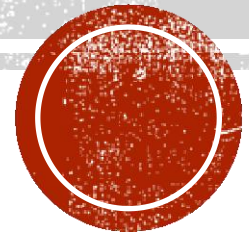


**CHAMPIONING RECOGNITION & CERTIFICATION
FOR INCLUSIVE QUALIFICATION PATHWAYS
TOWARDS LABOUR MOBILITY & PROMOTION IN
THE INFORMAL SECTOR PERSPECTIVES FROM NITA**

25th – 29th August 2025

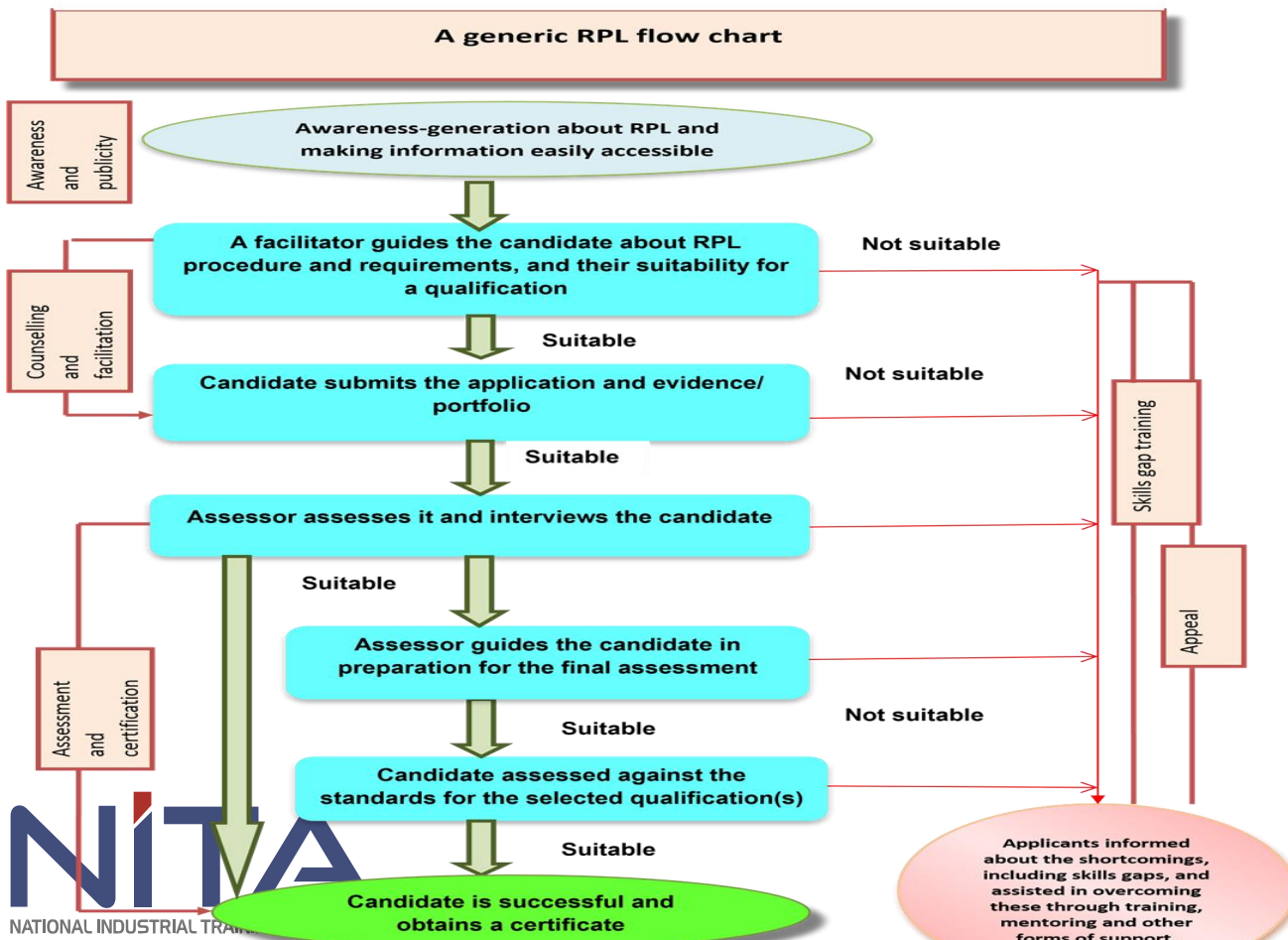
41ST AEAA CONFERENCE IN ADDIS ABABA – ETHIOPIA



By Joseph K. Musyoki, Jane Kamau and Joseph Githinji

ENHANCING SKILLS. INTRODUCTION:- RPL in Kenya

Definition: RPL validates skills and knowledge acquired through formal, informal, or non-formal learning against set criteria, enabling certification without traditional education routes.



•Context:

- ❑ Africa's youth population to exceed 830M by 2050; working-age group to form 85% of global workforce growth
- ❑ 80% of youth work in the informal sector key for employment but lacks formal skill recognition

•Policy Framework:

- ❑ Anchored on **National Qualifications Framework (KNQF)**
- ❑ Governed by the **National RPL Policy**, approved in Jan 2024 & launched in March 2024
- ❑ Coordinated by **KNQA** with support tools: Implementation Guidelines, Standards, MIS, and Training Manuals

•RPL Process:

- ❑ **Key Steps:** Counselling → Evidence Collection → Assessment → Validation → Certification
- ❑ Conducted by QAIs: **TVET-CDACC**, **NITA** (including enhanced Trade Test pathways)

•Impact:

- ❑ Recognizes real-world skills
- ❑ Enhances employability and lifelong learning
- ❑ Promotes **labour mobility**, **social inclusion**, and **cost-effective** qualification access



The Role of RPL in Enhancing Employability within the Informal Sector

Empowering the Workforce

RPL fosters recognition of workers in the informal sector, enhancing employability and career prospects.

Inclusive Skill Validation

The process of validating skills through RPL can significantly uplift marginalized groups in the workforce.

Youth Engagement Strategies

Engaging young people through RPL opens doors for skills development and labor mobility.





Research Objectives



To explore existing best practices and model them to analyze approaches implemented



To develop actionable recommendations for enhancing the recognition and certification



The Methodology

Mixed methods
(qualitative +
quantitative)

Qualitative: Desk
review of policies,
case studies,
ILO/UNESCO
guidelines

Quantitative:
Comparative analysis
of secondary data
from RPL assessments
over the past 2 years
&

Case study from
Affordable Housing
Project (AHP)

APH Case Study
Sample: 567
construction workers
across 20 sites

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: - Review of RPL Implementation in Kenya

Policy Progress:

- ❑ Kenya launched the **National RPL Policy in March 2024** (KNQA, 2025), enabling national recognition of skills gained outside formal education
- ❑ **NITA** aligned its frameworks (e.g., Industrial Training Act, Trade Testing Rules) to support broader RPL implementation

Assessment Trends:

- ❑ Over **10,000 individuals assessed** via RPL; **19.9%** were non-Kenyans (e.g., from South Sudan, Ethiopia – ILO PROSPECTS)
- ❑ **62.5% of candidates** were **youth aged 18–34**

High-Demand Skill Areas:

- ❑ **Cosmetology, construction, hospitality, and automotive** topped RPL assessments, mirroring trade test trends

Assessment Costs:

- ❑ **Grade III (KNQF Level 2):** ~\$77.37 USD
- ❑ **Master Craftsperson III: (KNQF Level 5):** ~\$154.74 USD
- ❑ Cost remains a **barrier for informal workers**

Certification & Employment Impact:

- ❑ **RPL certifications** issued by NITA are aligned with NSC Pathways & **National Trade Testing**
- ❑ Linked to **minimum wage compliance**, currently:
 - ✓ KES 27,352.45 (~\$211.62 USD) for full-time workers
 - ✓ KES 36,360.92 (~\$281.32 USD) for higher-skilled workers



CONTINUATION...RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

- There was disjoint in packaging of OCS in traditional trades and industry practices which necessitated assessment in new trade areas such as Barbering, Formwork and Scaffolding, among others.
- Most of the skills acquired was informal. However, there was noted growth of structured non-formal training spearheaded by **Master craft persons (MCPs)**
- Most MCPs **operated SMEs and pioneered structured non formal training in the Jua Kali sector, leading to additional income stream.**
- **NITA recognized and utilised MCPs as industry practitioners in RPL skills verification & assessments**
- **Structured Labour mobility & RPL** provided framework for formal recognition of skills acquired through national skills transfer programs



AHP CASE STUDY FINDINGS

- AHP is a transformative national program geared towards providing decent, safe, and affordable housing for Kenyans, while creating jobs and earning opportunities.

94% male, 6% female (all aged 18–35)

96% between 18–35 years

72% no formal qualification

Top trades: Masonry (41%), Carpentry/Joinery, Steel Fixing

Skills acquisition:
52% on-the-job,
22% mentorship,
24% formal training

- Better earning protected under the minimum wage for workers who acquired skills informally after RPL assessments & certification
- Young people initially engaged as unskilled workers were recommended by foremen for assessment upon acquisition of skills
- AHP were linked Jua kali MSMEs which are spring board for skills acquisition for supply of inputs including industrial building materials, doors, and windows.



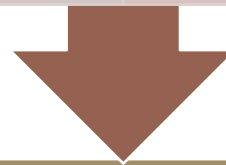


Gender Dynamics & Workforce Profile

Gender Bias

- **Male-dominated trades:** General masonry, carpentry, and steel fixing

- **Female-dominated trades:** Hospitality and cosmetology



Workforce Profile

- Mostly **young, unskilled or informally trained males** (94% male, 6% female (all aged 18–35))

- Strong **self-confidence** in trade skills and high **interest in RPL certification** (96% rated themselves 'Experienced' or 'Highly Experienced' and 99% were interested in RPL assessment)



Implication

- Highlights need for **gender-responsive** and **targeted certification pathways**

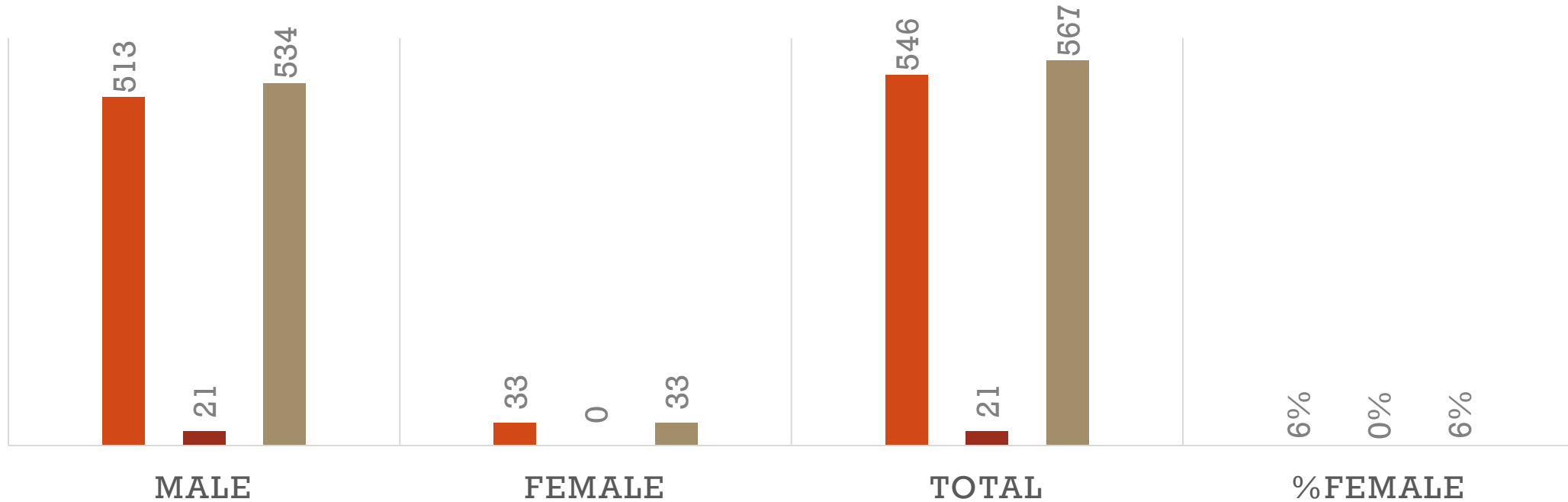
- Supports strategic **skills development** and **workforce planning** for quality, safety, and sustainability in Kenya's construction sector



Gender and Age Distribution

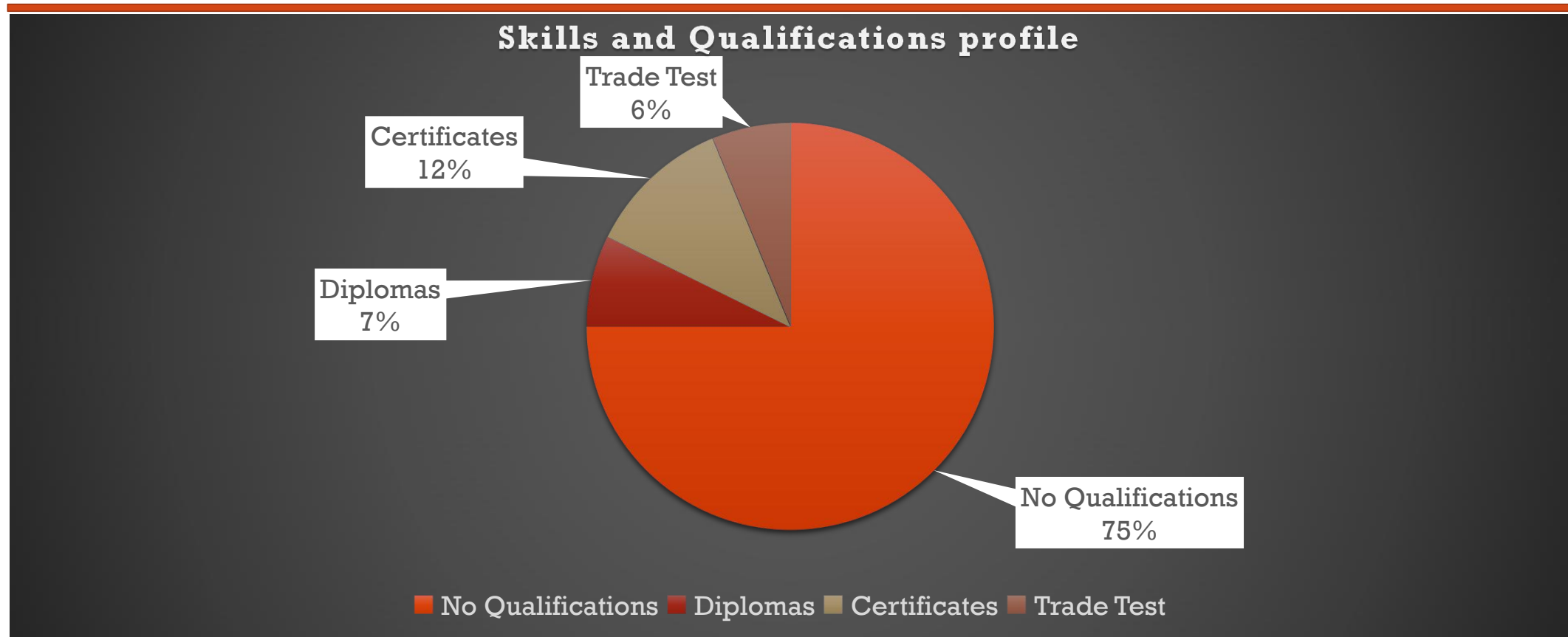
GENDER AND AGE DISTRIBUTION

■ 18 - 35 yrs. ■ Above 35 years ■ Total



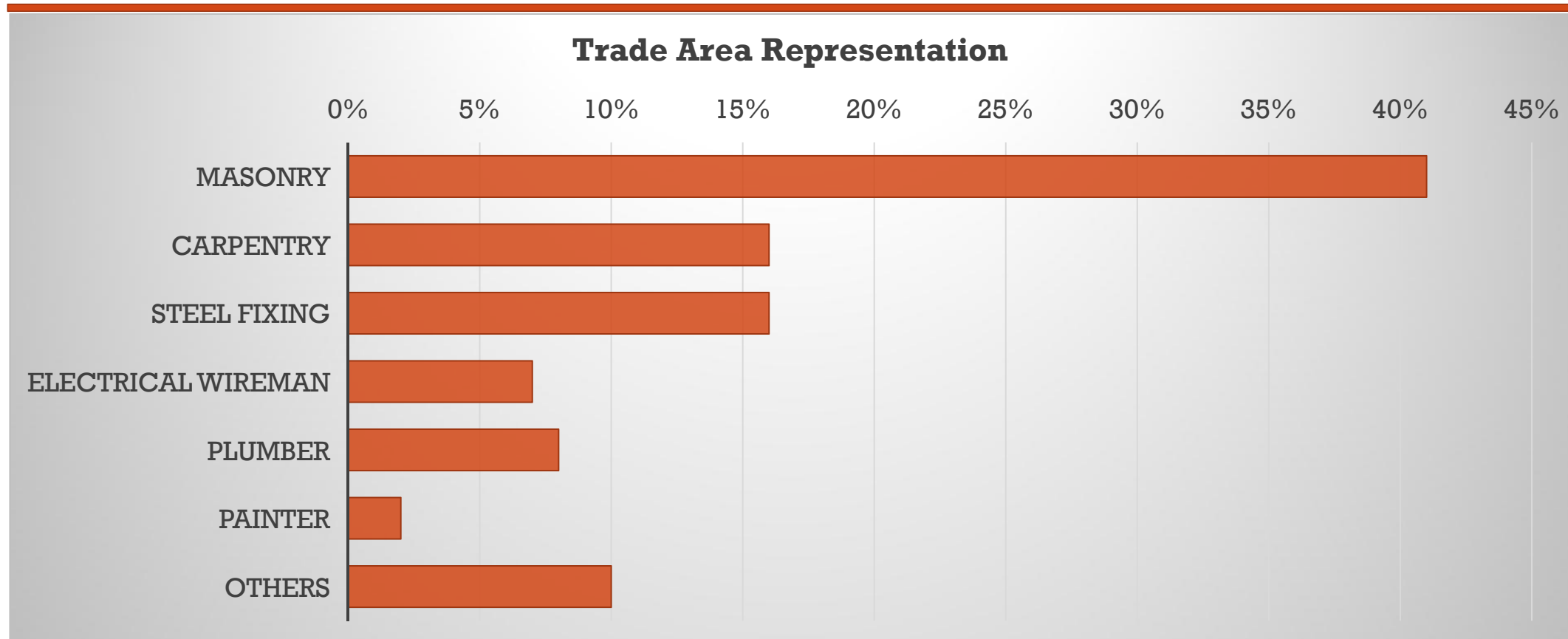


Skills and Qualifications Profile





Trade Area Representation





Findings – Experience and Readiness

- 96% rated themselves 'Experienced' or 'Highly Experienced'
- 99% ready for NITA assessment
- Costs: \$77–\$154 USD – **was cited as major barrier**
- 99.8% interested in RPL sponsorship





Sector Insights

High demand: Masonry, Carpentry, Steel Fixing

Low representation: Floor Tiling, Form Work

Gender imbalance & youth dominance

Gaps in technical certifications





Key barriers to RPL Implementation for Low-income Workers



Cost of Assessment

High costs associated with RPL assessments hinder access low-income workers seeking certification.



Lack of Awareness

Many individuals in the informal sector are unaware of RPL opportunities, limiting their participation.



Institutional Challenges

Insufficient institutional capacity hampers effective RPL implementation across various regions.





Recommendations

Establishment of on-site or mobile assessment centers

Targeted recruitment for female participation in some sectors

Gender-sensitive training & workplace policies

Large-scale subsidized RPL programs

Mentorship for underprepared candidates

Prioritize high-demand trades

Balance specialization in underrepresented trades





Conclusion

- RPL is a transformative pathway for skills formalization, labour mobility, and equity for economies with large informal sectors.
- Kenya has strong policy foundation (RPL Policy 2024)
- Cost & access barriers persist – need subsidized, inclusive RPL assessment pathways
- Upscaling RPL can unlock productivity, career growth, and economic transformation





THANK YOU

GET IN TOUCH

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