“Recognition of Non-Formal and Informal Learning Outcomes: Does Germany Already Have It?”

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(The opinions expressed in this power point presentation are those of the author alone)
Ja
Und nicht
Political and Research Agenda around the World

- TVET

- RNFIL0

- QF

- Literacy
Political and Research Agenda around the World

- **TVET**: technical and vocational education and training

- **RNFILO**: recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes

- **QF**: qualifications framework

- **Literacy**

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- TVET: technical and vocational education and training

- RNFILLO: recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes

- QF: qualifications framework

- Literacy

- But ALL THESE TOPICS ARE CONNECTED
Ideas

- Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Learning Outcomes: What are the Options?

- How about Germany?

- What are the other countries doing?
Agenda

- Definitions
- Rationale
- Country Practices
- Food for Thoughts
- Germany
Formal learning

- Formal learning:
  - Structured in terms of content, scheduling, organisation and financing
  - Always intentional
  - With learning objectives

- Examples: school, university, organised training at the workplace
Informal learning

- Not structured
- Never intentional
- Often called “experience”

- Experience is very present in the German dual system, for example:
  - Experience is therefore valued in Germany
  - But as part of the formal initial education and training system
Non-formal Learning

- Varies a lot (the least consensual 😞😞😞):
  - In between formal and informal
  - Useful to allow for national/regional/local or sectoral specificities
- It could be adult learning (Germany, Balkans, most of Africa, Haïti...)
- It could be rather organised (Benin, Ghana...)
- It could be side learning, together with formal learning typically

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Definitions in Short

- **Continuum**: from very formal to informal

- Do not use:
  
  formal = “[usually] leads to a qualification”

- It is not the **competences** that are non-formal or informal, it is the learning context

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Recognition of What?
Recognition for What/Whom?
Main Idea behind RNFIL

- Recognising all learning outcomes,

however acquired, whatever the context (whether formal, non-formal or informal)

- i.e.: make the best possible use of people's competences

(skills, knowledge, attributes... behaviour, values, beliefs...)

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Expected Benefits: Double Currency

- RNFILLO has currency in the labour market (visibility of competences, qualifications mean employability)

- RNFILLO has currency in the lifelong learning [formal] system (for resuming formal studies, like in Germany the Hochschulzugang - HZB)

- This is the difference between recognition of qualifications and recognition of learning outcomes

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Recognition for Whom?

Unqualified competent individuals°
It’s Recognition that Matters

- Recognition therefore has many meanings too 😞

- **Keyword:** what matters is recognition or whatever is award, **societal recognition** 😊😊😊

- **Validation** is the **technical** part of the process: it says nothing about the recognition of the qualifications/credits awarded

- Key issue 1: recognition does not necessarily mean a high level of **formalisation**

- Key issue 2: **standards** (access to LLL or to the labour market)

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Possible Outcomes of RNFIL

- Exemptions of academic prerequisite, or of part of the curriculum (Chile, Germany: Hochschulzugangsberechtigung - HZB for access to University)
- Credits (toward a qualification) (Australia)
- Partial qualification (toward a qualification, or even for the labour market)
- Labour competence(s) certificate (Argentina, Chile, Flemish Belgium...)
- Full qualification/certification (France, Norway, Ireland, Mexico: second chance for upper secondary qualification, i.e. Bachillerato)
RNFILO in the World

- Many terms (English):
  - RPL (Australia, South-Africa, Ireland…), PLAR (Canada), APL or APEL (UK…)
  - RAS (Recognition of Acquired Skills) or RAC (Recognition of Acquired Competences): BFL
  - (Recognition of previous knowledge 😞)
  - Recognition of Learning Outcomes: EU
RNFILO in the World

Other languages:

- Anerkennung von non-formalem und informellem lernen (Austria, Germany)

- EVC (Flanders, Netherlands…)

- Validation of Learning Outcomes from Experience (VAE, France)

- RAC (Reconnaissance des acquis et des compétences, Québec)

- RANFI (Mexico), Acreditación (Spain)

- Japan (no name!!!)

- Italy (varies by Province)

- Nordic European countries (also varies)

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Main Rationale for RNFIL

- Creating **new routes to qualifications**!

or second chance for a **qualification** (not for formal education°)

- For **equity**, for everybody to be “on the picture”; especially in the context of the establishment of qualifications frameworks
Rationale: A Policy Tool in Many Countries

- Time and cost (cheaper: not free and not cheap)
- A more qualified labour force: Untapped human capital (unqualified workers may have skills)
- Crisis (assessment a good start before reskilling); anticipation
- Motivation for individuals (not starting from scratch)
- Consistent with qualifications frameworks (learning outcomes)
- Flexible (continuum)
Country Practice in Short

- Some countries have a legal framework (South of Europe)
  Some do not (North of Europe: consensus and set or regulations)

- Some countries recognise academic knowledge, skills and competences (Portugal)
  Some focus, at last at the beginning, on competences for the labour market (Belgium Flanders)
Country Practice in Short

- Some may award full qualifications on the basis of recognition of non-formal and informal learning (Australia, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, South Africa)
  Many do not!! (culture shift needed)

- Some use existing standards (from the world of education) (Norway)
  Some create specific ones (close to the labour market needs). If employers knew what they needed: tool for employability!! (Flemish Belgium)
  France: against existing standards but specific assessment

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How does it work in practice?

Here again, approaches vary a lot. Possible patterns:

- **Information and guidance** (including employers, colleagues, unions…)
- **Documentation** (portfolio, previous jobs or training periods…) *(Like ProfilPASS in Germany)*
- **Assessment** (portfolio - Simulation, Observation, Written tests, Interview, Panel…)
- **Validation** (panel, assessor(s), rubber stamp…)
- (Full) **Certification/Qualification** (or not)
- (Societal) **Recognition** (or not)
Assessment in Practice

- Eligibility (e.g. Germany: Externenprüfung, 1.5x)

- Panel of assessors (at least 3 assessors: teacher, professional, validation officer)

- Cost issues:
  - Validation of NFILLO: 3 assessors for 1 applicant
  - Formal system: 1 teacher for 20 to 2000 students

- Even if RNFILO is an individual process, assessment will have to be partly collective
Barriers

Some barriers (the main?) are clearly psychological:

• Legitimacy of NFIL (culture shift) Germany???

• Credibility ("undeserved" award), & understanding what it is about ("you will award qualification to everybody")

• Input process unknown (therefore not quality assured)

• Most people do not realise the assessments in the formal learning system are based on random sampling: why should the NFIL system do more?

• Many actors and stakeholders are against RNFIL: universities (fear of competition), employers (upward pressure on wages), trade unions (reduced commitment to learning) - Individuals not aware (take up is small)

• Shift from learning to assessment

• Standards for assessment & ownership of the standards
Food for Thoughts

- A modular supply of formal training may be a necessary condition for RNFILO to fly

- Involve as many stakeholders and actors as possible up front (sense of ownership, motivation… and value/currency/societal recognition)

- Start somewhere (“low hanging fruits”, “Quick win”)

- Create success stories: “Role models” - Ambassador programme
Germany

- Experience is everywhere:
  - Dual system
  - Externenprüfung
  - Hochschulzugangsberechtigung - HZB
  - ProfilPASS
  - the many Portfolios of Competences
  - Berufsqualifikationsfeststellungsgesetz - BQFG

- But…

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- But:
  - Assessment not always there (ProfilPASS)
  - Assessment is never specific to individual experience, it is never carried out for single individuals
  - Yet, specific assessment is a key component of recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes in many countries:

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Assessment
ASSESSMENT: How Much do you Need to See?
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Does NOT help much:
ASSESSMENT: How Much do you Need to See?

Where do you need to watch?
ASSESSMENT: How Much do you Need to See?

Better:
ASSESSMENT: How Much do you Need to See?

Probably enough:
Conclusion: YES, Germany has it!

- Because experience is generally accepted as leading to competences
- There are many system in place that recognise experience
And NO: Germany is still not there yet

- Because experience is not accepted alone:
  - The many system accepting experience as carrying value do it in addition to formal learning
  - Not instead of formal learning

- Assumption: the society may not be fully ready to accept experience as sole origin of competences
Merci

Questions and comments please to:
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Read More about Germany?


• Jankovic Patrizia, Eszter Szucs and Patrick Werquin, 2008. Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Learning in Germany, Country Note prepared for the OECD activity on Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Learning, Review visit on 8-10 January 2008
Read More in General?

- Werquin P., 2013. Validation and Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Learning Outcomes in the South East Europe Region (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia), Document prepared for dvv-International (forthcoming)