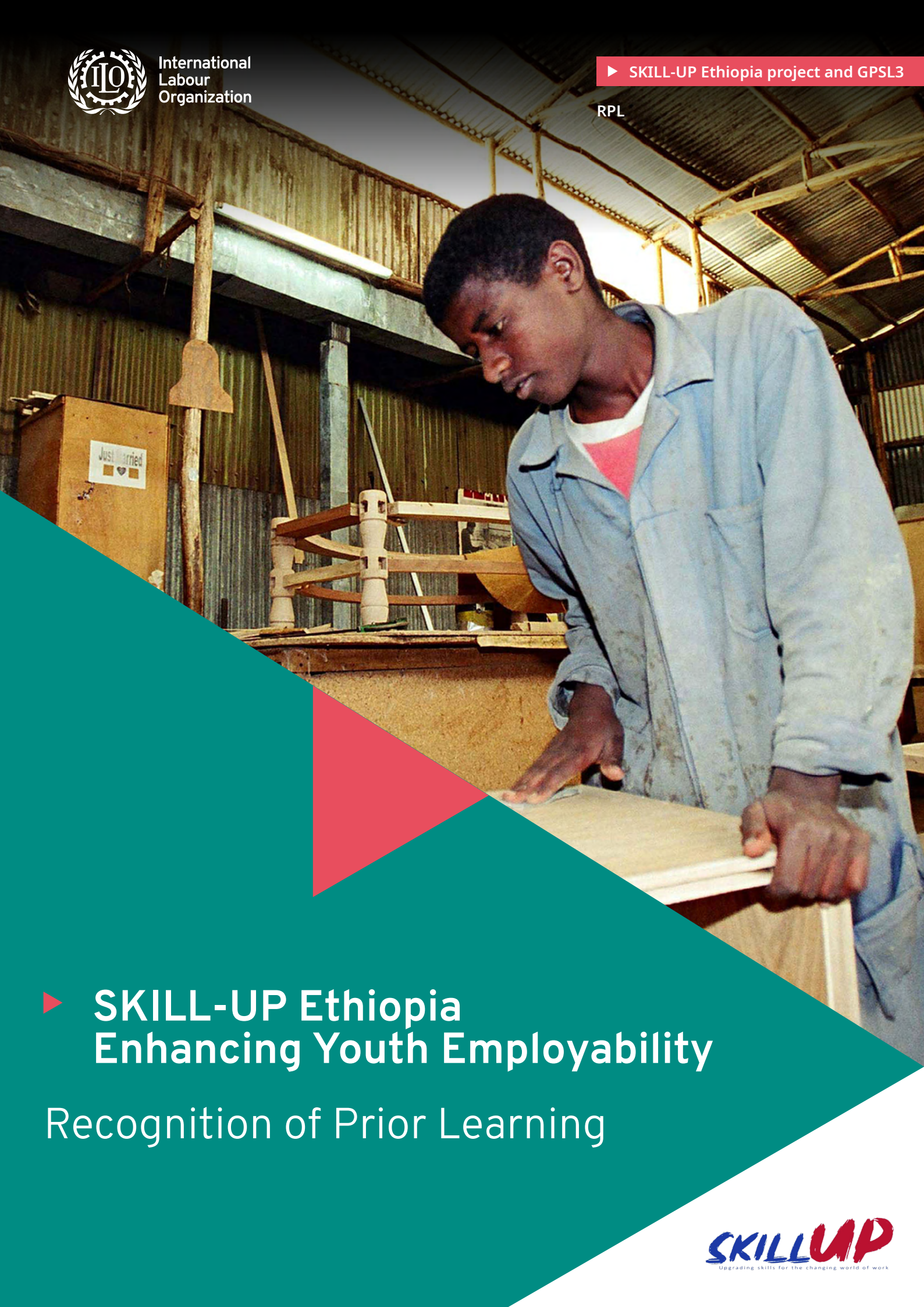




International  
Labour  
Organization

▶ SKILL-UP Ethiopia project and GPSL3

RPL



▶ **SKILL-UP Ethiopia**  
**Enhancing Youth Employability**

Recognition of Prior Learning



Enhancing Youth Employability:

Recognition of Prior Learning

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# Acronyms

<b>CAPI</b>	Computer-assisted personal interviews
<b>EEA</b>	Ethiopian Economics Association
<b>GDP</b>	Gross domestic product
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>JCC</b>	Jobs Creation Commission
<b>KII</b>	Key informant interview
<b>MOE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>MOCT</b>	Ministry of Culture and Tourism
<b>MoF</b>	Ministry of Finance
<b>MOLSA</b>	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
<b>MOSHE</b>	Ministry of Science and Higher Education
<b>MoTI</b>	Ministry of Trade and Industry
<b>MSEs</b>	Micro and small enterprises
<b>NPC</b>	National Planning Commission
<b>OSH</b>	Occupational safety and health
<b>PDC</b>	Planning and Development Commission
<b>RSA</b>	Rapid skills assessment
<b>SIDA</b>	Swedish International Development Agency
<b>SNNP</b>	Southern Nations and Nationalities and Peoples
<b>TVET</b>	Technical and vocational education and training
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>WBL</b>	Work-based learning
<b>WTTC</b>	World Travel & Tourism Council



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# SKILL-UP Ethiopia Enhancing Youth Employability: Recognition of Prior Learning

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is the process of identifying, documenting, assessing and certifying formal, non-formal and informal learning outcomes in relation to standards used in formal education and training. RPL thus provides an opportunity for people to acquire qualifications or credits towards a qualification, or exemptions (from all or part of a curriculum, or even from an academic prerequisite for entering a formal study programme), without going through a formal education or training programme.

Text 1: ILO. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): Learning Package

The concept of recognition of prior learning (RPL) has been introduced and applied by many countries, primarily to facilitate social inclusion and to acknowledge the value of informal and non-formal learning. Workers from the informal sector are often unsuccessful in gaining decent work: having left school at an early stage, they are locked out of the formal technical vocational education and training (TVET) or higher education system and unable to progress into further study or formal employment.

## Why is it important?

RPL is a way of formally apprehending and recognizing the skills and knowledge an individual develops through work, social and personal activities and informal learning. Opening new pathways for people unable to enter TVET or higher education, RPL can pave the way into formal courses, or in some cases, lead directly to the award of a full qualification. RPL is also used to recognize current competence, that is to assess an individual's current capacity to perform different skills, so that employers and unions can identify the skills possessed by applicants when applying for work, or for career advancement purposes.

Returning migrant workers can benefit from RPL, with the result that the skills and knowledge they acquired while working in other countries or regions are formally recognized. Some destination countries operate an RPL process for new workers to determine whether they have the skills to perform certain jobs. Migrant workers can benefit from RPL to gain recognition of the skills they developed while working overseas, thus creating opportunities for them to undertake skilled work in other countries.

## What is the aim of RPL?

The introduction of RPL reflects the Government of Ethiopia's commitment to broadening participation in TVET, building the skills profile of the nation's workforce and ensuring that all citizens have access to nationally recognized qualifications. Recognition of the skills and knowledge developed through all types of learning results in benefits for the individual in the labour market, in formal education and training, financially, and in terms of self-esteem.

- ▶ **All learning, irrespective of where and when it takes place, is valuable for the individual and for society.**

On-the-job training, informal apprenticeships, participation in sporting activities, organizing community events, raising children, managing a household, caring for the sick and for elderly relatives are all activities that result in learning outcomes, but which often do not come with a certificate of competencies recognizing the knowledge, skills and experience acquired. ILO Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): Learning Package

- ▶ **Formal education needs to be complemented by non-formal and informal learning.**

It is a person's competence that is assessed through RPL, not where or how the learning took place. Every individual learns and, through repeated practice, consolidates and builds on their skills and knowledge. Understanding what skills an individual possesses is important for him or her in planning a career and for the Government of Ethiopia in identifying the range of skills in the labour market.

- ▶ **Qualifications obtained through RPL are as valuable and valid as those gained by other means.**

RPL is a process whereby skills and knowledge are assessed against learning outcomes based on occupational standards. In countries where qualifications are not related to occupational standards, learning outcomes are used to formally recognize competence.

RPL is not an easy option: individuals have often spent years developing and honing their skills and knowledge, and the assessment process is objective and rigorous to protect the value of national qualifications.

- ▶ **RPL is an important aspect of a country's lifelong learning framework and RPL awards are as valid as traditional qualifications.**

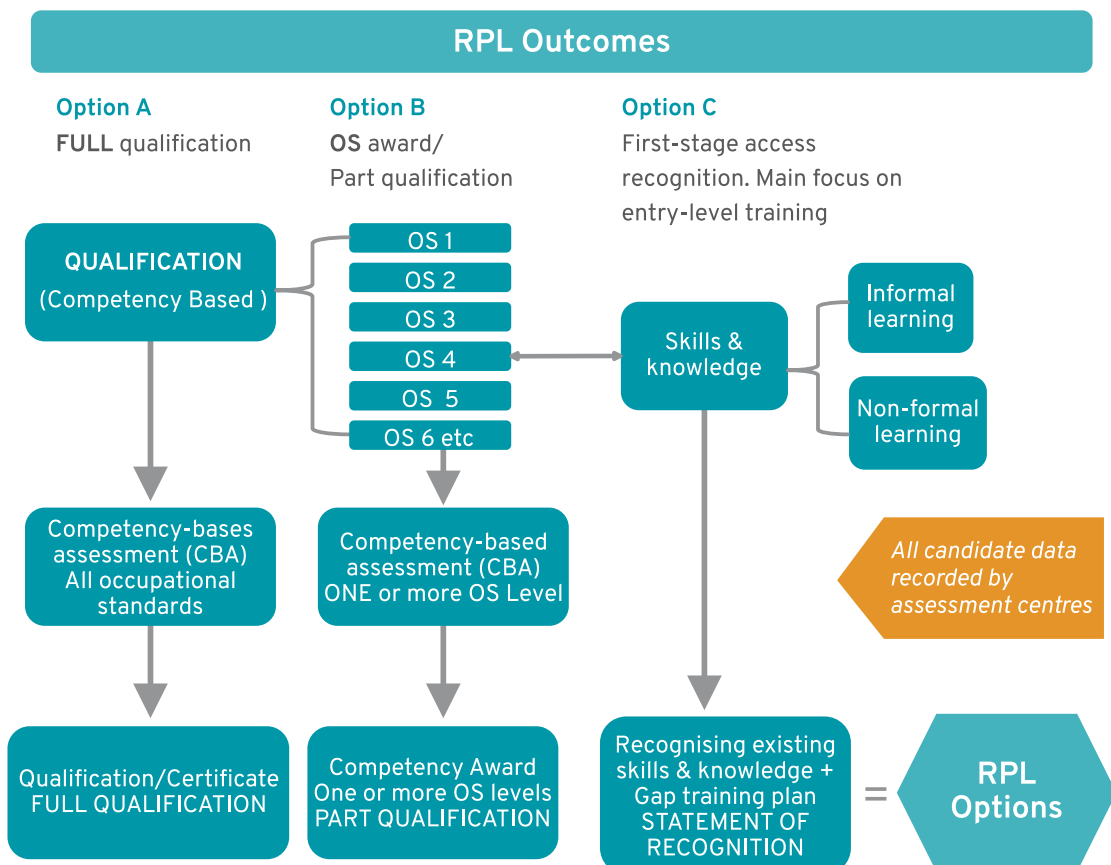
Although RPL is often thought of as a last-chance option for early school leavers, it is also used in recruitment, performance management, and career and succession planning. RPL allows employers to advance workers in whom they have invested over the years and who possess the relevant skills and experience for a particular job.

## RPL options

Employers, unions and governments use RPL to:

- ▶ determine the skills levels of potential workers during recruitment;
- ▶ advise employees on matching their skills and knowledge to existing qualifications and national occupational standards;
- ▶ assist employees in using their existing skills and knowledge for career development, progression and mobility;
- ▶ assist workers in identifying the skills they already possess that may be relevant to new functions in their job role;
- ▶ determine the skills and knowledge of migrant workers pre-departure or on return to their place of origin.

RPL is most commonly used in the TVET sector, as well as in higher education. RPL is usually used in these contexts for the following purposes:



## The RPL process

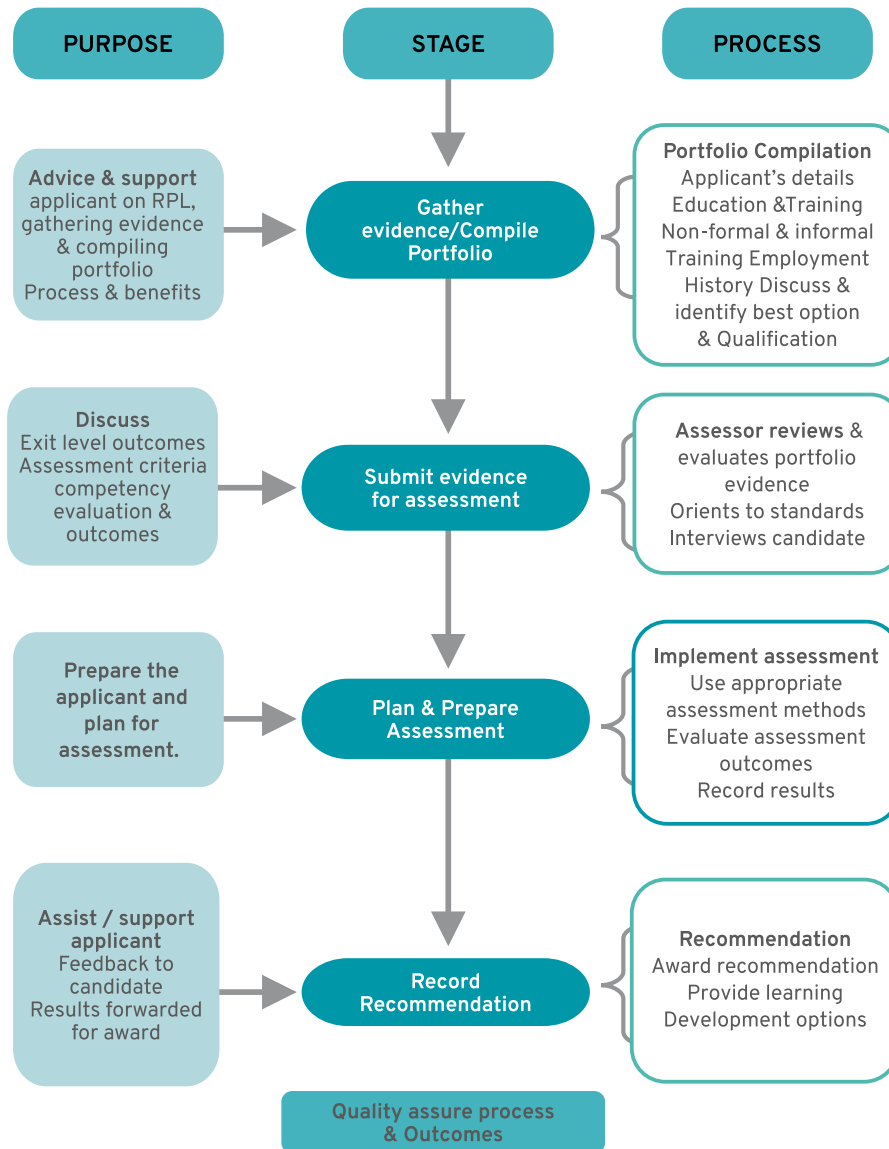
In practice, RPL is not implemented on the basis of one particular set of evidence requirements and usually it applies to more than one economic or educational sector. RPL systems differ widely, particularly in terms of:

- ▶ scope: the sectors covered and the legal and policy framework;
- ▶ process: the detailed stages and steps applicable, as well as the institutional responsibilities involved; and
- ▶ the methods applied, e.g. with regard to assessment (ILO RPL Learning Resource Package).

PL services in Ethiopia must be facilitated by an accredited assessment centre. An RPL assessment must be conducted by an accredited RPL assessor appointed by the relevant centre of competence, e.g. the City Government of Addis Ababa Occupational Competency Assessment Certification Centre, or the Amhara or Dessie Cluster Occupational Competence Assessment and Certification Agencies. These agencies are overseen by regional state centres of competence, which are the core institutions established at the regional level to implement and facilitate national occupational assessment and certification.

Individuals applying for RPL will need to gather evidence of their informal, non-formal and work experience. Such evidence may include certificates from non-formal courses. Local occupational competence assessment and certification agencies will be able to provide advice on what evidence is needed and what the self-assessment processes need to be completed. They will also be able to provide information on the costs of the RPL process.

The following is a generic diagram of the RPL process:



Centres of competency are responsible for ensuring that applicants who successfully complete a RPL assessment are issued with the relevant nationally recognized certification on behalf of the Federal TVET Agency. RPL certification must:

- ▶ be equivalent to the certification offered in other assessment pathways; and
- ▶ comply with the certification specifications set out by the Federal TVET Agency.

# Key terms: Definitions and concepts

Some of these terms come from the ILO **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Learning Package**

- ▶ **Formal learning:** instruction given in education and training institutions or specially designed training areas, including within enterprises in formal apprenticeship systems. The training is structured and has precise learning objectives.
- ▶ **Non-formal learning:** learning that takes place during activities not exclusively designated as learning activities, but which contain an important learning element.
- ▶ **Informal learning:** learning resulting from activities undertaken daily at work, in the family or in leisure activities.
- ▶ **Portfolio:** a compilation of informal, non-formal or community-based learning accomplishments, work history and performance reports, products and other evidence used to evaluate an applicant's learning and competency achievements.
- ▶ **Prior learning:** knowledge or skills acquired in earlier study and work or through experience.





## Further reading on RPL

Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment. <http://capla.ca/category/pla-resources/practitioners-resources/>

Cedefop. Validation of non-formal and informal learning. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning>

ILO. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): Learning Package. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---ifp\\_skills/documents/publication/wcms\\_626246.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_626246.pdf)

ILO. Assessing skills of informal economy workers [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---ifp\\_skills/documents/publication/wcms\\_343183.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_343183.pdf)

ILO. How to facilitate the recognition of skills of migrant workers. Guide for Employment Service Providers [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---ifp\\_skills/documents/publication/wcms\\_572672.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_572672.pdf) plus the facilitator notes [https://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS\\_572673/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS_572673/lang--en/index.htm)

ILO. Guide on skills recognition for returning migrants [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/meetingdocument/wcms\\_144619.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_144619.pdf)

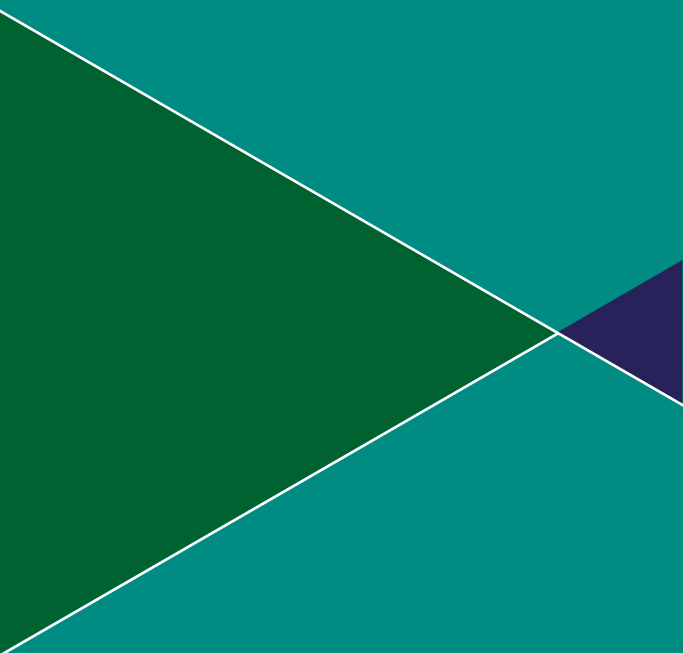
ILO. Understanding the potential impact of skills recognition systems. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---ifp\\_skills/documents/publication/wcms\\_532417.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_532417.pdf)

ILO. Strengthening skills recognition systems – Recommendations. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---ifp\\_skills/documents/publication/wcms\\_541698.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_541698.pdf)

ETF (2019). Global inventory of regional and national qualifications frameworks 2019 – Volume I: Thematic chapters. [https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2019-07/global\\_nqf\\_inventory\\_2019\\_vol\\_1\\_0.pdf](https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2019-07/global_nqf_inventory_2019_vol_1_0.pdf)

UNESCO, Institute for Lifelong Learning (2018). Recognition, validation and accreditation of youth and basic education as a foundation for lifelong learning. <https://uil.unesco.org/lifelong-learning/recognition-validation-accreditation/recognition-validation-and-accreditation>

UNESCO, Institute for Lifelong Learning (2010). Recognition, Validation and Accreditation of Non-formal and Informal Learning in UNESCO Member States. <https://uil.unesco.org/lifelong-learning/recognition-validation-accreditation/recognition-validation-and-accreditation-non>



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