. Prior Learning Assessment Inside Out 1.

CEDEFOP. 2015. *European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning* (Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities), doi:10.2801/008370.

Dyson, C.; Keating, J. 2005. Recognition of prior learning: Policy and practice for skills learned at work. (Geneva, International Labour Office).

Werquin, P. 2010. *Recognising non-formal and informal learning: Outcomes, policies and practices* (OECD, Paris, France), Chapter 2.

Yang, J. 2015. *Recognition, validation and accreditation of non-formal and informal learning in UNESCO member states* (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, Hamburg, Germany).

Links:

Video: *RPL success stories* (GQ Australia) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKqzVPSY5xw

Video: *RPL success stories, Vol. 1* (GQ Australia) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vWMHP-tf7_o

LEARNING UNIT 4
What challenges are involved in implementing RPL systems? How to address them?

Learning units	Duration
Getting to know each other	
Learning Unit 1: What is RPL and why is it important?	
Learning Unit 2: How to develop an RPL system: Introduction to the "building blocks"	
Learning Unit 3: Stakeholder involvement: Who is involved in RPL and in what ways?	
Learning Unit 4: What challenges are involved in implementing RPL systems? How to address them?	
4.1 Awareness, guidance and counselling 4.2 Matching occupational and qualification standards 4.3 Capacity of RPL professionals 4.4 Quality assurance 4.5 Costs and financing	3 hours
Learning Unit 5: What are the key components in assessment methodologies?	
Learning Unit 6: How do you know if the system is working?	
Summary, assessment test, evaluation and closing remarks	

Learning outcomes: Learning Unit 4

At the end of this learning unit, the participants will be able to:

- name and list the main challenges in implementing RPL systems

- identify and make the case for different strategies to address the challenges identified

- report on strategies applied to counter the challenges in the countries of their fellow participants.

Outline of Learning Unit 4: Challenges

Topic	Time: minutes	Methods	Materials
Welcome and identification of challenges in implementation of RPL systems	5 5 15 15	Short input Video and discussion "Map" of challenges/brainstorming Short input on the challenges	Projector, screen (wall), laptop, PPT, loudspeakers, internet or downloaded video Pinboard or wall with large paper, cards, markers
Strategies to address the challenges: 4.1 Awareness, guidance and counselling 4.2 Matching occupational and qualification standards 4.3 Capacity of RPL professionals 4.4 Quality assurance 4.5 Costs and financing	20 35 (45) 10	Group work on strategies to address the challenges (4.1–4.4) Group presentations and joint discussion (*Alternative (a)* and *(b)*: rotating group work stations/case stations, additions and joint discussion) Short input, country examples and discussion	Flipcharts, markers, cards, Handouts 4.1–4.4 Flipcharts, marker PPT
4.6 Summary of challenges and related strategies	15	Visual overview of challenges and strategies for addressing them Summary and closing remarks	Cards or sticky notes, markers (different colour to those used in the Welcome session)
Total duration	120 minutes (more with *alternative* listed above)		

Key questions to be answered with the learning unit

- What are the main challenges in the implementation of RPL systems?
- How can awareness of RPL be enhanced?
- How can occupational and qualification standards be matched?
- What is needed to build the capacity of RPL professionals?
- How can the quality of RPL be assured?
- How is RPL financed?
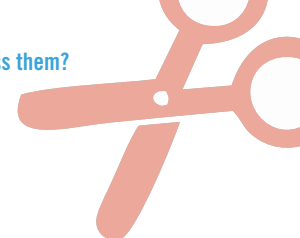
Main challenges in the implementation of RPL systems

The previous learning units focused on establishing an effective RPL system and the related building blocks (LU 2) and stakeholders (LU 3).

This learning unit focuses on selected challenges involved in implementing RPL systems, in terms of making them work effectively and efficiently. These challenges will be identified in this learning unit, together with suggested strategies and/or steps that can be taken to overcome them.

> **REFLECTION**
>
> What are the challenges that might hinder successful implementation of an RPL system? Which challenges might people in need of RPL encounter along the way?

> **LINKS**
>
> Watch the video. While watching, note down the real and perceived challenges/barriers to RPL facing employers (up to minute 2:30): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SZ5gNaskgv4.

Table 4.1: Main challenges in implementing RPL

Description	Challenge
People are not aware of the possibility of RPL, the process that it entails and the benefits it can offer them	Lack of awareness and knowledge about RPL
Employers are not aware of or do not recognize qualifications achieved through RPL	Lack of awareness, understanding and trust on the part of employers
Women who have been out of the workforce for a significant period of time often do not know that they might be eligible for RPL, or RPL offers do not specifically take into consideration the needs of this group	Lack of awareness and targeting of RPL towards those in particular need (vulnerable groups)
Language can act as an major barrier for potential applicants, particularly in countries with a number of local languages	Lack of awareness and targeting of RPL towards those in particular need (vulnerable groups)
People in need of RPL do not know that their present competencies might be recognized towards a qualification	Lack of guidance and counselling
Employers do not have confidence in the RPL process	Lack of confidence in the quality of the assessment applied during the RPL process
Insufficient numbers of counsellors or competent staff available for RPL and guidance support services inadequate	Lack of capacity – number of and competencies of RPL professionals inadequate
High costs of RPL, insufficient funds for supporting RPL processes (such as competencies gap training etc.)	Lack of access due to costs
The competencies acquired are not sufficient to meet the qualification standards but no opportunity to advance or close the competencies gap is available	Lack of competencies upgrading or competencies gap training opportunities

NOTES FOR TRAINERS (LU 4—4.0 Main challenges)

(a) **Input:** Provide a short input on the learning unit and its objectives. Highlight the fact that this unit focuses on strategies to address challenges in the effective implementation of RPL systems and will deal with a number of issues raised in LU 2 when introducing the "building blocks".

(b) **Video:** Show the video (see link above, up to minute 2:30). Ask the participants to note the challenges of RPL. Then briefly discuss what they gathered from the video. Explain that, as a next step, you want to create a "map" of challenges for discussion.

(c) **"Map of challenges":** Invite the participants to reflect on challenges, which may go beyond those listed in the video. You can either ask them to discuss in their groups or discuss in plenary and then ask some participants to write the results on cards. Cluster them on the pinboard or wall. Table 4.1 provides guidance on challenges with regard to implementation of RPL.

(d) **Input on challenges:** Provide an input on the challenges, outlining the main issues at hand for each area (challenge).

Time: 40 minutes.

4.1 Awareness, guidance and counselling

RPL is an evolving concept,[17] including the terminology and definitions involved. Many stakeholders and potential beneficiaries are still unaware of the opportunities that RPL offers in terms of outcomes, the process and the benefits – employer, education and training authorities do not understand the processes, undermining its acceptance.

For many countries, the RPL methodology for assessing one's competencies is complex, and the applicants require significant support and counselling during the various processes. During the guidance and counselling, the RPL candidate must receive detailed information on:

- the process
- timeline
- cost
- potential outcomes
- the benefits in the labour market.

In a successful RPL system, the nature of the relationship between the assessor and the applicant is different from that found in a traditional, formal education system.

The assessors, while maintaining quality and accuracy in the assessment, must provide accurate information about the process and guide applicants in collecting evidence. For example, while an applicant may have all the necessary credentials, he or she may not know how to present them. Hence, before beginning the

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17. The following section is taken and slightly adapted from Aggarwal (2015: 11, 12), where not otherwise indicated.
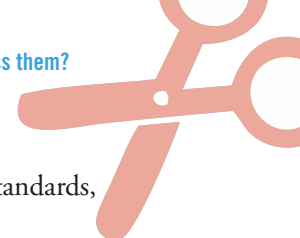
formal application process, applicants must be informed about the qualifications and competence standards, the costs, time frame and the advantages of RPL.

EXAMPLE

In **Tanzania**, guidance and counselling is provided by both facilitators and assessors. Facilitators provide information about the RPL process and requirements, while assessors offer specific guidance and information related to the assessment procedure. The aim is to provide effective counselling right from the start, so that suitable applicants are identified and the success rate maximized. This also helps to reduce costs and prevent the RPL system from being overloaded, particularly at the assessment stage.

To this end, some countries emphasize the use of ICT for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the vocational guidance and counselling system. In Queensland, Australia, applicants first visit a Skilling Solutions Centre (often in a local shopping centre) and use a web-based self-assessment tool to match their competencies to a relevant qualification (full or part) (http://skillomatic.theworklab.com.au). This takes about 10–15 minutes. Potential applicants are then provided with a list of preferred RPL providers where they can undergo the RPL process.

The online self-assessment checklist takes a user through the steps listed below, building knowledge about the process and matching their competencies with a qualification (part or full):

- Introducing the benefits of RPL.

- Selecting the qualification that is most suited to one's area of expertise from a list of approved qualifications.

- Identifying one's competencies against a list of competence groups and units of competence: for example, the website lists 11 competence groups for the qualification chosen in the previous step.

- Matching one's competencies with those of the qualification: the website does this automatically and lists the qualifications for which one's competencies are a potential match.

- Identifying and collecting evidence: the website provides guidance on the nature of evidence to be gathered as well as the types of evidence that are permissible.

- Viewing RPL providers: Applicants can search for providers which offer RPL for their chosen qualifications. The report generated can be printed and taken to the provider for discussion with an assessor, who will give more specific advice about the enrolment procedure and the evidence required.

Source: Aggarwal (2015).

Guidance and counselling are crucial components of the recognition process. Career guidance services and counselling[18] should also extend to the post-RPL process. For those who do not satisfy all the requirements to be awarded a qualification or partial qualification, the next step is to find top-up or gap training solutions. For those who succeeded in achieving the qualification or part-qualification, their next move is to make the best possible use of their newly acquired qualification.

The full information package to be provided to applicants should include:

- the potential benefits of RPL to all stakeholders, especially the applicants

- requirements for entering the RPL process (eligibility conditions)

- qualifications standards used in the assessment process

- cost of the entire RPL process, especially for applicants

- timeframe for assessment and the potential flexibility within the timelines and

- any other aspects of the RPL process that may be of interest to applicants (process, forgone earnings and opportunity costs).

A well-directed strategy must be developed to help generate awareness about RPL, its potential benefits, and to build positive attitudes in all stakeholders.

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18. The following paragraphs are taken, slightly adapted, from SADC (n.d.).

4.1.1   Strategies to address awareness, guidance and counselling

The **main strategies** focus on:

- **implementing awareness-raising activities and communication on RPL** among different target groups
- **ensuring a functioning system of guidance and counselling, which targets different groups, including vulnerable groups**, for potential applicants (pre-assessment of qualifications, assistance in the collection of evidence and preparation for the assessment). Sufficient RPL professionals to guide and counsel are required (link to section 4.3) and easy access is essential (link to section 4.5).

Who is responsible?

Depending on the system for RPL chosen, the Government and public and/or private employment service providers have responsibility for guidance and counselling (the recognition authority and institutions involved).

Key steps to ensure awareness, guidance and counselling:

- Develop an awareness-raising and communication strategy for RPL, its opportunities and requirements, process and potential benefits (based on needs assessment), targeting different potential applicants for RPL.
- Specifically reach out to employers to raise their awareness and build their trust in RPL.
- Guidance and counselling should be organized (and flyers available) in all (relevant) languages.
- Guidance services and counselling should be provided by trained, qualified professionals (link to 4.3: Capacity of RPL professionals).
- Techniques for fighting illiteracy (via mobile phones, SMS communication etc.) could be considered for raising awareness about RPL and guiding potential applicants through the RPL process (key messages, reminders of deadlines etc.).
- Dissemination of information through a wide range of mediums to increase outeach, such as radio, television and cartoon should be organized for illiterate potential applicants with strong practical competencies (targeted, based on the needs assessment).

TARGETING DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

Lack of awareness among disadvantaged groups impedes participation. "Low-skilled individuals, early school leavers, jobseekers/unemployed, individuals at risk of unemployment, older workers, migrants/refugees and people with disabilities, benefit least from validation" (CEDEFOP, 2017a).

More targeted information and awareness raising targeting those groups should therefore be undertaken. Where relevant – the determination of which might require a specific needs-based assessment – a focused approach to reach and include these groups within the current RPL system might be necessary.

REFLECTION

How is awareness on RPL raised in your country? Which services for guidance and counselling are in place?
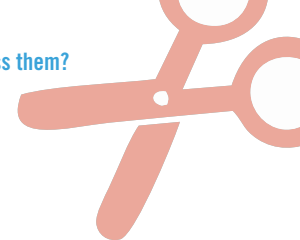
4.1.2   Examples and good practices in reaching out[19]

> **EXAMPLE**
>
> In **Belgium**, the public employment services (PES) are the primary channel for reaching individual users. Jobseekers have been the main target group of the scheme since its inception. Validation centres also provide information to anyone interested in the scheme. Prior to registering for a test, guidance is provided to applicants to assess their chances of success. Other ways to reach potential users include the Consortium website, the diffusion of information material, targeted emails to jobseekers, media campaigns and the creation of an online portal providing information about all types of validation procedures in French-speaking Belgium (Mathou, 2016).

> **EXAMPLE**
>
> In **South Africa**, the occupational learning system is a relatively new innovation. A number of marketing and communications activities are being undertaken to keep stakeholders informed about occupational qualifications development and assessment processes: (1) national road shows are held in all nine provinces; (2) a website was developed providing vital information; (3) a management information system was installed; (4) a marketing and communication strategy was developed; (5) the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations participates in major exhibitions and produces a range of printed materials. The different stakeholders also actively use Facebook and Twitter to promote RPL, including a one-page summary of the process, benefits and stakeholders, which uses visual elements to make it more appealing.

> **EXAMPLE**
>
> In **Germany**, the website "Recognition in Germany" acts as a one-stop-shop information centre, focusing mainly on individual users but also catering for employers and stakeholders.
>
> It serves as an information portal of the German Government for the recognition of foreign qualifications or certificates for migrant workers and refugees who wish to take up employment in Germany.
>
> The website collates relevant information and services that pertain to how professional recognition can be obtained and includes information on, among other things: (1) a step-by-step process of recognition for selected occupations, which are searchable via a user-friendly "Recognition Finder" function; (2) preconditions for skills recognition; (3) success stories relating to skills recognition; (4) hotline and counselling information; (5) relevant authorities, institutions and their contact information.
>
> Under "success stories", the website provides examples, offering information on people going through the recognition process and how it improved their chances of finding better jobs.
>
> It also provides guidance related to working in Germany, indicating ways of finding counselling providers, information on legal matters and on the recognition procedure itself and, most importantly, information on occupations covered and on authorities that may provide the competencies assessment.
>
> Users can access this website in eight different languages, including Turkish and Romanian, and the mobile application is available in German and English as well as in the five major languages spoken by refugees: Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Tigrinya and Pashto (ILO, 2017).
>
> (See website: https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/en/index.php)

> **EXAMPLE**
>
> In **Ghana**, awareness is supported through meetings, workshops, stakeholder consultations, exhibitions, trade fairs and participation in graduation ceremonies for the recognition of competencies of graduated apprentices.

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19. The following text is taken from a collection of case studies in Braňka (2016a).

4.2 Matching occupational and qualification standards

Assessment under RPL is carried out against standards prescribed for a qualification.[20] Since potential RPL applicants have acquired a significant portion of their learning in the workplace and since they often use their newly acquired qualifications in the labour market, there needs to be a close match between occupational standards and qualification standards.

Each of the two standards has different objectives:

- **occupational standards,** which are determined by the labour market, describe the typical activities involved in an occupation (plumber, driver etc.) and the related competencies applicants must have in order to carry out these activities, while

- **qualification standards,** most of the time designed by educational institutions, focus on how and what people need to learn as well as how it will be assessed.

While occupational standards influence the latter, the organization of learning in the education system is based on pedagogic principles, and on building a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

In simple terms, the standards for assessment/validation of informal and non-formal learning are the same as those for formal educational and training and occupational standards. Occupational standards are detailed written descriptions of what an employee is expected to know and do in his or her work role. They are national requirements and benchmarks for competent performance in the workplace (see the example of a bricklayer/stonemason under section 4.2.2).

TARGETING DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

For migrant workers, RPL is further complicated by the challenges associated with the recognition of foreign qualifications and experience – or the lack of relevant mutual recognition agreements. The RPL procedure for migrant workers typically involves the recognition of qualifications which have been acquired in their home country, including verification of documents of formal education outcomes: checking of individual evidence (outcomes of informal and non-formal learning – occupational experience and continuing training) and competency-assessment procedures (testing).

For potential migrants, it is therefore important to start the recognition procedure before departure, wherever possible. In addition, an automated recognition process may be established – on the basis of an agreement reached between countries. Such agreements would be further supported and promoted by establishing coherence and aligning national and regional qualification frameworks.

Supporting measures, such as guidance and recommendations for skills upgrading for migrants, are also critically important (ILO, 2017).

Approaches to recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes with the aim of awarding a qualification relate to qualification standards. A learning outcomes-based approach – expressing what an applicant is expected to know and be able to do – usually provides a better reference point for validation, implicitly acknowledging that the same outcome can be reached in various ways. Using learning outcomes, however, provides no guarantee of success. If written too narrowly, important facets of the individual learning experience may be lost; if written too generally, assessment may lose orientation and result in a lack of consistency and reliability. The writing of learning outcomes-based standards requires attention to the balance between job/task-specific and transferable skills and competencies (CEDEFOP, 2009).

Consequently, qualifications should be modular and competence based, with clearly defined standards or learning outcomes. The standards for full or modular-type qualifications (against which applicants are assessed) should closely match the occupational standards used in the labour market.

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20. The following section is taken from Aggarwal (2015: 17f) and slightly adapted.

If the full qualification covers a broad range of competencies, the modules may be designed to serve three distinct purposes:

1. A module (or a combination of modules) must match the standards of the associated occupation.

2. There must be horizontal and vertical linkages between modules.

3. Overall, the modules should come together to cover the standards of the full qualification.

Sometimes it requires innovative thinking to achieve these three objectives. However, designing qualification systems which serve these purposes allows workers to see their competencies assessed and certified, at least against a module or part qualification, and ensures parity with formal education and training. If desired, workers can take additional modules, furthering their competencies, spending less time and money, and thus fulfilling the objective of lifelong learning.

EXAMPLE

India has designed a new competence-based training system called Modular Employable Skills, which incorporates the abovementioned features. **Tanzania** is also restructuring its qualifications along these lines.

4.2.1   Strategies to address the matching of occupational and qualification standards

The **main strategies** include the following:

- design and apply modular and competence-based standards based on learning outcomes to facilitate recognition

- define RPL qualifications that match the standards (in full or part) of formal education and training/qualification standards

- establish feedback mechanisms.

Who is responsible?

Depending on the system for RPL, the Government and public and/or private service providers have responsibility for guidance and counselling (the recognition authority and institutions involved).

Key steps to ensure matching of occupational standards and qualification standards:

- For existing systems: assess whether qualifications awarded through RPL refer to the same or equivalent standards as those for formal education and training.

- For new systems: in designing the system, ensure that the standards used for RPL and formal education and training are equivalent.

- Put emphasis on competence-based standards and learning outcomes.

- Use feedback mechanisms to ensure review and revision of standards used for RPL.

REFLECTION

How are occupational and qualification standards matched in your country or in a particular education sector in your country? What procedures have been put in place to match these?

4.2.2   Example: Occupational standard of a bricklayer, stonemason

EXAMPLE

Occupational standard: Bricklayer/stonemason

Main duties: Lay bricks, concrete blocks, stone, structural tiles and other masonry materials to construct or repair walls, floors, partitions, foundations and other structures, using building materials such as cement, grout, plaster, resins etc. and products such as sand, gravel etc.

Working environment: Civil and industrial building and construction fields.

Organization context: Work under the supervision of a building master.

Modality of the delivery of tasks: (a) May work both outdoors or indoors on a building site, where workers can be subject to noise, dust and bad weather conditions; (b) the job requires physical effort; good time-keeping practices; willingness to comply with obligations to use any prescribed equipment for preventing injuries and to follow the proper practices prescribed for a given building site.

Optional requirements: Previous working experience in the sector or a certificate issued by a building and construction school will be an asset.

Soft skills:

- accuracy
- dexterity
- resilience to hard physical work
- a positive attitude towards teamwork and cooperation.

Competencies necessary to be able to carry out construction works:

- ability to read blueprints, with a clear capacity to understand the symbols used
- capacity to interpret the specific technical project in order to define modalities, shape, dimensions and measurements of the building works
- ability to plan and benchmark the tasks in compliance with the project schedule
- capacity to define the technical characteristics of the building materials and knowledge of how to use them according to the nature of the works to be done
- ability to carry out masonry and plaster work
- ability to demolish, open or close partitions
- competence in erecting simple scaffoldings and mobile platforms
- capacity to clean up any rubble produced on the site.

Knowledge of the following:

- the variety and characteristics of building materials
- environmental regulations at EU, national and regional level on waste management concerning civil and industrial debris
- different steps in the building process
- basic knowledge of the technology concerning building materials
- concrete
- basic technical drawing
- rules on safety in building and construction.

Skills:

- apply techniques for erecting scaffolding
- apply techniques for erecting scaffolding in wood
- use tools for construction works (e.g. drills, chisels, pneumatic guns etc.)
- use safety equipment for individual protection
- apply techniques for inside plaster
- apply techniques to prevent walls from falling down
- apply techniques for finishing the surfaces as required by the project's specification
- apply techniques for building works using prefabricated elements, grid and linear structures, tensile structures, walls
- capacity to use tools for construction works
- apply procedures for the maintenance of equipment and tools for construction and building work
- apply procedures to maintain the safety of building sites.

Source: ILO (2017).
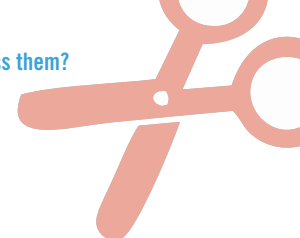
4.3 Capacity of RPL professionals

The quality of RPL, including guidance and counselling, is therefore highly dependent on the competencies of RPL professionals. These might have different names and responsibilities in the RPL process and include (depending on the country and the model adopted):

- administrators/coordinators
- counsellors
- guidance professionals
- assessors
- facilitators/master trainers
- moderators, among others.

Capacity of RPL professionals was introduced in LU 2 as part of the building block on the institutional framework. RPL professionals perform several key functions in the system depending on their role in the process, including:

- providing information
- developing and/or applying assessment methods and tools
- providing counselling during, and facilitating, the process
- assessing and certifying qualifications; assuring quality
- conducting audits and
- following up on appeals, among other tasks.

The Government and/or the institutions tasked with RPL need to ensure sufficient capacity and adequate numbers of professional staff.

EXAMPLE

The role of a counsellor and the required capacity

The work of a counsellor starts with the process of reaching out to engage potential applicants, supporting their preparation for assessment, and guiding the applicants after the assessment decision. An important part of the role is to work with applicants to appraise the extent and depth of evidence of learning outcomes (helping to develop self-awareness).

The counsellor must have a clear understanding of the context of RPL and related standards. The counsellor informs the applicant of procedures, how to present evidence of learning outcomes and respond to questions, and explains expectations in terms of behaviour, helping the applicant to prepare for an assessment and providing realistic information on possible outcomes.

The counsellor must therefore have thorough knowledge of the assessment process. A distinctive part of the role is independence from the assessment process and the ability to offer impartial advice on the process (CEDEFOP, 2015: 33).

A general strategy for preparing RPL professionals for their role and function (a capacity-building strategy) should be in place. Evidence suggests that the RPL momentum sometimes stalls after successful piloting because the scaling-up process requires sufficient numbers of professionals, trained to inform, guide and assess RPL applicants (Werquin, 2017). RPL assessment must be equitable, culturally inclusive, fair, flexible, valid and reliable, and allow for reasonable flexibility. This requires not only competent assessors and recognition procedures to ensure the authority and reliability of the results, but also oversight and monitoring of the

performance of assessors to ensure consistency in their judgements (Singh, 2015: 170). See section 4.3.2 for an interesting example of the capacity building approach for RPL professionals in Tanzania.

EXAMPLE

In **Australia**, there is increasing action on developing assessors' capacities, aimed at helping assessors to see their own strengths as professionals.

In **Portugal**, professionalization is sought through the sharing of practices, knowledge and experiences among teachers and trainers who carry out adult learning programmes and undertake RPL assessments. Many countries (e.g. Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, Chile, Tanzania and Mauritius) require registration or accreditation of assessors, often in conjunction with training measures that are provided for them (Singh, 2015: 170).

4.3.1   Strategies to address capacity of RPL professionals

Addressing the challenge of capacity of RPL professionals involves two prerequisites: clarified institutional structures (link to building block institutional framework) and relevant mandates and sufficient resources (financial and human). Table 4.2 details the key knowledge and skills required by RPL assessors.

The **main strategies** refer to the following aspects:

- Assess and determine the required number and the profiles of the range of RPL professionals (counsellors, assessors, facilitators, certifiers, professionals dealing with appeals etc.).

- Establish the mandate and capacity of the recognition authority/ies to ensure relevant numbers and capacity (link to section 2.3: Institutional framework).

- Ensure a sufficient number of RPL professionals, based on the needs assessment.

- Develop a strategy for capacity development of RPL professionals (general preparation for their different roles and continuous professional development).

- Build and ensure the knowledge and competencies of RPL professionals (preparation of RPL professionals, training, certification, etc.).

Who is responsible?

Depending on the system of RPL in place and the institutional set-up and roles assigned, responsibility lies with:

- government (the appropriate ministry and respective budget) and/or

- the recognition authority or authorities (public or private institutions, depending on the system).

In systems, where employers or employers' associations are also involved in RPL through their role in assessing competencies, they also need to ensure the capacity of the respective professionals, e.g. assessors, within their company, trade or industry.

Key steps to ensure the availability of competent and qualified RPL professionals:

- Establish a database of potential RPL professionals, with information about their field of expertise (guidance, assessment) and their level of competence/experience.

- Determine the criteria for selection of RPL professionals at different RPL practice levels.

- Identify those RPL professionals who meet the criteria.

- Conduct training needs assessments on potential RPL professionals.

- Design and establish training programmes for potential RPL professionals according to training needs.

- Train the different professionals on RPL processes and the assessment methods put in place.

- Identify strategic occupational sectors for (piloting) RPL.

- Accredit the RPL professionals (at the level of the recognition authority, including the necessary capacity for certification and management).

- Develop a database for qualified and accredited RPL professionals.

- Ensure mechanisms for sharing of experiences of RPL professionals (network of professionals).

(Slightly adapted from SADC (n.d.: 32), taking into account Braňka (2016a).)

REFLECTION

How is capacity of RPL professionals in your country and respective education or economic sector addressed? Do you have sufficient numbers of RPL professionals?

4.3.2   Examples: Building the capacity of RPL assessors

EXAMPLE

The job of an **assessor** is to seek, review and check evidence of an individual's learning and judge whether it meets specific standards. Assessors must therefore fully comprehend the standards and the relevant assessment methods for referencing evidence against those standards.

In Europe, **assessors** are generally required to have a fixed number of years of experience in the respective field; five years is a common requirement and assessors can be recently retired professionals, senior managers in their field, expert representatives of academia, and social partners or teachers in the specific field, with direct experience in the particular educational or occupational sector where RPL is applied. Training in the process of recognition is also required.

(Adapted from CEDEFOP, 2015: 34.)

Table 4.2: Key knowledge and skills of assessors

Key knowledge and skills of assessors
• Be familiar with the validation process (validity and reliability).
• Have experience in the specific field of work.
• Have no personal interest in the validation outcome (to guarantee impartiality and avoid conflicts of interest).
• Be familiar with different assessment methodologies.
• Be able to inspire trust and to create a proper psychological setting for the candidates.
• Be committed to provide feedback on the match between learning outcomes and validation standards/references (via support systems).
• Be trained in assessment and validation processes and knowledgeable about quality assurance mechanisms.
• Operate according to a code of conduct.

A few countries have developed formal qualifications and training programmes for assessors, as detailed in table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Qualification measures for RPL assessors – examples

Country	Qualification for assessors
Australia	Developed a learning resource for assessors, namely "Informal learning: Learning from experience", which includes assessment tools and case studies (Vickers, 2014)
Norway	Organizes annual courses and seminars for assessors and the mentoring of inexperienced assessors. Assessment centres register trained assessors (Christensen, 2013)
Slovenia	The National Assessment Centre trains RPL assessors, using funding from participants' registration fees (Werquin, 2010b)
Manitoba, Canada	The Red River College offers two levels of training: a 40-hour introduction to the PLAR system and an advanced 40-hour course on PLAR (Werquin, 2010b)
South Africa	Evaluators are required to be "registered assessors", who are trained and also meet the minimum SAQA criteria to perform assessments in particular sectors. Moreover, the assessor must be qualified at a higher NQF level than the level at which the assessment takes place (Werquin, 2010b). RPL practitioners are also trained by public universities
Tanzania	RPL assessors need to be licensed through a three-step process of training. The licence is valid for three years only and can be withdrawn in the event of unsatifactory performance. Performance of the assessors is regularly monitored by RPL facilitators (see the example provided below for further detail)
Mauritius	RPL facilitators receive training that stresses the different skills required for RPL and their role in guiding the applicant. The training puts particular emphasis on reflection in facilitation, active listening, a non-judgemental attitude etc., so that the facilitator supports the applicants in the identification of things they know (knowledge), things they do (skills), things they have (evidence) and the compilation of the evidence in a portfolio

Source: Aggarwal (2015: box 10).

EXAMPLE

Tanzania – Bridging the skills gap for RPL professionals

Tanzania put in place a capacity-building approach to address:

- RPL facilitators, coordinators and assessors as professionals that are directly involved in and implementing the RPL process

- professionals that are indirectly involved, such as in the management of RPL institutions, decision-makers and those that enable RPL in terms of finances, logistics and M&E.

The main difference in the capacity building of these two categories of professionals lies in the content and the depth and length of training provided (see table 4.4 for details).
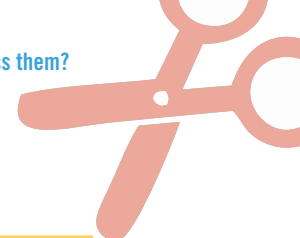
Table 4.4: Capacity-building approach for different RPL professionals in Tanzania

RPL professionals and profiles	Capacity building
Directly involved in RPL	
RPL assessors: • assess the actual competencies of the applicants against set standards Assessors need to know how to assess applicants, how to identify skills gaps and be able to suggest how these can be bridged	Obtain licensing through successful completing of training consisting of three steps: 1. 10-day training for prospective assessors. Number of participants (assessors) 20–30 with five trainers 2. Micro-exercise for 2–3 days practising assessment in a mock-up assessment scenario 3. Real assessment
RPL facilitators: • ensure that the assessors abide by the quality standards set out • act as mastertrainers • are mandated to reject applications (with reasons)	
Indirectly involved in RPL	
Involved in the overall process within RPL institutions, decision-makers and those that enable RPL in terms of finances, logistics and M&E	A 2-day training course on the following aspects: • What is RPL? • Benefits • Process and how it is carried out • Principles of assessment centres (for supervisors: when to intervene) • Mastercraftspersons

4.4 Quality assurance

As trust and confidence in RPL is key to its success, one of the major challenges is quality assurance of the procedures applied. While quality assurance is carried out at all stages in a formal learning system (input, learning process, outcome), RPL focuses principally on the outcome stage which acknowledges the learning outcomes, no matter where, how or when learning occurred. Consequently, often a much more rigorous assessment methodology is used to ensure that only competent applicants are awarded certificates, credits or (full or partial) qualifications (Aggarwal, 2015).

4.4.1   Strategies to address quality assurance

The **main strategies** to address quality assurance are:

1. put in place a quality assurance framework for RPL with related quality standards

2. accredit service providers

3. enforce quality assurance through controls.

The above-mentioned strategies must be built on:

- a quality strategy for RPL that defines quality assurance measures and mechanisms (standards) and related procedures

- established quality assurance arrangements/mechanisms, including quality standards and codes for guidance, counselling and assessment tools and methodologies.

Collecting and disseminating results of RPL, which also links to monitoring and evaluation (see LU 6), is also related to assuring quality and at the same time creates and enforces the credibility of, and boosts confidence in, RPL.

To ensure the credibility and consistency of RPL certification, countries specify quality assurance mechanisms, which combine several strategies outlined throughout this learning unit. Those most frequently used are:

- establishing common standards and quality codes

- ensuring the availability of competent RPL professionals

- collaborating with employers' and workers' organizations and other relevant stakeholders

- developing assessment tools and methodologies

- accrediting RPL centres

- moderating assessments

- monitoring and evaluation frameworks (see LU 6)

- independent auditing of the entire RPL process

- disseminating results (Aggarwal, 2015: 10).

Who is responsible?

Depending on the system in place and the institutional set-up, the responsibility for ensuring quality assurance will rest with the Government (the relevant ministry) for establishing the overall framework for quality assurance, including a certification system for recognition providers. On their behalf, the recognition authority or authorities (public or private institutions, depending on the system) are responsible for implementation and follow up on quality assurance in guidance, assessment, certification, etc.

Key steps to ensure quality assurance in RPL include the following:

- Develop sound assessment tools and methods (based on a quality strategy).

- Establish quality codes and standards.

- Collaborate with the relevant stakeholders (Government, employers, training authorities, service providers and their organizations).

- Establish an accreditation system for recognition authorities.

- Use information on quality, guidance and counselling, as well as assessment methodologies applied in awareness-raising campaigns and activities on RPL.

- Enforce quality assurance and conduct independent audits of the RPL process.

- Monitor and evaluate the quality and demonstrate the results of RPL.

- Disseminate results and distribute information to the wider public on RPL.

LINKS

Examples for quality assurance in the Netherlands and in Tanzania are provided in LU 2. The example of capacity building for RPL professionals in Tanzania under section 4.3 also provides a close link to quality assurance.

REFLECTION

How is quality in RPL assured in your country or in a sector? Which specific approaches and mechanisms are in place – and has it positively impacted perception of and trust in RPL?

4.4.2 Examples: Quality assurance

EXAMPLE

Quality assurance in the assessment system in South Africa

The assessment system is made up of the following processes and procedures:

Stage one: Approval of Assessment Quality Partners

Stage two: Accreditation of Assessment Centres

Stage three: Monitoring of Assessment Quality Partners

Stage four: Quality assurance of external integrated summative assessment through:

- moderation of examination question papers
- moderation of internal assessment
- monitoring the conduct of assessments
- moderation of external assessment.

The assessment process itself

An external, nationally standardized assessment is conducted for the issuing of occupational awards as a prerequisite to certification. This ensures that learners who have achieved the required levels of competence in each curriculum component are required to integrate their learning and display applied occupational competence across a range of variable contexts.

To qualify for external assessment, the applicant must first pass the knowledge, practical and workplace components of the qualification. A minimum of 20 per cent of the required credits must be gained in each of the three components (knowledge, practical skills and work experience). This means that the remaining 40 per cent of the credits can be added to any component to support the purpose of the qualification.

The models for assessments are:

Written assessment	Evaluation of practical tasks
Invigilators download examination papers or computer-based tests	Registered assessors evaluate performance of practical tasks in a simulated work environment and probe applicants' actions with questions
The papers are marked off-site or computer scored	
Suitable for qualifications with a huge knowledge base and a large number of learners	Suitable for qualifications with a huge practical skills base and a large number of learners
Decentralized approved sites are required	Decentralized accredited centres are required
Evaluation of a project and/or assignment	**Evaluation of on-the-job performance**
Panel of assessors and additional expert practitioners evaluate a report on a project or an assignment and pose questions.	Registered workplace assessors evaluate on-the-job performance through observation and/or questioning, using specified assessment criteria requirements
Suitable for qualifications with an equal amount of practical skills and work experience or knowledge and a smaller number of learners.	Suitable for qualifications with a huge work experience component in specialized environments and a variable number of learners
Decentralized approved sites are required	Approved workplace sites are required

The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations will issue two types of certificates:

- occupational certificates: for learners who have proven competence against occupational qualifications (120+ credits) or part qualifications (25–119 credits)
- trade certificates: for trades recorded on the National Learner Record Database but without associated occupational qualifications.

4.5 Costs and financing

The cost of implementing a functioning system for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes poses a considerable challenge. Establishing and maintaining ad hoc qualification standards, if any, and related assessment procedures for RPL and building capacities of RPL professionals (guidance, counselling, assessment) is costly.

Financing RPL can be undertaken in different ways, with the largest distinction made between:

- public systems
- private driven systems or
- mixed systems, where both the Government and private institutions (and the applicant) bear the costs.

Some countries use a cost-sharing model, between applicants and different stakeholders – which can be Government and/or employers. There is no universal financing system in place and different countries chose different pathways, as becomes apparent in section 4.5.2: Examples: Sources of funding for RPL across countries. Figure 4.1 also depicts different possible models and sources of funding for RPL.

Figure 4.1: Funding possibilities for RPL
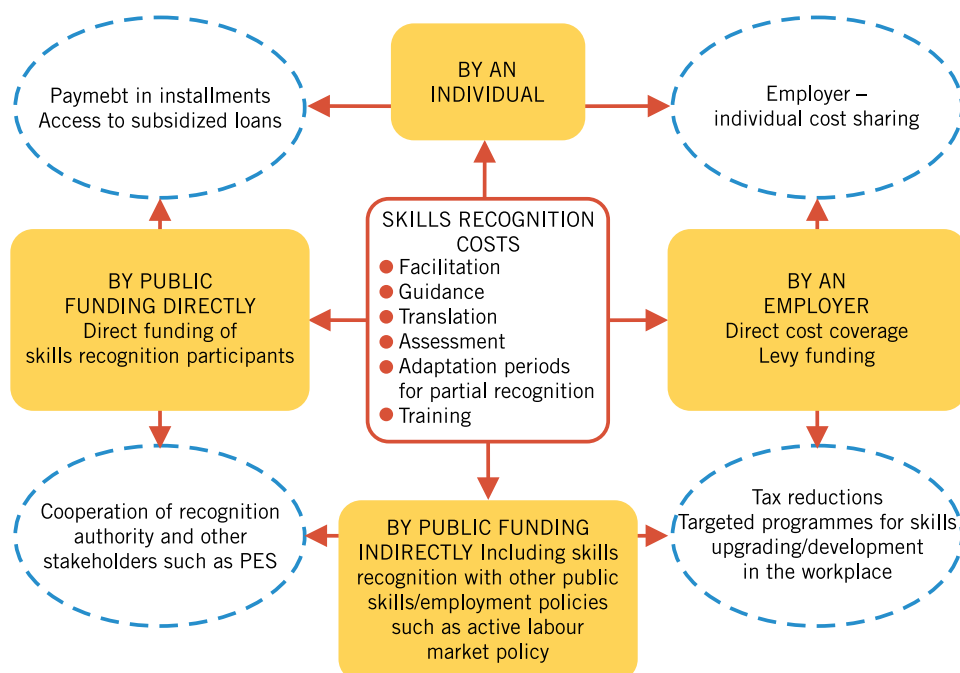
Source: Braňka (2016b: 54).

Costs to potential applicants can certainly impede participation. Experience has shown, on the other hand, that fees can increase applicants' trust in the process – and also increase their personal motivation.

EXAMPLE

Draft guidelines for RPL in Malawi describe an apparent consensus among stakeholders that RPL should not be free for the applicant in order to create motivation and prevent abuse of the system (Werquin, 2017: 30).

There are positives and negatives to charging fees to applicants, as shown in table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Strengths/enablers and weaknesses/barriers of fees charged to applicants

Strengths and enablers	Weaknesses and barriers
• May make education and training providers more willing to offer prior learning recognition, as it can be a source of income, or at least the costs are covered by the fee	• Determining the fee to charge can be complicated – as recognition is not a homogeneous process and varies for different education/occupational (sub) sectors
• Fees can be determined in relation to the varying costs associated with different types of recognition, including different assessment methods applicable	• Fees may be a barrier to participation for low-income and generally disadvantaged groups
• Without national regulations/guidelines, fees may vary across a country, encouraging learners to "shop around" (which might also increase competition, which in turn can increase the quality of recognition services provided)	• Fees are likely to put off applicants if participation in education is otherwise free
	• Without national regulations/guidelines, fees may vary across a country, which may be a problem if applicants do not have the mobility to "shop around"

Source: Adapted from CEDEFOP (2017b: 53).

4.5.1 Strategies to address financing for RPL

The **main strategies** to ensure accessibility to and financing for RPL are:

- determine the financing needs for RPL
- decide on a financing model and ensure (sustainable) financing
- inform all stakeholders about the actual costs and benefits.

Who is responsible?

The Government and recognition authorities and other stakeholders, such as employers, with regard to determining a financing model and following it.

In mixed systems (where the cost is shared by public and private sources, and/or including fees payable by applicants), all parties are responsible for providing their contributions and determining the rules for financing so that they are clear to everybody.

Key steps to ensure accessibility and sustainable financing in RPL include the following:

- Conduct a cost analysis to identify the actual costs for RPL (depending on the system and institutional set-up chosen).

- If necessary, assess the capacity of the service providers/recognition authorities to determine potential additional costs from capacity-related measures.

- Convene stakeholders, if applicable, to discuss possibilities and agree upon a financing model for RPL.

- Determine a model, contributions and modalities, including a long-term financing strategy.

- Take into account the needs of disadvantaged groups and possibly identify specific financing modalities for the financing strategy and model.

- Disseminate transparent information about the cost incurred for applicants.

REFLECTION

How is the RPL system financed in your country and sector/s? Who bears the costs and how high are these?

4.5.2 Examples: Sources of funding for RPL across countries

EXAMPLE

In many African countries, public training institutions bear the cost of RPL. This is true for Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia and Tanzania. In South Africa, the Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) generally uses a skills development levy for meeting RPL costs, and in some cases employers also share the cost. India has started an RPL programme for construction workers, who largely work in the informal economy, with State Construction Welfare Boards paying the assessment fees and skills gap training fees, and providing a wage allowance to offset wage losses during the training (DGET, 2014). In all these examples, no direct cost (e.g. registration or entrance fee) was charged to the applicants (Aggarwal, 2015).

EXAMPLE

A quarter of the European countries in the CEDEFOP inventory combine funding for recognition from both public and private sources. These include Denmark, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden. In Denmark, France and Italy, private funding is sourced from private sector funds (such as training funds), which tend to be administered by social partners. In Germany, social partners take responsibility for a specific aspect of the process (providing advice and guidance). In some countries, individual employers cover the fees which are charged to employees wishing to undertake RPL: namely, Croatia (for sectoral recogntion), the Czech Republic, Germany (for the external students' examination), Latvia, Romania and Slovenia (for recognition carried out by professional/craftspersons associations) (CEDEFOP, 2017b: 40).

EXAMPLE

An OECD study on the RPL practices of 22 countries, conducted by Werquin (Werquin, 2010b) noted the use of different cost-sharing methods for RPL, which was also noted at a technical workshop on RPL in Johannesburg in 2017. Applicants often cover a small portion of the cost through registration or entrance fees, although this is not a prerequisite for all countries since, in practice, all different financing models are applied. However, most of those countries apply cost-sharing systems, which vary in terms of the parties involved and the fee structure. It also became apparent that pilots of RPL are usually covered by Government or specific programmes (mostly also financed through public resources).
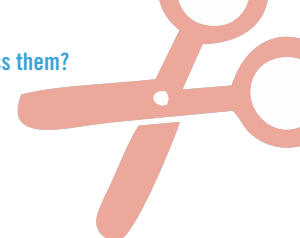
4.6 Summary

The challenges identified and means of addressing them are detailed in sections 4.1 to 4.5 above. However, these challenges are often interconnected and therefore the strategies for resolving them are frequently also linked (see table 4.6).

Table 4.6: Challenges and how to address them

Challenge…	Can be addressed through….
Lack of awareness and knowledge about RPL	Active provision of information on (a) the offer of RPL available and concrete information for the applicant to turn to, and (b) the benefits from RPL for different stakeholders to build trust and increase commitment to the RPL system
Lack of awareness and trust by employers	Active provision of information (particularly on (b) above), guidance and counselling and quality assurance, particularly in assessments undertaken. Matching of RPL with existing qualifications also builds trust in RPL
Lack of awareness and targeting of RPL to those in particular need (vulnerable groups)	Active provision of information (see above, both (a) and (b)), guidance and counselling, building capacity of RPL professionals, matching of qualifications (including recognition of foreign qualifications)
Lack of guidance and counselling in addition to not knowing about the possibilities	Active provision of information (see above, particularly (a)), capacity of RPL professionals, put guidance and counselling offers in place, matching of qualifications, financing of the RPL system
Lack of trust in the quality of the qualification gained through RPL	Quality assurance, including matching of qualifications and awareness on outcomes of RPL (LU 6)
Lack of capacity – number of and competencies of RPL professionals	Ensuring capacity of RPL professionals and sustainable financing of the RPL system
Lack of skills upgrading or skills gap training opportunities	Matching of qualifications, financing of the RPL system

NOTES FOR TRAINERS (LU 4 – 4.1–4.6)

(a) **Group work:** Divide the participants into four groups. Assign each group one of the topics of sections 4.1–4.4. Ask each group to discuss and document, considering the short input and overview on the topics received, the following in their groups:

(i) Which main strategies and key steps to address the challenge can you identify? What examples do you know of (or in the case of international groups: how are the challenges addressed in the countries present in your group)?

(ii) Who is responsible for addressing the challenge?

Write the group tasks on a flipchart and provide each of the groups with flipchart paper and markers. Ask the groups to develop their answers in 20 minutes. Either right from the beginning or mid-way through the exercise (depending on how experienced the groups are), provide them with the respective handouts. Ask each group to present their findings; add points, where necessary, and ensure a good summary to facilitate learning for the other groups. Provide handouts on all challenges to all participants for their reference. If the group is very experienced, invite them to share in their groups differences between their own systems and to share them as part of the presentations. You can also keep a pinboard where you collect information on aspects of systems in different countries.

Time: 20 minutes for group work, 35 minutes for group work presentations.

Alternative (a) (more time consuming, but ensuring that all participants deal with each topic):

Write the group tasks on a flipchart and provide each of the groups with flipchart paper and markers. Ask the groups to develop their answers in 20 minutes. Either right from the beginning or mid-way through the exercise (depending on how experienced the groups are), provide them with the respective handouts. Ask each group to present their findings; add points, where necessary, and ensure a good summary to facilitate learning for the other groups. Provide handouts on all challenges to all participants for their reference. If the group is very experienced, invite them to share in their groups differences between their own systems and to share them as part of the presentations. You can also keep a pinboard where you collect information on aspects of systems in different countries.

Alternative (b) (for an advanced technical group or a mixed group containing participants with extensive knowledge about their RPL system):

Well beforehand, approach around four individuals that you have identified as potential case givers for either all challenges or any number of challenges for which you find case givers with good approaches to addressing a challenge. Allocate them each a corner of the room, or other suitable places, and for each case introduce the overall topic of the approach to the participants.

Time: Depending on the number of work stations and case givers, around 45 minutes.

(b) **Input on accessibility and financing:** Provide a short input to the participants, particularly the examples and cases given, to provide an overview on how the system is financed and who bears the costs on the ground. Emphasize the varying approaches between different countries. Discuss with the participants what they know about how the system is financed in their own countries and sector/s.

Alternative: The material can also provide for an additional working group on financing. Should you prefer to expand the number of working groups or have a higher number of participants in any case, add the financing challenge to the working groups instead of providing the input.

▶▶▶

(c) **Summary:** Introduce the activity of jointly summarizing the learning points of the unit by completing the "map of challenges" from the beginning of the session, detailing how each can be addressed. The challenge cards (or cluster of challenges) should each be completed by a card (or large sticky note), indicating how the challenge can be addressed (see table 4.6). Either do this jointly with the participants in plenary by actively facilitating the discussion, asking participants to write the cards/notes at the same time and sticking them on the "map of challenges" or assign groups of two to three participants one identified "challenge" (or cluster) each. Ask them to come up with the "how" – the overall approach by which this can be addressed – and ask them to write their answer on a card or sticky note (provide the material). Summarize in the end by emphasizing that, as can be seen, the challenges can be addressed by a number of strategies simultaneously. This underlines the fact that, within the implementation of an RPL system, a number of areas have to be actively shaped, particularly when moving from RPL as a pilot in one sector or occupation to a scaling-up of RPL.

Close the learning unit by thanking everybody for their attention and participation and announcing that, as part of the next learning unit (LU 5), you will be looking at assessment methodologies.

Time: 25 minutes (or 15 minutes, if the alternative is followed for (b) and costs and financing is added to the group work).

Overview of handouts for Learning Unit 4

4.1   Strategies to address awareness, guidance and counselling

4.2   Strategies to address matching of occupational and qualification standard

4.3   Strategies to address capacity of RPL professionals

4.4   Strategies to address quality assurance

Suggestions for further reading around Learning Unit 4

Souto-Otero, M.; Villalba-Garcia, E. 2015. "Migration and validation of non-formal and informal learning in Europe: Inclusion, exclusion or polarisation in the recognition of skills?", *International Review of Education*, Vol. 61, pp. 585–607. doi:10.1007/s11159-015-9516-7.

Links:

Video: *Skills recognition and RPL qualifications* (GQ Australia):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SZ5gNaskgv4

Video: *Quality assurance in RPL: What is the support system needed?* (Capla):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jr_DR9pioZk

LEARNING UNIT 5
What are the key components in assessment methodologies?

Learning units	Duration
Getting to know each other	
Learning Unit 1: What is RPL and why is it important?	
Learning Unit 2: How to develop an RPL system: Introduction to the "building blocks"	
Learning Unit 3: Stakeholder involvement: Who is involved in RPL and in what ways?	
Learning Unit 4: What challenges are involved in implementing RPL systems? How to address them?	
Learning Unit 5: What are the key components in assessment methodologies?	
5.1　Compiling evidence of learning outcomes: Key components for assessment of RPL 5.2　Assessment methods 5.3　The portfolio method	2 hours
Learning Unit 6: How do you know if the system is working?	
Summary, assessment test, evaluation and closing remarks	

Learning outcomes: Learning Unit 5

At the end of this learning unit, the participants will be able to:

- describe the different assessment methods for RPL

- describe the portfolio method in detail

- develop a sample portfolio based on profiles given.

Outline of Learning Unit 5: Challenges

Topic	Time: minutes	Methods	Materials
5.1 Key components for assessment of RPL	10	Introduction, input and discussion	Projector, screen (wall), laptop, PPT
5.2 Assessment methods	40	Expert interview (present or via videoconferencing) Q&A session	Comfortable chairs or standing table (if via video: laptop, screen, loudspeakers, internet)
5.3 The portfolio method	20 45 5	Input and group work Presentations and discussion *Alternative:* input Summary and closing remarks	PPT, flipcharts, markers, masking tape, Handout 5.1
Total duration	120 minutes		

Key questions to be answered with the learning unit

- What are the key components for assessment of prior learning outcomes?
- What assessment methods exist and might be applicable?
- What is the portfolio method?
- What are the main challenges related to the portfolio method?
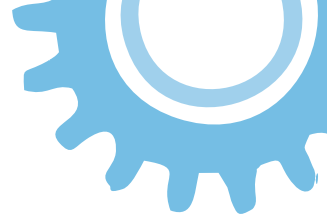
5.1 Compiling evidence of learning outcomes: Key components for assessment of RPL

Key components for the assessment of RPL are:

- **Evidence:** Presented in a form required or prescribed by the system or relevant to demonstrate the prior learning. The individual will have to demonstrate evidence of the learning outcomes, or competencies, acquired.

- **Competent and trained counsellors and assessors** to inform the applicant and guide the compilation of evidence (relating to the challenge of capacity of RPL professionals discussed in LU 4) and able to provide relevant feedback to the applicant.

- **Accessible services** (guidance and counselling) that can adapt to cater for the diverse needs of applicants, including vulnerable groups.

- The **actual competencies of the applicant** and how they are documented.

Regardless of context, and whether the application is for an occupational title, employment, credit or qualification, clear criteria for both applicants and assessors are necessary. Similarly, the purpose of an assessment must be clear. Both applicants and organizations/institutions need to be aware that assessments are based on specific learning or performance-based outcomes.

In short, RPL assessment should be:

- transparent

- valid

- reliable.

EXAMPLE

Norway recommends the use of clearly defined and described steps and stages that can be recognized by all stakeholders, as this is important for building confidence in the system, including: (1) information and guidance; (2) description/mapping of competencies, including documentation from formal and informal learning, and from practical work experience; (3) assessment or validation; and (4) recognition of competencies – and accreditation.

5.2 Assessment methods

REFLECTION

What are the assessment methods applied in RPL?

Different assessment methods and tools can be applied in the RPL process. For example, RPL in higher education for credits might require a test while, in TVET, work observation or a specific trade test might apply.

To ensure parity of qualifications (formal and those acquired through RPL), the **same assessment standards should apply for non-formal and informal learning as for formal learning**. However, **assessment procedures** can, and probably should, differ, since evidence of competencies has to be established. Assessment

tools and methods must be adapted, combined and applied in a way that reflects the individual specificity and non standardized character of non formal and informal learning. Tools for assessment need to be fit for purpose (CEDEFOP, 2015: 58).

The range of assessment tools and methods include the following:

- **Written or e-portfolio:** to enable a more structured, iterative approach to building evidence, mixing and applying a number of tools (including those listed below).

- **Mapping** against programme level outcomes or qualification level descriptors for large amounts of credit or programme modules.

- **Use of level descriptors** to enable the articulation of prior informal learning in learning outcomes that are more relevant to this type of learning.

- **Presentation:** formal or informal, which can be used to check the ability to present information in a way that is appropriate to both subject and audience.

- **Simulation and evidence extracted from work:** where applicants are placed in a situation that fulfils all the criteria of the real life scenario to have their competencies assessed (observation of practice, simulation) or a workplace observation.

- **Tests and examinations:** identifying and validating informal and non formal learning through or with the help of examinations in the formal system, e.g. written examinations.

- **Structured interviewing** as an evidence source.

- **Panel** of interviewers to test applicant's knowledge.

- **Use of technologies**, e.g. web/video-conferencing, video and podcasts or virtual reality.

- **Workplace-derived artefacts** to demonstrate competencies.

- **Employer reference/evidence.**

- Work-based learning **simulations** of practical tasks.

- **Record** of volunteer learning and experience.

- "Assessment on demand", such as an **exam or assignment**.[21]

Not all methods are always applicable or necessary. Depending on the qualification or parts thereof and standard to be reached, a combination of assessment methods might apply, such as records and references from previous employers, workplace observation and an oral examination; or a written test or portfolio only; or a trade test simulation and oral examination. Each assessment tool or method has its strengths and weaknesses. Combining traditional methods and tests with other methods, such as practical demonstrations, can allow for relatively flexible procedures (Singh, 2015). Table 5.1 provides an example of the kinds of evidence required for RPL in Queensland, Australia.

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21. List adapted from QAA (No date), including information from CEDEFOP (2009: 60).
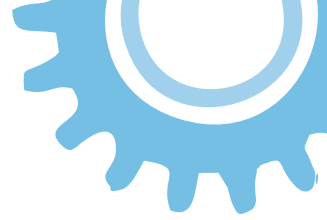
Table 5.1: Evidence for RPL recommended by Queensland State, Australia

Nature of evidence for RPL, as recommended by Queensland State, Australia		
• Direct evidence	• Indirect evidence	• Historical evidence
• Workplace observation	• Industry awards	• Written references from past employers
• Demonstration of skill	• Job specifications or position descriptions	• Log books and other records of performance
• Samples of work	• Curriculum vitae or résumé	• Certificates or qualifications
• The materials or tools with which the applicant works	• Rosters or timesheets	• Letters of support
• Referees' reports	• Budgets	• Assignments, reports and documentation from previous courses
• Videos	• Visual presentations or written speeches	• Past competency-based assessments
• Audio files	• Letters or memos from the workplace	• Record of academic results
• Photos	• References/letters of support	• Course attendance record
• Published works, such as operational manuals	• Evidence of committee work	• Scrapbooks
	• Reading lists	• Magazine or newspaper articles
	• Workplace training records	

Source: Queensland Government (2014) (from Aggarwal, 2015).

In some cases, methods such as requiring applicants to create large portfolios, for example, will prove inappropriate. Practical demonstrations and/or oral questioning might be a preferable method.

While assessment methods need to comply with existing standards to guarantee comparability and quality, the assessment methods should be designed as far as possible to accommodate the individual applicant's needs. Innovative assessment methods for RPL are still required with the following qualities:

- less time-consuming, more cost-effective and simple but still credible

- taking into account the context in which each applicant's learning has been acquired and their individual characteristics (Aggarwal, 2015).

Overall, **a combination of methods can be beneficial**, as they can build on each other and create complementarity. A one-size-fits-all approach to the use of assessment methodologies, however, is not possible, as assessment in different sectors requires different foci.

For example, within a trade that falls under TVET, a practical test, which demonstrates specific skills, might be necessary (trade test), whereas documentation of certificates and evidence might be sufficient for credits in higher education.

One of the more widely used assessment methods for RPL is the learning portfolio method, covered more in detail in section 5.3. Other methods include interviews, context-based observations, 360-degree assessments, simulation and questionnaires.

5.2.1   Examples of assessment methods

Table 5.2 details the various assessment methods for RPL applied in selected countries.

Table 5.2: Assessment methods used in different countries

Country	Assessment methods
South Africa	Uses the portfolio, publications, references and various testimony- and evidence-based methods, but in an extraordinarily open and dynamic system. These methods are examples, rather than prescribed. There is no all-inclusive list of assessment methods. Assessments have to be fair, valid, reliable and workable and are organized in three stages in which they are planned with applicants, carried out and then reported on. In practice, this approach may be further subdivided to distinguish between applications, their admissibility, preparation for assessment (identification), assessment (assembling evidence), judgement, moderation and a final report.
The Netherlands	Has chosen interviews, context-based observations and 360-degree assessments, in addition to the portfolio, justifying the choice on the grounds of cost, desired quality and the number of applicants to be assessed. It is regarded as a pioneer from the point of view of its assessment technique, as applicants are entitled to have their learning outcomes recognized in whichever of the four possible ways they prefer. The process of recognizing non-formal and informal learning outcomes is a real personal development plan in the Netherlands.
Scotland	Has the greatest number and most varied range of methods in use. Traditional methods exist alongside less traditional ones, which are very promising. Among them are simulation and observation of practice, mapping of learning outcomes, profiling, curriculum vitae (Europass or other kinds), learning portfolios, certified voluntary activity, assessment on request (examinations or homework), structured interviews, oral assessment and personal projects
Slovenia	Uses the learning portfolio to record the knowledge, skills and competencies acquired. Applicants receive assistance from a counsellor, which may be followed by an examination that tests skills and knowledge whose levels are not made clear by the portfolio. Practices vary widely depending on the institution concerned, and at its discretion, and the examination may be written or oral. If oral, it may comprise a discussion, an interview, reasoning with reference to a document, product evaluation, practical tests, a demonstration, simulation or role playing
Belgium (Flemish Community)	Applies a two-stage procedure in tertiary education: an initial portfolio-based assessment and then a real-situation assessment. Successful completion of the first stage is a precondition for proceeding to the second
Canada	For over half of its applicants (54 per cent), Canada uses the "challenge" (examination), followed by the learning portfolio (23 per cent) and the demonstration (23 per cent)

Source: Selection taken from Werquin (2010: 47f).
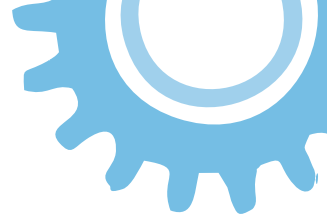
TARGETING DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

Benefits for disadvantaged groups: RPL certificates for Syrian refugees in the construction sector – Jordan

The ILO has partnered with the Government of Jordan to help Syrian refugees and Jordanians working in the construction sector to upgrade their professional expertise and obtain accredited skills certificates. Through ILO support, the Ministry of Labour and the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions have recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding to ease the process of issuing work permits to Syrian refugees in the construction sector. Applicants for the new work permits must hold an RPL certificate, which is obtained through the Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance (CAQA).

The RPL certificate is obtained through a course, which includes the following elements:

1. Four weeks of practical and theoretical work in professions such as floor layering , painting, plastering, plumbing and interior decoration. The course also includes sections related to occupational safety and health, in which workers receive practical instruction on workplace health and safety measures and requirements.

2. Other stages of the recognition process include:

3. Monitoring and coaching visits by trainers to workers at their work sites on working days.

4. Workers apply for the theoretical testing and practical assessment based on CAQA instructions in order to obtain the RPL formal certification.

The RPL certificate also benefits employers, as it helps them to match job requirements to workers with the right skills, and the mandatory insurance coverage improves protection of workers.

Some key figures:

*   Since September 2016, 2,500 Syrian refugees were certified with occupational licences in 12 occupations within the construction sector.

*   In five days (6–10 August), 1,120 Syrian refugees applied for occupational licences.

The factsheet (August 2017): New regulations for Syrian refugee access to non-employer-specific work permits in Jordan's construction sector provides more information and additional key figures.

Video: Improving skills and job prospects for Jordanian and Syrian construction workers (ILO) (2:40 minutes). The footage used in the video is amateur footage captured by the workers themselves. This is a specific initiative set up with a training authority, where both practical (demonstrations) and theoretical assessments (tests, examination) are applied.

Background video: Syrian refugee crisis puts pressure on Jordan´s Labour market (ILO).

5.3 The portfolio method

The portfolio method is widely applied in RPL across countries. This section explores the portfolio mehtod and what it implies in more detail.

DID YOU KNOW?

What is a portfolio for RPL?

A portfolio is an organized collection of materials providing evidence of the competencies that were acquired through experience instead of formal learning. The portfolio allows the applicant to contribute actively to the collection of evidence and contains a combination of tools, which strengthen the overall validity of the process. Many countries have introduced the portfolio as a central element in their recognition approaches (CEDEFOP, 2015).

When a portfolio is created, it contains all the applicant's relevant information on what has been learned and how, when and where. Portfolios might include CVs, references from employers or supervisors (current or past), performance appraisal documents, references from colleagues, photographs of completed work or videos of work in progress. Business competencies can also be included and proven with evidence if an applicant was self-employed.

Figure 5.1: Content of a portfolio

A portfolio includes:
- A written outline of education and career goals
- Learning outcomes and competency statements
- Documentation verifying the learning claimed

A portfolio **may** also include:
- A chronological record of significant learning experiences
- A life history paper
- Informal records of past learning achievements
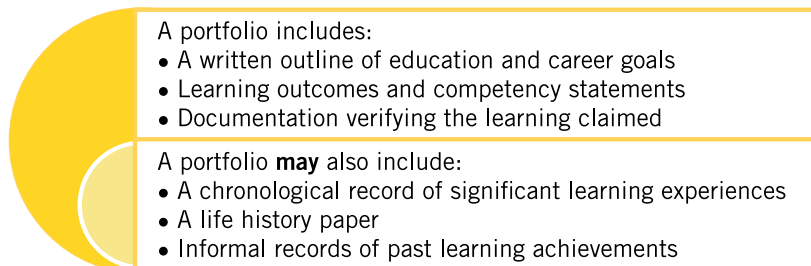
Source: ILO (2017b: box 19).

REFLECTION

"In general, we have seen that a good portfolio for validation, in the eyes of assessors, is characterised by being easy to assess because it is focused on specific matched learning outcomes" (CEDEFOP, 2015: 61).

Some countries concentrate on making the portfolio method more user-friendly, using **ICT for e-RPL or e-portfolio** presentation and providing extensive support to applicants. One recent trend is the use of digital portfolios. These so-called **e-portfolios** offer the possibility of combining text, audio, graphic and video based presentation of information. They also offer increased capacity to accumulate data, which can provide the audience with greater insights into the achievements and successes of the learner.

However, digital portfolios carry potential risks, for example the technological novelty of the product can overshadow the purpose of the portfolio and learning to use the technology itself could subsume the learning opportunities of portfolio construction. Further, developing a digital portfolio risks including unnecessary information and material that is not wholly derived from the candidates' own efforts (CEDEFOP, 2015: 61).

The approach to assessment is also being transformed, with assessors facilitating and guiding applicants during the process, and using a combination of methods. For example:

- Deloitte Consulting used an innovative methodology e-portfolio (or e-RPL) as an alternative to a hard copy portfolio to certify the skills of workers with low levels of education in South Africa's grain silo industry (see box 13 in Aggarwal (2015: 21) for more detail).

- European guidelines on RPL recommend organizing group sessions for applicants on preparing portfolios, the latter often being a major challenge for individual applicants. These group sessions may be complemented with individual tutorials (CEDEFOP, 2015).

LINKS

Watch the video on e-portfolios for RPL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XSTcqG-5mb0.
Reflect on the benefits of an e-portfolio relayed in the video.

5.3.1   Challenges related to the portfolio method and strategies to address these

REFLECTION

What challenges can the portfolio method create?

There are a number of challenges related to the portfolio method. The **main challenges** can be identified as follows:

(a) **Lack of guidance in preparing the portfolio**

This was identified as the major obstacle in the preparation of portfolios by the CEDEFOP (2008) inventory.

Strategy to address challenge:
Gathering groups of claimants together specifically to share experience and to learn from one another, thus enabling all participants to proceed with the preparation of their own portfolio for RPL with greater assurance. Such sessions can be complemented with individual tutorials (CEDEFOP, 20015: 61).

(b) **Language, complexity for those with little formal education**

This can be a further impediment to the successful completion of portfolios. The seemingly complicated task of putting a portfolio together, or simply the perceived magnitude of the effort required, often overwhelms and discourages applicants. In addition, some applicants may lack the necessary writing skills for written examinations. Bowman et al. (2003) also lament the fact that the existing RPL evidence guides and processes remain too academic and jargon-ridden for many potential applicants (Aggarwal, 2015).

Strategy to address this challenge:
Qualified counsellors offering active and simple guidance, with relevant skills in the local and native languages of the country. Such counsellors are also usually aware of requirements and possibilities for translation (in the case of foreign paperwork of migrants or returning migrants).

(c) **No demonstrable evidence (availability of paperwork, particularly for those from the informal economy or refugees)**

The portfolio method can be very demanding in terms of collecting evidence and completing documentation, particularly for applicants in the informal economy, those with limited formal education or migrants and refugees.

Strategy to address challenge:
With the growing use of portfolio methods, applicants can now turn to simpler ways of providing evidence, requiring only a few pages, to demonstrate their ability to meet standards, where possible. Discussions are ongoing in many countries on how methods of portfolio assessment might be improved in order to increase openness and transparency and to better enable applicants to describe their current competencies and motivation (Singh, 2015).

(d)   **Costs and difficulties of translating the paperwork – particularly applicable to migrants.**

EXAMPLE

Japan employs a type of portfolio that resembles a CV, which is used to list non-formal and informal learning in the employment sector.

One of the tools employed in **Portugal** is a biographical and narrative-based assessment that allows applicants to present their experiences in a less formal manner.

In **Australia**, there is an increasing use of e-portfolios for gaining recognition or credit towards a formal TVET qualification. Online self-assessments are useful for enabling applicants to gauge the likely outcome of applications to regulated professions or courses (Singh, 2015: 169).

TARGETING DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

Canada: Holistic portfolios

Education in Canada falls under provincial jurisdiction. Therefore, approaches to recognition differ widely between provinces – and recognition of qualifications must be negotiated between provinces.

To redress existing systemic inequalities, RPL in Saskatchewan was developed applying a different approach to assessment and portfolios: holistic portfolios. This approach helps to assess prior learning of individuals who lack the ability to identify or express their experience (informal or non-formal learning) as learning outcomes.

The holistic portfolio approach is based on a **narrative and reflective approach** through which the applicant is guided. It is also called "a journey of self-discovery". As part of the reflective process, applicants often redefine their narrative of life, experiences and, implicitly, their competencies in practice. It therefore is a process of extracting important knowledge, which helps applicants to (re-)gain a sense of identity and supports healing through the documentation of traditional knowledge. This approach is particularly important for indigenous populations and Canada's first nations. In Saskatchewan it was undertaken with first nations' healthcare employees, to support their career pathways.

After the foundation is built with the narrative, reflective documentation, focusing on the individual's strengths, talents and attitudes, a holistic portfolio is built. Applicants in this process can decide on their own headings and emphasis throughout. The process of putting together this kind of portfolio leads to reflection and realization of the knowledge, (transferable) skills and attitudes, compiles evidence and, ultimately, provides insight into what the applicant wants to do. After completing the process and the holistic portfolio the applicants can proceed to formal assessment.

As in other assessment methods, the holistic portfolio approach requires and includes **training for facilitators of the process**. Facilitators also need to develop their own portfolio as part of their training. A facilitators' guide was developed, called A journey of self-discovery, including guidance on activities and value-based exercises to guide reflection and extract traditional knowledge.

The implementation of the holistic portfolio approach allowed interesting observations:

- The approach seems to be motivating: in a workshop where elders were included who did not have to compile a portfolio, the elders ended up creating portfolios so that their traditional knowledge could be documented.

- Observing the process, it was possible to see a significant change in applicants: a transformation.

- While the completion rate of evidence files for assessment was low, the holistic portfolios had a high completion rate.

- The process helped to unify families.

The holistic portfolio approach might also be beneficial for refugees and migrants.
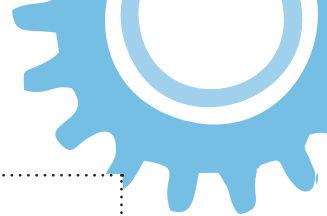
NOTES FOR TRAINERS (LU 5: 5.2, 5.3)

(a) **Expert input/interview:** Organize beforehand the attendance of an expert for assessment methods during the session. If this is not possible, consider conducting this part of the session as an interview via a videoconferencing instrument, such as Skype or another means (ensure a good and stable internet connection, sound and video). The best option would be to engage an expert who works in an institution conducting assessments or a counsellor for RPL, who guides applicants in the process of compiling evidence. Before the session, brief the expert on the group and give clear instructions on the topic to be covered (assessment methods, portfolio method). Should it be preferred, you can also ask the expert to provide a short overview of 15 minutes on different assessment methods and then conduct an interview with them, focusing on the different assessment methods that are applied, giving some concrete examples and an overview of the portfolio method and related challenges. Try to arrange the scene slightly differently from the rest of the training, e.g. use two comfortable armchairs for the interview and Q&A part with the expert. Should it not be possible to invite an expert to the training venue, consider conducting the input and interview and the Q&A session, providing the participants to ask relevant questions, via a videoconferencing tool. Should none of the above be available, provide an input yourself, based on the information provided.

Time: 40 minutes.

(b) **Group work and presentations:** Explain to the participants that you want them to think through, in a concrete way, what applicants would put into a portfolio to have their prior learning recognized. Form three groups and assign them each a fictitious person with a profile. Introduce these profiles to the participants, e.g.:

- Ralph, a nurse from the Philippines, with an accumulated six years of experience of working in rehabilitation centres in Norway and Sweden, wants to enrol in a qualification as a physical therapist.

- Maria, 56, who has looked after children of kindergarden age for around 13 years as a privately engaged nanny and taken some short courses in early childhood education, wants to try to get a qualification.

- Gene, a mechanic, has worked for 10 years in a motor shop in South Africa without any certification and seeks RPL (or RPL for artisans, as it is called there) to be able to move on in the job market.

Provide each group with a flipchart or two and markers. Ask them to develop the portfolio for their specific applicant, listing the type of information, evidence etc. they would include. Ask them to be creative and think out of the box in the process as well. If they need to, they should also feel free to detail some short courses or training the person might have attended. Give them 20 minutes to complete the portfolio then ask the groups to present their results. Discuss with the others and add (e.g. with coloured cards), where potentially important information was forgotten or what additional information could usefully be added. Where possible, relate back to what the expert has named as well in the input.

Alternative: provide input. Ask questions during the input to engage participants.

(c) **Summary:** Summarize what was covered in LU 5 and highlight the main learning points. Underline the fact that assessment of RPL needs to be flexible and fit the purpose. Good guidance and counselling in the process miwwght be crucial for the applicant to be successful. Close the session.

Time: 70 minutes (or 50 minutes with the input alternative chosen instead of group work).

Overview of handouts for Learning Unit 5

5.1   Developing a portfolio

Suggestions for further reading around Learning Unit 5

Yang, J. 2015. *Recognition, validation and accreditation of non-formal and informal learning in UNESCO member states* (Hamburg, Germany, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning).

Links:

Video: *Improving skills and job prospects for Jordanian and Syrian construction workers* (ILO).
Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=NIdRUkRthfs

Video: *Background to the situation: Syrian refugee crisis puts pressure on Jordan's labour market* (ILO).
Available online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3PxcyRarpAk

Video: Using an e-portfolio for RPL (Australian Flexible Learning Framework).
Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XSTcqG-5mb0

Video: *The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education*. No date.

LEARNING UNIT 6
How do you know if the system is working?

Learning units	Duration
Getting to know each other	
Learning Unit 1: What is RPL and why is it important?	
Learning Unit 2: How to develop an RPL system: Introduction to the "building blocks"	
Learning Unit 3: Stakeholder involvement: Who is involved in RPL and in what ways?	
Learning Unit 4: What challenges are involved in implementing RPL systems? How to address them?	
Learning Unit 5: What are the key components in assessment methodologies?	
Learning Unit 6: How do you know if the system is working?	
6.1 M&E system for RPL: Introduction	
6.2 What information and data should M&E on RPL gather?	1.5 hours
6.3 Measuring results: Examples, insights and challenges	
Summary, assessment test, evaluation and closing remarks	

Learning outcomes: Learning Unit 6

At the end of this learning unit, the participants will be able to:

- argue the importance of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of RPL systems for management and steering of a policy area and for good results

- distinguish M&E data and information on RPL to be gathered at output and impact level

- identify the kind of indicators relevant for different stakeholders (individual applicants/graduates, employers, training institutions)

- describe the data challenges and suggest ways to address them.

Outline of Learning Unit 6: M&E

Topic	Time: minutes	Methods	Materials
6.1 M&E system for RPL: Introduction	10	Input and interactive discussion	Projector, screen (wall), laptop, PPT
6.2 What information and data should M&E on RPL gather?	20 30 20 (45) (20)	Input, video and discussion Group work on indicators Presentations, summary *Alternative (a)*: Panel discussion with RPL graduates *Alternative (b)/addition* (for more advanced group): Group work on indicators	Loudspeakers, internet or downloaded video, PPT, Handouts 6.1–6.3 printed, flipcharts, markers RPL graduates for the panel
6.3 Measuring results: Examples, insights and challenges	20	Input and discussion in plenary	PPT or flipchart gallery (pre-prepared)
Total duration	100 minutes (1.5 hours +) (2 hours with *Alternative (b)/addition*)		

Key questions to be answered with the learning unit

- Which levels of M&E can we distinguish?
- Why is M&E of RPL systems important?
- What kind of information needs to be gathered – indicators
- What instruments can be used for M&E?
- What M&E information on RPL is available?

6.1 M&E system for RPL: Introduction

6.1.1 What is M&E?

Monitoring means systematic and routine tracking and reporting of (defined) information about an intervention. The information tracked can relate to the inputs (financial, material, human resources etc.), activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts (see the results chain, figure 6.1). It can also relate to emerging issues or results, as well as the internal and external context (including potential risks), within which the intervention operates. Monitoring information is used to assess whether an intervention is on track and to identify and correct any challenges in a timely manner.

Evaluation should be conducted regularly and aims to produce an overall evaluative judgement about the merit, worth or significance of an intervention. Evaluation findings are intended primarily to inform decisions about a specific intervention (or policy) but also to inform about necessary future investments and planning (Peersman et al., 2016).

Monitoring and evaluation are different but complementary. They produce different kinds of information – and evaluation uses monitoring information to draw conclusions. Together, they form a process from monitoring to evaluation. While monitoring is ongoing and tracks progress, evaluation assesses the situation at a given point in time.

Figure 6.1: The results chain of RPL

Inputs
- Human, financial, material resources
- RPL: budget allocated to institutions and processes, RPL professionals, materials for assessment, etc.

Activities
- Tasks performed to produce outputs
- RPL: setting up and maintaining RPL services, guidance, assessment procedures, conduct training

Output
- Direct services and goods resulting from activities
- RPL: Trained RPL professionals, RPL centres or institutions with an offer of RPL, available guidance and counselling services, information on RPL and the process provided, applicants counselled, RPL guidelines, etc.

Outcome
- Mid-term effects of the outputs: changes in behaviour and application achieved
- RPL: Assessment procedures passed, lowered drop out, completion rates, motivation, self-esteem, employment opportunities, advancements in career due to RPL, higher earnings through recognition, etc.

Impact
- Long-term effects produced (positive/negative, intended/unintended)
- Increased employment, lower skills shortages in the labour market, increase in remuneration, career progression, self-esteem, advancements in career over time, retention of employees, institutional changes through RPL, etc.

6.1.2   Why monitor and evaluate an RPL system?

The information gathered from M&E of RPL systems allows us to:

- establish the progress of implementation and action

- learn from implementation

- implement corrective measures – using information gathered for steering and management

- ensure effective participation of all stakeholders

- facilitate allocation of resources by governments and employers

- have a precise knowledge and understanding of who benefits from RPL and in which ways

- establish and consider long-term changes and effects (impact) at societal level

- communicate these effects and contribute to projecting a better image of RPL, increasing the buy-in of stakeholders.

M&E serves to improve:

- **information sharing** (transparency and accountability)

- **awareness raising and trust building** – as it contributes to enhancing the image of RPL and building trust in the instruments

- **quality assurance** – allowing improvements to be made to the RPL system, its management and implementation, e.g.

  ▸ taking corrective steps (in direction, procedures, policy emphasis etc.)

  ▸ changing the course of implementation, such as institutional set-ups, involvement of stakeholders, improving performance and influencing the allocation of resources.

LINKS

The main functions of M&E link back to **quality assurance of RPL** (see also LU 2 and LU 4).

6.2   What information and data should M&E on RPL gather?

6.2.1   What M&E data and information is available?

Few countries systematically collect and analyse such information and countries acknowledge that they have not collected sufficient data about RPL outcomes to provide accurate information on how successfully RPL has been implemented.

Nonetheless, ad hoc and local databases in assessment centres and enterprises do exist, to some extent. However, this data is often collected for administrative purposes and not for an analysis of (long-term) benefits (Recotillet and Werquin, 2009). Insufficient statistical data over time (e.g. through a longitudinal survey) is currently collected on RPL.

Some existing pilot programmes or interventions on RPL have conducted selected case studies and tracer studies on applicants and the benefits they received from RPL. These are, however, mainly conducted at sectoral level, covering either a certain educational sector (i.e. higher education) and/or a specific occupation

in selected countries. Since they contain only small, statistically irrelevant samples (and in general no control groups to compare how those that have not undergone RPL in a similar situation have fared) the information available does not permit any cross-sectoral and/or cross-country conclusions to be drawn on RPL.

It is therefore vital to pay more attention to the M&E of RPL systems and setting up related systems – or adding the collection of RPL information to existing M&E systems.

Given the lack of systematic M&E in place in the majority of countries, this section will focus on the minimum needed to assess if the RPL system is working.

EXAMPLE

In the case of **New Zealand** and **Australia**, no data is available, as RPL assessment is a part of the credit transfer system and is not distinguished from traditional assessment. In **Canada**, statistics to measure the effectiveness of PLAR as a successful intervention are difficult to find. **Denmark** reports that it has not systematically conducted quantitative or qualitative analyses of data relating to the outcomes and impact of RPL (Singh, 2015).

LINKS

Watch the video: Exploding the myths of RPL, available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SZ5gNaskgv4 (minute 6:32–9:03), for an example of benefits. Note down what you hear the different stakeholders saying regarding why it works and what changes it generated.

6.2.2   What information and data should be collected? By whom?

The information to be collected at output, outcome and impact can be for both monitoring and evaluation purposes. Depending on the scope required by the study, some of the aspects shown in figure 6.2 might be tracked and assessed.

Figure 6.2: RPL performance indicators

- RPL training institutionalized
- RPL centres opened
- Qualifications / sectors / NQF with integrated RPL
- RPL professionals
- RPL centres or institutions with an offer of RPL
- Guidance and counselling services available
- Information on RPL and the process provided
- Applicants counselled
- RPL guidelines, etc.

Output

- Increased RPL offer (institutional)
- Assessment procedures passed
- Increased completion rates / decreased drop-out
- Increased motivation and self-esteem
- Improved employment opportunities
- Improved retention of employees
- Advancement in career due to RPL
- Higher earnings through recognition, etc.

Outcome

- Employment rates
- Movement of workers from the informal to the formal sector, particularly disadvantaged groups
- Skills shortages in the labour market
- Development in remuneration
- Career progression (comparison with RPL, no RPL)
- Advancements in career over time (comparison with RPL, no RPL)
- Timeframe for the unemployed to get into work
- Image of RPL and lifelong learning
- Institutional changes through RPL, etc.

Impact

Source: Authors' development with input from Braňka (2016a) and Aggarwal (2015).

6.2.3 Tools and methods for M&E data collection

Methods for data collection can be **quantitative and qualitative**. The information will, in most cases, be stored in a database. The information must be disaggregated to the extent possible, e.g. based on gender, age, sector, geographical area etc. (with due respect to data protection principles, where applicable). All databases must be managed and maintained over time.

TARGETING DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

All information to be collected as part of M&E efforts should be disaggregated by gender, age, qualification type, full or part qualification, sector, where applicable, and whether the worker was employed in the informal or formal sector (Aggarwal, 2015). An M&E system should therefore be designed from the outset to include this differentiation (and cater for information on vulnerable groups as well).

Only if M&E systems take specific care to cover vulnerable or disadvantaged groups, will it be feasible to produce information that will be pertinent to them and provide information about their situation over time. Such information facilitates the process of identifying approaches that work or do not work for them (do not improve their situation) and enables effective targeting of RPL efforts.

See also the example on the German website "Recognition in Germany" (https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/en/index.php) as a specifically targeted approach, shared in LU 4.

Different data collection methods apply in M&E, based on the information required. For example, activity and output monitoring requires the collection of information (in a database), such as numbers of participants, disaggregated by gender, age etc., evaluation information from activities concerning RPL, e.g. number of applicants for a service, disaggregated as above.

Outcome and impact information for M&E is more complicated to gather. To cover all data collection methods possible for M&E would go beyond the scope of this LU. The most important statistical method, however, is a survey – preferably over time (longitudinal). Where possible, it should be undertaken with a statistically relevant sample and including a control group (a similar group of individuals who have not undergone RPL to compare and facilitate exclusion or identification of other contextual factors), usually using a standardized questionnaire.

Tracer studies, tracing applicants even years or decades later and establishing changes over time, provide another method, for which data from an earlier survey can also be used. Information on applicants kept over time facilitates tracer studies for impact M&E.

Interviews and **case studies** are more qualitative assessment methods, often used to complement survey information, if available. A challenge is statistical relevance, which in most cases cannot be achieved. Nonetheless, such methods can also be used for pre- and post-comparison purposes, e.g. by requesting a set of information on an applicant's perception, self-assessment, current salary levels etc. prior to RPL in order to facilitate comparison later on. It is also important to think of indirect ways of measuring, e.g. demand for assessment procedures training etc. (Braňka, 2016a: 46).

Impact of RPL, long-term effects and changes at the different levels of applicants, employers, training providers and Government might be established through data collected on the areas shown in table 6.1.

6.2.4   What kind of information to collect?

Table 6.1: Measuring the impact of RPL at different levels

At the individual level:

- Productivity
- Confidence, activation and motivation
- Employment status prior to and after recognition
- Job held prior to and after recognition, its link to RPL*
- Wage/salary prior to and after recognition
- Training/education started and obtained after recognition*
- Acceptance of obtained competencies through the recognition certificate by employers

On employers:

- Changes in the share of hard-to-fill vacancies and (opinion-based) assessment of employers on influence of competencies recognition on it
- Changes in the share of accidents prior to and after recognition*
- Changes in the share of workers complying with regulations*
- Average length of the hiring process; average length of vacancy posted*
- Staff productivity*
- Staff motivation*
- Changes in establishments' spending on RPL

On education and training providers:

- Changes in number of new courses developed and marketed on the basis of RPL
- Changes in services (guidance and counselling) for RPL applicants
- Changes in numbers of participants in courses developed and marketed on the basis of RPL
- Changes in staff profiles and number of staff*
- Changes in number of certificates and qualifications issued on the basis of RPL

On government priorities*:

- GDP growth; company-level productivity growth; total sectoral sales and output growth; sectoral export growth; sectoral product growth
- Growth of labour mobility (occupational, sectoral, territorial)
- Decreases in unemployment rate – total and/or for specific target groups (focus: RPL)
- Increases in skills and jobs matching for specific target groups (focus: RPL)
- Changes in hard-to-fill vacancies reported by employers
- Changes in indexes on inequality; wage difference; poverty etc.
- Comparison of migrant workers and nationals in terms of:
  - ▶ employment status
  - ▶ over-education/under-education
  - ▶ level of earnings
- Increased interest and enrolment in TVET
- Increased participation in lifelong learning
- Decreased level of informality for occupations/sectors targeted by competencies recognition
- Changes in share of persons with required certifications within these occupations
- Changes in number of accidents or other issues related to these occupations

*Note: * indicates that the relationship and attribution to RPL must be established, e.g. compared with data from control groups, as other factors might influence potentially this result.*
Source: Adapted from Braňka (2016b.)

The impacts assumed need to be measured. Therefore, the information required must be translated into indicators, the related information gathered (e.g. via surveys) and assessed based on econometric methods. Braňka (2016b) has detailed the information that would be required from the various standpoints of applicants, employers and education and training institutions. The information is used in an adapted form in figures 6.3–6.5.

Figure 6.3: M&E information to be gathered (indicators) on applicants

Questions around impact	Information to be gathered
Are RPL participants able to find a job easier and quicker?	Length, outcome of the job-seeking process before and after RPL Employment status prior to and after RPL
Are RPL participants able to get jobs in which they can take advantage of the recognized competencies?	Job held prior to and after RPL, link to RPL
Did RPL help open new career or training pathways for the participant?	Share of RPL participants starting new careers, getting promoted, starting new training (linked to RPL)
Did RPL have any impact on wages? Are RPL participants with recognized competencies paid better?	Wage, salary prior to and after RPL
Do RPL participants use recognition certificates and for what purpose?	Assessment of use of RPL certificates
Has RPL helped the participant to find a formal job and/or start a new business?	Share of RPL participants moving out or informality or starting a new business after RPL (comparison with control group)

Figure 6.4: M&E information to be gathered on employers

Questions around impact	Information to be gathered

Did RPL speed up the recruitment process? Did it improve skills-job matching?

- Average length of the recruitment process (compare with control group)
- Perceived effectiveness of matching

Did the productivity of employees increase? Can they work more efficiently and/or carry out more demanding tasks?

- Perceived productivity (employers)
- Employee morale, teamwork (employers / employees)

Did RPL help to comply with safety standards and other regulations related to jobs and the workplace? Did less accidents occur (due to RPL)?

- Share of workers complying with standards (compare, control group)
- Share of accidents prior to and after RPL (compare)

Does RPL reduce workers' turnover and increase the retention rate?

- Retention and turnover rate – comparison prior to and after RPL (and comparison with control group)

How many employers use RPL certificates in the recruitment process, and what value do they attribute to them?

- Share of employers using RPL certificates in recruitment
- Assessment of importance of RPL certificates in recruitment

Is the RPL certificate used or asked for by career guidance counselors and during the job-matching process carried out by the employment services?

- Information on utilization of RPL certificates in reviews and reports of career guidance and employment services

Figure 6.5: M&E Information to be gathered on education and training institutions

Questions around impact	Information to be gathered
Does RPL increase demand for training and lifelong learning in general?	📖 Enrolments, requests for training and lifelong learning measures (comparison with RPL, without – control group)
Has the training and service provided increased the chances for successful RPL? Are the training and services provided on RPL considered effective?	📖 Comparison of outcomes of applicants with and without training and services 📖 Perception by applicants on effectiveness
Has RPL changed the offer of the institutions? Are courses linked to occupations and skills sets which are mostly subject to RPL, more demanded?	📖 Changes in offer and reasons 📖 Assessment of demand of offer (comparison RPL courses and others)
Has related skills-gap training demand increased?	📖 Requests for, enrolment in such training
How are guidance and counselling services perceived and used?	📖 Assessment of satisfaction/perception of services 📖 Assessment on utilization (frequency, length, etc.)

NOTES FOR TRAINERS (LU 6: 6.1 and 6.2)

(a) **Input:** Provide an introduction input into 6.1 "What is M&E?". Involve participants by asking them reflective questions before developing on a point.

(b) **Discussion:** Develop the results chain and example information in an interactive dialogue based on questions with the participants. Show figure 6.1 and briefly explain, adding to what has been said.

(c) **Video:** Watch the video on benefits with the participants, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SZ5gNaskgv4, *Exploding the myths of RPL* (minute 6:32–9:03). While watching, ask the participants to note down what they hear the different stakeholders state about why RPL works and what changed. Discuss with them whether the statements related to outputs or outcome/impact.

(d) **Impact gallery – group work:** Provide a brief input on M&E information and tools (use a short PPT). To go deeper into the subject with the participants, hang up four flipcharts in different corners of the room numbered 1–4 with the headings: Impact information; Individuals – impact information; Employers – impact information; and Education and training providers. Split the participants into four groups. Ask each group to find their correspondingly numbered flipchart and to discuss and note down what impact one would want to assess at that level and what one would want to know in order to determine whether RPL works. Give them 5 minutes, then rotate the groups to the next flipchart. Ask them to read and add their own thoughts. Repeat the rotation until all the groups have contributed to all the charts.

(e) **Presentation and discussion:** Walk with the participants from one flipchart to the other – or hang the completed flipchart sheets on a pinboard or flipchart stands next to each other at the front of the room. Go through the information provided, discussing findings with the participants and adding points, where necessary.

Alternative (a): **Panel discussion with RPL graduates:** This will also depend on where the training is taking place. Should the training take place in Europe, consider asking if one of the participants who has undergone RPL in a developing country can sit on the panel. If no panel with RPL graduates was convened earlier, it can be used effectively here to underline the impact. Besides questions on benefits, advantages and disadvantages of RPL as they have experienced them, be sure to ask the graduates what changes RPL has effected in their lives, how the changes have manifested themselves and whether the participants were part of any tracer study or any survey, so far as they are aware. You can also use the panel to share insights from the perspective of the applicant on how easy, complicated, helpful etc. the system and process in place in their specific country is.

Time: 45 minutes.

Alternative (b) or addition for an advanced group: **Group work on indicators:** Divide the participants into three groups (or four, if necessary, by adding a "Government" group): "applicants", "employers" and "education and training institutions". Provide each group with their respective handout (6.1–6.3). Go through the questions for each group with all participants. Ask, if they want to add a dimension or question. Discuss proposals and add points, where appropriate. Provide each group with a flipchart and markers. Ask them to determine the list of indicators to discuss, what to measure and assess in order to be able to answer the question outlined (give an example, such as level of salary prior to RPL and after, self-esteem before and after RPL etc.). Give them 15 minutes to finish the task. Ask the groups to present their results.

6.3 Measuring results: Examples, insights and challenges

This section introduces selected RPL M&E information available on output, outcome and impact level. As indicated earlier, the information available is, however, not systematic or comparable.

The information available also focuses only on selected aspects, e.g. take-up of RPL by applicants and in institutions – which, as purely quantitative information, does provide much information about actual benefits and effects (outcomes and impacts) of RPL.

EXAMPLE

India has developed an online portal to track the progress of an applicant from enrolment to certification and is further improving the system by adding a module on the status of applicants after certification. Each provider will have to track and enter the employment status of applicants on the portal (Aggarwal, 2015). This will then combine output and outcome monitoring information.

"The number of persons who apply for RPL as well as those who go through the process has been quite high in **France**. Since the introduction of the system in 2002, 136,000 people have obtained certification through RPL, according to Paulet (2013). Different ministries (Higher Education and Research; Agriculture; Social Action and Health; Employment; Youth and Sport; Defence; Culture; and Maritime Affairs) are involved in admitting applicants and granting certification.

In **South Africa**, between 1995 and 2004, the total number of qualifications awarded increased at an average annual growth rate of 4.3%, with the highest growth in four-year first degrees, honours degrees and master's degrees. Education and Training Quality Assurance Bodies (ETQAs) have been able to make significant progress over the last few years and have already uploaded 2.7 million learners' records between 2006 and 2010.

Austria has also reported on take-up and has provided exemplary data for a number of initiatives and mechanisms (Brandstetter and Luomi-Messerer, 2010). More than 800 applicants per year acquire the lower secondary school (Hauptschule) qualifications in second-chance education; approximately 5,300 persons per year take the final apprenticeship examination "Lehrabschlussprüfung" (LAP) in second-chance education; approximately 3,800 persons per year are awarded the professional title Ingenieur; approximately 3,000 persons have been issued competence balances at the Tyrol Centre of the Future since 2003; and about 2,000 persons have been issued the competence profile KOMPAZ at the Volkshochschule Linz (Adult Education Centre Linz) (Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, 2011).

In **Mauritius**, some 50 persons have already acquired either a full qualification or a record of learning to date. According to information gathered by the Mauritius Qualifications Authority, some of them have been promoted in their jobs while others benefited from a rise in salary. In effect, RPL has not only broadened participation in education and training, but as one RPL applicant said, 'RPL has enhanced my confidence and given me a "second chance" by recognising my experience and know-how.' Additionally, a batch of 50 persons will be assessed shortly, of which 25 will be assessed against the National Certificate in Adult Literacy Level (Allgoo, 2013)."

Source: Singh (2015: 173).

EXAMPLE

Labour market impact measurement in Germany. A labour market impact measurement in Germany revealed that 79 per cent of the employers consulted stated that recognition improved workers' ability to perform more responsible tasks; 54 per cent stated it also led to a higher salary. Another important finding of the survey is that employers are also interested in recognition, and they actively search for relevant tools and information in the case of new employees. RPL is rarely used as a human resource development tool. Also, two-thirds of the companies surveyed would be willing to support employees during their recognition procedure (Bra ka, 2016b: box 42).

Data from a longitudinal survey of RPL in **France** (2007, by Dares, Céreq and Drees, for more on the sample see Recotillet and Werquin, 2009: 83) are used in a 2009 article by Recotillet and Werquin discussing benefits and effects of RPL. The article provides rare insights based on statistically relevant data. Some of the information is therefore used to enrich this section.

The survey provided information on completion (two years after the RPL procedure), indicating that successful completion (across a number of levels and qualifications) was higher overall when applicants were mentored by an institution during the RPL process: "Among applicants who had been mentored, 51% obtained their diploma, whereas if they had not had any mentoring, the success rate fell to around 35%" (Recotillet and Werquin, 2009: 85). This finding indicates that mentoring might be an important success factor and it might even counterbalance effects differences in initial levels of education (Recotillet and Werquin, 2009: 91). It further underlines what other research also mentions: that applicants find RPL procedures complex and difficult.

EXAMPLE

The 2007 survey by Dares, Céreq and Drees on RPL in **France**, introduced above, provides important insights into impacts for the individual, which can also impact society in the long term: qualifications obtained through RPL positively impact leaving unemployment, since applicants "obtaining full accreditation for their diploma have 33% more chance of finding a new job than those obtaining partial accreditation or no accreditation at all" (Recotillet and Werquin, 2009: 88).

The processing of the survey data revealed that there seems to be a positive correlation between RPL certification and the chance of achieving an increase in wages over time: the data show a positive effect on the probability of obtaining a better wage after RPL certification (Recotillet and Werquin, 2009: 92f).

With regard to a subjective effect of RPL, where applicants where asked about their perceptions, Recotillet and Werquin found that 65 per cent of the applicants stated that the RPL procedure had "helped them to become more confident and self-assured" (Recotillet and Werquin, 2009: 94). A further interesting find is that the higher the initial education level of the applicant, the less they reported a positive impact.

Additionally, the survey provides insight into the fact that the mentoring of (male) applicants helps to boost the success rate, that it has a positive effect on the probability of achieving a certification through RPL, once eligible.

EXAMPLE

Example of labour market impact measurement in Denmark.[21] The survey gathered data (by means of a questionnaire) from among those who had received a recognition (assessment), and it was supported by interviews with individuals from each target group. The major findings are detailed below:

- Around 80 per cent of qualification holders were satisfied with the process, including the quality of the support, information provided and timeframe. The guidance professionals and employers expressed a similar degree of satisfaction.

- Some 76 per cent of the respondents stated that they used the assessment certification. About half of them use it to prove their skills when applying for a new job. One-quarter of them used it to gain admission to a degree study programme. Only around 5 per cent of respondents found the assessment not useful at all.

- The assessments seem to have a positive effect on the qualification holder's chance of finding relevant employment or continuing studies. Although other factors may be involved, it is clear that the situation of qualification holders significantly improved during the period after assessment – and at the same time, the qualification holders themselves found that the assessment has played a positive role.

- The best example is the summary of answers to a question that was put to the qualification holders: If you worked in Denmark prior to the assessment, how well did your job match the qualification you gained in your home country before and after the assessment? As seen in the figure below, the assessment contributed to increased skills matching, although it is not clear whether the possible impact of other factors on the improvement of skills utilization was also considered.

Figure 6.6: Impact of skills recognition on participants in Danish User Survey, 2008
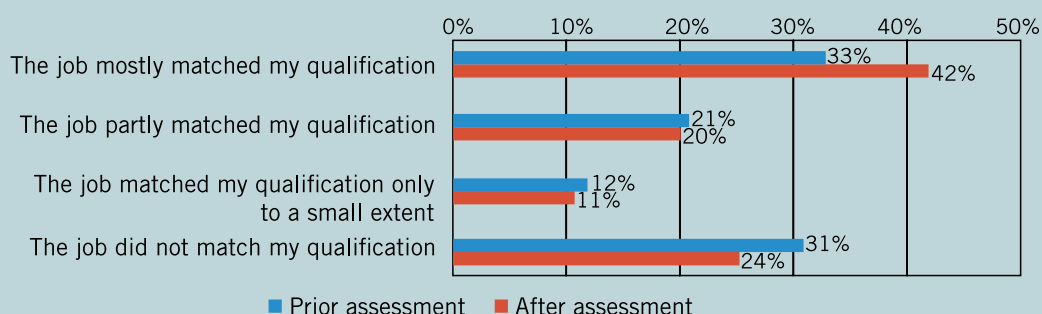
Source: Niras Konsulterne (2008) taken from Branka (2016b: box 41).

_____

22. Most of the information presented in the following is still outcome information. However, the last bullet point relates to impact.

TARGETING DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

Research from Australia: Disadvantaged groups less likely to access RPL

"Research in Australia has shown that RPL appears to benefit those from socio-economic backgrounds who already have experience of and success in post-compulsory education and training. They are mid-career, established in the workforce, older, full-time, and in associate professional, professional or managerial occupations. Maher et al. (2010) found that applicants from indigenous, non-English speaking backgrounds and women returning to the workforce are less likely to access and complete RPL than other groups. Moreover, the dominant model of RPL in Australia is the credentialing model (Butterworth, 1992), and Cameron (2004) found that this approach is neither relevant nor appropriate to the needs of disadvantaged and disengaged groups of learners" (Singh, 2015: 174).

The survey from **France** (2007, see Recotillet and Werquin 2009) corroborates this by pointing out that "better qualified people have more chance" of an RPL certification (Recotillet and Werquin, 2009: 93).

M&E information (and research as an instrument of it) can identify challenges and unintended impacts of an RPL system. If insight is gathered into unintended impacts, such as the finding described above, that disadvantaged groups are less likely to access and complete RPL, investigation into the "why" must be undertaken and emerging patterns must subsequently be addressed by better targeting of RPL to reach these groups.

NOTES FOR TRAINERS (LU 6: 6.3)

Input: Provide an overview of examples for the different levels. Emphasize that the results available to date are not comparable as such. Highlight the fact that M&E should be based on sufficient statistical information, such as in the case of the 2007 survey in France. Furthermore, the purpose of M&E information is to produce any insight, including unintended, negative impacts. As an example, mention the results from the pilot research in India (DEFT, 2016) in several sectors, indicating that the strongly assumed increase in remuneration did materialize as a positive impact of RPL in any of the tracer studies (in agriculture, the gem and jewellery sector and others). The results also show lower social recognition levels than had been assumed. The evaluation did, however, demonstrate a positive impact on the applicants' motivation for further training (see DEFT (2016) for further details).

Alternative (a): You can make a more active input by preparing the available evidence on flipcharts, summarizing under headings such as "Output", "Use of RPL", "Labour market impact", "Views of employers", etc. and then provide the examples and relevant information. Hang up the flipcharts in the room and walk from one to the other, either with the participants or just directing their attention, requiring the participants to change perspective.

Overview of handouts for Learning Unit 6

6.1–6.3   Information required for M&E (applicants, employers and education and training providers)

Suggestions for further reading around Learning Unit 6

European Commission. 2004. *Project cycle management guidelines* (EuropeAid Cooperation Office, Brussels, Belgium).

OECD-DAC. 2002. *Glossary of key terms in evaluation and results based management* (Paris, France).

Yang, J. 2015. *Recognition, validation and accreditation of non-formal and informal learning in UNESCO member states* (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, Hamburg, Germany).

Links

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SZ5gNaskgv4, *Exploding the myths of RPL: A pathway to greater productivity* (GQ Australia) minute 6:32–9:03.

SUMMARY AND CLOSING REMARKS

Learning units	Duration
Getting to know each other	
Learning Unit 1: What is RPL and why is it important?	
Learning Unit 2: How to develop an RPL system: Introduction to the "building blocks"	
Learning Unit 3: Stakeholder involvement: Who is involved in RPL and in what ways?	
Learning Unit 4: What challenges are involved in implementing RPL systems? How to address them?	
Learning Unit 5: What are the key components in assessment methodologies?	
Learning Unit 6: How do you know if the system is working?	
Summary, assessment test, evaluation and closing remarks	

Outline of the closing unit

Topic	Time: minutes	Methods	Materials
Summary exercise Where do we go from here?	40 (40)	Group work: Filling the building blocks with learning applicable (what needs to be done, what to be mindful of) *Alternative:* Where do we go from here?	Pinboard or whiteboard, coloured cards, marker, pins Handout
Assessment test Evaluation Certificates and closing	20	Test (or exercise/quiz) Evaluation in person/ evaluation form (Annex 3) Thank you and handover of certificates, speech	Assessment test (printed) Evaluation form (printed) Certificates (printed and signed)
Total duration	60 minutes		

> **NOTES FOR TRAINERS**
>
> (a) **Introduce** the last session with the aim of summarizing the whole training, visualizing all the learning that has happened and that the participants have acquired. The aim is to bring all the collective knowledge together.
>
> (b) **Summary exercise:** Set up a pinboard with brown paper or a large whiteboard. Add headings on cards (the building blocks and M&E): What is RPL? (1) regulatory framework, (2) institutional framework, (3) stakeholder ownership and commitment, (4) quality assurance, (5) financing and (6) M&E. Add two differently coloured cards to the board as a key, e.g. light blue for "what to do" and green for "what to be mindful of"/"good practice".
>
> Form six groups (mix the participants again by counting from one to six from any starting point in the room, the number allocated indicating their group).
>
> Start with all the participants together in plenary by briefly filling cards (or A4 paper) for "What is RPL?" (definition, stages in the process, building blocks etc.).

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Then ask the participants to form their groups, provide them with the different sets of coloured cards and markers and ask them to discuss and fill the coloured cards for their assigned topic according to the keys introduced. Give them 15 minutes to complete the task.

Once they have filled the cards, ask each group to come forward and cluster them on the board (or you can do this stage for them). Have a look at the things identified, ask the rest of the participants for additions, correct and/or add, where required. Complete the board with the rest of the groups (be mindful of managing the time well, keep the pace).

Emphasize at the end that this is the full overview of things that were discussed and what they have processed as part of the training. Thank participants for their attention and move on.

Alternative: Where do we go from here? (to set the focus not so much on summarizing the knowledge but on the way forward and commitment to change). Distribute the closing handout to the participants and explain the tasks as written on the handout. Give them 20 minutes to complete their document, adding another 10 minutes if they have not finished. Include a short feedback conversation on the exercise and invite participants to share aspects of what they have written down, if they want to.

Time: 40 minutes.

(c)   **Assessment test or quiz:** Depending on the set-up of the course, either distribute an assessment test or conduct an interactive quiz with the participants. You can use the PPT with assessment quiz questions provided in the supporting material, change these or add to them. Make it fun (e.g. keep some chocolates for high performers).

(d)   **Evaluation:** Depending on your preference you can do a short evaluation with the participants in person to know how the training went and what they take with them in addition to the evaluation form. However, the institution for which you are conducting the training might require an evaluation based on evaluation forms for the training (Annex 3). Distribute these to the participants and ask them to fill them in anonymously and leave them face down in one designated place. In any case, also conduct a short evaluation round for the course overall before distributing the sheets.

Evaluation in person: Invite participants to comment on what they liked about the course or what should be changed or improved. There are different ways to make this exercise more creative, e.g. bring a set of different pictures or postcards with different motifs (or Emotioncards© by Metalog®), sufficient for each participant to choose from (at least double the number of participants). Lay them out on the floor and ask the participants to pick one or two:

One: choose a card that speaks to your state of mind and mood at the end of the training

Two: one for the state of mind/mood and another which they feel relates to their learning.

Ask everybody to stand in a circle, showing the chosen picture and invite them to share the reason why they chose a certain card or picture. Keep the pace so that the exercise provides a nice closing round but does not get boring.

If you don't have sufficient cards, ask them to choose one for their state of mind and to comment on their main learning experience from the course during the round. You can also invite people to state what they particularly liked or did not like about the training.

Alternatives: Ask participants to share their observations (you can also pass a ball around to select participants at random). Put up a flipchart with three smiles of varying degrees of cheerfulness at the exit, where people can indicate their mood (you can also do this at the end of each day to have an idea of how the participants feel).

Evaluation form: Distribute the evaluation form and ask the participants to complete it. Highlight the fact that it is anonymous and indicate where they should leave their forms, face down.

(e)   **Certificates and closing:** Depending on the protocol applicable, thank the participants for their active participation, distribute the certificates (if applicable) and hand over to a representative from the organization hosting the training for a short closing speech.

Time: 20 minutes.

ANNEX 1: GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Technical terms

Competencies	Covers the knowledge, skills and know-how applied and mastered in a specific context.
Formal training	Instruction given in education and training institutions or specially designed training areas, including in enterprises in formal apprenticeship systems. Training is structured and has precise learning objectives.
Informal learning	Learning resulting from activities undertaken daily at work, in the family or in leisure activities.
Lifelong learning and training	A process that encompasses all learning and training activities undertaken throughout life for the development of competencies and qualifications.
National Qualifications Framework (NQF)	A nationally consistent set of qualifications for all post-compulsory education and training in a country.
Non-formal learning	Learning taking place in activities not exclusively designated as learning activities, but which contain an important learning element.
Non-formal training	Organized and systematic training in an informal setting that can be adapted to individual needs. Non-formal training emphasizes activities directly associated with work and often appeals to workers who have limited resources and few opportunities to undergo formal training.
Occupation	What a person (habitually) is engaged in to earn a living: a job, a business, a profession, an activity.
Prior learning	Knowledge or skills acquired in earlier study and work or through experience.
Qualification	A formal expression of the vocational and professional abilities of a worker that are recognized at international, national or sectoral levels.
Recognition of prior learning (RPL)	People acquire knowledge and skills by formal, non-formal and informal learning. RPL is a process of identifying, documenting, assessing and certifying such learning outcomes against standards used in formal education and training. Thus, RPL provides individuals with an opportunity to acquire a qualification or credits towards a qualification or exemptions (from all or part of the curriculum, or even exemption from an academic prerequisite for entering a formal study programme) without going through a formal education or training programme.
Skills	Ability to carry out a manual or mental activity that has been acquired through learning and practice.
Validation of non- (in)formal learning	The process of verifying that the skills and competencies that an individual has learnt in education, at work or in leisure activities meet certain standards.

Training methodologies[23]

Brainstorming	Brainstorming is a well-known, fast approach to collecting ideas. It is inclusive, encourages creativity and stimulates spontaneous thought processes. It can generate inspiration for innovation. A subject is presented to a group as a challenge, and the group is asked to freely generate ideas around this subject.
Case studies	Case studies examine specific issues by analysing a contextual scenario. They can be used to holistically introduce key concepts or learning topics, analyse circumstances, diagnose problems and propose solutions. They are a way of concretely presenting theory that might otherwise remain abstract. Case studies encourage the development of individual ideas and the understanding of diverse perspectives through participatory discussion and collaborative analysis. This method is related to storytelling, but allows more control over the content.
Design storyboards	Storyboards are sketches depicting significant changes in actions and scenes taking place in a film or television show. A storyboard of group dynamics invites participants to outline all the micro-organizing elements they need to achieve their purpose and to highlight and delete all the common causes of unproductive meetings (such as lack of or unclear common aim, frustration, antagonistic attitudes, absent participants etc.).
Fishbowl	The fishbowl facilitates dialogue between experts, exposing others to their knowledge and expanding the collective understanding of a subject. Knowledgeable people (the fish) sit in circle to discuss a series of directional questions. They are surrounded by a larger group of observers in an outer circle (the bowl). In some variations, people can move from the bowl to the fish, to share the opportunity to speak.
Presentations	PowerPoint is a presentation tool. It is one of many visual aids that can support, supplement and reinforce what the speaker says. It is not for summarizing documents on slides.
Role play	Role play gives participants the chance to simulate characters and situations in order to prepare for and practise real decisions and actions. Participants perform, observe, interact, reflect, provide and receive feedback, and analyse the case in question.
Sociometrics	Sociometrics require a high level of interaction among participants, and can be an effective approach to ice-breakers. In learning, sociometric activities engage people in representing social dynamics, using means such as Web 2.0 technology or physical spaces. It allows groups of people to identify factors that they have in common, and to get an overview of networks and structures. Social network analysis and social mapping are two of its most common applications in professional learning environments.

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23. The definitions in this glossary are sourced from the ILO International Training Centre's online resource 'Compass', accessible here.

ANNEX 2: HANDOUTS

Handouts Learning Unit 1

1.1 Key terms and definitions

Competencies	Covers the knowledge, skills and know-how applied and mastered in a specific context.
Formal training	Instruction given in education and training institutions or specially designed training areas, including in enterprises in formal apprenticeship systems. Training is structured and has precise learning objectives.
Informal learning	Learning resulting from activities undertaken daily at work, in the family or in leisure activities.
Lifelong learning and training	A process that encompasses all learning and training activities undertaken throughout life for the development of competencies and qualifications.
National Qualifications Framework (NQF)	A nationally consistent set of qualifications for all post-compulsory education and training in a country.
Non-formal learning	Learning taking place in activities not exclusively designated as learning activities, but which contain an important learning element.
Non-formal training	Organized and systematic training in an informal setting that can be adapted to individual needs. Non-formal training emphasizes activities directly associated with work and often appeals to workers who have limited resources and few opportunities to undergo formal training.
Occupation	What a person (habitually) is engaged in to earn a living: a job, a business, a profession, an activity.
Prior learning	Knowledge or skills acquired in earlier study and work or through experience.
Qualifications	A formal expression of the professional or vocational abilities of a worker that are recognized at international, national or sectoral levels.
Recognition of prior learning (RPL)	People acquire knowledge and skills by formal, non-formal and informal learning. RPL is a process of identifying, documenting, assessing and certifying such learning outcomes against standards used in formal education and training. Thus, RPL provides an opportunity for individuals to acquire a qualification or credits towards a qualification or exemptions (from all or part of the curriculum, or even exemption from an academic prerequisite for entering a formal study programme) without going through a formal education or training programme.
Skills	Ability to carry out a manual or mental activity that has been acquired through learning and practice.
Validation of non- (in)formal learning	The process of verifying that the skills and competencies that an individual has learnt in education, at work or in leisure activities meet certain standards.

1.2 Generic RPL process[24]

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┌─────────────────┐     ┌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌┐
│ 1. Awareness    │     ┊ Provision of targeted  ┊
│    and          │     ┊ and easily accessible  ┊
│    information  │     ┊ information on RPL.     ┊
└─────────────────┘     ┊ Awareness-raising      ┊
                        ┊ about RPL, existing    ┊
                        ┊ opportunities, where   ┊
                        ┊ to turn to, etc.       ┊
                        └╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌╌┘
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1. Awareness and information → Provision of targeted and easily accessible information on RPL. Awareness-raising about RPL, existing opportunities, where to turn to, etc.

2. Counselling and facilitation

- A counsellor/facilitator guides the applicant about RPL procedures and requirements and their suitability for a qualification — *not suitable* → Gap training
- *suitable* → Applicant submits the application and evidence / portfolio — *not suitable* → Gap training

3. Assessment and certification

- *suitable* → Assessor reviews and assesses the evidence submitted. Interviews the applicant. — *not suitable* → Gap training
- *suitable* → If applicable: Assessor guides the applicant, preparing for final assessment — *not suitable* → Gap training / Appeal
- *suitable* → If applicable: Applicant assessed against the standards for the selected qualification(s)

Applicant is successful and obtains a certificate/credit or units

Gap training / Appeal: Applicants are informed about shortcomings, including gaps; and assisted in overcoming these through training, mentoring and other support. Applicants might appeal a decision through mechanisms in place.

1.3 Role play: Benefits of RPL

About the role play

This exercise is a role play in which you will work on a fictitious case of "Titanic" and you will represent the Ministry of Labour, trade union, or employers' association. Please choose a role that is different from your actual role (e.g. if you are a Government official, please choose either trade union or employers' association). Through this role play you will understand another party's positions and perspectives on RPL.

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24. Source: Aggarwal, A. 2015. *Recognition of prior learning: Key success factors and the building blocks of an effective system* (1st edn) (Geneva, Switzerland, International Labour Organization).

Basic facts about "Titanic"

- Titanic is a developing country. Although it is rich in natural resources (minerals and agriculture, fishery, textile and leather industries), there is widespread poverty and high levels of youth unemployment.

- Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) only covers 10 per cent of the youth population.

- Most youth acquire skills through non-formal and informal means and do not have qualifications.

- The drop-out rates from school and TVET are high and, therefore, there are very low levels of formal schooling.

- Some 80 per cent of the country's workers are in the informal economy, and most of them are underemployed.

- Many workers migrate to other countries but face challenges in getting decent jobs as they lack formal qualifications.

- Employers complain about skills level of workers and new entrants to the labour force. However, many of them do not want to invest in skills development and consider it to be the responsibility of the Government.

The Vice President of Titanic intends to convene a tripartite task force that will be responsible for setting up an RPL system in Titanic. You have received an invitation from the Office of the Vice President to participate in the first task force meeting, which also poses the following questions:

1. **Why should the country establish a system of RPL?**

    - How will it benefit the workers who do not have qualifications?

    - How will it benefit the employers?

    - How will it benefit the country?

    - Will RPL benefit any other group? If yes, which one(s) and how?

2. **How to encourage the participation of employers and workers in RPL?**

The Vice President requests each party to: (a) present opinions on an RPL system; (b) engage in tripartite dialogue; and (c) come to a tripartite agreement on an RPL system.

Instructions

Each group will represent a different institution (i.e. Ministry of Labour, trade union or employers' association). Each institution will have a different opinion, interests and concerns about the need to set up an RPL system.

Please:

- Truly internalize the "role", the interests and concerns of the institution you will represent in this role play. Act out your role as best as you can.

- Discuss in your group the two questions from the Vice President from the viewpoint of your organization. For each question, please come up with the official position of your group.

- If you don't have sufficient information on a specific point you would like to make, feel free to be creative and "invent" some facts.

- Select two spokespersons who will represent your group at the task force meeting.

- At the task force meeting, your representatives will present your group's position and negotiate with representatives of the other groups. Representatives are expected to find common ground that is agreeable to all parties. Please be aware that you might need to adjust your positions and make concessions, if no agreement is initially reached with the other groups.

- The other group members who will not participate in the task force meeting will observe the discussions between the different groups in the task team. They will, however, have an opportunity to express their opinion during the final feedback/plenary session.

Time

- 10 minutes for reading instructions

- 25 minutes for group discussion on the two questions from the Vice President and selecting the two representatives

- 20 minutes for the task force meeting, discussions and written transcription of decisions

- 15 minutes for feedback and Q&A.

1.4 Group work task: Analysis of country examples

In your group, read the distributed material of the country example assigned. Assign a moderator, a documenter and a rapporteur (to present the result in plenary).

Discuss and determine the answers to the different categories and document them.

Country Analysis	
Policy/strategy/ national framework (scope)	
Educational sectors (scope)	
Stakeholder (process)	
Methods and tools	
Further observations	

Handouts Learning Unit 2: Building blocks

2.2 Examples: Policy and legal framework for RPL

(A) National policies and strategies

Group work

In your group, read, discuss and analyse the recognition regulatory framework information in the table and determine which countries (and how many)

- have a standalone **strategy/policy** (covering all sectors)

- have no strategy

- are currently developing a strategy, etc.

Add information from your own experience and country, if not yet represented.

Document your results on a flipchart or a PPT chart to be presented (consider drawing a table for an overview, if helpful).

Present your findings to the rest of the participants.

Country	Regulatory Framework
Australia	RPL is integrated into the AQF Qualifications Pathways Policy, which is built into Australia's Qualification Framework and aims at maximizing the credit that students can obtain from prior learning
Botswana	Botswana is in the process of developing a national RPL policy. The current pilot of RPL implemented in 10 sectors will inform the finalization of the RPL policy. The Botswana Qualifications Authority spearheads this process and was mandated to do so via the Qualifications Authority Act 2013
European Union	RPL is typically integrated within broader education strategies/policies rather than single policy documents.[25] Only France, Finland and Spain have a standalone RPL strategy/policy, covering all education sectors
India	RPL provisions are found in: • the National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2015 (MSDE) • the National Skills Qualification Framework, implemented by the National Skills Development Agency
Malawi	The RPL system in Malawi is still in development, although a form of RPL has previously been undertaken informally. Malawi has developed RPL guidelines but still seeks to review existing legal instruments governing vocational training to capture RPL in greater detail
Malaysia	RPL is reflected in the Malaysian Qualifications Framework 2010, developed after lifelong learning became a primary goal within the country's National Higher Education Strategic Plan 2007

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25. European Commission; Cedefop; ICF International. 2014. *European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2014. Final synthesis report.* Available at: http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2014/87244.pdf. Accessed on 07 February 2018.

Mauritius	RPL is detailed in the standalone RPL Policy 2009
Pakistan	RPL is reflected in: • the TVET Policy 2015 • National Skills Strategy 2009–2013 RPL is further aligned to the TVET sub-framework of the NQF, the National Vocational Qualifications Framework
Seychelles	RPL is aligned to: • Seychelles Qualifications Framework • Policy Guidelines on RPL 2008 (Seychelles Qualifications Authority)
South Africa	The RPL regulatory framework includes: • National Policy for the Implementation of RPL 2013, a standalone policy making the South African Qualifications Authority responsible for RPL implementation and quality assurance • Policy for the implementation of RPL of the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO, 2016) • QCTO Assessment Policy 2014
Uganda	RPL is integrated into the Business, Technical and Vocational Training Act 2008, which officially introduced RPL as part of the overarching 10-year plan Skilling Uganda, and the Ugandan Vocational Qualifications Framework

(B) Legislation linked to RPL for migrants – Germany and Sri Lanka

Group work

Read the text in your group (jointly or individually). Consider the following questions:

1. Germany: Which new Act was adopted (when), and what are its main features?

2. Sri Lanka: Who is targeted by the Labour Migration Policy and efforts to support RPL upon return? Can you think of reasons why?

3. What is the difference between the two examples and what does this tell us about the importance of the legal framework for RPL?

Analyse the information given in the text based on the three questions and document a short summary on a flipchart to support your presentation. Present your findings to the rest of the participants.

TARGETING DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

Germany has passed the so-called Federal Recognition Act, the "Law to improve the assessment and recognition of professional and vocational education and training qualifications acquired abroad", which came into force on 1 April 2012.

The Federal Recognition Act simplifies and standardizes procedures for the evaluation of foreign professional or vocational qualifications governed by Federal Law and opens up such procedures to target groups not previously entitled to pursue such a route. At the same time, the Act seeks to secure the requirement for skilled workers in Germany. It facilitates the use of professional or vocational qualifications for skilled workers from abroad and fosters integration into the German labour market.

Due to Germany being a Federal Republic with federal and local laws, the Recognition Act comprises several laws or amendments to existing laws and relates to over 600 occupations governed by Federal Law. The Recognition Act is a subsidiary law, meaning that it gives priority to existing regulations for specific groups, such as the Blue Card for highly skilled non-EU citizens, and for crafts occupations, which are recognized by local Crafts Chambers (see also: https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/en/federal_recognition_act.php).

The key objectives of changes to the migrant skills recognition approach in Germany are:

(a)   to improve utilization of migrants' skills on the German labour market

(b)   to reduce skills bottlenecks perceived by employers

(c)   to make the skills recognition process for migrants in Germany easier, faster and more transparent.[26]

TARGETING DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

Sri Lanka has put in place a National Labour Migration Policy, the main focus of which is low-skilled migrant workers – in particular, female domestic workers with limited capacity, knowledge and access to information and services. The policy calls for facilitation of the return and reintegration of migrant workers by creating opportunities for "skill transfer, productive employment and conflict-free social integration". Under this policy, the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment facilitates the process by providing services to returning migrants and their family members, including recognition of skills through RPL and certification.

2.3 Examples: Institutional framework[26]

Providers for recognition

Group work

Read the text in your group (jointly or individually). Consider the following questions:

- Who are the providers for recognition in the different countries?

- Can you identify particular similarities or differences?

Analyse the information given in the text based on the questions and document a short summary on a flipchart to support your presentation (pick three or four examples for the presentation). Present your findings to the rest of the participants.

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26. Braňka, J. 2016b. *Understanding the potential impact of skills recognition systems on labour markets: Research report* (Geneva, Switzerland, International Labour Organization).

Recognition authorities

Country	Regulatory Framework
Australia	**AQF Council:** Implementation of the Australian Qualifications Framework **National Skills Standards Council:** Oversight of training packages and training provider quality (including representation of industry) **The National Insurance Brokers Association:** Skills recognition for insurance brokers
Belgium	**Consortium de validation des compétences:** National skills recognition system, bringing together the five most important public sector training providers
Botswana	**Botswana Qualifications Authority (BQA):** Responsible for quality assurance of RPL across all sectors. The BQA sets assessment requirements. Accreditation of education and training providers to offer RPL assessments. They will be expected to comply with RPL assessment requirements and will be monitored regularly [27]
Brazil	**Certific Net:** Accrediting federal system encompassing: accrediting institutions (38 Federal Institutes of Technical and Technological Education); eligible entities for skills certification purposes (such as public and private schools, unions, enterprises, NGOs); and associated organizations in education, metrology, standardization and/or inspection[28]
Chile	**ChileValora:** The National System for the Certification of Labour Competency Standards in Chile, a decentralized public service connected to the Presidency of the Republic via the Ministry of Employment and Social Security. Its principal functions include the formal validation of labour competencies (regardless of how they were acquired or whether or not they possess an academic title or degree), the creation of opportunities for ongoing training and education, and accreditation and evaluation by way of processes based on defined standards and validated by the productive sectors
China	**Public occupation skill testing stations:** Assessment organizations approved by the Government and set up by industries, associations and local governments
Germany	**Universities:** Skills recognition in higher education **Chambers of Crafts, Industry, Commerce and Farming:** Skills recognition in the area of vocational education and training **Federal state level institutions:** Skills recognition for regulated occupations (e.g. doctors)
Ghana	**Business/trade associations:** Skills recognition of informal apprenticeships through exhibitions, trade shows and trade fairs[30]
India	**National Skills Development Agency:** Autonomous body created to implement the National Skills Qualification Framework, now part of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship **National Skills Development Corporation:** Facilitation of private-sector participation in the skills development effort[31] **National Skills Qualifications Committee** **Directorate General for Employment and Training and National Council for Vocational Training** under the Ministry of Labour and Employment

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27. BQA presentation at the ILO Technical Workshop on RPL, Johannesburg, September 2017.

28. Leite, E. 2015. *Skills mismatch and recognition in BRICS: Case of Brazil* (unpublished)

29. Velciu, M. 2014. "Recognition ofprior learning by competencies' validation in selected European countries", in *Contemporary Readings in Law and Social Justice*, Vol. 6, N. 1, pp 217-22.

30. Amankrah, J. 2015. *Labour market outcomes of the apprenticeship system in Ghana* (unpublished).

31. UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning et al., 2015. *Global inventory of regional and national qualifications frameworks. Volume II: National and regional cases* (Hamburg, Germany).

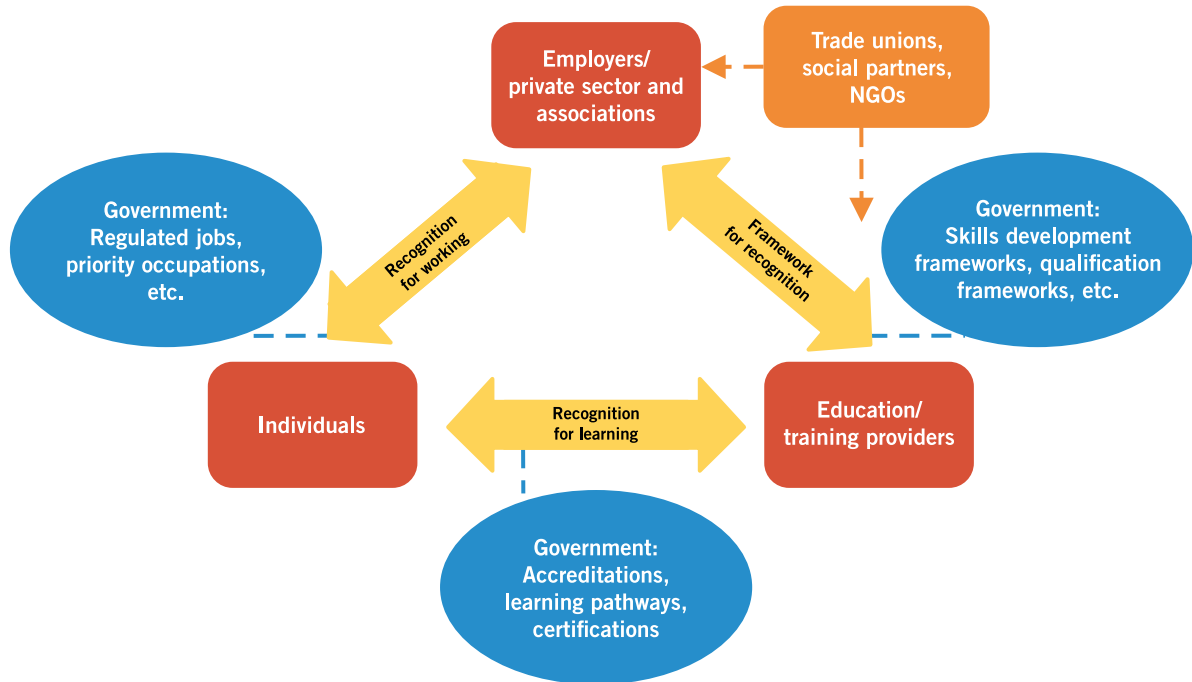|	
Malawi	**Assessment and awarding bodies in technical and vocational education, three-pronged approach:** National Trade Testing Services, Malawi National Examinations Board and Technical Entrepreneurial and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TEVETA). TEVETA is also the regulatory body
Malaysia	**Malaysia Qualifications Agency:** Implementation of Malaysia Qualification Framework, quality assurance, programme accreditation, recognition and articulation of qualifications[32]
Mauritius	**Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA):** Recognizes and validates competencies, issues certificates, trains RPL professionals. The Mauritius Qualifications Authority Act, 2001 assigns the MQA the function of recognizing and validating competencies for purposes of certification of learning acquired outside the formal education and training system
Pakistan	**Qualification awarding bodies at provincial level:** Either trade testing board or board of technical education
Seychelles	**Seychelles Qualifications Authority:** The authority which ascertains that courses and assessments meet the required standards, accredits providers and ensures their capacity
Singapore	**Singapore Workforce Development Agency:** Skills recognition and development body
South Africa	**Quality Council for Trades and Occupations:** Responsible for policy and criteria for assessment, RPL and credit accumulation and transfer for qualifications and part-qualifications[33]
Tanzania	**Directorate of Assessment and Certification, VETA (Vocational Education and Training Authority), RPL Section:** Responsible for the development and implementation of the RPL Guidelines.[34] It registers assessors, accredits RPL centres and trains RPL assessors, facilitators and moderators. Facilitators have a special role in quality assurance of the process and overseeing assessors
Trinidad and Tobago	**National Training Agency:** Agency under the aegis of the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education Division that serves as the awarding body for the Caribbean Vocational Qualification, the Trinidad and Tobago National Vocational Qualification in Trinidad and Tobago. Responsible for the development of TVET products and services. Conducts training for assessors and internal verifiers as well as training providers offering programmes leading to the awards
Uganda	**Directorate of Industrial Training:** In charge of quality assurance and assessment. It assures employers that every individual certified against the Uganda Vocational Qualification Framework is able to perform the relevant occupational tasks to the level of competence indicated on the qualification certificate[35] **Industrial Council:** Policymaking organ for technical and vocational skills development with representation from industry

32. UNESCO (2015).

33. Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO). 2016. *Policy for the implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)* (Pretoria, South Africa).

34. Vocational Education and Training Agency (VETA). 2014. *Guidelines for recognition of prior learning assessment (PLAR) in Tanzania* (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania).

35. UNESCO (2015: 382f).

Handouts Learning Unit 3

3.1 Key stakeholders in RPL[36]

3.2 Functions of the key stakeholders in RPL[37]

	Who is involved?	Example of main functions
European stakeholders	• EU Commission and Council • EU agencies, Cedefop and the European Training Foundation • European programmes • European social funds • European social partner organizations • European employers • European projects • European non-governmental organizations • European youth organizations	• Provide common guidelines • Provide common EU tools for validation • Support transparency and portability • Support policy learning and best practices transfer

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36.   Adapted from Braňka, J. 2016b. *Understanding the potential impact of skills recognition systems on labour markets: Research report* (Geneva, Switzerland, International Labour Organization).

37.   Source: CEDEFOP. 2015. European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning (Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities).

Public national stakeholders	• Ministries (of education, labour, etc.) • Education, training and qualification authorities • National projects • Public employment • Social services • Social partners	• Provide adequate legislation • Establish procedures • Determine role and responsibilities • Coordinate institutional actors • Provide national guidelines • Establish quality assurance mechanism
Public regional and local stakeholders	• Regional public authorities in education and training, labour and social services, etc. • Local public authorities in education, employment and social services • Regional and local projects	• Provide support to institutions establish procedures • Adapt guidelines to local environment • Coordinate among regional actors • Provide information and support carry out identification, documentation, assessment and certification
Education and training institutions	• Vocational schools universities • Private education institutions • Assessment centres and specialist recognition centres • Projects	• Carry out assessment and certification • Provide support for identification and documentation, including information and guidance • Support individuals

Handouts Learning Unit 4

4.1 Strategies to address awareness, guidance and counselling

The **main strategies** focus on:

- implementing awareness-raising activities and communication on RPL among different target groups

- ensuring a functioning system of guidance and counselling, which targets different groups, including vulnerable groups, for potential applicants (pre-assessment of qualifications, assistance in the collection of evidence and preparation for the assessment). Sufficient RPL professionals to guide and counsel are required (link to section 4.3) and easy access is essential (link to section 4.5).

Who is responsible?

Depending on the system for RPL chosen, the Government and public and/or private employment service providers have responsibility for guidance and counselling (the recognition authority and institutions involved).

Key steps to ensure awareness, guidance and counselling:

- Develop an awareness-raising and communication strategy for RPL, its opportunities and requirements, process and potential benefits (based on needs assessment), targeting different potential applicants for RPL.

- Specifically reach out to employers to raise their awareness and build their trust in RPL.

- Guidance and counselling should be organized (and flyers available) in all (relevant) languages.

- Guidance services and counselling should be provided by trained, qualified professionals (link to 4.3: Capacity of RPL professionals).

- Techniques for fighting illiteracy (via mobile phones, SMS communication etc.) could be considered for raising awareness about RPL and guiding potential applicants through the RPL process (key messages, reminders of deadlines etc.).

- Dissemination of information through a wide range of mediums to increase outeach, such as radio, television and cartoon should be organized for illiterate potential applicants with strong practical competencies (targeted, based on the needs assessment).

TARGETING DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

Lack of awareness among disadvantaged groups impedes participation. "Low-skilled individuals, early school leavers, jobseekers/unemployed, individuals at risk of unemployment, older workers, migrants/refugees and people with disabilities, benefit least from validation".[38]

More targeted information and awareness raising targeting those groups should therefore be undertaken. Where relevant – the determination of which might require a specific needs-based assessment – a focused approach to reach and include these groups within the current RPL system might be necessary.

REFLECTION

How is awareness on RPL raised in your country? Which services for guidance and counselling are in place?

4.1.1 Examples and good practices in reaching out[39]

EXAMPLE

In **Belgium**, the public employment services (PES) are the primary channel for reaching individual users. Jobseekers have been the main target group of the scheme since its inception. Validation centres also provide information to anyone interested in the scheme. Prior to registering for a test, guidance is provided to applicants to assess their chances of success. Other ways to reach potential users include the Consortium website, the diffusion of information material, targeted emails to jobseekers, media campaigns and the creation of an online portal providing information about all types of validation procedures in French-speaking Belgium.[40]

EXAMPLE

In **South Africa**, the occupational learning system is a relatively new innovation. A number of marketing and communications activities are being undertaken to keep stakeholders informed about occupational qualifications development and assessment processes: (1) national road shows are held in all nine provinces; (2) a website was developed providing vital information; (3) a management information system was installed; (4) a marketing and communication strategy was developed; (5) the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations participates in major exhibitions and produces a range of printed materials. The different stakeholders also actively use Facebook and Twitter to promote RPL, including a one-page summary of the process, benefits and stakeholders, which uses visual elements to make it more appealing.

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38. CEDEFOP. 2017a. *European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning – 2016 update. Synthesis report* (Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities).

39. Braňka, J. 2016a. *Strengthening skills recognition systems: Recommendations for key stakeholders* (Geneva, Switzerland, International Labour Organization).

40. Mathou, C. 2016. *Belgium-French: 2016 update to the European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning.* Country Report. Cedefop.

EXAMPLE

In **Germany**, the website "Recognition in Germany" acts as a one-stop-shop information centre, focusing mainly on individual users but also catering for employers and stakeholders.

It serves as an information portal of the German Government for the recognition of foreign qualifications or certificates for migrant workers and refugees who wish to take up employment in Germany.

The website collates relevant information and services that pertain to how professional recognition can be obtained and includes information on, among other things: (1) a step-by-step process of recognition for selected occupations, which are searchable via a user-friendly "Recognition Finder" function; (2) preconditions for skills recognition; (3) success stories relating to skills recognition; (4) hotline and counselling information; (5) relevant authorities, institutions and their contact information.

Under "success stories", the website provides examples, offering information on people going through the recognition process and how it improved their chances of finding better jobs.

It also provides guidance related to working in Germany, indicating ways of finding counselling providers, information on legal matters and on the recognition procedure itself and, most importantly, information on occupations covered and on authorities that may provide the competencies assessment.

Users can access this website in eight different languages, including Turkish and Romanian, and the mobile application is available in German and English as well as in the five major languages spoken by refugees: Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Tigrinya and Pashto.[41]

(See website: https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/en/index.php)

EXAMPLE

In **Ghana**, awareness is supported through meetings, workshops, stakeholder consultations, exhibitions, trade fairs and participation in graduation ceremonies for the recognition of competencies of graduated apprentices.

4.2 Strategies to address matching of occupational and qualification standards

The **main strategies** include the following:

- design and apply modular and competence-based standards based on learning outcomes to facilitate recognition
- define RPL qualifications that match the standards (in full or part) of formal education and training/ qualification standards
- establish feedback mechanisms.

Who is responsible?

Depending on the system for RPL, the Government and public and/or private service providers have responsibility for guidance and counselling (the recognition authority and institutions involved).

Key steps to ensure matching of occupational standards and qualification standards:

- For existing systems: assess whether qualifications awarded through RPL refer to the same or equivalent standards as those for formal education and training.
- For new systems: in designing the system, ensure that the standards used for RPL and formal education and training are equivalent.
- Put emphasis on competence-based standards and learning outcomes.
- Use feedback mechanisms to ensure review and revision of standards used for RPL.

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41. ILO. 2017. *How to facilitate the recognition of skills of migrant workers. Guide for employment services providers* (Geneva, Switzerland).

4.2.2 Example: Occupational standard of a bricklayer/stonemason[42]

Main duties: Lay bricks, concrete blocks, stone, structural tiles and other masonry materials to construct or repair walls, floors, partitions, foundations and other structures, using building materials such as cement, grout, plaster, resins etc. and products such as sand, gravel etc.

Working environment: Civil and industrial building and construction fields.

Organization context: Work under the supervision of a building master.

Modality of the delivery of tasks: (a) May work both outdoors or indoors on a building site, where workers can be subject to noise, dust and bad weather conditions; (b) the job requires physical effort; good time-keeping practices; willingness to comply with obligations to use any prescribed equipment for preventing injuries and to follow the proper practices prescribed for a given building site.

Optional requirements: Previous working experience in the sector or a certificate issued by a building and construction school will be an asset.

Soft skills:

- accuracy
- dexterity
- resilience to hard physical work
- a positive attitude towards teamwork and cooperation.

Competencies necessary to be able to carry out construction works:

- ability to read blueprints, with a clear capacity to understand the symbols used
- capacity to interpret the specific technical project in order to define modalities, shape, dimensions and measurements of the building works
- ability to plan and benchmark the tasks in compliance with the project schedule
- capacity to define the technical characteristics of the building materials and knowledge of how to use them according to the nature of the works to be done
- ability to carry out masonry and plaster work
- ability to demolish, open or close partitions
- competence in erecting simple scaffoldings and mobile platforms
- capacity to clean up any rubble produced on the site.

Knowledge of the following:

- the variety and characteristics of building materials
- environmental regulations at EU, national and regional level on waste management concerning civil and industrial debris
- different steps in the building process
- basic knowledge of the technology concerning building materials
- concrete

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42. Source: ILO. 2017. *How to facilitate the recognition of skills of migrant workers. Guide for employment services providers* (Geneva, Switzerland).

- basic technical drawing
- rules on safety in building and construction.

Skills:

- apply techniques for erecting scaffolding
- apply techniques for erecting scaffolding in wood
- use tools for construction works (e.g. drills, chisels, pneumatic guns etc.)
- use safety equipment for individual protection
- apply techniques for inside plaster
- apply techniques to prevent walls from falling down
- apply techniques for finishing the surfaces as required by the project's specification
- apply techniques for building works using prefabricated elements, grid and linear structures, tensile structures, walls
- capacity to use tools for construction works
- apply procedures for the maintenance of equipment and tools for construction and building work
- apply procedures to maintain the safety of building sites.

4.3 Strategies to address capacity of RPL professionals[43]

Addressing the challenge of capacity of RPL professionals involves two prerequisites: clarified institutional structures (link to building block institutional framework) and relevant mandates and sufficient resources (financial and human). Table 4.2 details the key knowledge and skills required by RPL assessors.

The **main strategies** refer to the following aspects:

- Assess and determine the required number and the profiles of the range of RPL professionals (counsellors, assessors, facilitators, certifiers, professionals dealing with appeals etc.).
- Establish the mandate and capacity of the recognition authority/ies to ensure relevant numbers and capacity (link to section 2.3: Institutional framework).
- Ensure a sufficient number of RPL professionals, based on the needs assessment.
- Develop a strategy for capacity development of RPL professionals (general preparation for their different roles and continuous professional development).
- Build and ensure the knowledge and competencies of RPL professionals (preparation of RPL professionals, training, certification, etc.).

Who is responsible?
Depending on the system of RPL in place and the institutional set-up and roles assigned, responsibility lies with:

- **government** (the appropriate ministry and respective budget) and/or
- the **recognition authority or authorities** (public or private institutions, depending on the system).

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43. Slightly adapted from South African Development Community (SADC) *Guidelines for recognition of prior learning (RPL) in the Southern African Development Community (SADC)* (Gaborone, Botswana), taking into account Braňka, J. 2016a. *Strengthening skills recognition systems: Recommendations for key stakeholders* (Geneva, Switzerland, International Labour Organization).

In systems, where employers or employers' associations are also involved in RPL through their role in assessing competencies, they also need to ensure the capacity of the respective professionals, e.g. assessors, within their company, trade or industry.

Key steps to ensure the availability of competent and qualified RPL professionals:

- Establish a database of potential RPL professionals, with information about their field of expertise (guidance, assessment) and their level of competence/experience.
- Determine the criteria for selection of RPL professionals at different RPL practice levels.
- Identify those RPL professionals who meet the criteria.
- Conduct training needs assessments on potential RPL professionals.
- Design and establish training programmes for potential RPL professionals according to training needs.
- Train the different professionals on RPL processes and the assessment methods put in place.
- Identify strategic occupational sectors for (piloting) RPL.
- Accredit the RPL professionals (at the level of the recognition authority, including the necessary capacity for certification and management).
- Develop a database for qualified and accredited RPL professionals.
- Ensure mechanisms for sharing of experiences of RPL professionals (network of professionals).

REFLECTION

How is capacity of RPL professionals in your country and respective education or economic sector addressed? Do you have sufficient numbers of RPL professionals?

4.3.1   Examples: Building the capacity of RPL assessors

The job of an **assessor** is to seek, review and check evidence of an individual's learning and judge whether it meets specific standards. Assessors must therefore fully comprehend the standards and the relevant assessment methods for referencing evidence against those standards.

In Europe, **assessors** are generally required to have a fixed number of years of experience in the respective field; five years is a common requirement and assessors can be recently retired professionals, senior managers in their field, expert representatives of academia, and social partners or teachers in the specific field, with direct experience in the particular educational or occupational sector where RPL is applied. Training in the process of recognition is also required.[44]

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44. CEDEFOP. 2015. European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning (Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities).

Table A.1: Key knowledge and skills of assessors

Key knowledge and skills of assessors
• Be familiar with the validation process (validity and reliability). • Have experience in the specific field of work. • Have no personal interest in the validation outcome (to guarantee impartiality and avoid conflicts of interest). • Be familiar with different assessment methodologies. • Be able to inspire trust and to create a proper psychological setting for the candidates. • Be committed to provide feedback on the match between learning outcomes and validation standards/references (via support systems). • Be trained in assessment and validation processes and knowledgeable about quality assurance mechanisms. • Operate according to a code of conduct.

A few countries have developed formal qualifications and training programmes for assessors, as detailed in table 4.3.

Table A.2: Qualification measures for RPL assessors – examples[45]

Country	Qualification for assessors
Australia	Developed a learning resource for assessors, namely "Informal learning: Learning from experience", which includes assessment tools and case studies (Vickers, 2014).
Norway	Organizes annual courses and seminars for assessors and the mentoring of inexperienced assessors. Assessment centres register trained assessors (Christensen, 2013)
Slovenia	The National Assessment Centre trains RPL assessors, using funding from participants' registration fees (Werquin, 2010b)
Manitoba, Canada	The Red River College offers two levels of training: a 40-hour introduction to the PLAR system and an advanced 40-hour course on PLAR (Werquin, 2010b)
South Africa	Evaluators are required to be "registered assessors", who are trained and also meet the minimum SAQA criteria to perform assessments in particular sectors. Moreover, the assessor must be qualified at a higher NQF level than the level at which the assessment takes place (Werquin, 2010b). RPL practitioners are also trained by public universities
Tanzania	RPL assessors need to be licensed through a three-step process of training. The licence is valid for three years only and can be withdrawn in the event of unsatifactory performance. Performance of the assessors is regularly monitored by RPL facilitators (see the example provided below for further detail)
Mauritius	RPL facilitators receive training that stresses the different skills required for RPL and their role in guiding the applicant. The training puts particular emphasis on reflection in facilitation, active listening, a non-judgemental attitude etc., so that the facilitator supports the applicants in the identification of things they know (knowledge), things they do (skills), things they have (evidence) and the compilation of the evidence in a portfolio

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45. Aggarwal, A. 2015. *Recognition of prior learning: Key success factors and the building blocks of an effective system (1st edn)* (Geneva, Switzerland, International Labour Organization).

4.4 Strategies to address quality assurance

The **main strategies** to address quality assurance are:

1. put in place a quality assurance framework for RPL with related quality standards

2. accredit service providers

3. enforce quality assurance through controls.

The abovementioned strategies must be built on:

- a quality strategy for RPL that defines quality assurance measures and mechanisms (standards) and related procedures

- established quality assurance arrangements/mechanisms, including quality standards and codes for guidance, counselling and assessment tools and methodologies.

Collecting and disseminating results of RPL, which also links to monitoring and evaluation (see LU 6), is also related to assuring quality and at the same time creates and enforces the credibility of, and boosts confidence in, RPL.

To ensure the credibility and consistency of RPL certification, countries specify quality assurance mechanisms, which combine several strategies outlined throughout this learning unit. Those most frequently used are:

- establishing common standards and quality codes

- ensuring the availability of competent RPL professionals

- collaborating with employers' and workers' organizations and other relevant stakeholders

- developing assessment tools and methodologies

- accrediting RPL centres

- moderating assessments

- monitoring and evaluation frameworks (see LU 6)

- independent auditing of the entire RPL process

- disseminating results.

Who is responsible?

Depending on the system in place and the institutional set-up, the responsibility for ensuring quality assurance will rest with the **Government** (the relevant ministry) for establishing the overall framework for quality assurance, including a certification system for recognition providers. On their behalf, the **recognition authority or authorities** (public or private institutions, depending on the system) are responsible for implementation and follow up on quality assurance in guidance, assessment, certification, etc.

Key steps to ensure quality assurance in RPL include the following:

- Develop sound assessment tools and methods (based on a quality strategy).

- Establish quality codes and standards.

- Collaborate with the relevant stakeholders (Government, employers, training authorities, service providers and their organizations).

- Establish an accreditation system for recognition authorities.

- Use information on quality, guidance and counselling, as well as assessment methodologies applied in awareness-raising campaigns and activities on RPL.

- Enforce quality assurance and conduct independent audits of the RPL process.

- Monitor and evaluate the quality and demonstrate the results of RPL.

- Disseminate results and distribute information to the wider public on RPL.

LINKS

Examples for quality assurance in the Netherlands and in Tanzania are provided in LU 2. The example of capacity building for RPL professionals in Tanzania under section 4.3 also provides a close link to quality assurance.

REFLECTION

How is quality in RPL assured in your country or in a sector? Which specific approaches and mechanisms are in place – and has it positively impacted perception of and trust in RPL?

4.4.2   Examples: Quality assurance

Group work:

- Analyse the quality assurance system of South Africa. Explain the "ingredients" of the system to your peers.

EXAMPLE

Quality assurance in the assessment system in South Africa

The assessment system is made up of the following processes and procedures:

Stage one: Approval of Assessment Quality Partners

Stage two: Accreditation of Assessment Centres

Stage three: Monitoring of Assessment Quality Partners

Stage four: Quality assurance of external integrated summative assessment through:

- moderation of examination question papers

- moderation of internal assessment

- monitoring the conduct of assessments

- moderation of external assessment.

The assessment process itself

An external, nationally standardized assessment is conducted for the issuing of occupational awards as a prerequisite to certification. This ensures that learners who have achieved the required levels of competence in each curriculum component are required to integrate their learning and display applied occupational competence across a range of variable contexts.

To qualify for external assessment, the applicant must first pass the knowledge, practical and workplace components of the qualification. A minimum of 20 per cent of the required credits must be gained in each of the three components (knowledge, practical skills and work experience). This means that the remaining 40 per cent of the credits can be added to any component to support the purpose of the qualification.

▶ ▶ ▶

The models for assessments are:

Written assessment	Evaluation of practical tasks
Invigilators download examination papers or computer-based tests	Registered assessors evaluate performance of practical tasks in a simulated work environment and probe applicants' actions with questions
The papers are marked off-site or computer scored	
Suitable for qualifications with a huge knowledge base and a large number of learners	Suitable for qualifications with a huge practical skills base and a large number of learners
Decentralized approved sites are required	Decentralized accredited centres are required
Evaluation of a project and/or assignment	**Evaluation of on-the-job performance**
Panel of assessors and additional expert practitioners evaluate a report on a project or an assignment and pose questions.	Registered workplace assessors evaluate on-the-job performance through observation and/or questioning, using specified assessment criteria requirements
Suitable for qualifications with an equal amount of practical skills and work experience or knowledge and a smaller number of learners.	Suitable for qualifications with a huge work experience component in specialized environments and a variable number of learners
Decentralized approved sites are required	Approved workplace sites are required

The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations will issue two types of certificates:

- occupational certificates: for learners who have proven competence against occupational qualifications (120+ credits) or part qualifications (25–119 credits)
- trade certificates: for trades recorded on the National Learner Record Database but without associated occupational qualifications.

EXAMPLE

ChileValora – accreditation of Centres for RPL, the National System for the Certification of Labour Competency Standards in Chile, carries out the quality assurance for qualifications, including RPL. It accredits the Centres of Evaluation and Certification of Labour Competency Standards, which are all private, legal entities operating in and for the public system. Strict legislation prescribes eligibility to become a centre. The function of the centres is to evaluate and certify applicants who request certification, based on existing occupational profiles and according to the methodological frameworks and standards of quality set by ChileValora. The centres specialize in different sectors (including universities). To create a transparent system, centres have to register on an electronic platform, detailing the services they provide in specific sectors. The platform also contains details about the application process.

To date (September 2017), there are 34 accredited centres and more than 700 qualified assessors in Chile. The methodology for the training of assessors is set by ChileValora, who also assess the assessors. Certified assessors are trained to observe, ask the right questions and provide the tools, methodology and matrix for assessment. They are retrained every two years to maintain the quality of the assessment.

Handouts Learning Unit 5

5.3 Building a portfolio

Group work task: Develop a portfolio for the profile of the applicant assigned to your group.

1. Think of the profile of the applicant given to you.

2. Consider the information outlined below as a guide and discuss.

3. List all information you would include (with headings, some additional information where necessary so that it is understandable) in the order it should appear in the portfolio.

It is important to encourage and help an applicant to collect evidence and prepare relevant documents. Below are some examples of what evidence may be included.

Portolio	Other documents
□ A paper outlining education and career goals □ Learning outcomes and competency statements □ A chronological record of significant leaning experiences □ Formal and informal records, i.e. certificates of past learning achievements– supplier training courses, in-house courses, workshops, seminars, club course, e.g. first aid, surf lifesaving, etc. □ Curriculum vitae/resume	□ Licenses obtained, e.g. forklift, working with children, etc. □ Photographs or DVDs of work undertaken □ Work samples such as technical drawings or site plans you have worked with workplace inductions □ Memberships of relevant associations □ Performance appraisals □ References or letters from previous employers or supervisors □ Any other documention that may demonstrate industry experience

Here are some tips to help to prepare the portfolio:

- Consider the **applicant's (potential) work history**, provide information about where they have worked, either paid or unpaid, and what tasks they performed there.

- What might be the **applicant's current job roles and responsibilities**, if they are currently employed.

- Consider taking the **opportunity to contact the applicant's workplace or previous workplace**, so their skills can be verified by someone who currently works or has worked with them.

- Consider the possibility of **contacting community groups or organizations from the unpaid or volunteer sector to verify work** the applicant has done.

- Consider any opportunities the **applicant might have had for in-house training** conducted by staff or suppliers to their industry or service area. If they were issued with **a certificate for their attendance**, this can be included.

Handouts Learning Unit 6

6.1 Information required for M&E on/from applicants

Interested in knowing	Information to be gathered (indicator)
Are RPL participants able to find jobs more easily and quickly?	
Are RPL participants able to get jobs in which they can take advantage of the recognized competencies?	
Did RPL help to open new career or training pathways for the participant?	
Did RPL have any impact on wages? Are RPL participants with recognized competencies paid better than those without?	
Do RPL participants use recognition certificates and, if so, for what purpose?	
Has RPL helped the participant to find a formal job and/or start a new business?	

6.2 Information required for M&E on/from employers

Interested in knowing	Information to be gathered (indicator)
Did RPL speed up the recruitment process? Did it improve skills-/ job-matching?	
Did the productivity of employees increase? Can they work more efficiently and/or carry out more demanding tasks?	
Did RPL help with compliance with safety standards and other regulations related to jobs and the workplace? Did fewer accidents occur (due to RPL)?	

Does RPL reduce workers' turnover and increase the retention rate?	
How many employers use RPL certificates in the recruitment process, and what value do they attribute to them?	
Is the RPL certificate used or asked for by career guidance counsellors and during the job-matching process carried out by the employment services?	

6.3 Information required for M&E on/from education and training providers

Interested in knowing	Information to be gathered (indicator)
Does RPL increase demand for training and lifelong learning in general?	
Has the training and service provided increased the chances for successful RPL? Is the training and services provided with regard to	
Has RPL changed the offer of the institutions? Are courses linked to occupations and skills sets, which are mostly subject to RPL, in greater demand?	
Has related skills-gap training demand increased?	
How are guidance and counselling services perceived and used?	

Handout Closing

Where do we go from here? Personal RPL plan

The intent of this exercise is twofold:

a. reflect on your country's RPL system, where it stands in terms of outreach, progress, hurdles, and

b. identify what needs to be done to progress and what you can do to move things forward.

See the generic timeline (stages) of the RPL process detailed below for your reference.
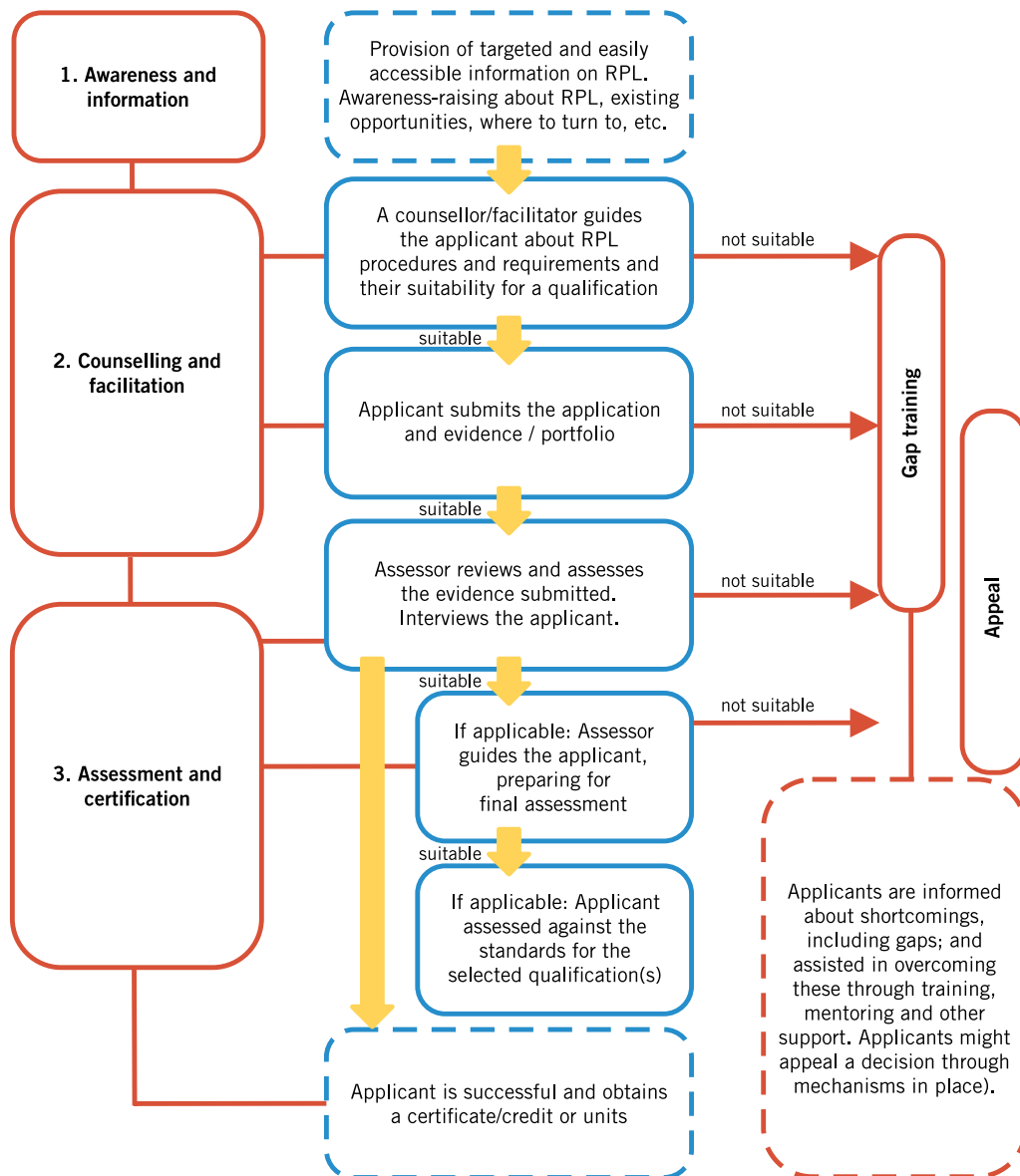
Task A:

- Identify where your country stands in the process (Point 1).
- Consider where you want to see your country in 1 year's time (Point 2).
- Now list the specific steps that will need to be taken to get from Point 1 to Point 2.

Task B: Individually

Set yourself goals and develop a strategy to reach them. Establish a timeframe (immediate, 3 months, 6 months, 1 year) and detail activities.

The more detailed the strategy, the easier it is to plot your way from Point 1 to Point 2.

1. **Time line: immediately**
   a. What are you going to do to help your country's RPL system move from Point 1 to Point 2 on your return following this workshop?
   b. Who are the other key players you will work with?
   c. How will you work with them?

2. **Time line: 3 months**
   a. What are you going to do to help your country's RPL system move from Point 1 to Point 2 over the next 3 months?
   b. Who are the other key players you will work with?
   c. How will you work with them?

3. **Time line: 6 months**.

4. **Time line: 1 year**.

Fill in the table below (on paper or on your computer). Remember, this is not just about the process, but what YOU are going to do – a personal action plan on RPL in your country. Be bold yet realistic about your role and expectations.

Timeline and strategy: My personal RPL action plan

Timeframe	What?	With whom?	How?	Goal!
Immediate				
3 months				
6 months				
1 year				

When you leave this training, review your action plan, follow it up at set points in time, potentially share it (or parts of it) with other stakeholders and make a commitment to yourself to deliver.

ANNEX 3: EVALUATION FORM

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) – ILO training course

Date and place:

Trainer/s:

Your overall assessment of the training:

Poor	Fair	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How relevant was the content of the training for you?

Not relevant	Relevant	Very relevant
☐	☐	☐

Please rate your overall level of knowledge on the topic before the training:

None				Expert
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Comparing your knowledge before and after the training, how much have you learned? Please indicate this by rating your level of skills/knowledge before and after the course.

Topics/Learning Units	Before					After				
	Low				High	Low				High
Rating	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
(LU 1) What is RPL and why is it important?										
(LU 2) How to develop and RPL system: Introduction to the 'building blocks'										
(LU 3) Stakeholder involvement: Who is involved in RPL and in what ways?										
(LU 4) What challenges are involved in implementing RPL systems? How to address them?										
(LU 5) What are the key components in assessment methodologies?										
(LU 6) How to know if the system is working?										

What observations, insights or ideas from the training will you try to apply in your professional working context?

....

....

....

Please provide your opinion on the appropriateness of the training's methods and organization (mark relevant number with x)

	1 Poor	2 Fair	3 Satisfactory	4 Good	5 Excellent
Overall duration of training					
Logistics and organization					
Interaction between participants					
Group activities					
Appropriateness of methods used (interactive, group work, cases etc.)					
Balance between theory and real-life examples					
Time for discussion					
Facilitation by the expert(s)/ trainer(s)					

Additional comments:

....

....

....

Please rate the trainer's performance during the training. Please indicate your response to the questions below (mark relevant number with x)

	1 Poor	2 Fair	3 Satisfactory	4 Good	5 Excellent
Has extensive knowledge about the subject/topic of the training					
Was well prepared and ready to instruct					
Used visual aids and handouts effectively					
Provided effective interaction with the participants					
Gave clear and concise explanations					

What did you miss or what would you wish to see in future training courses? Any other comments you wish to add?

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