TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AUTHORITY

STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) IN KENYAN TVET INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Many Kenyans acquire valuable skills through informal training, work and life experiences but remain uncertified and invisible to the labour market. The Kenyan Government developed Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy and established mechanisms to recognize the skills acquired through work experience and informal training to promote equity, inclusion, and lifelong learning. However, the extent to which RPL has been institutionalized, mainstreamed, and quality-assured across TVET institutions remains unclear. This study examined the status of implementation of RPL in TVET institutions in Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive research design to examine the status of RPL implementation in Kenyan TVET institutions. The assessment focused on awareness levels, institutional implementation practices, accreditation status, targeted skills areas, quality assurance mechanisms, and challenges affecting RPL Implementation. A descriptive research design was applied, targeting 2,930 accredited institutions and sampling 352 institutions across National Polytechnics (NPs), Technical and Vocational Colleges (TVCs), and Vocational Training Centres (TVCs). Data was collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed through descriptive statistics, complemented by qualitative insights from key informant interviews. Findings showed that although NPs and public TVCs registered high RPL awareness levels of 100% and 98% respectively, there were notable gaps in private TVCs and VTCs, where awareness ranged between 76% to 80%. Accreditation of RPL centres improved from 12% in 2023 to 23% in 2025; however, 73% of institutions remained unaccredited, limiting their capacity to offer credible RPL services. Implementation also rose from 23% to 36%, but growth remained uneven across regions and institution types. Popular RPL skill areas included Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy (61%), Masonry (57%), Electrical Installation/Solar PV (54%), and Motor Vehicle Mechanics (50%), reflecting strong demand from the informal sector. Institutions with low implementation capacity cited limited equipment, inadequate trained practitioners, and high resource requirements for assessments. Quality assurance mechanisms showed significant disparity: while all NPs had functional internal QA systems and had acquired most RPL policy documents, over 80% of VTCs and private institutions lacked the required QA structures, institutional policies, and key regulatory guidelines. Challenges hindering RPL implementation included low awareness (48%), lack of trained practitioners (32%), limited institutional knowledge (33%), weak coordination among stakeholders (31%), and insufficient standardized tools. These challenges carry substantial financial implications, particularly due to low assessment fees, high operational costs, and low candidate turnout. The study concluded that although progress had been made, RPL implementation was still constrained by systemic, institutional, and financial barriers. The gaps could be addressed through strengthened accreditation processes, expanded capacity-building, enhanced quality assurance, and targeted awareness strategies to scale up RPL as a credible pathway for skills recognition. The findings provided critical evidence to guide policy reforms, resource allocation, and strategic interventions for mainstreaming RPL within Kenya's TVET subsector.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACQF	African Continent Qualification Framework
BETA	Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda
GoK	Government of Kenya
ILO	International Labour Organization
IQA	Internal Quality Assurance
KASNEB	Kenya Accountants and Secretaries National Examinations Board
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
KNQA	Kenya National Qualifications Authority
KSTVET	Kenya School of Technical and Vocational Education and Training
NACOSTI	National Council for Science, Technology and Innovation
NITA	National Industrial Training Authority
NP	National Polytechnic
QA	Quality Assurance
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
TVC	Technical and Vocational Colleges
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TVETA	Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNEVOC	UNESCO International Centre for TVET
VTC	Vocational Training Centres

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) involves identification, assessment, and formal recognition of knowledge, skills and competencies acquired by individuals through work experiences, non-formal and informal learning against prescribed standards for a partial or full qualification (ACQF, 2024). Recognition of Prior Learning has been recognized as an essential component for building resilient and inclusive workforce since it enables certification of migrants, forcibly displaced persons, other vulnerable groups, and workers in the informal economy, thereby improving employability and efficacy. For industries, RPL offers a vital pathway to validate and build upon the skills of their employees, enhance productivity, and foster economic development. However, while the importance of RPL has been acknowledged, the challenge of sustainable financing and implementation has remained an incessant barrier, especially for the underdeveloped and developing countries (ILO, 2025).

According to UNESCO (2012), learning entails the acquisition or modification of knowledge, understanding, attitudes, values, skills, competencies and behaviors through experience, practice, study, or instruction. The recognition and certification of such learning have become a priority globally, driven by the increasing integration of world economies, migration of labor, rapid technological advancements and the urgency of ensuring equitable access to education and employment opportunities. RPL contributes to improved employability, mobility, lifelong learning, social inclusion, and self-esteem (Niwunhella *et al.*, 2023; ILO, 2015). Globally, RPL has been identified as a key element of lifelong learning and workforce development. The RPL gained momentum in the United States in the 1970s to expand higher education access for military veterans and spread to the UK, New Zealand, and Canada in the 1980s, then to Australia and South Africa in the 1990s (Harris, *et al.*, 2014). In Australia, RPL enables credit waivers for competencies already acquired, reducing the time needed for qualifications (Queensland Government, 2014). Canada has adopted RPL for workforce development and organizational effectiveness, while Portugal's New Opportunities Initiative recognized and accredited prior learning for millions of low-skilled adults, providing them with secondary-level qualifications essential for full citizenship (Carneiro, 2011).

UNESCO's Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL, 2022) underscores RPL as a pillar of lifelong learning systems, essential for integrating outcomes of non-formal and informal learning into national, regional and global qualifications frameworks. This global recognition reflects the pressing socio-economic needs in both developed and developing countries, where poverty, inequality, and rigid education systems continue to marginalize large groups of populations (NITA, 2021). In Africa, Mauritius and South Africa have embedded RPL into their higher education and workforce systems, with South Africa's model widely applied across 20 sectors and higher education institutions, including UNISA's postgraduate admission system (SAQA, 2014; Smith,

2014). In Tanzania, RPL helps identify skill gaps and make hidden competencies visible, addressing skills shortages in the labor market (Werquin, 2010).

The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS, 2022) reported that a large proportion of Kenyans under the age of 35 years (youth) possessed diverse skills acquired informally-particularly in the Jua Kali sector but lacked any form of certification. This report demonstrates the urgency of formalizing skills acquired outside traditional education and training systems. Similarly, Kenya has been hosting a vast population of refugees and migrants with valuable knowledge and professional qualifications that have not been recognized (UNHCR, 2021). The widespread implementation of the RPL can enable countries to attain the UNESCO qualification passport in recognizing the qualifications of all skilled personnel, including refugees and vulnerable migrants.

Recognition of Prior Learning has been an integral part of Kenya's training ecosystem. Agencies such as the National Industrial Training Authority (NITA) and Kenya Accountants and Secretaries National Examination Board (KASNEB) have employed RPL principles since the 1960s to certify individuals with skills in various skill areas and levels. The enactment of the TVET Act, 2013, led to the creation of new agencies to reform curricula and institutional regulations. The Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) was established to oversee the Kenya National Qualifications Framework (KNQF) and ensure recognition of formal, non-formal, and informal learning to enhance mobility, employability, and lifelong learning. In 2024, KNQA launched the RPL Policy Framework to institutionalize recognition of prior learning. The Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA) also developed RPL Standards Requirements and Guidelines to ensure quality in the RPL process. The Authority has accredited over 20 RPL Centres in National Polytechnics (NPs) and technical and vocational colleges, with assessments carried out by national polytechnics and the TVET CDACC for qualifications from level 3 to level 6.

Kenya's Vision 2030 and the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA) emphasize the link between education, training, and the labor market for national development. Recognizing prior learning is therefore integral to Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET) implementation, offering flexible pathways for certification, lifelong learning, and career progression. By institutionalizing RPL, Kenya is aligning with international best practices while addressing local labor market challenges, reducing marginalization, and enhancing the visibility of skills across its workforce.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority undertook a baseline study on status of RPL implementation in TVET institutions in Kenya in 2023. The study identified key challenges, including low awareness levels, inadequate infrastructure, low number or lack of trained RPL practitioners, lack of standardized assessment tools, and unclear progression pathways. Despite great emphasis and Government interventions to improve the implementation of RPL, the progress and persistence of these challenges remain unclear. Due to the evolving skills

of landscape and reforms in competency-based training, there is a need to provide regular updated evidence to inform policy, resource allocation, and strategies for mainstreaming RPL. This follow-up study sought to assess the current implementation status of RPL, track progress made by institutions since 2023, and identify emerging gaps to strengthen RPL as a pathway for skills recognition and lifelong learning.

1.3 Main Objective of the study

The main objective of this study was to assess the status of implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in TVET institutions in Kenya.

1.3.1 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were to:

i. Determine the levels of awareness of RPL among TVET providers in Kenya;
ii. Establish the extent of RPL implementation within the TVET institutions in Kenya;
iii. Identify the skill areas targeted for RPL by TVET providers;
iv. Establish the quality assurance mechanisms in place for RPL implementation;
v. Identify challenges hindering effective implementation of RPL in TVET institutions and propose mitigation measures.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study provides significant information to policymakers on the progress and challenges experienced by institutions in RPL implementation, thereby informing policy review. The study finding was also expected to enable TVET institutions to assess their preparedness in RPL implementation and identify areas that require capacity building. For RPL candidates, particularly those in the informal sector, the findings demonstrate how RPL improves access to certification and employment opportunities. Moreover, the study contributes to academic knowledge on vocational education and skills recognition in Kenya and offer a foundation for future research and reforms.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study determined the status of implementation of RPL by accredited TVET providers in Kenya. Specifically, the study determined the extent of RPL awareness and implementation within the TVET institutions, the availability of functional quality assurance systems for effective implementation, challenges facing the implementation of RPL as well as mitigation strategies put in place to address the challenges.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) has gained attention globally as a mechanism for validating and recognizing skills acquired outside formal education and training systems. This chapter reviews the literature on RPL, with a focus on its implementation by TVET institutions. The review aligns with the study objectives by examining awareness levels, proportion of institutions implementing RPL, targeted skill areas, quality assurance mechanisms, challenges, and mitigation strategies. The literature incorporates international, regional, and Kenyan contexts to highlight best practices, emerging issues, and knowledge gaps. By synthesizing global experiences and Kenyan realities, the review establishes a foundation for understanding how RPL can be effectively implemented to promote decent employability, social inclusion, and lifelong learning of RPL graduates.

2.2.1. Awareness and Knowledge on RPL Implementation

Awareness and knowledge are widely recognized as critical enablers of effective Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) systems across the world. Awareness refers to stakeholders' understanding of the purpose, processes and benefits of RPL, while knowledge denotes deeper comprehension of assessment methodologies, policy frameworks, and implementation procedures (Harris, 2023). Literature consistently shows that RPL initiatives flourish in environments where learners, educators, employers, and policymakers possess adequate information and capacity to engage meaningfully with the system (Bhandari & Bhandari, 2023).

Globally, countries that have invested in systematic awareness creation have recorded higher uptake and stronger institutional acceptance of RPL. Harris (2023) found that deliberate public sensitization campaigns significantly increase participation rates by empowering potential candidates to seek assessment and legitimizing RPL within educational and labour systems. In South Africa, long-standing advocacy efforts by the South African Qualifications Authority, including community outreach, sector-targeted workshops, and integration of RPL within the National Qualifications Framework, have been instrumental in expanding access for marginalized populations and normalizing RPL as a credible pathway for skills recognition (South African Qualifications Authority, 2024). Similarly, in Australia and New Zealand, public awareness materials, employer-focused engagements and capacity-building for assessors have strengthened understanding of RPL processes and increased learner confidence in engaging with assessment (Clark & Everest, 2021; Bhandari & Bhandari, 2023). In Europe, multilingual national information campaigns and the embedding of RPL guidelines within qualification frameworks have enhanced transparency and ensured that both learners and institutions understand the procedures and value of RPL (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, 2020). Collectively, these international experiences demonstrate that awareness creation is not a peripheral activity but a foundational driver of successful RPL implementation.

In contrast, literature indicates that Kenya faces significant gaps in awareness and knowledge of RPL among key stakeholders. A baseline study conducted by the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA) revealed that although many administrators and trainers were aware of the existence of RPL, their understanding of its processes, assessment standards, evidence requirements, and policy provisions remained limited (Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority, 2023). The study further found low awareness levels among the public, especially among artisans, workers in the informal sector, and out-of-school youth, who constitute the primary target group for RPL. Thus, many individuals with substantial informal or experiential skills are unaware that RPL offers a pathway to formal certification and improved employability. This gap is compounded by limited employer sensitization, which reduces workplace support for employees who may wish to pursue RPL (Ndlovu & Ndhlovu, 2024).

The literature identifies several reasons why awareness creation is essential for strengthening RPL implementation in Kenya. First, adequate awareness enhances candidate participation by helping potential beneficiaries understand eligibility, requirements, and benefits (Harris, 2023). Second, knowledge among trainers, assessors, and administrators is necessary for consistent quality assurance, credible assessments, and institutional readiness (Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority, 2024). Third, employer awareness influences the extent to which workplaces support RPL candidates, recognize RPL-based qualifications, and collaborate with training institutions (Clark & Everest, 2021). Finally, integrating RPL awareness into national policy communication channels enhances visibility and elevates RPL as a legitimate component of the skills development ecosystem (Bhandari & Bhandari, 2023). Without such comprehensive awareness frameworks, RPL implementation risks being misunderstood, underutilized, or resisted by key stakeholders.

The limited awareness and inadequate knowledge identified in Kenyan literature represent a critical bottleneck to the operationalization of RPL. Although the policy environment has laid a strong foundation, insufficient sensitization threatens the system's ability to deliver equitable access, recognize informal skills, and contribute to national skills development goals. The research establishes that awareness creation should not be viewed as a one-off intervention but as a continuous, multilevel strategy targeting institutions, employers, communities, and potential candidates. Addressing the awareness gap is therefore essential for unlocking the full potential of RPL as a transformative tool for lifelong learning, workforce mobility, and the formalization of skills in Kenya.

2.2.2 Proportion of TVET Providers Implementing RPL

The extent to which Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) providers implement Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) varies significantly across global, regional, and national contexts. Literature attributes these variations to institutional, policy, and systemic factors that either facilitate or constrain RPL adoption. Osei, Mensah, and Asante (2023) argue that institutional leadership commitment, availability of financial resources, and adequacy of human

capacity, particularly trained assessors, strongly influence the proportion of institutions that operationalize RPL. Where institutions lack these enabling conditions, RPL remains peripheral despite supportive national policies.

In many developed countries, widespread implementation of RPL is attributed to long-standing investments in strong policy architectures, quality assurance systems, and capacity-building initiatives. For example, in Canada and Australia, over 60% of TVET institutions have formally embedded RPL within their qualifications frameworks and routinely use it for recognizing industry and experiential learning (Wheelahan & Moodie, 2017; Wihak, 2006). These systems benefit from coherent national policies, sustained funding, and digital infrastructure that streamline candidate assessment and evidence management. Such environments create strong institutional incentives for RPL uptake and contribute to high levels of institutional participation.

Conversely, Sub-Saharan Africa continues to exhibit uneven RPL implementation. UNESCO-UNEVOC (2022) attributed this inconsistency to insufficient institutional resources, limited assessor training, fragmented policy environments, and infrastructural deficits. In many African countries, TVET institutions prioritize traditional training pathways due to financial limitations, weak policy enforcement, and limited awareness of RPL benefits. As a result, even where national RPL frameworks exist, their translation into institutional practice remains inconsistent (Chisholm et al., 2022).

In Kenya, the National RPL Policy Framework envisioned the integration of RPL across all accredited TVET institutions. However, empirical evidence indicates that implementation remains limited. A baseline survey by the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority found out that only 23% of accredited TVET institutions had fully implemented RPL processes, with national polytechnics demonstrating significantly higher uptake than technical and vocational training centres (Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority, 2023). The study attributed low institutional participation to inadequate funding, insufficiently trained assessors, limited infrastructure, and inconsistent institutional prioritization (Ndimande & Moyo, 2024). These constraints disproportionately affect smaller institutions, which often lack the financial and human resource capacity required to establish RPL centres, conduct assessments, or maintain the necessary quality assurance processes.

Similar implementation gaps have been reported in other African countries where ambitious national policies have not translated into substantive institutional practice due to capacity and resource deficits (Chisholm et al., 2022). For Kenya, UNESCO (2023) emphasizes that scaling up RPL implementation will require sustained investment in institutional capacity, targeted assessor training, adequate learning and assessment facilities, and stronger alignment of RPL programs with labour market needs. Strengthening institutional readiness is therefore essential for expanding the proportion of TVET providers implementing RPL.

From this perspective, understanding these inter-institutional variations is important for identifying strategic intervention points. The low proportion of Kenyan institutions implementing RPL does

not reflect a lack of policy commitment but rather the presence of systemic and institutional barriers that hinder operationalization. Addressing these bottlenecks through deliberate resource allocation, enhanced capacity-building, and policy support mechanisms is vital for realizing the national goal of recognizing skills acquired through informal and experiential learning pathways.

2.2.3. Skills areas Targeted by RPL Providers

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) systems around the world typically prioritize skill areas that are closely linked to labour market needs, national development priorities, and sectors characterized by high levels of informality. Globally, RPL initiatives most commonly focus on technical and vocational trades such as construction, hospitality, welding, motor vehicle mechanics, hairdressing, and beauty therapy sectors that consistently exhibit strong demand for skilled labour (International Labour Organization, 2022). In addition to technical trades, RPL providers in many countries also assess foundational skills including digital literacy, language proficiency, numeracy, and basic health care competencies, given their critical role in employability and workplace productivity. These skills are benchmarked against national occupational standards, allowing successful candidates to receive formal qualifications aligned with competencies gained through formal, non-formal, or informal learning experiences (International Labour Organization, 2022).

International evidence illustrates how RPL skill targeting is shaped by socio-economic conditions. For example, in Nepal, RPL programmes have been strategically designed to target returning migrant workers, particularly those previously employed in construction and garment sectors, supporting their reintegration into the domestic labour market by validating skills acquired abroad (Bhandari, 2024). Similarly, in countries such as South Africa, Australia, and the Philippines, RPL systems prioritize skill areas that address national shortages, promote social inclusion, or support economic transitions, including green skills and digital competencies (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2022).

In Kenya, priority skill areas for RPL closely mirror the structure of the informal sector, which employs a significant proportion of the country's workforce. The Jua Kali subsector, comprising artisans in masonry, carpentry, tailoring, welding, electrical and Installation work, motor vehicle mechanics, and hairdressing, represents the primary target population for RPL interventions (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2025). This alignment reflects the reality that many Kenyan workers acquire technical competencies through apprenticeship, on-the-job learning, or experiential practice outside formal TVET systems. A baseline study by the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority found that welding, electrical installation, and hairdressing were among the most frequently assessed trades in accredited RPL centres, indicating strong uptake in areas where informal learning pathways are most prevalent (Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority, 2024).

Furthermore, Kenya's key development blueprints, such as Vision 2030, the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA), and the national green economy strategy underscore the need for skilled workers in manufacturing, construction, agriculture, renewable energy, and digital services (Ministry of Education, 2023). Aligning RPL skill areas with these national priorities will be essential for ensuring that RPL contributes meaningfully to economic transformation and labour market competitiveness. Expanding skill recognition into emerging areas such as solar technology, electric mobility maintenance, climate-smart agriculture, and ICT-based services could enhance the relevance of RPL in future labour markets.

Collaboration between industry, TVET institutions, professional bodies, and sector regulators is also critical for broadening the range of skills eligible for RPL. Industry-led identification of priority occupations, joint development of occupational standards, and establishment of sector-specific RPL centres can help bridge existing gaps and ensure that RPL assessments reflect current technological and market demands (UNESCO, 2023). Kenya has made progress in targeting core informal sector trades; however, the current range of RPL skill areas remains narrower than the evolving skills landscape demands. Expanding RPL to include both traditional and emerging skill domains, particularly those linked to digital transformation, green technologies, and value-added manufacturing, will be crucial for enhancing the system's relevance, inclusivity, and impact.

2.2.4 Quality Assurance Systems for RPL

Quality assurance (QA) is a cornerstone of credible and sustainable RPL systems. It ensures that assessments are fair, transparent, reliable, and consistent across institutions, thereby safeguarding the integrity of qualifications awarded. Quality assurance allows the assessment of the learning outcomes of RPL applicants with a reasonable percentage of correspondence between the qualification/assessment standards used and the reality of their achievements. The quality-assured RPL process must meet a set of clearly identified conditions so that the outcomes of the RPL process are consistent with the learning outcomes possessed by the applicant. Lack of quality assurance can greatly hamper the effectiveness of the RPL process (Grażyna *et al.*, 2013).

Globally, countries that have invested in strong QA frameworks have reported higher trust in RPL outcomes and better acceptance by employers and learners. In South Africa, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), was established to provide comprehensive QA mechanisms through the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). This has facilitated standardization of RPL processes and enhanced mobility of learners across education and employment pathways (SAQA, 2019; Harris, 2023). Similarly, in Australia, the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) enforces national standards for RPL, ensuring that assessment tools meet industry relevance and are comparable to formal qualifications (Wheelahan & Moodie, 2017).

Regional evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa indicates that QA remains a major challenge. Studies by UNESCO-UNEVOC (2022) and Chisholm, Motala, & Vally (2022) highlight that many African countries lack standardized tools, trained assessors, and monitoring systems, resulting in inconsistent practices across institutions. Even in South Africa, despite being a regional leader,

Harris (2014) noted that scaling RPL for marginalized groups has been uneven, partly due to weak monitoring and verification mechanisms at institutional levels. Namibia and Mauritius have attempted to develop QA guidelines for RPL, but limited funding and fragmented governance have slowed implementation (UNESCO, 2023).

In Kenya, QA for RPL is anchored in the TVET Act Cap 210A, which mandates institutions to establish Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) systems and TVETA as an external quality assurance agency. TVETA has developed the RPL standards and guidelines complete with RPL accreditation tool; to regulate and quality assure its implementation. The Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) also provides overarching coordination under the Kenya National Qualifications Framework Act (2014). However, empirical evidence shows significant gaps in enforcement. Many institutions lacked functional IQA offices or committees, and most of them had not developed institutional RPL policies (TVETA, 2024). Similarly, Kimani and Mwangi (2023) observed inconsistencies on how institutions applied standards, often due to inadequate assessor training and the absence of standardized assessment instruments. These weaknesses can compromise the comparability and reliability of RPL outcomes from different providers.

Research further emphasizes that QA in RPL must be multi-dimensional, involving policy frameworks, assessor competence, verification mechanisms, and stakeholder engagement. Osei *et al*. (2023) drawing from Ghana's experience, stress that continuous professional development for RPL practitioners is essential for maintaining assessment integrity. Additionally, ILO (2022) advocates for industry involvement in QA processes to ensure that certifications remain relevant to labor market needs.

Strengthening QA in RPL requires a holistic approach. This includes developing sector-specific assessment tools, building assessor and verifier capacity, harmonizing national policies with institutional practices, and establishing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. In Kenya, ensuring that every accredited RPL Centre adopts standardized IQA systems, coupled with regular audits by TVETA and KNQA, will be key to maintaining credibility. By aligning QA systems with the best international practices and labor market demands, RPL can gain legitimacy as a trusted pathway for skill recognition and career progression.

2.2.5 Challenges Hindering Implementation of RPL

Although Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) holds significant promise in bridging skills gaps and promoting inclusive learning pathways, its implementation is fraught with persistent challenges both globally and locally. At the international level, studies have highlighted financial constraints, inadequate assessor capacity, and low societal recognition of informal learning as the most common barriers (Maurer & Morshed, 2022). In many contexts, learners and employers remain skeptical of the credibility of RPL certificates compared to traditionally earned qualifications, undermining the policy's ability to serve as a genuine vehicle for mobility.

Across Africa, additional challenges complicate implementation. The UNESCO-UNEVOC (2022) regional review pointed to fragmented policy environments, weak industry linkages, and underdeveloped infrastructure as recurring obstacles. In several countries, policies supporting RPL exist on paper but lack the institutional support and resources needed for translation into practice. Even in South Africa, where RPL is relatively advanced, Harris (2014) noted that scaling opportunities to reach marginalized populations has been uneven, with funding shortfalls and weak monitoring mechanisms limiting sustainability.

In Kenya, while the launch of the National RPL Policy Framework (GoK,) 2021) and the establishment of accredited centres represent critical milestones, implementation remains uneven and fragmented. The TVETA (2023) report revealed that only a small proportion of accredited institutions had operationalized RPL, with national polytechnics taking the lead, while technical and vocational colleges and vocational training centres lagged significantly behind. The report attributed this disparity to several interconnected challenges such as low awareness and negative perceptions among learners and employers, inadequate funding and weak infrastructure, shortage of qualified assessors and limited training opportunities, unclear progression pathways for RPL-certified learners, and weak coordination among regulatory bodies such as TVETA and KNQA. Collectively, these barriers undermine the credibility, accessibility, and effectiveness of RPL, limiting its potential to promote lifelong learning and equitable skills recognition. If left unresolved, these challenges could render RPL more of a symbolic policy than a transformative mechanism for skills recognition and social inclusion. For RPL to achieve its intended impact, Kenya must move beyond policy formulation to sustained investment, capacity development, stakeholder engagement, and integration into labor market and education systems.

CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology that was used in this study. It provides a detailed outline of the research design, target population, sample size, sampling technique, data collection methods and instruments, pilot testing, and data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive research design to systematically examine the status of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) implementation in Kenyan TVET institutions. Data collection focused on five critical areas, namely: TVET providers' awareness on RPL; the extent of RPL implementation; the specific skill areas targeted; the quality assurance mechanisms put in place and the challenges impeding effective implementation including potential mitigating strategies. Data collection was collected using a questionnaire. Presentation of the study findings is done using descriptive statistics such as percentages, frequency tables, and charts to offer a clear overview of implementation of RPL.

3.3 Target Population

This study targeted all the accredited 2,930 TVET institutions in Kenya as of 31st July 2025 (Kenya School of TVET, 34 National Polytechnics-NPs, 1,688 Technical and Vocational Colleges-TVCs, and 1,207 Vocational Training Centres-VTCs).

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Stratified and simple random sampling was employed to obtain a representative sample size using Yamane's formula, $n = N/1 + N(e^2)$, where n is the sample size, N is the population while e is the desired margin of error. Stratification and random sampling were employed to ensure that representative numbers of each category of TVET institutions in the various counties were given equal opportunities in the study. However, due to their small population, all the NPs were considered in this study. The data for KSTVET was analyzed together with that for the NPs to ensure confidentiality.

$$n = \frac{2930}{1 + (2930 \times 0.05^2)} = 352$$

A total of 352 TVET institutions, representing 11.9% of the institutions, were considered for this study.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

Data from the sampled respondents was collected using structured questionnaires. Two questionnaires were developed: one targeting RPL coordinators/administrators and another for the Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), which involved QAB representatives, regulators and policy administrators. RPL coordinators/administrators' questionnaires was scripted in Kobo Collect and

administered to the sampled respondents. For the KIIs, the interviews were recorded and transcribed to ensure accuracy and completeness of the information collected. They contained both open-ended and closed-ended questions to capture comprehensive information.

3.7 Pilot Testing

The questionnaire was pre-tested using a sample drawn from non-participating institutions to assess the validity, reliability, and clarity of the items. Data collected during the pilot study was analyzed to determine its relevance to the study objectives. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, where a coefficient of above 0.7 was recorded, indicating acceptable internal consistency in line with recommended thresholds (Cronbach, 1951). Based on the pilot findings, the data collection instruments were revised to enhance clarity, improve validity, and eliminate potential sources of error.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

Five teams, each comprising two TVETA officers, visited the sampled institutions and administered the questionnaire to RPL Coordinator/Administrator within the institutions.

3.8 Legal Considerations

The Authority obtained a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) as required by law before conducting the study. Prior to data collection, the research team held a preliminary meeting to establish clear modalities for administering the questionnaire and ensuring dignity and respect for all respondents. The team created a conducive environment that enabled respondents to participate freely and without discomfort. Respondents were informed of the confidentiality of the information they provided and were encouraged to give honest and accurate responses to all items in the questionnaire.

3.9 Data Analysis

Data analysis involved both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Quantitative data collected was sorted, cleaned, and analyzed using SPSS and Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations were used to summarize and present the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the empirical findings and discussion of the study. It covers the response rate, demographic characteristics of the respondents, and the results corresponding to each specific objective of the study.

4.1 Response Rate

This section presents the response rate for the TVET institutions that participated in the study. It outlines the distribution of sampled institutions across categories and highlights the level of participation achieved during data collection.

Table 1:

Response rate

No.	National Polytechnic	Public TVC	Private TVC	Public VTC	Private VTC	Total
Number Sampled	34	108	113	79	18	352
Number Responded	34	100	100	74	10	318
Response Rate	100%	93%	88%	94%	56%	90%

A total of 318 TVET institutions across the 47 counties responded to the survey, resulting in an overall response rate of 90%. This high response rate, combined with nationwide coverage, enhanced the reliability of the data and supports the generalization of the findings across the TVET sector in Kenya. The response rate differed by institution category: National Polytechnics recorded a 100% response rate, while Public TVCs and Public VTCs registered strong response rates of 90% and 88%, respectively. In contrast, private VTCs had a lower response rate of 56%, mainly due to the non-operation of some sampled private institutions at the time of data collection. The variation in response rates may therefore be attributed to the relative stability and consistent operations of public institutions compared to their private institutions

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents who participated in the study. The analysis provides insights into gender distribution and training experiences of respondents.

4.2.1 Gender Distribution of Respondents

Table 2 shows the gender distribution of respondents across the various institution types and categories.

Table 2:

Gender distribution of respondents

Respondent	Public NP	TVC	VTC	Public Total	Private TVC	VTC	Private Total
Administrator							
Female	50%	27%	26%	**27%**	33%	29%	**33%**
Male	50%	73%	74%	**73%**	67%	71%	**67%**
Trainer/ RPL Coordinator							
Female	44%	37%	44%	**40%**	50%	33%	**47%**
Male	56%	63%	56%	**60%**	50%	67%	**53%**
Total	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

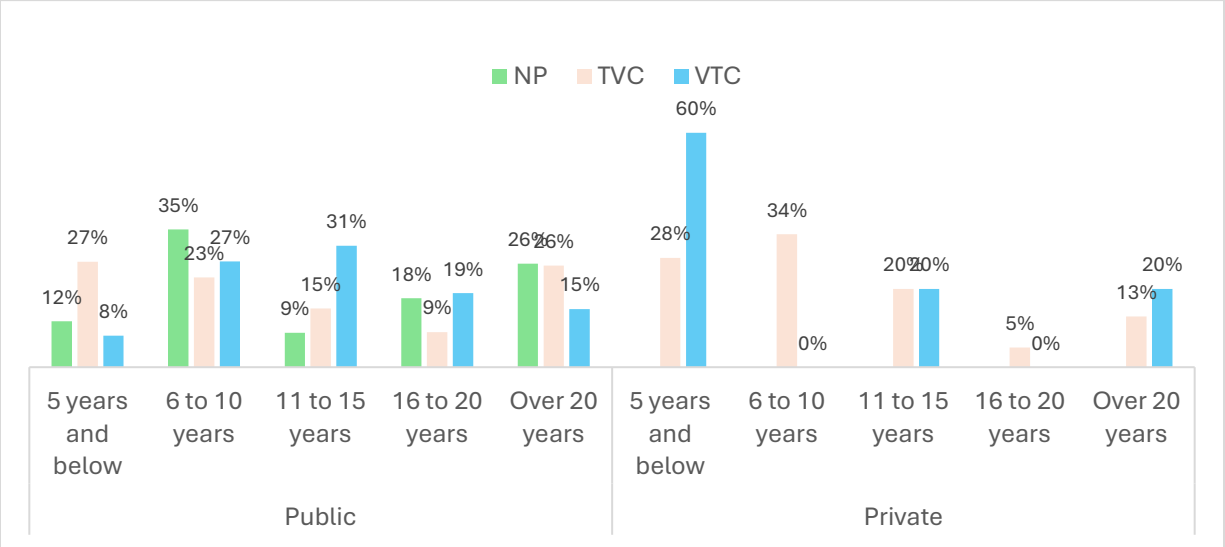
The demographic distribution showed that male respondents were more dominant in both public and private institutions at 73% and 63% respectively. For Trainers and RPL Coordinators, males formed the majority in both public (60%) and private (53%) institutions. The findings indicate that although female participation is notable across all categories, leadership and training roles remain male-dominated in most institutions. The gender distribution was compliant to the two-third gender rule required by the Kenyan constitution.

4.2.2 Respondents Training Experience

The successful implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) relies heavily on the availability of seasoned experienced trainers who can exercise sound professional judgment during assessment. Figure 1 shows the respondents' training experience.

Figure 1:

Respondents' Experience in Training



The findings show that VTCs reported the highest proportion of trainers with at least 11 years of experience (65%), followed by National Polytechnics and TVCs, each with 52% of their trainers having 11 or more years of service. This distribution of experience is significant because RPL

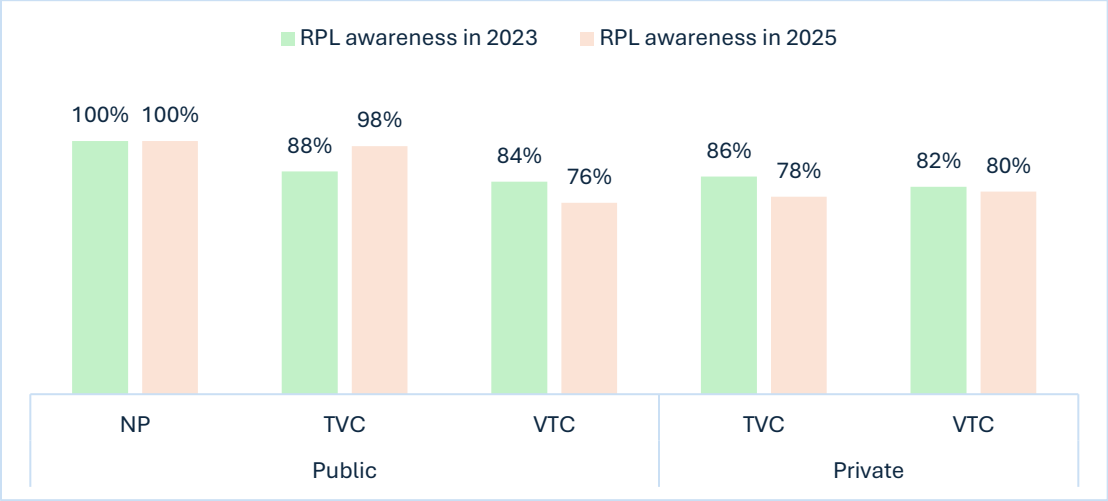
demands more than routine instructional competence; it requires the ability to interpret diverse forms of evidence, evaluate experiential learning, and make consistent defensible assessment decisions. Trainers with longer service are more likely to possess these advanced competencies. Their accumulated experience enables them to accurately judge candidates' competencies, understand the nuances of occupational standards, and apply reliable assessment criteria. Moreover, experienced trainers are better positioned to support capacity-building efforts within their institutions, thereby strengthening the overall quality and credibility of the RPL process.

4.3 Awareness levels on RPL

Improved public awareness on RPL can greatly increase its large-scale implementation by enhancing stakeholder participation, inclusion, and support. The TVETA (2023) report on RPL identified low awareness as one of the obstacles to RPL implementation. Public awareness can be improved through various initiatives such as regular sensitization, and training. This study assessed the knowledge and awareness levels of administrators and trainers on RPL. Figure 2 shows the awareness levels on RPL in the various categories of TVET institutions.

Figure 2:

Awareness levels on RPL



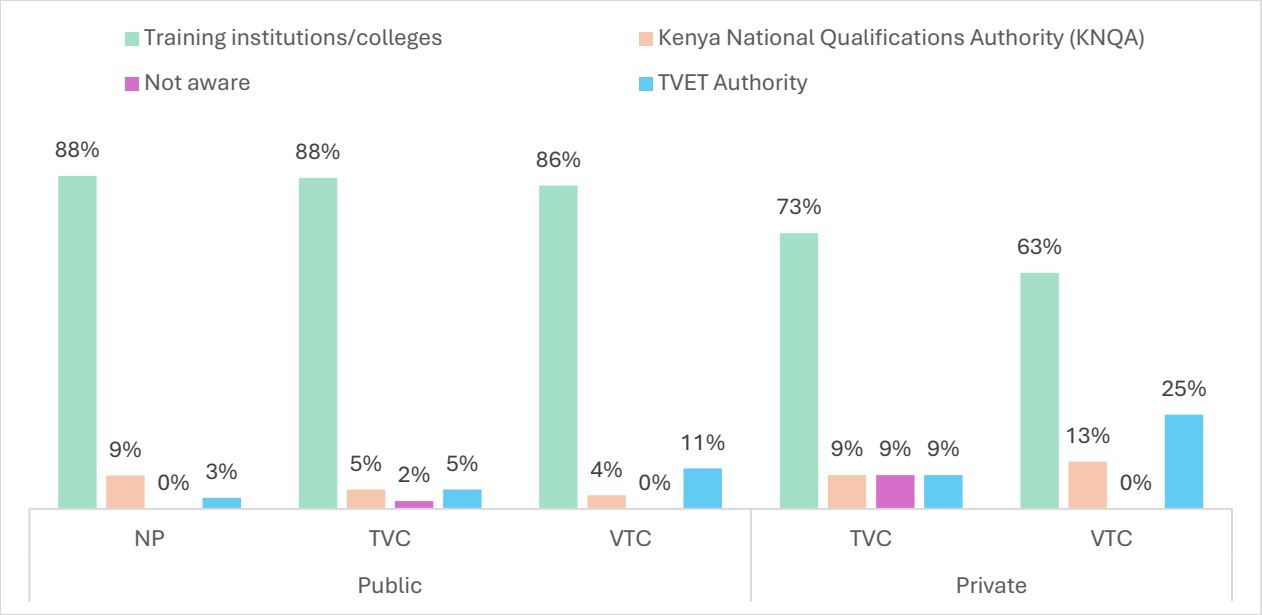
The awareness levels varied from 100% in the NPs to 76% in the public VTCs. The RPL awareness levels for the public Technical and Vocational Colleges (TVCs) closely followed that of the NPs at 98%. The public VTCs reported 76% RPL awareness levels while the private TVCs and VTCs reported awareness levels of 78% and 80% respectively. The findings from this study showed that the National polytechnics maintained their RPL awareness levels of 100% while that of the public TVCs increased from 88% in 2023 to 98% in 2025. However, a marginal decrease in RPL awareness levels was observed in private TVCs, public, and private VTCs. The high awareness levels of RPL in the NPs and public TVCs could be attributed to the great emphasis placed by the Kenyan Government on implementation of RPL in the institutions.

4.3.1 Institutions responsible for implementing RPL in Kenya

The respondents were asked to identify the institutions responsible for implementing RPL. Figure 3 shows the responses that were given by the respondents.

Figure 3:

Institutions Responsible for Implementing RPL

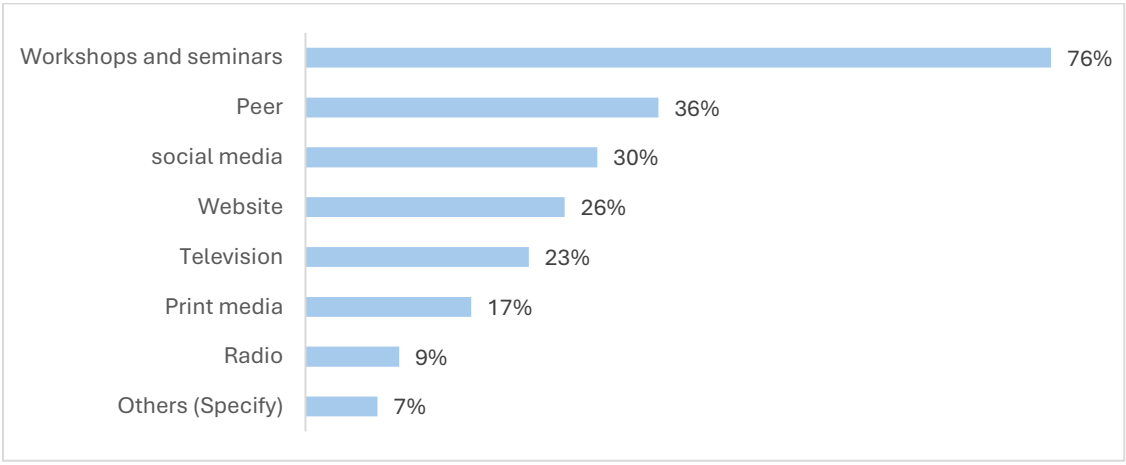


4.3.2 Sources of RPL information

The information on RPL can be obtained from various sources. Administrators and trainers who were aware of RPL were asked to state their sources of information on RPL. The findings on sources of RPL information were as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4:

Sources of RPL information



Majority of the respondents (76%) who were aware of RPL indicated that Workshops and seminars were their main sources of information. Other sources of information comprised of Peers (36%),

social media (30%), Website (26%), and Television (23%). The information provided by the respondents indicated that Workshops and seminars remained highly effective in delivering RPL related information. The other sources of information that were stated by the respondents included ministerial circulars and politicians. Workshops and seminars were the most predominant channels through which institutions accessed information on RPL. However, given that these sources are relatively resource intensive, there is a need to strengthen the use of digital platforms and online technologies as primary RPL information dissemination pathways, since they offer a more cost-efficient and scalable alternative for enhancing institutional awareness and capacity on RPL.

4.4 Extent of RPL implementation within the TVET institutions in Kenya

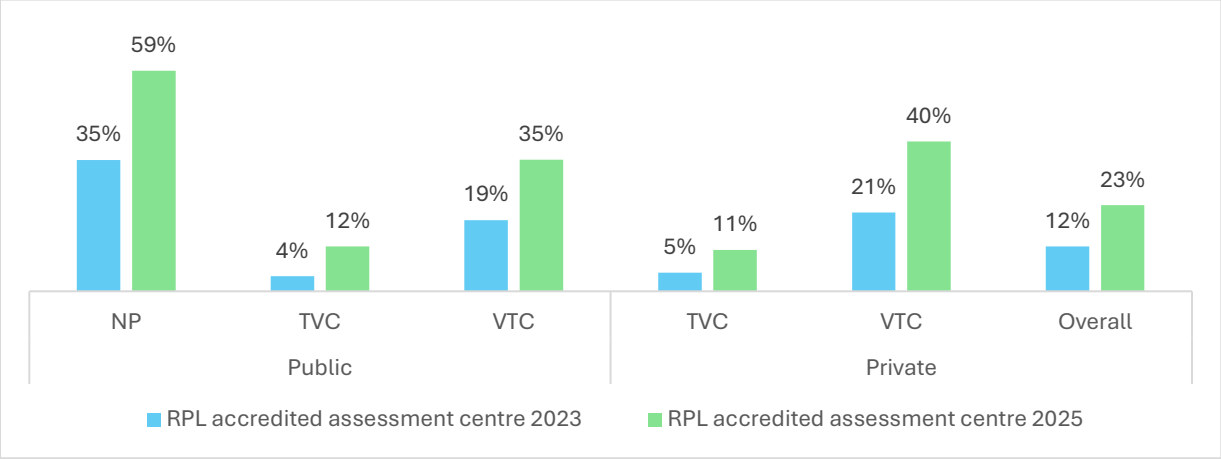
The implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is governed by the national RPL policy framework, RPL Standards and guidelines, and other relevant policy documents. The TVET providers should comply with standards and policy documents in the implementation of RPL. The key component of this compliance is obtaining accreditation from the relevant regulatory authority. This section covers the implementation status among the institutions and their accreditation by relevant regulatory authorities.

4.4.1 Accreditation of RPL Assessment Centres

The RPL Standards and Guidelines require TVET institutions intending to implement RPL to formally apply to TVETA to be accredited as RPL Assessment Centres. Other regulatory and Qualification Awarding Bodies such as NITA and KASNEB accredit their own centres, which function as RPL assessment centres. The study sought to assess accreditation status of TVET institutions as RPL assessment centres, a prerequisite for credible and standards-aligned implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning. A comparative analysis on the same was done between the years 2013 and 2024 as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5:

Comparative Analysis of Institution's Accreditation as RPL Assessment Centres



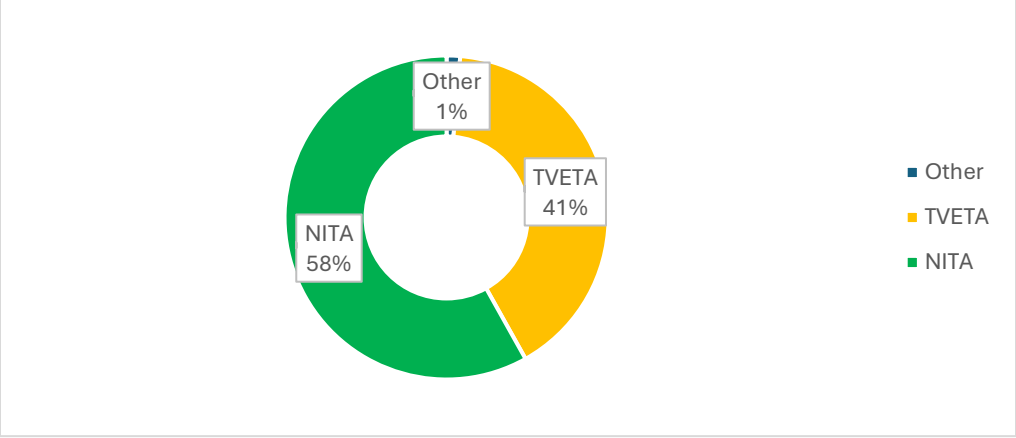
The accreditation of NPs as RPL centres rose from 35% in 2023 to 59% in 2025. This improvement reflected the growing readiness of NPs to align with RPL quality assurance requirements.

Similarly, an improvement in accreditation levels among other categories of public institutions was noted. Thirteen percent (13%) of public TVCs and 35% of public VTCs had been accredited. A similar trend was observed among private institutions, where accredited RPL centres increased to 11% for TVCs and 40% for VTCs, up from 5% and 21% respectively. Although the overall proportion of accredited institutions improved from 12% in 2023 to 23% in the current study, a substantial majority (73%) still lack accreditation, limiting their capacity to implement RPL in accordance with national standards.

The qualitative findings from Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) provided crucial context to these quantitative patterns. Several respondents indicated that many institutions were not aware that RPL implementation required formal accreditation as an assessment centre, indicating gaps in communication and dissemination of regulatory requirements. Furthermore, some institutions lacked basic understanding of the accreditation procedures, documentation, and compliance criteria, undermining their ability to initiate or complete the process. These institutional knowledge gaps were exacerbated by inconsistent and sometimes conflicting communication from regulatory authorities. Notably, the circular referenced as Ref: CDACC/CBA 7/64/1 Vol.2 (79) was cited as contradictory provisions within the RPL Standards and Guidelines. This contradiction generated uncertainty among institutions regarding whether accreditation was indeed mandatory prior to offering RPL services, resulting in hesitancy or delays in pursuing accreditation.

In addition, stakeholders described the accreditation process as slow, unclear, and overly demanding, which discouraged many institutions, particularly those with limited administrative capacity, from progressing through the full accreditation cycle. This perception of bureaucratic complexity offers an additional explanatory link to the overall low accreditation levels recorded across the TVET landscape. The study also determined the proportion of institutions accredited by various regulatory bodies. Figure 6 illustrates the distribution of institutions according to their accrediting agency.

Figure 6:
RPL Accrediting Agencies



The findings further showed that out of the 23% RPL accredited institutions, 58% had been accredited by NITA, while 41% were accredited by TVETA. The RPL accredited centres increased from 16% in 2023 to 23% in 2025. Despite the increased accreditation of RPL centres, the majority of the institutions were still noncompliant with the RPL Standards and Guidelines, which require all RPL assessment centers to be accredited.

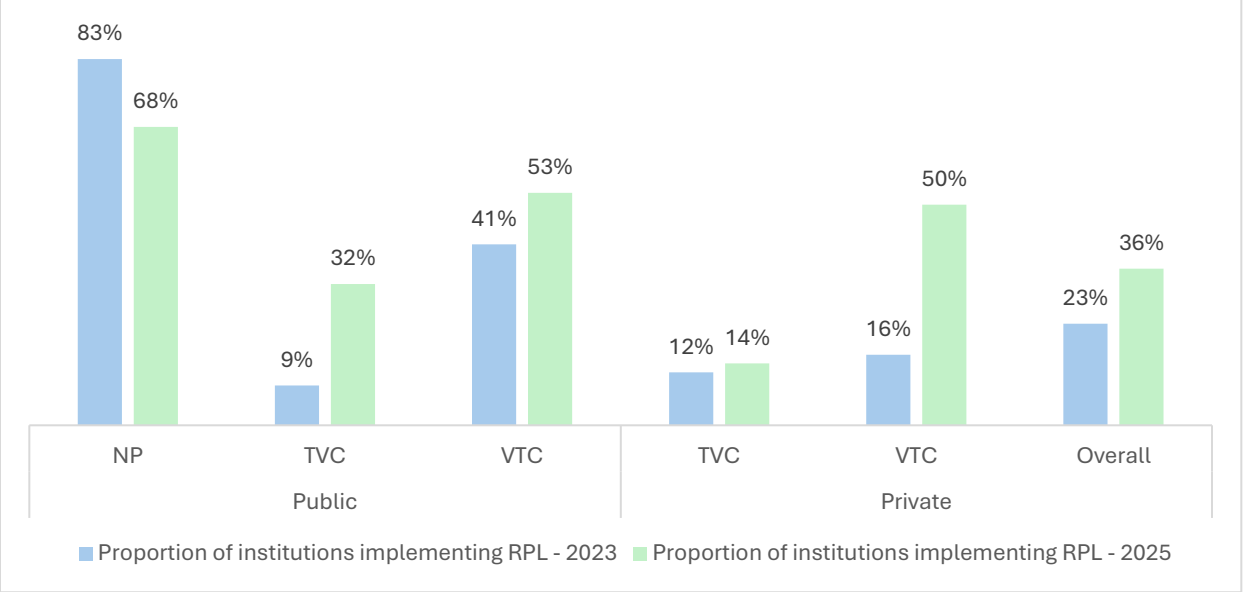
The results indicated that while progress had been made, the institutional readiness for full-scale RPL implementation was constrained by low accreditation levels, regulatory ambiguities, and procedural challenges. Strengthened communication, clearer guidance, and more efficient accreditation processes could be essential for achieving the intended national RPL objectives and ensuring that institutions operate fully within the established quality assurance framework.

4.4.2 Proportion of Institutions Involved in RPL Implementation

RPL implementation encompasses the admission of RPL candidates, their mentorship, assessment, and subsequent certification. Institutions were asked to state whether they were actively involved in RPL implementation. Figure xxx indicates the proportion of institutions that were involved in RPL implementation.

Figure 7:

A Comparison of institutions implementing RPL in 2023 and 2025



The proportion of NPs that were implementing RPL decreased from 83% in 2023 to 68% in 2025. This reduction could be attributed to the upgrading of 22 TVCs to NPs, some of which had not implemented RPL. The finding on the proportion of NPs implementing RPL (22) was comparable to the data presented by SD TVET which showed that 20 NPs were implementing RPL as of 4th November 2025. Among public institutions, 32% of TVCs and 53% of VTCs reported implementing RPL, up from 9% and 41% respectively in 2023. In private institutions, 14% of

TVCs and 50% of VTCs were implementing RPL compared to 12% and 16% in 2023. The findings also revealed that a substantial number of institutions were implementing RPL without undergoing accreditation by the relevant authorities, contrary to the requirements of the RPL Standards, Requirements, and Guidelines. Overall, the proportion of institutions implementing RPL increased from 23% in 2023 to 36% in 2025.

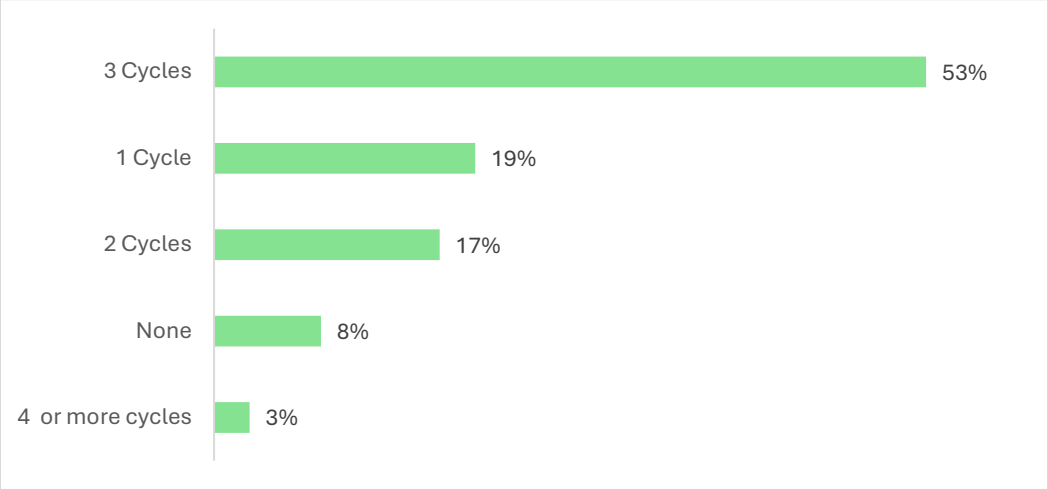
In addition, the responses from KII associate low implementation of RPL to resource and capacity constraints, including shortages of trained RPL practitioners, inadequate equipment, insufficient physical space, and limited financial support. Many institutions lack the human capital needed to implement RPL effectively, while some have been excluded from training opportunities. Additionally, the reduced assessment fee set without institutional input was seen as unsustainable and potentially detrimental to quality, as institutions struggle to cover implementation costs.

4.4.3 RPL Assessment Cycles

Most of the Kenyan Qualification Awarding Bodies (QABs) conduct three assessment cycles annually, and RPL assessments are expected to follow the same structure. The study sought to establish the number of RPL assessment cycles undertaken by the institutions. Figure 8 depicts the number of RPL assessment cycles that had been undertaken by the institutions;

Figure 8:

Number RPL Assessment Cycles



Most institutions (53%) conducted 3 RPL assessment cycles. Nineteen percent (19%) of institutions conducted one cycle; 17% and 2% of the institutions conducted two cycles and more than four cycles, respectively. However, 8% of the institutions did not conduct any RPL assessment. The findings indicated that most of the institutions assess RPL candidates in three cycles.

4.5 Skill Areas Targeted for RPL Implementation

The Government remains committed to facilitating the certification of citizens who possess undocumented skills through the RPL framework. This certification is intended to enhance

individuals' ability to negotiate improved employment terms, support career progression, and provide pathways for further training. All accredited TVET institutions in Kenya have the mandate to offer RPL programmes, provided they meet the criteria laid out in the TVET Standards: Recognition of Prior Learning guidelines. According to these standards, institutions must demonstrate institutional readiness by having institutional policy, trained assessors, and quality assurance mechanisms to be accredited as RPL centres. This study sought to identify the skill areas and qualification levels currently offered by institutions already implementing RPL, as well as the areas institutions not yet implementing RPL intend to introduce in the future. These insights provide a clear picture of both existing practice and emerging prospects for expanding RPL across Kenya's TVET system.

4.5.1 Skills Areas Implemented through RPL by TVET Providers

The RPL implementation process requires providers to undertake targeted awareness creation to inform potential candidates and identify programmes that can be prioritized for assessment and certification. This study sought to determine the training programmes currently emerging as the most preferred for RPL certification, as this information is essential for guiding evidence-based decision-making and resource allocation to strengthen RPL provision. Accordingly, institutions already implementing RPL were requested to indicate the specific courses and corresponding qualification levels offered through the RPL pathway. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3:

Implemented Skills Areas

Skill Areas	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy	61%	19%	2%	1%
Masonry / Building Technology	57%	21%	0%	0%
Electrical Installation / Solar & PV	54%	25%	0%	0%
MVM	50%	22%	0%	0%
Plumbing	48%	18%	0%	0%
Tailoring and Dressmaking	48%	15%	0%	0%
Food and Beverage	35%	14%	0%	1%
Welding and Fabrication	34%	18%	0%	0%
Carpentry / Woodwork	28%	14%	0%	0%
ICT	18%	8%	1%	0%
Housekeeping and Accommodation	6%	3%	0%	0%
Tiling	6%	3%	0%	0%
Accountancy	1%	2%	1%	0%
Others Skill Areas	20%	14%	4%	2%

The study findings revealed that Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy, Masonry/Building Technology, Electrical Installation/Solar PV, and Motor Vehicle Mechanics (MVM) were the most popular RPL programs. This suggested that individuals in the working sector frequently possessed skills in these areas but required Recognition of their Prior Learning (RPL) to gain the necessary certification. In contrast, certain skills areas such as Accountancy, Tiling, Housekeeping and Accommodation were

implemented by only a few institutions. The other skill areas that were offered under RPL included Science Laboratory Technology, Library Information Science, Agriculture, Baking Technology, and Office Administration. A comparable pattern was observed in 2023, where the most implemented skill areas were Masonry/Building Technology (61%), Electrical Installation (51%), Tailoring and Dressmaking (47%), Hairdressing and Beauty (44%), and Motor Vehicle Mechanics (42%).

Key informants noted that institutions prioritize RPL skill areas based on high candidate interest, market demand, and available resources. Sensitization, candidate inquiries, local industry presence, and national initiatives like Affordable Housing and Kazi Majuu guide choices. Trades such as cosmetology, electrical work, motor mechanics, welding, and dressmaking are emphasized, with formal needs assessments rarely conducted.

4.5.2 RPL Implementation Prospects

Institutions that were not implementing RPL were asked if they intended to adopt it in the future. This information was essential for informing policy decisions and targeted interventions to strengthen RPL uptake in all institutions in Kenya. The responses are presented in Table 4.

Table 4:

RPL Implementation Plans

Skill Areas	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
Accountancy	3%	2%	0%	1%
Carpentry / Woodwork	12%	5%	1%	0%
Electrical Installation / Solar & PV	46%	27%	4%	1%
Food and Beverage	25%	18%	5%	1%
Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy	46%	26%	5%	0%
Housekeeping and Accommodation	5%	2%	0%	0%
ICT	22%	18%	6%	4%
Masonry / Building Technology	38%	25%	3%	0%
MVM	30%	19%	4%	1%
Plumbing	26%	26%	11%	9%
Tailoring and Dressmaking	34%	19%	4%	0%
Tiling	38%	22%	3%	2%
Welding and Fabrication	2%	1%	0%	0%
Other (specify)	20%	11%	2%	1%

The building and construction sector, including trades such as tiling, plumbing, masonry, carpentry and woodwork, and solar PV installation, collectively emerged as the most preferred skills area among institutions intending to implement RPL in the future. This heightened demand is likely influenced by the Affordable Housing Programme under the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA), which prioritizes large scale construction activities and promotes the certification of artisans through RPL to enhance the availability of competent, formally recognized skilled workers. The service sector, comprising trades such as hairdressing and beauty therapy, tailoring,

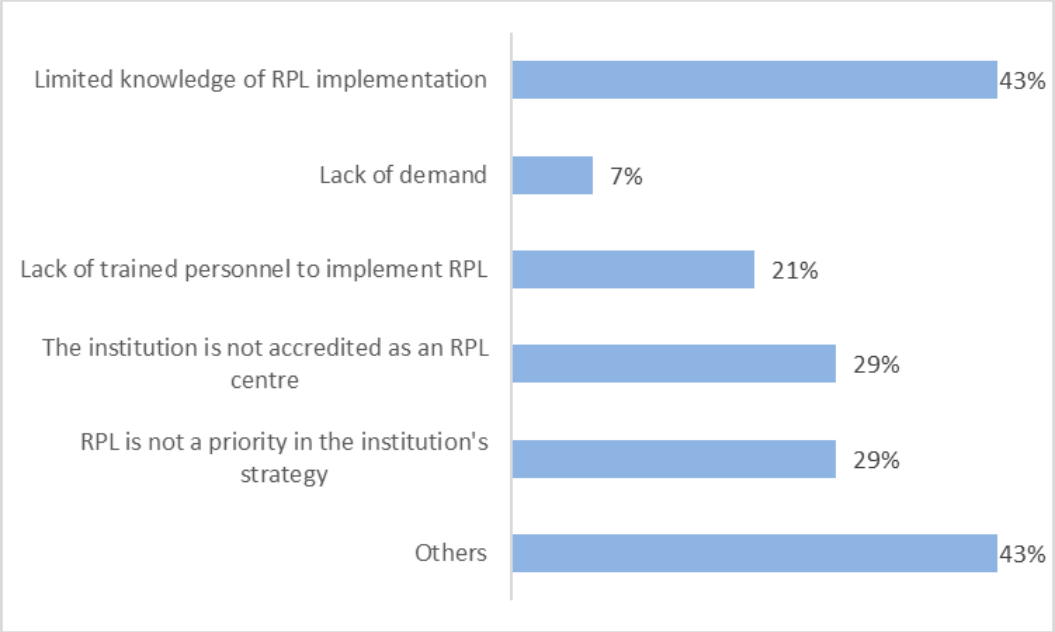
and dressmaking, also featured prominently among institutions intending to implement RPL programmes. The increased demand in these areas is likely driven by the expansion of the service industry, supported by growth in tourism, export of labour, hospitality and fashion sectors, which continue to generate substantial demand for certified and industry-ready practitioners.

4.5.3 Institutions with no Intention to Implement RPL

Out of the sampled institutions that participated in the survey, 4.4% stated that they were neither implementing RPL nor had plans to initiate the process. The institutions were requested to indicate the reasons for their lack of intention to engage in the RPL initiative. The findings are presented in Figure 9.

Figure 9:

Reasons for having no intention to implement RPL



Limited knowledge of RPL implementation (43%) emerged as the most significant barrier to adoption, followed by lack of institutional accreditation as RPL centres and low strategic prioritization of RPL (each at 29%). Additionally, 21 percent of institutions cited the absence of trained RPL personnel, while perceived low demand for RPL accounted for 7%, and no institution reported challenges related to physical facilities. Other barriers highlighted by respondents included stringent professional regulations, particularly in fields such as animal health, where regulators impose strict practice requirements that limit the applicability of RPL. Some institutions noted that they were still in the process of identifying appropriate programme areas before submitting their accreditation applications. Respondents also referenced medical regulations and professional practice guidelines, emphasizing that programmes in Medical and Health Sciences were considered unsuitable for RPL because these fields require structured formal training and do not encourage alternative pathways for individuals without conventional medical preparation. Furthermore, some institutions expressed concerns based on prior experiences where RPL

candidates demonstrated inadequate practical competencies despite claiming prior experience, making institutions more cautious about implementing RPL. The findings suggest that capacity gaps, inadequate accreditation, and weak institutional prioritization are the main factors hindering RPL implementation.

4.6 Quality Assurance Mechanisms for RPL Implementation

Quality Assurance mechanisms provide clear guidelines for RPL as an important alternative structured pathway for individuals with demonstrable skills to obtain formal certification. The process is anchored in established legal, policy, and regulatory frameworks that prescribe standards for assessment and certification. To ensure full compliance with these frameworks, accredited assessment centres are required to establish structures for RPL implementation and institute robust internal quality assurance mechanisms that safeguard the integrity, consistency and credibility of the RPL process. This study sought to determine the extent to which institutions have established requisite structures and functional quality assurance mechanisms to facilitate effective RPL implementation.

4.6.1 RPL Implementation Structures in Training Institutions

Respondents were requested to indicate the availability of key institutional structures required for effective RPL implementation, including an appointed RPL Coordinator, a designated RPL coordinating office and established systems for maintaining RPL records. The responses were further disaggregated by institution type and category as presented in Table 5.

Table 5:

RPL Implementation Structures in Training Institutions

Institution Type/ Parameter	NP	TVC	VTC	Grand Total
Public				
Appointed RPL coordinator	91%	52%	5%	41%
Maintenance of RPL records	67%	28%	14%	29%
RPL coordinating office available	79%	27%	4%	27%
None of the above are available	6%	43%	86%	53%
Private				
Appointed RPL coordinator	-	4%	10%	5%
Maintenance of RPL records	-	5%	0%	5%
RPL coordinating office available	-	4%	10%	5%
None of the above are available	-	94%	90%	94%

The findings showed significant disparities in the availability of institutional structures required for effective RPL implementation across institution types and ownership categories. National Polytechnics exhibited the strongest readiness, with high availability of appointed RPL coordinators (91%), RPL offices (79%), and established record-keeping systems (67%). Public TVCs showed moderate readiness, while Public VTCs reported very low availability of these structures, with the majority (86%) lacking the required parameters. Private institutions demonstrated similarly low preparedness, with over 90% indicating that none of the structures are

in place. The findings indicated that RPL implementation capacity is concentrated in National Polytechnics, while most TVCs, VTCs and private institutions lacked the foundational structures necessary to support effective and credible RPL processes.

4.6.2 Maintenance of RPL Records

Maintaining RPL records is essential for accountability, transparency, and ensuring that assessment decisions can be verified and audited when needed. Respondents were requested to indicate the RPL records kept at the institutions. The findings are presented in table 6.

Table 6:

RPL Records maintained at the Institutions

RPL Records Maintained	Proportion (%)
Candidate Records	92%
Assessment Records	46%
Administrative and Logistical Records	38%
Quality Assurance Records	32%
Accreditation Records	32%
Feedback and Monitoring Records	23%
Certification Records	20%
Complaints and Appeals Records	6%

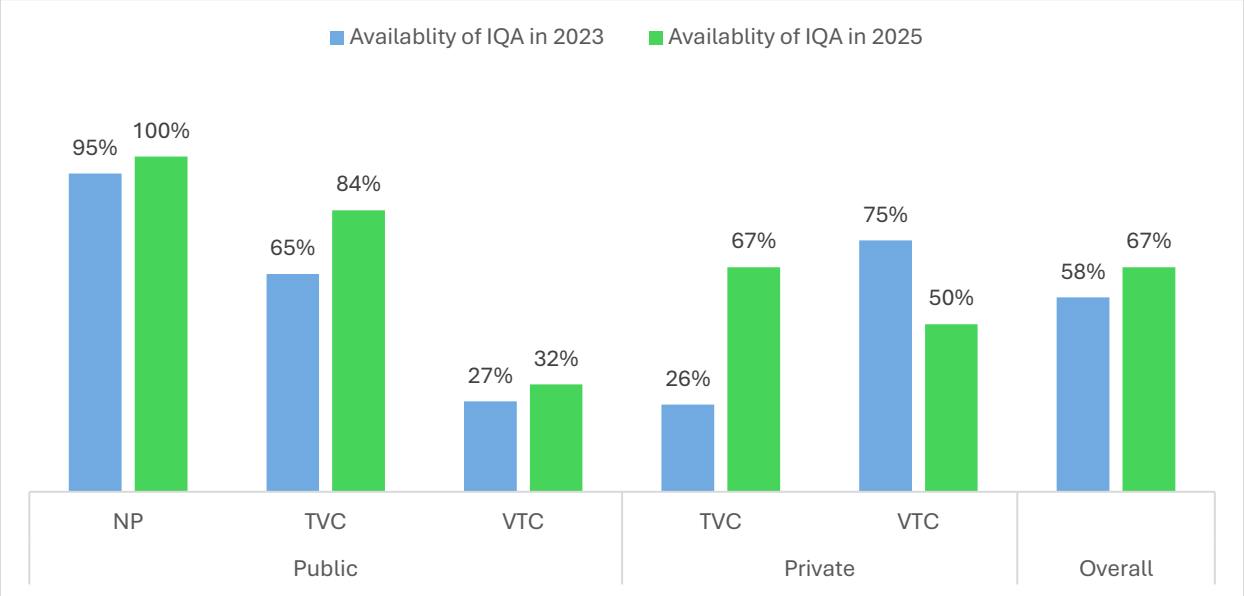
The findings showed that institutions prioritized maintaining candidate records (92%), reflecting strong emphasis on tracking applicant information throughout the RPL process. A significant proportion of institutions (46%) had also kept assessment records, indicating moderate compliance with essential documentation required to support transparent and verifiable assessments. However, 6% of institutions were maintaining complaints and appeals records, a notable gap that undermines accountability, limits learner protection, and weakens the credibility of the RPL system.

4.6.2 Availability of Functional Quality Assurance System

Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) systems play a major role in ensuring effective implementation of the RPL process. This study determined the availability of quality assurance systems for the RPL process within the institutions. Administrators from NPs, TVCs and VTCs were asked to confirm the availability of IQA systems in their respective institutions. Figure 10 shows the proportion of institutions that had put in place IQA systems in 2023 and 2025.

Figure 10:

Proportion of institutions with IQA systems in 2023 and 2025



All the NPs had established functional Quality Assurance systems, indicating strong institutional structures, better resource availability and high compliance levels with National quality standards. However, Public and Private TVCs had 84% and 67% availability respectively, representing two-third compliance. This signals that there are still gaps in implementation possibly due to limited resources, understaffing, inadequate training etc. In Public VTCs showed the weakest performance with majority of 68% lacking functional QA systems which can be attributed to low funding allocation, weak institutions management systems and possibly availability of few QA personnel while in Private VTCs shows availability of QA systems is evenly split.

Consequently, the comparison showed that all categories improved between 2023 and 2025 with National polytechnics being the strongest performers, reaching 100% in 2025. Private TVCs showed major progress in IQA compliance with an improvement from 26% (2023) up to 67% (2025) while public VTCs showed a slow improvement of 5% from 27% in 2023. In overall, the institutions showed positive growth of IQA compliance from 58% (2023) to 67% (2025) in 2025 but significant gaps remain especially in Public VTCs.

4.6.3 Role of Quality Assurance in RPL Assessment Process

The study sought to determine the role played by the internal quality assurance in the implementation of the RPL process as shown in the above Table 7.

Table 7:

Role Played by Internal Quality Assurance in RPL Assessment Process

Role of IQA ON RPL Process	Proportion (%)
Development of institutional RPL policy	48%
Development of IQA work plans/activities	47%
Internal verification of RPL processes (Assessments)	42%
Monitoring the RPL process	49%
Notifying regulators about RPL assessments	11%
None	30%
Any other	4%

A significant proportion of respondents stated that Internal quality assurance was involved in various aspects of the RPL process. Monitoring the RPL process, development of institutional RPL policy, and development of Internal Quality Assurance work plans/activities emerged as the most well-known roles with 49%, 48%, and 47% respectively. This implies that institutions are prioritizing setting up RPL policies, monitoring the RPL process, and IQA workplans as they implement RPL. A significant proportion (30%) of the respondents stated that Quality Assurance had no role in RPL assessment process signaling that a portion of institutions might run the RPL programs without Internal quality checks. 11% believed that Notifying regulators about RPL is among roles of IQA while 4% suggested that there are more roles of IQA apart from the options that were available.

4.6.4 RPL Policy Documents and Standards Acquisition and Implementation

Policy documents, Standards and Guidelines provide clear guidelines by indicating the expected training and skill outcomes as well as mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the processes. The study identified the policy documents that had been acquired by the institutions and their implementation status. The findings were as presented in Table 8.

Table 8:

RPL Policy Documents and Standards Acquisition and Implementation

Institutions and Type	Public		Private	
	Availability	Implementation	Availability	Implementation
National Polytechnics				
CBA Tools Standard Requirements and Guidelines	68%	87%	N/A	N/A
CBET Assessment Centres Standard	68%	87%	N/A	N/A
Guidelines for Implementation of RPL in Kenya	94%	84%	N/A	N/A
QAB Assessment Requirements and Guidelines	62%	86%	N/A	N/A
RPL Policy Framework in Kenya	97%	85%	N/A	N/A
RPL Standard Requirements and Guidelines	74%	88%	N/A	N/A
TVCs				
CBA Tools Standard Requirements and Guidelines	26%	78%	11%	75%
CBET Assessment Centres Standard	31%	67%	14%	80%
Guidelines for Implementation of RPL in Kenya	46%	57%	10%	38%
QAB Assessment Requirements and Guidelines	9%	29%	4%	50%
RPL Policy Framework in Kenya	57%	54%	12%	42%
RPL Standard Requirements and Guidelines	26%	64%	10%	38%
None of the above are available	35%	-	77%	-
VTCs				
CBA Tools Standard Requirements and Guidelines	5%	0%	10%	0%
CBET Assessment Centres Standard	5%	0%	10%	0%
Guidelines for Implementation of RPL in Kenya	7%	0%	10%	0%
QAB Assessment Requirements and Guidelines	3%	0%	10%	0%
RPL Policy Framework in Kenya	11%	13%	10%	0%
RPL Standard Requirements and Guidelines	7%	0%	90%	-
None of the above are available	84%	-	-	-

A large proportion (62% to 97%) of National Polytechnics had acquired the policy documents, with the highest proportion (97%) having acquired RPL policy. The implementation levels were high for all the policy documents that had been acquired by the NPs ranging from 84% to 88%. In the public TVCs, 35% had not acquired either of the policy documents while those that acquired some showed moderate implementation levels ranging from 29% to 78%. The majority of the public VTCs (84%) had not acquired any of the policy documents. Similarly, most private TVC and VTCs (77% and 90%, respectively) had not acquired any of the policy documents. The low levels of availability of the required policy documents in most public VTCs and private institutions could be attributed to low awareness levels, hence there is a need for enhanced sensitization and capacity building to enhance RPL implementation.

There was a significant increase in the availability of RPL policy documents, Standards and Guidelines in the National Polytechnics from a proportion of 26%-47% in 2023 to 62%-97%. This signals that there is increased readiness by the NPs to implement RPL.

4.7 Institution's Overall Readiness to Implement RPL

Respondents were requested to reflect on their institutions' adherence to the applicable policies, standards and guidelines governing RPL implementation and to assess their overall institutional readiness to operationalize RPL. The reflection was to focus on key readiness dimensions captured in the questionnaire, including accreditation status, availability of qualified and licensed RPL practitioners, existence of internal quality assurance mechanisms, establishment of institutional RPL implementation structures and adequacy of physical facilities. Using a five-point Likert scale, respondents were expected to indicate whether their institutions were *fully ready*, *moderately ready*, *ready*, *slightly ready*, or *not ready* to implement RPL. The results are summarized in Table 9

Table 9:

Institutions' Overall Readiness to Implement RPL

Institution	Fully ready	Moderately ready	Not ready at all	Ready	Slightly ready	Total
Public	**13%**	**29%**	**2%**	**33%**	**24%**	**100%**
NP	35%	9%	0%	50%	6%	100%
TVC	7%	32%	3%	29%	29%	100%
VTC	9%	34%	1%	31%	24%	100%
Private	**8%**	**38%**	**10%**	**25%**	**19%**	**100%**
TVC	8%	39%	11%	23%	19%	100%
VTC	10%	30%	0%	40%	20%	100%
Total	**11%**	**32%**	**5%**	**30%**	**22%**	**100%**

The institutional readiness to implement RPL was generally moderate, with 32% of respondents indicating their institutions are moderately ready and 30% stating they were ready. Only 11% reported being fully ready, suggesting that while progress had been made, most institutions had not yet reached optimal readiness. A smaller proportion, 22%, considered themselves slightly ready, while 5% reported being not ready at all, indicating limited but notable preparedness gaps. NPs exhibited the strongest readiness levels, with 35% fully ready and 50% ready, whereas Private TVET institutions showed greater variability, including the highest responses not ready at 11%. These results suggested that although institutions had established foundational parameters for RPL implementation, significant effort was still required to enhance capacity, quality assurance, and infrastructure to achieve full readiness.

4.8 Challenges hindering effective implementation of RPL in TVET institutions and Proposed Mitigation Measures

This section presents the key challenges that continue to impede the effective implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in TVET institutions, as identified through data collected. It

also outlines proposed mitigation measures aimed at strengthening institutional capacity, improving awareness, enhancing operational efficiency, and ensuring that RPL processes are effectively supported across the TVET ecosystem.

4.8.1 Challenges Hindering Effective RPL Implementation

The challenges affecting the implementation of RPL were largely attributed to financial constraints. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which selected challenges affected RPL in their institutions, as well as the corresponding mitigation measures. The challenges that were hindering RPL are summarized in table 10

Table 10:

Challenges hindering implementation of RPL in TVET institutions

Statement	Not at all	To a small extent	To some extent	To a great extent	Total
Changing industries and Technologies	54%	6%	21%	19%	100%
Compromised Integrity of the process	62%	6%	13%	18%	100%
Lack of awareness	18%	5%	30%	48%	100%
Lack of coordination between different stakeholders	46%	5%	18%	31%	100%
Lack of partners to support RPL implementation	44%	6%	25%	25%	100%
Lack of political good will	67%	4%	15%	14%	100%
Lack of qualified RPL practitioners	44%	6%	18%	32%	100%
Lack of standardized assessment tools	67%	4%	13%	15%	100%
Limited knowledge on RPL	26%	10%	31%	33%	100%
Negative attitudes	67%	7%	16%	10%	100%
Public Perception	61%	6%	18%	15%	100%
Regulatory and Accreditation Challenges	65%	7%	12%	16%	100%
Weak linkage between industries and RPL Assessment centres	54%	6%	20%	19%	100%
Overall	**52%**	**6%**	**19%**	**23%**	**100%**

The major challenges that were affecting the implementation of RPL in TVET institutions were mainly related to lack of awareness, knowledge, and qualified RPL practitioners. From the KII, it was established that 2697 persons have been trained as RPL practitioners, which is not sufficient to service the entire country. It was further noted that 38 out of 245 institutions had not trained RPL practitioners. The Kenya School of TVET, which is mandated to train and build capacity of trainers including training of RPL practitioners' assessors, verifiers, RPL advisors and coordinators should organize regular sensitization forums.

The key informants identified the emergence of parallel training initiatives by the State Department of TVET, RPL Delivery Unit and other actors that had created uncertainty and role duplication, thus hindering the development of adequate RPL practitioners. They noted that although these

initiatives were well-intentioned, they had inadvertently weakened a unified national approach to capacity development. This fragmentation has resulted in uncertainty among institutions regarding which certification is authoritative, diluted demand for RPL training programmes and resulted in inconsistency in training quality and assessment of practitioners.

The key informants further observed that the fragmented capacity-building environment that creates a perception that multiple actors can train RPL practitioners had contributed significantly to reduced enrolments into KSTVET's RPL programs, limited national coordination and planning of instructor supply creating a mismatch between actual supply and national demand of certified RPL practitioners. Informants noted that persistence in this fragmented capacity building environment may lead to inconsistencies in RPL practitioner competence.

The Key informants further observed that the involvement of regulators, policy oversight or coordinating bodies in CPD could create conflict of interest and undermine the principles of separation of power, quality assurance and institutional independence built into the TVET ecosystem through the TVET Act Cap 210A. This fragmented capacity-building environment could explain why the number of trained RPL practitioners is far below the national requirement despite the growing demand for Recognition of Prior Learning. The key informants recommended that safeguarding KSTVET legal mandate as the national instructor training institution is essential for ensuring quality, consistency and scalability of RPL capacity building in the country.

Further, 42% of respondents reported that lack of awareness largely affected implementation, while an additional 33% indicated it affects implementation to some extent, demonstrating that awareness remains a major barrier. Similarly, 31% reported that limited knowledge on RPL largely affects implementation, and 34% indicated it affects implementation to some extent, highlighting persistent information gaps on RPL.

Stakeholder collaboration also posed challenges. From the study findings, 32% of respondents stated that lack of coordination among stakeholders largely affects implementation, while 19% cited it as affecting implementation to some extent. In addition, 30% indicated that lack of partners to support RPL implementation largely hinders implementation. Emerging issues such as changing industries and technologies, though less severe, still impact implementation, with 18% reporting that it largely affects implementation.

On the other hand, some challenges were cited as having less effect on RPL implementation. For instance, 66% stated that lack of political goodwill does not affect implementation of RPL, while 65% reported that compromised integrity of the process is not a concern.

The findings showed that the implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in TVET institutions is constrained by several critical challenges, most of which have significant financial implications. The most outstanding issues relate to low awareness, limited practitioner capacity, insufficient knowledge of RPL processes, inadequate tools and infrastructure, and weak coordination among stakeholders. These factors interact to create systemic inefficiencies that undermine both uptake and sustainability of RPL.

Low awareness is a key barrier, with 48% and 30% of respondents citing a major and moderate impact respectively, contributing to low candidate turnout. Although a circular directs institutions to charge Ksh. 3,000 candidates assessed on-site (institution) and Ksh. 1,500 for those assessed off-site (industry), these fees remain insufficient to cover the full costs of conducting RPL assessments.

Capacity gaps among RPL practitioners were also notable. 32% of respondents reported that the lack of qualified practitioners affects implementation to a great extent, while 18% indicated it affects implementation to some extent. This shortage increases the workload for available assessors and slows assessment processes. Because staff often manage RPL duties alongside regular teaching without additional compensation, the institution incurs high labour costs per candidate, making RPL financially unsustainable under current arrangements.

Similarly, limited knowledge of RPL procedures was highlighted by 33% of respondents as a great-extent challenge, and 31% as a moderate challenge. This leads to inefficiencies such as incomplete portfolios of evidence and prolonged assessment cycles. Each delay increases administrative and supervisory time, adding to operational costs without generating corresponding income, especially in cases where candidates drop out midway.

Infrastructure and resource constraints also featured prominently. While the table does not isolate percentages for equipment shortages, qualitative data strongly emphasized inadequate tools, obsolete facilities, and competition for workshop space. Resource-intensive assessments such as those requiring consumables, modern machines, or specialized setups force institutions to subsidize the assessment process. The fixed assessment fee of Ksh. 3,000 was far below the cost of conducting assessments in technical trades, resulting in a consistent financial deficit.

Stakeholder coordination challenges also stood out, with respondents indicating they largely affected implementation. Conflicting directives from different regulatory bodies increased administrative burdens and duplicated the efforts. These inefficiencies translated into additional staff time and compliance costs, none of which are offset by the low assessment fee.

Overall, the findings reveal that RPL implementation is hindered primarily by challenges that carry substantial financial implications. Low awareness reduces candidate numbers, capacity gaps increase labour costs, knowledge limitations drive inefficiencies, infrastructure deficits elevate operational expenses, and inter-agency coordination problems create administrative overheads. Together, these challenges weaken the institutional ability to deliver RPL effectively and threaten its sustainability within the TVET ecosystem.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

The study provided a comprehensive assessment of the status of RPL implementation in Kenya's TVET subsector as of 2025. The key findings are summarized in line with the study objectives.

The awareness of RPL had increased substantially since 2023, rising to 100% in National Polytechnics, 98% in public TVCs, and remaining relatively high (76–80%) in VTCs and private institutions. Workshops and seminars were the main sources of information (76%), followed by peers and social media digital platforms. This indicated that awareness efforts relied heavily on traditional, resource-intensive approaches, while more scalable digital strategies remained underutilized. This outcome could be attributed to the limited onboarding of RPL providers onto the National RPL Management Information System, coupled with constraints related to internet connectivity and coverage.

Accreditation of RPL Assessment Centres, increased from 12% in 2023 to 23% in 2025, with National Polytechnics recording the highest gain from 35% to 59%. The National Industrial Training Authority (NITA) emerged as the leading RPL accrediting body (58%), followed by TVETA (41%). Nevertheless, 77% of institutions remain unaccredited, largely because of limited knowledge of accreditation requirements, contradictory circulars, perceived bureaucratic complexity, and slow accreditation process.

Implementation of RPL rose from 23% in 2023 to 36% in 2025. The VTCs (both public and private) showed the fastest adoption, driven by the fact that government trade testing in VTCs is essentially RPL. Conversely, implementation in National Polytechnics declined slightly from 83% to 68%, partly due to the recent upgrading of some TVCs to NP status. A worrying proportion of institutions continue to offer RPL without accreditation, indicating persistent non-compliance with the RPL Standards and Guidelines.

Most institutions (53%) that were implementing RPL conducted three assessment cycles per year. The most frequently offered skill areas remain Hairdressing & Beauty Therapy, Masonry/Building Technology, Electrical Installation/Solar PV, and Motor Vehicle Mechanics, predominantly at Levels 3 and 4. Institutions planning to introduce RPL in the near future prioritize construction-related trades (masonry, plumbing, tiling, carpentry, solar PV) and service-sector skills (hairdressing, tailoring, food & beverage), reflecting alignment with the Affordable Housing Programme (AHP) and labour export opportunities.

Establishment of RPL institutional implementation structure and quality assurance mechanisms was moderate. National Polytechnics demonstrated strong RPL implementation capacity, with 91% having appointed RPL coordinators, 79% operating dedicated RPL offices, and 67% maintaining appropriate records. Public and private TVCs and VTCs lagged significantly, with 53% to 94% reporting that none of the required structures were in place. Quality assurance systems

were fully functional in all National Polytechnics and in approximately two thirds of public and private TVCs but remained largely absent in most VTCs. Maintenance of complaints and appeals records was notably weak, with 6% of institutions meeting this requirement.

The major barriers to effective RPL implementation included limited stakeholder awareness, and shortage of RPL practitioners. Inadequate infrastructure and assessment tools, unsustainable assessment fees that do not cover actual costs, regulatory ambiguity, and weak inter-agency coordination. Financial implications cut across almost all challenges: low candidate numbers reduce revenue, high assessor workload increases labour costs, obsolete equipment forces subsidization, and bureaucratic delays raise administrative overheads.

5.2 Conclusion

The study concludes that Kenya has recorded measurable progress in institutionalizing RPL within the TVET sector between 2023 and 2025. This was evidenced by higher awareness, doubled accreditation rates, and a 56% increase in the proportion of institutions actively implementing RPL. These gains demonstrate that sustained policy attention and targeted sensitization efforts can yield results. However, RPL remains in an incipient phase of development, characterized by pronounced institutional unevenness and heavy reliance on a few flagship institutions (mainly National Polytechnics). The majority of TVET providers continue to operate outside the required quality assurance framework, thereby compromising the credibility, consistency, and national scalability of the RPL system.

The implementation of RPL in Kenya still suffers from systemic bottlenecks that include regulatory ambiguities, inadequate and unsustainable financing, severe shortages of RPL practitioners, weak internal quality assurance mechanisms, and over-dependence on costly physical workshops for awareness creation. These bottlenecks collectively impede the transformation of RPL from a peripheral activity into a mainstream certification pathway for Kenya's large informal workforce. Until these constraints are completely addressed, RPL will remain unable to fulfil its transformative potential of certifying millions of skilled but uncertified artisans and facilitating their integration into formal employment, career progression, and further education and training.

Overall, while notable progress had been achieved since 2023, RPL implementation remained concentrated in a small cluster of well-resourced public institutions, particularly National Polytechnics, leaving the majority of TVET providers, especially VTCs and private colleges, only marginally prepared to deliver credible, standards-compliant RPL services.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations were proposed to enhance implementation of RPL by TVET Providers:

1. Strengthen coordinated multi-stakeholder awareness initiatives to enhance understanding of RPL among both potential candidates and training providers;

2. The KSTVET to take a leading role in strengthening the capacity of RPL practitioners, leveraging its institutional strength and national reach to support rapid and scalable expansion of RPL implementation across the country;
3. Harmonize policy directives with regulatory requirements and enforce strict compliance to eliminate inconsistencies and strengthen adherence;
4. Institutions to align programmes offered through RPL with labour market priorities through regular skills mapping to ensure responsiveness to emerging workforce needs;
5. Undertake regular capacity building of IQA committee members to play active roles in RPL implementation;
6. Institutions should acquire and implement applicable policies, standards and guidelines to effectively guide RPL processes;
7. Undertake a cost study and consultative review of the prescribed RPL assessment fee to ensure sustainability;
8. Institutions strengthen their capacity through large-scale training of RPL practitioners, enforce mandatory appointment of licensed RPL coordinators, and establishment of functional RPL offices as prerequisites for accreditation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Data Collection Questionnaire

Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA) is conducting a follow up study on Implementation Status of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) by TVET Providers in Kenya. The findings of the study will determine the progress made by the institutions and inform policy on support for RPL in the country. You have been identified as one of the respondents. Your honest response to the items of this questionnaire will remain confidential, and the data will be used entirely for the intended purpose. Should you find any question to be inappropriate/inapplicable to your circumstances, you are under no obligation to answer.

Part 1: Preliminary Information

101 Name of TVET provider: ……

102 County (Please select)

103 Type of Institution/ provider

☐ Private

☐ Public

104 Category of institution/ provider

☐ Vocational Training Centre

☐ Technical and Vocational College

☐ National Polytechnic ☐ KSTVET

105 Designation of respondent

☐ Administrator

☐ Trainer/ RPL Coordinator

106 Gender of the Respondent

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

107 Training experience

- ☐ 5 years and below
- ☐ 6 to 10 years
- ☐ 11 to 15 years
- ☐ 16 to 20 years
- ☐ Over 20 years

Part 2: Awareness Levels of RPL among TVET Providers in Kenya

201 a. Are you aware of Recognition of Prior Learning?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (If no, go to Part 3)

201 b. If yes, indicate source of RPL information

- ☐ Website
- ☐ Workshops and seminars
- ☐ social media
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Print media
- ☐ Television
- ☐ Peer
- ☐ Others (state): .....

201c What is the main purpose of RPL?

- To certify skills gained through work experience or informal training
- To provide access to further education and training opportunities
- To recognize qualifications obtained abroad
- I am not aware of the purpose of RPL

201d. Which institutions in Kenya are responsible for implementing RPL?

- TVET Authority
- Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA)
- Training institutions/colleges
- Not aware

Part 3: Proportion of TVET Providers Implementing RPL and the Targeted Skill Areas

301 a. Is your institution involved in RPL implementation?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

301 b). If yes, in which skill areas and levels (L3, L4, L5, L6)

- ☐ Welding and fabrication
- ☐ ICT
- ☐ Housekeeping and Accommodation
- ☐ Tailoring and dress making
- ☐ Hairdressing and beauty therapy
- ☐ Electrical installation/Solar & PV
- ☐ Masonry/Building technology
- ☐ MVM

- ☐ Food and beverage
- ☐ Plumbing
- ☐ Carpentry/Woodwork
- ☐ Tiling
- ☐ Accountancy
- ☐ Others (State) …….

301 c. If no, does your institution intend to implement RPL

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes to **301c**, state the target skill areas and levels

- ☐ Welding and fabrication
- ☐ ICT
- ☐ Housekeeping and Accommodation
- ☐ Tailoring and dress making
- ☐ Hairdressing and beauty therapy
- ☐ Electrical installation/Solar & PV
- ☐ Masonry/Building technology
- ☐ MVM
- ☐ Food and beverage
- ☐ Plumbing
- ☐ Carpentry/Woodwork
- ☐ Tiling
- ☐ Accountancy
- ☐ Others (State)…….

If no, state the reason

- ☐ Lack of facilities
- ☐ Lack of trained personnel to implement RPL
- ☐ Lack of demand
- ☐ RPL is not a priority in the institution's strategy
- ☐ The institution is not accredited as an RPL centre
- ☐ Limited knowledge of RPL implementation
- ☐ Others (state)

302 a. Is your institution accredited as an RPL centre?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

302 b. If YES, State the accrediting Authority/ Agency

- ☐ NITA
- ☐ TVETA
- ☐ KASNEB
- ☐ Others (Specify)

Part 4: Availability of a Functional Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) System for the RPL Process

401. Has your institution put in place structures for RPL implementation (Check for evidence) Tick accordingly;

- ☐ RPL coordinating office available
- ☐ Appointed RPL coordinator
- ☐ Maintenance of RPL records

402 a. Does the institution have an internal quality assurance system? (Evidence for appointment of IQA office and/or committee)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

402 b. If yes, what role does the IQA play in RPL process? (Evidence)

- ☐ Development of institutional RPL policy
- ☐ Development of IQA work plans/activities
- ☐ Monitoring the RPL process
- ☐ Internal verification of RPL processes (Assessments)
- ☐ Notifying regulators about RPL assessments
- ☐ Any other (State)…….... (Align with requirements of RPL Policy and Standard)

403. State whether your institution has acquired and is implementing the following policy documents;

- ☐ RPL Policy Framework in Kenya
- ☐ Guidelines for Implementation of RPL in Kenya
- ☐ RPL Standard Requirements and Guidelines
- ☐ CBET Assessment Centres Standard
- ☐ CBA Tools Standard Requirements and Guidelines
- ☐ QAB Assessment Requirements and Guidelines

Part 5: Challenges affecting the implementation of RPL

501 Indicate the extent to which the following challenges affect the implementation of RPL in your institution (1 = Not at all, 2 = To a small extent, 3 = To some extent, 4 = To a great extent)

Challenge	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
Limited knowledge on RPL				
Lack of qualified RPL practitioners				
Negative attitudes				
Weak linkage between industries and RPL Assessment centres				
Lack of awareness				
Lack of partners to support RPL implementation				
Lack of political good will				
Compromised Integrity of the process				
Lack of coordination between different stakeholders				
Lack of standardized assessment tools				
Regulatory and Accreditation Challenges				
Changing industries and Technologies				
Public Perception				

Other(specify)….

Part 6: Mitigation strategies to challenges affecting the implementation of RPL

601. State the strategies that have been put in place to mitigate challenges affecting the implementation of RPL

Appendix 2: Key Informant Interview Guide (For QABs, TVETA and KNQA)

Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA) is conducting a follow up study on Implementation Status of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) by TVET Providers in Kenya. The findings of the study will determine the progress made by the institutions and inform policy on support for RPL in the country. You have been identified as one of the respondents and we request your honest views in relation to the topic of study. The information provided will solely be used for the purpose of the study.

With your permission, we would like to audio-record this discussion. While we will also take notes, a recording will allow us to capture the discussion more accurately and ensure that no important points are missed. Both the notes and recordings will be kept safe and secure and will not be shared beyond the research team. (Confirm that participants consent to the recording). This discussion will last about 45 minutes.

100 Skill areas targeted for RPL by TVET providers

101. Could you briefly introduce your institution and describe its mandate in relation to RPL implementation? *(ALL)*

102. For how long has your institution been actively involved in implementing RPL programs? *(QABs and NITA)*

103. Which skill areas and at what levels have emerged as the most popular for RPL candidates in your institution? *(QABs and NITA)*

104. In your opinion what factors or criteria inform the selection and prioritization of these skill areas and levels for RPL implementation? *(QABs and NITA)*

200. Quality assurance mechanisms in place for RPL implementation.

201. As a regulator, what specific quality assurance mechanisms have you established to guarantee credible and standardized Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) provision across institutions? *(TVETA, NITA, KNQA)*

202a. Considering that the number of RPL-accredited institutions in Kenya remains low, what do you perceive as the main factors contributing to this situation? *(ALL)*

202 b. To enhance access to RPL services and TVET, what specific measures has your organization implemented to fast-track the accreditation of more institutions to offer RPL? *(TVETA, NITA, KNQA)*

203. What structures exist at institutional level to ensure coordination and quality assurance of RPL? *(ALL)*

204. What follow-up or enforcement measures do you employ to ensure strict compliance with established RPL standards, policies, and guidelines? *(ALL)*

205. How is data on RPL implementation managed (collection, processing, storage, retrieval) *(ALL)*

206 What collaborative mechanisms or synergies exist among TVETA, NITA, KNQA, and other relevant bodies to harmonize RPL quality assurance processes? *(TVETA, NITA, KNQA)*

207. What measures have been put in place to safeguard the integrity, fairness, and credibility of the RPL assessment process? *(ALL)*

208. What additional steps are planned to strengthen and sustain quality assurance mechanisms for RPL implementation? *(ALL)*

300. Challenges hindering effective implementation of RPL in TVET institutions and propose mitigation measures.

300. In your perspective what are the key challenges hindering effective implementation of RPL? *(ALL)*

301. For each challenge identified which mitigation measures would you propose? *(ALL)*

Appendix 3: Work Plan

Activity	August	September	October	November
Development of proposal and data collection tools				
Identification of target population and sampling				
Piloting				
Briefing of data collection teams				
Data collection				
Analysis, report writing and dissemination				