

# Microcredentials: challenging views beyond Europe



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*The recognition of learning does not necessarily have to be formally quality-assured and assessed to be recognised and have currency*

Looking for a broader view on microcredentials, we interviewed two non-European keynote speakers at the Cedefop conference.

Dr Julie Reddy is the Chief Executive Officer of the South African Qualifications Authority and an expert with a distinguished career in skills and qualifications. She approves of the key principle behind microcredentials but voices some concerns about their use across the North-South divide.

### **What are your concerns about the definition of microcredentials?**

My concerns stem from how the term 'credentials' is being used in the Global North, where

credentials equal qualifications in credential evaluation of qualifications, particularly in the higher-education space. To me, credentials are a much more expansive term that is commonly used to describe a person's abilities, experiences and agency to serve a purpose. A formally acquired qualification is but one item in a 'basket of credentials' attained by a lifelong learner in their lifetime and individualised learning journeys. The definitions being posited for microcredentials in the Global North are following a similar trajectory of trying to define it as an 'assessed and quality-assured' module or unit of learning. This suits the higher and formal education academy but continues to marginalise the recognition of non-formal and informal learning achievements.

### **Is there a place for microcredentials in your country's national qualifications framework (NQF)?**

I am not opposed to the key principle underpinning microcredentials, which essentially is the recognition of credits and short learning programmes. The South African NQF has already been implementing this for many years. We have a national policy to register qualifications and part-qualifications/credits on our NQF. The question I am currently grappling with, given my concerns about the narrow definition and usage, is: do we need to follow the global trend and rename/rebrand what already exists in our system? My view is that both credentials and microcredentials, as currently