

Recognition of Prior Learning in the construction sector

Innovation and Learning Practice

Bridging Innovation and Learning in TVET (BILT) Project

Ministry of Labor and Skills, Ethiopia

The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) project enables workers in Ethiopia's construction industry who have had no formal training to acquire nationally recognized qualifications. To date, 812 construction workers have been assessed across seven key occupations and the RPL is being implemented across all regions of Ethiopia.

Start date: January 2023

Type of implementing institution: Government organization or affiliation

Implementing partners: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) Ethiopia and the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Target group: Returnee migrants, refugees, internally displaced people, indigenous craftspeople, skilled construction workers.





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Ministry of Labor and Skills

Ministry of Labor and Skills

The Ministry of Labor and Skills (MoLS) oversees skills development, national job creation and labour concerns. It is working to create skilled technical and vocational education and training (TVET) managers, teachers, industry practitioners and workers who will contribute to Ethiopia's economic and social development.

Description of activities

The RPL project assesses individuals' competencies against pre-set learning outcomes and offers recognized qualifications to candidates, regardless of how they acquired their skills. This eliminates the need for those who are working in the sector – and who already have valuable skills, knowledge and capabilities – to attend formal institutions, thereby reducing duplication and resource waste.

Relevance

What issues is the RPL project designed to address?

According to the Ethiopian Construction Sector Association¹, over 70 per cent of Ethiopia's construction workforce lacks formal qualifications despite acquiring essential skills through, for example, on-the-job training, apprenticeships and community-based learning. In addition, many indigenous people, refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) face barriers to obtaining formal qualifications. Traditionally, people can only obtain qualifications through formal education or training, a process that many cannot afford.

What strategies has the RPL project employed to address these challenges?

The MoLS, GIZ Ethiopia, ILO and the construction sector collaborated to develop comprehensive guidelines, assessment tools, training materials and certification management for seven key construction trades: masonry, plastering, tiling, gypsum, painting, carpentry and bar bending. They also selected assessors and assessment centres to support these initiatives.

¹ Documents available in hard copy at the MoE office.

Is the RPL project part of a wider initiative or goal?

The project is an integral part of Ethiopia's TVET Proclamation as well as the country's Education and Training Policy and Qualification Framework². It also aligns with other related rules, regulations and directives, and existing policy frameworks, at national and regional levels. Its implementation reflects Ethiopia's commitment to broaden participation in TVET, strengthen the skills profile of the nation's workforce, and ensure all citizens have access to nationally recognized qualifications.

Added value

What is new and innovative about the RPL project?

Before the RPL project, only people with qualifications gained through formal education and training would be assessed and receive nationally recognized certificates. In contrast, the RPL project helps skilled people to acquire a nationally recognized certificate regardless of their educational background. By providing alternative pathways to skills recognition, the initiative promotes accessibility and inclusion, particularly for those people who cannot afford the time or cost of traditional formal education.

What stage of implementation is the project currently at?

All preparation activities have been completed, including the development of implementation guidelines, assessor training and assessment tools for seven occupations. To date, 812 skilled workers in the construction sector have been assessed, with 86 per cent deemed competent. All 14 regions of Ethiopia are implementing the RPL approach, and the Ministry is working with key stakeholders to ensure RPL-certified workers are recognized and accepted in the international labour market.

What positive social outcomes has the project achieved since its inception?

The project benefits a wide range of people including skilled workers, employers, the government, TVET institutions, assessment and certification bodies, and the wider society. Specifically the project is:

- strengthening the skills pool and enhancing the relevance of qualifications;
- promoting equality and social inclusion, particularly for disadvantaged groups;
- reducing duplication in training and skills development programmes;
- advancing the development and innovation of indigenous crafts;
- promoting collaboration between the private and public sectors; and
- encouraging workplace promotion for those who meet RPL competency standards in private and public construction companies.

² Documents available in hard copy at the MoE office.

Transferability

To what extent is this project transferable?

The RPL approach applies to any sector and is transferable internationally. In addition to the construction sector, RPL processes in other sectors have been initiated across Ethiopia including in food and beverage, culinary arts, domestic work, massage and wellness, and hair and beauty.

What advice would you offer to those wishing to replicate this initiative?

The process demands substantial funding and buy-in from multiple stakeholders. Collaboration among industry leaders, employers, government and individuals is key. Leveraging existing education centres as assessment hubs reduces costs, while a centralized, standardized curriculum, training modules and assessment tools ensure consistency across regions.

Has the initiative been promoted in any national contexts?

The initiative is promoted on the MoLS's website and Facebook page, and is a key performance indicator in the Government's agenda for social and economic development.

RPL project is one of the BILT project's Innovation and Learning Practices that address systemic challenges within the five work streams of the project.

Specifically, this initiative addresses new qualifications and competencies in TVET.

Additional Innovation and Learning Practices cover the following areas:



New qualifications and competencies in TVET

- *Identifying new qualifications and competencies in a timely manner;*
- *Integrating them into appealing and flexible curricula and training regulations; and*
- *Implementing them in innovative training approaches.*



Digitalization



Entrepreneurship in TVET



Greening TVET



Migration and TVET

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More information about this practice
<http://mols.gov.et>

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About the BILT Project

UNESCO-UNEVOC's Bridging Innovation and Learning in TVET (BILT) project is a reference point for innovation and learning in TVET. It fosters global policy dialogue and peer learning among TVET stakeholders while promoting innovation and inclusive excellence in TVET. BILT complements developments at the national level in supporting innovative, market-oriented and attractive modes of learning and cooperation in TVET.

The BILT project explores the process of identifying, integrating and implementing new qualifications and competencies in TVET. This is known as the 'three I's process'.

In addition to the broad focus on new qualifications and competencies, BILT addresses four complementary themes: Digitalization in TVET, Greening TVET, Entrepreneurship in TVET, and Migration and TVET.

For more information, please visit
www.unevoc.unesco.org/bilt

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New qualifications and competencies in TVET

- **Identifying** new qualifications and competencies in a timely manner;
- **Integrating** them into appealing and flexible curricula and training regulations; and
- **Implementing** them in innovative training approaches.

Entrepreneurship in TVET

Unlocking the potential of innovative entrepreneurial activities and fostering entrepreneurial culture

Greening TVET

Responding to new development paradigms for sustainability and reduced environmental impact

Digitalization in TVET

Providing response to new skills demands, as technology has permeated the world of work and is changing the profile of jobs

Migration and TVET

Accelerating the integration of migrants into their host communities, and allowing them to become productive members of the workforce

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