Labour Market Impact of National Qualification Frameworks

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International Labour Organisation (ILO)
ILO Studies on the Labour Market Impact of NQFs

2010
- ILO and ETF funding
- S. Allais & M. Young, *The implementation and impact of National Qualifications Frameworks: Report of a study in 16 countries*

2015
- ILO funding
- S. Allias, *Labour market impact of NQFs in Six Countries: Belize, Jamaica, France, Ireland, Sri Lanka and Tunisia*
Do we have good evidence of NQF outcomes and impact?

- Many NQFs are still at too early a stage to evaluate
- Evidence of positive outcomes from the development process
- Monitoring and evaluation usually an afterthought
- Limited independent evaluation
- Less evidence of labour market impact: difficult to interpret and generalise due to weak data and methodological challenges (wages, geographic and occupational mobility, improved progression, recruitment practices, stakeholder engagement...)
- Limited evidence on trans-national or regional QF impact
What does the overall evidence show?

- **Improved understanding of education systems?** – Yes, if QF is comprehensive and ‘loose’, and if language is kept simple and applied consistently. Most success in improving communication.

- **Increased coherence & coordination?** – Potentially: a loose, comprehensive QF may provide a tool but not drive change

- **Improved access, transfer and progression?** – Potentially, if comprehensive, but depends on complementary measures, incentives and trust; but may introduce rigidities which restrict access and progression; limited evidence of impact on ‘parity of esteem’
What does the overall evidence show?

- **Improved accountability and control?** – Yes, but can be bureaucratic, costly and stifle provision

- **Updated and extended standards?** – Yes, may increase employer input; but not if complexity, bureaucracy or cost discourage employer engagement. Risk of over specification and redundant qualifications

- **Enhanced quality of learning?** – Variably: quality assurance may have impact; other impacts on pedagogy are slow to appear

- **Increased recognition of skills and learning (incl. informal learning)?** – It provides a tool but not the incentive to use it, or the trust to underpin recognition
What does the overall evidence show?

Promote mobility? – Has helped some countries to market their educational programmes abroad; evidence of harmonised occupational standards across jurisdictions, difficult to judge impact on labour mobility due to data issues

Reference qualifications to transnational framework? – Yes, on paper, but trust in referencing has not been well tested

Make education more demand-focused? – Yes and no; increased employer input in specific sectors, but effects can be negative, and the problems of articulating demand persist

Promote lifelong learning? – Yes, through some of the above

Reduce skills mismatch? – Yes and no; improved quantification of the stock of skills, stronger links between qualifications and occupations, but attribution...
THANKS