

European Inventory

on validation of informal and
non-formal learning



European inventory on validation of informal and non-formal learning TURKEY

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Informal learning is a very new concept in Turkey, which has been discussed by the parties concerned. It is considered to be the sum of all overall skills individuals have acquired through the education system, through paid and unpaid work, through organisational activities and family life/life in society. It is considered to be very important for an individual to acquire a qualification on the basis of learning which takes place outside formal education and training. Therefore it is necessary to establish a system which gives individuals the right to document their informal learning without having to undergo traditional forms of testing, by building bridges between formal, non-formal and informal learning. The future of lifelong learning is bound up with the success people as individuals, groups and collectives have in extracting learning from informal experiences, which is relevant to advancing their overall fulfilment.

These issues will not only serve to create the grounds for development of partnerships at all levels of public administration but also between relevant social partners. The benefits will include: identification of the needs of the learner and labour market; identification of adequate resources by encouraging an increase in public and private investment and new investment models in lifelong learning; more accessible learning - notably as a result of multiplying local learning centres in the workplace and by facilitating learning on the job; the creation of enabling environments for persons who are particularly at risk of exclusion, including the disabled, migrants and the rural community; and the creation of a learning culture to motivate potential learners, to increase levels of participation and to demonstrate the need for learning at all ages.

The creation of platforms and the establishment of enabling fora for the debate concerning the validation and certification of non-formal and informal learning will contribute to enhancing awareness of the Turkish public of the importance of non-formal and informal learning, to foster better cooperation between education and training structures and the relevant social partners, and to stress the contribution made by education and training to the equality of opportunities.

In this report we will come to demonstrate that while Turkey has some existing laws in place to enable recognition of prior experience within the VET system, the country does not have a standard validation methodology in place to enable individuals to get their informal and non-formal learning identified, assessed and recognised in a way that would lead to a nationally acknowledged competency.

2.0 PUBLIC SECTOR

2.1 Legislative background

The **Basic Law on National Education No. 1739** arranges the non-formal and formal education in a manner that they complete each other, and if necessary they offer the same qualifications and they benefit from all their opportunities. Non-formal education is composed of two basic components: general and vocational technical educational programs. These two parts are prepared in a co-dependency manner.

Vocational and technical training was rearranged by the “**Vocational Training Law**” no. **3308**, which came into force in 1986. In this law, it is stated that the competences gained through informal and non-formal training can be assessed when an individual enters an apprentice training and the competences gained during the apprenticeship training can also be assessed when an individual enters formal education. The Rules and Regulation “the Assessment of Documents and Diplomas in Apprenticeship Training and Vocational Training” determine the rules for the assessment of the competences gained during apprenticeship training.

Upon entering into force of the **Law No. 5544**¹ (Vocational Qualifications Authority Law) in the year 2006, a new period was started in Turkey regarding the recognition and certification of professional competences. The objective of the Law is to determine the principles of national qualifications in technical and vocational fields and to establish the National Vocational Qualifications Authority to set up and operate the national vocational qualifications system², linked to the national qualifications framework. The law also states that based on a portfolio of questions, a document or a certificate approved by the Authority indicating the professional competency level will be awarded to the individuals that succeed in examinations.

The basic rationale for the development of a validation system is to enable the transition between different types of vocational training for individuals. The individual can utilise his/her competences gained through non-formal training when moving, first to apprenticeship training and then, to formal training. Therefore, validation of non-formal training will enable attainment of a nationally recognised certificate. Since the regulations (to be in accordance with the Law in question) are still being prepared, the implementation

1 Official Gazete, nb.26312, 7 October 2006; www.meb.gov.tr

2 The National Vocational Qualifications System (NVQS) planned to be established in this scope is defined in the aforementioned Law as follows: Rules and activities concerning the development of technical and vocational education standards and qualifications based on these standards, their implementation, authorization, supervision, assessment and evaluation, documentation and certification related to these” [Law No. 5544, Article 2ç].

has not started as of yet. Validation and certification of informal learning will also be evaluated in the framework of the “National Vocational Qualification System” by taking into consideration the fact that many adults do not have previously and formally evaluated/certified skills and knowledge.

In order to be in harmony with the European Union Member States, Turkey is also committed to adapting to the common European principles on identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning which have (May 2004) been endorsed by the (Education) Council.

In accordance with the amendments brought about by the Law no. **4702** and the arrangements in the “Regulation on Vocational and Technical Education”, the “Vocational Education Committee” at the central level and “Provincial Vocational Education Committees” at provincial level have been established, in order to ensure the wide and effective representation of the government, employees, employers and other social partners. These committees ensure the wide and effective participation of the sector representatives who produce goods and services, into the activities of the determination of manpower and educational needs.

2.2 Stakeholders

Non-formal education is mainly the responsibility of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), Directorate General of Apprenticeship and Non-formal Education. The said Directorate General governs the non-formal education services through 925 public education centres and 303 vocational training centres that are found across the country. Other ministries, official institutions and organisations, universities, municipalities, associations, trade associations, foundations and volunteer organisations and private education institutions can also offer non-formal education activities and they can open courses and award certificates of accomplishment.

There are various types of educational institutions at every level which provide non-formal learning opportunities and choices. These institutions offer educational activities to individuals in accordance with their interests, demands and needs.

The list below outlines the responsibilities and activities of some key stakeholders in the sphere of validation of informal and non-formal learning:

- The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) has been playing an important role in developing non-formal learning facilities. MoNE organizes the courses in a flexible way, in terms of their duration, location and level, in order to accommodate the needs of those who are employed at the same time they are seeking further education.

- Some universities also provide these opportunities for those who would like to develop their professional knowledge, skills and experiences.
- The Vocational and Technical Education Research and Development Center (METARGEM) was established in 1986 to provide planning, research and development services to the MoNE. Its responsibilities cover research and planning, curriculum development, design of projects, testing and evaluation, educational technology and technical publications.
- Despite the fact that MoNE maintains primary responsibility for non-formal education, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security is the Government's primary institution responsible for policy and administrative issues related to employment and the labour market. Conducting training activities based on "labour market needs analysis" is the responsibility of The Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR). İŞKUR targets young people, women, those who have lost their jobs, those receiving unemployment allowance, people with disabilities, and ex-offenders. It is responsible for dealing with (i) employment and unemployment issues, (ii) job brokering in both the public and private sector, (iii) active employment measures and (iv) accreditation of private employment services.
- KOSGEB (Small and Medium Sized Industry Development Organization) is a non-profit, semi-autonomous organization linked to the Ministry of Industry and Trade. KOSGEB has been established for the purpose of supporting SME development. It offers consultancy and training services to contribute to the creation of self-employment through business start-up training to SMEs in order to increase their competitiveness both in the internal and in the international market. KOSGEB, through its 25 enterprise development centers, 12 technology development centers and ten laboratories spread throughout the country, is one of the major providers of consultancy and training services to SMEs and potential entrepreneurs.¹

2.3 Validation in practice

Two different methods of evaluation have been adopted:

- In the first method, exemptions from the apprenticeship training can be awarded on the basis of an evaluation of certificates from non-formal education institutes² (e.g. duration of training is assessed).

¹ <http://www.kosgeb.gov.tr/>

² In the context of certification system, according to the Circular 2007/17 of the Prime Ministry Regarding the Coordination of Education and Training "Except in-service training, all education activities that are arranged by public or private organisations will be coordinated with Ministry of National Education, in determining the required terms for the employment the candidates will be asked certificates that are approved by Ministry of National Education and assistance will be ensured for the surveillance and audit roles of the said Ministry."

- The second method is an evaluation of the competences gained by the individual him/herself through work experience. This method is limited to the evaluation of the experiences gained before the apprenticeship training. For the evaluation, an individual is required to document his/her actual work in that profession.

It is also necessary to emphasise a different implementation aspect of the validation system that was started in 2005. In this implementation, an individual having a mastership certificate¹ in a professional sector is also awarded a certificate of salesperson in areas closely related to the mentioned profession. For instance, anyone who has a mastership certificate in the professional sector of furniture is also directly awarded certificates for;

- Furniture salesperson,
- Industrial machinery salesperson,
- Construction materials salesperson.

Individuals that moved to apprenticeship training by evaluation of the certificates received from non-formal training, must, in the end, prove their competences in assistant-mastership or mastership examinations. However, the assistant-mastership and mastership examinations are not fulfilled in a way that measure defined national competences. In this context, it is also observed that no continuous mechanisms have been developed regarding the monitoring and evaluation of the methods being implemented at the moment. However, there are supervision mechanisms that hinder the performance in a way that does not conform to defined principles of the concordance procedures².

It is possible to move to apprenticeship training through evaluation of the certificates received from non-formal training, and to move to formal training through assistant-mastership or mastership certificates received from apprenticeship training. Assistant-masters and masters can be graduates of vocational high schools provided that they succeeded in compensatory training programmes. The Ministry of National Education determines what lessons these individuals would be exempted from. In general it can be

¹ The arbitrament according to temporary article 1- b/1 of the Vocational Education Law number 3308, "Those who owned a workplace and worked there as a master before the enactment of Law may directly apply to obtain a proficiency certificate in three months." has been improved and revised such as "those who didn't own a workplace but worked there as a master.." by General Directorate for Apprenticeship and Non-formal Education, and the said article bides to become a law in Turkish Parliament. This article will provide those who achieve vocational skills by informal learning, to obtain a proficiency certificate.

² The principle of concordance is applied when the certificates received from non-formal training are evaluated for transition to apprenticeship training; and the theoretical and practical parts of the training received are taken into consideration separately.

said that, among the individuals possessing the certificate of mastership, those willing to obtain the diploma of a vocational high school are exempted from professional lessons.

2.4 **Examples of Prominent Activities, related to validation of informal and non-formal learning**

- In the scope of the “On-the-job Training Project”, the Ministry of National Education organises courses and seminars including “Computer Programming”, Web Designing”, “Programming Languages”, “Project Cycle Management”, “Total Quality Management”, “New Approaches in Education”, “Presentation of the EU Educational Programs” (and the related projects) and “Development of Educational Materials in the Internet media”.
- New standards have been established from 2001 forward for the creation of practical training opportunities. According to these arrangements, small enterprises with less than 20 employees may provide skills training to vocational students if they desire. Additionally, larger enterprises with 20 or more employees that operate in fields covered under the “Vocational Education Law No. 3308” have to provide practical training in the ratio of 5%-10% on the basis of the total number of the employees. In addition, enterprises employing more than 200 people must establish a unit for practical training and appoint training personnel to the unit for this purpose¹. And, by law, trade unions in Turkey are under the obligation to allocate 10% of their resources for training of their members.
- According to the “Vocational Education Law”, development and harmonisation courses are organized for the personnel who want to have a proficiency or to promote in his/her career. These courses are organized by the Ministry of National Education in cooperation with the related institutions and bodies. In this framework cooperation activities have been carried out according to protocols which have been signed with various foundations and institutions.
- The principle of concordance is applied when the certificates received from non-formal training are evaluated for transition to apprenticeship training; and the theoretical and practical parts of the training received are taken into consideration separately.
- Formal and non-formal educational activities (such as computer literacy, computer programming, computer based accounting; courses on the use of communication technologies-such as the internet; carpet weaving courses; courses for adaptation to industrial machines and new technology; foreign language courses; income-generating skill and vocational courses that encourage entrepreneurship and employment and socio-cultural educational programs according to the interests and needs of the individual) are provided free of charge in the “Public Education Centres” and

1 VET Reform Policy Peer Review Turkey, 2004

“Vocational Education Centres” which are opened by the “General Directorate of Apprenticeship and Non-formal Education.”

- In vocational and technical schools “modular programmes” are applied and a flexible structure that facilitates the vertical and horizontal transitions between the programmes is now available.

3.0 PRIVATE SECTOR

Both sectoral and company-specific initiatives organise various lifelong learning activities in Turkey. There are many private education institutions addressing both students and adults, aiming to teach skills and professions in certain areas. These institutions train intermediate manpower through short-term education. Private Vocational and Technical courses provide programmes in hundreds of different areas such as ICT, foreign languages, ballet, music etc. - courses may be opened for any programme that teaches a skill or a job.

3.1 Social partner involvement

The leading sectoral stakeholders are employers' associations (TOBB, TİSK and TESK) and workers' and civil servants' trade union confederations (TURKİŞ, HAK-İŞ, DİSK, KESK, KAMUSEN and MEMURSEN). Most social partners and especially trade union confederations wish to establish a partnership with MoNE and commence active participation in the design and implementation of policies in order to strengthen their institutional capacity on education and vocational training.

TOBB¹ (The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey) has 362 members of the Chambers of Industry and Commerce and over a million member companies. TOBB participates in a wide range of social dialogue committees as the representative of the private sector in the areas of commerce, industry, maritime commerce and commodity exchange. It has the authority, under Article 12 of the Law No. 5174, to open vocational training courses in the areas of its competence and to issue training certificates for training provided to its members on subjects that are not within the scope of the Vocational Training Law, no. 3308. Moreover, TOBB has the responsibility to contribute to the strengthening of vocational training

TISK (The Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations) has 18 sectoral employment associations and numerous companies as members. It provides different types of training for its members in various sectors. More institutionalized and structured training courses are delivered through foundations established within the organisational structure of TISK such as The Turkish Employers' Association of Metal Industries (MESS), Turkish Textile Employers' Association (TÜTSİS) or Employers Association or Construction Industries (INTES) in sectors of metal, textile and construction. These foundations are capable of undertaking regular assessment for identifying sector needs. TISK and The Turkish

¹ <http://www.tobb.org.tr/>

Confederation of Trade Unions (TÜRK-İŞ) have been implementing the “TİSK and TÜRK-İŞ Pilot Project to Enhance Efficiency in Education and Employment” within the scope of EU financed Strengthening Vocational Education and Training System in Turkey Project (SVET) since 20 April 2006¹. According to the activity report prepared by TISK, 148.457 workers attended the courses organized by TISK and its employment associations between 2000 and 2005²

TESK³ (The Turkish Confederation of Trades and Craftsmen) is considered to be the main representative of the small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in the country. It provides various types of seminars and information to member organizations in addition to its extensive role in apprenticeship training. For trades- and craftsmen, it constitutes the highest level of professional representation with around four million registered members. As a professional organization, TESK acquired a considerable weight in Turkey’s socio-economic panorama with a significant employment potential and technical/technological capacity. One important role of TESK is to implement and manage vocational/occupational training activities in apprenticeship centres located in many small industry clusters. These activities of vocational education and training are carried out jointly with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce and the Ministry of National Education. TESK evaluates and certifies the knowledge and skills acquired through informal and non-formal learning (mainly work experience) of individuals in professions, which are not covered by the apprenticeship training system (as defined by the Law No. 3308 on Vocational Training). Indeed, the Confederation awards the following certificates;

- The TESK certificate of assistant-mastership;
- The TESK certificate of mastership; and
- The TESK certificate of tradesman ship.

This certification process comes under the framework of "The Regulation on the Awarding of Professional Certificates for Provinces and Professional Branches for which the Apprenticeship Training is not provided".

Individuals who started working after 1993 in professions not covered by the apprenticeship training can attend examinations three times a year at the chambers of professions that are branch organisations of TESK. Those who successfully complete this examination can receive one of the above-mentioned certificates. The examination commission consists, under the presidency of the head of relevant profession chamber, of:

¹ http://www.tisk.org.tr/hakkinda_en.asp?dil=en

² TISK, “2000 - 2005 dönemi, TISK ve Üye İşveren Sendikaları İle Bağlı Eğitim Vakıflarının Eğitim Faaliyetleri raporu”, Ankara

³ <http://www.tesk.org.tr/>

- Two members designated by the related chamber of profession.
- One member from the Chamber's Professional Training Consultancy Unit.
- A teacher designated by the Professional Training Center of the Ministry of National Education that provides apprenticeship training services.

The examination for "Tradesmanship Certificate" can only be taken in a written form, while the examinations for the certificates of assistant-mastership and mastership include both written and practical assessments. Unfortunately, no information is available on the number of individuals who have benefited from this certification process.

The certificates issued by TESK are replaced with their equivalent certificates by the Ministry of National Education, if that profession is taken into the coverage of apprenticeship training practice of the Law No. 3308 on Vocational Training.

TÜRK-İŞ¹ (Public Workers Dominant Trade Union Confederation), according to available information, has the highest number of member workers, with 1,800,000 members, nine regional offices and 680 local offices. TÜRK-İŞ has more resources for training and more collaboration with MoNE than other confederations. Despite its limited co-operation with employers' associations, it appears to indulge in more training activities with employers than other trade union confederations. The Confederation's training targets are mainly member workers in a wide range of subjects and issues.

HAK-İŞ², the Confederation of Turkish Real Trade Unions was set up in 1976. Today, HAK-İŞ has 8-affiliate trade unions and 400 members. Private sector and the municipalities are its pioneer sectors. HAK-İŞ has implemented an 18-month project in Kayseri with EU support to develop the involvement of social partners in vocational education. A centre for vocational guidance and consultancy has been established. At the end of this project it is aimed to reach 10.000 workers, 1500 enterprises, and 5000 students. The Confederation has also implemented an EU-supported project for training residential technicians and at the end of the project 250 technicians obtained certificates

DISK (Workers Trade Union Confederations) and **KESK**³ (Civil Servants' Trade Union Confederation) also provide different types of training and information seminars to their members. These confederations increased their training activities through EU-funded projects.

KAMUSEN (Confederation of Unions of Public Servants) and **MEMURSEN** (Confederation of Unions of Civil Servants) also carry out educational activities in terms of lifelong

1 <http://www.turkis.org.tr>

2 <http://www.hakis.org.tr/>

3 <http://www.kesk.org.tr/>

learning. They take cultural activities and training like seminars, conferences, panels, public meetings, assemblies and courses, in order to support the vocational and technical training.

The Turkish Employers' Association of Construction Industries (**INTES**) has cooperated with **YOL-İŞ** Trade Union and tried to form a system with a view to issue internationally valid certificates to employees working in the construction sector. In relation to this development, a large training centre was built in Ankara, staff have been trained and employed and the standards for relevant professions have been prepared. Currently, these standards are being updated with the cooperation of INTES, MEGEP and sector representatives. Besides, INTES has been cooperating with different international and national organisations for the accreditation of its Training Centre and is thus to become an accredited Centre initially nationally and afterwards internationally. INTES is also a member of the Board of Directors of MYK (Vocational Qualifications Authority) and all of the activities of INTES related to non-formal education and certification of the skills are made in accordance with the Law No. 5544.

The Employer Confederation of Textile Industrialists trains and certifies skilled workers in six different professions in the field of textiles.

3.2 Individual companies

Some enterprises in Turkey implement programmes with a view to determine the competencies of their employees and to prepare them to their future duties under the scope of international performance development systems¹.

The system implemented by one of large-scale companies in Turkey, which pays importance to the competence development and validation of its manual employees, is outlined below.

Example

The company employs vocational high school graduates through a three-stage examination. An interview is carried out following written and practical examinations. In the interview it is intended to measure candidates' skills such as flexibility, group-working, learning ability etc. Those who are employed are then subjected to a 4-stage on-the-job training and certified accordingly. These stages are as follows:

- Learning;

¹ Otto Bauer; Head of Board of Directors, Foundation for Development of Technological Education, Stiftung Zur Förderung der Technologieausbildung, TEGEV

- Working under supervision;
- Working by him/herself alone; and
- The ability to teach others.

Those certified as being able to train others may also have the opportunity to be upgraded to the management level. The candidates for the management levels in the company are assessed on a 'case study' basis, and those who succeed are given management tasks.

4.0 THIRD SECTOR

Some associations and foundations, such as National Education Foundation (MEV), provide significant support for the development of non-formal education in Turkey.

The Vocational Education and Small-scale Industries Foundation (MEKSA)¹ was established in 1985 and has been working as a non-profit, public interest foundation to promote vocational training and small industry in Turkey. MEKSA has been successful in bringing together all the social partners involved in vocational training. It also carries out international cooperation in order to keep vocational training parallel to the recent developments all over the world. The projects are financed from abroad and have provided educational opportunities to many people, including women, children, and young people.

The Training Foundation of Construction and Installation Workers (İNİŞEV) provides training for workers in the construction sector. The Foundation made protocols with MoNE², İŞKUR and MEKSA in terms of qualitative developments in education. The certificates and the training of İNİŞEV can be a model for other foundations and institutions that organise similar training. Within the framework of LLL, these training courses have a crucial importance, as they introduce a mutual benefit and promote collaboration as well as possible joint use of the trained labor among social partners.

The Turkey-Middle East Public Affairs Administration Institute (TODAI), the Turkish Industrial Management Institute and the Turkish Scientific and Technical Research Institution (TÜBİTAK), the National Productivity Center (MPM), the Directorate for Developing and Supporting Small and Medium Sized Industrial Enterprises (KOSGEB), the Continuous Education Centers (SEM) and many other NGOs provide non-formal education services to their employees to help their career development, in cooperation with MoNE.

¹ www.meksa.org.tr

² http://www.meb.gov.tr/stats/apk2001ing/Section_6/7Protocols.htm

5.0 CONCLUSION

It might be concluded that a consciousness, required for the implementation of validation of competencies acquired outside of formal education, has been developed in Turkey. There are a number of examples of the delivery of informal and non-formal learning across the public, private and third sectors.

Turkey is committed to adopting the common European principles on identification and validation of informal and non-formal learning. The Vocational Qualifications Authority Law No. 5544 that has entered into force in 2006 is expected to bring down some of the barriers to implementation of a national validation system.

Thus, progress in terms of awareness and legislation has been made - the next steps are to implement validation further in practice.