Technical Consultation Workshop on the Use of Skills Logbooks, Skills Passports and other Mechanisms to Improve the Portability of Skills and Qualifications

An Initiative of the ILO under the Global Skills Partnership on Migration

Background

In order to gain access to employment migrants not only need to possess relevant qualifications and skills, but also need to be able to signal and validate these qualifications and skills to potential employers. This means qualifications and skills need to be mobile and recognized, i.e. portable. The portability of qualifications and skills ultimately depends on a trusted source of information.

Article 18 of the Global Compact on Migration calls for "innovative solutions that facilitate mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competences of migrant workers at all skills levels, (…) to optimize the employability of migrants in formal labour markets in countries of destination and in countries of origin upon return, as well as to ensure decent work in labour migration." Proposed actions include among others to promote the transparency of certifications, the use of technology and digitalization to evaluate and mutually recognize skills more comprehensively, and promote documentation and information tools that provide an overview of a worker's credentials, skills and qualifications, recognized in countries of origin, transit and destination.

Qualifications formally recognised by government or government endorsed authorities can provide such trust, as do credentials issued by large employers or industry bodies. As some credentials are more trusted than others, recognition tends to be most successful when established through social dialogue involving governments, employers' and workers' organizations and education and training institutions. This is true for both formally certified qualifications and informally acquired skills.[1]

Skill logbooks have been a feature of many national skills systems for a number of years. They are typically used to record the skills, competencies and qualifications achieved by learners as part of individual qualifications or programs of learning. By comparison, skill passports, whilst a similar concept, often act as a summary of competencies or qualifications held by an individual and achieved across multiple programs. However, this distinction between skill logbooks and skill passports does not always apply as on occasion the terms are used interchangeably. In both cases however, these tools have been primarily developed and used in education and training systems with established qualification and quality assurance systems. Countries where most migrants or internally displaced people originate from, however, usually suffer from weak skills development systems. Skill logbooks and skill passports can take different forms and can be a formal and/or informal record of educational attainment. For example, the EC EUROPASS acts as a digital wallet that details and aligns qualifications and skills to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), regardless of how they have been acquired and where; the Australia Electricity Supply Industry skill passport is a paper based system recognised in that industry sector as a record of learning; in Sri Lanka, the recently developed Skills Passport is a smart card that contains information of qualifications and work experience that can be verified online by use of a QR code.[2]

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[1] ILO (2007) Portability of skills, GB.298/ESP/3, 298th Session

[2] ILO (2020) The role of social partners in skills development, recognition and matching for migrant workers: A contribution to the Global Skills Partnership.

Increasingly, digital technologies are affecting the recognition of skills and qualifications. Digital credentials, including badges and other micro-credentials often linked to individual digital wallets or SMART cards have utilised distributed ledger technologies such as blockchain to provide non-paper based solutions to record, store and verify qualifications and skills, including core/soft skills. For example, RedSafe has been developed by ICRC to provide a 'digital vault' for displaced populations so they can store important records, including credentials and employment records; and 'Yoma' the platform developed by UNICEF for African youth, provides a system for individuals to develop and safely store a digital CV including credentials.

In addition to numerous bilateral and several regional arrangements to facilitate the mutual recognition of qualifications, and higher education qualifications in particular, (see for example the ASEAN Professional Mutual Recognition Arrangements), at the international level, few initiatives exist specifically targeting migrants and refugees. Although at an early stage of development, UNESCO has developed a Qualifications Passport to support refugees and vulnerable migrants applying for higher education. It is a standardized document describing the highest achieved qualification(s), subject field, other relevant qualifications, as well as relevant job experience and language proficiency. The main purpose of the passport is to provide access and opportunities for refugees and vulnerable migrants to improve their language skills and carry out further studies, which could facilitate their labour market entry or enable them to access formal qualification/skill recognition.

Whilst the challenges surrounding skills recognition for migrants and refugees clearly cannot be solved by technology alone, taken together, these developments suggest the potential for more coordinated and informed action on how technology can enhance the recognition of skills and qualifications of migrant workers and refugees.

About the Global Skills Partnership on Migration

The Global Skills Partnership on Migration is an initiative between ILO, IOM, UNESCO, IOE and ITUC to join forces and mobilise expertise for the development and recognition of skills of migrant workers as a response to objective 18 of the Global Compact for Migration. It supports governments, employers and workers as well as their organisations, educational institutions and training providers, and other stakeholders to rethink migration in a way that is of mutual benefit to all stakeholders; principally migrant workers, including those who return (with a particular focus on women and youth), employers in need of skilled workforce, as well as the countries of origin and destination.

Objective

The objective of the workshop is to bring together representatives of key international and national organisations, including employers and workers' organizations, involved in work that deploys technology to strengthen systems that recognise skills and qualifications for the purpose of employment and/or further learning, especially as they relate to migrant workers and/or refugees. The workshop will assess the potential and current use of technology-based skills logbooks/passports along different stages of the migration cycle: recruitment, pre-departure, pre-employment, career progression, upon return. The workshop will provide an opportunity to share information about recent developments and explore the potential for joint initiatives or more coordinated action on the topic.

Participants

It is envisaged the event will be by invitation only, with registrations open, but not limited to, representatives of:

- ILO
- IOM
- UNESCO
- IOE
- ITUC
- UNICEF
- UNHCR
- World Bank
- Commonwealth of Learning (COL)
- ICRC
- EC
- ASEAN
- South Africa Qualifications Authority (SAQA)
- Sri Lanka Technical and Vocational Education & Training Commission (TVEC)
- Bangladesh Ministry for Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment
- The Commonwealth Centre for Connected Learning, Malta
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)
- Migration Policy Centre
- EC DG Education
- CEDEFOP
- Abu Dhabi Dialogue
- ETF
- AUC
- Private sector companies implementing credentialing platforms
- Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF)

Agenda

The workshop will take place on the 19 and 20 of October.2021, from 9:00 – 12:00 CET on each day.

Day 1			
1.	Welcome, Introductions and Background Michelle Leighton, ILO	9:00 – 9:10	
2.	Recognition of Skills & Qualifications for Migrant Workers through Skills Logbooks or Passports: Key Issues - Panel discussion moderated by Christine Hofmann, ILO Speakers:	9:10 – 9:45	What kind of skills logbook/passport initiatives or services are the five GSPM partners offering their constituents/members to improve skills and qualifications recognition and portability of migrant workers?

	Borhene Chakroun, UNESCO Jobst Koehler, IOM Stephen Yee, SNEF Paola Simonetti, ITUC		Which issues need to be addressed to improve the uptake and value of existing skills logbooks/passports initiatives?
3.	Comfort Break	9:45 – 10:00	
4.	Existing Approaches - 6 x 5-10 min presentations Moderated by Geertrui Lanneau , IOM Speakers: Andreas Snildal, UNESCO Dr Janaka Jayalath, TVEC Sri Lanka Kolawole Kayode Ladejobi, UNICEF Nigeria Koen Nomden, DG Empl, EC Berta Panes, ICRC	10:00 – 11:00	What are current logbook/passport initiatives offering? What is their scope, institutional grounding, and results in terms of portability? What is their development potential? • UNESCO+UNHCR – Qualifications passport for refugees and vulnerable migrants • Sri Lanka – Skills passport • UNICEF – Passport to earning/ Learning passport/ YOMA • Europass • ICRC: RedSafe
5.	Panel Q&A and Discussion moderated by IOM with previous speakers	11:00 – 11:45	
6.	Discussion and Conclusions Stephen Yee, IOE Paola Simonetti, ITUC	11:45 – 12:00	
Day 2			
6.	Welcome and Day 1 Recap Christine Hofmann, ILO	9:00 – 9:15	
7.	Technological Ecosystems for Skills Portability 5 x 5 min inputs, followed by Q&A Moderated by Katerina Ananiadou, UNESCO Alex Grech, 3CL Foundation Lluis Alfons Ariño, European Blockchain Services Infrastructure (EBSI) project Märt Aro, Estonia, Nordic EdTech Forum Kate Tulenko, Corvus Health	9:15 – 10:45	What kind of technological solutions are available to document, store, verify and facilitate the cross-border recognition of skills and qualifications? What are their pros and cons in terms of security, accessibility (such as in low-connectivity environments) and usability? What does 'interoperability' mean within the context of verifiable credentials? What are the challenges for the adoption of solutions for verifiable credentials by policy-makers? How can employers and workers navigate existing or evolving skills logbook/passport solutions?
8.	Comfort Break	10:45 – 11:00	
9.	Discussion and Conclusions Moderated by Paul Comyn, ILO	11:00 – 11:45	
10.	Closing and Way Forward Stephanie Winet, IOE Paola Simonetti, ITUC Srinivas Reddy, ILO Marina Manke, IOM Hervé Huot-Marchand, UNESCO	11:45 – 12:00	