
TOOLKIT FOR THE RECOGNITION AND VALIDATION OF PRIOR LEARNING IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION USING THE HUMANITARIAN ACTION QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

EUHAP European Humanitarian Action
Partnership

HA Recognition

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The Handouts in Annex 1 have been developed together with representatives of other project partners contributing to the Work Group: Jessica Narbone and Christian Mascaro from Institut Bioforce, as well as Kvetoslava Princova and Veronika Skalicka from Palacký University Olomouc. The Profiling Tool of which some examples are available in Annex 3 and to be found online at www.euhap.org has been developed by experts from the Institut Bioforce.

The Toolkit benefits from materials developed in previous EU funded projects. The Handouts are based on adaptations from the learner support materials developed within the Valuing Learning through Experience Project which involved eight European countries co-ordinated by Glasgow Caledonian University. The Profiling Tool is based on the Humanitarian Action Qualifications Framework (HAQF) which was developed by the European Universities on Professionalization on Humanitarian Action (EUPRHA) project which involved thirty European universities and two humanitarian NGOs and was coordinated by the University of Deusto.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized world economy, technological advances, migration and lifelong learning have become more relevant than ever. The model of lifetime employment is fast becoming outdated while workers need to constantly improve their skills and competencies to adjust to the fast-changing labour market. The humanitarian sector is not immune to these changes and needs to address the challenges posed by the changing nature of employment in the 21st century.

One way to be able to attract the most qualified employees to the humanitarian sector is to recognize that learning takes place not only in formal educational or training institutions but also in the workplace and in non-formal and informal activities and not all learning is formally recognized, validated, certified or accredited. Throughout their lives aid workers develop and enhance their knowledge, skills and competencies and their qualifications are growing. Even though there is an abundance of qualified personnel in the field, relevant qualifications are often not being officially recognized and/or validated.

Official recognition of more informal skills and competencies can support workers' participation in formal education, training and facilitate access to better or different jobs. But learning acquired through experience is not as structured as formal learning. It is more personal and individualised and often goes unnoticed by the formal recognition and validation channels. However, it is as real as learning in a formal academic setting.

This publication tries to tackle this challenge. It provides learning and training providers, employers and human resource personnel with a practical and comprehensive Toolkit to facilitate the recognition of learning using the Humanitarian Action Qualification Framework (HAQF).

The Toolkit contains a detailed explanation of recognition and validation of prior learning and its differences; the key features and core principles of the HAQF and how to use it in the process of recognition; the Handouts to explain the process of learning and recognition of learning to support individual learners or facilitators working with learners to identify what they know or are able to do and can use in other situations and make connections between their learning experience and particular qualifications or job profiles. Finally, there is a Glossary of terms that are used in the Toolkit.

Learners might want to map their prior learning against a particular job requirement or particular qualification or learning programme in the humanitarian sector. Learning providers or employers might want to check the level of qualifications of someone applying for a particular programme or job position. Some humanitarian workers might be aiming to undertake a formal programme of learning at a college or university to advance in their career and need to obtain recognition and validation of previous learning experience. Others might want to benchmark their knowledge and skills for personal development or for career planning. Whatever the reason to decide to start a recognition process, this Toolkit can be used by all learners and organisations to support learners or employees in the recognition of prior learning and might encourage them to seek validation, that is to attribute value to their learning.

2. WHAT IS RECOGNITION AND VALIDATION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)?

2.1. What is recognition of prior learning?

Recognition of prior learning is a process that can help people to value and build on the learning they have gained informally. In humanitarian action this may enable people to realize what they have learned through their experiences in the field, during a mission, or elsewhere in the humanitarian sector. The aim of recognition is to demonstrate acquired qualification to others (humanitarian agencies, organisations, etc.). It reveals the learner's potential and capacity to learn from future experiences.

There is no single definition of recognition. UNESCO acknowledges seven of them:

1. *An assessment process that assesses the individual's non-formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that individual has achieved the required learning or competency outcomes; May also be referred to as: Accreditation of prior learning; Validation of informal/non formal learning.*

Source: UNEVOC/NCVER 2009, Global

2. *The acknowledgement of a person's skills and knowledge acquired through previous training, work or life experience, which may be used to grant status or credit in a subject or module. It can lead to a full qualification in the VET sector.*

Source: NCVER 2013, Australia

3. *The process in which the individual's previous learning outside the formal system which contributes to the achievement of current competency/ies can be assessed against the relevant unit of competency and given recognition through the issuance of appropriate certificate.*

Source: TESDA 2010, Philippines

4. *The principles and processes through which the prior knowledge and skills of a person are made visible, mediated and assessed for the purposes of alternative access and admission, recognition and certification, or further learning and development.*

Source: SAQA 2013, South Africa

5. *Acknowledgment through evaluation of a person's skills and knowledge acquired through previous training, work or life experience, which may be used to grant credits.*

Source: SADC 2011, Southern Africa

6. *Acknowledgement of the knowledge and skills that an individual has acquired in previous training and work or through experience.*

Source: ILO 2006, Global

7. *The process of recognising previous learning (often experiential) towards gaining a qualification.*

Source: ILO (SED) 2007, Global

As there are different uses of the term recognition and validation, it is important to clarify the context and the use of the different terms in this Toolkit.

Recognition, as adopted in the *Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning 2012/C 398/01* **means the validation of learning outcomes**, whether from formal education or non-formal or informal learning. The purpose of it is to improve the interrelationship of education, training and employment, and to build bridges between formal, non-formal and informal learning.

Recognition awards learning experience in previous contexts (informal and formal learning situation) in humanitarian action or in other sectors. The process has personal, individual, social and economic impact (Singh, 2015:1).

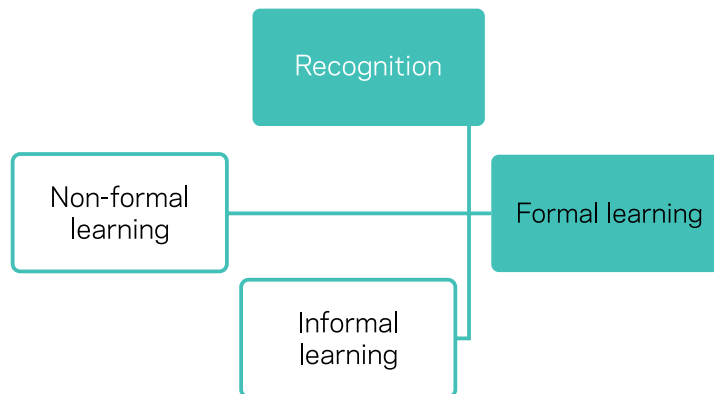


Chart 1: The components of recognitions of Prior Learning

2.2. How to implement RPL?

Sector-specific qualifications can be recognized in the RPL process by a review of past experiences. Learners reflect on their experience in order to discover and then express what these experiences have taught them. RPL is a process which can have diverse resources through which learning gained from experience can be recognized and used. People can acquire a range of knowledge and skills through it. There is no restriction on the type of experience that can provide someone with knowledge and skills – even negative experiences might have led someone to learn something about themselves. RPL is about recognizing that all experiences can provide a basis for learning. Chart 2 outlines a range of experiences that help the recognition of prior learning.

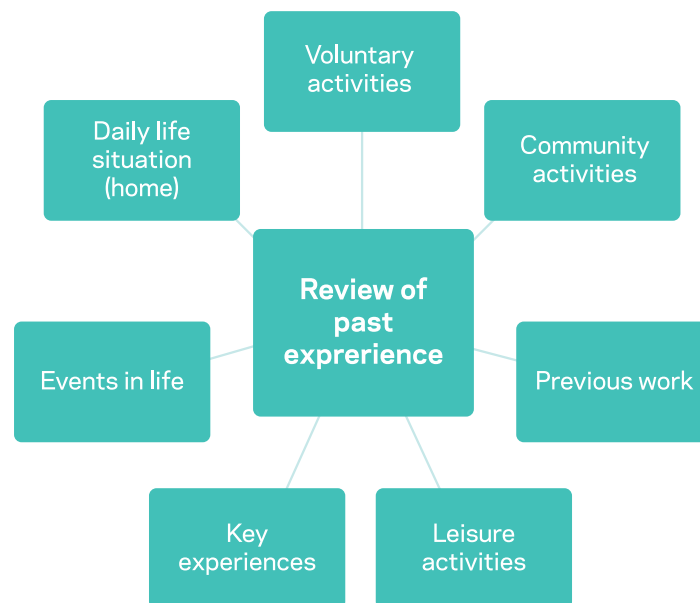


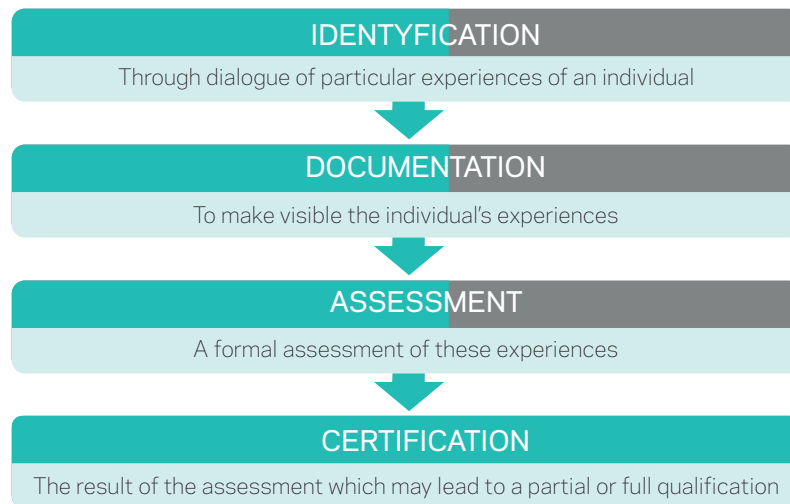
Chart 2: Review of past experiences for recognition and validation

2.3. What is validation of prior learning?

Validation means a process of confirmation by an authorised body that an individual has acquired learning outcomes measured against a relevant standard and consists of the following four distinct phases: identification, documentation, assessment and certification.

A validation process has two purposes: firstly, to make the learning of the individuals and their learning outcomes **visible**, assuming that this learning process takes place outside formal education and training institution; secondly, to attribute the **value** to the learning of individuals, irrespective of the context in which this learning took place.

Going through validation helps the learner to 'exchange' the outcomes of non-formal and informal learning for future learning or employment opportunities.



Source: Adapted from European Guidelines for validation of non-formal and informal learning

Chart 3: Four Stages of Validation

Key questions on the basic features of validation:

- Has the purpose of the validation been clearly defined and communicated?
- Have the different phases of the validation process been clearly defined? and;
- Communicated to the individual learner?

A variety of approaches to recognition and validation can be developed and used by learning providers or employers to meet the needs and goals of learner groups in different sectors. Qualification frameworks can help learning providers and employers to achieve consistency in the recognition of prior learning.

3. BENEFITS OF RPL IN THE HUMANITARIAN SECTOR

RPL can benefit different humanitarian stakeholders in a range of ways.

For individual learners:

1. People who have been out of the humanitarian sector for a long time and/or who may lack formal qualifications and/or confidence as learners;
2. Adults willing to get involved in the humanitarian sector;
3. Job-seekers looking for a way to demonstrate their learning to prospective employers in humanitarian action;
4. People wanting to improve existing qualifications in the humanitarian sector;
5. Those wanting to re-train or change careers into/from the humanitarian sector;
6. Students at colleges, higher education institutions (HEIs) and other learning and training providers willing to start a career in the humanitarian sector;
7. People who have taken non-formal learning or training in the workplace or through community-based learning;
8. People who have gained a range of skills and knowledge through volunteering or through activities or projects within their community.

For training providers:

1. Enable greater retention of learners;
2. Widen access to a range of learners;
3. Increase participation of learners from non-traditional learning backgrounds.

For employers:

1. Help to identify employees' skills effectively;
2. Help to identify skills gaps in organisations;
3. Help to identify appropriate training opportunities;
4. Reduce the time required in employee training through minimised duplication of learning;
5. Increase motivation and interest in workplace activities from employee/learner;
6. Generate new ideas and developments for the organisation as a result of the employee/learner reflecting on work activities;
7. Increase employee retention and reduced recruitment and training costs¹.

1 SCQF Social Services RPL Working Group, The Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership, Facilitating the Recognition of Prior Learning: Toolkit, Glasgow, 2010. http://scqf.org.uk/resources_cats/rpl/

The humanitarian sector can widely benefit from the use of RPL to support all aspects of work of the sector.

- 1 **Recruitment:** RPL can be incorporated into the interview stage or application stage. RPL can be easily adjusted to sector specific requirements and give chance to demonstrate an applicant on her/his achievements. The prior work and life experiences and leisure pursuits can identify and demonstrate the strengths, skills and values needed to successfully undertake the post they are applying for.
- 2 **Supervision and appraisal:** RPL used as part of supervision and appraisal can encourage the reflective process to help an individual review their performance, identify particular areas for further personal and professional development and challenge poor work practice.
- 3 **Performance interviewing:** RPL can support the process of application for promoted posts, by helping individuals to reflect on particular instances, where, for example, they have challenged poor work practices, considered the outcomes of their own or another's action or thought about how they might have dealt with a situation differently.
- 4 **Gaining qualifications:** RPL can be used to support workers to recognise their learning, including those who lack confidence as learners and/or who are reluctant to engage in formal learning. It can also accelerate the process of achieving qualifications.

Learners, training providers and employers can directly use the Toolkit and the profiling tool to recognise prior learning. The next sections and the Handouts provide information to support learners in the RPL process. Further details on the HAQF can be found on the EUHAP project website (www.euhap.eu). Those seeking validation are likely to be more effective in the process of claiming credit if they understand exactly how the evidence of learning, which they provide, will be assessed against the qualification or programme of learning, for which they are asking for credit. In this regard, it is recommended that training providers and employers identify facilitators to provide support during the self-evaluation process.

4. THE USE OF THE HUMANITARIAN ACTION QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK IN RPL

The Humanitarian Action Qualifications Framework (HAQF) and its underlying HA Profile was developed by higher education representatives from most of the European countries (30) together with the humanitarian umbrella organisation ICVA and the Sphere Project, renowned for its work on setting humanitarian standards and principles, as well as practitioners from the field through the NOHA Alumni Community in the EUPRHA project. Thus, it has both the support of European educators and the acceptance of humanitarian practitioners. The HAQF does not aim to replace existing competencies frameworks developed by different organisations. In fact, it is grounded on them (See, *HA Frameworks Matcher* at <http://euhap.eu/haqf/>).

The added value of the HAQF is that it acts as a common reference system based on learning outcomes. It acts as a translating device to make national and sectoral qualifications more readable and promote humanitarian workers' and learners' mobility between countries and organisations. It focuses on lifelong learning, thereby including general education, vocational education and training and higher education, as well as informal and non-formal learning. It acts as a neutral reference point for all different sorts of qualifications in the humanitarian sector and follows the approach of the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF-LLL) (see, www.ec.europa.eu/eqf).

Through its descriptors and levels, it facilitates inter-system transparency and recognition of (non) formal and informal learning by linking occupations, skills & competence and qualifications, thus benefiting the humanitarian sector as a whole: humanitarian actors, educators, policy makers, students, volunteers, and the society at large in an effort to further professionalise assistance to crisis-affected people.

The HA QF addresses five goals:

- (1) to provide important points of reference for setting and assessing learning standards to humanitarian education providers,
- (2) to inform international comparability of humanitarian education and training standards in the European context and where possible beyond that,
- (3) to assist in the identification of potential progression routes for lifelong learning in humanitarian action,
- (4) to promote a shared and common understanding of the expectations associated with typical qualifications by facilitating a consistent use of qualification titles across the humanitarian and educational sector, and
- (5) to support workers' and learners' mobility.

Consequently, there is a variety of potential users of the HAQF. At first thought, it seems that the primary users are the educators and agencies in the humanitarian sector contending with own qualifications systems and competency frameworks. By linking their own education and training programmes to the levels in the HAQF, they are better able to communicate with employers, prospective students, professional, statutory and regulatory bodies and other stakeholders on how their qualifications compare to qualifications from other countries and different humanitarian education and training systems. As a result, employers that are recruiting humanitarian aid workers will be better equipped to assess differences in levels among the qualifications of prospective candidates, and humanitarian aid workers will be better equipped to explain the extent of their humanitarian action learning.

4.1. The HAQF levels of learning and descriptors

The HAQF provides a way of comparing qualifications in the humanitarian sector. It is a 8-level hierarchy. It starts with Level 1, which indicates very basic learning, and goes up to level 8 which indicates very complex learning. The levels are defined by level descriptors (knowledge, skills and responsibility and autonomy) which show how the learning gets more demanding as the level of the learning rises.

Knowledge

In EQF-LLL (European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning) terms, knowledge is defined as “the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning” and consists of “the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study”. This descriptor describes what you know, which can be both theoretical and/or factual.

Skills

In EQF-LLL terms, skills are defined as “the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems”. This descriptor describes what you can do, which can be described as “cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) or practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments)”. Together with your knowledge resources, skills form the instruments in your toolbox that are required for resolving certain tasks or issues.

Responsibility & Autonomy

In EQF-LLL terms, the descriptor “competence” has a particular meaning that differs from what some would consider its customary meaning in English. Instead, it is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy and the descriptor is defined as “the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development”.

In essence, this descriptor describes in which situations you can work and alludes to professional conduct and the wider competencies displayed in terms of attitudes, behaviour and initiative necessary for operating professionally. While knowledge and skills are specific instruments/resources that you need to have in your toolbox, they do not tell much about when to use them or not use them. Responsibility and autonomy however relate to the contexts when and how you are expected to act proactively.

4.2. The Humanitarian Action Profile

The Humanitarian Action Profile (HA Profile) offers more guidance for each level of learning on what it could mean for the main aspects of humanitarian action work in terms of knowledge, skills and competence. Particularly, the HA Profile can function as a helpful aid and a reference point to identify specific qualifications. Depending on the objective of the validation process, the items in the HA Profile should be interpreted, contextualised and supplemented with more specific, technical and/or professional elements relevant to the field.

The HA Profile is directly linked to the learning levels 4 up to 8 of the HAQF and provides a more detailed, prismatic elaboration of its levels through six dimensions considered central to working in the humanitarian sector:

1. Humanitarian commitment
2. Context analysis & reflection
3. Coping & safety
4. Leadership
5. Collaborative relationships
6. Service to crisis-affected people




4.3. How to use the HAQF for recognition of prior learning

The HAQF can be used for recognition of prior learning. Recognising prior learning in the context of the HAQF helps the learner make connections between the life experience he or she has gained in the humanitarian and/or any related sector and:

- the ways in which he or she has applied this learning to his or her current work practice or other activities (providing reflective evidence of this);
- the ways (pathways) in which he or she can plan to build on this learning through his or her current role to meet particular goals.

As mentioned above, the HAQF levels are defined by their descriptors (knowledge, skills and responsibility and autonomy) which clearly indicate a progression in the learning process. Addi-

tionally, examples of specific professions have been identified to match each of the levels 4-8. They reveal the nature, area of studies and range of HAQF levels of a qualification:

| HAQF LEVELS | Job profiles | Recognition and validation of HAQF Qualifications | Qualifications of Higher Education Institution |
|-------------|---|--|--|
| 8 | Head of Programmes |  | Doctoral Degree, Professional Development Award |
| 7 | Country Director, Senior Advisor, Coordinator, Logistics Manager, Programme Manager | | Master Degree, Post Graduate Diploma, Post Graduate Certificate, Professional Development Award, NOHA Master Programme |
| 6 | Managerial position: Advisor, Logistics Manager, Programme Manager | | Bachelor Degree, Honors Degree, Graduate Certificate/Diploma, Professional Development Award |
| 5 | Technical position: technical excellence | | Higher National Diploma, Higher Education Certificate, Professional Development Award |
| 4 | Skilled, autonomous worker | | National Certificate, National Development Award |
| 3 | | | Standard Grade: Advanced, National Certificate |
| 2 | | | Standard Grade: General |
| 1 | | | Standard Grade: foundation |

The table above serves as an indication of the positions and qualifications related to the different levels. On this basis the learner should compare the evidence of his or her learning, that is of what he or she has learned, with the HAQF level descriptors which are expressed in learning outcomes.

In particular, those interested in validation and certification will need to understand exactly how the evidence of learning which they provide will be assessed against the qualification or programme of learning for which they are seeking credit.

5. THE HAQF PROFILING TOOL FOR RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

Based on the HAQF, a Profiling Tool has been developed to prepare learners for the process of recognition of prior learning by helping them make connections between the life experience they have gained in the humanitarian and/or any related sector and:

- the ways in which they have applied this learning to their current work practice or other activities (providing reflective evidence of this);
- the ways (pathways) in which they can plan to build on this learning through their current role to meet their particular goals.

The HAQF profiling tool helps learners to **acknowledge skills, knowledge and competencies** acquired through previous training, work or life experience in the different six core dimensions of humanitarian work. It **becomes a key element for the identification of progression routes and learning pathways for humanitarian professionals.**

The Profiling Tool helps:

- humanitarian learners reflect on and express learning from experience just to know which is their level of learning or to identify what someone has learned in relation to particular requirements of a programme or a job description;
- identify how that learning matches the HAQF level descriptors and therefore show the qualifications which are available to individuals/learners;
- identify how any prior learning could contribute towards qualification completion;
- identify the career stages to which each qualification level is equated and the range of job roles to which each qualification relates.

The tool is in a form of a table, one for each level of learning (4-8), divided in the six dimensions of the humanitarian profile where knowledge, skills and competencies can be identified. Individuals outline their work experiences and link these experiences to the required level of learning and/or job profiles and skills for the employers. The resulting table, therefore, has space for individuals to first list all their relevant experiences (evidences). Consequently, the table provides space for outlining the learning and skills that have been gained through these experiences. Further, the Profiling Tool aims to link these experiences with the level of learning or requirements by asking for evidence of application of prior learning and potential match with selected level. Some **competency indicators** which identify specific aspects of a competency (knowledge, skills and responsibility and autonomy) are provided as examples. The competency indicators help focus the competence scope and to identify situations (and/or aspects) in which the knowledge or skill or competence may be applied or developed. Finally, the Profiling Tool aims to somewhat inspire individuals carrying out the profiling exercise by asking them to outline actions needed to acquire the learning.

The HAQF Profiling Tool is a table based on the HAQF and the Humanitarian Action Profile. There is one table for each level.

| | | | | |
|---|--|-----------------|------------|------------|
| 1 | Level | Knowledge | Knowledge | Knowledge |
| 2 | Dimension | Descriptor | Descriptor | Descriptor |
| 3 | Examples of experience | Examples: | Examples: | Examples: |
| 4 | Learning (knowledge), skills and competencies gained from these experiences) | Examples: | Examples: | Examples: |
| 5 | Evidence of these learnings | Evidence: | Evidence: | Evidence: |
| 6 | Match/Correspondence with selected descriptors | Self-evaluation | | |
| 7 | Action I need to take: | | | |

The dimensions are central to humanitarian work therefore they have to be considered altogether. It is not possible to choose one dimension for the profiling exercise as **all** are integral to humanitarian work. But it can happen that learners have more learning experience or are more competent in one dimension than in the other.

The Profiling Tool is available on the EUHAP website. Annex 1 provides Handouts to support learners and those involved in helping learners or employees to recognize their learning from experience and on how to use the Profiling Tool in the RPL process.

ANNEX 1: HANDOUTS

Handout 1: Introduction to the process

RPL involves the recognition of what you have learned, not what you have done.

By going through the RPL process you will be encouraged to value your personal experience as a way of helping you to make choices and prepare for moving on to further opportunities in education or work. RPL can help you because it shows other people (and you) that you have learned significant things from your experiences and that you are capable of learning more from future experiences.

RPL can help in:

- Providing access to further learning at all levels;
- Building your confidence;
- Gaining credit within vocational or academic programmes or towards qualifications;
- Undertaking personal/self development;
- Improving your learning skills;
- Undertaking professional development;
- Valuing your life experiences.

The RPL process using the HAQF involves 4 steps:

1. Choosing the level;
2. Identifying your life and work experiences that are related to the competencies described in the different dimensions in terms of knowledge, skills and responsibility and autonomy;
3. Reflecting about the learning resulting from these experiences;
4. Providing evidence of this learning.

For example: Two people might have the same experience through doing identical jobs but one might have learned much more from the task(s) involved than the other. You may have said about someone, *They never learned any lessons from...* People who have learned something are able to use that learning to help them in other related situations. Again, you will have heard it said, *They drew on all their experience to overcome the problem.* Therefore, you need to provide evidence of what you have learned from your experiences, not just describe what you have done. This involves reflecting on your experiences and drawing out from them what you have learned, then writing this down and talking about it with your facilitator. The writing and the talk will help to provide the evidence you need. That evidence is then assessed by an evaluator at a college, university or learning and training provider. Once the evidence has been assessed and it is decided that it meets the performance criteria for the programme of learning that you are seeking, you may be awarded credit towards that programme or gain entry to another programme of learning.

Handout 2: Supporting learners in the recognition and validation process

Learners wishing to use RPL will usually require support to identify how their learning links with the HAQF level against which they are seeking recognition. In particular, those searching for evidence of learning are in need of guidance and support. As a result, it is recommended that learning providers and employers who are implementing RPL using HAQF should identify appropriate facilitators who can support learners to gain recognition of their qualifications.

Who is a facilitator?

The facilitator is someone who supports the learner as s/he undertakes the RPL process. The facilitator could be a line manager, supervisor, mentor, experienced colleague, teacher or trainer, preferably having some relation to the humanitarian sector. They could be a member of staff in the same organisation as the learner or might be an individual acting as a facilitator for a number of learners within different organisations. In all cases, the facilitator needs to have the knowledge and skills required to ensure that the learner knows how to generate the evidence of learning required.

What is the role of the facilitator?

The facilitator's task is to make sure that learners have access to the relevant material and information about the qualification and uses appropriate tools for the identification of qualifications. Both the facilitator and the learner need to be aware of the requirements of the relevant qualification, the awarding body and the learning outcomes. The facilitator has a crucial role in the process as he/she guides the learner to ensure that the process is maintained at a realistic level. The first step in the RPL process is to seek evidence of how the learner's experiential learning links to the learning outcomes of the qualification or learning programme or particular job requirements. If RPL is being used for entry to college or university or towards a qualification or learning programme, it is essential that formal contact is made at an early stage in the process with the college, university or learning and training provider where the learner's evidence of experiential learning will be assessed.

What kind of support will a facilitator provide?

It is important to recognise that the facilitator has two essential roles when supporting the learner. On one hand, the facilitator provides information and guidance on the RPL process by helping learners understand how to learn from experience, linking it to the HAQF levels, supporting in understanding HAQF descriptors and the learning outcomes at each level. They should also help learners to identify learning gained through experience, help in selection and production evidence of that learning, and identify areas for further learning.

Facilitator tasks

- Discussing the mutual responsibility throughout the process with clarification of roles;
- Conducting meetings with the learner to provide guidance and to discuss progress;
- Supporting the learner in reflection on prior experiences in order to identify learning and the potential evidence of this learning;

- Helping to fill the proofs of learning;
- Giving guidance on the production of documentation of evidence.

Issues to discuss with learner

- Tasks set;
- Steps to take;
- Problems and ways of dealing with them;
- Areas of strength and how to use them;
- Lessons learned;
- Evidence demonstrating the individual's learning;
- Short-term goals;
- Feedback.

Handout 3: Different ways of learning

There is no right or wrong way to learn - everybody is different and thus everybody learns in various ways. For example, some people learn well in groups, while others learn best on their own. Some people learn better from listening and talking than from writing and watching. And sometimes people learn from all of these approaches, but may learn different things from each of them.

The important thing for you as a learner is to find the ways that work best for you. To do this, you need to spend some time thinking about types of learning experiences you like, and types of learning experiences that you do not like. You also need to think about the skills that you have which are useful for learning, for example, reading, writing, listening, watching, taking notes, discussing ideas with others, explaining your ideas to others, etc.

Different styles of learning

Learning is a process which involves gaining knowledge, processing information and making connections between different bits of knowledge. Adults are likely to learn differently from the way children learn and are likely to have different reasons for wanting to learn. It has also been suggested that men and women might learn in different ways.

Sometimes we learn by experience. Over time we do things repeatedly and improve how we do things (i.e. through learning to get better at it) or we watch others doing things and learn from observation. We also learn by reflecting on our experiences, going over in our minds how we did something, how we might do it better next time, what was good about what we did and what could be better.

If you want to know more about different types of learning and to consider your own learning style please refer to Kolb's learning styles at this link: <http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/styles/kolb.html>

What is informal or experiential learning?

Learning can take many different forms and, in particular, can be either formal or informal. Formal learning often takes place in an educational setting such as a school, college, university, learning and training provider or workplace. Informal learning can take place anywhere - in community settings, in the workplace, at home and might be said to be happening all the time and all around us. So what is informal or experiential learning?

Experiential learning is the learning that we gain from our personal social experiences. For example, we may learn things from being a parent, or from running a household. Or we can learn from being involved in our communities, such as being part of a housing or residents' association, local interest or political group, etc. We can also learn from being in a particular work role, e.g. a business manager, nurse or engineer. All these experiences teach us things.

We can also learn from bad experiences - for example, a period of unemployment. Both good and bad experiences allow us to gain valuable knowledge. The key to informal or experiential learning is being able to reflect on our experiences and draw useful information from them, e.g. being able to

identify some of the main skills and knowledge that we have acquired as a result of those experiences. We can do this in a number of ways. For example, we might start by looking at major events in our life - perhaps a life-changing event, but also less significant events. These events may have changed the way that we look at things or the way that we approach life. Most of all, we are interested in how such events have increased our knowledge or skills.

Another way to think about our experiences is to consider some of the main social roles that we have played in our life. For example, we may be a parent, a child, a worker or a student. All these roles involve taking on certain responsibilities and tasks and from these experiences we can learn new skills and knowledge.

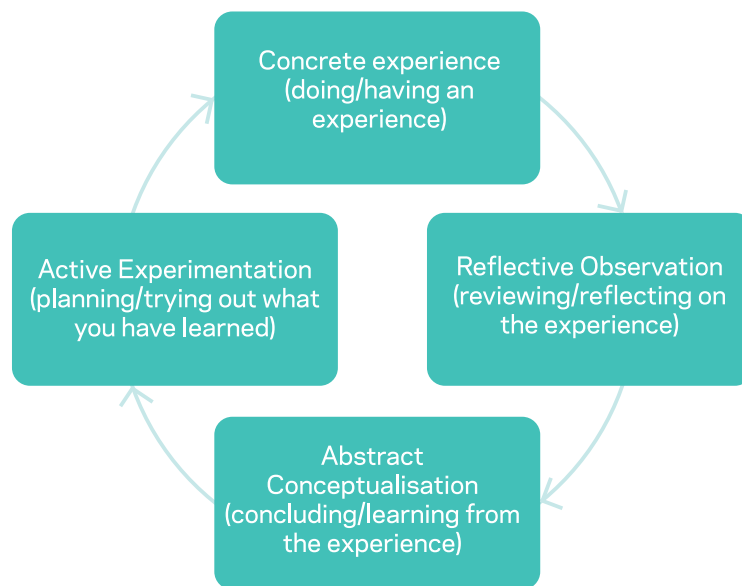
Sometimes we underestimate the importance of our experiences, especially those that we take for granted. Engaging in RPL allows people to consider their own experiences objectively, reflect on them and perhaps look at them in a different or new way. In some situations, we might have learned poor practice which we may feel we need to question. This is also a valuable learning experience. Through informal or experiential learning, we are constantly acquiring and renewing our skills and knowledge and it is important sometimes to take stock and reflect on how these have developed and changed.

Handout 4: How do we learn from experience?

Most people learn a great deal from doing something (or seeing someone else do something), experiencing (or seeing) the consequences of that action and 'learning a lesson' as a result.

People may often learn more from the experience of doing something than from reading books or from listening to a trainer or lecturer. Learning can be an individual or a shared experience.

Various attempts have been made to describe the process of learning but it is often described as a learning cycle ².



Stage 1: Concrete Experience

Learning begins with a real experience - this can be any experience or 'event'. It may be a specific experience or a series of related tasks/experiences such as a job we have done, bringing up a child, learning to drive, engaging in community or voluntary activities or the experience of being unemployed. It could also be some type of event that we observe.

Stage 2: Reflective Observation

The experience or event may 'make us think'. If we do, we move into Stage 2 of the cycle.

Stage 3: Abstract Conceptualisation

Thinking about the experience may make you realise that 'there is more to it than meets the eye', that the experience is simply one example of a pattern of things. We may begin to make connections to form ideas or theories about what that pattern is. We may make generalisations about the experience. We may, of course, then confirm those ideas by repeating similar experiences and maybe observing similar results.

2 Kolb, D. 1984. *Experiential Learning*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall. An evaluation of Kolb by the CLD sector can be found on the informal education website : <http://www.infed.org/biblio/b-explrn.htm>

Stage 4: Active Experimentation

However, we may go on to apply those ideas to new or different situations in order to test them out. If our ideas are borne out in practice then the 'lesson has been truly learned' and we are likely to apply it in future situations/experiences.

Of course, we may never learn from an experience because we never get beyond the experience itself. It is at Stage 3 that we make the connections. Without these, the experience remains something to be talked about but from which we may not have learned anything.

It is important to realise that we are not all equally effective in each stage of the cycle. Some individuals are stronger at generalising, expressing themselves in theory, while others are more effective in putting into practice what they have actually learned. Different individuals have different learning styles.

What types of experience can we learn from?

We can learn from any experience we have had or some event we have observed which was significant to us in some way. Any experience/event will do: it could be from work, home, leisure - anything at all, as long as we feel it was significant.

Examples of types of learning experience we might consider include, but are not limited to:

- a particular piece of work, task or project undertaken at work, or through community learning and development or voluntary work or independent study
- the experience of doing a particular job (paid or unpaid) over a period of time
- an educational or training course which may have been assessed but was not credit-rated by an academic institution
- the experience of training or teaching others, either formally or informally.

You can learn from any experience or event which is significant to you in some way.

Handout 5: What is reflection?

Learning through reflection is a skill that involves thinking about our own experiences from the past, thinking about our feelings about those experiences and drawing out some of the lessons that we have learned from those experiences.

We can reflect on our learning in a number of ways - for example, reflection might be an activity that we do thinking by ourselves. Or it might occur in a more social setting such as part of a group learning situation where we talk about and reflect on our experiences and share these thoughts with other people.

Reflection is something that we often do as part of our day-to-day activities - we often reflect as we are doing things and sometimes change the way that we do things according to that reflection. At other times, reflection is used long after an event or activity has been completed. In both cases, reflection can help us learn from ourselves and our experiences.

How do we reflect?

One way to reflect is to simply think about things from the start of an event to the completion of that event. Another way to reflect is to ask ourselves questions about things, for example, to think about a work, community or social role that we play or have played in the past. In fact, the key to effective reflection is being able to identify the skills and knowledge that you use in different roles you have played as project manager or coordinator or any other job position you had.

When we take a role, there are always expectations of what type of activities we will carry out, how we will behave, etc. You need to be able to identify the skills and knowledge that we used or learned during that event. Then you can describe them in detail:

- What did you have to do?
- What skills, talents and knowledge did you need for this?
- What have you learned through doing this?
- What have you learned that you can use in other situations in the future?

Handout 6: What is reflective learning?

Reflective learning means demonstrating your understanding of your role and or how you have dealt with particular issues or incidents. These may be experiences that went well or badly. The important thing is to demonstrate what you have learned from them. These questions might help your reflection of the positive or negative experience:

What was the situation like?

- Was it easy or hard to learn?
- What was it that you learned?
- Describe the people around and the difference they made to you.
- What made the learning not so enjoyable?
- Who else was there?

Think of a particular experience which you think helped you learn something and ask yourself the questions in the cycle, starting with "*What happened?*".

Handout 7: What is an evidence?

In order to get recognition for your learning through experience you need to show that you have achieved the skills and knowledge required for the particular level that you think matches your experience, or where the requirements of the job you are looking for is found, or a qualification you would like to have recognised.

Evidence is the information gathered which, when matched against the requirements of the competency, provides proof of competence. Evidence can take many forms and be gathered from a number of sources.

Evidence is something that demonstrates and confirms what you know or what you can do or what you can apply in other situations.

It is something you have produced while carrying out your role or something written about your work activities by someone who has observed these. That person might be your supervisor or facilitator, a colleague, a mentor, the beneficiaries of your work etc.

- Evidence which you could produce might include: letters, accounts of relevant key work experiences, reports, work notes and records.
- Evidence based on something someone else says about you and your strengths and skills might include, but is not limited to: written testimony about activities, feedback given by others on a task you have carried out. Evidence can also be provided by an assessor directly observing you as you carry out your work.

Handout 8: Social roles in life and identifying skills and knowledge.

Throughout our lives all of us play different social roles at different times - in any one day we might take on several different roles. For example, we might say that we have a role as a parent, child, worker, volunteer, learner, customer, client and so on. The social role that we take on at any one time depends on the social context we are in at that time and what we are doing.

For example, at home we may take on particular roles which are defined by where we are (context) and what we are doing (e.g. maintaining the house, caring for children etc.). In a different setting - e.g. a hotel, we might take on a different role. We might be a guest or we could be a worker: cleaner, manager, receptionist. In a training and education setting, we might take on the role of student or learner or teacher, depending on what our responsibilities are and what is expected of us.

When we take on a social role, there are always expectations of what type of activities we will carry out, how we will behave, how we might dress etc. These are influenced by what are called social norms, i.e. the things which are customary in a certain culture or country.

When you reflect on your experiences it might be helpful to think about your life in terms of the different social roles that you have played. Then you can describe them in detail:

- What were your responsibilities?
- What was expected from you?
- What skills did you need to have to perform that role?
- What knowledge did you need to have?

A concrete example:

Recently you have followed a first aid course. What have you learned in terms of knowledge, skills and responsibility with the course?

Knowledge

During the first aid course you have learned that there are four basic steps to intervene right after an accident:

1. To secure the location of the accident and the people involved;
2. To evaluate the victim's condition;
3. To ask for help;
4. To perform first-aid procedures.

You have also learned what are the specific actions to be carried out during these four specific steps. You even know them by heart. Does it mean that you would be able to be efficient if you are the first person available while an accident happens? Knowledge in itself would probably not be sufficient, but it provides a solid ground to apply skills and responsibility.

Skills

During the first aid training, you have practiced some fundamental actions and associated behaviours such as:

- Established a security perimeter around the accident place;
- Checked if the person is alive, conscious;
- Remained calm and focused;
- Practiced a heart massage, etc.

These actions and/or behaviours are linked to potential abilities. They are much more in the “practicing/doing” or in the “being” than for the knowledge. They are also completely linked to your knowledge which is essential for you to give a sense to what you are doing, or how you have to behave.

Now, does it imply that having the knowledge and the skills would mean that you have enough autonomy and that you will be competent during the “D-day” when such an accident happens? This is not so sure ...

Autonomy and responsibility = Competence

The competence as we understand it in the HAQF RPL means to have the requested ability to use your knowledge and your skills to apply it whenever and wherever needed. This also means that you have the capacity to get inspired from these two dimensions and to adapt it to your environments and contexts to find appropriate solutions (example: have practiced properly a heart massage but forgot to secure the place along the road).

The less you need supervision, the more you are considered as competent (autonomous and responsible). The more you are self-aware of your own attitude and able to adapt and use it automatically, the more you are competent.

For example, in another role - that of a patient in a hospital - you have to have a certain skill set such as: patience (waiting to be treated), good communication (to tell doctors and nurses about your illness and symptoms) and knowledge about how the hospital systems work: how to register first, where to go to be seen etc. All these elements are things that you have learned to do in your role as a hospital patient.


Another example might be in your role as a learner. For this role you have to have skills in communication (verbal and written), social and interpersonal skills (getting on well with other students and trainers or tutors), perhaps information technology skills if you are using a computer, problem-solving skills (to be able to work through the things you are being taught), group/team working skills if you are working with others etc. Perhaps you can think of other examples.

The key to effective reflection is being able to identify the skills and knowledge that you use in different roles you have played.

Handout 9: Linking what you have learned with the HAQF

The HAQF provides a way of comparing qualifications in the humanitarian sector. It is an 8-level hierarchy. It starts with Level 1, which indicates very basic learning, and goes up to level 8 which indicates very complex learning. The levels are defined by level descriptors (knowledge, skills and responsibility and autonomy) which show how the learning becomes more demanding as the level of learning increases.

Additionally, examples of specific professions have been identified to match each of the levels 4-8. They reveal the nature, area of studies and range of HAQF levels of a qualification:

| HAQF LEVELS | Job profiles | Recognition and validation of HAQF Qualifications | Qualifications of Higher Education Institution |
|-------------|---|--|--|
| 8 | Head of Programmes |  <p>Recognition of prior learning in humanitarian action</p> | Doctoral Degree, Professional Development Award |
| 7 | Country Director, Senior Advisor, Coordinator, Logistics Manager, Programme Manager | | Master Degree, Post Graduate Diploma, Post Graduate Certificate, Professional Development Award, NOHA Master Programme |
| 6 | Managerial position: Advisor, Logistics Manager, Programme Manager | | Bachelor Degree, Honors Degree, Graduate Certificate/Diploma, Professional Development Award |
| 5 | Technical position: technical excellence | | Higher National Diploma, Higher Education Certificate, Professional Development Award |
| 4 | Skilled, autonomous worker | | National Certificate, National Development Award |
| 3 | | | Standard Grade: Advanced, National Certificate |
| 2 | | | Standard Grade: General |
| 1 | | | Standard Grade: foundation |

The table above serve as an indication of the positions and qualifications related to the different levels. On this basis, the learner should compare the evidence of his or her learning, that is, of what he or she has learned, with the HAQF level descriptors which are expressed as learning outcomes.

In addition, level 4 to 8 of the HAQF provides a more detailed, prismatic elaboration of its levels through six dimensions considered central to working in the humanitarian sector. These dimensions compose the Humanitarian Action Profile.

The Humanitarian Action Profile offers more guidance for each level of learning on what it could mean for the main aspects of humanitarian action work in terms of knowledge, skills and competence. Particularly to identify specific qualifications, the HA Profile can function as a helpful aid and

reference point. Depending on the objective of the validation process the items in the HA Profile should be interpreted, contextualised and supplemented with more specific, technical and/or professional elements relevant to the field.

The HA Profile is directly linked to the learning levels 4 up to 8 of the HA QF and provides a more detailed, prismatic elaboration of its levels through six dimensions considered central to working in the humanitarian sector:

1. Humanitarian commitment
2. Context analysis & reflection
3. Coping & safety
4. Leadership
5. Collaborative relationships
6. Service to crisis-affected people



The dimensions of the EUPRHA meta profile

ANNEX 2: THE USE OF THE HAQF PROFILING TOOL FOR RECOGNITION

Handout 10: The HAQF Profiling Tool

The HAQF RPL profiling tool aims to prepare you for the process of recognition of prior learning by helping you make connections between the life experience you have gained in the humanitarian and or any related sector and:

- the ways in which you have applied this learning to your current work practice or other activities (providing reflective evidence of this)
- the ways (pathways) in which you can plan to build on this learning through your current role to meet your particular goals.

The HAQF profiling tool also helps you to **acknowledge your skills, knowledge and competencies** acquired through previous training, work or life experience in the different 6 core dimensions of humanitarian work. It will help you:

- reflect on and express your learning from experience just to know which is your level of learning or to identify what you have learned in relation to particular requirements of a programme or a job description;
- identify how that learning matches the HAQF level descriptors.
- compare the evidence of your learning with the HAQF level descriptors in the six humanitarian core dimensions.

The dimensions are central to humanitarian work and therefore have to be considered altogether. You cannot choose one to the profiling exercise as **all** are integral to humanitarian work. But you could realise that you have more learning experience, you are more competent in one dimension than in other.

The tool is in a form of a table, one for each level of learning (4-8), divided in the six dimensions of the humanitarian profile where knowledge, skills and competencies can be identified. Individuals outline their work experiences and link these experiences to the required level of learning and/or job profiles and skills for the employers. The resulting table, therefore, has space for individuals to first list all their relevant experiences (evidences). Consequently, the table provides space for outlining the learning and skills that have been gained through these experiences. Further, the Profiling Tool aims to link these experiences with the level of learning or requirements by asking for evidence of application of prior learning and potential match with selected level. Finally, the Profiling Tool aims to somewhat inspire individuals carrying out the profiling exercise by asking them to outline actions needed to acquire the learning.

The HAQF Profiling Tool is a table based on the HAQF and the Humanitarian Action Profile. There is one table for each particular level.

| | | | | |
|---|--|-----------------|------------|------------|
| 1 | Level | Knowledge | Knowledge | Knowledge |
| 2 | Dimension | Descriptor | Descriptor | Descriptor |
| 3 | Examples of experience | Examples: | Examples: | Examples: |
| 4 | Learning (knowledge), skills and competencies gained from these experiences) | Examples: | Examples: | Examples: |
| 5 | Evidence of these learnings | Evidence: | Evidence: | Evidence: |
| 6 | Match/Correspondence with selected descriptors | Self-evaluation | | |
| 7 | Action I need to take: | | | |

*A Profiling Tool based on levels 4 to 8 of the HAQF and examples of some of the profile dimensions can be found on the EUHAP website


Handout 11: How to use the HAQF profiling tool?

1. **The first row** (1) provides examples of positions in the level concerned and describes it in terms of knowledge, skills and responsibility and autonomy (all dimensions taken together as it is expressed in the HAQF).
2. **The second row** defines each particular dimension (e.g. humanitarian commitment) in terms of knowledge, skills and competence (responsibility and autonomy). Some competency indicators are provided as examples

These examples aim at supporting the narratives you should work on.

Example:

Linked to knowledge:


| | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|---|--|--|
|  <p>Leadership</p> | <p>A N/A</p> | <p>→ Highly specialised knowledge and interdisciplinary knowledge of current trends in the humanitarian sectors and a critical understanding of their main opportunities and threats.</p> <p>INDICATORS → Addresses underlying complex issues that have the potential to impact the implementation of the vision. → Has a good knowledge where to find the information he/she may need in order to complete his/her credible vision.</p> | <p>→ Ability to define and adapt strategic plans and objectives for the medium term taking into account trends from an overall perspective. → A range of coaching and management skills in order to facilitate the acceptance of strategic decisions and organizational goals and values.</p> <p>INDICATORS → Takes an active role in developing and articulating a clear and coherent identity for the organization in the context and builds commitment. → Identifies the information needs of a target audience and crafts communications to address the identified needs. → Effectively uses tools and processes to manage change and utilizes change as an opportunity to advance humanitarian goals. → Adapt leadership style to the time frame and changing situation.</p> | <p>→ Promotes the development of people in order to improve the strategic performance of the group by giving constructive feedback and encouragement, and giving each an equal opportunity to succeed.</p> <p>INDICATORS → Implements policies and procedures to develop the capabilities of the team and individual contributors. → Communicates well the strategy, values and objectives to the team, leading to more effective problem-solving, critical thinking, and decision-making. → Works together with each member of the group to plan, monitor and review its work objectives or goals and his or her overall contribution to the organization.</p> |
| <p>Examples of life experiences</p> | <p>Examples if applicable:</p> | | | |

In this picture, we can see the knowledge in the “Leadership” dimension which is required from someone self-estimated at level 7.

In order to be more concrete, to provide ideas and to support the descriptive part (row 3), “Competency indicators” of knowledge are provided. The complex issues mentioned are related to the “current trends” the person at this level should have in order to make a proper analysis. The knowledge is central in this case, i.e. it does not matter if you have the analytical capacity, if you are not aware of the subject, current trends and dilemmas involved.

Another dimension directly related to knowledge is linked to the knowledge of where to find the information. Sources are key to obtain the information and to be able to cross-check it. That means they should be plural. Analysis (skill) will come only at a later stage.

Linked to skills:


| | | | | |
|--|--------------|--|--|---|
|  <p>Leadership</p> | <p>A N/A</p> | <p>→ Highly specialised knowledge and interdisciplinary knowledge of current trends in the humanitarian sectors and a critical understanding of their main opportunities and threats.</p> <p>INDICATORS → Addresses underlying complex issues that have the potential to impact the implementation of the vision. → Has a good knowledge where to find the information he/she may need in order to complete his/her credible vision.</p> | <p>→ Ability to define and adapt strategic plans and objectives for the medium term taking into account trends from an overall perspective. → A range of coaching and management skills in order to facilitate the acceptance of strategic decisions and organizational goals and values.</p> <p>INDICATORS → Takes an active role in developing and articulating a clear and coherent identity for the organization in the context and builds commitment. → Identifies the information needs of a target audience and crafts communications to address the identified needs. → Effectively uses tools and processes to manage change and utilizes change as an opportunity to advance humanitarian goals. → Adapt leadership style to the time frame and changing situation.</p> | <p>→ Promotes the development of people in order to improve the strategic performance of the group by giving constructive feedback and encouragement, and giving each an equal opportunity to succeed.</p> <p>INDICATORS → Implements policies and procedures to develop the capabilities of the team and individual contributors. → Communicates well the strategy, values and objectives to the team, leading to more effective problem-solving, critical thinking, and decision-making. → Works together with each member of the group to plan, monitor and review its work objectives or goals and his or her overall contribution to the organization.</p> |
| <p>Examples of life experiences</p> | | <p>Examples if applicable:</p> | | |

The provided competency indicators are directly linked to the skills as listed (level 7, section Leadership).

The first one (Ability to define and adapt strategic plans and objectives) can be also better understood through example you may have had as mentioned in the competency indicators.

The other understanding of skills could be said as “know-how”, be it conscientious or not (this not because you know what is a piano but because you know how to play piano).

Linked to competencies (autonomy and responsibility):

| | | | | |
|--|--------------|--|--|---|
|  <p>Leadership</p> | <p>A N/A</p> | <p>→ Highly specialised knowledge and interdisciplinary knowledge of current trends in the humanitarian sectors and a critical understanding of their main opportunities and threats.</p> <p>INDICATORS → Addresses underlying complex issues that have the potential to impact the implementation of the vision. → Has a good knowledge where to find the information he/she may need in order to complete his/her credible vision.</p> | <p>→ Ability to define and adapt strategic plans and objectives for the medium term taking into account trends from an overall perspective. → A range of coaching and management skills in order to facilitate the acceptance of strategic decisions and organizational goals and values.</p> <p>INDICATORS → Takes an active role in developing and articulating a clear and coherent identity for the organization in the context and builds commitment. → Identifies the information needs of a target audience and crafts communications to address the identified needs. → Effectively uses tools and processes to manage change and utilizes change as an opportunity to advance humanitarian goals. → Adapt leadership style to the time frame and changing situation.</p> | <p>→ Promotes the development of people in order to improve the strategic performance of the group by giving constructive feedback and encouragement, and giving each an equal opportunity to succeed.</p> <p>INDICATORS → Implements policies and procedures to develop the capabilities of the team and individual contributors. → Communicates well the strategy, values and objectives to the team, leading to more effective problem-solving, critical thinking, and decision-making. → Works together with each member of the group to plan, monitor and review its work objectives or goals and his or her overall contribution to the organization.</p> |
| <p>Examples of life experiences</p> | | <p>Examples if applicable:</p> | | |

Again, these are concrete competency indicators (examples) of what a leader estimated at this level (7) should be able to implement/facilitate without support.

3. **The third row** refers to examples of life experiences. This part should be filled, if applicable, with examples of your own experiences. This means what have you done at practical level. Ideally different experiences should be mentioned. Which was your (not the team's) responsibility? What practical skills have you learned? Which knowledge have you acquired?

The types of experience which might have helped you to develop some of the skills, knowledge and competencies (responsibility and autonomy) defined in the level and dimensions descriptors might be:

- a. a particular event, task, project you carried out as part of your work role or within your home life or within your community;
 - b. the experience of carrying out a particular role for a period of time e.g.
 - c. your daily work (paid or unpaid);
 - d. participation in a training event, or 'on-the-job';
 - e. training;
 - f. being supervised and mentored;
 - g. supporting, mentoring or training others.
4. **The fourth row** refers to learning and skills gained. This part relates to the knowledge, skills or competencies that you have gained through your life experience. Look at the competency indicators to help you check if you have the knowledge, skills and competencies requested at this level. You should reflect on them as part of the learning process.
5. **The fifth row** refers to evidences of application of prior learning that you have gained through your life experiences in your present role. You will need to provide direct and reflective evidence of your skills and knowledge. It can be direct evidence like something you have produced (a report, training material, a needs analysis...) or someone has written or observed about you (written testimony, feedback by others). It can be also the result of a reflection about how you have used different standards or methods and /or skills to deal with a particular issue or situation reflecting evidence).
6. **The sixth row** is a self-evaluation to assess the potential match with the descriptors taking into consideration the previous answers (examples, evidences).
7. **The seventh** and final row refers to the process of reflecting about what action you need to take in order to: gain further learning (courses, academic programs) or experiences, or gather or produce the evidence you have identified. You might also need to undertake further learning and development in particular areas.

You might be ready to gain recognition for your prior informal learning through formal assessment.

GLOSSARY³

Recognition of learning outcomes

Formal recognition: the process of granting official status to skills and competencies: a) through the award of qualifications (certificates, diploma or titles); b) through the grant of equivalence, credit units or waivers, validation of gained skills and/or competencies;

Social recognition: the acknowledgement of the value of skills and/or competencies by economic and social stakeholders.

Learning outcomes

The set of knowledge, skills and/or competencies that an individual has acquired and/or is able to demonstrate after completion of a learning process:

Knowledge means the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual;

Skills means the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, skills are described as cognitive (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking) or practical (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments);

Competence means the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.

Qualification

The term qualification covers different aspects:

Formal qualification: the formal outcome (certificate, diploma or title) of an assessment and validation process which is obtained when a competent body determines that an individual has achieved learning outcomes to given standards and/or possesses the necessary competence to do a job in a specific area of work. A qualification confers official recognition of the value of learning outcomes in the labour market and in education and training. A qualification can be a legal entitlement to practice a trade (OECD);

Job requirements: the knowledge, aptitudes and skills required to perform the specific tasks attached to a particular work position (ILO);

³ Most definitions are drawn from the EQF (European Qualification Framework) and from the Cedefop glossary³. The terms – in particular the difference between recognition, validation and the validation stages – are discussed in more details in Chapter.

Personal attributes: the sum of knowledge, know-how, skills and/or competencies acquired by an individual in formal, non-formal and/or informal settings.

Qualifications framework

An instrument for the development and classification of qualifications (e.g. at national or sectoral level) according to a set of criteria (e.g. using descriptors) applicable to specified levels of learning outcomes.

Qualifications system

A system which provides rules governing all aspects of education and training activities leading to recognition of learning outcomes at national or sectoral level, including:

- definition of qualification policy, training design and implementation, institutional arrangements, funding, quality assurance;
- assessment, validation and certification of learning outcomes;
- mechanisms that link education and training to the labour market and civil society.

Assessment of learning outcomes

The process of appraising knowledge, skills and/or competencies of an individual against pre-defined criteria, specifying learning methods and expectations. Assessment is typically followed by validation and certification.

Formative assessment: a two-way reflective process between a teacher/assessor and learner to promote learning.

Summative assessment: the process of assessing (or evaluating) a learner's achievement of specific knowledge, skills and competence at a particular time.

Validation of learning outcomes

The confirmation by a competent body that learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and/or competencies) acquired by an individual in a formal, non-formal or informal setting have been assessed against predefined criteria and are compliant with the requirements of a validation standard. Validation typically leads to certification.

Certification of learning outcomes

The process of formally attesting that knowledge, skills and/or competencies acquired by an individual have been assessed and validated by a competent body against a predefined standard. Certification results in the issue of a certificate, diploma or title.

Certificate

An official document, issued by an awarding body, which records the achievements of an individual following a standard assessment procedure.

Learning process: Formal / Non-Formal/Informal

Formal learning: learning that occurs in an organized and structured environment in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view. It typically leads to validation and certification.

Informal learning: learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organized or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is mostly unintentional from the learner's perspective.

Non-formal learning: learning which is embedded in planned activities not always explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support), but which contain an important learning element. Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view.

Standard (or referential)

Expectation, obligation, requirement or norm expected. It is possible to distinguish between:

Educational standard refers to the statements of learning objectives, content of curricula, entry requirements as well as resources required to meet the learning objectives;

Occupational standard refers to the statements of the activities and tasks related to – or to the knowledge, skills and understanding needed for – a specific job;

Assessment standard refers to the statements of the learning outcomes to be assessed, the level of performance to be achieved by the individual assessed and the methodology used);

Validation standard refers to the statements of the learning outcomes to be assessed, the assessment methodology used, as well as the level of performance to be reached;

Certification standard refers to the statements of the rules applicable for obtaining a certificate or diploma as well as the rights conferred.

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