

Assessment of recognition of prior learning experiences of students in the TVET system in Ghana. Is it a rhetoric or reality?

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Abstract: *The changing economic and working environment has led to increasing emphasis on what individuals have acquired outside the educational institutions as a key policy issue in developing countries such as Ghana. Its potential is enormous not only as a framework for providing retrospective credit, exemptions and advanced standing into higher education programmes, but also crucially, as a tool for continuing professional development and wider workforce development. This paper explores the whole process of recognising prior learning of students, through the review of research studies, identifies successes and barriers hindering its implementation and describes the lead taken in other countries from which Ghana can learn. A lot of efforts have been put into the policy initiatives of RPL in the TVET institutions in Ghana but there seems to be lack of commitment in its implementation. The paper therefore concludes with policy guidelines that will enable the benefits of RPL to learners, institutions, employers and the nation to be realised.*

Keywords: *Assessment, prior learning, recognition, competencies, lifelong learning*

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I. Introduction

The need to establish systems for assessment of what adults have learnt outside the educational institutions is key policy issue in developing countries such as Ghana. The changing economic and working environment requires lifelong learning in different contexts and diverse situations makes it extremely difficult for individuals to have a stable and single career pathway. Rather, individuals need to prepare for a number of working roles and different opportunities to continually update and transfer their knowledge and skills. The notion of recognizing and accrediting what individuals already know and can do is gaining significant impact in the training programmes in many countries. As the world resources keep on dwindling in the face of rapid population increases, employers, human resource development specialists and government policy makers have a common goal of optimizing existing resources, maximizing available infrastructure and personal qualities by providing opportunities where every individual can make maximum use of their potentials (Moore and Rooyen, 2002). Educators, trainers, and other human resource development specialists are concerned that too much valuable time and effort is lost, teaching people what they already know and can do. Changes in work practices, needs of the labour market, the pressures of employability and high labour mobility create opportunities for RPL to play an important role in managing vocational pathways and developing skills of workers.

Recognition of prior learning (RPL)

The process of giving official acknowledgement to formal, informal, and non-formal is commonly referred to as assessment, accreditation, or recognition of prior learning (RPL). The concept of RPL is defined differently among countries due to differences in the usage and implementation strategies. In Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, the term RPL is used while in the UK, the accepted term is Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning (APEL). Slightly different terminology is used in other countries, such as Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition,(PLAR) in USA and Canada, although Accreditation of Prior Learning is sometimes used in Canada College Credit, *eeder verworven competenties* (EVC) in the Netherlands. The concept of RPL is understood by most people in the area of adult education as a method of assessing relevant competences gained through work and life experiences, which can then be counted towards qualification and for promotion in the workplace through the use of systematic set of procedures (Harris, 2000). In the context of VET, RPL refers to the practice that enables competences acquired by students in various circumstances to be recognized and accredited as part of their studies or qualification. Students' prior learning is recognized regardless of how, where and when they were acquired. In the process students become responsible for demonstrating, proving and providing adequate information on their competences. The process also enables students to evaluate their competences in relation to the goals in their study programmes.

The main goal of RPL is to recognize and acknowledge individuals' competence and knowledge regardless of how and where it has been acquired (Freitag, 2007; Stenlund, 2010). It also provides diverse and inclusive pathways to learning especially for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and to promote life-long learning (Stenlund, 2010). In many contexts, the concept, procedures, and tools for recognition of RPL have become integral part of competency-based assessment systems. Therefore RPL is only one of the forms, tools and procedures of competency-based assessment.

RPL and competency-based training

RPL has become an integral part of CBT because there is no difference between the concepts, procedures and tools in RPL and competency-based training (CBT) assessment processes. Both RPL and CBT assessment involve monitoring and assessing competences a person has, irrespective of where and how these competences were acquired. Consequently, both RPL and assessment of CBT emphasize three principles, namely assessment of evidence, current abilities and standards or competences. In CBT system, study programmes can vary greatly as in the form of length and depth, but RPL is at the extreme end of the continuum as it represents an assessment-only pathway (Knight, 2006). In Australia, RPL includes recognition of current competencies, the situation which arises when workers in certain occupations already have their competence certificated but are required to have it periodically reassessed to maintain their currency of their occupational licence or other certification. In this framework, RPL sometimes excludes credit transfer, a situation where a student is granted status or credit for equivalent subjects successfully completed with some other education or training organisation. Credit transfer is essentially an administrative process that does not involve an assessment of the applicant's competence (Knight, 2006).

Underpinning to the concept of RPL is the notion of lifelong learning. Lifelong learning is an active, on-going, voluntary and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge and skills to develop the self to be able to solve problems in life and employment. Lifelong learning is said to promote employability, economic competitiveness, mobility and individual fulfilment (Colardyn and Bjornåvold, 2004 cited in Stenlund, 2010).

Series of thoughts have been given to the development of procedures to assess prior learning, regardless of how of whether the learning has taken place in formal, informal or non-formal settings. However, there is paucity of research in this area. Implementing RPL and promoting its utilisation has been a policy priority as an integral part of the CBT implementation in Ghana and emergence of the Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

Study Purpose

Policy and research in RPL is often premised on the notion that learning from experience can be made equivalent to academic learning Stenlund (2010). Although many countries and VET institutions have public policies on RPL as a useful tool for social inclusion into formal education, its implementation has met various challenges, leading to low recognition of its qualification among HEIs (Bateman and Knight, 2002, Smith and Clayton, 2009). Key challenges are funding, assessment procedures and language problems. As an emerging VET system in Ghana, TVET institutions and technical universities need to identify pragmatic solutions to these challenges to be able to offer opportunities for the increasing number of junior and senior high school as well as technical graduates who are learning trades provided by master crafts people in the informal sector. As assessment procedures are meant to provide relevant information to inform accurate decision making, it is crucial to examine issues regarding the quality, utility and fairness in this type of assessment. The study therefore seeks to review the current situation, research on the assessment of prior learning in other countries so that Ghana can learn from their experiences to address the implementation issues.

II. Methodology

The study investigates the extent to which students' prior learning experiences are recognised in the TVET system in Ghana. The review on this study was based on relevant literature and policy papers from several databases including Academic Search Elite, Science Direct, Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC) and Web of Science in order to explore the RPL experiences among the countries. The search on the databases was conducted using combination of keywords such as assessment, accreditation, and recognition with the following descriptors; prior learning, experiential learning, informal learning, non-formal learning and work-related learning. The research review involved the philosophical foundations, theoretical models, procedure, processes and methods of assessment, and international experiences in the implementation of RPL. Contextual analysis was used to explore some relevant similarities and differences in the educational, economic and social contexts that influenced the CBT reforms in other countries. Relevant scholarly literature and policy documents were thoroughly examined to obtain insights into the principles, operational criteria and recommendations for best practices for emerging TVET systems like Ghana. The outcome of the analysis was used to generate conclusions to support the instructors' roles and strategies for RPL delivery in Ghana.

Recognition of Prior Learning Policy in Ghana.

Developing and promoting RPL is still an important priority for the TVET system in Ghana. A further clear testimony of the government preparedness towards its implementation is that it continues to be the subject of discussion by all the supervisory bodies of TVET in Ghana, namely; COTVET, NABPTEX, NAB, and development partners such as JICA, CIDA, NUFFIC and DANIDA. However, since 2006, most of the focus on these discussions to date has been on increasing awareness through series of workshops and seminars, developing resources or draft manuals which will assist learners, training providers and assessors, relevance and possible cost-benefits analysis of RPL to applicants and the TVET system in general. There is no hard information from any TVET institution on the RPL rates among the enrolling students. Currently, there is no consensus among interested parties as to how much credit can be awarded from RPL towards a particular qualification or quality assurance procedures to achieve credibility in the wards. Institution and employers could make better use of their resources to promote long-term human resource development by ensuring that applicants are not made to learn and do what they already know and can do.

More traditional educational discussion uses RPL to include credit transfer and sometimes creates different terms for the narrower sense. Recognition of prior learning is a strong means to recognize and validate competencies obtained outside the formal education and training systems for purposes of certification. Among the sectors in which RPL can be launched in Ghana include tourism, construction, printing, and plumbing, fitting and welding, dressmaking, hairdressing, beautician and cosmetics, electrical works installation, panel beating, Spray painting, agriculture, carpentry, masonry, roofing and tiling and adult literacy.

A report of the technical committee on the harmonization of competency-based training (CBT) in Ghana, recommended the adoption of policy on the RPL within the context of the TVET qualifications framework. The committee believes that the guidelines and policy will help solve the problem of all prior learning which has not been previously assessed or credit-rated. This will include prior learning achieved through life and work experiences as well as prior leaning gained in less formal context, work-based learning, and continuing professional development. Moreover, developing effective mechanisms for recognizing prior learning is an essential element of the successful implementation of the TVET Qualifications Framework and will also help in the promotion of the life-long learning concept in CBT

Goals of the RPL Policy in Ghana

- Recognize and validate competencies obtained outside the formal education and training systems for purposes of certification
- Recognize and support the legitimate interests of Ghanaians in obtaining credit for prior learning
- Assure public availability and scrutiny of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) provisions
- To ensure a consistent and equitable approach to the granting of credit for prior learning (COTVET Validation workshop, 2016).

In Ghana, RPL has the potential to be a powerful tool for the development of human capital in the CBT implementation. Many skills acquired informally through self-learning or apprenticeship are not recognized (Palmer, 2009). Although a greater percentage of Junior and Senior High School (JHS/SHS) leavers engage in training provided by master craft personnel in various trades, (Doudu, 2006), there is no well-defined progression or training pathways within the whole VET system in Ghana, making it difficult for these trainees in the informal sector to obtain opportunities for higher levels of qualification. For education and training in Ghana to be accessible to all, then individuals must be encouraged to continually acquire new skills and gain reward and recognition for existing skills, experiences and learning previously acquired. Appreciation and recognition of prior learning will motivate learners to continue learning to develop the self to be able to solve problems in life and employment.

Philosophical foundations of the recognition of prior learning

The philosophical roots of RPL are found in the educational philosophy of John Dewey, the social psychology of Kurt Lewin and the cognitive developmental theory of Piaget (Rooyen & Moore, 2002). Central to these theories is that learning is seen as a lifelong developmental process which is personal and holistic; new learning is integrated into the experience and cognitive sets of the learner to form new and creative outcomes which reflect an application of knowledge, understanding, skills and values. These theories also mean that high level and quality learning can be gained through experience and informal means. On the basis of this, RPL is commonly considered as adult learning principles that reflect the notion of a lifelong learning occurring in a real world, through a wide range of styles, methods and contexts or environments (Masters & McCury cited in Rooyen & Moore, 2002). Thus, experiences lead to learning and learning leads to understanding, while understanding triggers the ability to generalise and from that leads to insight (Rooyen & Moore, 2002).

Theoretical models and perspectives of RPL procedures

Two main models or perspectives of RPL practices have been developed by several authors, the credit exchange and the developmental model. In the credit exchange model, the claimant offers evidence of past achievements and credit is awarded if this evidence indicates the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities. In the development model, aside evidence of past achievement, the claimants are asked to evaluate their prior experience and the associated learning. The evaluation stage of the assessment process is meant to reflect on personal and professional development (Stenlund, 2009). Osman (2004) cited in Stenlund (2009) suggests the transformational model as the third approach to recognise experiential or invisible learning as valid academic knowledge generated outside the academic institution. While the credit exchange approach seems efficient and attractive to some, the reflective process of the developmental model seems to offer insight and fresh understanding to others. The transformational model appears to be a preferred choice because reflection is essential in assessment process but the major concern is whether academic institutions have the capacity and competence to assess this invisible learning (Osman, 2004).

RPL implementation process

The implementation and utilisation of RPL and APEL in Australia and UK respectively are offered on national basis and involves national lead agencies such assessors, advisors, and verifiers who initiates coordinate and promote RPL development through the provision of adequate information, assessment procedures, economic support and quality assurances (Knight, 2006; Starsz, 2011). The RPL process is usually based on modularisation of study programmes on the basis of specified learning outcomes. It involves learners presenting a portfolio of work or collection of evidence supported by verbal or narrative argument (Lester, 2007). Sources and types of evidence include copies of pay slips, resumes, performance appraisal, logbook entries, achievement records, training records, papers and photograph, samples of completed work, references from current and past employers, supervisors and colleagues, certificates, testimonials from clients and work samples. These collections are evaluated to ensure whether the evidence can be accepted as credit, be counted towards qualification, or determine readiness for admission to a programme or specific course (Joosten-Ten Brinke et al, 2008, Lordly, 2007). The evaluation process includes document analysis, authentic and knowledge tests involving written, oral and computer-based test or demonstration of practical skills. In the UK, other criteria for evaluating evidence for APEL include acceptability, sufficiency, authenticity and currency (Garnett et al, 2004). Assessment process of RPL/APEL is subject to the same rigour as competence which depends on the student's performance of narrow set of skills prescribed by the employer in the workplace (Brockmann et al, 2008). Learning outcomes are measured in terms of 'competent' or 'not yet competent' as in Australia and 'pass / fail' in the UK because the outcome of learning is specified in a single performance criterion which can either be demonstrated or not.

Methods of assessment of RPL

The method of assessment of RPL should always be appropriate for the learner, and the context of the experience so as to provide evidence of learning which has taken place. Ways of assessing an RPL claim include:

- A portfolio of evidence with reflective commentaries
- A focused interview or viva based on materials submitted for assessment
- Submission of a piece of work and a reflective account of learning achieved
- An artifact such as a sculpture, a design, a painting, a model, with an explanation of its relevance to the learning outcomes of a unit, module or pathway.
- Encapsulation, which permits additional work to be completed to make up the difference / deficit between the level of applicant's prior learning and the level of the receiving pathway (Garnett, et al, 2004)

Criteria for determining the appropriateness of evidence for assessment

The Quality Assurance Agency (2004) cited in Garnett, et al, (2004) considers the following criteria as range of evidence suitable to support a claim for RPL.

- Acceptability- is there an appropriate match between the evidence presented and the learning being demonstrated, is the evidence valid and reliable
- Sufficiency – is there sufficient evidence to demonstrate fully the achievement of the learning claimed
- Authenticity- is the evidence clearly related to the applicant's own efforts and achievements.
- Currency- does the evidence relate to current learning?

International experiences in RPL

Blom et al (2004) found that employees who accessed RPL in an enterprise-based training enhanced employment prospects of learners, identified skill gaps and opportunities for networking with other learners and

staff within training organisation. It is further reported that students who undergo RPL process exhibit greater self-confidence, improved self-esteem, problem-solving skills, self-awareness and higher motivation to continue with their studies (Whittaker, Whittaker and Clearly, 2006). Some of these potential benefits of RPL however, must be treated with caution since much of the literature is often prescriptive or descriptive and the claims lack rigorous methodology and analysis (Joosten-Ten Brinke et al, 2008; Smith and Clayton, 2009).

Bateman and Knight (2002) report that the use of RPL in Australia is greatest among older VET students (25-39), probably due the fact that older students are more able to compose their portfolios compared to the younger ones. It is reported that in 2004, proportion of students with at least one RPL subject was 10% for Diploma and above students, 5.5% for certificate III & IV and 1.8% for Certificates I & II students. In terms of age group, students with RPL for age (25-39years) were 4.4%, (20-24years) were 4.2% and 2.1% for (15-19years) (Knight, 2006). This contrasts with the UK system where award of NVQ on the basis of APEL is much higher at levels 1 to 3 (Certificates levels) than 4 to 8 (Diploma and Degree levels) because of low theoretical content at the lower levels. This adversely affects progression between different NVQ levels and from vocational to academic route (Garnett et al, 2004). Despite the perceived advantages of access and equity, RPL implementation as a route to qualification in both Australia and UK has not achieved much success. As a result, the number of students gaining APEL annually in higher institutions was relatively low (Irving, 2002). Similarly, students who received RPL in the university in Australia slightly increased from 4.2% to 5.2% and in the VET system from 6.8% to 7.3% between 1997 and 2001 (Wheelahan et al, 2002). Other challenges include high cost of implementation, labour and resource intensive, and applicants' difficulty in writing portfolios. The poor perception about the effectiveness of RPL has resulted to a problem of mutual recognition of qualifications among universities, VET colleges and related fields of study, forcing applicants to undertake extra training on skills they have previously acquired (Wheelahan et al, 2002; Stenlund, 2010).

One major concern about the use of RPL is the problem for learners to be awarded academic credit on behalf of their own reflections on their learning. Other concerns are the process of converting informal, non-formal and previous experiences and competences gained from different contexts to fit very well into formal into the depth and range of formal learning or credits. One problem in this context is that students are likely to miss valuable learning opportunities. In this regard, Wagner & Childs (2006) conclude that RPL must focus on access and learning opportunities of students rather than award of credits or advanced standing. Further, the use of portfolio may disadvantage some groups of applicants who cannot write or organise the required documents, procedure is complicated and time consuming while some universities are not ready to publicly assess and award credits to informal and non-formal competence.

In Ghana, RPL is not officially known in the CBT implementation. Many skills acquired informally through self-learning or apprenticeship are not recognised (Palmer, 2009). For example, about 60% of the junior High school leavers (JHS) and a further 30% of Senior High School (SHS) leavers who could not proceed to SHS and tertiary education respectively engage in training provided by master craftsmen in various trades (Doudu, 2006.). However, most of the skills acquired by these trainees through training are not recognised. Moreover, there is no well-defined progression or training pathways within the whole VET system in Ghana, making it difficult for these trainees in the informal sector to obtain opportunities for higher levels of qualification. It is reported that only 1.6% of the total educated labour force in Ghana has some qualification in vocational and technical education (Baffour-Awuah and Thompson, 2011). Given these realities, there is the need for qualification framework which recognises individual's prior learning from a variety of contexts to enable trainees in the informal sector acquire higher levels of vocational qualification.

RPL implementation issues

From the review of studies on RPL, students who undergo RPL process are said to exhibit greater self-confidence, improved self-esteem, self-awareness and higher motivation to continue with their studies (Whittaker, Whittaker, and Clearly, 2006). As the process of RPL encourages learners to continue educating themselves and upgrading their skills and knowledge for improved employment outcomes in itself is considered to be part of lifelong learning (Smith and Clayton, 2009, Stenlund, 2010). This assists individuals to gain a feeling of self-worth and confidence to make changes in their lives and career directions.

However, both the NVQ system and the training packages in the UK and Australia respectively focused on assessment of task-specific skills deemed necessary for certain job roles that required little or no underpinning knowledge. As such, these systems neither enhanced the production of innovative knowledge nor lifelong learning and individual social and occupational mobility (Brockmann et al, 2008). Moreover, low theoretical content also tend to inhibit progression between different levels of NVQs and from vocational to academic routes (Garnett et al, 2004). The issue of pre-defining outcomes against specific standards tends to restrict the assessors' judgement to routine practices in the workplace which may not guarantee employability. Moreover, when outcomes of learning are tied to descriptions of work or specific workplace activity it

emphasises tradition and discourage the development of innovative knowledge and new forms of practice, leaving graduates for largely routine and restricted tasks (Nuffield Review, 2008).

Though RPL forms part of the Australia, UK, and Netherlands' pathways to vocational qualification, its implementation has not been very effective in the VET systems of many countries due to factors such as inadequate resources, time and complex processes of gathering evidence about applicants. (Mayet, 2006 cited in Stenlund 2010). Studies reveal that many higher TVET institutions seem to lack real commitment to tackling the issue of widening access to higher educational qualifications neither have they made conscious decisions to implement good RPL policies (Osborne, 2003, Knight, 2003 cited in Stenlund, 2010). The issue of de-recognition of the prior learning of trainees is not only seen as unnecessary repetition of the competencies, skills and knowledge but also a disincentive to skill development and achievement of vocational qualification. Palmer (2009) notes that RPL is important to facilitate an individual's move from informal to formal economy, and from less to more productive employment.

In the implementation of CBT approach in the TVET institutions in Ghana, teaching, learning and assessment usually take place in simulated working environment due to inadequate workshops, equipment and training materials (Boahin & Hofman, 2012). This creates particular problems for effective implementation of RPL assessment as the context needed to allow the applicant to demonstrate the required knowledge and skills is not available. Neither is it possible to develop standardised assessment tasks which could be administered to assess an applicant's competence due to the inability of candidates to perform in a realistic context. In this regard, RPL assessment depends heavily on supporting evidence supplied by the applicant, an employer or by some other person who has first-hand knowledge of the applicant's competence and performance in a relevant context. Equally daunting task facing most applicants is gathering of the necessary portfolio, and support materials while assessors have same daunting task of evaluating these materials.

Policy issues towards RPL implementation in Ghana

RPL assessment must involve diverse performance indicators

For RPL assessment to enhance employability, performance indicators must cover both routine and non-routine workplace practices, situational contexts and contingency management skills in order to promote flexibility and adaptable labour force to deal with the unknown (Reid and Fitzgerald, 2011). RPL means that learning takes place outside higher educational institutions while knowledge is produced outside the classroom. Higher educational institutions need to change their roles and mindsets and rather forge new partnership models with industries and the informal sector to implement RPL to widen participation and equal opportunities to all applicants, as a tool to improve and expand skills in the labour market and a mechanism for social inclusion.

Flexible and support systems in TVET institutions

To address the promotion and take-up of RPL, public TVET institutions which receive public funds to deliver training should offer RPL as mature entrance examinations for all workers entering training as mature students to strengthening wider participation and social inclusion. Higher educational institutions in Ghana require flexible entry and exit points, trained assessors and institutional culture that is prepared to change. In addition, there is the need to establish appropriate, flexible, valid, and reliable systems of RPL and resources that support the system. Equally important is the investments in both time and money as well as change in higher organisational culture and policy for successful implementation (Heath 2001 cited in Stenlund, 2010).

Institutions need to produce materials and handbooks which clearly explain RPL processes and how to access these processes e.g; how to get started at unit, module or pathway level, how to gain support and advice through the use of workplace mentor, on-line tutor or handbook, including the use of appropriate institutional templates, the timescales for submission, the nature and currency of evidence etc;. These materials must be accessible in a range of formats, including audio, visual and web-based materials.

Access and equity

Emerging relationships between global economy and educational institutions reveal that education increasingly follows the requirement of work. Therefore, to promote access and equity, RPL assessment must be fair, linked to standards, and non-discriminatory or any potential hidden discrimination should be actually guarded against. Consideration need to be given by institutions to learners with special requirements, including students with disabilities, and the medium of assessment is a second language.

For Ghana to achieve a large stock of human capital for its economic development, RPL needs to be an integral part of the TVET sector to provide access to learning pathways for the large number of JHS and SHS leavers without qualification as well as those engaged in training in various trades. To this end, RPL could be organised in a modular approach in the VET system to assist applicants to obtain a qualification after completion of the module. Implementing RPL in the educational system in Ghana is likely to address the needs

of disadvantaged groups, part-time and mature students who seek to obtain entry into programmes by removing the artificial barriers between academic and VET systems.

Relevant agencies to harmonise systems, procedures and processes of RPL

There is no consensus among interested parties as to how much credit can be awarded from RPL towards a particular qualification, quality assurance procedures to achieve credibility in the wards and the political will and support to implementation of RPL. Other relevant agencies, organisations, institutions supervisory bodies (COTVET, ITABS, NABPTEX, TEU, polytechnics and Technical Universities, etc;) involved in the actual delivery need to harmonise their systems, procedures and instruments.

Successful RPL implementation also requires the development of common fundamental principles, method, instruments, consistency in procedures and processes of RPL both in and among higher education and faculty study programmes, supervisory agencies and across all countries to promote mutual recognition of qualifications among universities, VET colleges and related fields of study.

Integrating various settings and innovative techniques for RPL

The RPL notion that learning takes place in different contexts has implications for the design of teaching and learning modules in terms of structure, delivery and assessment. To this end, TVET institutions, and other HEIs need to formally integrate various settings, such as work placement; blended learning that includes face-to-face, video-conferencing and on-line learning for on-campus and off-campus students; company-in-house training; and community practices into mainstream training programmes.

Innovative techniques such as the e-portfolio and an on-line facility to offer quality information on RPL for both students and staff could promote greater awareness, reduce bulky physical products and documents, minimise the time-consuming and onerous tasks of the assessment process and serve as a quality control as it monitors the verification process.

Collaborative efforts of relevant stakeholders

A rigorous and effective RPL system requires the support of government, institutions and the business community to provide funds and materials as the process is apparently resource-intensive. The need for COTVET to intensify training programmes to enhance the capacity of the training system to deliver services and to promote good practice in the TVET systems. Capacities need to developed on the training of assessors, evidence of performance, standards and methods of assessment, detailed criteria to be collected and evaluated and explore other possibilities and models adopted in other countries to benefit a large number of individuals, the labour market partners and the society as a whole.

III. Conclusion

The success of RPL to serve the interest of the workers and the TVET system at large cannot simply be a talk shop, but through a more pragmatic and conscious effort in its implementation. For Ghana to move from rhetoric to reality institutions should have a transparent criteria for awarding or not approving credit for RPL claims and all decisions should be demonstrably rigorous, fair and equitable. Assessment of RPL must be subjected to the same rigour as the mainstream assessment of current learning, be open to external review, scrutiny and monitoring and procedures for dealing with queries and complaints to ensure reliability and mutual recognition to support progression across all TVET systems.

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