Recognition of Prior Learning: Nordic-Baltic Experiences and European Perspectives

The OECD Activity: *Scope and Emerging Issues*

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Conference in Copenhagen, 6-9 March 2007
Agenda for today

- Background
- Why do we want to organise recognition programmes?
- Why it doesn’t necessarily work?
- Concluding remarks
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- **Background**
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Lots of evidence about Recognition* of Non Formal and Informal Learning* (RNFIL), but piecemeal

OECD activity on Adult Learning

OECD activity on the role of national qualifications systems in promoting lifelong learning

...
NQS and LLL.

This link is identified as *mechanisms*

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- RNFIL = mechanism to create more and better lifelong learning
- as well as:
  - credit transfer
  - qualifications framework*
  - stakeholders involvement
  - …

- *Qualifications Systems: Bridges to Lifelong Learning (OECD, 2006)
- Motivation is the key issue (*Beyond Rhetoric*, 2003, and *Promoting Adult Learning*, 2005)

… since learning = waste of time and money

=> Don’t ask adults to start from scratch!!!!!

😀 😞 😞
### Literacy and Educational Attainment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low literacy</th>
<th>High literacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low educational attainment</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High educational attainment</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The OECD Activity

- RNFIL is high on most countries’ agenda

=> “New” OECD activity on RNFIL:
  - 27 countries (22 BRs, 18 reviews)
  - One assumption: not always good (cost)
  - Research
  - Visits – fact finding approach
  - Data collection – if any

- Methods: desk based research, thematic review and/or collaborative policy analysis

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The OECD Activity

But why do we need an OECD activity if it’s already on most countries’ agenda?

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Why?

- Because we need more research!!!!

- Rationale of the activity:
  - Economic benefits
  - Educational benefits
  - Social benefits
  - Psychological benefits

- Purpose of the activity:
  - Technical and institutional arrangements
  - Indicator, data*
  - Good – and bad – practice
  - Develop pilot models

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Framework of the Activity

- Institutional and technical arrangements
  - Governance (legal framework, QA…)
  - Cost (who pays?…)
  - Link to QS and QF (legitimacy, value, double currency…)
  - Assessment practice
  - Equity and social cohesion (Matthew effect, low skilled…)
  - Link to labour market (outcomes, SMEs*…)
  - Personal and social development (+ learning, promotion)

- Stakeholders behaviour

- Contextual factors
  - Demographic changes
  - Internationalisation (portability…)
  - New technologies (e-portfolio…)

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- 3.1. Financial resources invested in recognition of non formal and informal learning
- 3.2. Expenditure per participant in any programme of recognition of non formal and informal learning
- 3.3. Characteristics of participants in the recognition process of non formal and informal learning
- 3.4. Outcomes, for individuals, of participation in the recognition process
- 3.5. Enterprises and employers
- 3.6. Recognition providers
- 3.7. Educational institutions
- 3.8. Mobility and transition
- 3.9. Broad types of non formal programmes that lead to recognition

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Above all, because RNFIL appears to be among the possible solutions to address key issues!!!!

😊😊😊
Participating countries

22 countries on 5 continents
(15 in Europe, 22 CBR, 18 reviewed):

Australia, Austria, Belgium-Flanders, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Malta, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom
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- No more *lifetime jobs* (Japan???)

- **Demography**
  (Ageing, labour force *shortages*, work after retirement age, labour market, education system, tertiary education…)

- **Skills mismatch**
  (make skills *visible* for governments to organise learning *provision*; for individuals to *perform* well in the labour market and/or to *(re)enter* LLL system at the most optimal level)

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- **Inequities**
  (women in labour market, gender issues in the VET initial system, immigrants: unqualified to make their skills visible as well as qualified to organise equivalencies)

- **Immigrants**
  do fill some skills gaps – UK – but there maybe issues in terms of safety, security or health (Nurses)

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- Migration and mobility in general
  (workers, students)

- Second chance
  (identify skills of poorly qualified people to certify them) – safety net

Second chance for NEET people, for instance

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Why?

- **Impact/role** of other devices/programmes (such as qualifications frameworks (EQF typically) set in motion – based on **learning outcomes**, also the essence of RNFIL)

- May not create economic **growth**, but will help **sustain** it!!!
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- Employers may see wider skills supply if more learning is recognised in the workforce
- May need workforce with qualifications (ISO, existing regulations…)
- On the other hand this might lead to a reduction in commitment to formal training programmes
- Ownership of the standards will may remain an issue for a long time; going beyond the standards even more of an issue

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Trade Unions

- Sceptical – at best 😞

- Shift of focus from learning to assessing
Providers of learning

- Worried!!!! OF COURSE
  (US higher education institutions and universities)

- Nevertheless, **providers** may be encouraged to **widen**
  access to programmes if **quality** assured recognition
  systems are in place

- Documenting skills may save some subsystems (Folk
  high schools in Norway???)

- Although there may be increased direct and indirect
  costs involved in recognising non-formal and
  informal learning

- May create additional qualifications (Mexico)

- Ownership of the standards

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Providers of qualifications

- OK!!!! OF COURSE

- But same worries about cost…
Individuals

- System not transparent
- Access not easy
- Information and guidance still lacking
- Doesn’t happen for low qualified people – second Matthew effect

=> Individuals are not fully convinced yet

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Governments

- ???

- We have to interest not only Ministry of Education, but also Ministries of Finance, Labour…
  It must have to do with employment and unemployment*

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Next Steps, Outcomes and Collaboration

- Country and International Organisations Meeting, September 2007, venue to be confirmed

- Country Background Reports available before Summer (22)

- Mexican and Norwegian Country Notes available soon

- A glossary with CEDEFOP, draft available soon

- Collaboration with UNESCO, World Bank, ILO and the EU Cluster on “Recognition of Learning Outcomes” (exchange of ideas, of data, of practice and cross participation of experts)

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Participating countries, NQS

- **CBRs**: Australia, Belgium (French speaking), Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, Slovenia, Switzerland and United Kingdom (15)

- **TGs**: Australia, Belgium (Flanders), Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom (20)

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