



Ministry of Gender, Labour  
& Social Development



# REPORT ON THE 1<sup>ST</sup> EAST AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING



**HELD AT NICAN RESORT HOTEL**

**11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

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## List of abbreviations

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ALE	Adult Learning and Education
ALESBA	Adult Learning and Education System Building Approach
BTVET	Business, Technical Veterinary Education and Training
CEG	Community Empowerment Group
CESA	Continental Education Strategy for Africa
CLC	Community Learning Centre
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DIT	Directorate of Industrial Training
DVV	German Adult Education Association
ICOLEW	Integrated Community Learning for Wealth Creation
MDA	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MoES	Ministry of Education Sports
MoGLSD	MoGLSD
NALCES	Non-formal Adult Learning and Community Education Strategy
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
QFs	Qualification Frameworks
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RVA	Recognition, Validation and Accreditation
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SUICOLEW	Support for Integrated Community Learning for Wealth Creation
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UIL	UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

## Executive summary

This report provides the activities that took place during the 1<sup>st</sup> East African Conference on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) which was held on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of December 2024. The 1<sup>st</sup> East African Conference on Recognition of Prior Learning brought together adult educators, researchers, adult education advocates, practitioners from government, civil society and academia from Tanzania and Uganda. The conference aimed at developing understanding of RPL frameworks, processes and methodologies, sharing experiences on RPL and Qualification Frameworks (QFs) and developing next steps for development of RPL and QFs in Uganda and Tanzania.

The first day began with registration, introductions, prayer, objectives, norms and official opening by Hon Dr. Peace Mutuuzo, the Minister of State Gender and Culture. First Keynote address presentation was made by Katie Jones of UIL. She gave the international perspective of RPL. Dr. Shirley Lloyd made the second keynote address and it covered the assessment of the status of RPL in Uganda and Tanzania. This was followed by a world Café that discussed the presentations and drew lessons for the future.

On the second day, the Dr. Shirley Lloyd presented case studies on RPL from South Africa. While Prof Assinger another RPL expert from the University of Graz provided case studies from Austria. There was a panel discussion on experiences from Uganda and Tanzania. A way forward was developed by both Uganda and Tanzania teams showing what will done to have an operational RPL framework and to operationalize it. The conference was concluded with a Declaration and Call for Action on RPL.

The call for action reflected the commitment pf participants who agreed on the following;

- Improve coordination, awareness raising, financing, and addressing language concerns;
- Conduct collaborative research in the area of Recognition of Prior Learning and Qualification Frameworks;
- Develop mechanisms, methods and tools for assessment and accreditation of prior learning;

- Appeal to government to design relevant guidelines, institutionalise Recognition of Prior Learning in existing structures and mobilise adequate resources to implement Recognition of Prior Learning;
- Develop National Qualification Framework with Recognition of Prior Learning as a critical component (Uganda) and in Tanzania, operationalise the National Qualification Framework;
- Develop a community of Recognition of Prior Learning practitioners to deepen information exchange and knowledge production and sharing;
- Harness the developing relationship and collaboration with expert and experienced scholars (Dr. Phillip Assinger and Dr. Shirley Lloyd) and institutions (UIL, DVV International), particularly those that have been part of the foundational process of this learning journey; and,
- Adopt the recommendations of the assessment report.

# 1 Introduction and Background

## 1.1 Introduction

This report provides the activities that took place during the 1<sup>st</sup> East African Conference on RPL which was held on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of November 2024 in Kampala, Uganda. It provides details of what transpired in the plenary and breakaway sessions during the conference. The report also provides lessons learned at the conference and their implications for training, policy and practice. The report ends with a declaration and call for action on RPL (Kampala Declaration on RPL, 2024).

## 1.2 Background

Ever since Uganda (MoGLSD) changed the adult literacy programme from FAL to ICOLEW, a number of developments have taken place. There has been a shift from using the functional adult literacy approach that integrates reading, writing and numeracy with livelihood skills. Since 2016, MoGLSD with support from DVV International has been implementing the ICOLEW Programme using a more comprehensive approach - ALESBA. The ALE system assessment was conducted in 2021 revealed some blockages in the system element (enabling environment) that included the absence of a strategy. The strategy was developed and adopted by stakeholders in December 2023. One of the objectives stated in the strategy is the development of qualification framework for nonformal learning and recognition, validation and certification of prior learning (RPL). Additionally, in Tanzania, there was need to operationalize the qualification framework that was endorsed in 2024 with RPL included as a key principle of the Qualification framework.

Dr Shriley Lloyed, an expert in RPL from South Africa was contracted to undertake an assessment of the status of RPL in Uganda and Tanzania whose results were shared in this conference. Additionally, experiences at international level and selected case studies at country level have been shared or shall be shared during this conference, and the lesson learned used in developing RPL frameworks for Uganda and Tanzania. This conference is therefore an attempt to generate ideas for the development of RPL in Uganda and Tanzania.

The 1<sup>st</sup> East African Conference on RPL aimed to develop understanding of RPL, sharing experiences in the development and implementation of RPL in Uganda,

Tanzania and outside the region and developing a roadmap for the development and implementation of RPL in both countries. The conference brought together participants from Uganda and Tanzania who were drawn from MDA, CSOs, academia, media representing the service providers and beneficiaries of ALE to share experiences, best practices and innovative solutions. The facilitators of the conference included Dr. Shirley Lloyd, an experienced academic and practitioner of RPL from South Africa, Ms. Katie Jones, an expert on RPL from UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning and Dr. Phillip Assinger, from the University of Graz - Austria.

The purpose of the conference was to provide a platform for stakeholders to engage in critical discussions on the issues currently shaping RPL across the East African region and beyond.

## **Day One**

### **2. Registration, Prayer and Opening Remarks**

The first day of the conference started with registration that captured the registration details of all the participants present at the conference hall. Registration was guided by Ms. Nigat Tsegaye who also supplied the conference materials. After the registration, the moderator of the conference Dr. Ephraim Lemmy Nuwagaba welcomed all the participants and resource persons to the conference and Uganda, the pearl of Africa. This was followed by self-introductions by the participants from Uganda, Tanzania and South Africa who were in the conference hall. There were participants who were on line and these were introduced by the moderator of the conference. To set the conference rolling, a prayer seeking God's guidance and blessings for a successful conference was made.

## 2.1 Welcome Remarks



In his welcome remarks, the conference host, Country Director – DVV International, Mr. Caesar Kyebakola recognized the presence of all participants and welcomed them to the conference on RPL and QFs, the first of its kind in East Africa. He thanked members of the organizing committee that comprised of officials from MoGLSD, DVV International - the regional office in Tanzania and country office in Uganda, and the moderator. He revealed that the

participants were very carefully selected and because of their expertise, the conference is expected to lay the necessary groundwork for RPL in particular and QFs in general to thrive in both countries. He noted that the conference deliberations would feed into building a complete education system that takes into consideration the needs of formal as well as non-formal learning interests. This is in line with interventions suggested in the Non-formal Adult Learning and Community Education Strategy for Uganda (NALCES) 2023/24-2027/28. He concluded by wishing the participants fruitful deliberations and a happy stay in Uganda for those coming from outside.

## 2.2 Opening Remarks by Head of Delegation, Tanzania



The Head of the conference delegation from Tanzania, Director of TVET from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Dr. Fredrick Salukele introduced the delegation and expressed appreciation to the organisers of the conference for inviting them. He noted that QFs recognise RPL in the formal and non-formal education sector including TVET and university education. He argued that in Tanzania, from primary school, each

student has a vocational skill they are trained in, same as in secondary schools. These vocational skills are equated. He noted that one can go through vocational skilling from primary to PhD level. He concluded by saying that Tanzania has given RPL a high priority for both formal and non-formal learning and is recognised in the Tanzanian QF.

### 2.3 Remarks by East African Regional Director, DVV International



In her remarks, Ms. Frauke Heinze the Regional Director, DVV International (East Africa Region) welcomed all the participants present to the first East African conference on RPL and appreciated their role in promoting adult learning. She acknowledged the presence of the participants online, and recognized the presence of Hon. Dr. Peace Mutuuzo, the Chief Guest, and Minister of State for Gender and Culture in the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development.

She briefly explained the work DVV International, focusing on Tanzania and Uganda. She highlighted the relevance of RPL in the work context of Uganda and Tanzania and provided a justification why DVV is supporting the conference on RPL. She noted that Uganda and Tanzania as many African countries are facing high drop-out rates in primary schools and there are many non-literates and therefore, they are engaged in non-formal education. She however, noted that due to the absence of RPL, there is a challenge for this majority of the population to access formal education using the skills obtained non-formally. She revealed that DVV International initiatives is to support RPL frameworks and operations together with its partners from both countries through the ICOLEW and ICBAE Programme. She affirmed that she believed the team of experts making the presentations at the conference had the necessary expertise to steer the process of developing RPL and can therefore guide the conferences appropriately. She wished the participants useful deliberations.

## 2.4 Conference expectations, objectives and ground rules

The moderator of the conference Dr. Ephraim Lemmy Nuwagaba guided participants in brainstorming on conference expectations and ground rules for guiding participants throughout the conference after which he presented the conference objectives.

### **Conference Expectations**

- i. To learn about RPL and its linkage with QFs.
- ii. To share experience regarding RPL in East Africa and globally and how it is incorporated in the NQF.
- iii. To learn success stories on the development and implementation of RPL
- iv. To discuss how NQF will align with current efforts of education reforms by MoES.
- v. To know how to implement the NQF internationally.
- vi. To understand how the recommendations of the assessment on the status of RPL in Uganda and Tanzania can help prepare an RPL mechanism, implement it and the results thereof.
- vii. To learn how to modernise the RPL to benefit the people.
- viii. To share experiences on RPL and QFs, learn from other countries and network for future opportunities on RPL and QFs
- ix. To understand the processes, structures and the roles & responsibilities of each structure.
- x. To learn about RPL and the pathways that can help learners in non-formal education to get into the formal education and to which levels.
- xi. To know future opportunities for non-formal education.
- xii. To learn on how RPL can help in the growth and development of a country.
- xiii. To creating a learning a platform on RPL.

### **Ground Rules**

The ground rules the participants agreed on were that;

- Phones be put in silent mode
- Time be managed well

### **Objectives of the Conference**

The objectives of the conference were to;

1. To develop understanding of RPL and QF frameworks, processes and methodologies.
2. To understand the status of the development and implementation of RPL in Uganda and Tanzania
3. To share experiences on the development and implementation of RPL and QFs in Uganda and Tanzania and outside the region.
4. Develop a roadmap for RPL in Uganda and in Tanzania.

### 3. Official opening

The official opening was moderated by Ms. Lydia Naluwende of MoGLSD. Who briefed the minister about the purpose of the conference, what had so far been covered and the pending activities. She then invited the Commissioner, Community Development and Literacy to make his remarks and invite the minister to open the conference.



#### 3.1 Remarks by Commissioner, Literacy & Community Development



The Commissioner, Literacy and Community Development, MoGLSD, Mr. Evarist Tumwesigye began by highlighting the importance of providing adult literacy services to the non-and semi-literates so that they are not left behind in community development processes.

He acknowledged the collaborative efforts of different actors working in the adult literacy and community education sector and appreciated DVV International for support government efforts in reaching out to the non-and semi literates. He explained that ICOLEW programme, which was started in 2016 with support from DVV International

and covering four districts had been successfully piloted. He shared a milestone, the good news that government of Uganda had given SUICOLEW a code to rollout the programme countrywide. He added that UNESCO Korea will support CLC in eight (8) districts including Bunyangabu.

He concluded by expressing hope that the conference will move forward initiatives to develop RPL and a qualifications framework for non-formal learning in Uganda. He then invited the Honourable Minister to give her speech.

### 3.2 Official Opening by the Chief Guest



The Minister of State Gender and Culture, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development who was the chief guest welcomed all participants to the conference and informed them that Uganda was happy to host the first ever East African conference on prior learning. She noted that while Uganda had made progress in the provision of adult learning programmes, attaining accreditation of the knowledge and skills to qualify for a smooth transition to lifelong learning

opportunities and gainful employment remains a challenge. Additionally, the 24% of the Ugandan population who remains non literate (approximately 10 million), (UBOS 2022), justify the relevance of ALE services. She noted that education policies in Uganda align well with SDG 4. Recognising that Tanzania's literacy rate of 82% is better than Uganda's, she argued that Uganda can a lot from Tanzania. She reiterated Uganda's constitutional mandate and commitment to supporting education including non-formal adult learning. She decried the absence of a national qualifications framework in Uganda, and yet the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) 2016-2025, mandates countries to develop and implement national qualifications frameworks that ensure RPL including competences acquired through the non-formal learning pathway.

She commended DVV International for collaborating with the Government to embark on the development of RPL and QF for non-formal learning as recommended in NALCES. She expressed optimism that Recognition of Prior Learning will enhance non-formal adult learning satisfaction, boost learning achievement, promote intentional lifelong learning, and job access. RPL, she reiterated, will be a vital resource during the development of a National Qualifications Framework.

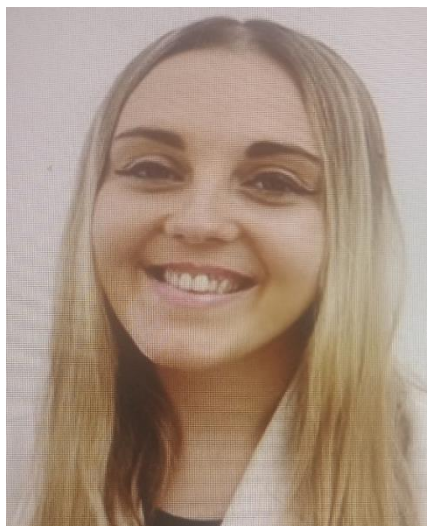
She commended Tanzania for having a National Qualifications Framework where Recognition of Prior Learning is a key element running through all sub-sectors of the education system and said that she looked forward to Uganda developing the same. She thanked DVV International for making it possible for Uganda to collaborate with the experts from the Institute of Adult Education of Tanzania, and consultants from South Africa and Austria. She expressed optimism that the collective efforts of the participants and facilitators will contribute towards sustainable development of our region.

She concluded by wishing the visiting team a wonderful time in Uganda. She then appealed to the Tanzanian Delegation that will travel to Namayingo District for the learning visit of the Community Learning Centre to give feedback as we continue to learn from each other. She then she officially declared the First East African Conference on Recognition of Prior Learning open.

## 4 Presentations and group work

### 4.1 1<sup>st</sup> Keynote Address

First Keynote address presentation was made by Ms. Katie Jones on recognition, of Prior Learning (RPL) from an international perspective. In the presentation, Katie explained that RPL makes visible and values the full range of competences



(knowledge, skills and attitudes) that individuals have obtained in various contexts, and through various means in different phases of their lives.’ She noted that RPL empowers individuals as lifelong learners, addresses socio-economic challenges and promotes cultural integration and social inclusion. She highlighted the risks and challenges to implementation as difficulty in promoting of informal and non-formal learning outcomes, access barriers to learners, and, fragmented efforts.

Katie shared UIL’s work on inclusive RPL for migrants and refugees which has five components namely, a literature review, a thematic report, policy brief, a toolbox, and, an online course. The online course ‘Skillsets in Transit’ aims to enable participants to strengthen RPL in their countries by building competences for developing and implementing policies and practices that are inclusive of migrants and refugees.

Katie argues that a robust national policy approach can contribute to a strong foundation from which to develop RPL systems and processes that cater for the needs of all groups. She adds that NQFs and sustainable funding models can complement a robust national policy approach to lay a solid basis for inclusive RPL systems. Additionally, accessible assessment practices can enhance the overall inclusivity and effectiveness of RPL. She noted that RPL uptake and completion can be increased through awareness-raising efforts and tailored support that caters for the needs of all groups.

UIL provides capacity-building workshops focused on responding to key challenges in LLL policy and flexible learning pathways. This is done through tailored online

learning modules via the UIL Learning Hub, in-person engagement in Shanghai, and, independent teamwork on collaborative output documents.

Katie concluded her presentation by providing three questions for reflection;

1. What are the main challenges you are facing in your efforts to advance inclusive RPL processes in your country?
2. What existing efforts are in place that could be built upon?
3. What challenges do traditionally underrepresented learner groups face when trying to access and complete RVA processes in your country? How effectively are these obstacles addressed at present?

### **Emerging Issues from the Presentation (Question and Answer Session)**

The moderator, Dr. Ephraim Lemmy Nuwagaba guided the participants through a question - and - answer session. The issues or questions raised and the responses by the presenter are shown in the table.

<b>Sn</b>	<b>Issues/Question</b>	<b>Response</b>
i.	Informal learning outcomes are difficult to recognise and validate. What do you advise?	Advised for open assessment processes which can enhance recognition and validation.  Engage stakeholders, CSOs on the importance of informal education.
ii.	Among Tanzanian refugees, RPL should be recognised.	Consider the opportunities and how to support the recognition of learning of refugees.
iii.	Does Kenya RPL recognise learning of the education system and the one at workplaces?	Kenya has a comprehensive system of pathways and processes.
iv.	RPL does not recognise the credentials and the outcomes.	An RPL system should consider recognising credentials.
v.	How will RPL be recognised and integrated in the TVET sector?	The concerns have been addressed in the current Technical Vocational Education & Training (TVET) bill - <i>(DIT response)</i> .

vi.	How best can we have country based RPL?	Recognise the competencies for pathways.  Develop tools for RPL guidelines to guide pathways.
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## 4.2 Second key note

Dr. Shirley Lloyd, a consultant on RPL from South Africa who conducted the research



in Tanzania and Uganda presented the findings. She made a presentation of her report *“A Gap Analysis on the Status of Recognition of Prior Learning Frameworks and Implementation in Uganda and Tanzania.”*. She explained the context of the study and its aim which was to conduct a gap analysis of the status of RPL frameworks and implementation in Uganda and Tanzania.

The research objectives were to;

1. Identify the ways in which perspectives, meaning and understandings of global, national and local stakeholders regarding RPL have influenced the adoption and implementation of RPL frameworks and policies.
2. Establish whether the meanings of RPL have been adopted in policies in Uganda and Tanzania.
3. Consider the elements in the current RPL framework and implementation processes in Uganda and Tanzania.
4. Understand the influence of a national qualifications’ framework in the development of an efficient and effective development of an RPL framework and implementation.

She explained that she had used qualitative and interpretivist approaches and her data collection involved literature review and semi-structured interviews with policymakers, government officials, regulators, DVV International officials, and senior academics in Uganda and Tanzania. The findings revealed the participants’ perceptions of the status of Recognition of Prior Learning frameworks, of lifelong

learning and of the development of qualifications frameworks in their respective countries. They further revealed the challenges of developing and implementing policies which include the lack of clear mandates for a single responsible department or organisation for the further development and implementation of RPL, a disaggregated and segmented policy environment, lack of resources, lack of knowledge and understanding about RPL, poor communication, and lack of a good articulation system to enable recipients of RPL to further their studies.

The following were the recommendation made in the report;

1. Ascribing similar meanings and definitions of key concepts aids understanding, therefore Uganda and Tanzania need to develop a glossary of terms and definitions per country that is well-consulted with all stakeholders and agreed to.
2. A national RPL policy will achieve a cohesive approach to delivering RPL and it should be developed in a consultative and participatory manner in both countries.
3. New or amended policies should be developed to reflect the local needs of the citizens and aligned to regional, continental and global partnerships and imperatives as policy segmentation is disruptive for qualifications framework and RPL development.
4. A single coordinating body should be put in place to coordinate the countries' QF and RPL development and implementation as a single coordinating organisation fosters development and implementation.
5. Capacity building about the identified elements of the QF and the RPL policy and implementation should be undertaken with a clear vision of what should be achieved, within reasonable timeframes, by identified people who will be responsible for agreed roles and responsibilities. This is because capacity building from expert practitioners will enhance implementation.
6. Adequate resources need to be raised by governments to fund RPL development and implementation processes and CSO need to play supportive roles. Unfunded and under-resourced policy mandates remain incomplete.

### **Emerging Issues – Question and Answer session**

After the presentation, the moderator guided participants through a question and answer segment and the issues raised by participants and responses by the researcher to those issues are shown in the table.

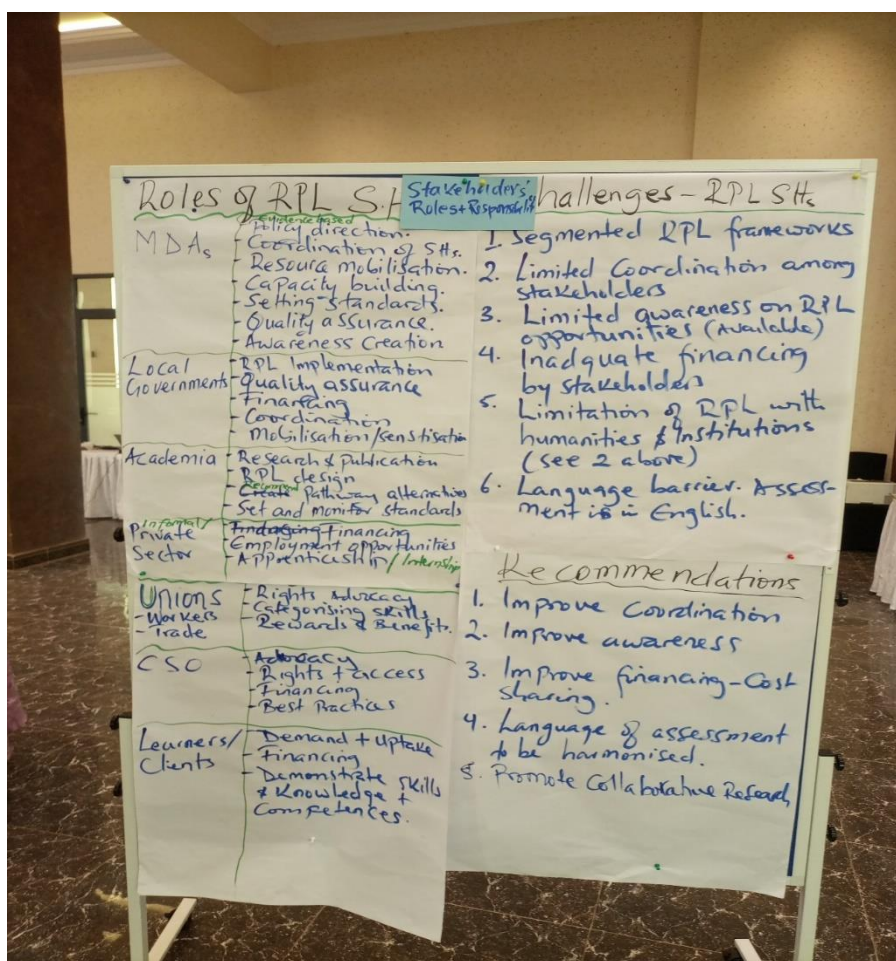
<b>Sn</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Response</b>
i.	Tanzania does not have guidelines.	The guidelines are in place though the gap is not inclusive for all categories. Need to revise them to be inclusive.
ii.	Tanzania does not have enough policies.	Tanzania has one education policy which accomodates all sub sectors within the education sector.
iii.	RPL in non-formal learning is not recognised in the formal sector.	Non-formal learning is mainly used by employers.
iv.	How can there be a scheme of the employer will consider those gone through RPL even if they are not in formal sector	There is need to recognise such skills through RPL mechnaisms.
v.	To what extent does SAQA recognise ABET and what experience do you have to it?	All learning levels including ABET are recognised by SAQA and are part of the system.
vi.	Can the competencies be developed from the non-formal education.	RPL reccognises all levels of competencies from both formal and non-formal learning.
	What strategies acan be put in place to avoid policy segmentattion since it is disruptive for QF formulation (Dr Zaaly'embikke online)	There can't be policies for sub sectors except for the national level.

### **World Café**

After that, participants were involved in a World Café and they reflected on RPL mechanisms and recommendations of the gap analysis as well as the presentations and discussions. The cafes were organized around four tables with each table focusing on one theme. For each of the themes, focus was put on current practices in Uganda and Tanzania, challenges and then recommendations were drawn.

Table one discussed stakeholders' roles and responsibilities in RPL and was moderated by Caesar Kyebakola of DVV International, Uganda country office while table two was on methods for assessment and accreditation of prior learning and was

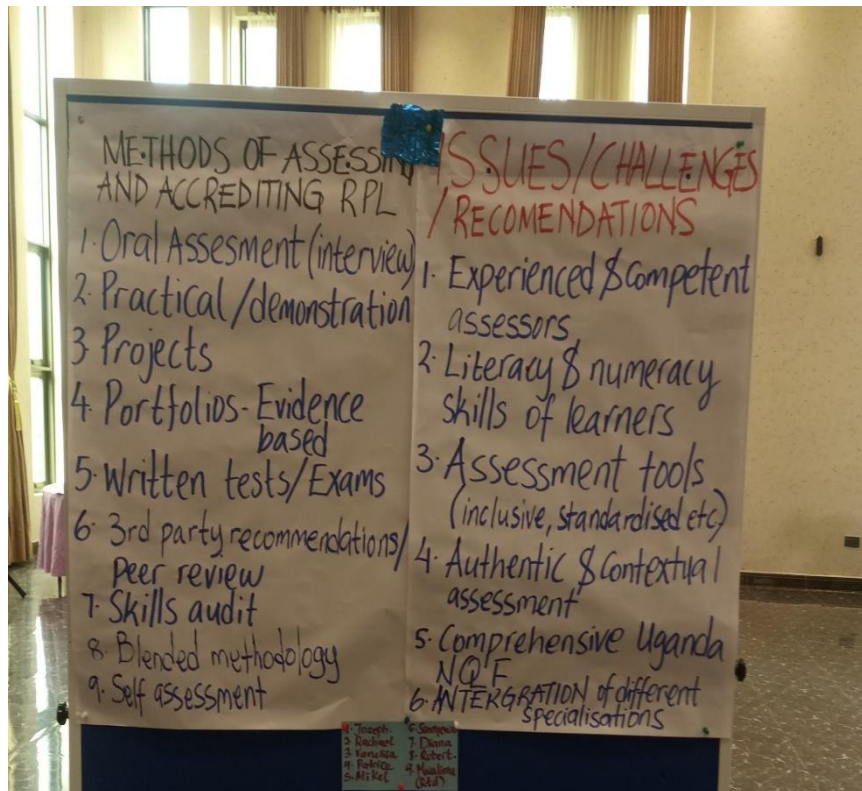
moderated by Dr. Jjuuko Robert of Education and Development Initiative (EDI) Uganda. Table three was on processes to operationalize RPL and was moderated by Ms. Frauke Heinze of DVV International, Regional Office Tanzania and table four was on legal policies and frameworks and was moderated by Imelda Kyaringabira of MoGLSD. After the discussion, there was a gallery walk where all participants congregated at each table and listened to the presentation of the group and then made inputs. The gallery walk was done on the morning of 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024. The stakeholders' roles that the roundtable came up with were as shown in the picture below;



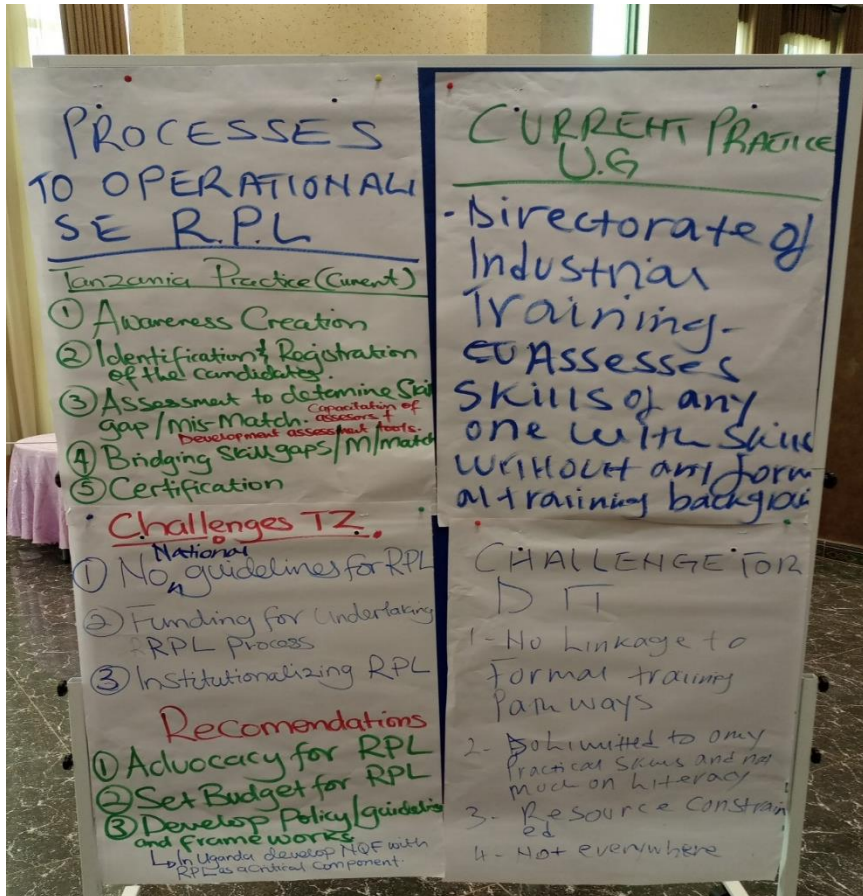


Mr. Caesar Kyebakola explaining stakeholders' roles and responsibilities during the World Café gallery walk.

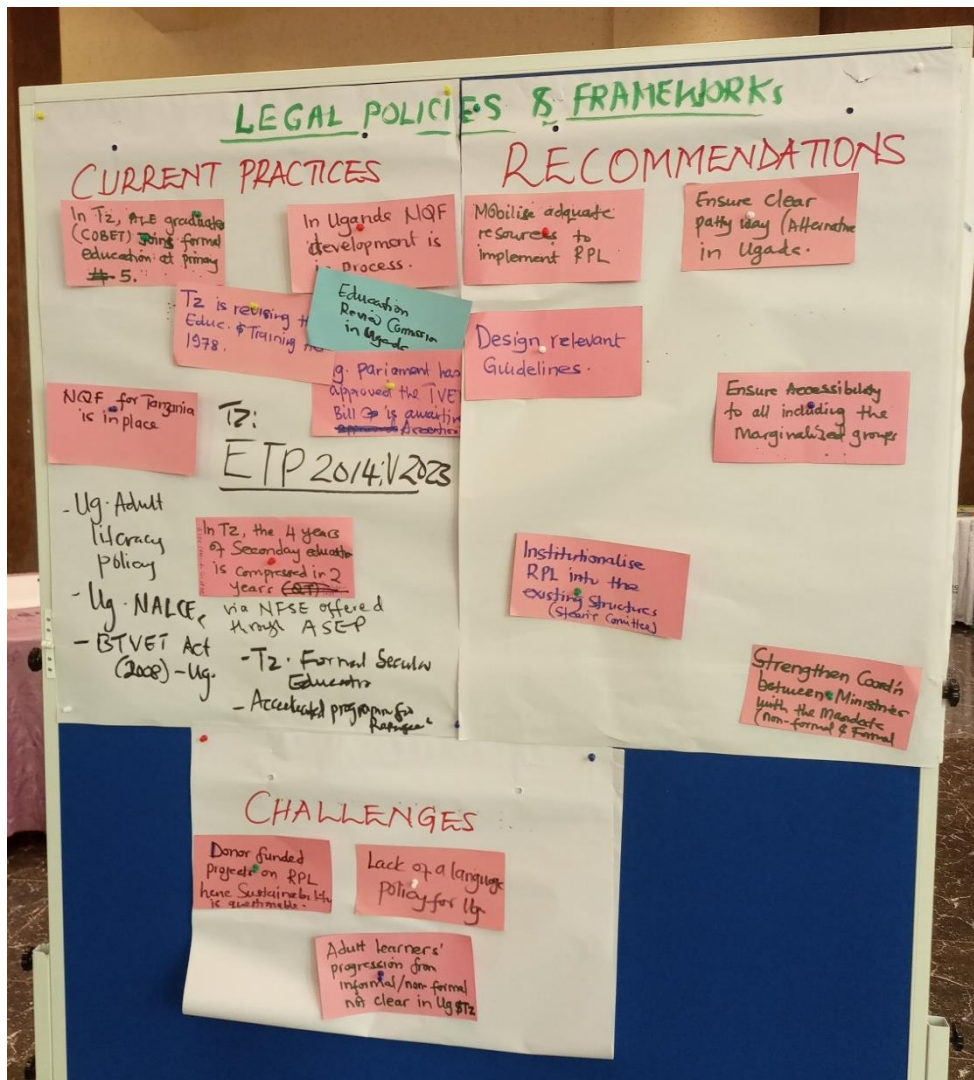
The following were the methods of assessment developed during the World Café;



The processes to operationalise RPL were identified as shown in the following table;



The legal policies and frameworks identified were the following;



The issues discussed by each group were reviewed during the gallery walk and some input made during this period. The input was included on the cards and flip charts as and when they were made. The discussions were then later used in developing a way forward and next steps for each country.

## DAY TWO

### 5 Presentations and group work

#### 5.1 Keynote Addresses

Dr. Shirley Lloyd presented the first key note of day two covered case studies from South Africa. The three case studies focused on the different stages of RPL implementation of;

- RPL for adult learners
- PPL for refugee
- RPL for promotion and designation

In her presentation, Dr. Shirley Lloyd covered two kinds of RPL, credit accumulation and transfer, definitions, principles, case studies and policies guiding RPL. She mentioned that the South African NQF has 10 tiers starting with certificate and ending with PhD. It also has sub-frameworks covering levels of different types of education and professions or trades. She noted that the RPL policy recognizes two types of RPL - one that enables alternative access routes into programmes of learning for registered qualifications and part-qualifications for those who do not meet formal entry requirements and the other for awarding of credits towards a registered qualification. She emphasised that both types of RPL involve recognition of learning obtained informally or non-formally.

She argued that clear definitions help facilitate common understanding that allows recognition and validation and certification as well as trans-country equating of qualifications. Some of the principles of RPL are that it should be learner centred, inclusive, comprehensive, participatory, transparent, relating well with the NQF, emancipatory, and able to address contextual factors. She further argued for institutional readiness if RPL implementation is to succeed. The types of RPL in the South African context were explained as RPL for credit, RPL for qualification, RPL for access, RPL for designation, RPL for promotion and workplace recognition, RPL for asylum seekers/refugees.

She then presented the following six case studies;

1. Structured Interview Questions for the WES/SAQA Pilot Project for

- assessing one's qualifications for work,
2. From policy to implementation: The upset community of practice helped describe the processes involved in RPL,
  3. Quality assurance in RPL: Getting it right helps describe the types of assessments and assessment processes for employment purposes,
  4. Whole Qualification for helping determine qualification equivalences,
  5. RPL process for designation which explains the process in a South African coaching pathway, and
  6. RPL for promotion which explains how candidates without formal qualifications for a particular job can be assessed for promotion.

As the next presentation was online and its time could not be adjusted, the question-and-answer session that should have followed the presentation was postponed and would be handled later.

## 5.2 Key note address

The second key note for the day was an online presentation by Dr Phillip Assinger of the University of Graz - Austria, *"Procedures for the Recognition of Prior Learning Conceptual, organizational, educational perspectives and selected case studies."* He started with the argument that *"All individual and collective learning, knowledge*



*and practices have an intrinsic value that should be recognised."*

His presentation was organized in three parts. The first part was on basic RPL procedures, goals and methods, the second part covered three case studies from Austria and the third part provided the conclusions.

He noted that RPL from the perspective of accrediting outcomes can be explained as the practice of reviewing, assessing and accrediting what a person has learned outside formal learning contexts. From the perspective of validating evidence, it can be explained as ascribing value and validity to with regard to learning contexts,

learning processes and learning outcomes. He explained that an ideal RPL procedure involves orientation where information and guidance is provided, followed by assessment by teachers and facilitators, and then admission to an institution, or awarding credits and certificate by an accrediting body. He argued that RPL operates within an environment that has a qualifications framework that is contextualized, has goals, standards, stakeholders with clear roles and responsibilities and clear governance mechanisms.

In the case studies, he explained the Austrian policy context, the RPL in basic and compulsory education for adults where he described the curriculum, assessment phases and assessment instruments. He highlighted the success factors as teachers' capabilities, sustained funding and social recognition of the programme. He explained the RPL for NQF-Level 1/2 qualification, RPL in dual Vocational Education and Training at NQF level 4.

He then asked participants to reflect on the following questions;

1. Considering that RPL policy, system and procedures are needed, where do you want to start and where do you want to put the focus?
2. As there is integrated, autonomous and seconding RPL with different goals and different procedures, which goal is easiest to achieve and which is most beneficial to learners? Which procedures serve best?

He concluded by saying that RPL is more than qualification and there are different forms of access: formal, ontological, epistemological. He argued that all three should be kept in mind to have a holistic RPL. At the level of procedures, the learner group, the facilitators, the programme coordination, and the institutional infrastructure are success factors. He counselled that there is no need to start from the scratch as there is much to build on or adapt from the ICOLEW Programme such the CLCs, CEG-facilitators, baselines, continuous and summative assessment guidelines, etc.

### 5.3 Plenary round table

#### **How an RPL system could look like in Tanzania and Uganda**

The insights from Tanzania were shared by Dr Sempeho Safu (Institute of Adult Education and Dr Oleke (NACTVET). The insight from Uganda were shared by Ms.

Nabankema Milly (Directorate of Industrial Training, Uganda) and Ms. Harriet Akello, MoGLSD.



### **Tanzanian Experience of RPL**

The Tanzanian team presented the RPL experience in Tanzania. They explained that there are pathways from non-formal education into formal education. The technical and vocational skills are recognised and the quality provided by institutions is regulated. RPL is widely accepted in Tanzania in recognising the skills out of the formal setting and they gave an example of government working with artisans. The challenges were presented as certificates that are not equated according to the levels attained, inadequate government resources that leaves most programmes to be donor funded. The practices of beneficiaries contributing funds so as to be certified makes it difficult as most learners don't have the finances.

### **Uganda's Experiences of RPL**

The perspectives were provided by MoGLSD and DIT. Harriet of MoGLSD mentioned that non-formal sector was recognised by the education review which led to the creation of the department of Community Development and Literacy. The department has been providing adult literacy programs. They noted that the certificates obtained by adult literacy learners are not recognised by the formal education system and that there are no career pathways.

They recommended that the adult learning and community education sector needs to be harmonized with national qualifications framework.

### **DIT Perspective in regard with RPL**

Ms. Nabankema Milly mentioned that DIT derives its mandate to assess and award certificates of competence from the BTVET Act. She stated that DIT works with companies, NGOs and artisans to recognise, validate, assess and award certificates. She revealed that they operate an online data base and every candidate assessed is given a number. She noted that they use a vocational QF and argued for a general QF to guide candidates into formal education. The major challenge she mentioned was how to link the candidates into the world of work.

The plenary session then discussed the presentations and identified the emerging issues which are listed as follows;

- DIT is working with Makerere University Business School on the issue of carrier pathways.
- Learners who don't understand English have challenges during instruction and assessment and there is need to employ instructors and assessors who know the language of the learners.
- There is need to promote functional literacy and numeracy to ensure that adult learners are streamlined into the employment sector.
- Accreditation, certification in Tanzania is possible due to collaborative efforts between the formal and informal sector and a recognised authoritative accreditation body.
- Skills development is necessary and ICOLEW needs to have post literacy activities that emphasise skills development.

The following are the recommendations drawn after the discussions.

- i. Identify and categorise non-formal adult learning and education that is to be integrated into the RPL framework.
- ii. Develop a comprehensive post literacy programme that will produce graduate that identify with qualifications of Craftsman 1 and the different levels of DIT
- iii. Identify the languages for post literacy programmes.

- iv. Build the capacity of facilitators, supervisors and managers to effectively manage assessment.
- v. Build a clear system of assessment,
- vi. Identify entry points for youth and young adults to enter formal education from non-formal education.

#### 5.4 Road map for RPL in Tanzania and Uganda

The participants were grouped into country specific groups to develop roadmaps for each country and the roadmaps are presented below;

##### **RPL roadmap for Uganda**

- i. Orientation
  - Orienting the existing steering committee (multi/inter-sectoral agency) on RPL.
  - Receiving presentations on proposals on RPL from different service providers.
- ii. Finalising the development of the post-literacy programme
  - Disseminating and discussing the post literacy programme in the steering committee
- iii. Familiarising ourselves with the situation analysis report for RPL.
- iv. Drafting the RPL framework and harmonising it with the NQF
- v. Stakeholder's consultation on the draft RPL framework
- vi. Launching the final RPL framework and report on the processes

##### **RPL roadmap for Tanzania**

- i. Develop national RPL guidelines (inclusive assessment framework)
- ii. Develop national RPL quality assurance framework
- iii. Review TCPD to accommodate RPL practitioners.
- iv. Develop RPL financing strategy.
- v. RPL to feature well in the new national skills development strategy (NSDS).
- vi. Enhance awareness creation for RPL through mechanisms to be agreed.



Team Uganda



Team Tanzania with Commissioner, Community Development and Literacy, MoGLSD and Regional Director DVV International

## 7. Lessons learned from the conference and their implications for policy and practice

Dr. Shirley Lloyd's presentation of the assessment report revealed that Uganda and Tanzania were at different stages with regard to the development of RPL. The presentation of the case studies from UIL presented an international perspective while the case studies from Austria and South Africa provided hands on experiences of RPL in various contexts and for various purposes in different countries. Although the policy environments were not the same in the various countries, the principles and processes had many similarities which can serve as useful benchmarking opportunities for Uganda and Tanzania in their processes of developing and implementing RPL. There are positive results expected from having RPL systems and NQFs as they can contribute to enhancing the provision of adult learning and education as they can strengthen the ALE system in a country. Although Tanzania and Uganda are at different stages of developing RPL, there is a lot they can learn from each other on this RPL journey and efforts should be made to enhance collaboration in this effort.

## 8. Call for Action on Recognition of Prior Learning and Qualifications Frameworks



Call for Action on RPL and QFs (Kampala Declaration 2024)

The moderator briefly provided the background to the conference, the main issues discussed during the conference and presented the key joints and country specific messages and action points captured within the two days. He then read the call to action which the conference participants adopted.

### **Call for Action on RPL and Qualification frameworks**

#### **Preamble**

We the stakeholders present at the 1<sup>st</sup> East African Conference on recognition of prior learning held from 11<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2024;

- a) recognising that the world in Sustainable Development Goal 4 aims to ‘ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’,
- b) further recognising that the Marrakech Framework of Action provides a strong call to invest in adult education and lifelong learning and RPL and QF;
- c) concerned that some adult learners who complete the non-formal adult learning programmes hardly have access to formal education or opportunities to use their knowledge and skills to seek employment opportunities,
- d) recognizing the diversity of providers and services offered by the wide spectrum of ALE stakeholders,
- e) further recognising government role in performing their constitutional mandate of providing education to its citizens,

We pledge to:

- Improve coordination, awareness raising, financing, and addressing language concerns;
- Conduct collaborative research in the area of Recognition of Prior Learning and Qualification Frameworks;
- Develop mechanisms, methods and tools for assessment and accreditation of prior learning;
- Appeal to government to design relevant guidelines, institutionalise Recognition of Prior Learning in existing structures and mobilise adequate resources to implement Recognition of Prior Learning;
- Develop National Qualification Framework with Recognition of Prior Learning as a critical component (Uganda) and in Tanzania, operationalise the National Qualification Framework;
- Develop a community of Recognition of Prior Learning practitioners to deepen information exchange and knowledge production and sharing;
- Harness the developing relationship and collaboration with expert and experienced scholars (Dr. Phillip Assinger and Dr. Shirley Lloyd) and institutions (UIL, DVV International), particularly those that have been part of the foundational process of this learning journey; and,
- Adopt the recommendations of the assessment report.

## 8. Closing Remarks and official closing

Closing speech should point out the importance of the conference and suggest some of the next steps for further development and coming efforts.

### 8.1 Closing Remarks by Country Director, DVV International

The Country Director, DVV International, Mr. Caesar Kyebakola thanked all presenter and participants for their useful contributions. He appreciated the team that made livestreaming possible and the organising team of the conference both in Uganda and Tanzania for the work well done.

### 8.2 Closing Remarks by the Head of Delegation, Tanzania

The Head of the Tanzanian delegation appreciated all participants and the presenters for the inciting experience and knowledge shared. He thanked Uganda for organising the 1<sup>st</sup> East African RPL Conference and for the experience shared, although Tanzania was ahead of Uganda in developing RPL. He informed participants that Tanzania is developing a draft skills strategy and will make sure the RPL is reflected. He, on behalf of the delegation, promised to work harder and especially in the area of accreditation. He concluded by pledging that Tanzania would put into practice what they have learnt.

### 8.3 Closing Remarks by Regional Director, DVV International

The Regional Director, DVV International, Ms. Frauke Heinze appreciated all the contributions towards the RPL, the learning and sharing of experiences on RPL. She thanked presenters who brought the international perspective into the RPL discussions. She encouraged members to open up their minds and contextualise the learnings. The Regional Director appreciated the moderation team, MoGLSD for the partnership towards implementing non-formal adult learning and education since 2016, the livestreaming team and DVV International – Uganda and Tanzania. She ended by saying that she was looking forward on working on the RPL roadmap and to engage more on the next steps.

### 8.4 Official closing by Permanent Secretary, MoGLSD

The Permanent Secretary, MoGLSD was represented by the Commissioner, Community Development and Literacy, Mr. Evarist Tumwesigye. He said that Uganda is delighted to have the RPL issue transition from being a country issue to regional

issue because of its importance. He appreciated DVV International Uganda Country Office for the logistical support towards organising the conference. He conveyed apologies from the Permanent Secretary, MoGLSD who could not be available for the conference. He informed participants that Uganda is making strides in the area of adult education and that the Korean government is conducting a feasibility study towards supporting adult education using the CLC approach starting with the financial year 2026/27. He called upon members to consider the issues discussed, take them seriously and act. He noted that when the RPL framework is developed, it will help guide pathways. He appealed to the Inter-ministerial Technical Steering Committee Members support the processes of developing RPL system and pledged to implement the recommendations of the assessment and call to action. He concluded by wishing participants journey mercies to their respective destinations and everyone a merry Christmas and prosperous new year 2025 and thereafter, declared the conference officially closed.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Conference programme

*Nuwagols*



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA  
MINISTRY OF GENERAL  
LABOUR & SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT




**1<sup>ST</sup> EAST AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING**

Day 1		
Time	Activity	Responsible Persons
08:30	Registration of participants	DVV International Uganda
09:00 – 09:15	Opening remarks	Country Director DVV International Uganda
09:15 – 09:30		Head of Delegation Tanzania
09:30 – 09:45		Regional Director East Africa, DVV International
09:45 – 10:00	Conference expectations/ objectives/ground rules	Moderator
10:00 – 10:55	Official Opening	Commissioner, Community Dev/Literacy Permanent Secretary, MoGLSD Minister of MoGLSD
10:55 – 11:00	Group Photo	All Participants
11:00 - 11:30		TEA Break
12:00 – 12:45	RPL & NQF from the global and lifelong learning perspective	Katie Jones, UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning
12:45 – 13:00	Question and Answer Session	Moderator/Katie Jones
13:00 – 14:00		LUNCH
14:00 – 15:30	Status of RPL in Tanzania and Uganda – Recommendations for the way forward	Dr. Shirley Lloyd, Consultant on RPL from South Africa
15:30 – 17:00	Reflecting on RPL mechanisms and recommendations	World Café To get to know, and to discuss different perspectives on and approaches to RPL



DAY 2		
Time	Activity	Responsible Person
08:30 – 09:00	Registration of participants	DVV International Uganda
9:00 – 10:00	Key take aways DAY 1	Rapporteur
10:00 – 10:30	Case studies from South Africa	Dr. Shirley Lloyd presents 3 case studies from South Africa on the different stages of RPL implementation.
10:30 – 11:00	Question & Answer Session	Moderator/ Dr Shirley Lloyd
11:00 – 11:30		TEA Break
11:30 -12:00	Procedures for validation, RPL and case studies from Austria	Dr Phillip Assinger, Researcher and member of ESREA
12:00 – 12:30	Question and Answer	Moderator/ Dr Phillip Assinger
12:30 – 13:30	How an RPL system could look like in Tanzania and Uganda	<p><b>Round table discussion</b> 2 key stakeholders from each country are invited for sharing their ideas (tbc)</p> <p><b>Tanzania</b> Dr. Sempeho Safu – Director Research Institute of Adult Education Dr. Oleke – NACTVET</p> <p><b>Uganda</b> Mr. Ejoru Alphonse – Assistant Commissioner for Literacy – MoGLSD Ms. Nabankema Milly – Officer in-charge of RPL – Directorate of Industrial Training</p>
13:30 – 14:00		LUNCH
14:00 – 15:30	Road map for RPL in Tanzania and Uganda	Participants
15:30 – 16:00	Call for action	Moderator/Consultant Summary of key points for the road map
16:00 – 16:30	Official closing ceremony	Regional Director DVV International Permanent Secretary

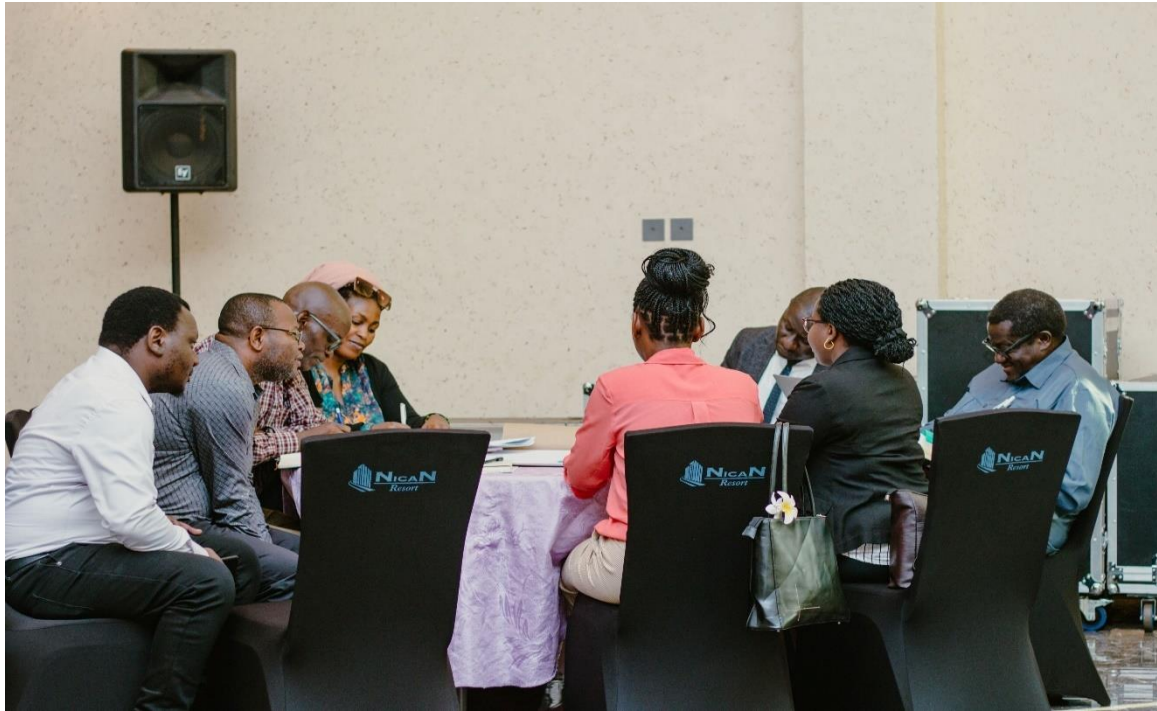
Appendix B: Some photographs taken during the conference



The Guest of Honour, flanked by the Commissioner, Head of the Tanzania delegation & Regional Director, DVV International listening to the key note by the researcher



Some participants listening attentively during one of the sessions



Some participants engaging in a group discussion



A representative of the adult learners, Mr. Ismail Kasiita explaining something in a group discussion



Ms. Betty Nandudu Mubiita, the DCDO Namayingo explaining a point during group work



Dr. Robert Jjuuko making a presentation during the gallery walk



The Regional Director, DVV International Ms. Frauke Heinze making a presentation during the gallery walk



Mr. Mr. Otim Charles of Nsamizi Institute of Social Development making a presentation during the gallery walk



Dr. Jofrey Oleke making a presentation during the gallery walk



Mr. Joseph Kifampa making a presentation during the gallery walk



Dr. Sempeho Siafu making a presentation on the way forward regarding RPL in Tanzania

### **Appendix C: Organising committee members**

Ms. Frauke Heinze

Mr. Caesar Kyebakola

Ms. Imelda Kyaringabira

Mr. Joseph Masonda

Mr. Joseph Kifampa

Dr. Ephraim Lemmy Nuwagaba

Ms. Irene Nakato

## List of participants from Tanzania and other countries



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