Enhancing Coaches' Learning, Mobility and Employability in the European Union

Report #2
Recognition of Prior Learning and Work-Based Experience in Coach Development

April 2016

Authors: Kirsi Hämäläinen, Jan Minkhorst, Bas van der Heijden, Philipp van Benthem, Sergio Lara-Bercial, Julian North, Ladislav Petrovic, Klaus Oltmanns and Karen Livingstone

Project Partners

HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences

MAGYAR EDZŐK TÁRSASÁGA — HUNGARIAN COACHING ASSOCIATION

ICCE International Council for Coaching Excellence

LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY

trainerakademie köln

NOC*NSF

www.coachlearn.eu   CoachLearn   @CoachLearnEU

Disclaimer

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute and endorsement of the contents which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary

The recognition of prior learning and work experience (RPL&WBE) in coach development is a fundamental part of project CoachLearn. CoachLearn is co-funded by Erasmus+ under the Strategic Partnerships Action within Key Action 2 – Cooperation and Innovation for Good Practices. It seeks to enhance sport coaches' learning, mobility and employment through the development of a European Sport Coaching Framework. This report provides an introduction to the topic and subsequently presents the findings from a survey aimed at gathering the views of a cross-section of coach education stakeholders across the European Union. Stakeholders represented in the sample included national lead coaching organisations, national Olympic committees, national and international governing bodies of sport and vocational and higher education institutions. The main objectives were to identify key challenges faced by organisations in relation to RPL&WBE and existing models of good practice. Central to this goal was defining major factor for the development of successful systems.

The Current Solutions for the Recognition for Prior Learning & Work-Based Experience

Several solutions for RPL&WBE in coach education in the EU were identified by the desk-research and the stakeholder survey.

- In most cases, RPL&WBE systems belong to single organizations. They vary from formal frameworks and guidelines to case by case solutions.
- The most commonly used system around the EU is the RPL&WBE for (former) Elite Athletes.
- Only Belgium (Flanders) has a formal system which covers the whole field of coach education. In this case too, one organization is responsible for the whole coach education system.
- In the UK, there are national guidelines for RPL&WBE in coach education but the implementation is still in progress.
- There are some examples of RPL&WBE system between specific organizations, but these are not very common.

Key Challenges

Coaching stakeholders identified key challenges in developing RPL/WBE system:

- A lack of a common coaching framework as a reference point. Organizations have very different curricula and aims for their coach education, and thus it is challenging to create effective and compatible systems for the RPL&WBE
- Organisations lack time and resources to create effective RPL&WBE systems and implementation tools
- Independent education organizations might not be willing to have RPL systems because it is time and resource consuming.
- Independent education organization might not be willing to have a RPL systems because they do not trust the quality of education of other organizations or because education is an important source of revenue they do not want to relinquish

Required Support

Stakeholders, especially National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of sport, within the sample stated that they would welcome guidelines and tools for the development and implementation of their own RPL&WBE systems.

2. Project CoachLearn – Background & Introduction

CoachLearn is led by Leeds Beckett University (UK) in conjunction with the International Council for Coaching Excellence (UK), Trainerakademie Köln (Germany), the Hungarian Coaching Association (Hungary), Haaga-Helia University (Finland) and NOC*NSF (Netherlands). The project is co-funded through an Erasmus+ bid (2014 call) under the Strategic Partnerships Action within Key Action 2 – Cooperation and Innovation for Good Practices. It started in October 2014 and will be completed in August 2017.

CoachLearn Rationale

Sport coaches are at the front-line of sport development and delivery. Based on previous studies, it is estimated that there could be as many as 5 to 9 million coaches operating across Europe, with a likely reach of somewhere between 50 and 100 million sport participants (Duffy et al., 2011; European Commission, in preparation). In June 2014 the European Commission (Directorate-General for Education and Culture: Youth and Sport) produced an Implementation Report for the period 2007-2014. A key element of this implementation report was the further work required on the European Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF) and European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) within the sport sector. This had already been acknowledged in the Council's Work Plan for sport 2011-2014 (European Council, 2011), and re-emphasised in the 2014-2017 edition (European Council, 2014).

Notwithstanding considerable work in recent years, a number of key issues remain to be addressed:

a) Despite significant progress on the development of the European Framework for the Recognition of Sport Coaching Competence and Qualifications (EFRCCQ; ECC, 2007), there remains a need to *further evolve this work so that it aligns with EQF and with the recently developed International Sport Coaching Framework* (ISCF; ICCE, ASOIF and LBU, 2013). Achieving clarity around the necessary competencies per role and domain will support this.

b) Sport coaching is, by its nature, lifelong and employment/deployment orientated. Yet, there is a need to *develop consistent and appropriate approaches to the recognition of prior learning* that are more closely related to the work and life experiences of volunteer; part-time and full-time coaches.

c) Within this context, there is also need to develop *a more effective system for the recognition of experience, education and qualifications that occur in a work based context*.

d) The nature and contribution of the *sport coaching workforce* has not been quantified, with consequent implications for planning; education and training; work-integrated learning; employment and mobility.

CoachLearn Objectives

In order to address the above issues CoachLearn will:

a) Develop a *European Sport Coaching Framework* (ESCF) that is responsive to the needs of coaches and the idiosyncrasies of international, national and sport specific contexts. This Framework will

be aligned to EQF and the International Sport Coaching Framework, and referenced against other relevant European qualification systems and tools.

b) Provide, through a careful process of ***data collection and analysis***, a clear picture of the needs of sport coaches, coach developers (trainers of coaches) and a variety of organisations with a stake in their education, employment and mobility.

c) Identify ***examples of good practice at a global and European level*** in relation to systems and frameworks of education, employment and mobility of sports coaches.

d) Offer an accurate representation of the ***nature of the sport coaching workforce*** in the five participant countries in relation to its status (volunteer; part-time paid; full-time paid), domain (children; participation; emerging athletes; high performance athletes) and its role (coaching assistant; coach; senior coach; master coach).

e) Develop suitable ***guidance and practical tools*** to facilitate the adoption and implementation of recognised protocols and systems ***for Recognised Prior Learning*** within European Union coach education stakeholders

f) Produce ***tools to support member states and coaching stakeholders evaluate their current coach education systems against clear reference points*** (European Sport Coaching Framework) and plan for the development of future, enhanced systems. This tool will also serve as a quality assurance instrument for relevant bodies and agencies

Overall thus, CoachLearn seeks to ***enhance sport coaches' learning, mobility and employment through the development of a European Sport Coaching Framework*** and associated research data and implementation and dissemination tools. This framework will act as recognised reference point across the Union for the development and benchmarking of coach education programmes and coaching systems. The ESCF will also enhance national systems of vocational education and training in sport coaching by being referenced against relevant EU education and employment frameworks. The outcomes of CoachLearn will create a step change in the learning, mobility and employment of sport coaches in the European Union.

CoachLearn Impact

As a result of the above developments, CoachLearn will:

a) Enhance the lives of sport coaches and their participants and athletes across the European Union.

b) Increase the synergies and effectiveness of the existing European network of organisations involved in the betterment of sport coaching. This will provide the basis for future research, development, innovation, dissemination, implementation and evaluation of new solutions in the education, employment and mobility of coaches that will be applied to the wider industry.

c) Support the creation of a common language and methodology used by member states.

d) Foster the development of an enhanced model for long term coach development (LTCD) and long term coach developer development (LTCDD) within Europe. These will provide a reference point for the development of suitable coach and coach developer learning and employment pathways across the Union.

e) Clearly define primary functions of the coach and work related competencies and associated modes of work-based integrated learning per coaching domain (children, participation, emerging athlete and high performance athlete), role (coaching assistant, coach, senior coach and master coach) and status (volunteer, part-time and full-time). These will provide the basis for the development of effective and efficient learning opportunities for sport coaches throughout the member states.

f) Enhance the contribution of sport coaching to the social and economic life of the EU.

g) Retain and further enhance the position of Europe as a leader in sport coaching and in the development of solutions that are relevant to the labour market and the social economy of the Union.

3. Introduction to the Recognition of Prior Learning & Work-Based Experience (RPL&WBE)

Background for the RPL&WBE

Several studies show that coaches' learning is sourced from many different situations. Formal coach education programs have been shown to make varying but often limited contributions. Overall, these studies on coaches learning have highlighted the significant contributions of informal learning experiences (Cushion, Armour &Jones 2003; Lemyre, Trudel & Durant-Bush 2007; Mallet, Trudel, Lyle & Rynne 2009; Blomqvist & Hämäläinen 2015).

Society and work life are changing rapidly and those changes have a great influence on the way learning is understood and conceptualised. Education in general is undergoing a major shift, and this is also being felt in coach education. In the past, universities had a monopoly of knowledge. It was difficult to get access to the latest knowledge any other way than via Universities. New ways to transfer knowledge have opened the access for almost anyone. This has changed the role of formal education.

New areas of knowledge and industry and new occupations no-one could have imagined a few years ago have changed the labour market. These new jobs require competences and combinations of expertise that were unknown until now. This fast-paced development is likely to continue. Acquiring these new knowledge, skills and competences by formal education only is just not possible. Educational institutions have to think of new ways of keeping up with market forces.

In coaching, the recognition that learning happens not only in formal settings, and that it is a lifelong process has provoked, in many cases, a change in terminology from coach education into development. This reflects a change in thinking from traditional 'one-way' education systems and programs (the linear steps in figure 1) towards a more comprehensive approach to development (multi-modal education and development in figure 1).
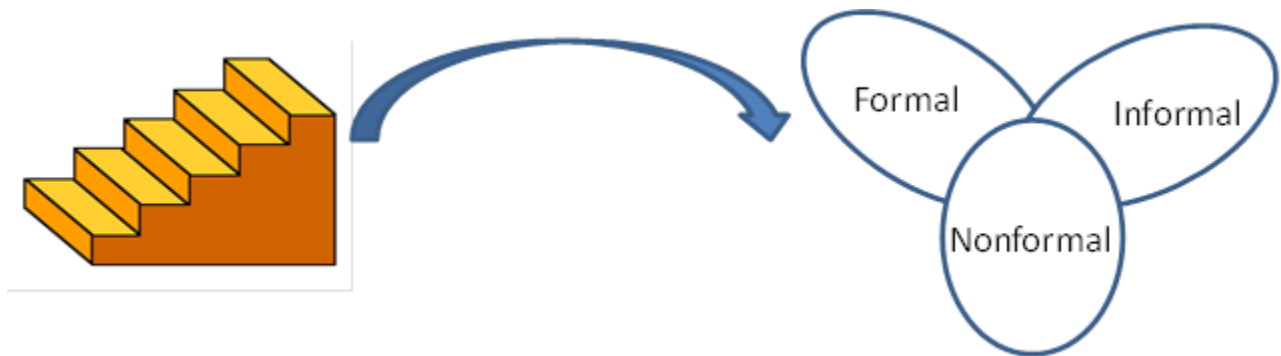
Figure 1. The paradigm of learning has shifted from traditional education systems towards a more comprehensive approach of learning.

Content- and knowledge-based, input-driven education programs have evolved towards competence- and, more recently, reality-based curricula. The need to study theory and acquire knowledge (learning by being) and its implementation into action (learning by doing) is progressively changing into learning by making which combines both into learning in real life situations (Stenlund, 2014). This approach makes it possible to learn competences which have up to now been difficult to write into curriculums or have been considered as tacit knowledge.

Similar to how coaching has steadily changed from using a coach-centred approach towards a more athlete-centred style, coach development has also changed from teacher (coach developer) centred teaching into student (coach) centred learning. This facilitates the development of more individual learning pathways and recognises that, increasingly, a big part of the learning happens in the networks in which the individual operates (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Education has changed from teacher-centred approach into student-centred and towards learning in networks.

Likewise, the assessment of learning outcomes has changed toward assessment of effectiveness. Evaluating the ability to implement knowledge and skills in context instead of the ability to repeat is the

main goal of the assessment. How learning affects coaches' actions and what the consequences are to the athlete are the priority.

As the needs and demands of the workplace have changed, so has our understanding of how learning happens and how competences are acquired. These changes create more demands on competence assessment methods and tools. The ability to recognise learning and competences at any point of the learning process – prior, during and after- is paramount.

Definitions

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) (other similar or related terms include Recognition of Current Competences, Accreditation of Prior Learning, Recognition of Experimental Learning, and Accreditation of Prior Learning and Achievement)

UNESCO (2012) uses the term Recognition, Validation and Accreditation (RVA). RVA of all forms of learning outcomes is a practise that makes visible and values the full range of competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes) that individuals have obtained in various contexts and through various means in different phases in their lives.

- Recognition is a process of granting official status to learning outcomes and/or competences, which can lead to the acknowledgement of their value in society.

- Validation is the confirmation by an approved body that learning outcomes or competences acquired by an individual have been assessed against reference points or standards through pre-defined assessment methodologies.

- Accreditation is a process by which an approved body, on the basis of assessment of learning outcomes and/or competences according to different purposes and methods, awards qualifications (certifications, diplomas or titles) or grants equivalences. In some cases, the term accreditation applies to the evaluation of the quality of an institution or a programme as a whole.

Competences and Learning Outcomes

- Competences indicate a satisfactory state of knowledge, skills and attitudes and the ability to apply them in a variety of situations.

- Learning outcomes are achievements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do as a result of a learning process.

Formal, Non-Formal and Informal Learning

Formal learning takes place in education and training institutions, is recognised by relevant national authorities and leads to diplomas and qualifications. Formal learning is structured according to educational arrangements such as curricula, qualifications and teaching-learning requirements. In formal situation learning is mediated or guided by some knowledgeable other. Learners in formal situations have less control over what information is delivered which influences what can be learned.

Non-formal learning is learning that has been acquired in addition or alternatively to formal learning in some cases. It is also structured according to educational and training arrangements, but more flexible. It usually takes place in community-based settings, the workplace and through activities of civil society organisations. Through the recognition, validation and accreditation process non-formal learning can also lead to qualifications and other recognitions.

Informal learning is learning that occurs in daily life, in the family, in the workplace, in communities and through interests and activities of individuals. Through the recognition, validation and accreditation process, competences gained in informal learning can be made visible, and can contribute to qualifications and other recognitions, in some cases, the term experimental learning is used to refer to informal learning that focuses on learning experience. Informal learning may occur in institutions, but it is not typically classroom-based or highly structured, and control of learning rests primarily in the hands of the learner. Informal learning can be deliberately encouraged by an organization or it can take place despite an environment not highly conducive to learning. Incidental learning almost always takes place although learners may not always be conscious of it.

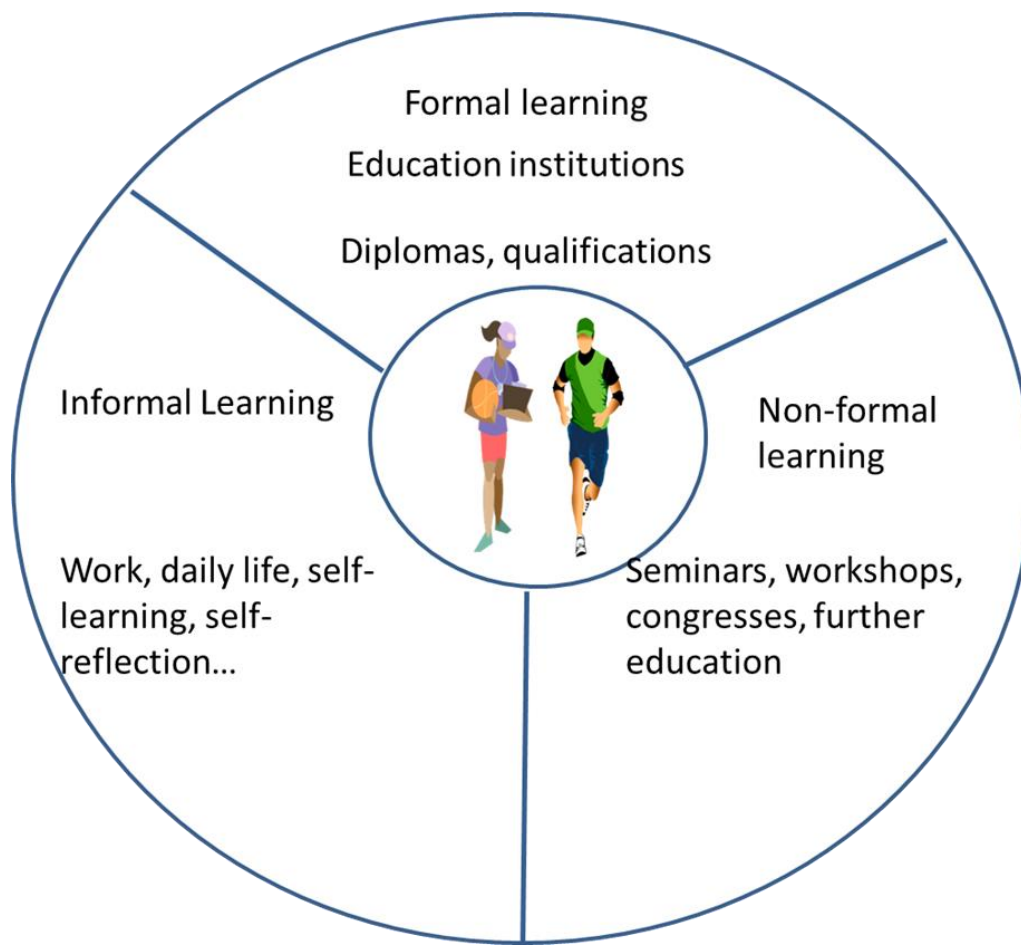(UNESCO 2012; Mallet, Trudel, Lyle & Rynne, 2009)

Figure 3. The spectrum of learning situations: Formal, informal and non-formal learning.

Rationale for the promotion of the RPL&WBE

European and National Lifelong Learning Policies has emphasised the importance of the Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning since European Union Member States agreed the Common European Principles for Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning in 2004. At this point, the Education Council of the European Union adopted a set of Common European Principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning which kick-started the process of developing and implementing mutual learning across the EU. The progress of development based on voluntary participation of Member States, candidate countries and countries of the European Economic Area culminated in the European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning (EU, 2009) Validating non-formal and informal learning is increasingly seen as a central way to improve and promote lifelong and lifewide[1] learning. More and more European countries are emphasising the importance of making visible and valuing learning that takes place outside formal education and training institutions, for example at work, in leisure time activities and at home

UNESCO has also played an important role in developing a vision of lifelong learning. Its Institute for Lifelong Learning has published guidelines stressing the need to strive for learning opportunities for all, throughout life, to improve the quality of life, to promote a more just society, and equip people to anticipate and tackle the challenges they face. Lifelong learning covers the full range of provision of learning opportunities, from early childhood through schools to further and higher education. Most importantly, it extends beyond formal education to non-formal and informal learning opportunities. (UNESCO 2012)

Traditionally, most occupations have been learned in action (e.g. in the workplace). The history of formal vocational education is relatively recent. A potential explanation resides in the fact that formal education was not accessible for everyone. This restricted access gave formal education a higher status and depreciated the value of experiential learning. Nonetheless, it has been commonly accepted that, even for those accessing formal education, the ability to fulfil the duties of a particular occupation is only truly acquired after formal education is finished and the learner spends time in the workplace.

Despite the above, qualification systems in many societies still focus on formal learning in educational institutions. As a result, a large part of individuals' learning remains unrecognised. This leads to a huge under-utilisation of human talent and resources in society. There are people who are not fully aware of their own stock of human capital or its potential value. There are also some people who are unable to put all the learning they have acquired to full use because they cannot easily prove their capabilities to others. Therefore, the learning outcomes of non-formal and informal settings need to be made visible, assessed and accredited (UNESCO 2012). Although, recognition of non-formal and informal learning

---

[1] Lifewide learning recognizes that most people, no matter what their age or circumstances, simultaneously inhabit a number of different spaces – like work or education, being a member of a family, being involved in clubs or societies, traveling and taking holidays and looking after their own well-being mentally, physically and spiritually. So the timeframes of lifelong learning and the spaces of life-wide learning will characteristically intermingle and who we are and who we are becoming are the consequences of this intermingling (http://www.lifewideeducation.uk/lifewide-learning.html)

outcomes does not in itself create human capital, it makes existing human capital more visible and more valuable to society at large (OECD,2010).

Benefits of RPL&WBE for Society

- Shortens the time spent in formal education thus producing an active workforce quicker and at younger age

- Could cut the expenses of formal education, although this is not always necessarily the case.

- Promotes life-long learning and the development of a positive learning culture

- Helps to compare competences internationally and supports workforce mobility

- Is seen as a time-saving and cost-effective way for employers to reach a better understanding of current skill level in an organization and to demonstrate investment in staff development.

- Can increase equity (reduce educational drop-out, increased access to qualifications to under-privileged groups like immigrants, elderly people, etc)

- Can support workforce adaptation to fast-paced changes in the nature of the job and the required competences to fulfil it

Benefits of RPL&WBE for Individuals:

- Recognition of competence can be an empowering experience

- Access to and completion of formal education can be quicker and easier

- Studying is more motivating when topics already learnt do not have to be repeated

- RPL is seen a way to bring those who feel excluded from education back into learning pathways

- RPL is seen as a tool for delivering greater flexibility and customer choice in training and education systems.

Benefits of RPL&WBE for Education Institutions:

- Motivated students

- Increased funding (due to higher graduation rates)

- RPL&WBE can also be used in assessing if the applicant meets the access criteria for the program

  On the other hand, a strong RPL&WBE system requires:

- Individualized and flexible study paths

- Increased need for student guidance

- An appropriate protocol for competence recognition

(e.g. Ministry of Education 2004, Arene 2009)

4. Aims of the Survey

The second half of the CoachLearn Report #2 (R*ecognition of Prior Learning and Work-Based Experience in Coach Development)* aims to identify the existing RPL&WBE systems used in Coach Education within the EU. To gather the required information, a small-scale survey amongst key stakeholders in EU countries was conducted.

The key objectives of the survey were:

1. To find out what kind of RPL&WBE systems exist in Coach Education in Europe
2. To identify the parameters that define a successful RPL&WBE system
3. To find out the key challenges in developing the RPL&WBE system

5. Participants & Methodology

Participants

Organizations were invited to reply to the survey in three phases. First, CoachLearn partners were asked to be involved and to nominate key stakeholders from their countries. Second, countries expected to have information relevant to the goals of the survey were also invited tom complete it. Finally, a third round of invitations took place at Global Conference in Vierumaki in August 2015 where coach development experts from all over the world were gathering.

Table 1 shows the list of participants.

	Type of organization			
Country	Educational Institute (University or vocational education)	National Coaching agency	(Inter)National umbrella organization (NOC; NSF)*	Sport federation
Italy	1			
England	2	1		1
Switzerland		1		
Sweden	1			
Belgium (FL)		1		
Denmark			1	
Poland	1			
Norway			1	
Germany	1			1**
Netherlands			1	
Finland	1		1	

* *Sometimes the NOC/NSF was acting in this particular situation as a National Coaching Agency*
** *representing agency (no education of coaches)*

Table 1 – Survey participants by type of organization and country

Methodology

The survey was conducted using Google Forms. Some questions required a text answer where the participants were asked to elaborate on a certain topic while some others asked participants to choose between a number of options. On the latter type, a text box was supplied and participants were asked to rationalize their choices. The survey was filled with the help of interviewers who were able to clarify the questions and ask some further in-depth questions if necessary. Table 2 offers an overview of the survey structure and the questions.

Section Title	Questions	Answer Type
You and your organization	General questions about the person completing the survey and their organisation	Text
Coach Education organizations and the situation of RPL&WBE	Which organisations are involved in coach education in your country and which also conduct RPL	Selection from list
The RPL&WBE system	Describe your existing RPL&WBE system	Text
	How does the RPL&WBE take place in your country or in your sport	Text
Does RPL&WBE take place between different pathways of the coach education market?	Does RPL&WBE take place between different pathways of the coach education market?	Text
Assessment of the competences.	Which competences are assessed?	Text
	How are competences assessed?	Text
	Do you feel the competence assessment methods are appropriate/working?	Yes/No
Challenges in developing the RPL&WBE system	What have been the main barriers to the development or implementation of your RPL&WBE system?	Text
Good Practice	Do you think that your RPL&WBE system or parts of it are an example of best practice?	Yes/No

Table 2 – Survey structure and questions

Text answers were thematically analysed[2] giving rise to a number of main themes and subthemes. Multiple choice questions were tallied up and proportions calculated.

6. Survey Findings

General findings

The survey was completed by 16 respondents representing organizations from 11 European countries. Six out of the 16 participant from four different countries (Germany, UK, Belgium/Flanders and Finland) indicated that they have a formalized RPL system in Coach Education. Only in Belgium/Flanders the

---

[2] Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3(2), 77-101.

system is formalized to include the whole coach education system. In other cases, the RPL system is formalized within a single organization, but not necessarily between different organizations in the same country.

Nearly all respondents indicated that the need for effective and efficient RPL&WBE systems is continuously growing and that they expected the outcomes of project CoachLearn to be of great help for them.

Examples of formal RPL&WBE systems in Coach Education

Only Belgium (Flanders region) has a well-established, mature and nationwide RPL&WBE system. Coach education in Belgium is centralized and it is provided by the National Coach Education Institute called the Flemish Coach Academy (part of BLOSO, the Flemish Sport Agency[3]). The system is individualized according to the needs of the coach.

In the UK, the majority of national governing bodies of sport have integrated their formal education courses into the Qualifications and Credits Framework (formerly the National Qualification Framework) and thus are obliged to have a RPL&WBE system in place. Most of the time, recognition and accreditation is awarded by the national organization in charge of qualifications, examinations and assessment (e.g. Ofqual in England; SQA in Scotland; DCELL in Wales; and CCEA in Northern Ireland). For level 4 courses and above, this is done by Universities. Leeds Beckett University confirmed the existence of a RPL&WBE system, but acknowledge its complexity and the fact that it has only been used twice in the past three years.

Notwithstanding progress, RPL&WBE in coach development in the UK is still grappling with two key issues. First, the RPL&WBE of people outside the regular coach education pathways and second, the willingness of national governing bodies to recognize coaching qualifications obtained in vocational or higher education institutions. In general, however, in the UK the development of a RPL-system seems to get more and more a high priority status.

In Germany, several organisations are involved in Coach Education. The Trainerakademie in Cologne is responsible for the education of Level 4 coaches (e.g. Diplom-Trainer) within the coach license system of the DOSB (German Olympic Sport Federation) and its member federations. There are RPL&WBE systems within the various organisations and some examples of mutual recognition. However, no centralised system exists.

In Finland, Universities (e.g. Haaga-Helia) have a RPL&WBE system for the students based on both the National Qualification Framework and the National Sport specific framework. It appears though as if each institution has a system of its own. Therefore no centralised system is present in Finland.

The way RPL-systems are applied in each of the above countries differs from country to country and from institute to institute. Both Finland and UK indicated that, where the RPL&WBE system(s) are used, there are elements of both formal learning aspects (diplomas; certificates) and informal learning/WBE

---

[3] BLOSO has recently merged with the Department of Sport and is now called Sport Vlaanderen

(self reflection; self documentation; 360 feedback peer reviews and so on). But still, the systems of the different institutes in one country are very different and far from standardised for the whole country.

Special examples

Most of the respondents indicated that they have no formalized RPL&WBE system. It is worth noting that this does not mean there is no RPL&WBE taking place at all. There exist systems for single organizations or special cases.

Denmark indicated that the NOC has some guidelines which are used when necessary (e.g. for example for a physiotherapist who wants to become a coach). The institutional attitude in Denmark is "we will always try to help people to get qualifications in the easiest way, without compromising in quality". This individualised RPL system works well for an organization which is responsible for a part of the coach education system.

In other countries like Italy, Switzerland, Sweden, The Netherlands and Germany (up to level 3) federations tend to play the lead role for RPL&WBE because they are the institution responsible for the certification for the coach. There are no guiding principles in the way how the RPL&WBE is organized and they have often (also within a country) different guidelines. In other countries where there is no national coach education framework (e.g. Sweden and Denmark) creating a standardised RPL&WBE system is more difficult.

An additional issue is the fact that in some countries coaches can be educated in two or more different systems or frameworks (e.g. Germany, Finland and The Netherlands). Different coach education programs in these countries are organized by federations, vocational education and higher education organizations. Data from our survey suggests that it is not always evident that you can switch from one system to another system by undergoing an RPL&WBE process even if an institution has RPL&WBE guidelines.

RPL for (former) Elite Athletes

Eight respondents answered that they have a RPL&WBE system specifically to service former or retiring elite athletes. Elite athletes seem to be a group which organisations are willing to recruit as coaches and to facilitate their RPL&WBE. From a coach development perspective, this population may be one whose prior learning and work-based experience is easier to recognize.

Italy, UK, Switzerland, Sweden, Poland, Norway and Germany informed that some national federations use RPL&WBE for elite athletes on a regular basis. By contrast, in the Netherlands, this takes place very occasionally an only in some federations. How this process occurs differs significantly from country to country. In some cases, there is special program designed specifically for (former) elite Athletes (Switzerland; UK: some federations; Netherlands and Sweden: Football federations, Finland). Sometimes, special dispensation is granted to former athletes to skip some parts of the normal program attended by all other coaching candidates (e.g. Poland). For most countries with RPL&WBE provision for former top athletes, this differs from federation to federation in the way it is organised. Most of the time they use different guidelines. In sum, there does not seem to be an overarching national policy for elite athlete RPL&WBE in most countries.

Good Practices/Examples

Belgium (Flanders) has a very detailed RPL&WBE system developed by BLOSO (now Sport Vlaanderen). It seems to be a good example for other countries to develop guidelines and assessments for both RPL and WBE even when coach education is not organized in a very centralized manner unlike the way it is in the Flanders region. The Belgium system is based on a framework where competences are clearly written. It is highly individualized and it allows learners to acquire even the highest level of qualification based on prior learning and experiences.

sportcoachUK has very detailed guidelines and instructions for federations to conduct RPL&WBE procedures. This is possible thanks to the fact that their coach education system is based on a common framework (The UK Coaching Framework, 2008) and therefore their RPL&WBE guidelines could be a useful reference point for other countries.

Many Universities have guidelines for RPL&WBE for their students. These have been developed in recent years to support the recognition of informal and non-formal learning and the use of more comprehensive competence assessment systems.

In Finland, vocational education is based on competence-based qualification. In order to complete a competence-based qualification, candidates must demonstrate certain skills and competence required in the profession. There is a preparatory education for the qualification, but one can demonstrate the required competences also without education. Therefore, RPL&WBE is automatically built into the system as a central element.

Conclusions

The fundamental element for the development of a formalised national RPL&WBE system is the existence of a national coaching framework. Without a common framework it is very problematic to develop and apply RPL&WBE between education systems and organisations. A European Sport Coaching Framework will support the creation of such systems and therefore the provision of opportunities to study for coaching qualifications and work as a coach inside the EU for all.

Keywords: standardization and/or alignment of existing different framework(s); development of a general/national sport coaching framework, development of a European Sport Coaching Framework (ESCF)

When coach education is offered in different educational sectors (Universities, Vocational Institutes, Federations, etc.) it is not evident that mutual recognition is taking place and therefore there is a need for a national RPL&WBE-system to facilitate it.

Keywords: Mutual recognition and alignment

There is a big difference between the existing guidelines (formalized) and their practical application. In reality, it is important to acknowledge that an efficient and effective working model will be time- and resource-intensive (e.g. workforce and funding). These resources may not always be available.

Keywords: (national) Policy

Future Steps

The survey revealed that there is a need for tools and guidance materials to create systems for RPL & WBE. However, it was also found that the needs of organisations and the solutions available to them to develop an effective system which implements good governance are very diverse. In some cases, there might be a need to create a system which covers the entire coach education structure of a country or sector (e.g. Belgium or UK). On the other hand, there might be need for light touch solutions which are easy to put in use in relatively small organizations. In any case, a critical success factor is the existence of a national or sport-specific framework for coach education and development that RPL&WBE processes can refer to.

In addition, whatever the RPL & WBE system is like, there are some fundamental principles which should be fulfilled (European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning, 2009, p17)

- **Individual entitlements:** Identifying and validating non‑formal and informal learning should, in principle, be a voluntary matter for the individual. There should be equal access and equal and fair treatment for all individuals. The privacy and rights of the individual are to be respected.
- **Stakeholder obligations:** Stakeholders, should establish, in accordance with their rights, responsibilities and competences, systems and approaches for identifying and validating non‑formal and informal learning. These should include appropriate quality assurance mechanisms. Stakeholders should provide guidance, counselling and information about these systems and approaches to individuals.
- **Confidence and trust:** The processes, procedures and criteria for identifying and validating non‑formal and informal learning must be fair, transparent and underpinned by quality assurance mechanisms.
- **Credibility and legitimacy**: Systems and approaches for identifying and validating non‑formal and informal learning should respect the legitimate interests and ensure the balanced participation of the relevant stakeholders.

© CoachLearn

Report compiled by Kirsi Hämäläinen, Jan Minkhorst, Bas van der Heijden, Philipp van Benthem, Sergio Lara-Bercial, Julian North, Ladislav Petrovic, Klaus Oltmanns and Karen Livingstone

Leeds – March 2016

References:

Arene 2009.OPPIMISESTA OSAAMISEEN: AIEMMIN HANKITUN OSAAMISEN TUNNISTAMINEN JA TUNNUSTAMINEN http://www.helsinki.fi/halvi/srno/raportit_ja_julkaisut/AHOT_raportti_2009.pdf

Blomqvist M. & Hämäläinen K. 2015. Valmentajien seurantakysely 2013. KIHUn julkaisusarja nro 49. ISBN 978-952-5676-76-1. Kilpa- ja huippu-urheilun tutkimuskeskus, Jyväskylä.

Cushion, C.J., Armour, K.M., Jones, R.I. 2003. Coach education and continuing development experience and learning to coach. Quest, Aug. 2003; 215-230.

European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning, 2009. http://www.google.fi/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=0ahUKEwiQtdvksqTLAhXpNJ oKHQpgCNcQFgghMAE&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.cedefop.europa.eu%2Ffiles%2F4054_en.pdf&usg=AF QjCNGKS8apoXcGG1KAOOnswAEw1fYtFQ&bvm=bv.115339255,d.bGs

Lemyre, F., Trudel, P., Durand-Bush, N. 2007. How youth-sport Coaches Learn to Coach. The Sport Psychologist, 21; 191-209

Mallet, C.J., Trudel, P., Lyle, J., Rynne, S.B. 2009. Formal vs. Informal Coach Education. International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching. Volume 4, Number 3, 325-334.

Ministry of Education 2004.Recognition of prior learning in the educational system, Reports of the Ministry of Education, Finland 2004:27,

http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Julkaisut/2004/liitteet/opm_212_tr27.pdf?lang=fi

Stenlund, A. 2014 in Mutanen, T., Vanhanen-Nuutinen, L. (eds) Kestääkö innovointi. Oppimista korkeakoulun ja työelämän dialogissa. Metropolia ammattikorkeakoulun julkaisusarja, Taito-työelämäkirjat, Helsinki.

OECD, 2010. Recognizing non-formal and informal learning outcomes, policies and practises. OECD Publishing, France.

UNESCO, 2012. UNESCO Guidelines for the Recognition, Validation and Accreditation of the Outcomes of Non-formal and Informal Learning. UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002163/216360e.pdf