



COLLEGES &
INSTITUTES
CANADA



EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF RPL CERTIFICATION ON EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT IN KENYA

A Tracer Study Report

March 2025



FOREWORD

Recognition of skills and qualifications is key in supporting access to education and employment and, enables realization of the agenda on social inclusion, and lifelong learning. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) plays a critical role in linking the gap between skills, qualifications and inclusivity. Through making the invisible skills visible, formal and well documented, RPL provides pathways for education and training, employment opportunities, advancement and personal growth.

Section 8 (1)(m) of the KNQF Act Cap 214 mandates the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) to conduct research on equalization of qualifications. The Authority is pleased to present the research findings on "Evaluating the Impact of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) certification on Employment, Education, and Personal Development in Kenya." The study examined the influence of RPL certification on individuals' access to employment opportunities, educational advancement, and personal growth. The goal of this study was to evaluate the long-term impact of RPL programs on beneficiaries in Kenya, focusing on their access to employment, educational opportunities, and personal development. The study's primary objectives were to investigate how RPL certification have influenced beneficiaries' employment trajectories, including job acquisition, career advancement, and income levels; examine the extent to which RPL has facilitated further educational opportunities; explore how RPL has contributed to beneficiaries' personal empowerment, self-esteem, and confidence as well as its role in improving their social and economic mobility; and, investigate challenges and barriers that may hinder the effectiveness of RPL such as awareness issues and cultural biases.. The findings provide evidence-based recommendations on further improving RPL implementation and its effectiveness in the country.

Looking into the future, the valuable insights from this study will serve as a solid underpinning for better strategies that will empower skilled people, enhance labor and drive economic progress. The dedication to improving RPL implementation in Kenya remains steadfast, ensuring that skills and competencies are duly acknowledged and certified in ways that generate tangible impact.

KNQA extends its gratitude to Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan) for both technical and financial support to this pivotal research.



Hon. Stanley Kiptis, EBS

Council Chairperson

Kenya National Qualifications Authority

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Kenya National Qualifications Authority extends its sincere gratitude to the technical team that contributed to the successful completion of this research study on "Evaluating the Impact of RPL Certification on Employment, Education, and Personal Development in Kenya."

The Authority expresses deepest appreciation to CIGan for their financial and technical support that enabled the Authority to conduct this research and gather valuable insights that will enhance the effectiveness of RPL policy in Kenya. We are grateful to the RPL beneficiaries who participated in this study, sharing their experiences and providing crucial data that formed the foundation of our findings.

Special recognition goes to the KNQA Research team led by Dr Peter W. Wekesa, PhD and technical experts from CIGan led by Erick Kayere Msc, who worked tirelessly to design, implement, and analyze this comprehensive study. This collaborative effort has been crucial in contributing to the overall progress and prosperity of Kenya's citizens, and we look forward to the positive changes that will result from the implementation of the study's recommendations.



Dr. Alice Kande, PhD

Director General/CEO

Kenya National Qualifications Authority

MESSAGE FROM COLLEGES AND INSTITUTES CANADA

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is become a powerful catalyst for improving youth employability and skills development. By formally recognizing and certifying skills gained through informal and non-formal learning, RPL opens doors to better job opportunities and career advancement for young people.

In collaboration with key stakeholders, Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan) through the Young Africa Works in Kenya TVET program, supported by the Mastercard Foundation, has played a crucial role in advocating for and implementing RPL across Kenyan TVET institutions. A key milestone in this journey was the partnership between Humber College, Norquest College, Red River College, KNQA and Kenyan TVET institutions, which focused on strengthening the capacity of RPL practitioners in select Centers of Excellence (COEs) and other institutions. Nyeri and Kitale National Polytechnics piloted the RPL program, successfully launching and graduating the first cohort in March 2024. This achievement has inspired more institutions to develop and adopt RPL policies, further embedding the system into Kenya's TVET framework.

To assess the effectiveness and impact of RPL, the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) conducted a tracer study on the graduates of the first cohort. The study evaluated employment outcomes, career progression, and skill utilization among RPL graduates while identifying challenges and opportunities for scaling the program. It also examined potential barriers that could affect the long-term sustainability of RPL in Kenya. The insights from this study will guide policy refinement, enhance certification processes, and strengthen engagement with the private sector. Additionally, the findings will support the ongoing training and development of RPL assessors, now under the leadership of Kenya School of TVET ensuring a strong and sustainable RPL ecosystem. This report presents key findings, recommendations, and actionable insights from the study, aiming to reinforce RPL as a transformative tool for inclusive economic growth and workforce development.

We are grateful for the partnership with the State Department TVET, KNQA, Partner TVET Institutions and the young people that participated in this study and we look forward to the implementation of the recommendations and enhancement of the learnings on positive outcomes.



Aggrey Ndombi

Senior Technical Advisor/Country Representative

Colleges and Institutes Canada

LIST OF RESEARCH INVESTIGATORS

Name	Role	Institution	Email
Dr. Peter Wekesa	Principal Investigator	KNQA	peterwekesa@knqa.go.ke
Dr. Alice Kande	Co- Investigator	KNQA	alicekande@knqa.go.ke
Moritz Schmidt	Co-Investigator	CICan	MSchmidt@cican.org
Aggrey Ndombi	Co-Investigator	CICan	ANdombi@ke.collegesinstitutes.ca
Dr. Winnie Bulimo	Co-Inestigator	KNQA	winniebulimo@knqa.go.ke
Erick Kayere	Co-Investigator	CICan	ekayere@ke.collegesinstitutes.ca
Dr. Wambeye Marakia	Co- Investigator	KIBU	jokimawa@gmail.com
Esther Kamoet	Co-Investigator	KNQA	estherkamoet@knqa.go.ke
Tabitha Mburu	Co-Investigator	KNQA	tabithamburu@knqa.go.ke
Juliet Wekulo	Co-Investigator	KNQA	julietwekulo@knqa.go.ke
Kelvin Omwansa	Co-Investigator	CICan	komwansa@ke.collegesinstitutes.ca
Alfrick Biegon	Co-Investigator	KNQA	alfrickbiegon@knqa.go.ke

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym/Abbreviation	Full Form
CBET	Competency-Based Education and Training
CICan	Colleges and Institutes Canada
FKE	Federation of Kenya Employers
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KEWI	Kenya Water Institute
KMD	Kenya Meteorological Department
KNDFE	Kenya National Drama and Film Festival
KNQA	Kenya National Qualifications Authority
KNQF	Kenya National Qualifications framework
KSTVET	Kenya School of TVET
KUCCPS	Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Services
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training
NITA	National Industrial Training Authority
QAIs	Qualifications Awarding Institutions
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TVETA	Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority
TVET-CDACC	Technical Vocational Education & Training Curriculum Development and Certification Council

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword.....	ii
Acknowledgement.....	iii
Message from Colleges and Institutes Canada.....	iv
List of Research Investigators.....	v
Acronyms and Abbreviations.....	vi
Table of Contents.....	vii
List of Table.....	ix
List of Figures.....	x
Executive summary.....	xi
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 History of RPL.....	1
1.3 Purpose of the Study.....	4
CHAPTER TWO:.....	5
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	5
2.0 Research Design.....	5
2.1 Sampling Technique.....	5
2.2 Research Tools.....	5
2.3 Data Collection.....	5
2.4 Data Analysis.....	5
2.5 Ethical Considerations.....	6
2.6 Reliability.....	6
CHAPTER THREE:.....	7
FINDINGS.....	7
3.1 Demographic Analysis.....	7
3.1.1 Age Distribution.....	7
3.1.2 Gender Distribution.....	7
3.1.3 Disability Status.....	8
3.1.4 Nationality.....	9
3.1.5 County Representation.....	10
3.2 Education and Certification Background.....	11
3.2.1 Education Levels.....	12
3.2.2 Course Certification Overview.....	12
3.3 QAls' RPL Certification.....	14
3.4 Access, Recruitment and Outreach and Costs and Affordability to RPL.....	15
3.4.1 Motivation and Accessibility.....	16
3.4.2 Awareness and Outreach.....	16
3.4.3 The Influence of Qualifications Attained through RPL.....	20
3.4.4 Analysis of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Impact.....	23
3.4.5 Model Summary.....	23
3.5 Conclusion.....	25

3.6	The Facilitation of Further Educational Opportunities by RPL	25
3.6.1	Access to Opportunities	25
3.6.2	Enhanced Preparedness for Further Education:	25
3.6.3	Access to Skill Development Programs:	25
3.6.4	Positive Impact on Educational Advancement:	25
3.6.5	Satisfaction with Educational Opportunities:	26
3.6.6	Report on the Analysis of RPL's Impact on Obtaining RPL certification on education advancement	28
3.6.7	Conclusions	29
3.7	The Contribution of RPL to Personal Empowerment and Social Mobility	29
3.7.1	Self-Esteem and Confidence:	29
3.7.2	Personal and Professional Empowerment:	30
3.7.3	Sense of Personal Empowerment:	30
3.7.4	Social Mobility:	30
3.7.5	Economic Opportunities and Financial Well-being:	30
3.7.6	Economic Opportunities:	32
3.8	Conclusion	32
3.8.1	Improved Job Prospects due to RPL	32
3.8.2	Enhanced Job Prospects:	32
3.8.3	Increased Competitiveness:	32
3.8.4	Opening New Job Opportunities:	32
3.8.5	Confidence in Securing Better Job Positions:	33
3.9	Implications for RPL Programs	33
3.10	Future Research Directions	33
3.11	Conclusion	33
CHAPTER FOUR		34
CONCLUSION		34
4.1	RPL's Impact on Employment Trajectories:	34
4.2	RPL's Role in Facilitating Further Educational Opportunities:	34
4.3	RPL's Contribution to Personal Empowerment and Social Mobility:	35
CHAPTER FIVE		36
CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:		36
REFERENCES		38

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1	Age of the respondents.....	7
Table 3.2	Gender of respondents.....	7
Table 3.3	Disability status.....	9
Table 3.4	The nationality status.....	9
Table 3.5	Nationality Distribution Overview.....	10
Table 3.6	Access, Recruitment and Outreach and Costs and Affordability to RPL.....	17
Table 3.7	Influence of Qualifications Attained through RPL.....	22
Table 3.8	Model Summary of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Impact.....	24
Table 3.9	ANOVA Results of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Impact.....	24
Table 3.10	Coefficient Analysis of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Impact.....	24
Table 3.11	Satisfaction with Education Opportunities.....	27
Table 3.12	Model Summary for RPL Certification Likelihood.....	28
Table 3.13	ANOVA Results for RPL Certification Likelihood.....	29
Table 3.14	Contribution of RPL to Personal Empowerment and Social Mobility.....	31

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1	Gender certification in RPL.....	8
Figure 3.2	Types of disability experience by respondents.....	9
Figure 3.3	County representation.....	11
Figure 3.4	Education level.....	12
Figure 3.5	Courses Certification.....	13
Figure 3.6	QAIs' RPL Certification.....	14
Figure 3.7	Communication channel used to reach RPL participants.....	15
Figure 3.8	Sources of funding for RPL.....	19

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) conducted a tracer study to evaluate the impact of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) on employment, education, and personal development in Kenya, as mandated by Section 8(1)(m) of the KNQF Act Chapter 214. The study examined how RPL programs influence access to employment, educational advancement, and personal growth among beneficiaries.

Employing a tracer methodology, data was collected to assess the long-term benefits of RPL in terms of employment outcomes, educational progression, and personal empowerment. The study aimed to identify areas for RPL optimization, promote equity and inclusion, inform policies to enhance social mobility, empower marginalized populations, and contribute to Kenya's broader economic development.

Findings indicate that RPL has significantly improved employment prospects, especially for individuals from marginalized communities. Beneficiaries have experienced career advancement, higher incomes, and increased job satisfaction. The study also highlights RPL's potential to foster social inclusion and contribute to sustainable socio-economic development in Kenya by formally recognizing skills acquired outside traditional educational settings.

Challenges remain, including limited awareness of RPL programs and inconsistent quality in assessments. Recommendations include enhancing RPL awareness campaigns, improving assessment quality, and expanding program accessibility to ensure broader participation and equitable outcomes across diverse populations. These improvements will further leverage RPL's potential to unlock opportunities and drive inclusive economic growth in Kenya.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA), as mandated by Section 8(m) of the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) Act CAP 214, to conduct research that supports the recognition and equalization of qualifications. In alignment with this mandate, the Authority in collaboration with CICA successfully carried out a tracer study to Evaluate the Impact of RPL Certification on Employment, Education, and Personal Development in Kenya. The study aimed to assess the transformative effects of RPL on individuals' access to employment, educational opportunities, and personal growth, while identifying key areas for enhancing its implementation for greater equity and inclusion.

1.2 History of RPL

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) has emerged as a transformative global tool in education and workforce development, enabling individuals to gain formal recognition for knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired outside of traditional educational frameworks. RPL acknowledges the value of non-formal and informal learning, providing pathways for individuals to gain qualifications, improve employability, advance educational opportunities, and foster personal empowerment (Kenya's RPL Policy Framework, 2024). This framework has become especially crucial for marginalized and disadvantaged groups, including refugees, migrant workers, and those in the informal economy, who often face barriers to accessing formal education or recognized qualifications. In recent years, RPL has garnered significant attention worldwide, with governments and organizations embracing it as a strategy to address skills mismatches, unemployment, and inequality.

RPL's implementation has varied across different regions, each shaped by unique socio-economic and educational contexts. However, the core principle remains the same: to validate informal and non-formal learning and support individuals' progress toward formal qualifications, thereby improving their opportunities for employment and education. In Europe, RPL has become an integral component of lifelong learning policies. The European Union (EU) has actively supported RPL initiatives since the early 2000s, recognizing its potential to promote mobility, employability, and personal development across member states. The European Qualifications Framework (EQF), introduced in 2008, provides a common reference point for qualifications and encourages the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. Countries such as France, Germany, and the United Kingdom have been pioneers in RPL implementation. In France, RPL has been a significant part of the vocational education system since the 1990s. The French "Validation des Acquis de l'Expérience" (VAE) allows individuals to obtain formal qualifications based on their professional experience. Germany has developed a similar approach through its "Recognition Act," which provides individuals with the opportunity to have their qualifications recognized in a formal system, especially migrants and refugees. The UK has utilized RPL to enhance access to further and higher education, with a particular focus on adult learners and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In the United States of America, RPL, often referred to as Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), is implemented primarily in higher education. The American Council on Education (ACE) has been a leader in the recognition of prior learning since the 1970s, providing guidelines for colleges and universities to assess and award college credits for learning gained through work experience, military service, or self-directed study. The PLA system allows adult learners to earn credits toward degree programs, reducing the time and cost of obtaining a degree. Several states, including California and New York, have adopted PLA policies to support workforce development and educational access for returning adult learners.

In Latin America, the concept of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) has been gaining momentum over the past two decades, particularly in response to the region's challenges related to informal labor markets, youth unemployment, and educational access. Brazil has made significant strides in recognizing prior learning as part of its national vocational training policies. The National System of Professional Education (Sistema Nacional de Educação Profissional - SNEP) and the Brazilian Ministry of Education have introduced initiatives to promote RPL. The country's National Qualifications Framework (NQF) was developed to align formal and non-formal learning, with RPL being integrated into the framework to allow workers, especially those in the informal economy, to gain formal recognition for their skills. Research conducted by the Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA) in Brazil has shown that RPL in the country has helped improve access to formal jobs, especially for workers who have acquired skills in informal settings. In 2017, a study on RPL's impact in the Brazilian labor market revealed that formal recognition of non-formal qualifications improved the economic integration of marginalized groups, particularly indigenous people and rural workers, by providing them with opportunities to gain certifications that were accepted by employers. However, the research also highlighted the need for further awareness and training for assessors to ensure consistent and fair evaluations of informal learning.

The Argentine National Education Law of 2006 established a framework for lifelong learning, and in this context, RPL plays a key role in helping individuals gain access to higher education or better job opportunities. Research by the National Commission for Adult Education has indicated that RPL programs in Argentina have had positive effects on employment outcomes, particularly among individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. In one study, 72% of RPL beneficiaries reported either securing full-time employment or receiving promotions after obtaining their certifications. A study conducted by the Mexican Secretariat of Labor and Social Welfare in 2018 found that RPL had been effective in improving the employability of workers, especially in rural and marginalized areas. However, challenges remain in terms of the consistency and quality of assessments, as well as the need for greater recognition of RPL qualifications in the private sector. The study also noted that many workers in the informal economy lack access to the resources and information needed to navigate the RPL process, highlighting the need for better outreach and awareness campaigns.

In Asia, RPL is a relatively new concept but has gained significant traction in countries like India, Japan, and the Philippines. India introduced the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) in 2013, which includes provisions for the recognition of prior learning to enhance skills development and certification for workers in various sectors, particularly in informal labor markets. Japan's RPL initiatives focus on enhancing employability by providing recognition for vocational skills acquired through non-formal training programs. In the Philippines, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) has been at the forefront of implementing RPL, offering assessments to individuals in sectors like agriculture, hospitality, and construction, enabling them to earn certificates and gain formal recognition for their skills.

RPL has proven to be a valuable mechanism for promoting social inclusion, reducing skills gaps, and improving employment outcomes across Africa. In South Africa's approach to RPL has been central to its post-apartheid educational reforms, having established a national RPL policy in the 2000s. The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) has developed a robust system for recognizing prior learning, which has helped many individuals secure formal qualifications, enhancing their employment prospects and contributing to poverty reduction. A study conducted by SAQA in 2019 showed that nearly 1.2 million South Africans had their prior learning recognized between 2000 and 2018. Many workers who participated in RPL programs were able to advance in their careers, secure better-paying jobs, or obtain formal education. Despite the success, challenges persist in the form of inconsistent quality of assessments, limited employer recognition, and a lack of trained assessors in some sectors. Additionally, the informal sector, where many RPL candidates come from, still lacks sufficient awareness of the RPL process. Ghana has increasingly embraced RPL as a means to improve its labor market and educational outcomes.

According to a 2021 report by the National Accreditation Board (NAB), Ghana had successfully certified over 5,000 individuals through RPL by the end of 2020. The report noted that RPL has been particularly successful in rural and peri-urban areas, where many workers have skills but lack formal educational qualifications. RPL has been shown to increase income levels for beneficiaries by 20-30%, particularly in agricultural and artisan trades. One of the key challenges in Ghana is ensuring that RPL is accessible to those in remote regions. Despite some success, there is still a significant lack of understanding among workers and employers about the value of RPL certifications.

In East Africa, countries like Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya have begun exploring RPL as part of their skills development strategies. The East African Community (EAC) has recognized RPL as a tool for harmonizing qualifications across member states, promoting regional integration, and improving labor market outcomes. Kenya, in particular, has made significant strides in implementing RPL through the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA), which has developed a national policy framework for recognizing prior learning. The development and implementation of RPL in Kenya has been a collaborative effort involving various stakeholders. The government, through the Ministry of Education and other relevant agencies, has played a crucial role in developing policy framework and guidelines for RPL. International organizations, including the International Labour Organization (ILO) and CICA, have provided technical and financial support in developing RPL tools and training of practitioners. The policy was launched by the government on 22nd March, 2024 where 983 individuals who were successfully assessed, by the National Industrial Training Authority (NITA); Technical Vocational Education & Training Curriculum Development and Certification Council (TVET CDACC); The Nyeri National Polytechnic and The Kitale National Polytechnic, during policy pilot supported through the Young Africa Works in Kenya TVET Program in collaboration with Canadian Colleges – Humber College, Norquest College and Red River.

Through a partnership with Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICA), the Kenyan Ministry of Education, the private sector and the Mastercard Foundation under the Young Africa Works TVET Program, Humber College led a four-year partnership - Young Africa Works in Kenya-TVET-02 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) - with Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA), in collaboration with Canadian institutions NorQuest College and Red River College Polytechnic.

The RPL project sought to give access to and equip young people, including women and other young people in marginalized communities, with certifications that recognize the skills and training acquired outside formal education. The program undertook extensive capacity building for RPL practitioners at partner TVET institutions, supported the development of RPL policies and piloted the implementation frameworks at select institutions that led to the roll out of RPL nationally. The certification from RPL provided formal evidence that the individuals possess the technical capacity to perform tasks in the indicated areas and are expected to open employment and self-employment opportunities for the bearers in the formal economy. The certification targets areas under the Big Four Agenda (Food Security, Affordable Housing, Universal Healthcare and & Manufacturing) and Digital sectors. The aim of the initiative is to promote access to employment opportunities for young people and contribute to Kenya's Vision 2030 of transforming the country into a middle-income country. A tracer study conducted in 2024 by KNQA and Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICA) evaluated the long-term impact of RPL in Kenya, focusing on the outcomes for beneficiaries in terms of employment, education, and personal development.

The RPL project sought to give access to and equip young people, including women and other young people in marginalized communities, with certifications that recognize the skills and training acquired outside formal education. The program undertook extensive capacity building for RPL practitioners at partner TVET institutions, supported the development of RPL policies and piloted the implementation frameworks at select institutions that led to the roll out of RPL nationally. The certification from RPL provided formal evidence that the individuals possess the technical capacity to perform tasks in the indicated areas and are expected to open employment and self-employment opportunities for the bearers in the formal economy. The certification targets areas under the Big Four Agenda (Food Security, Affordable Housing, Universal Healthcare and & Manufacturing) and Digital sectors. The aim of the initiative is to promote access to employment opportunities for young people and contribute to Kenya's Vision 2030 of transforming the country into a middle-income country.

A tracer study conducted in 2024 by KNQA and Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan) evaluated the long-term impact of RPL in Kenya, focusing on the outcomes for beneficiaries in terms of employment, education, and personal development. The findings suggest that RPL has significantly improved the employment prospects of individuals, especially those from marginalized communities. Moreover, the study highlighted challenges such as limited awareness of RPL and inconsistent quality in assessments. However, it also provided evidence of RPL's potential to foster social inclusion and contribute to sustainable socio-economic development in Kenya.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

RPL has become a critical component of Kenya's education and vocational training system, providing a pathway for individuals, especially from marginalized communities, to gain formal qualifications and recognition based on their non-formal and informal learning experiences. However, while RPL programs seek to help individuals gain certification and improve employability, there is insufficient evidence on beneficiaries' educational advancement, career progression, and personal development. The lack of in-depth research on the long-term outcomes of RPL presents a gap in understanding how effectively these programs are contributing to social mobility and addressing the country's skills mismatches. This study sought to fill this critical knowledge gap by providing valuable data that can inform policy decisions and improve RPL program design. Furthermore, the research findings present potential obstacles to the successful implementation of RPL, offering evidence-based recommendations for overcoming these barriers.

- a.) The study's primary goal was to provide a thorough understanding of RPL's influence on beneficiaries' lives, focusing on four key objectives:
- b.) Assess RPL's impact on employment trajectories,
- c.) Examine role of RPL certification facilitating further educational opportunities;
- d.) Explore its contribution to personal empowerment and social mobility;

Identify challenges and provide recommendations for enhancing RPL policies.

CHAPTER TWO:

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.0 Research Design

Mixed-methods approach was applied to evaluate the impact of RPL certification in Kenya. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the RPL impact, capturing both statistical trends and personal narratives. The study targeted individuals who participated in the RPL process from 2022 and graduated in March 2024, with a target population of 980 individuals. The research was conducted in two phases: a pilot study and the main data collection.

2.1 Sampling Technique

Using a random sampling technique, 242 participants were initially selected, with 221 ultimately included in the final analysis. This sample represented a diverse group of respondents aged 18 to 59 years, including both males and females, from 24 different counties in Kenya. The sample size of 221 out of 980 provided a confidence level of approximately 95% with a margin of error of about 5%, which, while acceptable, could be improved in future studies.

2.2 Research Tools

The study utilized a combination of data collection methods, including individual interviews and questionnaires. In-depth interviews were conducted to gather qualitative data on respondents' experiences and perceptions of the RPL process. These interviews provided rich, detailed insights into the personal impact of RPL on beneficiaries' lives. Structured questionnaires were administered to collect quantitative data on various aspects of the RPL impact, allowing for statistical analysis and identification of broader trends. The quantitative tools were coded onto an online Enketo platform (Ona Data), to allow for online and offline data collection as well as ensure data quality in collection and analysis.

2.3 Data Collection

Data collection involved administering questionnaires and scheduling interviews with the selected participants. The questionnaires were designed to capture quantitative data on employment status, educational progression, and personal development, while the interviews provided qualitative insights into the beneficiaries' experiences and perceptions of the RPL process. To ensure that the data being collected was of the highest possible quality, the investigative team put in place measures to ensure that the quality of the data was maintained throughout the data collection process. This started initially with the pilot and data collection team training that intended to ensure that the tools were as comprehensible as possible and that there was common understanding of all the questions by the team to have consistent responses from the different respondents targeted in the data collection exercise. Back checks were conducted with the findings showing relatively high consistency between the submitted data and the backcheck, further reliability tests are explained in subsequent sections.

2.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis employed both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data from questionnaires were analyzed using statistical methods to identify trends and patterns, providing a broad overview of the RPL impact across the sample. Qualitative data from interviews underwent thematic analysis to extract key insights and supporting evidence, offering deeper context and personal narratives to complement the statistical findings. This mixed-methods approach allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the RPL impact, combining the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies.

However, the study had limitations that should be acknowledged. The lack of control groups was a significant limitation, as it prevented a comparative analysis of RPL beneficiaries against non-beneficiaries. This comparison could have provided valuable insights into the specific advantages and outcomes attributable to the RPL process.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were a crucial aspect of the study design and implementation. Prior to data collection, all participants were provided with detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks and benefits. A consent was sought from the respondent, explaining the voluntary nature of participation, the right to withdraw at any time, and measures to protect confidentiality. Participants were given ample opportunity to ask questions and clarify any concerns before agreeing to take part.

2.6 Reliability

The evaluation of the RPL study in Kenya employed reliability analysis and Principal Component Analysis (PCA) to assess the measurement instrument's effectiveness. The reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.983 across 31 items, indicating exceptionally high internal consistency. The PCA extracted nine components, with the first component accounting for 75.6% of the total variance. The first four components cumulatively explained 93.444% of the total variance. These findings validate the instrument's efficiency and its ability to provide valuable insights into RPL impact. The strong first component suggests a primary factor significantly influences RPL beneficiaries' experiences in Kenya.

CHAPTER THREE:

FINDINGS

3.1 Demographic Analysis

This section provides an overview of respondents' distribution and analysis in terms of Age, Gender, Disability status, Nationality and County representation.

3.1.1 Age Distribution

The age distribution of the respondents is as shown in Table 3.1 below:

Age category	Frequency	Percent
18-24 Years	22	10.0%
25-34 Years	116	52.5%
35-44 Years	68	30.8%
45-54 Years	13	5.9%
Above 55 Years	2	0.9%
Total	221	100

Table 3.1 Age of the respondents

The study found out that, 52.5% of the respondents fall within the 25-34 years, 30.8 % fall within 35-44 years, 10% fall between 18-24 years, 5.9 % fall between 45-54 years and 0.9 % are above 55 years. This indicates that RPL has particularly been embraced by the youth as opposed to other age groups.

The presence of these mature individuals underscores the inclusive nature of RPL, which recognizes the value of lifelong learning and the need to acknowledge the skills and experiences of individuals across different life stages. The diverse age distribution of the respondents highlights the broad reach and impact of RPL in Kenya.

3.1.2 Gender Distribution

The gender distribution among respondents is as shown in table 3.2 below:

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	84	38.00%
Male	137	62.00%
Total	221	100

Table 3.2 Gender of respondents

According to the study findings, 38.0% (84) of the participants were female, while 62.0% (137) were male. This gender distribution highlighted a higher representation of male participants in the study.

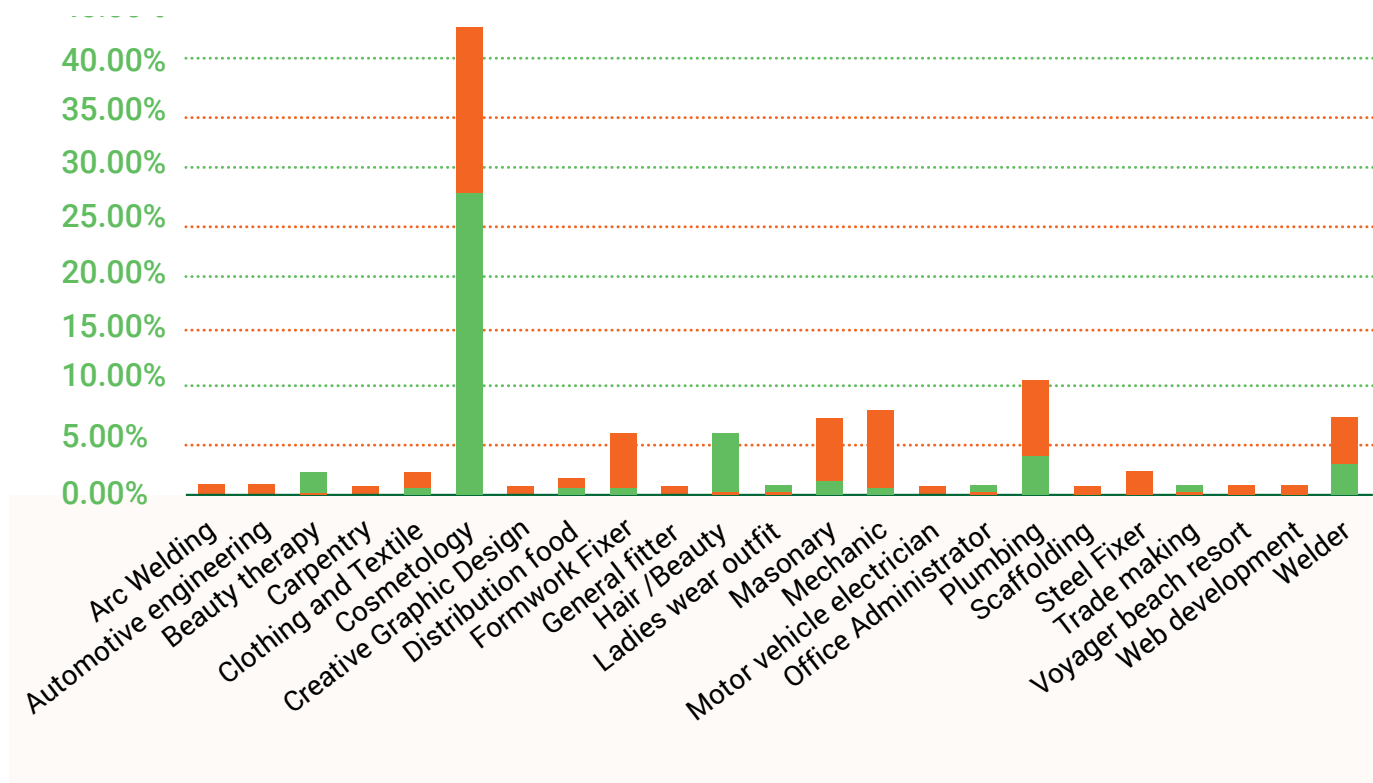


Figure 3.1 Gender certification in RPL

Source: KNQA

The data in figure 3.1 on gender certification in RPL reveals notable disparities between female and male participants across various vocational fields. In the cosmetology sector, women represent a significant majority at 27.5%, while men account for 14.1%. This trend highlights the appeal of beauty-related courses among female learners. Other fields, such as hair and beauty, also show female participation at 5.4%, with no male involvement. Conversely, male participation is more pronounced in traditionally male-dominated fields. For instance, mechanics have a male percentage of 6.7%, while plumbing shows a similar trend with 6.7% male participants compared to 3.4% female participants. Additionally, fields like masonry and welding exhibit higher male percentages at 5.4% and 4.0%, respectively, with minimal female representation.

3.1.3 Disability Status

The findings in table 3,3 indicate that 3.2% of the respondents were people living with disability. The low percentage of respondents with disabilities raises important considerations for the RPL and its accessibility. It suggests that there may be barriers preventing individuals with disabilities from participating fully in RPL initiatives, which could limit their opportunities for employment and personal development.

The inclusion of people with disabilities in such programs is vital for promoting equity in access to education and training, thereby enhancing their employability and overall quality of life.

Disability Status	Percent
People living with Disability	3.2%
People without Disability	96.8%
Total	100.0%

Table 3.3 Disability status

The types of disabilities reported by respondents in Figure 3.3 reveal a diverse range of challenges. Among those with disabilities, 42.9% identified as physically challenged, indicating a significant presence of mobility-related issues. Additionally, 14.3% reported being albino, while another 14.3% indicated a disability related to listening. Similarly, 14.3% noted disabilities involving their left-hand fingers and 14.3% reported leg disabilities. This distribution underscores the importance of creating inclusive RPL that accommodate various types of disabilities, ensuring equitable access to education and employment opportunities for all individuals.

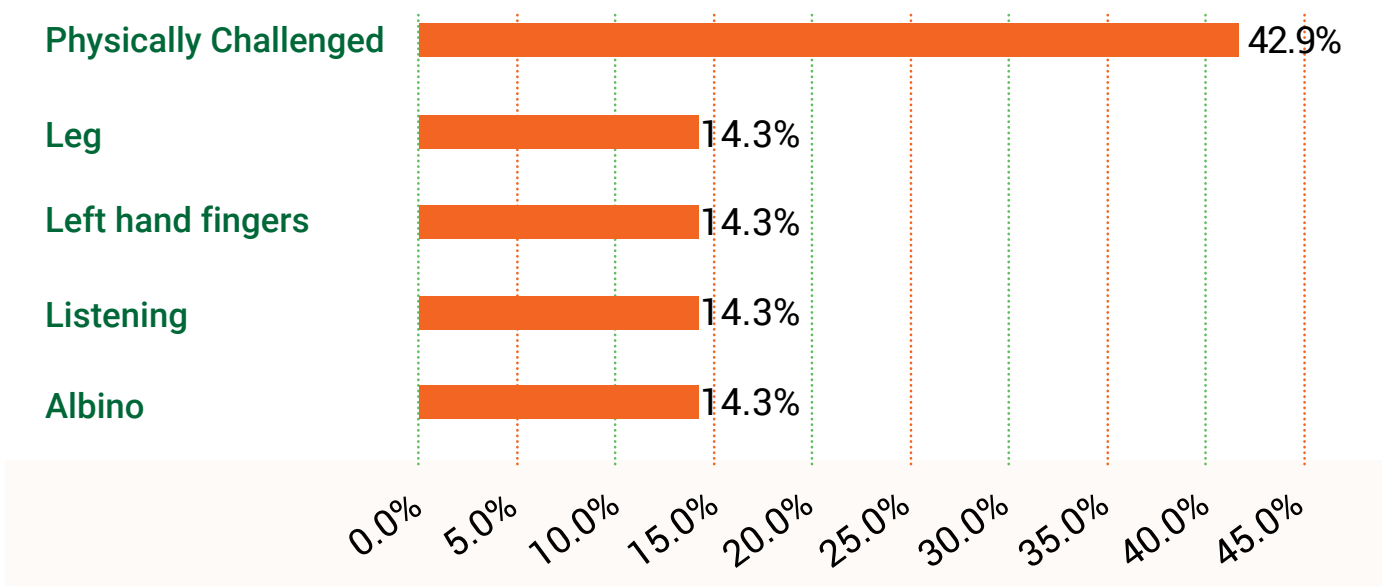


Figure 3.2 types of disability experience by respondents

Source: KNQA

3.1.4 Nationality

The data presented in table 3.4 highlights the demographic composition of individuals interested in RPL within the country, revealing that 78.7% are citizens while 21.3% are refugees. This indicates a significant presence of refugees who are actively seeking opportunities for personal and professional development through RPL.

Status	Percent
Citizens	78.7%
Refugees	21.3%
Total	100

Table 3.4 The nationality status

The data in Table 3.5 illustrates the distribution of nationalities seeking RPL certification, with Kenya representing the largest proportion at 80.1%. The Democratic Republic of Congo (7.7%) and South Sudan (6.8%) also make notable contributions. Smaller percentages are observed for Burundi (1.4%), Sudan (2.7%), Ethiopia (0.9%), and the Central African Republic (0.5%).

Nationality	Percent
Burundi	1.4%
Central African Republic	0.5%
Democratic Republic of Congo	7.7%
Ethiopia	0.9%
Kenya	80.1%
South Sudan	6.8%
Sudan	2.7%
Total	100

Table 3.5 Nationality Distribution Overview

3.1.5 County Representation

The study indicates that Nairobi stands out as the leading with 25.3 % followed by Turkana (10.4%), Garissa (9.0%), Nakuru (6.3%), Kisumu (5.9%), Uasin Gishu (5.4%), Nyeri (6.8%), Kiambu (4.1%) among others as indicated in the Figure 3.3 below. The varied participation rates across counties underscore the need for targeted outreach and support to enhance engagement in RPL throughout Kenya.

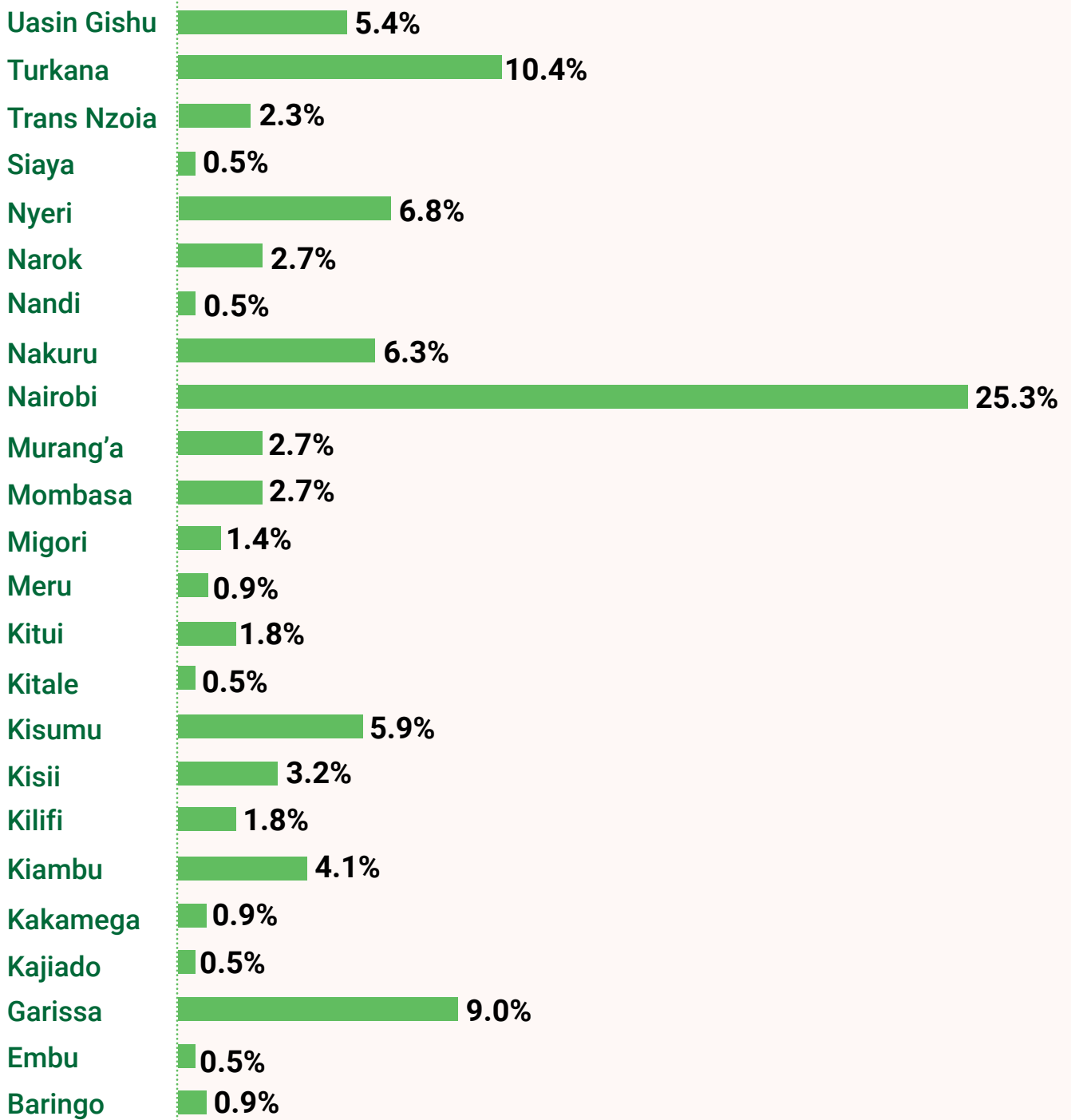


Figure 3.3 County representation

Source: KNQA

3.2 Education and Certification Background

The report illustrates the level of education attained by the respondents, the highest being a bachelor's degree while the lowest having no formal education. It also highlights the distribution of individuals who have completed different levels of formal education, ranging from no schooling to university degrees, and their corresponding enrollment in specific courses.

3.2.1 Education Levels

The highest level of education attained by respondents is summarized below in figure 3.4 below :

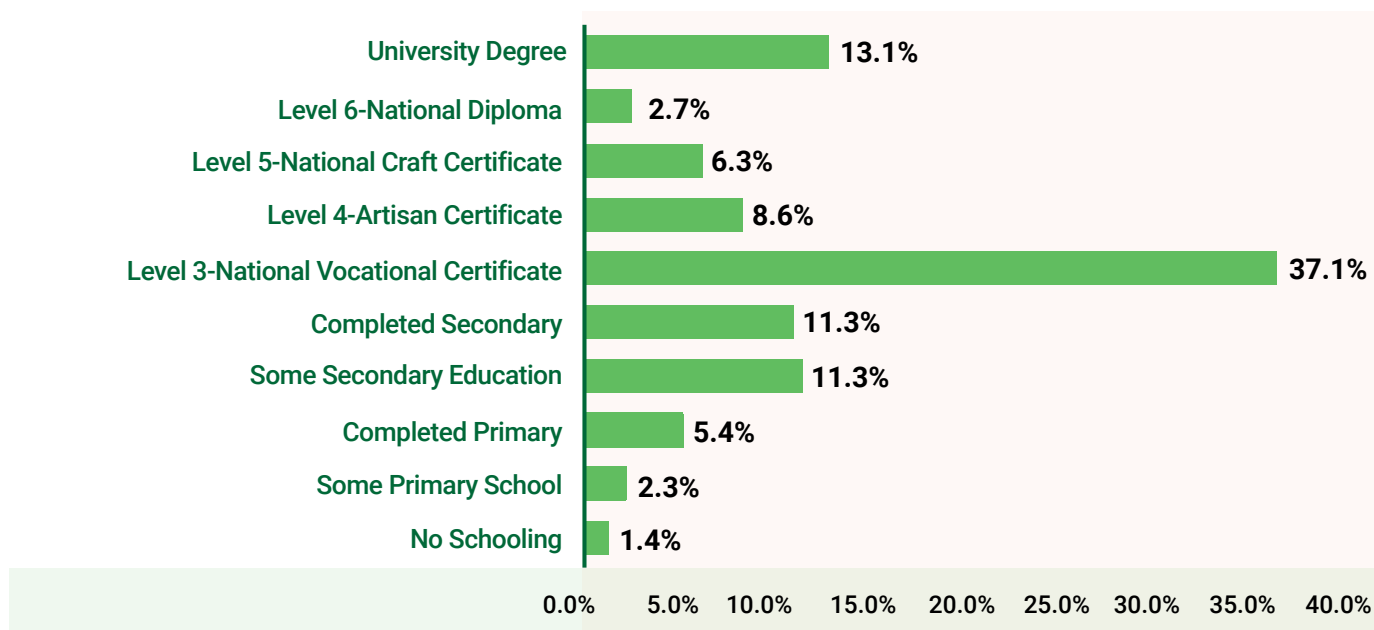


Figure 3.4 Education level

Source: KNQA

The data collected shows varying levels of schooling, with 1.4% of respondents reporting no formal education, while 2.3% have attended some primary school, and 5.4% have completed primary education. A notable 11.8% have some secondary education, and 11.3% have completed secondary school. The most significant group comprises those with a Level 3 National Vocational Certificate, accounting for 37.1% of respondents. This highlights the importance of vocational training in enhancing employability and skill recognition within the workforce. In addition, 8.6% hold an Artisan Certificate (Level 4), and 6.3% possess a National Craft Certificate (Level 5). Higher education qualifications are also represented, with 2.7% having a National Diploma (Level 6) and 13.1% holding a university degree.

This pattern implies that there is higher demand for RPL by people who hold a KNQF level 3 certificate qualification as opposed to those with no schooling and those with KNQF level 6 - diploma qualification.

3.2.2 Course Certification Overview

Figure 3.6 represents courses/skills areas that were certified through RPL and their respective levels. The courses certified include practical skills such as welding, Masonry, Motor Vehicle Mechanic, automotive engineering, carpentry, cosmetology, and web development, among others.

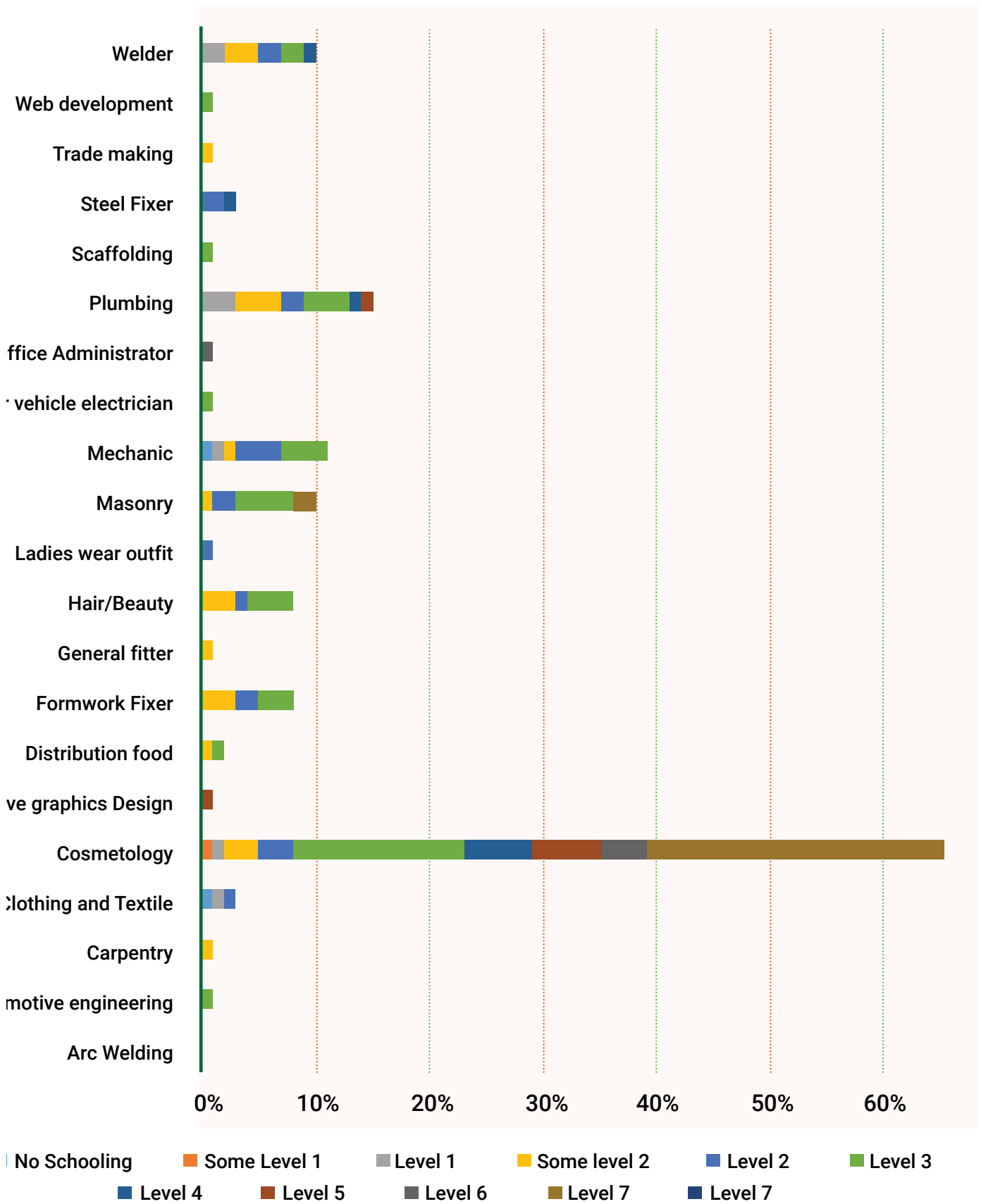


Figure 3.5 Courses Certification

Source: KNQA

Cosmetology stands out as a field attracting individuals across the educational spectrum, with more than 60% of participants receiving recognition, including those holding university degrees (Level 7, 26%). Similarly, Plumbing shows a diverse participant base, with individuals ranging from those with some secondary education (Level 2, 2%) to those with higher-level certifications such as Level 4-Artisan Certificates (1%) and Level 5-National Craft Certificates (1%) receiving recognition, demonstrating the program’s inclusivity. There is also a significant number of participants with completed secondary education (Level 3, 4%) who received RPL recognition. Fields like Arc Welding show no participation across all educational levels, while Automotive Engineering has a small concentration of participants with Level 3-National Vocational Certificates (1%), suggesting a more direct correlation between formal vocational training and RPL recognition in these specialized areas. Other fields, such as Masonry, Mechanics, and Welding, also reflect a mix of participants with varying educational backgrounds, further highlighting the program's ability to formally acknowledge and elevate existing expertise across diverse skill sets.

3.3 QAIs’ RPL Certification

Several Qualifications Awarding Institutions issue RPL certifications as shown in figure 3.6 . The National Industrial Training Authority scored a significant number of 34.3% of certification issued. The Nyeri National Polytechnic follows with 20%, while Kitale and Eldoret scored 17.9% and 12% respectively. Notably, 14.9% of respondents reported pending certifications, indicating ongoing challenges within the certification process as shown in the Figure 5 below.

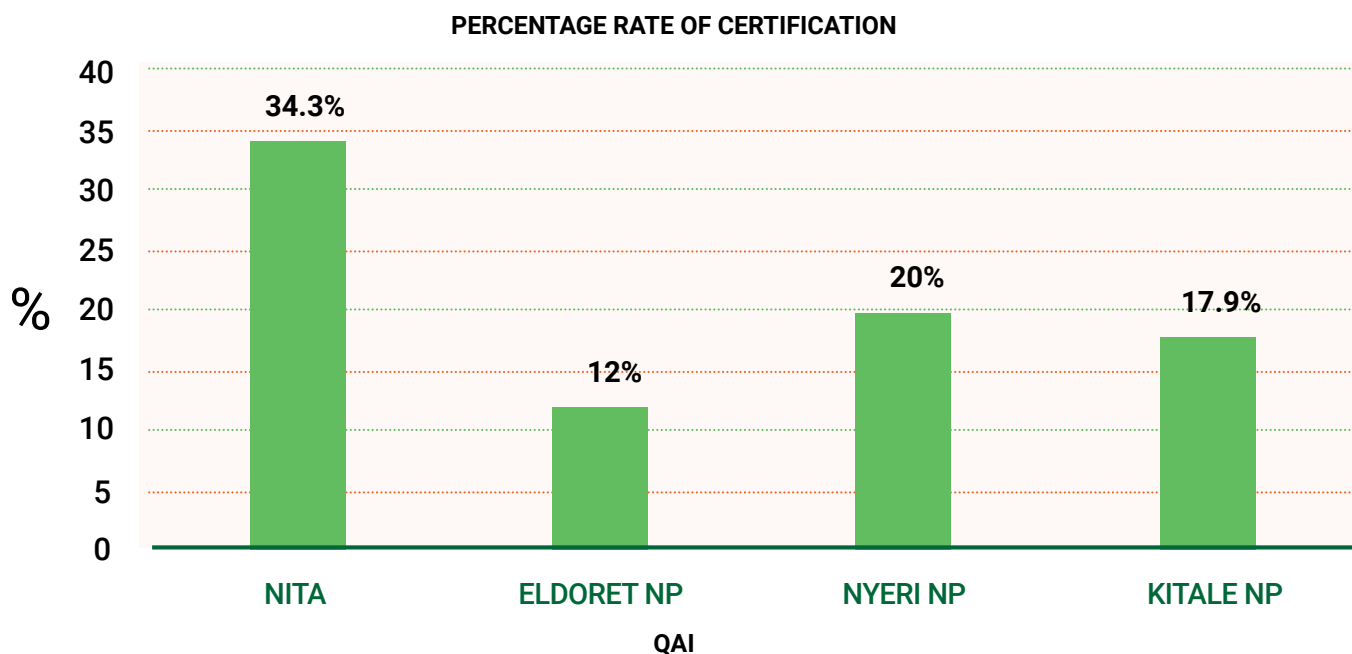


Figure 3.6 QAIs’ RPL Certification

Source: KNQA

3.4 Access, Recruitment and Outreach and Costs and Affordability to RPL

The data collected on how respondents learned about the Recognition of RPL program in *Figure 3.7* reveals significant insights into the effectiveness of various communication channel. A majority of respondents, 64.3%, reported hearing about the program through word of mouth, indicating that personal recommendations and community discussions play a crucial role in raising awareness. This suggests that satisfied participants are likely sharing their experiences, thereby encouraging others to engage with the RPL initiative. In contrast, traditional media channels have a limited impact, with only 5% of respondents learning about the program through radio and 2.3% through television. This highlights a potential area for improvement, as these platforms could be leveraged more effectively to reach a broader audience. The internet served as a source of information for 17.6% of respondents, demonstrating the growing importance of online resources in disseminating information. Meanwhile, posters accounted for 4.1%, and other sources made up 6.8%, which may include community events or local organizations.

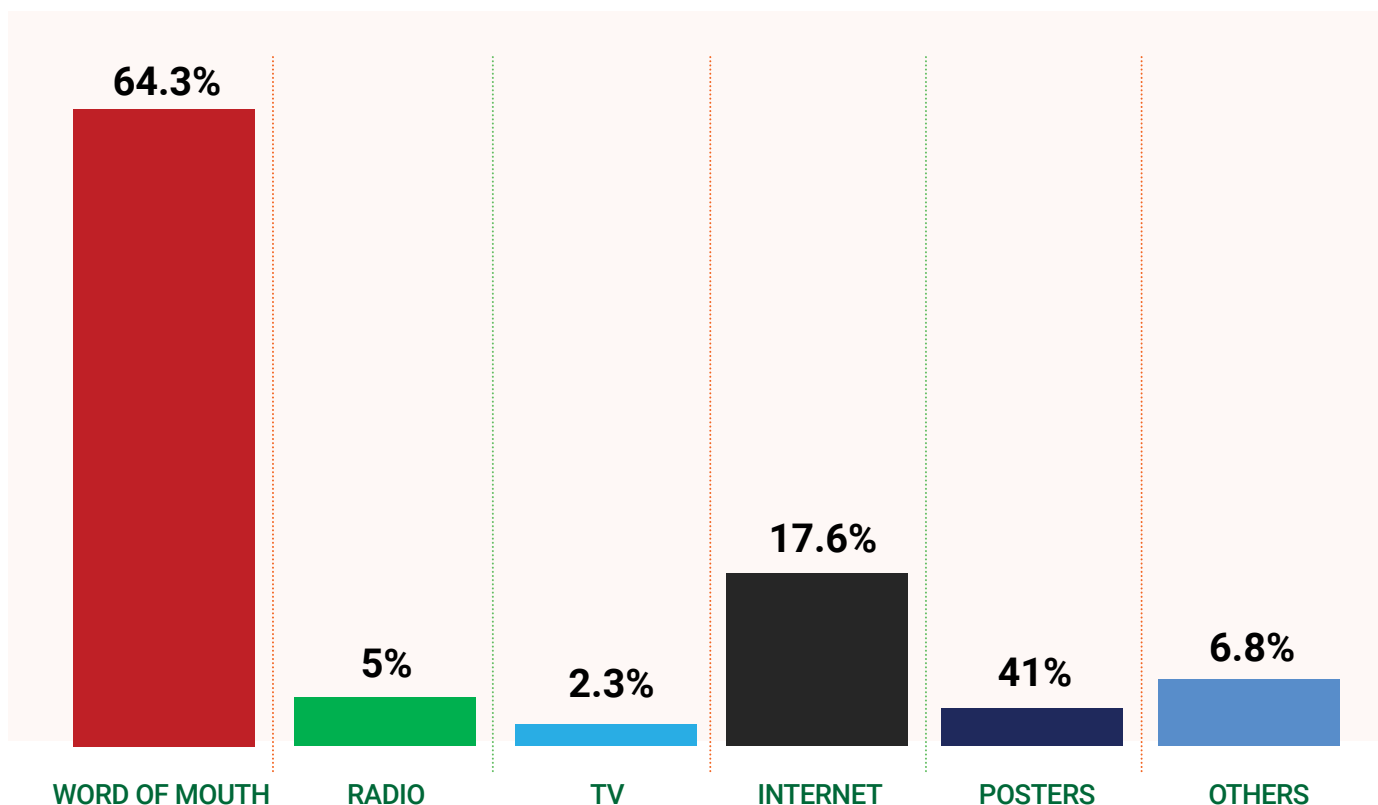


Figure 3.7 communication channel used to reach RPL participants
Source: KNQA

The data in table 3.6 offers a detailed snapshot of participant sentiments towards various aspects of the RPL program. Across different categories such as motivation, accessibility, information dissemination, counseling, assessment, affordability, and satisfaction with certification, responses vary in terms of agreement and satisfaction levels. The mean scores range from 3.57 to 4.24, reflecting differing degrees of approval. Skewness values suggest varying distributions in responses, indicating potential areas of concern or satisfaction within the RPL process.

3.4.1 Motivation and Accessibility

A notable 46.6% of respondents strongly agreed that they were motivated to pursue RPL, indicating a high level of intrinsic motivation among participants. However, only 38% agreed that the RPL program was easily accessible in their local area, suggesting potential barriers to entry for some individuals. The mean score for accessibility was 3.59 with a standard deviation of 1.235, indicating variability in experiences across different locations. This data suggests a consistent pattern in the motivation levels of the respondents towards RPL. The findings imply that the RPL program is perceived positively and holds a high level of value or relevance to the participants. This strong motivation could be attributed to various factors such as career advancement opportunities, personal development goals, or the perceived benefits of gaining recognition for existing skills and knowledge.

3.4.2 Awareness and Outreach

Regarding awareness, only 29.4% felt adequately informed about the RPL program through publicity efforts. The mean score for this aspect was 3.77 (SD = 1.093). Similarly, satisfaction with outreach efforts by RPL practitioners received a mean score of 3.76 (SD = 1.109), with 41.2% agreeing that these efforts were satisfactory. These results highlight a gap in effective communication and outreach strategies that could enhance program visibility.

The negative skewness of -0.471 implies a slight skew towards the lower end of the scale, indicating that while the mean suggests moderate accessibility, there is a tendency for some respondents to rate accessibility lower than the mean.

The standard error of skewness at 0.164 indicates a reliable estimate of the skewness value, reinforcing the observation that the distribution is somewhat skewed towards lower accessibility ratings, albeit to a moderate degree. This skewness suggests that while the majority of respondents perceive the RPL program to be moderately accessible, there is a subset that views it as less accessible.

The findings may indicate areas for improvement in making the RPL program more widely accessible. This could involve enhancing outreach efforts, increasing awareness about the program, or addressing potential.

	n	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness
I was motivated to pursue RPL	221	2.7%	1.8%	10.9%	38.0%	46.6%	4.24	0.915	-1.5
The RPL program was easily accessible in my local area	221	2.7%	1.8%	10.9%	38.0%	46.6%	3.59	1.235	-0.471
I was adequately informed about the RPL program through publicity and awareness creation	221	5.4%	18.1%	17.6%	29.4%	29.4%	3.77	1.093	-0.721
I was satisfied with the outreach and awareness efforts by the RPL practitioners	221	2.7%	14.5%	13.6%	41.2%	28.1%	3.76	1.109	-0.713
I received adequate counseling and facilitation during the RPL process	221	2.7%	7.2%	11.3%	50.7%	28.1%	3.94	0.964	-1.112
The assessment of my skills and knowledge was fair and thorough	221	2.7%	7.2%	11.8%	43.4%	34.8%	4	1.002	-1.103
I was satisfied with the certification and recognition I received	221	5.9%	5.9%	15.8%	38.5%	33.9%	3.89	1.12	-1.047
The RPL program was affordable for me	221	9.0%	13.1%	16.7%	33.5%	27.6%	3.57	1.269	-0.628

Table 3.6 Access, Recruitment and Outreach and Costs and Affordability to RPL

One significant barrier could be limited awareness among respondents, potentially stemming from insufficient information dissemination about the program's benefits and participation procedures. This lack of awareness might hinder individuals from fully understanding the opportunities that the RPL program offers. Moreover, geographical accessibility could pose another obstacle, particularly for individuals residing in remote or underserved areas where the program's physical locations may be limited, thus impeding their ability to access it conveniently.

Additionally, procedural complexity, including intricate application processes, unclear guidelines, or bureaucratic hurdles, could present challenges for individuals seeking to engage with the RPL program. To enhance accessibility, initiatives such as targeted awareness campaigns, expanding program locations, offering financial aid, providing multilingual support, and simplifying application procedures could be implemented. Addressing these barriers is crucial to fostering inclusivity and improving the effectiveness of the RPL program.

3.4.2.1 Counseling and Assessment Satisfaction

Participants expressed a relatively high level of satisfaction with the counseling and facilitation provided during the RPL process (mean = 3.94, SD = 0.964), with over half (50.7%) agreeing that they received adequate support. Furthermore, the assessment of skills and knowledge was perceived as fair and thorough by 34.8% of respondents who strongly agreed (mean = 4.00, SD = 1.002). This suggests that while the assessment process has strengths, there is room for improvement in ensuring fairness and thoroughness across all evaluations.

The skewness value of -1.112 indicates a significant negative skew in the distribution of responses, leaning towards the lower end of the scale. This skewness suggests that there is a notable proportion of respondents who rated their experience with counseling and facilitation lower than the mean, highlighting potential areas of concern or dissatisfaction within the process. The standard error of skewness at 0.164 reinforces the reliability of this skewness estimate, indicating a consistent skew in the distribution of responses.

The findings suggest that while the majority of respondents viewed the counseling and facilitation positively, there exists a subset of participants who may have encountered challenges or perceived shortcomings in this aspect of the RPL process. Potential issues could include insufficient support, lack of clarity in guidance, inadequacy in addressing individual needs, or communication barriers during the counseling sessions.

To address these concerns and enhance the overall experience of participants, it may be beneficial to focus on improving the quality and effectiveness of counseling and facilitation services. This could involve providing comprehensive training to counselors, ensuring personalized support tailored to individual needs, enhancing communication strategies, and creating a supportive environment that fosters trust and transparency throughout the RPL process. By addressing these areas of improvement, the RPL program can better meet the diverse needs of participants and enhance their overall experience and satisfaction with the counseling and facilitation provided.

3.4.2.2 Certification Recognition

Satisfaction with the certification and recognition received post-assessment was moderately positive, with a mean score of 3.89 (SD = 1.12). However, only 33.9% strongly agreed that they were satisfied with their certification outcomes, indicating potential areas for enhancing the perceived value of RPL certifications in the job market.

A skewness value of -1.047 indicates a significant negative skew in the distribution of responses. This suggests that a notable proportion of respondents rated their satisfaction lower than the mean, highlighting potential dissatisfaction or areas of improvement within the certification and recognition process. The standard error of skewness at 0.164 reinforces the reliability of this skewness estimate, indicating a consistent skew in the distribution of responses towards the lower end of the satisfaction scale.

Possible reasons for this skewness could include discrepancies in expectations regarding the certification process, variations in perceived value or relevance of the certification received, or shortcomings in the recognition provided post-assessment. To enhance participant satisfaction with certification and recognition, addressing these potential issues is crucial. Strategies such as refining the assessment criteria to ensure fairness, enhancing the credibility and value of certifications, and providing clearer pathways for recognition and career advancement based on RPL achievements could help improve overall participant satisfaction and program effectiveness.

3.4.2.3 Funding for RPL

Funding for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) assessments in Kenya shown in Figure 3.19 comes from various sources, reflecting a diverse support system. A significant portion, 36.2%, of respondents self-funded their assessments, demonstrating personal investment in their qualifications. The National Government contributed 24.9%, indicating its commitment to enhancing skills recognition. Additionally, 26.7% of funding came from donor organizations, highlighting external support for educational initiatives. Meanwhile, 3.6% of respondents received funding from county governments, and 8.6% cited other sources. This varied funding landscape underscores the collaborative effort to facilitate access to RPL assessments and promote skill recognition across the country.

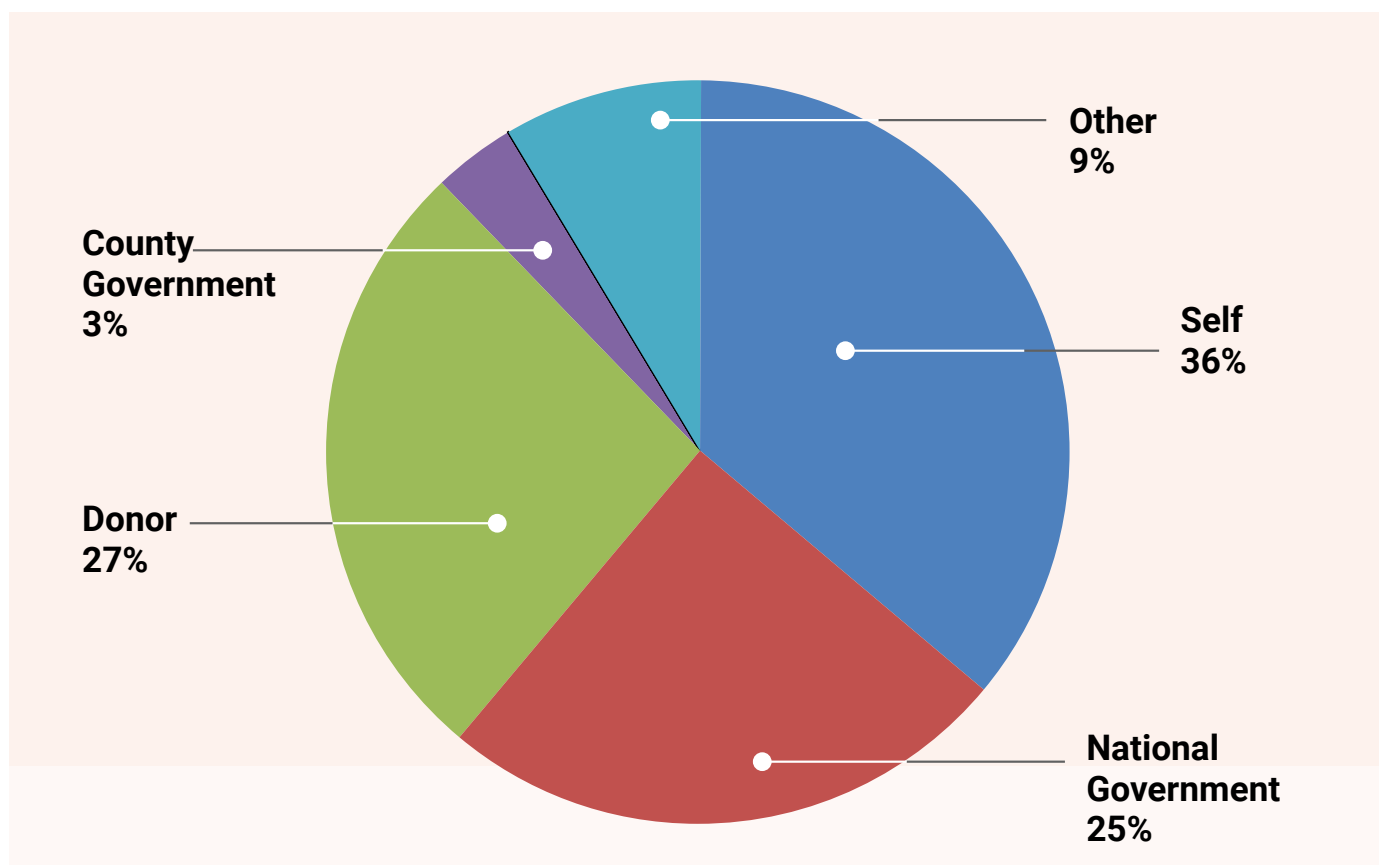


Figure 3.8 sources of funding for RPL

Source: KNQA

3.4.2.4 Affordability Concerns

Affordability emerged as a critical issue, with only 27.6% strongly agreeing that the RPL program was affordable for them (mean = 3.57, SD = 1.269). This highlights financial barriers that may deter potential candidates from participating in RPL programs.

The skewness value of -0.628 signifies a slightly negative skew in the distribution of responses, indicating that while the majority of participants may view the program as somewhat affordable, there is a notable proportion who perceive it as less so. This skewness hints at potential disparities in financial circumstances among participants, with some finding the program more financially burdensome than others.

The standard error of skewness at 0.164 reinforces the reliability of this skewness estimate, suggesting a consistent skew in the distribution of responses towards the lower end of the affordability scale.

Several factors could contribute to the perceived affordability of the RPL program. These may include the cost of assessment, administrative fees, study materials, and any associated expenses. Participants' individual financial situations, such as income levels, existing financial commitments, and access to financial aid or support, can also influence their perception of affordability.

To address concerns related to the affordability of the RPL program, several strategies could be considered. Implementing financial assistance programs, scholarships, or grants to support individuals facing financial constraints could make the program more accessible to a wider range of participants. Additionally, offering flexible payment options, installment plans, or discounts for individuals from underprivileged backgrounds could help alleviate financial burdens associated with participation in the program.

Clear communication about the costs involved in the RPL process, including transparent breakdowns of fees and expenses, can help participants make informed decisions about their participation. Providing information on available financial support options and resources for assistance can also empower individuals to navigate the financial aspects of the program more effectively.

Moreover, conducting periodic reviews of program costs and affordability metrics, along with gathering feedback from participants on their financial experiences, can enable program administrators to continuously monitor and address affordability concerns. By prioritizing financial accessibility and implementing targeted measures to support participants with varying financial needs, the RPL program can enhance its inclusivity and effectiveness in catering to a diverse participant base.

3.4.3 The Influence of Qualifications Attained through RPL

3.4.3.1 Job Enhancement

The analysis of the impact of qualifications gained through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in table 3.7 reveals a generally positive influence on various facets of career development and personal growth. Data collected from 221 respondents highlights how RPL qualifications contribute to job enhancement, career advancement, income levels, job prospects, and employer recognition.

A significant portion of respondents, approximately 63%, believe that obtaining RPL qualifications has substantially enhanced their job roles, reflected in a mean score of 3.72. This indicates that RPL qualifications play a crucial role in improving job performance and expanding responsibilities. Furthermore, RPL qualifications have a pronounced effect on respondents' confidence in their job prospects. About 76% express increased confidence due to their RPL qualifications, achieving a mean score of 3.95. This suggests that RPL significantly bolsters career outlook and perceived employability.

Employer recognition of RPL qualifications also emerges as a positive aspect, with 73% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that their qualifications are valued by employers, yielding a mean score of 3.9. This demonstrates that RPL qualifications are generally regarded as credible and respected within professional fields.

3.4.3.2 Career Advancement

RPL qualifications also positively impact career advancement. About 69% of respondents agree or strongly agree that RPL has facilitated their career progression, reflected in a mean score of 3.81. This suggests that RPL is recognized as a valuable asset for individuals seeking to advance their careers. However, the influence of RPL on income levels is less pronounced than expected. While 48% of respondents report increased income as a result of RPL, the mean score is lower at 3.39, indicating that not all individuals experience significant financial benefits.

Looking ahead, many respondents anticipate future salary increases directly linked to their RPL qualifications, with approximately 68% agreeing or strongly agreeing with this expectation, achieving a mean score of 3.82. When assessing the impact of RPL on securing employment opportunities, a substantial 72% of respondents report a high or very high impact, with a mean score of 4.04. This underscores the effectiveness of RPL in helping individuals obtain job opportunities.

Despite these positive outcomes, the impact of RPL on assuming higher-level responsibilities is comparatively lower. About 58% of respondents report a high or very high impact in this area, with a mean score of 3.57. This suggests that while RPL has enabled many to advance, there is still potential for growth in leadership roles. Furthermore, the broader impact of RPL qualifications—considering aspects like salary increments, recognition, and opportunity access—shows variability, with about 33% of respondents reporting a high or very high impact, reflected in a mean score of 2.86. This indicates that while RPL is beneficial, its effects may differ significantly among individuals.

In conclusion, RPL qualifications have a notable positive effect on career enhancement, job prospects, and employer recognition. However, the financial benefits and broader impacts are unevenly distributed across respondents. Overall, RPL serves as a valuable mechanism for career advancement and personal development, although its effectiveness can vary based on individual circumstances and industry contexts.

	n	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
Obtaining qualifications through RPL has significantly enhanced my job	221	5.0%	9.0%	23.1%	34.8%	28.1%	3.72	1.117	1.248	-0.691	-0.171
RPL has positively impacted my career advancement	221	5.9%	6.8%	18.1%	38.5%	30.8%	3.81	1.123	1.261	-0.93	0.28
My income levels have increased as a result of RPL	221	7.2%	15.8%	28.5%	27.1%	21.3%	3.39	1.192	1.422	-0.297	-0.777
I feel more confident in my job prospects due to my qualifications after RPL	221	4.5%	6.3%	13.1%	41.6%	34.4%	3.95	1.067	1.138	-1.124	0.837
I believe that my qualifications after RPL assessments are recognized and valued by employers in my field	221	5.0%	7.2%	14.5%	38.9%	34.4%	3.9	1.106	1.223	-1.032	0.473
I anticipate that my salary will increase within a reasonable timeframe as a direct result of my RPL assessment and qualification	221	5.0%	6.8%	20.4%	36.7%	31.2%	3.82	1.1	1.21	-0.865	0.208

Table 3.7 Influence of Qualifications Attained through RPL

3.4.4 Analysis of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Impact

The goal of this analysis is to determine the impact of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) certifications on individuals' career outcomes, such as job prospects, salary expectations, and career advancement. By using a regression model, the study explores how certain factors—like job confidence, income levels, and career advancement—influence the likelihood of someone obtaining an RPL certification and how these certifications, in turn, affect their career trajectories.

3.4.5 Model Summary

The model summary in table 3.8 reveals a moderate relationship between the predictors (factors such as job confidence and income levels) and the likelihood of obtaining RPL certifications. Specifically, about 12.5% of the variation in whether someone pursues an RPL certification can be explained by the factors included in the model. This indicates that while the predictors collectively have a meaningful impact, there are other factors not captured in the model that also play a role. The model is statistically significant, confirming that the predictors are relevant in understanding the likelihood of obtaining RPL certifications.

The ANOVA table 3.9 results further support these findings, showing that at least one of the predictors significantly affects the likelihood of obtaining RPL certifications. The model explains a meaningful portion of the variability in certification likelihood, highlighting the importance of the factors included in the analysis.

When examining the coefficient analysis, several key insights emerge. On the positive side, individuals who believe that RPL qualifications have enhanced their job opportunities are more likely to pursue RPL certifications. Similarly, those who feel more confident in their job prospects due to RPL are also more likely to obtain certifications. These findings suggest that RPL certifications are valuable for improving job prospects and boosting confidence, which in turn motivates individuals to seek further qualifications.

However, there is also a surprising negative impact: individuals who report increased income as a result of RPL are less likely to pursue further certifications. This could be because they are already satisfied with their career progress and do not feel the need for additional qualifications. It highlights a potential complacency effect, where achieving certain career milestones reduces the motivation for further professional development.

Additionally, some predictors did not show significant relationships with the likelihood of obtaining RPL certifications. For example, factors like employer recognition of RPL qualifications or expectations of a salary increase did not strongly influence the decision to pursue certifications. This suggests that while these factors may be important in other contexts, they are not key motivators for individuals seeking RPL certifications.

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
				R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
.354	0.125	0.101	0.429	0.125	5.107	6	214	.000

Predictors: (Constant), salary will increase, income levels increased, RPL assessments are recognized by employers, more confident in my job prospects, career advancement,

Table 3.8 Model Summary of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Impact

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	5.641	6	0.940	5.107	.000b
Residual	39.400	214	.184		
Total	45.041	220			

Table 3.9 ANOVA Results of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Impact

B	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	Std. Erro	Beta				
(Constant)	1.285	.117			10.981	.000
Obtaining qualifications through RPL has significantly enhanced my job	.130	.060	.321		2.160	.032
RPL has positively impacted my career advancement	.005	.056	.012		.088	.930
My income levels have increased as a result of RPL	-.086	.040	-.226		-2.134	.034
I feel more confident in my job prospects due to my qualifications after RPL	.130	.059	.308		2.215	.028
I believe that my qualifications after RPL assessments are recognized and valued by employers in my field	-.046	.048	-.114		-.969	.333
I anticipate that my salary will increase within a reasonable timeframe as a direct result of my RPL assessment and qualification	-.030	.045	-.073		-.661	.509

Table 3.10 Coefficient Analysis of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Impact

3.5 Conclusion

The primary objective of this analysis is to establish the impact of RPL certifications on career outcomes, such as job confidence, income, and career advancement. The regression model helps us understand not only how certain factors influence the likelihood of someone pursuing an RPL certification but also how these certifications affect their careers. The key takeaways are that RPL certifications are valuable for enhancing job opportunities and boosting confidence, but individuals who have already seen significant career benefits—such as increased income—may be less motivated to pursue further certifications. Factors like employer recognition or salary expectations, while important, do not strongly influence the decision to pursue RPL certifications. Overall, this study provides valuable insights into what motivates individuals to obtain RPL certifications and how these certifications impact their professional lives.

3.6 The Facilitation of Further Educational Opportunities by RPL

This report analyzes the impact of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) on respondents' access to further educational opportunities, based on data from 221 participants in table 3.11. The analysis focuses on five key statements reflecting different facets of RPL's influence on educational pathways. The data is presented using a Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree," with mean scores and standard deviations calculated for each statement.

3.6.1 Access to Opportunities

The statement, "RPL has significantly enhanced my access to (e.g., university, technical training) opportunities," reveals a generally positive perception. While a small percentage (5%) strongly disagreed, a significant majority (54.3%) agreed or strongly agreed (33.9% + 20.4%), resulting in a mean score of 3.53. This suggests that RPL has demonstrably broadened educational avenues for a substantial portion of the respondents. The standard deviation of 1.093 indicates a moderate spread in responses, suggesting some variation in individual experiences.

3.6.2 Enhanced Preparedness for Further Education

The statement, "I feel more equipped for further educational opportunities after RPL assessments," shows a strong positive response. A combined 75.5% (44.3% + 31.2%) agreed or strongly agreed, with a higher mean score of 3.92 and a relatively low standard deviation of 1.041. This indicates that RPL significantly improved respondents' perceived readiness for further education. The negative skewness (-1.079) suggests a concentration of responses towards the "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" categories.

3.6.3 Access to Skill Development Programs

The statement, "The RPL process has opened doors to new skill development programs for me," mirrors the positive trend. The majority (71.5%) agreed or strongly agreed (40.7% + 30.8%), achieving a mean score of 3.86. The standard deviation of 1.076 shows a similar spread to the previous statements. The negative skewness (-0.955) again highlights the concentration of positive responses.

3.6.4 Positive Impact on Educational Advancement

The statement, "I believe that RPL assessments have positively impacted my educational advancement," produced similarly strong positive results. A substantial 73.7% (44.3% + 29.4%) agreed or strongly agreed, with a mean score of 3.9. The standard deviation of 1.013 indicates less variability than in some previous statements. The negative skewness (-1.043) reinforces the concentration of responses in the positive range.

3.6.5 Satisfaction with Educational Opportunities

The final statement, "I am satisfied with the educational opportunities that RPL has provided me," showcases high levels of satisfaction. A significant 75.6% (43.9% + 31.7%) agreed or strongly agreed, achieving a mean score of 3.93. The standard deviation of 1.031 is comparable to other statements. The negative skewness (-1.093) again points towards a clustering of responses towards the positive end of the scale.

The analysis consistently demonstrates a strong positive perception of RPL's impact on respondents' access to and engagement with further educational opportunities. Across all five statements, a significant majority of respondents reported positive experiences, indicating that RPL effectively facilitates educational advancement. The relatively consistent mean scores and standard deviations, coupled with the negative skewness observed across most statements, suggest a robust and reliable positive impact of RPL on educational pathways. Further research could explore the specific types of educational opportunities accessed through RPL and the long-term career outcomes associated with these opportunities.

	n	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
RPL has significantly enhanced my access to (e.g., university, technical training) opportunities	221	5.0%	11.8%	29.0%	33.9%	20.4%	3.53	1.093	1.196	-0.455	-0.389
I feel more equipped for further educational opportunities after RPL assessments	221	4.1%	6.8%	13.6%	44.3%	31.2%	3.92	1.041	1.084	-1.079	0.821
The RPL process has opened doors to new skill development programs for me	221	4.5%	7.2%	16.7%	40.7%	30.8%	3.86	1.076	1.158	-0.955	0.429
I believe that RPL assessments have positively impacted my educational advancement	221	4.1%	5.0%	17.2%	44.3%	29.4%	3.9	1.013	1.026	-1.043	0.951
I am satisfied with the educational opportunities that RPL has provided me	221	4.1%	5.9%	14.5%	43.9%	31.7%	3.93	1.031	1.064	-1.093	0.93

Table 3.11 Satisfaction with Education Opportunities

3.6.6 Report on the Analysis of RPL's Impact on Obtaining RPL certification on education advancement

The analysis explores the relationship between people's perceptions of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and their likelihood of obtaining RPL certifications. The results reveal a weak positive relationship ($R = 0.242$) between these perceptions and the likelihood of certification. Specifically, the R-squared value (0.059) indicates that only about 5.9% of the differences in whether people obtain RPL certifications can be explained by their perceptions of RPL. This suggests that while perceptions of RPL play a small role, other factors not included in this study—such as career goals, financial constraints, time availability, or employer requirements—likely have a greater influence on the decision to pursue certifications. Despite the weak relationship, the model is statistically significant ($p = 0.023$), meaning that, collectively, perceptions of RPL do have some impact on certification likelihood.

When examining individual perceptions, only one stood out as having a slight influence: the belief that "RPL assessments have positively impacted my educational advancement." People who agreed with this statement were slightly more likely to obtain RPL certifications. However, this relationship is weak ($p = 0.136$), indicating that the effect is not strong. Other perceptions, such as feeling more equipped for further education, being satisfied with RPL opportunities, or believing that RPL has opened doors to skill development programs, did not show a significant relationship with certification likelihood. Interestingly, the perception that "RPL has significantly enhanced access to opportunities" had a negative coefficient, suggesting it was slightly associated with a lower likelihood of obtaining certifications. This unexpected finding requires further investigation to understand whether it reflects a confounding factor, measurement error, or a genuine trend.

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
.242	.059	.037	.444	.059	2.678	5	215	.023

Table 3.12 Model Summary for RPL Certification Likelihood

Predictors

- ▶ Satisfaction with educational opportunities provided by RPL.
- ▶ Perception that RPL enhanced access to opportunities (e.g., university, technical training).
- ▶ Belief that RPL opened doors to new skill development programs.
- ▶ Feeling more equipped for further educational opportunities after RPL assessments.
- ▶ Belief that RPL positively impacted educational advancement.

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	2.641	5	0.528	2.678	.023
Residual	42.400	215	0.197		
Total	45.041	220			

Table 3.13 ANOVA Results for RPL Certification Likelihood

Dependent Variable:

- ▶ Whether the respondent has obtained any Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) certifications.

Predictors

- ▶ Satisfaction with educational opportunities provided by RPL.
- ▶ Perception that RPL enhanced access to opportunities (e.g., university, technical training).
- ▶ Belief that RPL opened doors to new skill development programs.
- ▶ Feeling more equipped for further educational opportunities after RPL assessments.
- ▶ Belief that RPL positively impacted educational advancement.

3.6.7 Conclusion

The study shows that while positive beliefs about RPL's impact on educational advancement may slightly increase the likelihood of obtaining certifications, other factors likely play a more significant role. The findings should be interpreted with caution due to the model's limited predictive power. Future research should investigate a broader range of factors, such as personal, financial, and professional considerations, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of what drives people to pursue RPL certifications. Ultimately, the goal of this analysis is to determine whether perceptions of RPL's impact influence the likelihood of obtaining certifications, and while the findings suggest a small effect, they also highlight the need for further exploration into this complex decision-making process.

3.7 The Contribution of RPL to Personal Empowerment and Social Mobility

This report analyzes the impact of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) on the personal and professional lives of 221 respondents, focusing on self-esteem, empowerment, social mobility, and economic well-being. Data was collected using a Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree," allowing for the calculation of mean scores, standard deviations, and measures of skewness and kurtosis.

3.7.1 Self-Esteem and Confidence

The statement, "RPL has boosted my self-esteem and confidence," reveals a predominantly positive impact. A significant majority (71.7%) agreed or strongly agreed, resulting in a high mean score of 3.93. The standard deviation of 1.095 indicates moderate variability, suggesting individual experiences varied. The negative skewness (-1.037) and relatively low kurtosis (0.492) suggest a distribution concentrated towards the positive end of the scale, with fewer extreme responses. This indicates that RPL significantly enhanced self-esteem and confidence for a large proportion of respondents.

3.7.2 Personal and Professional Empowerment

The statement, "I feel more empowered in my personal and professional life due to my qualification," yielded similar positive results. A substantial 73.8% (41.2% + 32.6%) agreed or strongly agreed, with a mean score of 3.93. The standard deviation (1.033) suggests less variability than the previous statement. The negative skewness (-1.002) and moderate kurtosis (0.66) again point towards a distribution skewed towards positive responses. This confirms RPL's significant contribution to overall empowerment.

3.7.3 Sense of Personal Empowerment

The statement, "RPL has played a significant role in enhancing my sense of personal empowerment," reinforces the previous findings. 76% (43% + 33%) agreed or strongly agreed, achieving a mean score of 3.95. The low standard deviation (1.03) and highly negative skewness (-1.117) indicate a strong and consistent positive impact, with responses heavily concentrated towards the positive end of the scale. The kurtosis value of 1 suggests a slightly heavier tail than a normal distribution, indicating some more extreme positive responses.

3.7.4 Social Mobility

The statement, "The qualifications acquired through RPL have positively impacted my social mobility," shows a positive but less pronounced effect compared to the previous statements. While 67.1% (37.1% + 30.3%) agreed or strongly agreed, the mean score is lower (3.8). The standard deviation (1.098) is similar to other statements, but the skewness (-0.783) is less negative, indicating a slightly broader distribution of responses. This suggests that while RPL positively impacts social mobility, its effect is less universally felt than its impact on self-esteem and empowerment.

3.7.5 Economic Opportunities and Financial Well-being

The statement, "RPL has improved my economic opportunities and financial well-being," reveals a more mixed response. Only 57.9% (33.5% + 24.4%) agreed or strongly agreed, with a mean score of 3.6. The standard deviation (1.134) is higher than for some previous statements, suggesting greater variability in individual experiences. The less negative skewness (-0.547) indicates a less concentrated distribution of positive responses. This suggests that while RPL can improve economic prospects, its impact is less consistent than its impact on personal empowerment.

This analysis reveals a significant positive impact of RPL on respondents' self-esteem, confidence, and sense of personal and professional empowerment. The consistent positive responses across multiple statements strongly suggest that RPL plays a vital role in personal development. While the impact on social mobility and economic well-being is also positive, it is less universally experienced, indicating that the benefits of RPL may vary depending on individual circumstances and external factors. Further research could explore these variations, examining factors that might moderate the relationship between RPL and economic outcomes. Overall, the findings highlight RPL's effectiveness as a tool for personal growth and empowerment, underscoring its value in fostering individual development and career advancement.

	n	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness	Kurtosis
RPL has boosted my self-esteem and confidence.	221	4.5%	7.2%	14.5%	38.0%	35.7%	3.93	1.095	1.2	-1.037	0.492
I feel more empowered in my personal and professional life due to my qualification	221	3.6%	6.3%	16.3%	41.2%	32.6%	3.93	1.033	1.067	-1.002	0.66
RPL has played a significant role in enhancing my sense of personal empowerment	221	4.1%	5.4%	14.5%	43.0%	33.0%	3.95	1.03	1.062	-1.117	1
The qualifications acquired through RPL have positively impacted my social mobility	221	4.1%	9.5%	19.0%	37.1%	30.3%	3.8	1.098	1.206	-0.783	-0.05
RPL has improved my economic opportunities and financial well-being	221	5.4%	11.3%	25.3%	33.5%	24.4%	3.6	1.134	1.286	-0.547	-0.415
I am satisfied with the impact of RPL on my personal empowerment and social mobility	221	5.0%	8.6%	20.4%	40.3%	25.8%	3.73	1.09	1.187	-0.792	0.09

Table 3.14 Contribution of RPL to Personal Empowerment and Social Mobility

3.7.6 Economic Opportunities

The coefficient for "RPL has improved my economic opportunities and financial well-being" was -0.059, with a p-value of 0.193, suggesting no significant impact on the likelihood of obtaining RPL certifications.

3.8 Conclusion

The findings from this analysis highlight a nuanced relationship between personal empowerment and the likelihood of obtaining RPL certifications. While the model shows statistical significance overall, individual predictors vary in their contributions. The strong positive association with personal empowerment suggests that fostering a sense of empowerment could enhance the pursuit of RPL certifications. However, self-esteem, social mobility, and economic opportunities did not demonstrate significant impacts in this context.

These results underscore the need for further research to explore additional variables and their interactions, which might better explain the factors influencing individuals' decisions to pursue RPL certifications. Understanding these dynamics could inform strategies aimed at maximizing the benefits of RPL for personal and professional development.

3.8.1 Improved Job Prospects due to RPL

The analysis of responses from 221 participants regarding the impact of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) on job prospects and competitiveness in the job market reveals valuable insights into the perceived benefits of RPL qualifications on career advancement. Participants' perceptions were gauged across four key statements, focusing on how RPL has influenced job opportunities, competitiveness, and confidence in securing better positions, shedding light on the transformative effects of RPL credentials.

3.8.2 Enhanced Job Prospects

The data illustrates a considerable consensus among participants regarding the positive impact of obtaining qualifications through RPL on their job prospects. A significant majority (67.6%) expressed agreement, with a mean score of 3.73. This suggests that RPL qualifications have played a vital role in enhancing participants' employment opportunities and career prospects, providing them with a competitive edge in the job market.

3.8.3 Increased Competitiveness

Participants also indicated that RPL has increased their competitiveness in the job market, with 69.2% agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement, resulting in a mean score of 3.79. This finding underscores the value of RPL qualifications in enhancing participants' marketability and standing out among job applicants, potentially leading to improved career outcomes and advancement opportunities.

3.8.4 Opening New Job Opportunities

When considering the statement that their qualifications have opened up new job opportunities, participants shared mixed sentiments. While a substantial portion (56.5%) acknowledged the positive impact, the mean score of 3.57 suggests some variability in experiences. This indicates that while RPL qualifications have facilitated access to new job prospects for many, the effects may vary among participants based on individual circumstances and career trajectories.

3.8.5 Confidence in Securing Better Job Positions

Regarding confidence in securing better job positions due to RPL, participants overwhelmingly expressed optimism, with 76.5% agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement, leading to a high mean score of 3.93. This reaffirms the role of RPL in boosting participants' confidence in their abilities and qualifications, empowering them to pursue higher-level job positions with assurance.

In conclusion, the analysis highlights the significant positive impact of RPL qualifications on participants' job prospects, competitiveness, and confidence in securing better job positions. The findings suggest that RPL plays a crucial role in enhancing career opportunities, improving competitiveness in the job market, and instilling confidence in individuals' abilities to advance professionally. While participants generally reported favorable outcomes across various dimensions related to job prospects, there were nuanced perceptions regarding the opening of new job opportunities. The results underscore the transformative potential of RPL in empowering individuals to achieve career growth, navigate the job market effectively, and secure better employment opportunities. Further research could delve into specific mechanisms through which RPL influences job prospects and career advancement, providing deeper insights into the long-term effects of RPL qualifications on individuals' professional lives.

3.9 Implications for RPL Programs

The analysis underscores the importance of RPL in enhancing personal confidence and perceived job prospects. This suggests that RPL programs should emphasize these benefits in their marketing and outreach efforts to attract more participants. However, the lack of significance for other perceived benefits like increased competitiveness and new job opportunities indicates that RPL programs might need to better demonstrate these outcomes to potential participants. Moreover, the findings suggest that while RPL can enhance confidence, its impact on tangible career outcomes like job opportunities and competitiveness might be more nuanced. Therefore, RPL programs should focus not only on enhancing confidence but also on providing clear pathways to new job opportunities and demonstrating how RPL can increase competitiveness in the job market.

3.10 Future Research Directions

Future research should delve deeper into understanding why certain perceived benefits of RPL, such as increased competitiveness and new job opportunities, do not significantly influence the decision to obtain RPL certifications. This could involve exploring other factors that might influence this decision, such as personal motivations, career goals, or external factors like employer recognition of RPL qualifications. Additionally, there is a need to investigate how RPL impacts career advancement and job market outcomes over time. Longitudinal studies could provide valuable insights into whether RPL certifications lead to sustained career benefits and how these benefits compare across different industries or sectors.

3.11 Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis provides valuable insights into the factors influencing the pursuit and attainment of RPL certifications. It highlights the positive impact of RPL on confidence in job prospects, which is a key driver for individuals seeking to obtain RPL certifications. However, it also reveals complexities in the relationship between RPL and other perceived benefits like job opportunities and competitiveness. These findings can inform strategies to promote RPL programs by emphasizing their benefits for personal growth and career confidence. Additionally, they underscore the need for continued research into the broader impacts of RPL to ensure that it effectively supports individuals in achieving their career goals. By addressing these gaps, RPL programs can be tailored to better meet the needs of participants and enhance their career outcomes.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) program in Kenya has demonstrated significant impacts on employment trajectories, educational opportunities, personal empowerment, and social mobility. This summary synthesizes the key findings from the data analysis and provides recommendations for enhancing RPL policies based on these insights.

4.1 RPL's Impact on Employment Trajectories

The data reveals a generally positive influence of RPL qualifications on various aspects of career development. Approximately 63% of respondents believed that obtaining RPL qualifications significantly enhanced their job roles, with a mean score of 3.72. This indicates that RPL plays a crucial role in improving job performance and expanding responsibilities. RPL qualifications also had a pronounced effect on respondents' confidence in their job prospects, with about 76% expressing increased confidence due to their RPL qualifications (mean score 3.95). This suggests that RPL significantly bolsters career outlook and perceived employability.

Employer recognition of RPL qualifications emerged as a positive aspect, with 73% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that their qualifications are valued by employers (mean score 3.9). This demonstrates that RPL qualifications are generally regarded as credible and respected within professional fields.

Regarding career advancement, about 69% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that RPL has facilitated their career progression (mean score 3.81). However, the influence of RPL on income levels was less pronounced than expected, with a mean score of 3.39, indicating that not all individuals experience significant financial benefits.

When assessing the impact of RPL on securing employment opportunities, a substantial 72% of respondents reported a high or very high impact (mean score 4.04). This underscores the effectiveness of RPL in helping individuals obtain job opportunities.

4.2 RPL's Role in Facilitating Further Educational Opportunities

The data indicates that RPL has significantly enhanced access to further educational opportunities. Approximately 54.3% of respondents agreed that RPL has improved their access to university or technical training opportunities (mean score 3.53). A substantial 75.5% of respondents felt more equipped for further educational opportunities after RPL assessments (mean score 3.92). This suggests that RPL significantly improved respondents' perceived readiness for further education.

The RPL process has opened doors to new skill development programs for 71.5% of respondents (mean score 3.86). Additionally, 73.7% believed that RPL assessments have positively impacted their educational advancement (mean score 3.9). Overall satisfaction with the educational opportunities provided by RPL was high, with 75.6% of respondents expressing satisfaction (mean score 3.93).

4.3 RPL's Contribution to Personal Empowerment and Social Mobility

The data reveals a significant positive impact of RPL on respondents' self-esteem, confidence, and sense of personal and professional empowerment. Approximately 71.7% of respondents agreed that RPL has boosted their self-esteem and confidence (mean score 3.93). A substantial 73.8% felt more empowered in their personal and professional life due to their RPL qualification (mean score 3.93). Furthermore, 76% agreed that RPL has played a significant role in enhancing their sense of personal empowerment (mean score 3.95). Regarding social mobility, 67.1% of respondents agreed that the qualifications acquired through RPL have positively impacted their social mobility (mean score 3.8). However, the impact on economic opportunities and financial well-being was less pronounced, with 57.9% agreeing to this statement (mean score 3.6).

CHAPTER FIVE

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the findings, several challenges and areas for improvement in the RPL program have been identified. The following recommendations are proposed to enhance RPL policies and maximize the program's benefits:

- a.) Enhance awareness and outreach efforts with emphasis on young women:** The data shows that 64.3% of respondents learned about RPL through word of mouth, while traditional media channels had limited impact. To address this, implement targeted marketing strategies to increase awareness about RPL programs, focusing on diverse communication channels beyond word-of-mouth. Utilize social media, community events, and partnerships with educational institutions and employers to reach a broader audience, while emphasizing the role of RPL in facilitating continuous skill development and adaptability in a rapidly changing job market. Develop pathways for RPL participants to engage in ongoing learning and skill upgrading, potentially through partnerships with educational institutions and online learning platforms. Further, the data reveals gender disparities in certain vocational fields, therefore there is need to develop initiatives to encourage participation in non-traditional fields for both genders, promoting equal opportunities across all vocational areas. Implement targeted outreach programs and provide support systems to encourage underrepresented genders in specific fields. The data further shows varying participation rates across different counties, needing the implementation of targeted outreach and support programs in underrepresented regions to ensure equitable access to RPL opportunities across the country.
- b.) Improve accessibility, including for individuals with disabilities and young women:** While 38% of respondents agreed that the RPL program was easily accessible in their local area, there is room for improvement. Expand the geographical reach of RPL programs, particularly in underserved areas. Consider implementing mobile assessment centers or partnering with local institutions to bring RPL services closer to potential participants. Critically, only 3.2% of respondents identified as having a disability. Implement inclusive policies and support systems to encourage participation of people with disabilities in RPL programs. This may include providing assistive technologies, adapting assessment methods, and ensuring physical accessibility of RPL centers.
- c.) Address affordability concerns:** Only 27.6% of respondents strongly agreed that the RPL program was affordable for them. Implement financial assistance programs, scholarships, or flexible payment options to make RPL more accessible to a wider range of participants. Consider partnering with financial institutions to offer low-interest loans for RPL assessments.
- d.) Strengthen industry-education linkages:** Foster closer collaboration between educational institutions and employers to ensure RPL qualifications align with industry needs and are recognized in the job market. Establish industry advisory boards to provide input on RPL assessment criteria and ensure relevance to current workplace requirements. While employer recognition of RPL qualifications was generally positive, there is room for improvement through engaging in awareness campaigns targeted at employers to increase understanding and acceptance of RPL qualifications. Consider developing a national framework for recognizing RPL qualifications across different industries and sectors. While the data suggests that while RPL enhances job prospects, there may still be gaps in aligning skills with market demands. Collaborating with industry partners to regularly update RPL assessment criteria and ensure they reflect current and emerging skill requirements in various sectors will be key.
- e.) Enhance counseling and support services:** While 50.7% of respondents agreed they received adequate counseling during the RPL process, there is potential for improvement. Provide comprehensive guidance throughout the RPL process to help participants maximize the benefits of their qualifications in terms of career advancement and further education. Offer personalized career counseling and mentorship programs to support RPL participants in leveraging their qualifications effectively.

- f.) Enhance the economic impact of RPL:** While RPL has shown positive impacts on job prospects and career advancement, its influence on income levels and economic opportunities was less pronounced. Develop targeted support programs to help RPL participants translate their qualifications into tangible economic benefits and career advancements. This could include job placement services, networking events, and workshops on salary negotiation and career planning. Further, given that RPL participants may have diverse career goals, including self-employment, incorporation of entrepreneurship training and support as part of the RPL program including modules on business planning, financial management, and access to micro-financing opportunities could enhance the economic participation of RPL graduates. Exploration of comprehensive post-certification support programs to help RPL graduates leverage their qualifications effectively including job search assistance, professional development workshops, and networking opportunities with potential employers could enhance the economic participation of RPL graduates.
- g.) Strengthen quality assurance:** Continuously monitor and improve assessment and certification processes to maintain the credibility and value of RPL qualifications in the job market. Implement regular reviews of assessment criteria and methodologies to ensure they remain relevant and aligned with industry standards. There is need to further conduct longitudinal studies to track the long-term impact of RPL on career progression, educational advancement, and economic well-being, and use this data to continuously refine and improve RPL policies and programs.
- h.) Improve the assessment process:** While the majority of respondents found the assessment process fair, there is potential for enhancement. Implement standardized assessment methodologies across different RPL providers to ensure consistency and fairness with considerations of incorporating technology-enabled assessments to improve efficiency and accessibility. Further, recognizing that different industries may have unique requirements and challenges and the need to develop tailored RPL pathways for key economic sectors, ensuring that assessments and certifications are closely aligned with industry-specific standards and needs.
- i.) Promote international recognition:** As Kenya's workforce becomes increasingly global, work towards ensuring that RPL qualifications are recognized internationally. Engage with international bodies and counterparts in other countries to establish mutual recognition agreements for RPL certifications.
- j.) Integrate RPL with national skills development strategies:** Ensure that RPL policies and programs are closely aligned with broader national skills development and economic growth strategies. This integration can help position RPL as a key tool in addressing national skills gaps and promoting economic development.

By implementing these recommendations, Kenya can enhance its RPL program, making it more accessible, effective, and aligned with both individual career aspirations and national economic goals. The data clearly shows the positive impact of RPL on personal empowerment, career advancement, and educational opportunities. By addressing the identified challenges and building on the program's strengths, RPL can play an even more significant role in developing Kenya's human capital and driving economic growth.

REFERENCES

- National Industrial Training Authority. (n.d.). Kenya to implement recognition of prior learning. Retrieved January 21, 2025, from <https://nita.go.ke/news/NITA/346-kenya-to-implement-recognition-of-prior-learning.html>
- Egesah, O. B., Wahome, M., Langat, E. K., & Wishitemi, B. E. L. (2014). University graduate tracer studies (UNITRACE): Methodological lessons and utilization of selected results in Kenya. *Journal of International Academic Research for Multidisciplinary*, 2(8), 305.
- UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. (n.d.). Recognition, validation and accreditation in Canada. Retrieved January 21, 2025, from <https://www.uil.unesco.org/en/articles/recognition-validation-and-accreditation-canada>
- Kenya National Qualifications Authority. (n.d.). Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). Retrieved January 21, 2025, from <https://knqa.go.ke/service/recognition-of-prior-learning/>
- Post Training. (n.d.). Find Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Assessment Centres. Retrieved January 21, 2025, from <https://www.posttraining.go.ke/find-recognition-prior-learning-rpl-assessment-centres>
- International Labour Organization. (n.d.). Kenya's journey to recognizing informal skills: The making of the Recognition of Prior Learning policy. Retrieved January 21, 2025, from <https://www.ilo.org/resource/article/kenyas-journey-recognizing-informal-skills-making-recognition-prior>
- Kenya National Qualifications Authority. (n.d.). Recognition of Prior Learning in Kenya. Retrieved January 21, 2025, from https://knqa.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/session_4_rpl_kenya_plw_acqf_03.06.21-j_mukhwana_1_0.pdf
- International Monetary Fund. (n.d.). Kenya: Country data. Retrieved January 24, 2025, from <https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/profile/KEN>
- European Commission. (n.d.). The EU-Kenya agreement explained. Retrieved January 24, 2025, from https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/east-african-community-eac/eu-kenya-agreement/agreement-explained_en
- Danish Trade Union Development Agency. (2025). Kenya Labour Market Profile 2024/2025. <https://www.ulandssekretariatet.dk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Kenya-LMP-2024-2025-final.pdf>.
- Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. (2023). National Skills Development Policy. <https://www.labour.go.ke/>
- Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. (2023). Economic Survey 2023. Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. (2023). National Skills Development Policy. <https://www.labour.go.ke/>
- UN Women. (2022). The Status of NEET in Kenya: A Quantitative Analysis of Youth Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) (15-24 years old). UN Women East and Southern Africa Regional Office. <https://africa.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-10/UNW%20NEET%20Kenya.pdf>
- Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. (2023). National Skills Development Policy. State Department for Labour and Skills Development. https://www.labour.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Kenya-National-Skills-Development-Policy-2023_0.pdf

Motuka, G. M., Mochere, C. M., & Orodho, J. A. (2024). Reforms in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Kenya: Focus on Variables That Influence Sustainable Development. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 15(6), 76-85. <https://ppl-ai-file-upload.s3.amazonaws.com/web/direct-files/43602885/c5b4b3fe-6da1-450b-b012-18ef4b99bd69/Reforms-in-Technical-and-Vocational-Education-and-Training.pdf>

African Union Commission. (2020). Continental Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to Foster Youth Employment. <https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/38480-doc-continental-strategy-for-tvet-to-foster-youth-employment.pdf>

Kenya Coast National Polytechnic. (n.d.). Recognition of Prior Learning. Retrieved January 24, 2025, from <https://kenyacoastpoly.ac.ke/recognition-of-prior-learning/>

Federation of Kenya Employers. (2024). Report of the Departmental Committee on Finance and National Planning on its Consideration of the Finance Bill 2024 (National Assembly Bill No. 30 of 2024). <http://www.fke-kenya.org/sites/default/files/downloads/Report%20of%20the%20Finance%20and%20National%20Planning%20on%20the%20Finance%20Bill,%202024.pdf>

National Industrial Training Authority. (2022). Industrial Training, Skills Development, Assessment and Term Dates 2022. <https://www.nita.go.ke/media-centre/downloads/public-notice/industrial-training-skills-development-assessment-and-term-dates-2022-notice.html>

Standard Media. (2023, January 21). Unlocking skills: The case for recognising prior learning in Kenya. Retrieved January 21, 2025, from <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/branding-voice/article/2001507625/unlocking-skills-the-case-for-recognising-prior-learning-in-kenya>

UN Women Africa. (2024, November 12). Bridging the gap: How Kenya's National Care Policy can drive gender equality. <https://africa.unwomen.org/en/stories/news/2024/11/bridging-the-gap-how-kenyas-national-care-policy-can-drive-gender-equality>

World Bank. (2024, November 26). Ujasiriamali: Self-Employment and Job Creation for Youth in Kenya. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2024/11/26/ujasiriamali-self-employment-and-job-creation-for-youth-in-kenya>

Kenya News Agency. (2025, January 21). KNQA to harmonize the implementation of the RPL policy strategic plan to curb unemployment in the country. Kenya News. <https://www.kenyanews.go.ke/KNQA-to-harmonize-the-implementation-of-the-rpl-policy-strategic-plan-to-curb-unemployment-in-the-country/>



Colleges and Institutes Canada

Bank of Africa (BOA) House, 4th floor | Karuna Road | P.O. Box 66552 – 00800 | Nairobi, Kenya