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► From Experience to Opportunity: Unlocking Skills through RPL

Lessons from the Training and
Experience Sharing Workshop on
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

From Experience to Opportunity: Unlocking Skills through RPL

Lessons from the Training and Experience
Sharing Workshop on Recognition of Prior
Learning (RPL)

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Foreword

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is increasingly central to building more inclusive and responsive labour markets. Across Africa and beyond, many workers acquire valuable skills through informal and non-formal pathways, yet these competencies often remain unrecognized. Unlocking this potential is both a matter of inclusion and a strategic opportunity to improve productivity, mobility, and access to decent work.

This report presents the outcomes of the Regional Training and Experience-Sharing Workshop on RPL, held in Nairobi, Kenya, under the framework of the **PROSPECTS partnership** and the ILO's **Global Skills Programme**. Both initiatives support countries in strengthening skills systems to improve employment outcomes, particularly for vulnerable populations, including refugees, host communities, and workers in the informal economy. RPL is a key instrument in this regard, providing pathways to recognition, certification, and progression.

The workshop also contributes to advancing the ILO's **Skills and Lifelong Learning Strategy**, which promotes flexible and inclusive approaches to skills development, and aligns with the **African Union Commission's Continental TVET Strategy (2025–2034)**, which identifies RPL as a critical tool for strengthening skills systems and enhancing employability across the continent.

Over four days, participants from eight countries exchanged experiences, identified common challenges, and explored solutions across key areas, including RPL governance, financing, quality assurance, outreach, and labour market outcomes. A key outcome of the workshop is the development of country action plans, which will now be validated at national level and translated into concrete implementation steps.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to all those who contributed to the success of this workshop. This includes ILO colleagues who supported the event through facilitation, moderation, logistics, and technical assistance to national partners. We are particularly grateful to Kenya for hosting the workshop and for sharing its experience, including through the study visit to an operational RPL centre.

We also thank all participants for their active engagement and commitment to advancing RPL in their respective countries. The exchanges throughout the workshop underscore the value of cross-country learning and collaboration in addressing shared challenges.

We hope this report will serve as a practical resource for policymakers and practitioners working to strengthen RPL systems and promote inclusive labour market development.

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1. Introduction

Background and rationale of the workshop

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) has gained increasing prominence as a policy tool to support inclusive labour market development, particularly in contexts characterized by high levels of informality, skills mismatches, and displacement. Across many countries, large segments of the workforce acquire skills through non-formal and informal pathways, yet these competencies often remain unrecognized, limiting access to decent work, further training, and career progression. RPL addresses this gap by providing structured processes to identify, assess, and certify skills regardless of how they were acquired, thereby making competencies visible and transferable in the labour market. ILO's Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195), the ILO Quality Apprenticeships Recommendation, 2023 (No. 208), and UNESCO's Recommendation on the Recognition, Validation and Accreditation of Non-formal and Informal Learning, 2012, provide the international normative framework (see Box 1).

In this context, RPL plays a critical role in promoting labour market inclusion. It enables workers in the informal economy, as well as migrants and forcibly displaced persons, to have their skills formally recognized, facilitating their transition into formal employment and access to further learning opportunities. It also contributes to reducing inequalities in access to education and training and supports lifelong learning pathways, in line with ILO normative frameworks on human resources development and skills recognition.

The workshop was organized within the framework of two major ILO programmes: the **PROSPECTS partnership** and the **Global Skills Programme**. Both initiatives support countries in strengthening skills systems to improve employment outcomes, with a particular focus on vulnerable populations, including refugees and host communities. In this regard, RPL has emerged as a key instrument to enhance employability, support economic inclusion, and respond to labour market needs across diverse national contexts.

Purpose of the workshop

The regional training and experience-sharing workshop aimed to strengthen the capacity of participating countries to design, implement, and scale up RPL systems. It provided a platform for countries at different stages of RPL development to exchange experiences, identify common challenges, and explore practical solutions across key thematic areas, including governance, financing, quality assurance, outreach, and labour market impact.

Through a combination of expert inputs, country presentations, peer learning, and facilitated discussions, the workshop sought to:

- Deepen understanding of RPL as a policy and implementation tool;
- Share emerging practices and innovations across countries;
- Identify priorities for strengthening and institutionalizing RPL systems; and
- Support countries in developing actionable next steps toward sustainable and inclusive RPL systems.

Box 1: Recognition of Prior Learning in ILO labour standards

The ILO Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195) and the ILO Quality Apprenticeships Recommendation, 2023 (No. 208) establish recognition of prior learning (RPL) as a central pillar of lifelong learning, skills portability and inclusive labour-market transitions. Recommendation No. 195 calls on Members to design human resources development and lifelong learning policies that validate prior learning and skills gained, notably to support transitions from the informal to the formal economy (para. 3(d)), to develop national qualifications frameworks that facilitate the recognition of prior learning and previously acquired skills, competencies and experience (para. 5(e)), and to put in place transparent mechanisms for the assessment, certification and recognition of skills, including prior learning and previous experience, whether acquired formally or informally and irrespective of country of acquisition (para. 11(1)). Building on this system-wide foundation, Recommendation No. 208 explicitly defines recognition of prior learning as a structured process of identifying, documenting, assessing and certifying competencies acquired through formal, non-formal or informal learning (para. 1(d)) and operationalizes RPL within apprenticeship systems by allowing prior learning to be taken into account for admission to apprenticeships (para. 10(c)), by permitting the reduction of apprenticeship duration on the basis of prior learning (para. 10(h)), by anchoring recognition and certification within qualification frameworks for apprenticeships (para. 6), and by requiring the adoption of processes to recognize relevant prior learning acquired in the informal economy, including through bridging measures (para. 27(d)).

Together, the two Recommendations provide a coherent normative and policy framework that positions RPL as an important component of national skills and qualifications systems and as a practical instrument for access, progression and certification in apprenticeships.

Participants

The workshop brought together representatives from **eight countries**—Egypt, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Malawi, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda—each at different stages of developing and implementing RPL systems.

Participants included a broad range of stakeholders reflecting the tripartite nature of the ILO, including:

- government officials from ministries and national agencies responsible for skills development, TVET, and qualifications frameworks;
- representatives of employers' and workers' organizations;
- practitioners involved in RPL implementation, assessment, and quality assurance; and
- ILO specialists and facilitators supporting the workshop.

This diverse participation enabled rich exchanges across countries and stakeholder groups, fostering a shared understanding of RPL challenges and opportunities and reinforcing the importance of coordinated, multi-stakeholder approaches to building effective RPL systems.



Figure 1 Participants of the RPL workshop representing eight countries.

2. Key Policy Questions Framing the Workshop

The workshop was structured around a set of core policy and implementation questions reflecting the main challenges and priorities in developing and scaling up Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) systems. These questions emerged both from the workshop concept and from country experiences shared during discussions. They guided the exchange across thematic areas and informed reflections on how to strengthen RPL systems in diverse national contexts.

How can RPL systems promote inclusion and labour market integration?

A central question across sessions was how RPL can effectively support labour market inclusion, particularly for workers in the informal economy, migrants, refugees, and other vulnerable groups. Discussions emphasized that RPL is not only a certification mechanism but also a pathway to:

- access employment opportunities;
- empower people through recognition of their skills and competencies encouraging lifelong learning and career development;
- facilitate transitions from informal to formal work; and
- enable entry and progression into further education and training.

What governance and institutional arrangements are required to establish effective RPL systems?

Countries explored how to design and institutionalize RPL systems within existing skills and education frameworks. Key questions included:

- How to anchor RPL in legal and policy frameworks?
- What institutional roles and coordination mechanisms are required?
- How to ensure alignment with national qualifications frameworks and TVET systems?

How can RPL systems ensure quality, credibility, and trust?

Ensuring the credibility of RPL certificates—particularly among employers—was identified as a critical challenge. Discussions focused on:

- how to design valid, reliable, and fair assessment methodologies;
- how to strengthen the capacity of assessors and institutions; and
- how to embed RPL within existing quality assurance systems, including by using digital solutions.

How can RPL systems be financed sustainably?

Financing emerged as one of the most critical and complex issues discussed during the workshop. Key questions included:

- What are the full costs of RPL, beyond assessment (e.g. outreach, counselling, system development, digital solutions)?
- Who should bear these costs—governments, employers, individuals, or development partners?
- What financing models can ensure long-term sustainability?

How can outreach, awareness, and uptake of RPL be strengthened?

Low awareness and limited uptake remain major barriers to RPL implementation. Participants discussed:

- how to design effective communication and sensitization strategies, including through social media and digital platforms;
- how to reach workers in the informal economy and remote areas; and
- how to tailor messaging to different target groups.

How can RPL systems be better linked to labour market demand?

A key concern raised during discussions was whether RPL systems are sufficiently **demand-driven**. This includes:

- aligning RPL with sectoral labour market needs;
- involving employers in standard setting, assessment, and certification; and
- ensuring that RPL leads to tangible employment outcomes.
- Ensuring RPL is aligned with national priorities, plans and programmes such as major public investments programmes etc

How can monitoring, evaluation, and evidence on impact be strengthened?

Participants also reflected on how to measure the effectiveness of RPL systems. Key questions included:

- How to track employment and income outcomes of RPL candidates?
- How to assess the impact on productivity, formalization, and inclusion?
- What data systems, platforms and indicators are needed?

What makes RPL systems sustainable in the long term?

Finally, the workshop addressed broader questions of sustainability, drawing on country reflections:

- How to ensure long-term financing and institutional capacity, including for digitization?
- How to maintain stakeholder engagement and trust?
- How to adapt RPL systems to evolving labour market needs?

3. Country Snapshots: Status of RPL Systems

Egypt

Egypt's skills development context is marked by a large workforce with significant competencies acquired outside formal education and training systems, alongside increasing labour market demand driven by economic growth and sectoral transformation. In this context, RPL is seen as a promising tool to improve labour market access and support inclusion, particularly for migrants, refugees, and low-skilled workers. However, recognition of skills remains largely fragmented, and many workers continue to face barriers in translating experience into formal qualifications and employment opportunities.

At the policy and institutional level, Egypt currently lacks a comprehensive and coherent RPL system. Responsibilities for skills recognition are dispersed across several institutions, resulting in limited coordination and weak system coherence. While there are elements of certification and skills recognition, these are not yet embedded in a unified national framework aligned with qualifications systems. Stakeholders under the Ministry of Labour, the Federation of Egyptian Industries, GIZ, and the trade unions highlighted the need for a clear institutional lead, stronger legal anchoring, and improved coordination mechanisms to move toward a functioning national RPL system.

RPL implementation in Egypt remains at an early stage, with no large-scale system in place. There are efforts under the Ministry of Labour to provide sectoral skills assessments which lack the technical value and industrial relevance; and is not yet linked to continuing education pathways. The skills assessment certificate costs an average of 40 EGP which may increase based on the sector. Key challenges include low awareness among stakeholders, limited engagement of the private sector, unclear financing arrangements, and weak linkages to labour market needs. At the same time, the country benefits from strong political interest, existing institutional infrastructure, and active social dialogue platforms. Priority actions identified include developing a national RPL framework, strengthening coordination, building awareness, and establishing a sustainable financing model to support future implementation.

Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, RPL is closely linked to national development priorities and is used as a strategic tool to support economic transformation. The country's focus on sectors such as agriculture, construction, and manufacturing has created strong demand for certified skills, particularly in large-scale infrastructure and industrial projects. RPL is therefore used not only as a recognition mechanism but also as a way to improve productivity, support labour mobility, and address inequities between formally and informally trained workers.

The system [is anchored within the broader TVET framework](#) and aligned with national policies, including the TVET strategy and qualification framework. The Ministry of Labour and Skills plays a central coordinating role, working with regional institutions, industry bodies, and development partners. RPL is embedded in sectoral strategies and linked to occupational standards, with strong emphasis on competency-based assessment and industry involvement in defining and validating skills. Ethiopia has also developed a national RPL guideline to streamline the RPL processes and ensure quality.

Ethiopia has progressed beyond pilot stages and is actively implementing RPL across priority sectors, including agriculture and construction. The country has certified 360.000 people through RPL in 2024-

25 and set ambitious targets of 800000 workers for 2025/26. The system has demonstrated tangible benefits, including improved access to employment and recognition for previously uncertified workers. At the same time, challenges remain in terms of awareness, financing, and the need for more detailed and operational strategies. Inclusion is a key strength of the system, with RPL targeting refugees, returnees, and other vulnerable groups, although scaling these efforts sustainably remains a priority.

Jordan

Jordan's approach to RPL is driven by the objective of building a more inclusive and skills-based labour market, particularly in a context shaped by economic diversification and the presence of large refugee populations. RPL is seen as a mechanism to enhance employability, support access to training and certification, and create pathways for individuals whose skills have been acquired outside formal systems.

The country has developed a relatively strong institutional model, with the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission (AQAC) serving as a central authority for RPL and broader skills certification.¹ The system is aligned with the national qualifications framework and supported by sector skills councils, ensuring that standards reflect labour market needs. Jordan has also invested in developing structured processes for assessment, certification, and quality assurance, contributing to a more coherent system compared to many peers.

Despite these strengths, RPL implementation is still evolving. Key challenges include limited assessment capacity, insufficient numbers of trained assessors, and low awareness among employers and communities. Financing constraints and the need to expand access across sectors also remain critical issues. Nonetheless, Jordan has made important progress in institutionalizing RPL and is focusing on strengthening quality assurance, building capacity, and expanding the system to reach more beneficiaries.

Kenya

Kenya has one of the most advanced RPL systems among participating countries, reflecting the strong need to recognize skills in a labour market dominated by informality. A large share of the workforce possesses practical skills without formal qualifications, making RPL highly relevant for improving employability, facilitating transitions to formal work, and supporting economic inclusion.

The country has established a comprehensive policy and institutional framework anchored in the Kenya National Qualifications Framework. The Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) provides overall oversight, working alongside TVET institutions, regulatory bodies, and industry stakeholders. A key feature of the Kenyan model is its emphasis on stakeholder engagement, particularly the involvement of employers in standard setting, assessment, and certification, ensuring that the system remains closely aligned with labour market demand.

Implementation has progressed from pilot phases to scaling, with RPL being applied across multiple sectors. Evidence from tracer studies shows positive impacts on employment, income, and worker confidence, as well as increased access to further training opportunities. However, challenges remain, particularly related to affordability, awareness, and accessibility in remote and marginalized areas and for returned migrants. Strengthening financing mechanisms, expanding outreach and integration

¹ Prior to the establishment of AQAC, the Technical Vocational Skills Development Commission (TVSDC) piloted RPL in construction and agriculture with around 12000 beneficiaries, mostly Syrian refugees, who benefited from improved access to occupational licenses and work permits through RPL. This crisis related experience served as learning ground for the new model conceived.

with employment services, and improving monitoring and evaluation systems are key priorities for the next phase.

Malawi

Malawi's labour market is characterized by high levels of informality and a large youth population with limited access to formal skills recognition. In this context, RPL is seen as an important tool to enhance employability, particularly for rural youth, women, and informal workers. However, the system is still at an early stage of development, with limited institutionalization and coverage.

Institutionally, RPL is currently embedded within broader TVET structures, with the Ministry of Labour and the Directorate of Assessment and Certification Services playing key roles. However, the absence of a dedicated RPL policy framework remains a major gap, limiting clarity on roles, standards, and implementation processes. Efforts are underway to develop such a framework, supported by strong political commitment and stakeholder engagement.

RPL implementation is still largely at the pilot stage, with initial assessments and system development activities ongoing. Key challenges include lack of sustainable financing, limited awareness, and insufficient institutional capacity. At the same time, Malawi has identified clear priorities, including developing a financing framework, strengthening quality assurance, improving outreach, and establishing a comprehensive policy framework to guide future scaling.

Tanzania

Tanzania has integrated RPL into its broader skills development agenda, recognizing its importance for addressing skills mismatches and improving employability. The system is closely linked to the National Skills Development Programme, which provides a structured platform for implementing RPL alongside other skills development interventions.

Institutionally, RPL is coordinated through the Prime Minister's Office and supported by the Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA), which provides nationwide infrastructure for delivery. While Tanzania has yet to develop a national policy framework, RPL implementation guidelines exist. The system benefits from established training centres and strong linkages to national programmes, enabling relatively wide geographic coverage and integration with existing skills systems.

Tanzania has moved beyond pilot stages and is implementing RPL through national programmes and budgets, fed by a training levy, with growing emphasis on digitalization and labour market linkages. Key achievements include strong outreach mechanisms and integration with major government projects, which help create employment opportunities for certified workers. However, challenges remain in mobilizing further financing, strengthening digital systems, and maintaining stakeholder engagement, particularly as the system scales.

Uganda

Uganda has a long-standing tradition of skills assessment through mechanisms such as the "workers pass," reflecting an early recognition of informally acquired skills. RPL is therefore not entirely new but builds on existing practices aimed at certifying competencies and supporting workforce development.

The system is anchored in the TVET framework, with the Uganda Vocational and Technical Assessment Board (UVTAB) serving as the central authority for assessment and certification. While RPL is embedded within existing structures, some frameworks and tools remain under development, particularly in relation to coordination and standardization.

Implementation is ongoing and evolving, with significant achievements in certifying large numbers of workers and linking certification to employment opportunities, including migration pathways. However, challenges persist, including coordination gaps, limited financing, and the need to strengthen institutional capacity. Priorities include improving implementation frameworks, enhancing stakeholder engagement, and ensuring sustainable system development.

Sudan

Sudan is at a very early stage of considering RPL as part of its skills development system. Discussions during the workshop highlighted the potential role of RPL in addressing skills recognition challenges, particularly in contexts of displacement, high number of returnees, informality, and limited access to formal training.

Institutional and policy frameworks for RPL are not yet developed, and the system remains largely conceptual. Before the crisis, some form of RPL was primarily implemented within the TVET systems to formally recognize skills acquired through informal work experience, apprenticeships and non-formal learning. It basically takes the form of competency-based trade testing, portfolio-based assessments and aligned with the nascent National TVET Qualification Framework allowing individuals to obtain nationally recognized certificates or credits towards further training. However, after the crisis, these systems were largely affected hence stakeholders have begun reflecting on how RPL could be integrated into national systems and what objectives it should serve, including supporting employment, facilitating inclusion, and improving labour market functioning.

Key challenges include the absence of a clear policy framework, limited institutional capacity, and the need to define the purpose and scope of RPL within the national context. At the same time, Sudan's participation in the workshop has helped identify priority areas for future action, including defining target groups, building awareness, and developing initial system components.



Figure 2 Participants engaging in an interactive activity at the workshop

4. Thematic Insights and Cross-Country Analysis

4.1. RPL for Inclusion and Labour Market Integration

Across all countries, RPL is fundamentally framed as an inclusion tool, particularly in labour markets characterized by high levels of informality and limited access to formal qualifications. The workshop confirmed that RPL plays a critical role in making existing skills visible, thereby enabling workers to access employment opportunities, transition into formal jobs, and pursue further education. This is especially relevant for populations such as informal workers, migrants, refugees, and youth, who often possess valuable competencies but lack formal certification.

Evidence from country experiences demonstrates that RPL can contribute positively to labour market outcomes. In Kenya, for example, [tracer study findings](#) indicate that a majority of RPL beneficiaries experienced improved job roles, career advancement, and increased confidence in employment prospects. In countries, where tracer studies are yet to be conducted, participants indicated anecdotal reports showing positive labour market outcome of some RPL graduates in Tanzania, Ethiopia, Uganda and Malawi. Similarly, discussions highlighted that RPL enhances self-esteem and agency among workers, which can be an important factor in labour market participation. However, participants also emphasized that RPL does not automatically translate into decent employment. While some beneficiaries access jobs or promotions, others remain in informal or precarious employment, pointing to the need for stronger linkages between RPL and labour market systems and post RPL support services.

A key insight from the discussions is that RPL must be embedded within broader employment and skills policies to fully realize its inclusion potential. Countries such as Ethiopia have aligned RPL with sectoral development strategies, ensuring that certification responds to labour market demand in priority sectors. At the same time, inclusion requires deliberate design choices, including targeted outreach, adapted assessment approaches, and support services for vulnerable groups. Without these, RPL risks reinforcing existing inequalities rather than addressing them.

4.2. Governance, Policy and Institutional Arrangements

The workshop highlighted that the institutionalization of RPL depends fundamentally on the existence of clear governance structures, defined roles, and strong coordination mechanisms across stakeholders. While all participating countries recognize the importance of embedding RPL within national skills systems, they are at different stages of developing coherent governance models. A key lesson is that fragmentation of responsibilities—particularly across ministries responsible for labour, education, and qualifications—remains a major barrier to effective implementation.

Several countries presented more advanced or structured governance arrangements. In **Jordan**, the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission (AQAC) serves as the central authority responsible for RPL, covering accreditation, assessment, and quality assurance across education and training systems. This centralized model is aligned with the Jordan National Qualifications Framework and supported by sector skills councils, allowing for clearer accountability and system coherence. Similarly, in **Kenya**, the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) provides overall coordination and oversight, while implementation is carried out by accredited RPL centres and TVET institutions

under the regulatory supervision of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA). The National Industrial Training Authority (NITA) is also mandated to conduct RPL assessment and certifications. Industry stakeholders are formally integrated into the system, particularly in assessment and validation processes, ensuring alignment with labour market demand.

In **Ethiopia**, governance is organized through a multi-level system led by the Ministry of Labour and Skills (MoLS), which oversees RPL implementation nationally. Delivery is decentralized through regional structures such as Centres of Competence (CoCs) and regional TVET bureaus, which are responsible for assessment, certification, and coordination with industry. This model reflects an effort to combine national policy direction with decentralized implementation, although it also introduces complexity in coordination across levels. In contrast, participants from countries such as **Egypt** and **Malawi** highlighted governance challenges, including fragmented institutional responsibilities and the absence of a dedicated RPL policy framework. In Malawi, for instance, RPL functions are currently housed within the Directorate of Assessment and Certification Services under the Ministry of Labour Skills and Innovation (MOLSI), but without a comprehensive national framework, roles and processes remain insufficiently defined.

Across all cases, the need for a clearly mandated **lead agency** emerged as a critical factor for system effectiveness. Whether centralized (as in Jordan) or coordinated through a lead institution within a broader system (as in Kenya and Ethiopia), successful models ensure that one body has overall responsibility for policy development, coordination, and quality assurance. At the same time, effective governance requires strong engagement of social partners and industry. Participants from countries emphasized that employers' organizations, sector skills councils, and training providers must be involved not only in implementation but also in the design of standards and processes. Without such engagement, RPL systems risk becoming supply-driven and disconnected from labour market realities.

Finally, institutionalization is not only about formal structures but also about system coherence and integration. Discussions highlighted the importance of aligning RPL with national qualifications frameworks, TVET systems, and labour market policies. In several countries, this alignment is still evolving, with ongoing efforts to integrate RPL into existing policy frameworks and administrative systems. Strengthening governance arrangements therefore requires both formal institutional design and continuous coordination across stakeholders, supported by clear mandates, shared objectives, and sustained political commitment.

4.3. Outreach, Awareness and Uptake

Low awareness and limited uptake of RPL emerged as a consistent challenge across all participating countries, regardless of the level of system development. While policy frameworks and institutional arrangements may be in place, many potential beneficiaries—particularly in the informal economy and refugees in camps and settlements—remain unaware of RPL opportunities or lack a clear understanding of how the system works. This gap is especially pronounced among rural populations, refugees, and workers in micro and small enterprises. Of equally critical importance is awareness among key labour market actors in particular employers to ensure trust and acceptance of the RPL certification.

Country experiences illustrate a range of outreach strategies. In Kenya, awareness efforts have been anchored in strong stakeholder engagement during the development and rollout of the RPL policy framework. Key stakeholders such as the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA), the State Department for TVET, and social partners—including the Central Organization of Trade Unions (COTU)

, Federation of Kenya Employers and Sectoral Industry Associations and informal sector associations such as the *Jua Kali* federation—have played an important role in disseminating information. Outreach has relied heavily on structured communication through local leadership networks, including community leaders, trade associations, and religious institutions, as well as simplified messaging in local languages and the use of social media platforms.

In Tanzania, outreach is closely linked to the National Skills Development Programme, coordinated by the Prime Minister’s Office. Information is disseminated through multiple channels, including Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA) centres, local government authorities, and youth development officers. In addition, Tanzania has leveraged digital tools and social media to reach young people, complemented by national events broadcast on TV, public campaigns, and workplace-based outreach targeting employers and workers directly.

Despite these efforts, challenges remain across countries. Participants from Malawi, Egypt, and Uganda highlighted that awareness is still limited and often concentrated in pilot areas. Barriers such as language diversity, geographic distance from assessment centres, and complex application processes further reduce uptake. In remote and refugee-hosting areas such as northern Kenya, additional challenges include lack of sufficient and accessible assessment centres, lack of information in relevant languages and misconceptions about eligibility, cost or documentation requirements. As a result, strengthening outreach requires not only broader communication campaigns but also targeted, context-specific approaches, including mobile services, partnerships with community-based organizations, and simplified procedures to improve accessibility.

Furthermore, representative of the COTU-Kenya highlighted value of RPL for formal workers’ promotion, upgrading and job changes, and elderly workers without certification as overlooked dimensions of the RPL conceptualisation.

4.4. Assessment, Certification, and Quality Assurance

Ensuring the credibility and acceptance of RPL certification is central to the effectiveness of RPL systems. Across all sessions, participants emphasized that employer trust depends on the perceived quality, consistency, and relevance of assessment processes. At the same time, RPL systems must remain flexible enough to accommodate diverse candidates with different learning pathways, creating a constant tension between standardization and adaptability.

Countries have adopted different models to address this challenge. In Kenya, quality assurance is anchored in the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) and implemented in collaboration with the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA) and the National Industrial Training Authority (NITA). Assessment processes typically involve multiple actors, including trained assessors, TVET trainers, and industry representatives (often referred to as “verifiers”), who ensure that assessments reflect real workplace standards. This multi-actor approach is designed to strengthen credibility and reduce the risk of inconsistent assessment practices.

In Jordan, quality assurance is centralized under the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission (AQAC), which oversees all aspects of accreditation, assessment, and certification. The system follows clearly defined procedures, including self-assessment by candidates, submission of evidence, formal assessment by trained assessors, and mechanisms for appeals and validation. This structured approach aims to ensure transparency and accountability at each stage of the process, thereby strengthening trust in RPL outcomes.

However, several challenges were identified across countries. Limited capacity of assessors, inconsistencies in applying standards, and insufficient industry involvement can undermine confidence in RPL certification. Employers raised concerns about whether assessors have sufficient practical experience and whether assessment tools adequately reflect evolving technologies and workplace practices. In response, countries such as Ethiopia have invested in training assessors and involving industry experts in developing standards and conducting assessments. Overall, strengthening quality assurance requires continuous investment in capacity building, regular updating of standards, and robust monitoring mechanisms to ensure consistency and credibility.

4.5. Financing and Sustainability of RPL Systems

Financing remains one of the most critical constraints to the development, scaling, and sustainability of RPL systems. While there is broad consensus on the value of RPL, countries continue to face challenges in translating this into sustainable financing arrangements. A key insight from both the workshop discussions and the ILO guidelines is that RPL entails a wide range of costs beyond assessment, including awareness raising, guidance and counselling, system development, quality assurance, and institutional coordination. These costs are often underestimated, particularly during pilot phases, leading to difficulties when attempting to scale up systems.

Countries are experimenting with a variety of financing models, but no single approach has proven sufficient. In **Tanzania**, RPL is financed primarily through the Skills Development Levy (SDL), which provides a relatively stable funding source but remains constrained in scale. In **Malawi**, financing combines government allocations, a TVET levy, examination fees, industry contributions, and donor support, yet still falls short of covering total system costs. In **Ethiopia**, funding is shared between government budgets, employer contributions (particularly for workplace-based assessments), and development partners such as ILO, GIZ, and the World Bank. Across these cases, a common pattern emerges: RPL systems rely on **mixed financing models**, with varying degrees of dependence on public funding and external support.

A particularly instructive example discussed throughout the workshop is the approach taken in **Kenya**, where a tripartite, multi-stakeholder process—bringing together government, employers, and workers' representatives—undertook a detailed costing exercise to better understand the real cost of RPL. This led to the development of a **differentiated unit cost model**, which recognizes that the cost of assessment varies significantly across occupations and sectors. For example, assessing candidates in trades such as welding or construction requires materials, equipment, and workplace-based evaluation, making it more costly than assessments in less resource-intensive occupations. The Kenyan model therefore avoids a “one-size-fits-all” approach and instead allocates costs based on the specific requirements of each trade. This approach has been widely recognized as a good practice, as it improves transparency, supports more accurate budgeting, and provides a basis for cost-sharing among stakeholders.

The workshop discussions also highlighted the importance of **cost-sharing mechanisms** for sustainability. There was broad agreement that RPL should not be fully free, as this can lead to system overload, reduced ownership, and unsustainable dependence on public or donor funding. At the same time, requiring full cost recovery from individuals risks excluding vulnerable groups, particularly informal workers and refugees. As a result, countries considered the development of “**differentiated unit cost models based on cost-sharing**” most relevant, where governments, employers, and individuals each contribute, with differentiated contributions depending on policy objectives and

target groups. In some cases, employers sponsor assessments for their workforce, while governments or development partners subsidize access for disadvantaged populations.

Despite these emerging practices, significant challenges remain. Financing mechanisms are often not fully institutionalized, and reliance on donor funding continues to pose risks for long-term sustainability. Moreover, the full cost of RPL systems—including “hidden” costs such as opportunity costs for candidates—is rarely captured in national planning. The key lesson from the workshop is that financing must be treated as a **core design element of RPL systems from the outset**, rather than an afterthought. Sustainable RPL systems require diversified funding sources, transparent costing models, and deliberate policy choices to balance efficiency, equity, and accessibility.

4.6. Monitoring, Evaluation and Labour Market Outcomes

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems for RPL remain unevenly developed across countries, yet they are critical for demonstrating impact, informing policy decisions, and strengthening system credibility. While most countries track basic outputs—such as the number of candidates assessed or certified—far fewer have established systematic mechanisms to measure outcomes, including employment, income, or progression into further education. This limits the ability to assess whether RPL is achieving its core objective of improving labour market integration.

Among the countries represented, **Kenya provides one of the most advanced examples of outcome monitoring**, having conducted a tracer study covering RPL beneficiaries across multiple counties. The study, based on a mixed-methods approach with both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, examined employment trajectories, access to further education, and personal empowerment outcomes among certified individuals. The findings indicate a clear positive impact: **63% of respondents reported improved job roles, 69% experienced career advancement, and 73% indicated that RPL qualifications are recognized by employers**. In addition, over half of beneficiaries reported improved access to further education and training opportunities, while a large majority felt better equipped to pursue additional learning pathways.

Beyond employment outcomes, the tracer study highlights the broader social and psychological effects of RPL. Beneficiaries reported increased confidence, improved self-esteem, and greater recognition of their skills within their communities and workplaces. These findings are consistent with insights from workshop discussions, where participants emphasized that RPL contributes not only to economic outcomes but also to **empowerment and social inclusion**, particularly for workers who previously lacked formal recognition of their competencies. At the same time, the study also identified persistent barriers, including limited access in certain regions, inadequate awareness, and affordability constraints, which continue to affect participation and outcomes.

Other countries are beginning to develop similar approaches, although systems remain less formalized. In **Malawi**, follow-up visits and tracking exercises have been conducted to assess the employment outcomes of RPL graduates, with early evidence suggesting improved job prospects, increased wages, and greater employer trust in certified workers. In **Uganda**, monitoring is embedded within the Uganda Vocational and Technical Assessment Board (UVTAB), which tracks certification outcomes and receives verification requests from employers, including international recruiters, providing indirect evidence of labour market relevance. However, these efforts are not yet supported by comprehensive M&E frameworks or standardized indicators.

A key lesson from the workshop is that effective M&E systems must move beyond output monitoring to focus on **long-term outcomes and impact**, including employment quality, income levels,

formalization, and access to social protection. Participants emphasized the importance of developing integrated data systems, including digital platforms that can track candidates throughout the RPL process and beyond. In Kenya, for example, efforts are underway to develop a digital RPL management information system to support end-to-end tracking of candidates and outcomes.

Ultimately, strengthening M&E systems is essential for ensuring accountability, enabling learning, and supporting the continuous improvement of RPL systems. Without robust evidence on outcomes, it is difficult to justify investment in RPL or to refine system design. The workshop therefore underscored the need for countries to institutionalize M&E as a core component of RPL systems, linking data collection to policy development, financing decisions, and labour market strategies.



Figure 3 Participants engaged in an experience sharing session exchanging approaches, best practices and challenges in implementing RPL.

5. Study Visit: RPL Implementation at NITA Training Centre, Nairobi

As part of the workshop programme, participants undertook a field visit to a National Industrial Training Authority (NITA) training centre located east of Nairobi National Park, which also functions as an accredited RPL assessment centre. The visit provided an opportunity to observe the practical implementation of RPL processes and to connect policy discussions with on-the-ground practice.

The visit began with a presentation by NITA staff on their role within Kenya's national RPL system. Established under the Industrial Training Act (Cap 237), NITA is mandated to regulate industrial training, develop curricula, assess occupational skills, and award certificates of competence. It operates under the State Department for Labour and Skills Development and plays a central role in implementing demand-driven training and assessment aligned with industry needs. Its functions in RPL include setting standards and guidelines, accrediting assessment centres (including workplaces), ensuring quality assurance, and coordinating the work of RPL practitioners such as counsellors, assessors, and moderators.

Participants were then guided through the RPL process as implemented at the centre, observing different stages including candidate registration, guidance and counselling, evidence collection, and assessment. The process was structured and sequential, with different professionals responsible for each stage to ensure transparency, objectivity, and quality assurance. Counsellors worked with candidates to identify appropriate qualification levels and support them in preparing evidence, while assessors conducted formal evaluations based on defined standards.

Two concrete assessment examples were observed. In the first case, a candidate seeking certification in tailoring at National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 2 presented evidence of prior work, including videos demonstrating practical skills. In the second case, a candidate for a machine operator role in a garment factory underwent a practical assessment, where they were required to complete a specific task using industrial equipment within a defined timeframe. These examples illustrated the emphasis placed on competency-based assessment, combining documentary evidence with real-time performance evaluation.

The visit also highlighted several innovative practices within the Kenyan system. NITA is accrediting not only formal training institutions but also informal "Jua Kali" workplaces as RPL assessment centres, allowing assessments to take place in real work environments and expanding access for informal workers. In addition, the Government of Kenya has integrated RPL into its Affordable Housing Programme, requiring contractors to ensure that a certain number of workers and artisans obtain RPL certification. This represents a strong example of how RPL can be embedded in large-scale public investment programmes, linking skills recognition directly to employment opportunities and supporting the transition from informal to formal work.

Another important area of application is labour migration. NITA is using RPL as part of its services to prepare Kenyan workers for overseas employment, including domestic work placements. Through the development of occupational standards, assessment tools, and facilities such as a "model house" simulating real working conditions, RPL is used to certify and validate competencies for international labour markets. This demonstrates the relevance of RPL not only for domestic labour market integration but also for managed labour migration and international skills recognition.

During the reflection session following the visit, participants expressed strong appreciation for the professionalism and structure of the RPL process. In particular, they highlighted the clear separation of roles between counsellors, assessors, and quality assurance actors, which contributes to neutrality and credibility. The practical orientation of assessments and the alignment with occupational standards were also seen as key strengths of the Kenyan model.

However, participants also raised a critical concern regarding certification. It was noted that the certificates issued explicitly indicate that they were obtained through RPL. While the certification is formally equivalent to that obtained through formal training pathways, this distinction was perceived as potentially undermining its value in the labour market. Participants expressed concern that such labelling could lead to RPL certificates being viewed as “second-class” qualifications, thereby affecting employer perceptions and limiting the intended benefits of recognition.

This observation reinforces broader discussions during the workshop regarding trust, quality assurance, and labour market acceptance of RPL. The study visit highlighted that while robust systems and processes can be established, attention must also be paid to how certification is presented and perceived. Ensuring that RPL qualifications carry equal value and recognition remains a critical challenge for countries seeking to scale up RPL systems.

6. Key Lessons Learned and Emerging Good Practices

Drawing on the country presentations, thematic discussions, and practical insights from the workshop, this section synthesizes the main lessons and emerging good practices in the design and implementation of RPL systems. To support this analysis, **Table 1** below provides a comparative overview of key features across the eight participating countries, including governance arrangements, implementation status, financing approaches, and inclusion strategies. The table illustrates the diversity of approaches and stages of development, highlighting both common patterns and context-specific differences. Building on this overview, the following sections identify what works, the main challenges that persist, and promising practices that can inform future RPL system development and scaling.

► **Table 1. Comparison of key RPL system features among the eight countries represented**

Indicator	Egypt	Ethiopia	Jordan	Kenya	Malawi	Sudan	Tanzania	Uganda
1. Dedicated national RPL policy/ framework	Not yet comprehensive national framework	RPL implementation guideline; embedded in TVET framework	Yes, under AQAC-led institutionalization	National RPL Policy Framework approved and launched	Not yet; priority is to develop one		Embedded in national skills development arrangements; implementation guidelines	Embedded in TVET/skills system, but some tools/frameworks still developing
2. Main lead institution	Fragmented; no single lead yet identified	Ministry of Labour and Skills (MoLS)	Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission (AQAC)	Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA)	Ministry of Labour / Directorate of Assessment and Certification Services		Prime Minister's Office; VETA key implementing role	Uganda Vocational and Technical Assessment Board (UVTAB)
3. Link to NQF / qualifications system	Partial / evolving	Linked to Ethiopian TVET Qualification Framework	Aligned with Jordan NQF	Anchored in KNQF	Partial / via TVET policy		Implied through national skills system; not clearly stated in all sources	Linked to national TVET / qualifications arrangements

4. Implementation stage	Early stage / exploratory	Scaling: 360.000 RPL candidates in 2024/25	Pilot to institutionalization: Pilot for 3000 candidates foreseen	Scaling: 100.000 candidates since 2024, among which 10.000 certified	Pilot phase: 266 RPL candidates since 2024	Very early / conceptual	Operational / scaling through programme approach: 25,523 RPL candidates certified since 2015.	Operational but still strengthening tools/frameworks: 200.000 RPL candidates since 2012
5. Main target groups	Refugees, migrants, Egyptians, low-skilled workers	Informal workers, returnees, migrants, IDPs, vulnerable groups	Workers, refugees, NEETs	Informal workers, formal workers without qualifications, refugees, youth	Rural youth, women, general population with uncertified skills	To be defined	Youth, informal workers, wider workforce	Informal workers, refugees, migrant workers, youth
6. Priority sectors mentioned	Hospitality, construction, food, domestic work	Agriculture, manufacturing, mining, ICT, tourism/hospitality	Multiple sectors via skills councils	Construction, agriculture, hospitality, energy	Construction, agriculture, tourism/hospitality, mining		Construction and other sectors under national skills programme	Agriculture, manufacturing, construction, services, ICT

7. Strong employer / private sector role	Limited at present; needs strengthening	Yes, via industry / associations and employer sponsorship	Yes, via sector skills councils	Yes, especially in standards, assessment and uptake	Emerging / limited		Yes, employers engaged through programme and levy system	Yes, through Federation of Uganda Employers and sector engagement
8. Separation of guidance / assessment / certification functions	Not yet clear	Partial through different actors in the system	Yes, more structured	Yes in principle; appreciated during study visit and discussed in workshop	Developing		Partial	Partial
9. Financing model	Unclear / under development	Mixed: government, employers, donors, some candidate fees	Government / donor / candidate fee mix under development	Cost-sharing approach; differentiated unit costing discussed	Government, TEVET levy, fees, industry, donors		Skills Development Levy + government allocation + some self-funding	Public funding, emerging levy-related arrangements, partner support

10. Unit costing / detailed costing exercise				Yes, differentiated unit cost model	Not yet fully; interested in Kenya model		Costs vary by trade; funded through programme	
11. Digitalization / e-RPL emphasis	Limited so far	Some e-RPL related capacity and tools	Portal and structured digital process emerging	RPL MIS under development / digital evidence used	Limited		Strong emphasis on digitalization and system integration	Limited / evolving
12. Evidence of labour-market outcomes		Qualitative evidence from sector use / employment relevance	Limited pilot-stage evidence	Strongest evidence base, including tracer study	Early positive follow-up evidence		Qualitative evidence linked to public projects and uptake	Some evidence via worker pass recognition and employer verification
13. Refugee inclusion explicitly built into system discussions	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Limited / less prominent	Potential future relevance	Not central, but inclusion focus present	Yes

14. Key immediate priority identified	Establish national system and lead institution	Detailed strategy, awareness, financing	Expand capacity, awareness, coordination	Sustainable financing, outreach, practitioner capacity, M&E	Policy framework and financing mechanism	Define purpose and target groups	Financing, digitalization, labour-market linkages	Institutional framework, coordination, sustainable financing
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6.1. What works

A first lesson from the workshop is that RPL works best when it is **anchored in national systems rather than treated as a stand-alone project**. The stronger country examples all show integration with broader qualifications, TVET, or labour market frameworks. In Kenya, RPL is anchored in the Kenya National Qualifications Framework and supported by the Kenya National Qualifications Authority and TVET regulators. In Jordan, the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission provides a central institutional anchor linked to the national qualifications framework. In Ethiopia, RPL is embedded in the wider TVET and labour system, with the Ministry of Labour and Skills leading implementation through regional structures. These arrangements do not eliminate all implementation problems, but they provide the institutional basis needed for coherence, equivalence of qualifications, continuity, and scaling.

A second lesson is that **stakeholder engagement is not an optional add-on but a core condition for credibility and uptake**. Countries repeatedly stressed the importance of involving employers, workers' organizations, training institutions, and regulators from the outset. Kenya's experience was frequently cited because employers and informal sector representatives were involved in policy development, awareness creation, standards discussions, and assessment processes. Uganda similarly emphasized that employers need to participate not only symbolically but through technically competent representatives who can contribute to standard setting and assessment design. The private sector role is especially important in ensuring that RPL remains demand-led and that certified workers are trusted in the labour market.

A third lesson is that **quality assurance and process integrity are central to the value of RPL certificates**. Participants consistently returned to the question of trust: are RPL certificates really seen as equivalent to qualifications obtained through formal learning routes? The more promising practices observed during the workshop suggest that trust is strengthened where standards are clear, assessors are trained, industry is involved, and roles are separated across guidance, assessment, and certification. This was also visible during the study visit to the NITA centre, where participants appreciated the professionalism of the process and the fact that different functions were performed by different people. Such arrangements strengthen neutrality and reduce the perception that assessment outcomes are arbitrary.

A fourth lesson is that **RPL is most effective when linked to concrete labour-market opportunities**. This was particularly clear in the Kenyan and Ethiopian discussions. In Kenya, the emerging evidence base from tracer work shows that RPL can improve job roles, confidence, access to promotion, and pathways into further learning. The affordable housing programme links RPL to concrete public investments. In Ethiopia, the strongest examples of RPL uptake were tied to sectors with clear labour demand, including construction and agriculture. Tanzania also illustrated the importance of linking RPL to public investments and major infrastructure projects, so that certification is not only symbolic but connected to jobs and livelihoods. These examples suggest that RPL gains traction when it is visibly connected to employment, productivity, and mobility rather than presented only as a certification exercise.

6.2. Persistent challenges

Despite growing policy commitment, countries continue to face major challenges in moving from pilots to sustainable systems. The most prominent challenge across all sessions was **financing**.

Several countries are still relying on a combination of donor support, limited public allocations, and ad hoc contributions from employers or candidates. This creates uncertainty and makes it difficult to scale beyond pilots. The workshop made clear that many systems still underestimate the real cost of RPL by focusing too narrowly on assessment, while overlooking the costs of awareness, counselling, system management, assessor development, quality assurance, and monitoring.

A second persistent challenge is **fragmented governance and limited coordination**. This was particularly evident in countries such as Egypt and Malawi, where participants pointed to the absence of a clear policy framework or a single lead institution with authority to coordinate the system. Even in countries with stronger institutional arrangements, coordination across ministries, regulators, training institutions, employment services and industry stakeholders remain complex. Fragmentation also affects the user experience: candidates may be referred from one institution to another, and employers may not know which body is responsible for what. This weakens confidence and slows implementation.

A third challenge concerns **awareness, accessibility, and inclusion**. Participants from across countries noted that many workers who could benefit from RPL still do not know that it exists, do not understand the process, or are discouraged by travel, language, documentation, or cost barriers. These barriers are especially significant for rural workers, refugees, women, and informal workers with irregular incomes. The issue is not only communication; it is also one of service design. Where centres are far away, procedures are overly complicated, or evidence requirements are too rigid, uptake remains low even if the policy framework exists.

A fourth challenge is **the uneven labour-market recognition of RPL certificates**. Although the principle of equivalence is widely accepted in policy discussions, implementation can undermine this objective. The study visit raised a particularly important concern: if a certificate visibly indicates that it was obtained through RPL, employers and others may distinguish it from a certificate obtained through formal training. Participants saw this as potentially turning RPL into a “second-class” route, even when the assessed competence is formally equivalent. More broadly, several countries pointed to the need for stronger employer confidence, better communication about the quality of RPL, and more evidence that certification leads to real labour-market value. In this respect, considering the potential gaps in formal education history of individuals, there might be benefits for both employers and workers if RPL holders are guided towards complementary learning pathways that will improve their foundational and technical skills required by the latest technologies used in their profession, and accommodate them with environmental and OSH awareness

A fifth challenge is the limited development of **monitoring and evaluation systems**. Most countries can report the number of candidates assessed or certified, but far fewer can show what happened afterwards. Without stronger tracer systems and outcome data, it remains difficult to demonstrate impact, refine system design, or make the case for sustained investment. Kenya currently provides the strongest example in this area, but even there, participants emphasized the need to institutionalize tracking and link it more closely to learning, system improvement, and policy decisions.

6.3. Emerging good practices and innovations

One important emerging good practice is the use of **detailed costing and differentiated unit cost models**. The Kenyan example stood out throughout the workshop. A tripartite, multi-stakeholder group undertook a costing exercise to better understand the actual resource implications of RPL across different occupations and sectors. The result was a differentiated unit cost approach that recognizes that not all assessments cost the same. This is a particularly valuable innovation because it

improves transparency, supports more realistic planning, and provides a more credible basis for cost-sharing arrangements among government, employers, and candidates. It also moves the discussion beyond generic statements that RPL is “cheaper than training” toward a more operational understanding of sustainability.

A second promising practice is the move toward **digitalization and more flexible evidence collection**. Tanzania’s emphasis on digitalization as a national priority, Jordan’s development of a structured portal, and Kenya’s use of videos and digital evidence at the assessment-centre level all point in the same direction: digital tools can expand access, improve record-keeping, and support process transparency. At the same time, the workshop showed that digitalization is not an end in itself. It needs to be linked to practical service delivery, such as candidate registration, counselling, evidence submission, and monitoring. Where used well, it can reduce administrative burdens and improve accessibility; where poorly designed, it may create new barriers.

A third emerging practice is the strengthening of **workplace-based and sector-linked assessment models**. Countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, and Ethiopia illustrated the value of conducting assessments in or close to real work environments, especially in trades where performance is best demonstrated through practice. This can improve validity, reduce infrastructure costs, and help employers see the relevance of the process. It also supports stronger labour-market ownership, particularly where companies or sector bodies are involved in standards, assessment, or the identification of priority occupations.

A fourth emerging practice is the stronger articulation of **RPL as an inclusion tool**, especially for refugees, migrants, and informal workers. While this was present in the policy framing from the outset, several countries are now moving from general commitment to more targeted approaches. Kenya’s work in refugee-hosting counties, Ethiopia’s explicit inclusion of returnees and displaced populations, and Jordan’s efforts to build a more inclusive skills-based labour market all demonstrate that RPL can be adapted to populations whose skills are often invisible or difficult to prove through conventional documentation. These experiences suggest that inclusion should not be treated as a secondary benefit of RPL, but as a core design principle.

A fifth emerging practice is the gradual shift from output-focused implementation toward **evidence-informed system learning**. The tracer work in Kenya, the follow-up efforts in Malawi, and the institutional monitoring arrangements in Uganda all show early efforts to move beyond counting certificates toward understanding outcomes. This remains an area under development, but it is one of the most important directions for the future. Countries that build learning and feedback into their systems will be better positioned to improve quality, demonstrate impact, and make the case for stronger financing and institutional support.

A sixth Emerging Good Practice is the **closer link of RPL certification** to economic opportunities. In countries where graduates from formal training systems struggle to find jobs, the value of RPL certification may be questioned. However, examples from Ethiopia, Tanzania and Kenya demonstrate that when RPL certifications are linked to labour market opportunities, workers recognize their relevance and value as pathways to decent work become tangible. Therefore, countries should establish mechanisms to prioritize sectors for RPL.

7. Conclusions and Way Forward

The workshop reaffirmed the strategic role of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as a key instrument for promoting inclusive labour markets. By making skills visible and formally recognized—particularly for workers in the informal economy, migrants, and refugees—RPL can support access to decent work, facilitate transitions to formality, and strengthen lifelong learning pathways.

A central outcome of the workshop is that all participating countries have developed **initial action plans**, reflecting their respective priorities across governance, financing, outreach, quality assurance, and labour market linkages. These action plans will now be taken forward for **validation at national level**, involving relevant stakeholders, and subsequently translated into concrete implementation steps. This marks an important shift from knowledge exchange to operational follow-up.

The workshop also demonstrated the value of **cross-country learning**. Countries at different stages of RPL system development were able to share practical experiences, challenges, and solutions, helping to accelerate progress and avoid common pitfalls. This peer learning dimension was particularly valuable in areas such as financing models, institutional arrangements, and outreach strategies.

Looking ahead, participants identified several priority areas for continued support under both the **PROSPECTS partnership** and the **Global Skills Programme**. These include strengthening institutional frameworks and coordination mechanisms, developing sustainable financing models, expanding outreach to underserved populations, enhancing quality assurance systems, and building stronger evidence on labour market outcomes. Continued technical assistance, knowledge sharing, and partnership support will be essential to help countries move from pilot initiatives toward **scalable, sustainable, and inclusive RPL systems**.

8. Annexe: Workshop agenda

Time	Day 1 30 March	Day 2 31 March	Day 3 1 April	Day 4 2 April
09:00–10:30	10:00 Opening and welcome Government of Kenya, ILO, Embassy of the Netherlands	Session 3: Outreach and RPL uptake Cases: Kenya, Tanzania Facilitation: Nuran Torun Atis, ILO	8:30 Field Visit Facilitation: Stephen Mwangi, ILO	Session 7: Cross-Country Clinic Facilitation: Geoffrey Ochola, Christine Hofmann, ILO
10:30–10:45	ILO framing: RPL as flexible pathway for effective labour market inclusion - Albert Okal, ILO	Coffee Break		Coffee Break
10:45–11:30		Session 4: Financing RPL Cases: Tanzania, Ethiopia, Malawi Facilitation: Christine Hofmann, ILO Session open for PROSPECTS partners		
11:30–12:30	Ice breaker Expectations and key challenges (with particular focus on inclusion) Agenda presentation Facilitation: Geoffrey Ochola, ILO			Session 8: Country Action Planning Country Presentations Facilitation: Nuran Torun Atis, ILO

12:30–13:30	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
13:30–15:00	Session 1: RPL fair and cross-country discussions Facilitation: Christine Hofmann, ILO	Session 5: Quality assurance, assessments and digital solutions Cases: Jordan, Uganda Facilitation: Albert Okal, ILO	13.30 – 14.30h Structured Debrief	Tripartite cross-country learning on RPL Facilitation: Albert Okal, ILO Session open for PROSPECTS partners and others
15:00–15:15	Coffee Break	Coffee Break		Closing
15:15–16:30	Session 2: Institutionalization of RPL: Policy, roles and processes Cases: Kenya, Jordan, Ethiopia Facilitation: Christine Hofmann, ILO	Session 6: Monitoring and labour market impacts of RPL Cases: Kenya, Jordan Facilitation: Albert Okal, ILO		

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