

Recognition, Validation and Certification of informal and non-formal learning

Synthesis Report (Draft)

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1. Introduction

This synthesis has been compiled in order to document and analyse national policies and practices on recognition, validation and certification of non-formal and informal learning. The intention is to generate relevant data and to get a first impression about national frameworks, institutional structures and already existing programmes. Moreover, the explorations are intended to be used for further political, legal and methodological investigations, to make shortcomings visible, create awareness about the issue, and facilitate effective policy making.

Similar projects to this one have been carried out by the OECD in European countries and by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in developing countries (OECD 2005, p. 14). In contrast, an important exercise of this UIE synthesis is to clarify trends and developments internationally in developing, transition and developed countries. Based on this approach, the first phase has been a purely exploratory one, i.e. finding out with the help of a simple questionnaire sent out to 190 National Commissions worldwide, what exists in these countries in the field of recognition, validation and certification of learning that takes place outside the formal system. This draft synthesis, based on the results from 36 countries, draws particular attention to analytical categories, conclusions, shortcomings and suggestions with regard to closing knowledge gaps and further research. The countries cited, are used only as examples of cases in order to highlight the diversity of the processes entailed. Annex 2 gives a country-wise overview.

In this updated synthesis we found it necessary to refer to the conceptual frameworks, analyses and results of the OECD and the European Union reviews, because of their vast and long experience in the area of recognition, validation and certification (RVC). As the OECD states, "there is an increasing evidence that countries realise that their qualifications systems need to be able to change and evolve to meet rapidly-changing needs in the world of learning and in the labour market. Significant undercurrents identified are the changing profiles of learners (e.g. the proportions of adult learners, episodic participation in learning etc.), and the challenges to typical lifelong careers as stable employment diminishes. In addition to issues particular to a given country, these common concerns are contributing to encouraging many countries to examine their systems of qualification and consider what changes are required" (OECD 2005, p. 14).

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) is engaged in research to clarify these trends and developments addressing developing countries. The work of ILO includes: the establishment of a database of frameworks with a view to identifying good practices; a study investigating the feasibility and effective implementation of national qualification for the countries; an investigation into initiatives and practices of the recognition of prior learning; and the development of an introductory guide to explain the complexities and potential difficulties of developing such frameworks (OECD 2004, p. 24).

Similarly, UIE also plans to identify and disseminate good practice models, and to arrive at a common understanding on the nature of competencies and standards involved, assessment procedures, as well as interests at stake and system credibility. The aim is to assist Member States, especially in developing

and transition countries, in setting up systems of recognition, assessment procedures, standards and normative criteria for recognizing prior learning and experience.

The overall purpose of UIE's project is to promote a society offering lifelong learning for all, by building bridges between formal, non-formal and informal learning. The future of lifelong learning is bound up with success people as individuals, groups and collectives have in taking out from the informal experiences, learning relevant to advancing their overall fulfillment. Fortunately, there is more and more a common understanding on lifelong learning. The European Commission on lifelong learning (2001) defines the core concepts as follow:

Formal learning is typically provided by an education or training institute, structured and leading to certification. Formal learning is intentional from the learner's perspective.

Non-formal learning is not provided by an education or training institution and typically it does not lead to certification. However, it is structured. Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view.

Informal learning results from daily life activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not structured. Typically, it does not lead to certification. Informal learning may be intentional but in most cases, it is non-intentional (or 'incidental'/random).

Relevant definitions and terms used in this synthesis are summed up in the Glossary.

2. The results of the exploratory survey

36 countries out of 190 answered the questionnaire. The following categories have been designed in order to facilitate a comparative analysis, and in order to provide an overview about how RVC are carried out in the Member States' systems.

2.1 National frameworks supporting the process of RVC

A precondition for lifelong learning is the existence of an overall qualifications framework that covers any kind of learning. Not every country has such a framework. Many states which have a framework face an enormous discrepancy between policy and practice. Frequently, legal provisions control the framework. Whereas some countries seek support in laws and regulations, others promote co-operation between public authorities and social partners.

Moreover, one observes that approaches from the developing world differ largely from approaches of developed countries: Within frameworks of developing countries, policy implications aim both at basic and primary education and at accelerating access with particular reference to equity and female

enrolment. Enhancing basic literacy skills and non-formal education are still given top priority. In contrast, the apparent trends in developed countries are the reaffirmation of education and its validation as a basic right, and the promotion of a society for lifelong learning with many routes to learning opportunities.

Despite the lack of an overall framework in many countries, the obviously ongoing efforts towards validation of non-formal and informal learning should be appreciated. The fact, that a range of learning experiences is recognised, is already a very important step. Moreover, an important issue is the need to communicate the purpose, benefits and meaning of qualification frameworks to those who do not have them (OECD 2004, p. 5f). Important questions, that still have to be addressed are: What are the conditions for the introduction of qualification frameworks? What are the benefits of qualification frameworks? What are scenarios for the development of qualification frameworks? What about the international dimension of qualification frameworks?

The UIE synthesis shows that although different kinds of frameworks exist or may be introduced, they some share common features of coherence, integration of qualifications systems (or sub-systems) and common objectives to increase access, progression and flexibility of qualifications as a means to meet socio-economic needs and lifelong learning.

2.1.1 Countries with a legally based framework

The importance of an existing legal basis for RVC is underlined by a number of Member States (see Annex 2.1.1). Whereas Finland has a long history in provisions in validation, most developing countries have implemented a framework regarding this matter in recent years. Furthermore, some Member States highlight the importance of enabling access to the formal system (e.g. Korea, Austria), others point out the necessity of simplifying the process of RVC itself (like France and New Zealand).

2.1.2 Countries without a national framework but with certification activities that follow the formal national curricula

There are various approaches towards a national qualification framework (see Annex 2.1.2). For example, in Togo, recognition takes place in accordance with the national curricula, i.e. only if the competencies of the learner are in accordance with the national curricula. The southern African countries (Central African Republic, Malawi, and Oman) still have a long way to go towards frameworks. In the meantime, there exist some - mostly ad hoc - activities. Another way towards recognition of informal and non-formal learning is the decision of the Czech Republic, that teachers will be in the position to decide on the recognition of an applicant's prior learning. In St. Lucia, there are plans to integrate the recognition of prior learning into the existing National Vocational Qualification Framework. In some cases, based on the nature of the task performed, non-formal training is recognised for employment purposes.

2.1.3 Countries without a framework

The ways towards a framework are quite different (see Annex 2.1.3). While Latvia orients itself to the UNESCO-concept of validation of non-formal education on state level, it seems to put forward a top-down process, taking into consideration the priorities set by the Council of Europe and the European Commission. In contrast, Kenya is in process of introducing a system reform, in which public authorities, local levels, and non-governmental actors will be involved from the earliest stages of the process of recognition. Germany is currently in the process of completing a feasibility study to look at all so-called education and lifelong learning passports in Germany, in neighbouring countries and at EU level and to present proposals for a reference model of a lifelong learning passport across all educational areas. The collaborative study is currently being tested and further developed in practice in selected regions and companies.

In Macedonia, Poland, Latvia, Kenya, Madagascar, and Trinidad and Tobago, the implementation of legal frameworks is still under preparation. However, there are ad hoc and case-to-case initiatives for recognizing and validating competencies.

2.2 Coordination modalities in RVC

The information on institutional designs stemming from many Member States highlights that national educational structures in RVC differ largely. It is not possible to speak of a 'general institutional model', with the exception that in most countries governmental bodies are in charge of highest decision-making. In fact, government ministries appear to be the main drivers for change concerning implementing significant reforms in RVC of non-formal and informal learning. In some cases, particular groups (like autonomous communities, social partners, statutory agencies or awards councils) play additional key roles depending on the national situation (comp. OECD 2005a, p. 8).

A national system of RVC of non-formal and informal learning should involve various stakeholders coordinating their work in accordance with laws, regulations and guidelines. In order to assure legitimacy within a decentralised educational system, the different stakeholders need to strive at a shared responsibility. Only in a few countries, such a system has been developed as complementary to a system of RVC of formal learning (see Annex 2.2).

In Ireland for example, the Qualifications Act provides a legislative basis and a framework that links formal and non-formal education, which is one of the preconditions to be met for successful implementation of the concept of Lifelong Learning. The Qualifications Act established three new bodies:
the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI)
the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC)
the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC)

Whereas NQAI is responsible for the Irish framework of qualifications, HETAC and FETAC are awarding councils in higher and further education and training, which both operate in the context of a

vision for the recognition of all learning and are in line with the broad national and European policy of promoting a Lifelong Learning society.

In Norway, there exists an even greater variety of stakeholders of RCV of non-formal and informal learning. A national institute named "Vox", which is in charge of RVC, co-operates with trade organisations, universities and colleges, public and private educators as well as with social partners.

Most of the Member States handle RVC as a shared responsibility, whereas just a few have developed a predominance either of industry or of public authorities and government. Taking it as a shared responsibility, the stakeholders (such as bodies, organisations and companies) have an active role in supporting the individual learning process. They are responsible both for ensuring the closeness of the system of RVC of non-formal and informal learning to the individual and for raising awareness of the importance of RVC of non-formal and informal learning nationwide. These remits are still often assigned to formal learning providers.

All this goes to show that Legislation alone is not sufficient. The voluntary commitment of stakeholders are important to a successful implementation – in some cases, the latter may be more important than the existence of specific legislation. Only an active engagement of wide group of stakeholders can result in the development, maintenance and implementation of qualifications frameworks.

2.2.1 RVC as a shared responsibility

Mostly, diverse social partners of the Member States, which take RVC as a shared responsibility, take the role of essential players promoting the relevance of RVC of non-formal and informal learning (see Annex 2.2.1). Additionally, they are responsible for activities such as planning, administration, management and evaluation at different levels of the educational system. In the

Netherlands the partners and stakeholders that are involved in the policy and implementing level are amongst others government, national employers organisations, trade unions, national educational associations and the national labour agency. In Fran

The Mexican Council for Educational Promotion (CONAFE), which is an agency of the Secretariat for Public Education, has representatives in each community. These representatives promote and manage the access and graduation of thousands of pupils from rural areas to pre school and primary school education.

2.2.2 Predominance of industry in validation

Some countries emphasise the influence of industry in the process of RVC of informal and non-formal learning, even though public authorities, training organisations, national governments and education

research organisations continue to play a role. For example, in Australia, governmental bodies audit the training organisations conducting “Recognition of Prior Learning” (RPL), the industry and employers promote RPL as a viable pathway to skills recognition and continued learning. In Sweden the responsibility for validation is shared between the educational system and the labour market.

In these cases, co-operation with the private sector could be an advantage, as employers are often closer to the individual learner than governmental bodies (see Annex 2.2.2). On the one hand, this way of decentralisation creates an opportunity for harmonisation of the labour market’s needs with learning. On the other hand, individual learning queries, which are no asset to the labour market, might not be considered by awarding units.

However

2.2.3 Predominance of public authorities and government in validation

In some of the Member States, neither the adoption of a concrete framework nor the application of legal provisions is put into practice as yet (see Annex 2.2.3). In these countries, public authorities are the main initiators in promoting the issue of RVC of non-formal and informal learning. The role of social partners seems to be recognised, but due to the strong influence of government, decentralisation still sticks in a grey area.

For example in MACEDONIA, which is currently working on a legal framework concerning non-formal and informal learning, the process of validation is conducted unofficially. There is no registered body in charge of recognition, validation and accreditation, however, prior skills are assessed and certified on an individual basis by formal education providers. While his mode of conducting the validation might appear to be very flexible, it however exposes the learner to the arbitrariness of the assessing institution. Also in Palestine, RVC is conducted either by public authorities or by the government: It is the Palestinian Red Crescent which gives certificate for those who perform voluntary social and medical work with them, although literacy, adult education and parallel education forms of lifelong learning in cultural centres are certified by the Ministry of education and high education authorities.

2.3 Examples of programmes

With regard to the programmes, the Member States can be grouped into six different categories of programmes. The Annex gives detailed information about the programmes (see Annex 2.3). A rough overview of different kinds of programmes is given below.

2.3.1 Non-formal education programmes

Non-formal education programmes are a predominant feature of developing and transition countries.

Some countries (The Philippines, Mexico and partly Maldives) offer the opportunity of reintegration into the formal system through participating successfully in non-formal education programmes. In Mexico those who belong to the educational backlog (people 15 years of age or older who have not begun or have not finished basic education) are able to obtain certificates relating to primary, or secondary formal education. Most of the other countries (Bhutan, Togo, Palestine and Rwanda) focus on offering literacy programmes, but they do not mention the possibility of (re-)entering the formal system.

2.3.2 Programmes for entry into formal apprenticeship and training

Programmes for entry into formal apprenticeship and training are existent both in developed and in developing countries, and they are closely related to the acquisition of competencies within the framework of vocational and technical learning (see Annex 5.3.2). In Benin, for example, the existing programmes on technical and vocational training focus on the assessment of competencies acquired within non-formal and/or informal education/training. Similarly, Iceland tries to simplify the process for individuals on the labour market to strengthen their position there, by gaining a qualification or certificate through additional education, based upon recognition of their previous work experience and/or non-formal education.

2.3.3 Programmes conducted under comprehensive national qualification frameworks

Within this set of programmes all learners can apply for the certification of informal learning, be it for further education or for improving opportunities in the employment sphere. Only in New Zealand, there exists such a programme conducted under a comprehensive national qualification framework, within which all learners can apply for the certification of informal learning (see Annex 2.3.3). The assessors judge all evidence against unit standards, regardless of where evidence comes from. In addition, the NZQA requires all institutions and providers accredited to offer courses and qualifications, even outside the National Qualifications Framework, to make a commitment to the implementation of the recognition of prior learning. Recognition provided can be in the form of credit towards a formal qualification or the award of a full qualification. This approach has been particularly important for recognising Maori indigenous knowledge.

2.3.4 Programmes adopting a more open and global approach

Countries with highly differentiated educational systems, like Germany and Switzerland, provide programmes with a more open and global approach: Self-assessment, external evaluation of competencies and actual validation go hand in hand in Switzerland and Germany (see Annex 2.3.4).

The German ProfilPASS is a good example for making visible learning outcomes or prior learning. The ProfilPASS lays not so much emphasis on an objective assessment of an individual's competencies, leading to a qualification, but on the process of self-exploration and supporting individuals to find out, what competencies they have acquired. It is an instrument that has the function of guiding the individual to explore what he has learned and her/his different experiences throughout his/her life span. It enables the individual to describe his experience and to identify his competencies. Emphasis is laid on the holistic identification of competencies. The guiding process is itself empowering, enabling the individual to become aware of his own cognitive, social, communicative, volitional competencies. The aim is to motivate and assist the individual in applying these competencies to further his educational and occupational opportunities. This self-exploration procedure however, needs to be integrated into traditional methods of assessment in order to increase their validity and reliability (Preisser, 2004, p. 2). The profilPASS provides adults with the evidence required to meet any entry standards for vocational or higher level education.

The global approach adopted by Germany aims primarily at strengthening the individual, but at the same time it also benefits companies and supports the development towards a learning society.

2.3.5 Certification programmes for disadvantaged groups

The recognition of non-formal and informal learning is an opportunity to impact on the lives of disadvantaged groups within society. Many participants have influenced the recognition of non-formal and informal learning through programmes linked to equity and inclusion. With regard to certification programmes for disadvantaged groups, Egypt follows an ambitious plan: 5000 "Girl's Schools" shall be established until 2015. Ecuador focuses on youth and adults who lack vocational experience, and on old people (see Annex 2.3.5). These initiatives acknowledge that there are groups within society that need additional opportunities in order to realise their full human capability.

The chances and possibilities for disadvantaged groups to attain RVC of their non-formal and informal learning needs to be given greater attention.

2.3.6 Work-oriented programmes

Work-oriented programs focus on non-formal learning in small business programmes, like in St. Lucia. In the Czech Republic the re-training programmes have come to be active employment policy instruments. In Korea, para-school education programmes aim at re-integrating people into the formal education system through programmes such as civic schools, civic high schools, trade schools, trade high school, industry attached school, and school attached evening classes, air and correspondence high schools. Cyprus offers special programmes in industrial training implemented in public and private schools (see Annex 2.3.6).

2.4 What kinds of competencies are acknowledged?

The RVC of informal and non-formal learning entail the acquisition of competencies, which are implicit, and which sometimes cannot be taught at school or in adult learning programmes. These competencies result from learning cultural values and attitudes and help facilitate in coping with current realities. These competencies include meta-competencies such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication, tolerance, acceptance of diversity, and openness to accept and cope with change. They could also include awareness and participation in development. According to Weinert (2001) this set of meta-competencies, are problem-solving capabilities, which entail motivational and volitional elements, meaning the social willingness to apply problem solving capabilities in variable situations (quoted in Preisser, 2005). All Member States have highlighted different types of life skills, which include elements of these meta-competencies.

2.4.1 Recognition of competencies in daily life settings

Prior learning experiences in daily life settings take into consideration skills acquired in settings such as home, the marketplace, the workplace, or community life. There is an awareness of this kind of knowledge in very various Member States (see Annex 2.4.1). Cambodia, for example, highlights experience gained informally in enterprises, in the household or in the community; and informal learning through participation in social, cultural, religious and civil society activities gained in associations and clubs, in social service, or community-based services. The German programme. In accordance with Germany's holistic approach in the recognition of informal and non-formal learning, the programme "Learning culture for skill development" includes sub programmes that are trying to recognize and validate competencies that are learned in various settings such as work, social environment, in continuing education institutions and on the Web. (annex: 2.4.1)

2.4.2 Recognition of competencies in the context of non-formal education programmes

In the context of Mexico's community education programmes (CONAFE) the following skills are highlighted. The individual should be able to (see Annex 2.4.2):

- have knowledge of himself, own strengths, weaknesses and possibilities;
- have the motivation to learn and study
- live and work not alone with the aim of attaining power, wealth, recognition and credentials but more importantly finding a sense in learning.
- learn to be free, critical and independent.
- Show a curiosity in social reality, and participation in a community of learning, where ideas, knowledge and beliefs, although different and even contradictory are shared.

- recognise that the environment and the geographical location has influence on the culture, trade, economy and the increase of cities and towns,
- communicate with confidence and efficiency in his mother tongue that can be Spanish or an indigenous language,
- enjoy and express emotions through reading and writing,
- construct a positive image of oneself by recognising one's cultural identity, gender and be able to promote a living together based on respect and the acceptance of difference.

The Philippines, too, recognises life experiences, community experiences, education experience, paid and unpaid work when documenting skills.

In Benin and Togo, recognition is linked to experiences gained in non-formal organisations, but not to experiences gained in an informal way (see Annex 2.3.3). In Togo, informal education is recognised, validated and accredited when gained through associations, clubs, and NGO's, but not if gained in social or community service.

2.4.3 Recognition of vocational and practical competencies

In some Member States, it is vocational skills that are given special recognition (see Annex 2.4.4). Practical qualifications and acquired work experience are of primary importance in these countries.

In Surinam, for example, a still unorganised but great number of private institutions offer courses in practical competencies (administration, accounting, secretarial work, computer skills, technical skills, nursing skills, teaching youngsters the Chinese language, to play some musical instruments, learn a handicraft, and basics of Sport). In France, a governmental organisation, DAVA (Dispositifs Académiques de Validation des Acquis), validates occupational experience by giving a diploma, certificate, a title or a document testifying work experience.

2.5 How should these competencies be assessed?

Very little information on assessment procedures emerged from the country examples. Nevertheless, we consider it necessary, to highlight the fundamental issues of assessment, because it is central to the question of RVC of non-formal and informal learning. We are therefore referring to the guiding principles and methods that have been highlighted in the publication of Colardyn/Bjornavold (2004).

Preisser raises two fundamental questions. According to him, in establishing a system of RVC, we have to be conscious about the perspective we argue from. Assessing and allocating people for the sake of a better matching of human resources and economic demands is something very different from empowering them to master their lives for their own sake, whatever this is (Preisser, 2004, p. 4;)" , the perspective is either utilitarian or more humanistic and one has to be aware about the respective consequences.

Moreover, one has to consider the scope of the general approach: In general, there is a dilemma between generality and accuracy. The more holistic and general the approach is, the more broad is the standard, the more abstract are the principles of validation. This could mean making the recognition of competencies too general, so that in the end they may not express anything at all. A common currency for measuring competencies may be the time unit, that someone has spent in practising something; similarly, one could use the criterion of work load as is done in universities, for comparing various study programs. (Preisser, 2004, p. 3).

While the aim of recognition is to make visible a person's knowledge and skills, it is possible that the documentation produced by a recognition process deals with what the person in question lacks in order to achieve a specific goal. Sensitive handling of this is needed (OECD 2005b). The other danger is the many actors who are implementing a recognition system. Whilst this allows for flexibility and for learning needs to be met by the local community, it may also cause confusion through the use of different types of process and documentation. It is therefore important that Recognition systems are built on commonly agreed principles and that measures and methods are structured, so that we achieve a process that maintains uniform standards at the national level. (OECD 2005b)

We include below some considerations by Colardyn/Bjornavold (2004) of how to assess competencies from a humanistic approach.

2.5.1 General principles

According to Colardyn/Bjornavold, to improve the overall quality of validation in an upholding way, and to enhance the coherency and transferability at European and worldwide level, there is a need of a set of common principles regarding validation of non-formal and informal learning. Within Europe, this set of principles obtains the following concepts (2004, p. 122f):

Confidence:

- about transparency of procedures, standards and assessment criteria
- about availability of information
- in some existing 'ground rules'

Impartiality:

- concerning the roles and responsibilities of the "assessors"
- training and certifying should not be mixed up
- ensure proper training for those who validate
- enhancing systematic networking to enable fair (reliable) judgement

Credibility:

- through inclusion and commitment of the relevant stakeholders at appropriate levels

through reference to international standards/principles

Within the European scope, Colardyn/Bjornavold (2004, p. 61f) concluded, that there are three main objectives of European national policies concerning validation of non-formal and informal learning:

The first objective addresses the "individual" learning needs and emphasises that all learning is valuable and to value the outcomes in an appropriate way. This objective is closely related to strategies on life long and life wide learning and requires that individuals are granted flexible access to institutions (Sohlman, 2000). Maybe, the motivational impact of validation is more important than anything else. Furthermore, it requires that the labour market is willing and able to take into consideration the full range of competences held by individuals. A large number of Member States of the European Union expresses this objective.

The second objective is centred on economic issues. Validation can be seen as part of strategies to strengthen competitiveness and to improve economic performance. It is asserted that this can be achieved by managing the "knowledge capital" in a more efficient way. Competitiveness of the country and the improvement of its labour market define the economic issues.

The third objective focuses on institutional issues. Validation can serve to improve the functioning by making them more flexible and open to learning outcomes acquired elsewhere. Flexibility and access of learning institutions are at the core of this objective.

2.5.2 Assessment methods

A core question to be asked is whether it is appropriate to assess non-formal and informal learning according to the criteria, which are applied in appraising skills gained in formal education, and training. "There is no indication that the challenge of validation non-formally and informally acquired competences has led to the development and introduction of genuinely new testing and assessment methods. ... [The] object (of non-formal and informal learning; the author) to be 'measured' is different and more complex, making the requirements to reliability and validity even harder to reach." (Colardyn/Bjornavold, 2004, p. 117f)

In addition to this, especially informal learning experiences contain such a comprehensive and manifold richness, and thus can not simply be validated by techniques and methods of validating formal learning outcomes, such as traditional tests or examinations, declarative methods, methods based on observation, simulations, evidences of work practises, and portfolio-based approaches (compare: Colardyn/Bjornavold, p. 105).

There might be some convergences concerning the applicability for non-formal and informal learning, but it is extremely important to strengthen once more the necessity of a European or even worldwide set of principles on validation.

Colardyn/Bjornavold: 6 categories of assessment methods (p. 105):

- Traditional test or examination
- Declarative methods
- Methods based on observation
- Simulations
- Evidences of work practices
- Portfolio-based approaches

Learning	Formal Learning	Non-formal and informal learning
Assessments		
Formative assessments	Continuous controls Declarative - VAP/VAE Check-up of competences Evidence from real situation (work and/or others) Simulation Observation Result in Training Plans Career development plans Access to employment	Declarative - VAP/VAE Check-up of competences Evidence from real situation (work and/or others) Simulation Observation Result in Training Plans Career development plans Access to employment
Summative assessments	Exams and test (including tests related to outside school, like testimony of employers) Declarative Evidence extracted from real situation (work and/or others) Result in Diploma or certificate of a education or training process	Simulation Observation Evidence extracted from real situation (work and/or others) Result in Validation of a module Certification of a unit of competences

Source: Colardyn, D. (2002)

2.6 Benefits from RVC

Why has the validation of non-formal and informal learning become such a burning issue these days? Is validation a response to an increased economic demand for skills in a global world, or rather for a

growing social desire for learning?

As discussed, the introduction both of political frameworks and of decentralised institutional structures can be crucial preliminary steps for successful delivery and provision of recognition and certification of non-formal and informal learning in practice. Development and implementation of assessment and documentation methodologies of prior learning are further activities underlining the increasing importance of validation.

The concept of lifelong learning emphasises that learning must encompass the whole spectrum of formal, non-formal and informal learning in order to promote active citizenship, social inclusion, employability, and self-fulfilment of the individual. What we learn in formal education covers only some needed skills we need in life. Learning informally is the complementary side. Thus, to develop a system for learning throughout life requires linking the different learning domains in order to enrich and complement each other. In practice, this means to sum up and acknowledge all knowledge and skills, individuals have, acquired through schooling, paid and unpaid work, organisational activities, family-life and as a member of society.

There are many potential benefits, gained through validation of competencies for an individual, for an enterprise and for society. From our data, five benefits could be identified. These objectives, listed below, have to be seen as elements found in various combinations in each country - maybe, there are even more:

- Enabling learner's entrance into formal systems of further education or training
- Improving the learner's eligibility in the labour market
- For enterprises, recognition and certification of prior learning may be of importance because it increases their potential for effective human resource management.
- For a society as a whole, identification, assessment and recognition of learners' acquired competencies may simplify the transfer of skills between different spheres such as education, work and home, and therefore improve the allocation of a society's resources. Some countries emphasise this broad approach towards learning that stems from changes of a more global world. Educational and vocational transformations are considered to govern practically all areas of political, social, economic, and cultural activity within society. The assumption is that especially in a globalised world with international migration movements, the process of validation needs to be open, recognisable and easily accessible in order to let both the individual and society be mutual beneficiaries.
- While benefits to individuals in respect of their working lives, organisational activities and the educational system are central issues in developed countries' tremendous efforts are put in enhancing universal basic education.

From an analytical point of view, benefits for qualification frameworks can be divided into general

benefits and benefits to lifelong learning (OECD 2004, p. 10ff). Qualifications frameworks can bring general benefits mainly in four areas:

- Benefits for qualification systems and provision (supply side)
- Benefits to career development, guidance and employment placement, information and orientation including occupational mobility (demand side)
- Benefits to the international and transnational dimension
- Benefits to regulation, legislation and institutional arrangements

Benefits of qualifications frameworks to lifelong learning can be summarised as follows:

- to promote a culture of lifelong learning
- to integrate lifelong learning into a coherent system through qualifications in order to ease the transferability and transportability of skills and competencies from one area to another
- to enable non-standard forms of access, including accreditation of prior learning and recognition of non-formal and informal learning
- to enable further improvement of basic skills for different target groups at different levels
- to relate and compare qualification to each other on the basis of common reference points supporting the development of guidance materials
- learning could be more easily focussed on both individual and company learning needs
- reduce incidences of time spent by learners re-learning to reach outcomes already achieved in other contexts
- providing clarity and simplicity about skills and qualifications needed to policy makers, stakeholders and companies

2.6.1 Entrance into formal systems for further education or training

There are various approaches identified (see Annex 2.5.1). In Palestine, for example, the objective is not to certify prior learning but to recognise and certify the non-formal course for transfer to a further stage and integration into the formal system. Switzerland strives at developing a means for comparing formal, non-formal and informal learning, as the country wants to eliminate discrimination against people who gain competencies non-formally or informally. Consequently, the focus varies between including non-formal and informal learning in formal learning and improving the status of non-formal and informal learning.

Few countries in the UIE survey mentioned that the recognition of non-formal learning and informal learning is used as a mechanism for reducing the study time required in order to gain a recognised formal qualification (OECD 2005b). Training paths may also be shortened or modified to the individual's requirements and therefore lead to better and more efficient training expenditure, as highlighted in the OECD thematic review on lifelong learning (2005b)

Recognition procedures may motivate individuals to look upon learning not only in a lifelong sense, but

also as life wide opportunity. It may also encourage the individual to start new learning experiences (OECD 2005b). More research is needed on this aspect, which has been mentioned in the OECD review.

2.6.2 Improving learner's employability in the labour market

Individuals who have had limited access to , or not achieved in a formal education and training or those who learned skills predominantly in the workplace are often disadvantaged in securing employment which adequately reflects their skills and previous experience. Helping these workers to get their competencies formally recognised gives them evidence of their personal capital, which in turn assists them in their workforce negotiations. This helps improve employment and career prospects.

Norway counts on raising a positive awareness in society on the issue of immigrants who do not have recognisable prior experiences (see Annex 2.5.2). Norway has tried to raise the status of non-formal and informal learning. It has tried to create a general awareness in society about the value of non-formal and informal learning in contributing to the creation of 'mobile human capital'. By creating such awareness in society, it has been able to make migrants and immigrants more attractive for the labour market and create a demand for them in the labour market. In the same way, improving the employability of redundant workers the unemployed and those with no official recognition for their trades, is an important benefit from recognition.

2.6.3 Certification by enterprises of prior learning and experience

For enterprises, recognition and certification of prior learning may be of importance because it increases the enterprises' potential for effective human resource management. In St. Lucia (see Annex 2.6.3) recognition of programmes focus inter alia on the enhancement of entrepreneurial soft and hard skills and of small business management skills, on the increase of productivity and competitiveness on the development of linkages and networks among small enterprises, on the dissemination of information regarding these issues as well as the standardization of best practices within this sector.

Even where certification is not the primary goal, the making visible of competencies through instruments like the lifelong learning passport, benefit both individual and companies. The example from Germany highlights the close connection between benefits for the individual and companies and enterprises. Companies benefit from the system of lifelong learning passports because the competencies of their staff are visible and can be taken into consideration for staff planning and to be in a better position to organize self-organised training the system of lifelong learning passports are expected to benefit companies Continuing education institutions are particularly helpful in supporting the process of self-organised learning. In this way a learning culture is promoted by stimulating cooperation partnerships between individuals, societal institutions and companies.

2.6.4 Transfer of skills between different spheres such as education, work and home

For a society as a whole, identification, assessment and recognition of learners' acquired competencies may simplify the transfer of skills between different spheres such as education, work and home, and therefore improve the allocation of a society's resources. In Germany and other European countries this is the case (see Annex 5.5.4).

An outstanding project is the lifelong learning passport, which is a means for documentation of the learner's competencies of all kinds. It makes them visible for the learners themselves as well as for future employers, and therefore stimulates the public learning process on the way towards an expanding culture of recognition.

2.6.5 Enhancing universal basic education

Some countries emphasise this broad approach towards learning that stems from changes towards a more global world. Educational and vocational transformations are considered to govern practically all areas of political, social, economic, and cultural activity within society. The assumption is that especially in a globalised world with international migration movements, the process of validation needs to be open, recognisable and easily accessible in order to let both the individual and the society be mutual beneficiaries.

While benefits to individuals in respect of their working lives, organisational activities and the education system are central issues in developed countries, in the developing countries, such as Bhutan, Togo, Bangladesh, Egypt, and Mexico (see Annex 2.5.5), tremendous efforts are put in enhancing universal basic education.

2.7 Statistical data gathered in the Member States

The majority of the Member States were not able to provide up-to-date statistics on the number of people profiting from programmes or policies in their society. The statistical data collected are of very different level (see Annex 2.2.7). Whereas Mexico states that the project on community education will be developed in the school year 2004-2005 in 109 communities and 21 regions of the country, Egypt provides the number of persons having reached the literacy level from 1993 until 2003.

2.8 Future perspectives

Many different future scenarios are described (see Annex 2.2.8). For example, Korea views to turning society into a field of learning, and Iceland keeps on following the principles of LLL. In Ecuador, the non-formal system will be reorganised. New standards of selection and pedagogy according to market

demand are to be introduced.

2.9 Conclusion

This document was produced through a desk study using information obtained by means of the analysis of thirty-six questionnaires. The complex realities of implementation of procedures and mechanisms as well as of stakeholders' views are not easily gleaned from the questionnaires. A more comprehensive study on recognition, validation and certification of non-formal and informal learning should be conducted, using a more sophisticated research methodology, most importantly including surveys and in-depth interviews with primary stakeholders involved.

Within both a European and a worldwide 'development-process' of different validation systems the question of how to value learning comes up again and again: Questions like the following ones will have to be re-answered regularly:

- Who should decide how a learning outcome is valued and who eventually should set the standards we use for assessment?
- How to bridge and to link different learning systems and learning outcomes?
- Can lifelong (and lifewide) learning be realised, as long as different validation systems are unable to communicate with each other and fail to mutually recognise each other?

This document closes with some recommendations, and in the hope of having contributed both to finding some answers to the above questions it has tried to push the process forward towards a set of common principles regarding validation of non-formal and informal education and training with the aim of ensuring greater comparability between approaches in different countries at different levels.

This document has been more interested in looking at national qualifications from the perspective of lifelong learning rather than from the perspective of reforms in qualifications frameworks alone. This is because not many developing countries have yet been able to put in place developed frameworks and systems of recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

2.10 Recommendations

We need to be careful about transferring highly developed structures of recognition, validation and certification of prior learning and experience to developing countries. Care needs to be exercised concerning the transfer of structures which have reached their limit with regard to converting access to the educational system to a kind of merchandise (Merle 2004).

We also need to look at recognition of informal and non-formal learning from the point of view of the individual's existing will, motivation and resources vis-à-vis the system, institutions and structures and

how the individual fits into a system. We feel that that the basic underlying assumption of recognising non-formal and informal learning is the assumption that systems of education need to orient to the resources / capacities and motivation of individuals and groups and not the other way round. What are the purposes, benefits and meanings of qualification frameworks to those who do not (yet) have them?

Some developing countries emphasize the importance of meta competencies. However very often these meta competencies are referred to only after structures and frameworks of recognition, accreditation and validation have already been established. These meta competencies are also those that are currently in vogue in developed countries. There needs to be more thorough research done, particularly in developing countries, on what competencies people in different phases of their life have and need. There is a danger of making competencies too broad and general, so much so that eventually they do not have any relevance in the local context.

The Philippines (International workshop in Paris: 2004) mentions the deeply rooted social bias against learning experience outside school. It is considered second class, inferior and inadequate. We need to take cognizance of the fact that many such issues are also prevalent in developed countries such as Germany and other highly developed countries.

Given the enormous amount and richness of indigenous knowledge prevalent in developing countries it is necessary for recognition systems to deal with this topic with greater vigour. Recognition programmes need to identify and utilise traditional knowledge and wisdom which are essentially an integral part of the lifelong learning process practised by any traditional, especially rural society.

As a change in the role of Ministries of Education takes place, the governmental bodies evolve from providers of social services into bodies that supervise the coordination of stakeholders. Ideally, it would be preferable if they would also be in charge of mobilising funds, but the recorded data on this is too insufficient for conclusions.

Where there is predominance of industry in validation of individual learning, there could be a danger of considering only those experiences which are an asset to the labour market; other important competencies may be neglected by the awarding units. It may be necessary for industry to take a more holistic approach.

It would be advisable for countries to start the process of setting recognition systems by first doing a careful exploration and making visible individual's competencies, rather than using formal recognition methods for non-formal and informal learning. There could be a danger that informal and non-formal learning may get reduced to the equivalent of school education. There is also a danger for a lot of this learning to lose its traditionally democratic and radical function. In-depth studies are needed in order to assess how equivalency programmes are managed and whether a balance is being maintained between school-focussed and life-focused programming. The formal school syndrome often constricts the non-formal character and may tend to turn these non-formal education programmes into poor copies of formal school courses.

What are the conditions for the introduction of qualification frameworks? These need to be identified.

National frameworks of qualifications need to be communicated to the population in general if they are to be successful. Learners, providers and employers must be aware of the framework and be able to use it. (OECD 2005a, p. 9)

We need to get more information from countries on the key drivers of change that steer developments in many countries – for example, the internationalisation and globalisation of learning and the development of wider regional (European or transnational) labour markets (OECD 2005a, p. 8).

A more comprehensive study on recognition, validation and accreditation of non-formal and informal learning should be conducted in practice as it would clearly benefit from more sophisticated research methodology, most importantly including surveys and in-depth interviews with primary stakeholders involved.

It will be necessary to investigate how different national qualifications systems influence the quality of lifelong learning. We need to analyse the principles and visions of lifelong learning and what societal changes it is responding to in the national context. For which target groups are lifelong learning policies being designed?

The comparisons between the countries need to be done on a more selective basis, either with respect to financing modalities or with regard to assessment procedures, and taking into account the state of the educational system. There could be some sort of a group agenda. Group representatives could be representatives with extensive, well-established frameworks and those who have recently introduced them or are actively considering them.

Finally more work will need to be done on identifying individual and systemic barriers to the recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

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Annex 1:Glossary

The Glossary presents key terms in alphabetical order. Any definition is simply a working tool and defining a term does not prevent the underlying concepts from further development. The purpose of this glossary is to understand the questionnaire better and to arrive at a more accepted and less disputed vocabulary of validation, and, above all, in order to help communication.

References are taken from several sources:

The website of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), from the European Centre for Higher Education (UNESCO-CEPES), and from Colardyn/Bjornavold, from the Norwegian Institute for Adult Education (Vox) and from OECD The Role of National Qualifications Systems in Promoting Lifelong Learning. Report from Thematic Group 1, 2, and 3, 2005

Accreditation

The process by which a (non-)governmental or private body evaluates the quality of an educational institution as a whole or of a specific educational programme in order to formally recognize it as having met certain predetermined minimal criteria or standards. The result of this process is usually the award of a status (a yes/no decision), of recognition, and sometimes of a license to operate within a time-limited validity. Institutional Accreditation: The terms refer to the accreditation of the whole institution, including all its programmes, sites, and methods of delivery, without any implication as to the quality of the study programmes of the institution. Accreditation of Prior Learning: The process by which individuals are awarded credit toward qualifications based on their prior learning and (sometimes) experience (also called experiential learning). The credit is awarded upon clear evidence that the respective learning has resulted in the students having achieved the appropriate learning outcomes (CEPES 2004). Portfolio for Accreditation: An act of evidence characteristics of an institution in relation to a specific type of activity, especially to learning standards. This operation can be accomplished either by a concerned institution or by an external observer/assessor. Accreditation Body: A (non-)governmental or private educational association of national or regional scope that develops evaluation standards and criteria and conducts peer evaluation and expert visits to assess whether or not those criteria are met (CEPES 2004).

Assessment of competencies

The sum of methods and processes used to evaluate the attainments (knowledge, know-how and/or competences) of an individual, and typically leading to certification. Formative and summative assessment Non-formal and informal learning assessment and validation are legitimate and useful not only for improving the learning process but also to come to some desirable proof. . The role and function of assessment is crucial to basic methodological choices. Formative assessment: Formative assessment occurs during the learning process. It facilitates individual learning. The purpose is not to grade or certify the learner, but to help both the learner and the teacher focus upon the particular learning

necessary for movement towards mastery. Formative assessment involved the collection of appropriate evidence while the learning process takes place (Colardyn/Bjornavold 2004). Summative assessment: The primary goal of summative assessment is grading or certifying students or candidates. Skills and competences assessed are either potentially or actually in use. It takes place at the end of a unit, a course or year or when it is expected that the required level of competence have been achieved. The judgment is made after a particular piece of learning or education process is thought to be completed (Colardyn/Bjornavold). Is there a summative assessment where non-formal learning is tested for possible inclusion into the setting of formal education and training? Is there a summative function where non-formal learning is tested? Does it remain independent from formal education and training? Is a combination desirable and feasible? Today, currently accepted theory no longer separates formative and summative assessments (Taras 2002, p. 504 in: Colardyn/Bjornavold 2004). Standards (references) are a major issue for assessment of formal as well as non-formal and informal learning. While norm referencing (using the performance of a group or population) has to be seriously discussed in the context of assessing non-formal learning (due to the diversity of competences involved), the issue of domain referencing is very important. The definition of boundaries of competence domains (their size and content) and the ways in which competences can be expressed within this domain is of critical importance (Colardyn/Bjornavold 2004).

Assessors

Assessors need to have good knowledge of work practice and curriculum in the context of work. In educational institutions, assessors need to have good training in assessing generic skills and tacit knowledge (VOX 2002).

Certification of competencies

The process of formally validating knowledge, know-how and/or competences acquired by an individual, follows a standard assessment procedure. Certificates or diplomas are issued by accredited awarding bodies (Cedefop 2002).

Competence

Ability to apply knowledge, know-how and skills in a habitual and/or changing work situation (Cedefop 2002).

Documenting

In many countries, like in Norway, the Parliament has adopted a resolution that gives adults the right to document their non-formal and informal learning without having to undergo traditional forms of testing (VOX 2002). There are many ways of documenting and recording learning. The most commonly used

forms of documenting non-formal and informal learning are through curriculum vitae and skills certificates. Often, there are written guidelines.

Equivalence

Equivalence takes place when learning acquired in areas other than through the public education system is deemed equivalent with formal learning. There has been much discussion on what is equivalent when it comes to comparison with formal learning. Should this equivalence be in relation to a national curriculum? Should it be something that is a modified version of this national curriculum? According to the Norwegian "Realkompetanse Project", which is to be approved as equivalent, a skill has to reach a specific minimum level, be of a certain nature, in relation to a prescribed skill (quantitative and qualitative requirement for core knowledge. It must be possible to assess all skills within a specialist field, and to recognise them where appropriate, as equivalent learning, irrespective of requirements for knowledge content made in existing curricula and examinations (VOX 2002).

Evaluation

The general process of a systematic and critical analysis leading to judgments and/or recommendations regarding the quality of an education institution or a programme. Evaluation is carried out through internal or external procedures. The process of self-evaluation consists of the systematic collection of administrative data, the questioning of students and graduates, and the holding of moderated interviews with lecturers and students, resulting in a self-study report. Self-evaluation is basically a collective institutional reflection and an opportunity for quality enhancement. The resulting report further serves as a provider of information for the review team in charge of the external evaluation (CEPES 2004).

Indicators

“Operational variables referring to specific empirically measurable characteristics of education institutions or programmes on which evidence can be collected that allows for determination of whether or not standards are being met. Indicators identify performance trends” (CEPES 2004). With regard to validation, this could relate to results with regard to access to programmes or certification, or results in number of validations or certifications (with or without education and training) (Colardyn/Bjornavold 2004).

Learning

In formal education and training learning is structured and planned according to specific education and/or training objectives. In an enterprise activities may be highly structured but not planned according to any particular learning objective. The situation is not planned for learning but important learning outcomes may result from these activities. Finally, in activities with little structure or planning, for example, many family or community based activities learning is not the explicit objective, but it can occur. The question

of learning process control is equally important. While learning in formal education and training is structured according to a range of factors beyond the control of the learner (the curricula, the qualification framework, the teaching methods the composition of the class) non formal and informal learning will to a much greater extent be controlled by a learner himself. This is also the reason why the concept of competence is highly relevant to this field. By competences we address the way an individual is able to apply knowledge and experience to situations and problems. Self-directed and self organised are crucial to the development of life skills and can not be fully replaced by predefined and prestructured teaching (see Colardyn /Bjornavold).

The settings in which learning takes place are defined by formal or non-formal. According to Eraut (2000) and supported by Straka (2002), formal learning can be described as follows. Learning takes place within a prescribed framework for learning, learning is part of an organised event or package, learning is characterised by the presence of a designated teacher or trainer, learning is defined by the existence of external specifications of outcomes, learning leads to a designated qualification, credit, or certificate, and learning is affiliated with the right to further education.

Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning includes formal, non-formal and informal learning.

Formal learning is normally acquired through organised and structured programmes delivered via schools and other providers and is recognised (certificate and diplomas) by means of qualifications or part of qualifications.

Non-formal learning is acquired through organised programmes or courses but it is not typically recognised by means of qualifications nor does it lead to certification.

Informal learning is acquired outside of organised programmes and courses and is picked up through daily activities relating to work, family, community, gender relations, village life, or leisure, sport and recreation. Informal learning is often referred to as experiential learning and can to a certain degree be understood as non-intentional and incidental. Terms like prior learning or prior experiential learning are also used pointing to validation of already acquired learning outcomes.

Life wide Learning

Life wide learning is a term that has begun to be used to capture the idea that learning may take place in a range of contexts outside of formal education and with different aims and outcomes.

Qualification

Qualification is (a) an official record (certificate, diploma) of achievement which recognises successful completion of education and training, or satisfactory performance in a test or examination. (b) the requirement for an individual to enter or progress within an occupation (Cedefop 2003)

Qualification Framework

A comprehensive policy framework, which defines all qualifications recognized nationally in terms of workload, level, quality, learning outcomes, and profiles. It should be designed for to be comprehensible through the use of specific descriptors for each qualification covering both its breadth (competencies associated with learning outcomes) and its depth (level). It is structured horizontally in order to cover all qualifications awarded in a system, and vertically, by level. Its purpose is that of facilitating:

- (i) curriculum development and design of study programmes,
- (ii) student and graduate mobility, and
- (iii) recognition of periods of study and credentials.

Qualification System

Qualifications systems include all aspects of a country's activity that result in the recognition of learning. These systems include the means of developing and operationalising national or regional policy on qualifications, institutional arrangements, quality assurance processes, assessment and awarding process, skills recognition and other mechanisms that link education and training to the labour market and civil society. Qualification systems may be more or less integrated and coherent. One feature of a qualification system may be an explicit framework of qualifications.

(OECD 2005a: 6)

Recognition

Recognition of learning is a process of recording achievements of individuals arising from any kind of learning in any environment; the process aims to make visible an individual's knowledge and skills so that they can combine and build on learning achieved and be regarded for it.

Assessment of Prior Learning (APL) are processes which use a variety of tools to help learners reflect on, identify, articulate and demonstrate past learning. This learning has been acquired through study, work and other life experiences and is not recognised through formal transfer of credit mechanisms. APL allows the evaluation of past learning against established standards so that credit can be awarded and qualifications achieved.

Standards

Education(al) Standards: Various types of educational standards exist with regard to learning resources, programmes, and results, in general, and student performance (content standards, performance standards, proficiency standards, and opportunity-to-learn standards) (CEPES 2002).

Validation of formal and informal learning

Validation of non-formal and informal learning is an important element of work on lifelong learning both nationally and internationally. It gives adults more opportunity to acquire education and training to improve their qualifications. Governments in many European countries work in co-operation with social partners, educational institutions and civil society organisations (VOX 2002). According to the Cedefop glossary (2000, The International Encyclopaedia of Education), validation is defined as the process of identifying, assessing and recognizing a wider range of skills and competences which people develop through their lives and in different contexts through education , work and participation in civil society organisations.

Usefulness of validation could be the following: Certification in relation to existing formal level, give admission to a higher level of education and training system (continue learning), to get a job, for participation of work life, carry out a profession or trade. Many adults may never be entitled to re-enter secondary school, but validation of their non-formal and informal learning including vocational testing can help in their search for work (VOX 2002).

National system of validation includes

- 1) Law, regulations and agreements
- 2) Transparency of organisations conducting the validation process
- 3) National procedures
- 4) Reference points such as curriculum standards
- 5) System of information
- 6) Principles for guidance and assessment (The Realkompetanse Project 2002)

Annex 2 Country examples

2.1 National frameworks supporting the process of recognition, validation and certification

2.1.1 Countries with a legally based national framework

KOREA	In KOREA recognition and validation is guided by the policy on lifelong learning and the Lifelong Education Act. The framework has put into effect the national Lifelong learning centre and 16 regional centres. The qualification framework works under the Educational Credit Bank System. It is set up for people who have not been educated at the college level. It helps them to obtain academic credits and degrees by completing programmes and course work at civic education training institutions, acquiring various vocational licences. The common practice is to finish a certain course of education, which is evaluated and acknowledged. Or one passes the tests set for self-study as an alternative to a bachelor's degree. The certificate is awarded by the law of certification. It is Non-formal and informal learning is not recognised precisely. A committee evaluated the institutes and curriculum. After meeting the credit requirements, it is possible to transfer from a junior college (Bachelor degree) to a 4-year university, or to a graduate school.
FINLAND	In FINLAND, provisions on validation have a long history, and several political and legal initiatives always underlined the importance of this issue. During the past years, the comprehensive national approach has been further developed, and since 1998 recognition, validation and accreditation is performed on a larger scale. The related policy is primarily defined in new educational legislation, which provides a framework on the recognition of non-formal and informal learning at comprehensive schools, at upper secondary schools as well as at post-comprehensive vocational institutions and institutions for adult vocational training. Furthermore, the current law makes certification of prior learning the learner's subjective right.
FRANCE	Also according to the FRENCH legislation, every person has the right to obtain a certification for acquired competencies. Previously, validation of skills was only possible after the completion of various educational and vocational courses. But since 2002, the law changed and new, legally routed mechanisms for validation have been introduced. The Law on "modernisation sociale" regulates the recognised non-formal learning or "validation des acquis de l'expérience" (VAE) (learning from experience). Assessment of prior learning is made more flexible and broader. It concerns all diplomas, titles and certificates (three years

	<p>apprenticeship leading to the BEP, vocational training in a vocational institute leading to a diploma. Master-Diploma of the and certificates to adults with three years of experience in non-profit organisation given by the Association of the vocational training of adults (AFPA) or the Diploma of the DAVA of the Ministry of youth and primary and secondary education and research. All these diplomas, certificates and titles are included in the National Register of Vocational Certification (Répertoire national des certifications professionnelles). This register is a tool to manage the national training supply and to provide information to the individuals. The National Commission of Vocational Certification (Commission nationale de certification) is responsible for the Register.</p>
AUSTRALIA	<p>In AUSTRALIA the issue of recognition, validation and certification is generally referred to as “Recognition of Prior Learning” (RPL), which is one accepted pathway for skills recognition and for entry into the country’s post-secondary education and training systems. RPL is a feature of “Vocational Education and Training system” (VET), and is part of the “Post-Secondary Education Framework”. The “Australian Quality Training Framework” (AQTF) instructs that every registered training organisation must ensure that RPL is offered to applicants on enrolment. The AQTF is a nationally agreed set of standards for training providers within vocational education and training.</p>
AUSTRIA	<p>In AUSTRIA existing legal and institutional frameworks make it possible for formal education and training institutions to recognise competencies acquired in non-formal and informal settings. Furthermore, adults who have not completed any formal education and training are encouraged to continue their learning in various vocational evening schools. The government has introduced six different acts, which build a legal foundation for conducting exams in the formal educational systems for access to formal educational and training institutions. It is particularly, the "Vocational Training Act" as well as the "Crafts, Trade, Service and Industry Act" that set the foundation for seven different qualifications which learners can achieve in order to gain entry into further, mostly higher education. These qualifications can be reached by means of formal education, formal apprenticeships and/or vocational training.</p>
ICELAND	<p>The National Curriculum Guide for Upper Secondary Schools, issued on the basis of the Upper Secondary Education Act, contains rules on recognition of studies carried out at other schools, informal studies and work experience. It states, inter alia:</p> <p>“Principals of upper secondary schools are responsible for evaluating prior studies of students, whether formal or informal. Informal studies refers to knowledge or skills which have been acquired by other means than formal schooling, such as on courses held by independent educational agencies, or through work experience on the labour market.</p>

	<p>In evaluating such experience, the objective shall not be that the prior studies be exactly the same as are defined in the Curriculum Guide; the emphasis shall rather be on whether the studies can be evaluated as equivalent, and whether the student is qualified to complete the study programme. The work experience of student prior to commencing an apprenticeship may be recognised. The recognition may lead to the student being exempted from specific practical training modules and/or to a reduction in the duration of practical on-the-job training.</p> <p>In the case of doubt regarding the recognition of studies, it is correct to allow the student to enjoy the benefit of the doubt, or to offer him/her the opportunity to take a test of competence.</p> <p>The purpose of such tests is to give the applicant the opportunity to demonstrate his/her knowledge in a specified subject or field. Thus students can gain recognition of knowledge and experience they possess, which has not been acquired in the conventional way in school, thus reducing the duration of their studies. The Ministry of Education assigns upper secondary schools to administer tests of competence, which are held twice a year as the need arises.”</p>
NEW ZEALAND	<p>Non-formal and informal learning are not terms used in NEW ZEALAND, but procedures do exist for the recognition of prior learning (RPL). This allows the recognition, validation and accreditation of non-formal and informal education/training. One of the functions of the NEW ZEALAND Qualifications Authority is to ensure that there is a flexible system for the gaining of qualifications, which recognises competencies already achieved. The overarching responsibility of the Qualifications Authority is to establish a consistent approach to the recognition of qualifications in academic and vocational areas. Since lately, the NEW ZEALAND apprenticeship training is part of the structure of the NQF through the modern apprenticeship scheme.</p>
BENIN	<p>In BENIN a ‘Directory of Training and Professional Qualification’ has been created. Its purpose is to focus on vocational training issues within the non-formal and informal sector. Although legal bodies are not mentioned in the questionnaire, legal guidelines for dual internships as well as the procedure of certification of qualifications exist. This framework needs to be seen in the context of the reform initiative undertaken in March 2001, a reform of the entire educational system. This recently introduced system reform took into account the issue of recognition, validation and certification.</p>
MALDIVES	<p>The MALDIVES Accreditation Board (MAB), which is part of the MALDIVES National Qualifications Framework (MNQF), recognises many non-formal courses. However, this framework of recognition is not highly developed at present. The MNQF provides a comprehensive and coherent national framework that facilitates quality improvement, quality assurance, and private sector participation in post-secondary education. It also provides</p>

	<p>qualifications that are nationally standardized and quality assured to students, employers, and education providers.</p>
PHILIP-PINES	<p>In the PHILIPPINES the Bureau of Non-formal Education (BNFE) is mandated to set national standards and establish a national policy framework for the implementation of non-formal education programs of the Department of Education. The development of a non-formal education accreditation and equivalency–system (NFE A&E) was conceived under the umbrella of the All-Philippine Plan of Action (EFA PPA) and was incorporated as a core component of the Asian Development Bank. The legal framework of the NFE A&E–system development, however, precedes the UN-decade of EFA and is rooted in the general mandate for the development and promotion of non-formal education in the PHILIPPINES. The NFE A&E is legally based in the Constitution of the PHILIPPINES since 1972.</p>
NETHER-LANDS	<p>During the early 1990s, the DUTCH government felt that regular education should be made more accessible for adults. This led in 1993 to the establishment of the Commission on the ‘Recognition of Informally Acquired Skills’. The Commission published its report ‘Recognising Informal Skills’ in March 1994. This marked the launch of EVK: the recognition of informally acquired skills, and emphasised the need to increase accessibility to education traditionally based on formal qualifications or the award of certificates. The Cabinet responded positively to the report. It accepted that EVK could make a useful contribution to the functioning of the labour and training markets, especially for individuals. The implementation of the scheme had to tie in with existing structures and the stakeholders had to pay the implementing costs. The Cabinet agreed to provide a set of instruments to assist EVK, including the necessary development funding. The various stakeholders now actively got down to work. Schools, national professional education institutions, employment agencies, educational advisory bureaux, companies and other players began to work on the elaboration of EVK, either alone or in partnership. This work was resumed following the unveiling of the national action programme of the first liberal-socialist coalition government in 1998. The programme states, among other things, that: “More should be done to ensure that the workplace is used as a centre of learning. The experience gained should be made visible as informally acquired skills and qualifications. The Cabinet wants to assist this by setting up a system in which informally acquired knowledge and experience, that is, knowledge and experience gained outside the formal education system, can be tested and recognised. Finally, the STAR (committee of social partners) recommendations “Lifelong learning at work” (June 1998) made an important contribution to the further elaboration of the concept of lifelong learning.</p> <p>In its autumn debate on 3 December 1998, the Cabinet urged the social partners to jointly implement a series of measures and activities aimed at boosting the employability of the working population. The term ‘employability’ in this context</p>

	<p>is defined as ‘obtaining and retaining employment’. One of these activities was the development of the system for the Recognition of Informally Acquired Skills and Qualifications (EVC) through pilot projects carried out in companies and branches. At the beginning of 1999, the Minister of Economic Affairs appointed a broadly based working party to address this issue. The working party was chaired by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and included representatives of the social partners (VNO/NCW Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers, MKB Nederland (the national association of small and medium-sized enterprises), the FNV and CNV trade union confederations and the Ministries of Agriculture, Nature Conservation and Fisheries, of Education, Culture and Sciences, and of Social Affairs and Employment. The working party determined that EVC should not be used to highlight gaps in knowledge and skills. The opposite is in fact the case: EVC must build further on existing knowledge and skills. The scheme therefore uses the motto The Glass is Half Full! EVC shows that individual skills levels are in fact high already and suggests how they can be further enhanced. It is therefore not a goal in itself, but contributes to the development of individuals and the improvement of the human capital management of organisations and companies.</p>
EQUADOR	<p>In EQUADOR the entire system of recognition, validation and certification falls under the jurisdiction of the Direccion Nacional Permanente, Quito</p>

2.1.2 Countries without a national framework but with a system of recognition, validation and certification, which is based on the national curricula

ST. LUCIA	<p>In ST LUCIA, there are plans to integrate the recognition of prior learning into the National Vocational Qualification Framework. In some cases, based on the nature of the task performed, non-formal training is given consideration in order to establish credibility or for employment.</p>
CZECH REPUBLIC	<p>In the CZECH REPUBLIC for example, results of non-formal and informal learning can so far only be recognised within the system of formal education if they have been certified. Authority in this regard lies with the school headmasters. Even though initiatives have not been fully put into practice yet, several legal steps with regard to validation of non-formal and informal learning are in preparation in the CZECH REPUBLIC. A new school law has been introduced in order to strengthen the power of secondary school teachers. In future, teachers will be in the position to decide on the recognition of an applicant's prior learning. On the basis of an exam the teacher will be able to assess the level of education in order to admit entry to a higher level than the first year of secondary school. Further, a new lifelong education law is in preparation, too. By means of systematic</p>

	measures, this law will be the regulation of the process of recognition of non-formal and informal education and training. Employers can acknowledge results of prior learning, but they are not in obligation to do so.
AFRCA	<p>While national frameworks for recognition, validation and accreditation have been developed and elaborated by several countries in the North, many countries in the South (CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, MALAWI, EGYPT, TOGO, OMAN) lack this capacity and still have a long way to go. Some validation strategies and mechanisms are existent, but they are mostly erratic.</p> <p>Many countries like the CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC lack the basic parameters relating to validation of non-formal and informal learning. As a result assessment is conducted in accordance with the national curricula, using methodologies developed for the validation of competencies gained within formal schooling. Similarly MALAWI takes a similar approach and enables formal teaching institutions for the validation of competencies and knowledge acquired non- or informally. As these institutions follow formal guidelines for appraisal, learning elements, which are not taken into account by the national curricula, do not receive recognition.</p>
EGYPT	In EGYPT the centralised educational system does not recognise non-formal and informal education, which goes beyond what is laid down in the national curriculum. The framework for this recognition is grounded in policy and legislation relating to the national curricula. This also applies to the programmes on Illiteracy Eradication + Workers Education. However, in terms of programmes within the community (such as Community Service) this might not always be the case, as the projects undertaken by diverse local communities differ to a large extent.
TOGO	In TOGO, recognition only takes place when the competencies of a learner are in accordance with the national curricula. Within the scope of assessment in literacy programmes, written assignments are used for testing. Recognition, validation and certification of non-formal and informal education do not lead to continuing education, as entry into the formal system is still not gained. However, on vocational level it can lead to an improvement of employment opportunities. In cases where no official recognition takes place, does not mean that individual effort does not bring success and upward mobility. In TOGO, recognition, validation and accreditation of non-formal and informal learning takes place as well as of apprenticeships. With regard to Literacy programmes for adults the legal framework of the Directorate of Literacy and Adult Education, as well as by the Ministry of Social Affairs, Gender Equity and Children is applicable for the recognition of literacy competencies. The government is currently working on establishing further mechanisms and strategies in order to raise literacy on a national level.
OMAN	The procedure of recognition in OMAN follows the national curricula. Each

	<p>candidate must achieve the minimum requirements for each category of the curricula. Evaluation tools are written exams, presentations, written assignments, observation as well as measurement. Successful candidates gain the possibility to enter an education or vocational training path as well as placements for work experience within companies. Such improvement of competencies could also lead to an upgrade within employment. OMAN also recognises home studies by linking them with seminars.</p>
RWANDA	<p>In RWANDA the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) has put in place a system for the recognition, validation and certification of informal and non-formal learning with regard to functional literacy. In the domain of recognition of informal vocational training and apprenticeships, it is the Ministry of Labour, which has jurisdiction over its accreditation matters.</p>

2.1.3 Countries without a framework

MACEDONIA	<p>In the Republic of MACEDONIA, the Ministry of Education and Science is working on a law on informal education. Currently, MACEDONIAN participants of non-formal and informal education programmes do not receive full recognition and accreditation on national level for their knowledge and their competencies gained. However, in some cases employers do recognise the efforts of participants of non-formal and informal education programmes. At the same time, a strategy on education development is being established. One component of this strategy includes a system of recognition, validation and accreditation of non-formal and informal education.</p>
POLAND	<p>The POLISH Ministry of National Education and Sport has prepared a document entitled "Strategy for development of continuing education until the year 2010", in which the increase of access to continuing education is stressed. Furthermore, it sets a timeframe (2003-2004) for the preparation of legislative foundations in order to ensure permeability of formal and non-formal education.</p>
LATVIA	<p>The State Youth Initiative in LATVIA has oriented itself to the UNESCO-concept of the validation of non-formal education on state level, and recognition of it in society as a means of social integration, employment and support for human resource development. LATVIA is in the process of developing different directions of non-formal education, alongside with the planned hobby education programmes, taking into consideration the priorities set by the Council of Europe and the European Commission. The state requires financial support for youth organisations as builders of a value system for young people and as facilitators of young people's democratic and political participation.</p>

KENYA	In the search of a more accountable and efficient educational system, KENYA is in the process of introducing a system reform, in which public authorities, local levels and non-governmental actors such as NGOs and the private sector will be involved from the earliest stages of the process of recognition.
MADAGASCAR	MADAGASCAR is currently promoting a policy of non-formal education, which covers the areas "education of groups in difficult circumstances", "literacy programmes and education for adults", "programmes entirely focussing on women", and "training for trainers". However, there is no legislation, which could institutionalise a national system of recognition, validation and accreditation. Social competencies and soft skills are recognised, but often not certified. Sometimes associations and NGOs do certify participation in activities such as workshops. The Ministry, which is in charge of population issues, certifies by the end of a learner's education/training certain competencies achieved.
TRINIDAD/TOBAGO	Although TRINIDAD and TOBAGO has a programme of Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL), no national policy and legislation has been established and put into place yet.
PALESTINE	Likewise PALESTINE has not policies related to recognition, validation and accreditation of informal and non-formal education and training. There is no legislation. However, this issue of recognition has been put on the agenda. It is not mentioned that programmes of non-formal and informal education are not operating under some framework.
GERMANY	In Germany the Ministry of Education (BMBF) is developing for the present legislative period, a nationwide concept for a lifelong learning passport, which will include informal learning. The collaborative project "Lifelong Learning passport with certification of informal learning" is of great importance within the framework of the strategy for promoting lifelong learning. In accordance with the Bund-Länder Commission for Educational Planning and Research Promotion (decision of 17 June 2002) , lifelong learning is inter alia to be promoted by means of the recognition and certification of non-formal and informal learning

2.2 Coordination modalities in RVC

2.2.1 RVC as a shared responsibility

ICELAND	In addition to the National Curriculum Guide, the Education and Training Service Centre was established in Iceland in 2002 by the Icelandic Federation of Labour (ASÍ) and the Confederation of Icelandic Employers (SA). The role of the Centre is to be a collaborative forum of the founding parties for adult education and
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	<p>vocational training in co-operation with other education bodies operating under the auspices of the member associations of ASÍ and SA.</p> <p>The Centre operates in accordance with its articles of association and a service agreement with the Ministry of Education.</p> <p>The Centre targets those who have not completed the upper secondary level of education. This target group comprises almost 40% of people in the labour market, although the ratio varies between years and regions.</p> <p>The objective is to enable individuals who have not graduated from the upper secondary level to obtain an education and improve their position on the labour market.</p> <p>Among the Centre's objectives is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To have assessments performed of the education supply and real professional competence in the labour market. To ensure recognition of skills and knowledge acquired on training courses. To ensure recognition of skills acquired through experience, independent study, etc. To develop career counselling services in the labour market. To develop education records.
IRELAND	<p>In IRELAND, the Qualifications Act established three new bodies: the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI), the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) and the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC). Linked to NQAI which is responsible for the Irish framework of qualifications, HETAC and FETAC are awarding councils in higher and further education and training. Both operate in the context of a vision for the recognition of all learning and are in line with the broad national and European policy of promoting a Lifelong Learning society. Procedures for the access, transfer and progression of learners are key features of FETAC and HETAC responsibilities. Whereas HETAC is involved with awards in higher education and training FETAC is engaged in making awards in further education and training.</p> <p>Both Councils share the same functions and have to ensure that procedures for access, transfer and progression are implemented by the education providers, and to guarantee that the providers establish mechanisms for the assessment of learners which are fair and consistent. The close interaction of these three bodies creates possibilities for shared responsibility within the educational system of IRELAND. Furthermore, the Qualifications Act provides a legislative basis and a framework that links formal and non-formal education, which is one of the preconditions to be met for successful implementation of the concept of Lifelong Learning.</p> <p>www.nqf.ie www.nqai.ie</p>
NORWAY	<p>In NORWAY, a national institute named "Vox" is in charge of recognition, validation and accreditation of non-formal and informal learning. Generally speaking, it is an institute for adult learning. It co-operates with trade organisations,</p>

	<p>universities and colleges, public and private educators as well as with social partners. The NORWEGIAN government has established Vox as a central tool for the implementation of its newly launched Competence Reform, a national plan that targets adults both within and outside the working life.</p>
THE NETHERLANDS	<p>In the NETHERLANDS EVC is co-ordinated by means of the national employability-agenda. A circle consisting of: ministries of (1) Economic Affairs, (2) Social affairs and employment, (3) Education, Culture and Sciences, (4) Agriculture, Nature Conservation and Fishery; social partners. (5) Healthcare and (6) Internal Affairs are getting involved.</p> <p>In terms of policy implementation in the NETHERLANDS the following partners and stakeholders are involved government: VNO/NCW and MKB-NL are the major national employers organisations; FNV and CNV are the major national trade unions; BVE-raad is the national association for secondary vocational education; HBO-raad is the national association for higher vocational education; Colo is the umbrella organisation of 21 national bodies for vocational education. As the interest group for and of the national bodies, Colo carefully monitors relevant social developments and the education and labour market policy of government. CWI is the national labour agency. All parties are involved (in advisory board and advisory committee) in the Kenniscentrum EVC: a publicly funded knowledge centre for the validation of non-formal learning. All parties have their own responsibilities in initiating and implementing EVC-policy in their own 'back-yard'. The NETHERLANDS is now in the process of disseminating the national policy and vision from the macro-level to the meso-level, i.e. the level of sectors and branches. This step is co-ordinated by the Kenniscentrum EVC.</p>
KOREA	<p>In KOREA the National Lifelong Learning Centre takes responsibility for documenting the skills. But there are no organisations for validating and certifying non-formal education and the social recognition of non-formal learning. This is done by the respective institutions of higher education and by enterprises.</p>
MEXICO	<p>In MEXICO, it is the National Council for Educational Promotion (Consejo Nacional de Fomento Educativo, CONAFE) which was created in 1971 as a decentralised agency of the Secretariat of the Public Education. It has been entrusted to ensure conditions of educational equality in the country. Through the presence of an instructor in each community, it renders educational services in the communities and to socially disadvantaged people through programmes and modalities adapted to life situations of the community. In meeting its mission CONAFE has been constructing proposals with the assistance of specialists (technical teams, teachers, and community workers, for the integrated development of the learners. The presence of the council in the rural areas has made possible the access and the graduation of thousands of pupils a pre school</p>

	<p>and primary education through the presence of an instructor in each community. Community education takes into account and recognises the diverse cultural contexts favouring the participation and organisation of the community in the reflection and action according to its needs. It takes into account the knowledge, know how, the beliefs and the meanings. It also takes into account the forms of subsistence, organisation, production and recreation, the basic customs of life, the cosmic vision which is contained in their languages,</p> <p>During 2002, CONAFE created the Project “Centres of Community Education with the aim of generating the conditions for consolidating the processes of basic education deriving from the councils fundamental definition of basic education as a education which is integrative, flexible and which supports all the population en meeting basic learning needs, utilising the resources that have been developed in the context of community education. The centres employ two or more instructors in each community and is gradually expanding its impact in other communities of the region, considering especially small rural communities that are dispersed and inaccessible.</p> <p>This new project constitutes an opportunity to enrich the fundamentals of community education and generate situations of dialogue, exchange, reflection and action towards the realisation of life projects and future projects. The perspective is to participate in the construction of a society, which is democratic, plural, intercultural, cohesive and just which is in a constant process of change.</p> <p>The project on the community education centres can be considered as an initiative of recognising and validation, of knowledge, beliefs, practices that the persons in the persons in rural communities possess. The project has as its long-term goal to formalise the knowledge by means of a strategy of certification.</p> <p>Currently, the knowledge and community practices which are analysed and reflected in the context of the CONAFE’s programmes of community education are recognised and validated and are considered as a basis for lifelong learning and permanent education.</p> <p>The centres of community education are considered as centres of co-ordination and not as a certifying agency, but agencies that take into account the importance of recognising and validating what is already learned in daily knowledge of the users.</p> <p>The CONAFE establishes links with the Directorate General of Accreditation, Integration and Revalidation in the Secretariat of Public Education in order to obtain the permission to certify extramural, out-of-school primary and secondary education. CONAFE has intentions in the short term to initiate negotiations with institutions such as CONOCER, technical institutes and some non-governmental organisations for obtaining the certification of knowledge and practices that have been taken into account in its glossary as “prior learning”</p>
EQUADOR	<p>In EQUADOR different organisations are involved in the documentation of non-formal and informal learning. These could be Art and cultural centres, occupational centres and formal and informal technical schools. There is official or private</p>

	<p>archive of the learners.</p> <p>In EQUADOR the following competencies and grades are certified. In a technical centre for Electricians the following grades are recognised: occupation, artisan, middle technician, superior technician, technologist or engineer. Formal enterprises (private or public) have their own agreements concerning recognition of informal learning. Documentation is done by means of testimonials, and official or private archives .The individuals have to undertake experiments and practical tests, observations and analysis according to the parameters of evaluation laid down in the area of artisan skills, basic and secondary school level skills.</p>
FRANCE	<p>In FRANCE several Ministries take policy initiatives, mainly at the national level, and more and more at the regional level. It is primarily the Ministries of Education and Employment that were the first to become involved in the design and implementation of a policy. The National Commission of Vocational Certification, which is responsible for the Register, is composed of 16 representatives of Ministries, ten representatives of the social partners, three representatives of the different chambers and three from regions. In addition twelve qualified personalities take part.</p> <p>Several institutions implement the Validation des acquis d'expériences(VAE) : the Ministry of education accredits diplomas (DAVA or Dispositifs académiques de validation des acquis (2) The specialised institutes of the University are currently designing a Master-Diploma programme (3) The Association for the Vocational Training of Adults or Association pour la formation professionnelle des adultes (AFPA) give certificates to those adults who have 3 years of informal or non-formal experience. Similarly other institutes are involved such as the Conservatoire nationale des arts et métiers, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Youth; and enterprises in designing certificates, diplomas and titles which become a part of the Répertoire nationale des certifications professionnelles.</p> <p>The instruments of evaluation used include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A data bank which provides information on the validation of the acquisition of experience; - The personal dossier of the candidate; - The counselling and guidance between the professional advisor and the candidate; - The synthesis and result by the jury of evaluation.
GERMANY	<p>Under the umbrella of the Bund-Länder Commission for Educational Planning and Research Promotion, the Education Ministry and the European Social Fund have funded a feasibility study "Lifelong learning passport with certification of informal Learning from mid 2002 to autumn 2003. This feasibility study was look at all so-called education and lifelong learning passports in Germany, and in neighbouring countries and at the EU level., and to present proposals for the reference model of a lifelong learning passport across all educational areas, which would be usable below the statutory level.</p>

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2.2.2 *Predominance of industry in RVC*

AUSTRALIA	AUSTRALIA is a case in point. While governmental bodies audit the training organisations conducting “Recognition of Prior Learning” (RPL), the industry and employers promote RPL as a viable pathway to skills recognition and continued learning, whereas the research organisations focus on the development of RPL policies.
TRINIDAD/ TOBAGO	In TRINIDAD and TOBAGO, governmental bodies involve the local industry in the process of validation. While employers of the country’s industry set standards for the assessment of an individual learner’s skills, the process of recognition and certification of vocational competencies is conducted by the National Training Agency Awarding Unit, which is also in charge of the distribution of information regarding the Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) as well as Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR).

2.2.3 *Predominance of public authorities and government in RVC*

MACEDONIA	For example in MACEDONIA, which is currently working on a legal framework concerning non-formal and informal learning, the process of validation is conducted unofficially. There is no registered body in charge of recognition, validation and accreditation, however, prior skills are assessed and certified on an individual basis by formal education providers. While his mode of conducting the validation might appear to be very flexible, it however exposes the learner to the arbitrariness of the assessing institution. Therefore it can be said, that the MACEDONIAN educational system lacks to a large extent some input of decentralisation as the distribution of decision-making power remains with public authorities. The involvement of social partners is not mentioned in the information obtained from MACEDONIA.
BANGLADESH	The BANGLADESH Ministry of Primary and Mass Education uses similar methods by acknowledging prior skills by means of ‘informal judgements’. According to the data, it carries sole responsibility concerning recognition, validation and certification. The absence of an institutionalised approach towards non-formal and informal learning might lead to a neglect of a broader concept of learning as well as to a loss of human capital. In order to emphasize transparency and accountability of this educational system, participation of other stakeholders

	needs to a necessary step.
PALESTINE	In PALESTINE, although literacy, adult education, parallel education forms of lifelong learning in cultural centres are certified by the Ministry of education and high education authorities, it is the Palestinian Red Crescent which gives certificate for those who perform voluntary social and medical work with them.

2.3 Examples of programmes

2.3.1 *Non-formal education programmes, mostly in developing countries*

PHILIPPINE	<p>The first set of programmes is that within the non-formal education programmes, mostly in developing countries. The PHILIPPINE NFE A&E – system (non-formal education and accreditation and equivalency) is a new national non-formal education programme initiative of the Department of Education. It is foreseen to provide an alternative means of certification of learning to those Filipinos aged 15 and above, who are unable to avail of the former school system or who have dropped out of formal elementary or secondary education. There are options available to learners after they complete NFE A&E – system. Learners, who pass all tests successfully, receive a certificate comparable to a formal diploma. Elementary and secondary level those who desire to continue their learning are given the opportunity to enter the formal educational system. Most of the learners are expected to re-enter/ enter the world of work with an improved capacity for generating income and improving their own economic situation.</p>
MALDIVES	<p>The MALDIVES Centre for Continuing Education implements different programmes for out-of-school populations. These include training workshops, language courses, skill development courses, so-called "second chance education classes" for dropouts and students with learning difficulties, and development of materials on various topics and issues. The MALDIVES Accreditation Board (MABs) acknowledges training/education, which is part of a course meeting the MABs Pre-Qualifying Criteria. The regular method of assessment is the use of questionnaires. However, a successful assessment does not necessarily lead to further education / training, but some training institutions acknowledge individual and collective effort of learners and provide them opportunities for further training. Similarly, a successful assessment does not guarantee employment, but exceptions are made to individual and collective effort of learners.</p>
BHUTAN	<p>The programmes offered by the Division of Non-Formal and Continuing Education in BHUTAN differ according to the level of literacy of the learners. A so-called “Basic Literacy Programme” is targeted for illiterates and school dropouts. The course lasts one year and teaches basic skills in writing, reading and accountancy. Furthermore, it aims to put across knowledge, information and skills related to topics such as health, sanitation, environmental issues, agriculture and/or sexually transmitted diseases. A follow-up action of the “Basic Literacy Programme” is the “Post Literacy Programme”, which is open to those, who have completed the BLP as well as to other neo-literates. This course is offered in order to maintain the acquired skills of the trainees, and offers the following three modules: Functional Literacy, Life Skills and Value Education. The “Self Learning Programme”</p>

	promotes the idea of continuing and lifelong learning, and focuses mainly on two activities namely skill training and reading. Both activities take place in community learning centres or in local schools if these dispose of available space.
TOGO	In TOGO, there are about three literacy programmes offered: In "Traditional literacy" learners are introduced to basic learning skills such as reading, writing and calculating. Main goal is that the learners are able to read written information by the end of the programme. Teaching language is French. Within the scope of the programme "Functional literacy" learners are – besides the teaching of basic learning skills - introduced to issues of socio-economic importance. Teaching languages are Ewé, Tem, Kabiyè and Benn. The "Post-literacy" programme is a programme for learners, who have already gained some knowledge, but have not had the possibility to improve on this. Most learners in this programme are school drop-outs.
PALESTINE	In PALESTINE the two most important programmes are the literacy and non-formal education programme and the parallel education programme. The evaluation methods used are monthly reports from directors of non-formal education centres, from the head divisions in the education directorate, field visits, exam results.
RWANDA	In RWANDA a system has been put in place to recognise and accredit functional literacy. It entails the programmes that strive towards reconstruction and national integration, promotion of culture, science and technology, crafts and trade and other modern practices.
MEXICO	In MEXICO the major programme for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning is implemented by the Centre of Community education. It tries to offer diverse responses to meet the needs of the population in order to strengthen the development of competencies of the learners. These centres support: knowledge of oneself, own strengths, weaknesses and possibilities; learning and studying living and working not with the aim of only attaining power, wealth, recognition and credentials but more importantly finding the sense of learning. learning to be free, critical and independent. curiosity of the reality, and participation in a community of learning, where ideas, knowledge and beliefs, although different and even contradictory are shared.

2.3.2 Programmes for entry into formal apprenticeship and training

BENIN	In BENIN, the existing programmes on technical and vocational training focus on the assessment of competencies acquired within non-formal and/or informal education/training.
ICELAND	The programme done in co-operation with the Education and Training Service Centre has the objective to ensure recognition of skills for admission to training courses/programmes with recognition of work experience. This should make it easier for individuals on the labour market to strengthen their position there, by gaining a qualification or certificate through additional education, based upon recognition of their previous work experience and/or non-formal education.
FINLAND	FINLAND offers a competence-based qualification system, in which adults students gain the possibility to demonstrate their vocational skills in competence tests regardless of how and where they have acquired the skills. With regards to non-formal education and training there are three levels of competence-based qualifications: initial vocational qualifications, further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications. The initial vocational qualifications completed in the form of competence-based qualifications correspond to those taken in vocational education intended for young people. The further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications are primarily intended for people skilled in different fields to allow them to demonstrate their practical competence and vocational skills. All competence-based qualifications are based on the national core curricula drawn up by the National Board of Education. Assessment is conducted by means of various qualitative methods (such as observations, interviews, questionnaires, demonstrations, portfolios, project works). The three different levels of competence-based qualification open entry into different pathways. Initial qualifications provide general eligibility for higher education at polytechnics as well as at universities. However, the pathway from vocational education and training to university studies is seldom used; almost all university students have completed upper secondary school. Further and specialist vocational qualifications provide eligibility to study the same field at polytechnics as well as to further studies. Since 1994, FINLAND provides a National Certificate of Language Proficiency is a test system planned for adults. The tests can be taken by anyone, regardless of how and where they have acquired their linguistic proficiency. They measure language skills in practical situations in which an adult could be required to speak, listen to or read a foreign language – at home or abroad. Proficiency is divided into six skill levels, from elementary to practically perfect. The test can be taken in English, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Russian, Sami, Spanish and Swedish. Another programme in FINLAND is the Computer Diving Licence. Candidates who pass the test receive a certificate of IT proficiency. These tests are not official in the same sense as the competence-based and the language proficiency test. There are currently three levels of testing, which measure the candidate's skills, ranging from beginner to advanced user.
AUSTRIA	In AUSTRIA apprenticeship authorities appraise the skills of learners by means of

	<p>training ordinances, which include occupational skills, occupational profiles and regulations for the final apprenticeship examination. By the age of eighteen, learners are in the position to apply for an assessment. The applicant has to affirm the way of acquisition regarding the competencies attached to the apprenticeship trade he/she wants to be assessed in. If both the theoretical and the practical exams are passed successfully, the applicant still does not receive a certificate. But he/she is entitled to enter formal apprenticeship training, which duration will be shortened according to the already acquired credits. When concluding the formal training, all non-formally gained competencies will be recognised as well as certified. As the successfully completed final apprenticeship examination on the basis of non-formal learning equals a completed apprenticeship training on the basis of formal training, learners also achieved equal chances with respect to employment opportunities. In the case of a successful assessment of non-formal competencies, learners also gain the possibility to continue learning in formal educational institutions. In order to improve their future employment opportunities they are offered access to upper secondary, post secondary and tertiary education. This continuation of learning can be done besides other employment and/or from home.</p>
FRANCE	<p>In FRANCE, (describe the Bilans de Competences) there are diverse ways of validating non-formally and informally gained competencies. In FRANCE the Bilans des Competences, Law of 1991 helps to take stock of occupational and personal experience. The regional service centre helps the candidates to carry out a ‘self-assessment ‘ (auto-évaluation) and to build up a new occupational or training plan. The candidate is requested to map the needs and expectations. Information and methods and techniques are provided to him. In the second stage the candidates are helped to analyse his or her own motivation and occupational interests, to identify competencies and occupational aptitudes and eventually to assess general knowledge. This information enables the candidate to define his possibilities for mobility. This is then reviewed by a person in charge of guiding the candidate who on the bases of the results gives advice on necessary steps to reach the objectives in question.</p> <p>The aim of the ‘bilans de competence’ has the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To take stock of occupational and personal experience To identify acquired knowledge, competencies, attitudes related to work, and training and social life To make explicit the potential of the individual, to collect and arrange elements to define a personal or occupational ‘project’; To help manage personal resources To organise occupational priorities To assist career choices and career changes <p>The new (2002) French Law on Validation now explicitly validates competencies. This is new. The assessment centres therefore are not only guidance and counselling centres. The competencies can be validated ‘alone’ or it is possible to add them to achieve a qualification. This system is registered oth in the ‘education code’ and in the ‘labour code’. Individuals can obtain a vocational qualification, or pat of an official</p>

	qualification, for example a vocational national diploma or a sector's qualification related to their real experience without taking part in a formal learning or training system.
TRINIDAD/ TOBAGO	In TRINIDAD and TOBAGO, an individual's vocational competence will be validated against the National Occupational Standards set by employers in the industry. The methods for assessment are the following: observation of performance, oral questioning, examination of products produces as well as a review of the portfolio where applicable. Written assignments are another way of testing. The APL processes will validate and accredit an individual's competencies in certain functional areas. APL forms part of the initial assessment where individuals will be granted unit awards for each unit of competence. This method ensures for providing credit for prior learning towards achievement of a full TTNVQ award.
ICELAND	

2.3.3 Programmes conducted under comprehensive national qualification frameworks

NEW ZEALAND	In NEW ZEALAND, assessment for RPL credit on the NQF involves the collection of evidence of what learners know, understand and can do. That evidence is then judged against criteria expressed in unit or achievement standards. The NQF assessment is about achieving standards rather than performance in a set task or over a whole course, so evidence can be collected from a variety of sources. This will depend on the requirements of the standard, the situation of the assessor and the circumstances of the learner. Some evidence will come from formal tests and tasks. Some evidence will come from ongoing work or learning activities, whereas some evidence will come from outside a formal learning or work environment. The process of RPL actually uses all of these sources of evidence. Some learners are assessed on the basis of attested prior performance, using evidence they bring with them from previous jobs for example. Others are assessed on the spot without completing a course of learning. Many are assessed by a combination of the two: evidence the learner brings with them is taken into account but further assessment tasks are needed to cover all the skills and knowledge required. Some learners have to undertake further learning have to undertake further learning and assessment in order to complete a qualification. NQF assessors judge all evidence against unit standards, regardless of where evidence came from.
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2.3.4 Programmes adopting a more open and global approach

SWITZERLAND	<p>The SWISS system of recognition and validation has three different levels. The first level starts with a self-assessment of the learner, in order to find out whether this applicant has previously gained competencies. The second level consists of an external evaluation of the competencies and does not compare with professional education/training programmes. The third level is the actual validation-level, which main part is a practical assessment of the applicant's skills. This assessment is a comparison between the tested assessed competencies and competencies necessary for obtaining a certificate, an attestation or another formal written statement. Competencies which are not laid down in the national curricula are not being recognised, validated and accredited. SWITZERLAND uses diverse methodologies for the assessment mentioned above. Main goal is to develop a portfolio or a comparison of competencies. Very often, the individual applying for assessment and its aims have a large influence on the process itself. Whether a learner aims at continuing education/training or at improving job prospects is linked to his/her own drive and motivation. A successful assessment enables the realisation of improving prospects.</p>
GERMANY	<p>The GERMAN project "Lifelong learning passport with certification of informal learning" is based on a study which aimed to investigate in the so-called education and lifelong learning passports in GERMANY as well as in neighbouring countries and at EU level. It concluded that there is in fact an urgent need for such a reference model, and developed a corresponding implementation plan. The collaborative project was launched in 2003. In the meanwhile, the lifelong learning passport was renamed into profile passport. It should be used as an instrument for self-reflection with accompanying advice and thereby stimulate lifelong learning. The use with the passport goes hand in hand with the development and testing of an advisory concept for people, who gained already some qualifications through continuing education. The passport is compatible with the EUROPASS, which was also designed in order to document acquired qualifications.</p>

2.3.5 Accreditation programmes for disadvantaged groups

EGYPT	<p>In EGYPT three different educational programmes are offered: The "One Classroom School for Girls" aims at extending educational service to female learners in areas deprived of education. Programmes in these schools are flexible in order to adapt to conditions of rural areas as well as with the limited requisites of the learners. The programmes last about three years. The participants receive</p>
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	<p>after successful completion a Primary School Certificate, which gives them the possibility to continue their education in secondary schools. A second programme focuses on schooling in Upper Egypt, in co-operation with local communities, "Community Schools" have been established in areas with deprived access to education. The third programme aims at diminishing the wide gap between the education of women and men. The so-called "Girl's Schools", affiliated to the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, have been set-up in seven regions of the country. EGYPT follows an ambitious plan by aiming at the establishment of 5000 "Girl's Schools" by 2015. Evaluation tools and methods vary between either a written or an oral exam. In vocational training, the assessment is conducted by means of practical performance and/or participation in a vocational project. Evaluation may be on a daily basis, periodically or by the end of a certain project. Successful assessment enables to continue education and training. For example those who pass the Illiteracy Eradication Programme are entitled to join the diverse Post Literacy Programmes in either formal preparatory schools (for young people) or in non-formal evening classes (for adults). Certificates are taken into consideration by authorities in commercial and industrial enterprises in deciding on the level an individual worker has reached. Improvement of job opportunities generally depends on the certificates an individual worker holds.</p>
ECUADOR	<p>In EQUADOR recognition is given to occupational oriented training for youth and adults who lack vocational experience. In the context of this project youth and adults are integrated into productive activities. At the end of the training the learners are given a certificate. There is also a project for older persons are disseminated knowledge on support programmes with them. They are also helped to cope with old age. Another programme deals with occupational training for youth and adults. Courses are held in state centres. The training concentrates on technical education for employability.</p>

2.3.6 *Work-oriented programmes*

ST. LUCIA	<p>Evaluation methods in ST LUCIA include on-the-job observation and monitoring of demonstrated skills. After successful completion of an assessment, certificates or 'elements of competence' will be issued, which might lead to career paths and other education/training possibilities. The Small Enterprise Development Unit (SEDU) has recognised the lack of formal certification among micro- and small entrepreneurs in ST LUCIA. To facilitate their development and promotion of good business practice, five small business programmes have been developed. The programmes are the following: "Small business management for micro and small entrepreneurs", "Marketing management for micro and small entrepreneurs", "Financial management for micro and small entrepreneurs", "Quick books</p>
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	<p>accounting", and "Peachtree accounting". Furthermore, the Ministry of Education recommended establishing a National Accreditation Council.</p> <p>In CYPRUS, a programme of industrial training as an integral part of some study courses in public and private schools of higher education exists.</p>
CYPRUS	<p>In CYPRUS, a programme of industrial training as an integral part of some study courses in public and private schools of higher education exists.</p>
CZECH REPUBLIC	<p>In the CZECH Republic, the framework on recognition of non-formal education/training the legislation provides re-training programmes. These re-training programmes are only offered by institutions, which are accredited by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Re-training programmes constitute one of the active employment policy instruments. The courses are actually offered in response to unemployment rates within the area of certain fields. The unemployed represents a predominant target group in re-training programmes. Most participants are registered with the Public Employment Offices as job seekers. Employed people taking part in the re-training programmes are rather limited. If they do, it is mostly their employers who want them to improve their competencies in order to move them to another job. Re-training is organised with respect to conditions and requirements of practical work. However, the courses cover both, theoretical and practical training whilst following apprentice and study guidelines. With regards to work-experience and informal learning through e.g. participation, recognition of acquired competencies has not yet been introduced. Sometimes employers acknowledge these achievements, but there is no legal foundation for the recognition of prior learning.</p>
THE NETHERLANDS	<p>THE NETHERLANDS all existing practices are published in "Nulmeting EVC 2001" (Kenniscentrum EVC, Utrecht 2002). It will be available in an English version in March 2002. These relate to Vocational education & training; Higher education; Guidance and career-counselling; Central Labour Agreements of social partners; Training-policies of government and social partners; Labour-agencies; Tax law system</p>
KOREA	<p>KOREA has both liberal and occupational and liberal programmes. There are also para-school education programmes such as civic schools, civic high schools, trade schools, trade high school, industry attached school, and school attached evening classes, air and correspondence high schools.</p>

2.4 What kinds of skills are acknowledged?

2.4.1 Recognition of skills in daily life settings

CAMBODIA	CAMBODIA has reported on the recognition, validation and certification of non-formal education; non-formal training and apprenticeships work; experience gained informally in enterprises, in the household or in the community; and informal learning through participation in social, cultural, religious and civil society activities gained in associations and clubs, in social service, or community-based services.
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC	CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC has reported that work experience, gained in enterprises and in the community, as well as informal learning is recognised, validated and accredited, as well as non-formal education and non-formal training.
IRELAND	The recognition of learning in IRELAND takes all types of learning into account. Recognition of competencies, which have not so far been assessed or measured, takes place prior to entering a programme supported by FETAC. Such prior learning may have been acquired through formal, non-formal and informal routes of learning. The existing policy identifies learning under three main categories: "Credit for learning gained in employment: e.g. a builder might be exempt from certain subjects in construction studies, due to this/her experience in this field"; "Learning gained from voluntary / community activities: Carrying out duties in associations, sporting organisations, political organisation and/or charities might entitle individuals to exemptions from the learning outcomes on certain programmes"; and "Learning gained from experience working at home: Individuals having outstanding experience in managing a household and rearing children might merit exemptions from learning outcomes on programmes in health care, child care, catering etc".
EGYPT	In EGYPT, recognition is given to non-formal education, non-formal training/apprenticeships, work-experience (apart from household work) as well as to informal learning within the community, with NGOs, within associations and/or clubs.
SWITZERLAND	In SWITZERLAND, the current system of recognition, validation and certification of non-formal and informal learning/training aims at a global approach, which equals all competencies gained, whether non-formally or informally. A difference is made when the learning situations in which the competencies were achieved, are too different.
AUSTRALIA	The recognition of prior learning (RPL)-programme in AUSTRALIA covers the recognition of skills, knowledge and competencies no matter how and where they

	<p>were attained. Within the scope of skills assessment, the learner is supposed to give reliable evidence regarding his/her achieved competencies. The assessment includes formal and informal education/training, work experience or general life experience, and can result in a full qualification, credit towards a qualification, and/or a statement of attainment for partial completion of a qualification.</p>
TRINIDAD/ TOBAGO	<p>In TRINIDAD and TOBAGO, formal education and training, work experience gained in an enterprise (both, formal and informal), work experience gained at home or within the community as well as informal learning acquired in social organisations, clubs or NGOs are recognised and validated towards APL.</p>
GERMANY	<p>In GERMANY, all forms of learning are being included in the self-reflection and documentation process for the lifelong learning passport. There is, however, no certification in the sense of an official certificate confirming qualifications. There is also no official framework that is established. The programme "Learning culture for skill development" focuses particularly on competencies acquired through voluntary activities, for example in clubs, associations, etc. Identifying a framework for recognition is part of this programme. However, its results will not be available before the end of 2006. As the programme deals with learning in the social environment it includes e.g. work experience in companies, in the household, in the community, in association and in non-profit clubs.</p> <p>However it needs to be mentioned that in the first place, the programme is aimed at integration or reintegration into the work process.</p>
MADAGASCAR	<p>In MADAGASCAR, a range of competencies/skills are recognised, validated and certified. In the field of non-formal education, certain institutional bodies award certificates or attestations in order to create a way of 'social' recognition as there are no official mechanisms for recognition of non-formal education. Many of the non-formally gained competencies correspond to what formal education offers (for example the ability to write and to read), thus these competencies are recognised. In the field of non-formal training and apprenticeships, sometimes the taskmaster of the learner writes a statement proving participation and what actually has been achieved during the training. In the field of work experience, there are certificates for work and/or statements for internships which are issued in order to acknowledge the experience gained. The value of such a statement is often linked to the reputation of the taskmaster.</p>

2.4.2 Skills in the context of non-formal education programmes

PHILIPPINES	<p>In the PHILIPPINES documentation of life experiences, community experiences, education experience, paid and unpaid work-experience are all considered. Some</p>
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	<p>prior skills, knowledge and competencies documented and measured are the following: Skills that are used in daily life like counting, problem solving (simple problems), reading directions and filling in forms. Vocational competencies such as driving and painting are also acknowledged. Learners may bring competencies gained during formal schooling in the past. All these different types of learning experiences and skills gained outside the NFE A&E – system should be acknowledged, documented and taken into account.</p>
CAMBODIA	<p>In the case of recognition, validation and accreditation of competencies in CAMBODIA, basic learning skills (ability to write, to read, to calculate, to understand the content of written texts, and to solve problems) as well as basic vocational skills are considered. Not all acknowledged competencies have to be laid down in the national curricula; if the assessed skills may improve the learners' quality of life, they can be considered. The methodology used for assessments are written assignments, questionnaires or other forms of testing. If a learner completed an assessment successfully, he/she gains access to further educational paths as well achieves the possibility to improve his/her employment opportunities.</p> <p>In the case of recognition, validation and accreditation of competencies in CAMBODIA, basic learning skills (ability to write, to read, to calculate, to understand the content of written texts, and to solve problems) as well as basic vocational skills are considered. Not all acknowledged competencies have to be laid down in the national curricula; if the assessed skills may improve the learners' quality of life, they can be considered. The methodology used for assessments are written assignments, questionnaires or other forms of testing. If a learner completed an assessment successfully, he/she gains access to further educational paths as well achieves the possibility to improve his/her employment opportunities.</p>
CYPRUS	<p>In some countries like CYPRUS while informal learning is only partly recognised it is "highly valued". This is because such competencies are considered as extra curricular activities rather than academic.</p>
BHUTAN	<p>Learners in BHUTAN receive certificates after the completion of non-formal education programmes - the Basic- and Post Literacy Programme. Non-formal training is not yet certified. Also work experience does not result in a certification, but is considered as very important and to be validated. Informal learning mostly takes place within the community and encompasses various social skills, which are recognised but neither validated nor certified.</p>
BANGLADESH	<p>The information on recognition, validation and certification from BANGLADESH is rather limited: Non-formal education, training/apprenticeships and informal learning are only partly recognised, validated and certified, whereas work experience such as community work, work in the household as well as in an enterprise is higher valued. The assessment focuses on basic skills in the following disciplines: reading ability, writing ability, numerical / accounting skills as well as</p>

	so-called social and life skills.
MALDIVES	In the MALDIVES only non-formal education receives recognition, whereas non-formal training, work experience and informal learning are not acknowledged.
OMAN	In OMAN, non-formal education and non-formal training are handled differently: With regards to non-formal education, the Educational Evaluation Department awards certificates, whereas with regards to non-formal training, standards are set in order to improve the trainer's competencies. Work experience and informal learning are not considered.
MALAWI	In MALAWI, the National Adult Literacy Programme acknowledges non-formal education, as does TEVT and MEDI recognise non-formal training or competencies gained within the scope of a non-formal internship. Furthermore, MEDI and TEVT acknowledge work-experience acquired in an enterprise.
PALESTINE	In the PALESTINIAN case, while prior learning experience is neither recognised, nor validated or acknowledged. Certificates are given to persons who have completed a certain non-formal course or programme. In the case of literacy or an adult education programme a learner is given a certificate after completing two years of study. In the 'Parallel education programme' a student qualifies both academically and vocationally to get transferred to ninth grade. After two more years he/ she can qualify for the general secondary education exam. In some cases experience of membership in sports clubs is acknowledged when seeking admission to sports education. Informal experience with non-governmental organisations is "taken into consideration" in employment and study. Voluntary community work is taken into consideration in the graduation title of students graduating from the university. However informal work experience in the household, in the community and in the enterprise is not recognised nor acknowledged.
RWANDA	RWANDA does not have a procedure for documenting learning prior to the admission of a learner into a functional literacy course, but it does an oral test, which permits the ranking within the literacy class prior to the starting of the programme on literacy. This evaluation is undertaken in order to determine the niveau of the level of knowledge that they have for having classes in different groups with different levels. A file is maintained at the local level, which helps the organisation to follow up the literacy work of the learner.
MEXICO	In the context of its community education programmes, CONAFE in MEXICO recognises the following skills. The learner in the community education training programme must be able to: Know one's body, organs, their functions and the care that they require. To recognise that the environment and the geographical location has influence on

	<p>the culture, trade, economy and the increase of cities and towns.</p> <p>To communicate with confidence and efficiency in one's mother tongue that can be Spanish or an indigenous language</p> <p>To read diverse types of texts utilising different strategies for finding information and be able to understand it.</p> <p>Enjoy and express emotions through reading and writing</p> <p>Apply diverse strategies to making mental calculations and predict and collect results of a mathematical problem;</p> <p>To construct a positive image of oneself by recognising one's cultural identity, gender and be able to promote a living together based on respect and the acceptance of difference.</p> <p>Show an attitude of organisation from planning through to the last evaluation of tasks in order to guaranty the quality of one's learning and work.</p> <p>To be able to do research and solve problems, organise, analyse, and hierarchies the information through comparisons, classifications and the searching of causal relationships.</p>
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BENIN	In some countries informal apprenticeship skills as well as work-oriented and vocational skills are emphasised. In BENIN, it is planned to introduce forms of recognition, validation and certification within the field of non-formal apprenticeships.
TOGO	In TOGO, non-formal education as well as non-formal training and apprenticeships are recognised, validated and accredited. However, work experience gained in the household and/or in the community does not receive recognition, validation and accreditation. Informal education is recognised, validated and accredited when gained in associations and clubs and NGOs; but when gained in social service or the community it is only socially recognised.

2.4.3 Recognition of vocational skills

FINLAND	In FINLAND, there is emphasis on vocational skills. With regard to non-formal education and training there are three levels of competence-based qualifications: initial vocational qualifications, further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications.
AUSTRIA	In Austria the General Higher Education Entrance Examination for graduates in AUSTRIA partly recognises acquired work experience. The exceptional admission to the final apprenticeship examination recognises non-formal education/training, work experience as well as informal learning. ...

ICELAND	<p>In ICELAND, mostly vocational skills and work experience is recognised. At present recognition is granted to courses and other training carried out outside the conventional education system, e.g. at training centres of trade unions or individual trades, such as certified trades. There are also cases of highly specialised training, such as pilot training, being recognised, taking into account the studies in the general education system. There are also cases of education and training organised by companies for their employees being recognised in the same way. For apprentices, part of their time working in the trade before the commencement of formal training is often recognised.</p> <p>Individuals with work experience are often exempted from preliminary studies which are required for students who are commencing studies under the curriculum guide. A variety of work experience is thus recognised as part of their basic education. Thus nurses' aides can have part of the experience they have gained recognised toward their formal studies. Schools may evaluate the experience and age of applicants, and thus grant exemptions from the formal requirements as defined in the Curriculum Guide.</p>
ST. LUCIA	<p>In ST LUCIA, SEDU (Small Enterprise Development Unit) gives primarily recognition, validation and accreditation to formal education and official training programmes. But it is considering non-formal education/training, work experience and informal learning as well.</p>
KOREA	<p>In KOREA the following qualifications and skills are recognised and validated: technical qualifications are validated and certified according to the Technology Qualification Law; holders of qualification licences in various kinds of national examinations; graduates of educational courses offered by industrial complexes. All these qualifications are recognised as a school career and the self-study system will exempt you from examination in some parts of the curriculum.</p>
PALESTINE	<p>In PALESTINE, apart from the recognition of literacy and non-formal education courses, enterprises have their own framework for upgrading workers. Semi-skilled workers are those with one or less than one year of vocational training. Skilled workers are those who have two years work experience after tenth grade. Technicians are those who have two years of work experience after the secondary stage and specialists are those with four years of study and four years of work experience. The ranking is done according to formative and summative evaluation in the enterprise.</p>
SURINAM	<p>In SURINAM there are a great number of private institutions offering courses in practical skills in the field of administration, accounting, secretarial work, computer skills, technical skills nursing skills etc. Some of these institutions seek recognition by the ministry of education. If they fulfil the prerequisites of the Ministry then they are able to validate the final examinations. A representative of the Ministry sits at the exams of the institution. Apart from these skills cultural and social organisations offer</p>

	<p>a variety of activities varying from teaching youngsters the Chinese language, Urdu, to play some musical instruments, learn a handicraft, computer skills and basics of Sport. However, non-formal and informal learning is not organised yet in Surinam.</p>
FRANCE	<p>In FRANCE, skills in the following areas of experience are validated.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) occupational experience (DAVA – Dispositifs académiques de validation des acquis of the Ministry of education; (2) Master Diploma recognised by each department of the University; (3) Three years of occupational experience – which is recognised by the AFPA – Association for the vocational training of Adults. (4) Prior learning and competencies are recognised by the Institute for Art. (CNAM – Conservatoire national des arts et métiers . The competencies include competencies in the occupational and technical area. Candidates who only have a high school or secondary school certificate cannot be taken into account. Informal competencies in the household and health area also cannot be recognised. Documentation of competencies takes the form of a diploma; certificate, a title or a document testifying work experience.

2.5 How are these skills assessed?

2.5.1 General Principles

2.5.2 Assessment methods

BANGLADESH	Formative and summative evaluation methods are followed using questionnaire
BENIN	Examination in the end of a course
CAMBODIA	Questionnaires
REPUBLIC CENTRAL AFRICA	Pedagogical tests, questionnaires, direct exchange/communication
ECUADOR	Some are in form of paper and pencil while others are oral. In vocational training, evaluation is made through performance appraisal and/or project. Evaluation may be daily, periodically or by the end of the term or program.
FRANCE	Information Centres and databases to ensure access to information about the VAE (Validation des acquis d'expériences / validation of experiences), the file the candidate has to put together for the VAE, counseling talks with a counselor and a teacher, the workplace itself, sum-up and decision by a jury
GERMANY	<p>- Instruments still need to be developed and refined.</p> <p>- identification procedures – Voluntarism, social requirements, direct employability, comprehensive profile of competencies.</p> <p>- Methodological problems – objectivity, reliability and validity of meta-competencies</p> <p>- developing reference models for identification and evaluation.</p> <p>Assessment tools in the company context: examinations for external pupils (“Schulfremdenprüfung”), or the admission of external pupils to an examination in accordance with the vocational Training Act or the Trades and Crafts Code (Handwerksordnung)</p> <p>- work remarks, conversation between the colleagues; employers’ references, staff interviews,</p> <p>Assessment tools in the non-company context.</p> <p>- criteria for evaluating generic competencies acquired during household, family work as well as voluntary work.</p>
ICELAND	Certificates, formal verification and details of the content and duration of studies and work experience; in some cases a minimum age limit is applied. The applicants are often also interviewed, in order to evaluate their experience,

	strengths and weaknesses more accurately. Evaluation of individuals is carried out by the relevant educational institution (cp. question 1). An overall evaluation of specific informal learning programmes is also in progress, carried out by a working party appointed by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the social partners. The group is also preparing criteria for evaluation of work experience.
IRELAND	There are various methodologies in existence from portfolio building to an assessment based model. In general the process involves an identification of skills, knowledge and competence, assessment and recognition of learning however acquired.
MALAWI	Written test, supervised workshops, practicals
MALDIVES	Questionnaire
MEXICO	In Mexico the Standardisation and Certification Systems of Labour Competency, as part of the Project for Modernisation of technical Education and Training, certify individual's competencies that have been acquired throughout their life, regardless of the manner and place in which they are acquired. This certification is based on Labour Competency Technical Standards (NTCL) developed by Standardisation Committees (Lead Bodies) integrated by entrepreneurial, workers and educational or training institutions representatives. NTCLs also provide a basis for technical education modular programmes.
NEW ZEALAND	An adult has been competent at something for years but has no qualification to recognise that competence. They have been employed by an advertising agency or working with a volunteer rescue organisation so they can prove that they are competent. They can produce samples of their work, letters of validation from peers and supervisors, etc. There may be no need for formal assessment tasks. The samples of work and testimonials become evidence that can be evaluated. The learner can show you evidence of prior performance.
OMAN	Observations, exams, continuous measurement (of what??), presentations, written assignments, etc.
PALESTINE	Monthly reports from directors of centres, field visits, exams
RWANDA	Exams
SWITZERLAND	Schedule of assets and liabilities, portfolio
TRINIDAD/ TOBAGO	An individual prepares a portfolio of evidence to document their prior learning

	<p>where applicable. In addition, the individual prepares a logbook of work activities. Where portfolio or logbook preparation is non-practical or cannot be supplied, the individual is assessed through observation of performance, oral questioning (or written testing) and examination of products that they can produce.</p>
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2.6 The benefits of recognition, validation and accreditation

2.6.1 Entrance into formal systems for further education or training

ICELAND	One of the objectives of the work done in cooperation with the Education and Training Service Centre is to ensure recognition of skills for admission to training courses/programmes with recognition of work experience. This should make it easier for individuals on the labour market to strengthen their position there, by gaining a qualification or certificate through additional education, based upon recognition of their previous work experience and/or non-formal education.
SWISS	SWISS efforts towards validation of non-formal and informal learning focus entirely on the satisfaction of individual learners and aim at achieving three overall goals: facilitating learners the access to formal and continuing education and training, enabling the acquisition of a certificate for gained competencies and knowledge, as well as improving possibilities and prospects of learners concerning vocational prospects. Additionally, SWITZERLAND strives at developing a means for comparing formal, non-formal and informal learning, as the country wants to eliminate discrimination against people who gained their competencies non- or informally. It is motivated to improve employability of especially young people, but also to ensure their social inclusion and to encourage them towards active citizenship, personal development and self-confidence. This approach to social recognition of prior learning is outstanding.
MALDIVES	On the MALDIVES the main objective of courses and programmes offered by the Accreditation Board (MAB) is the learner's achievement of a certificate. All courses are required to obtain approval to commence from the MAB. The purpose of this approval is to ensure adherence of courses to minimum standards of quality prescribes in the MAB's Pre-Qualifying Criteria.
NEW ZEALAND	In NEW ZEALAND new modes of access and delivery have caused the re-examination of ways to measure, recognise and provide credit for learning. Assessment centres, diagnostic and recognition of prior learning (RPL) devices, credit transfer arrangements and credit recognition registers make it easier for learners to build from their knowledge and skills base and enhance the possibility of qualifications. A Tertiary Education Strategy (2002-2007; TES) is being implemented, which outlines how tertiary education can give effect to national goals. One of the objectives of the TES is to ensure that there is a coherent and reliable system of qualifications, learning recognition and credit transfer. Recognition of Prior Learning contributes towards other objectives in the TES. For example, one

	<p>objective is to increase participation by Maori in both a broader range of disciplines and in programmes that lead to higher-level qualifications. The tertiary education system will have a crucial role in empowering Maori learners through foundation skills education that builds on recognition of prior learning. The role of Maori foundation education will continue to be important in bringing Maori learners into tertiary education and higher education levels. Further, RPL is also expected to improve foundation skills on a general.</p>
PALESTINE	<p>The PALESTINIAN recognition system is clearly oriented to certification or title so that the learner is able to qualify for transfer to the next stage and become integrated into the formal education system. The objective is not to certify prior learning but to certify the non-formal course for transfer to a further stage and integration into the formal system. Experience is recognised only if this is a three-year experience, which accompanied by a certificate. In this case the learner is allowed to study further.</p>
RWANDA	<p>The RWANDA response has stated that the objective of recognition in its functional literacy programme is giving the learner direct access to a certification. With this training the learner can take up vocational training in different occupations of his choice. The recognition is accorded to the non-formal education, which the learner undergoes. The validation takes place either through the passing of exams, The functional literacy courses are held either in the centres for literacy or imparted by NGOs and religious groups.</p>
FRANCE	<p>The French qualification framework allows the candidate to get a certificate or diploma. Either the competencies are validated 'alone' or as an 'add on' to other qualifications. Alternatively the candidate is advised to do a further training programme.</p>
MEXICO	<p>The MEXICAN system of recognition and validation recognises non-formal and informal learning (knowledge, practices, values and attitudes) as consumables. In the long run it makes inter- institutional links for achieving certification of some abilities and knowledge which permit the persons to improve their employment and quality of life. They also promote the access to new knowledges, which permit the transfer and inter- linkages between written language, mathematical language and cultural expression (stage art and plastic art etc).</p>
ICELAND	

2.6.2 Improvement of the learners eligibility in the labour market

NORWAY	<p>In NORWAY, a lot of immigrants and refugees have professional skills from their home countries which they are unable to document, or else they have</p>
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	documentation which is not accepted on the NORWEGIAN labour market. This has resulted in the requirement for the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal education and training. Documentation of this kind can give immigrants greater opportunities with regards to their employment prospects. On the basis of this awareness, society should value non-formal and informal competencies as 'mobile human capital' contributing and being beneficial to its overall achievements.
BENIN	One purpose of BENIN's programmes in the field of technical and vocational education is the integration of learners into a course, where they are able to use and to implement their already acquired competencies. The recognition of these already acquired competencies takes place on a professional level. Thus, a successful assessment might lead to access to further employment possibilities, to improvement of future employment possibilities or to promotion within a current job (especially when it comes to agriculture).
MALAWI	In MALAWI, the programmes on Technical and Vocational Training (TEVT) aim at integrating learners into a training course with recognition of some years of their prior learning experience. The National Adult Literacy Programme as well as programmes offered by the MEDI focus on learner's achievement of direct access to a title or certificate. Further, the overall aim of both, TEVT and programmes by MEDI is the recognition of competencies at the vocational level in order to upgrade employment or to change jobs.
AUSTRALIA	With the implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) programme AUSTRALIA aims to maximise the recognition as well as the utilisation of current skills for diverse purposes. Firstly, by increasing access to further education (whether it be formal or non-formal), the programme aims at the promotion of lifelong learning in AUSTRALIA. Furthermore, RPL should achieve the improvement of employment possibilities, aligned to the needs of the country's industry. Secondly, one hopes to reduce unnecessary or duplicated skills training and to maximise the use of limited vocational education and training resources towards the formation and development of skills.
THE NETHERLANDS	The desired effects of EVC in the NETHERLANDS are fourfold: (1) to improve deployability: improved deployment of individual talent is the most important motivation underlying EVC. It increases the opportunities open to the individual on the labour market by highlighting the skills he or she already has and how those skills can be used and strengthened. This can apply both to those already in employments and to job-seekers. For employers, the emphasis lies on improving the employability of employees within the company. (2) To create a demand-led labour market: improving the match between education and the labour market is essential for the organisation of EVC. In order to improve employability, labour market functions must be expressed in terms of skills. These skills must in turn be linked to a demand for learning. The education infrastructure must be transparent,

	flexible and demand-led in order to be able to provide the customised approach required. (3) To make learning more flexible: the recognition of informally acquired skills will boost people's desire to keep on learning, i.e. will promote lifelong learning, since the additional skills could lead directly to the award of certificates or exemption from diplomas. The recognition approach can also make visible or recognisable existing skills and qualifications within or outside the labour process. This promotes the transparency of the many opportunities for learning. The customer, i.e. the student, will not only want to learn independently of the preliminary training circuit but will also know better than now how, what and when to learn, and why he is learning. (4) To optimise other forms of learning: other learning environments and forms of learning must be formulated and/or utilised more effectively, since EVC also shows which learning environment and/or form of learning is best for a particular individual. This could include (combinations of) on the job training, mentoring/tutoring, independent learning, distance learning, and so on. The recognition of skills and qualifications will inevitably lead to an adjustment of the existing qualification structure in professional education. The existing description of exit qualifications in the current qualification structure for professional education does not always tie in with the skills required on the labour market.
PALESTINE	In PALESTINE workers can upgrade their jobs by undergoing non-formal training courses.
FRANCE	The FRENCH qualifications Framework allows the candidate to improve his job career, by either maintaining his current job or being able to change his job by doing a training course. But the certificate does not automatically lead to mobility in job career. It all depends on the enterprise. At the most the assessment centre recommends him to a training course or advises and counsels him the diverse possibility according to the 'bilans de competencies'
ICELAND	

2.6.3 Certification of prior learning for enterprises

ST. LUCIA	In ST LUCIA for example the named objectives of programmes are: the increase of knowledge, skills and abilities of entrepreneurs; the development of an entrepreneurial culture in ST LUCIA; and the encouragement for entrepreneurship. Furthermore the enhancement of entrepreneurial soft and hard skills and of small business management skills; the increase of productivity and competitiveness; the development of linkages and networks among small enterprises; the dissemination of information regarding these issues as well as the standardization of best practices within this sector are considered important outcomes.
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2.6.4 *Transfer of skills between different spheres such as education, work and home*

GERMANY and other EUROPEAN COUNTRIES	In GERMANY as well as in other European countries, a genuine approach towards validation of non-formal learning was taken by the introduction of the Lifelong Learning Passport. The Passport is a means for documentation of the learner's competencies of all kind. It makes them visible for the learners themselves as well as for future employers, and therefore stimulates the public learning process on the way towards an expanding culture of recognition. Since the Passport was introduced in several European countries, this joint concept can facilitate communication between different education systems, employees and employers on a national level as well as across borders. Further, it pushes the learner's ability to use and develop gained competencies with foresight, and become a proactive, mobile European citizen. Main objective in this regard is the promotion of a learning society at both the individual's and the institutional level.
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2.6.5 *Enhancing universal basic education*

BHUTAN	According to the obtained data, the issue of recognition, validation and accreditation of non-formal and informal knowledge cannot be as much pushed as in developed countries, as educational systems of developing countries often face daunting challenges, which need to receive higher attention. Built often on a weak institutional base, education systems of the South are more vulnerable than those in the North. Factors such as poor governance, difficult economic conditions, increased debt burden, combined with the impact of HIV/AIDS and armed conflict continue to be obstacles and shape the educational goals of these countries. The overall objective of programmes offered in BHUTAN is to increase the literacy rate within the country. Further, the three interrelated programmes aim to promote the idea of lifelong learning opportunities for men and women. Courses are held in Zhungkha, the national language, which is supposed to be promoted as well. So far, the completion of any of these programmes is not certified. It also does not lead to any recognition on the vocational level.
TOGO	The overall objective of TOGOLESE efforts within education focuses entirely on the promotion of the country's literacy level – whether it be supporting illiterates or strengthening the knowledge of neo-literates. Implemented programmes aim at enabling as many learners as possible to read the French language, to write in French and to gain basic knowledge in numeracy. On the basis of this cadre, entry into formal education or training, and the possibility to gain certification for acquired skills is given. Following to this, employment opportunities of learner's improve. The underlying goal of this approach in TOGO is to address learner's

	conscience in order to contribute to the country's economic development.
BANGLADESH	The national curriculum of non-formal education in BANGLADESH was developed by the Directorate of Non-formal Education under the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education. Most training institutions of non-formal organisations within BANGLADESH follow this curriculum. Four non-formal education programmes are being performed focussing on the provision of literacy services to working children; consolidation, maintenance and upgrade of neo-literates; as well as the promotion of a female understanding for the relationship between population growth and socio-economic development. If a competence is not specified on the national curriculum, it will not be recognised.
EGYPT	In EGYPT, gender disparities remain across most levels of education and highlight the need for specific education strategies to enrol and retain female learners. Main aim is extend women's access to learning. The focus lies especially on areas, which are generally deprived of education. The approach of programmes is very flexible, which is necessary in order to adapt to condition of rural areas. Within the scope of such a programme, non-formal and informal learning experiences are recognised, but are not awarded if they are not in accordance with the EGYPTIAN national curricula. Frankly speaking, these countries are determined to a vicious circle: on the one hand, they are told by donors to promote basic education as a means out of economic shortage, and on the other hand, they cannot value and use the existent non-formal and informal knowledge of their people, as the entire focus is supposed to circle around formal education.
MEXICO	In Mexico, the recognition and validation that is made of the learning and knowledge of the inhabitants of rural communities through the programmes of community education is incorporated in the education proposals through the Ministry of Education at the pre-school, primary and secondary levels forming an important input of basic education. For example the Ministry of education uses the input from the community education centres to orient its practical education in the context of Pre-school Communities, Community Courses, Secondary Community; Children's community education; Education for Indigenous Communities (Pre school and Primary); Intercultural education for migrant children (pre school and primary); Education for Community Health; Cultural Caravans; Community Museums; Community Radios; Research and Collection of Popular Oral Traditions. An extremely minute work of certifying prior learning is being planned and designed in the project on community education centres. In Mexico, the recognition and validation that is made of the learning and knowledge of the inhabitants of rural communities through the programmes of community education is incorporated in the education proposals through the Ministry of Education at the pre-school, primary and secondary levels forming an important input of basic education. For example the Ministry of education uses the input from the community education centres to orient its practical education in the

	<p>context of Pre-school Communities, Community Courses, Secondary Community; Children's community education; Education for Indigenous Communities (Pre school and Primary); Intercultural education for migrant children (pre school and primary); Education for Community Health; Cultural Caravans; Community Museums; Community Radios; Research and Collection of Popular Oral Traditions. An extremely minute work of certifying prior learning is being planned and designed in the project on community education centres.</p> <p>In Mexico, the recognition and validation that is made of the learning and knowledge of the inhabitants of rural communities through the programmes of community education is incorporated in the education proposals through the Ministry of Education at the pre-school, primary and secondary levels forming an important input of basic education. For example the Ministry of education uses the input from the community education centres to orient its practical education in the context of Pre-school Communities, Community Courses, Secondary Community; Children's community education; Education for Indigenous Communities (Pre school and Primary); Intercultural education for migrant children (pre school and primary); Education for Community Health; Cultural Caravans; Community Museums; Community Radios; Research and Collection of Popular Oral Traditions. An extremely minute work of certifying prior learning is being planned and designed in the project on community education centres.</p>
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2.7 Statistical data gathered in the Member States

AUSTRALIA	In AUSTRALIA data on RPL (recognition of prior learning) are reported to the “Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard” (AVETMISS), which is managed by the “National Centre for Vocational Research”. According to AVETMISS, the amount of RPL has almost doubled during the past six years (from 2.4% in 1995 to around 4% in 2001). However, these records only relate to RPL conducted at enrolment; other RPL that might be conducted during training is not usually recorded and does not appear in statistics.
AUSTRIA	In 2003, about 5300 AUSTRIANS have been given immediate access to the apprenticeship leaving examination. About 2000 learners gained entry into higher education, and about 900 completed successfully the so-called "Berufsreifeprüfung".
GERMANY	The GERMAN profile passport is being tested and evaluated in the current trial phase on the basis of 2000 copies.
EGYPT	In EGYPT, about six million learners reached a literacy certificate during the period 1993-2003. The amount of people who have continued their learning at the preparatory level after getting the literacy certificate is about 103.392; about 15.233 people continued at the secondary level.
FINLAND	In 2002, about 23,000 people in FINLAND completed competence-based qualifications and about 10,000 people completed individual qualification modules.
IRELAND	In IRELAND the recommendations on APEL assessment are incorporated into the mainstream processes and procedures developed between HETAC and the institutions. These procedures and processes result in recommendations from the institutions that allow HETAC to make higher education and training awards. This existing system does not differentiate the APEL learners from mainstream learners. However, it is considered that the level of APEL assessment is very low. It is estimated that about 10 out of 40 higher education institutions operate some APEL.
NEW ZEALAND	Because RPL (recognition of prior learning) is a standard form of assessment in NEW ZEALAND, separate statistics for recognition of credit through RPL are not kept. The competitive nature of the education system, however, has encouraged most education providers to liberalise credit transfer rules, and there has been an expansion in credit transfer and RPL. As awareness of the demand for shorter

	<p>courses has grown, providers have begun delivering more tailored short courses. Changes in credit recognition arrangements should also lead to improved efficiency in matching learner needs with course delivery. Over the entire tertiary education sector, of students completing a qualification in 2001, 15% progressed to a higher level qualification in 2002, 18% continued to study at the same level, 6% studied at a lower level, and 62% left study.</p>
PHILIPPINE	<p>2,500 PHILIPPINE learners have been part of the Learning Support Delivery System. 18,923 are successful registrants for the NFE A&E – system. 14,504 out of these 18,923 took part in the testing. About 1,874 learners have passed the test successfully.</p>
MEXICO	<p>In MEXICO the project on community education of CONAFE will be developed in the school year 2004-2005 in 109 communities and 21 regions of the country.</p>
ECUADOR	<p>In EQUADOR, it has been stated that about 30 per cent of the about 800 learners improve their levels of knowledge through non-formal training programmes.</p>

2.8 Future perspectives

THE NETHERLANDS	In the Netherlands, social partners are involved in a discussion about the formulation of an individual right on EVC on a sectoral level. The Kenniscentrum EVC is involved in this discussion. (a) Education: all schools for secondary vocational education are obliged to produce a business-plan on the validation of non-formal learning in the coming years. The Kenniscentrum EVC facilitates this action. (b) Education: intake assessment (concerning APL) is becoming common practice in higher education. (c) Government: preparation of experiments with personal learning funds, also usable for APL. (d) Government: preparation of tax Law system in which using APL-methods will become tax-deductible. The Kenniscentrum EVC is advising on this subject. (e) Intermediary sector: the Kenniscentrum EVC is working on an ESF-project aiming at building up an infrastructure for non-traditional and their lobby-organisations to help them entering the in a more favourable approach. Labour agencies are also involved. The use of the EVC-systematics is vital in this approach. (f) Government: a new programme for subsidising the up-skilling of the labour force has the validation of non-formal learning as its backbone. The Kenniscentrum EVC is also involved in this programme.
KOREA	In the future, KOREA plans through its recognition system to give coherence to the many scattered non-formal education programmes with a view to turning society into a field of learning. There are already trends towards a increase in public libraries, and existing facilities have been renovated and expanded by automating the –routine services. An information-sharing network has been made possible by introducing up-to-date information processing technology.
PALESTINE	According to the PALESTINIAN response, the future perspectives tend in the direction of greater integration between non-formal and general formal education; more co-operation between institutions and ministries and competent associations as well as communities in regard to recognition, validation and certification of non-formal and informal learning; more international and Arab co-operation; establishing competent organisations and forming committees to oversee programmes; training specialists in this field; creating awareness over this type of education through the information media; setting up legislation which recognises, validates and certifies experience and establishes equivalencies.
MEXICO	In MEXICO, the attempts of the Centres of community education constitute a possibility of strengthening basic education for all inhabitants in every community. This is an opportunity for the recognition of the utility and the quality of the knowledge, learning and practices for solving the needs and challenges of each social and culture context.
ECUADOR	In ECUADOR, the non-formal system will be reorganised. New standards of

	<p>selection and pedagogy according to market demand are to be introduced. It is also intended to improve the Specialisation in the technical field and for improvement (both work and income) in the work life. It is also planned to set up different instructional grades in order to make access to special informal job oriented courses.</p>
ICELAND	<p>It is generally agreed in Iceland that recognition of non-formal and informal education and work experience is a major issue for further development of LLL.</p>
GERMANY	<p>In view of the demographic development, the central aim is to use the potential of older generation and individuals not in gainful employment for the benefit of the economy and society and for the benefit of the individuals themselves.</p> <p>To bring together in a single vocational education CV the qualifications acquired in the work, social and family environment, including all prior and experiential learning.</p> <p>Cooperation partners will implement the educational passport on a broad basis.</p>

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