QUALIFICATIONS AND RECOGNITION: QUALITY ASSURANCE AS A TOOL TO PROMOTE RECOGNITION OF HIGHER EDUCATION OUTCOMES

INQAAHE 2019 Workshop 3

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AIMS/OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

By the end of the workshop, participants will:

- Be aware of the approaches that a number countries and regions use to recognise local and foreign higher education qualifications

- Have identified challenges facing the recognition of qualifications in the frames of global developments

- Have considered the dependence of qualification recognition on the underpinning mechanisms for quality assurance and the fostering of trust

- Have identified and discussed implications of the challenges and development in this area for their own national context

WORKSHOP OUTLINE

- Introductions

- Presentation on current approaches and challenges

- Consideration of case studies and focus questions

- Feedback discussion on focus questions

- Conclusions

- Individual reflection and buddying

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDG) 2030: GOAL 4

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

SDG GOAL 4, TARGET 4.3: INDICATIVE STRATEGIES

Ensure *quality assurance, comparability and recognition of tertiary education qualifications* and facilitate credit transfers between recognized tertiary education institutions.

Strengthen international cooperation in developing cross-border tertiary and university education and research programmes, including *within the framework of global and regional conventions on the recognition of higher education qualifications,* to support increased access, better quality assurance and capacity development
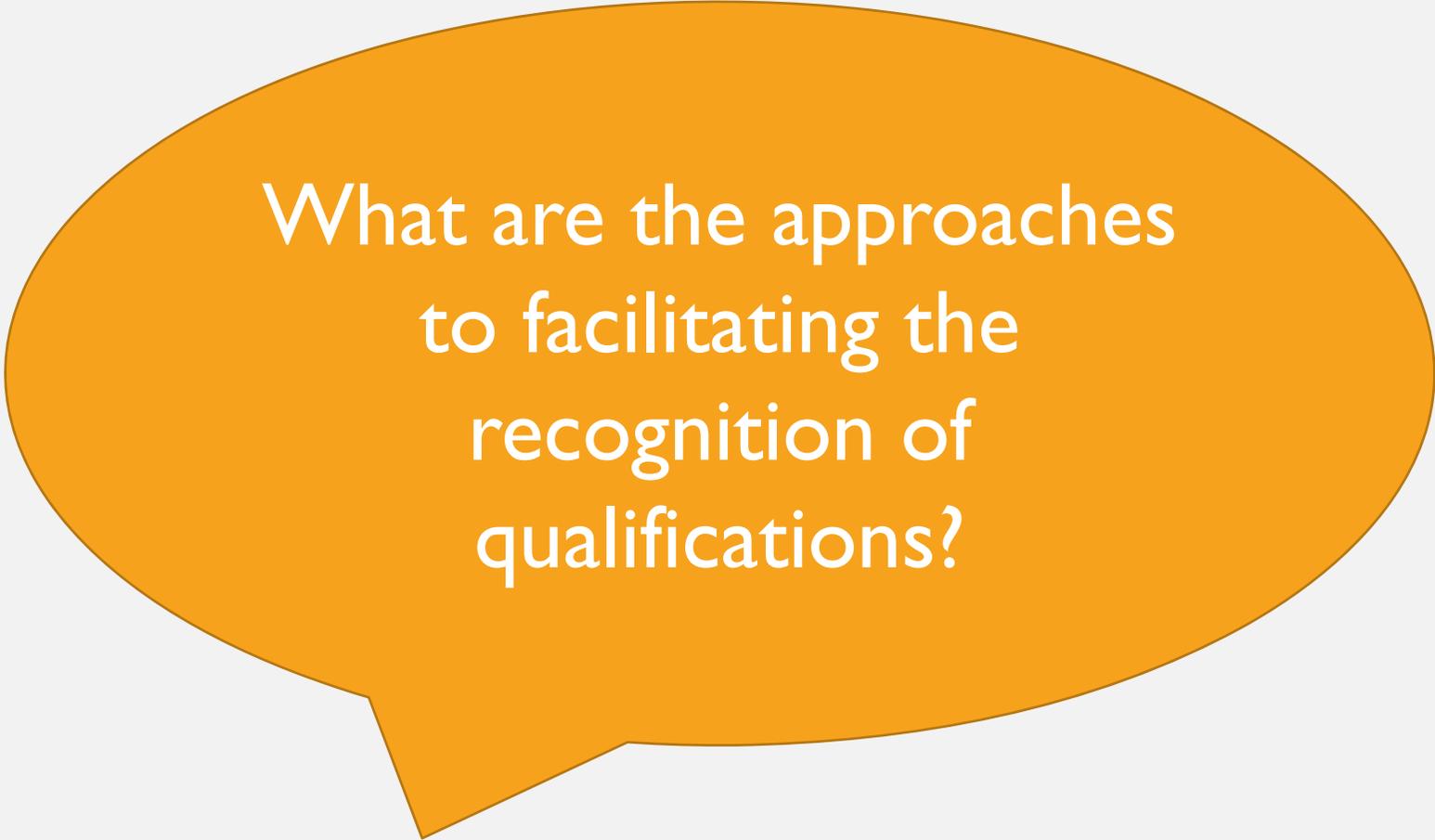
APPROACHES TO FACILITATING THE RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Government policy (such lists of approved institutions)

- Agencies for recognition and comparison of qualifications (such as the NARIC network)

- Qualifications Frameworks (allowing comparison of foreign qualifications)

- Metaframeworks (such as the EQF, ASEAN qualifications reference framework)

- Conventions (such as Lisbon Convention, Tokyo Recognition Convention, future Global Convention)

- Free trade agreements/intranational service agreements

DEFINITION OF A QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

A qualifications framework is an instrument for the development and classification of qualifications. *In their most basic sense NQFs can be understood as classifiers specifying the relationship – horizontally and vertically - between different qualifications within a national system**. A comprehensive qualifications framework is one that covers all levels and types of education, both academic and vocational.*

European Area of Recognition Project Manual 2012
http://www.eurorecognition.eu/emanual/Chapter%207/introduction.aspx

Australian Qualifications Framework

- Certificate I
- Certificate II
- Certificate III
- Certificate IV
- Diploma
- Advanced Diploma / Associate Degree
- Bachelor Degree
- Bachelor Honours Degree / Graduate Certificate / Vocational Graduate Certificate / Graduate Diploma / Vocational Graduate Diploma
- Masters Degree
- Doctoral Degree

Senior Secondary Certificate of Education

AQF

Level	Band	Professional Pathway	Academic Pathway	Technological Pathway	Vocational Pathway	RPL[1]
10	Higher Education (Post – school)	Professional qualification 5	Doctorate	Doctorate of Technology	[New qualifications may be developed]	N/A[2]
9		Professional qualification 4	Master / PG Diploma	Master of Technology	[New qualifications may be developed]	
8		Professional qualification 3	Bachelor / Graduate Diploma	Bachelor of Technology	[New qualifications may be developed]	
7		Professional qualification 2	Advanced Diploma	Advanced Diploma of Technology	[New qualifications may be developed]	
6		Professional qualification 1	Diploma	Diploma of Technology	Vocational Diploma	
5		Introductory Professional qualification	Certificate	Certificate of Technology	Certificate of Vocational Competency 3	
4	Schooling	General Education Diploma			General Vocational Diploma / Certificate of Vocational Competency 2	
3		General Certificate of Basic Education			General Vocational Certificate / Certificate of Vocational Competency 1	
2		[New qualifications to be developed]			[New qualifications to be developed]	
1	Literacy	Access				

Oman Qualifications Framework Diagram 2018

QFEmirates

Associate Degree

Higher Diploma

Bachelor

Diploma

Advanced Diploma

Post Graduate Diploma

Certificate 4

Applied Bachelor

Certificate 3

Applied Graduate Diploma

Master

Certificate 2

Secondary School Certificate (G 12)

Doctoral

Certificate 1

TBA

Applied Master

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

QF Emirates | مجموعة المؤهلات الإماراتية
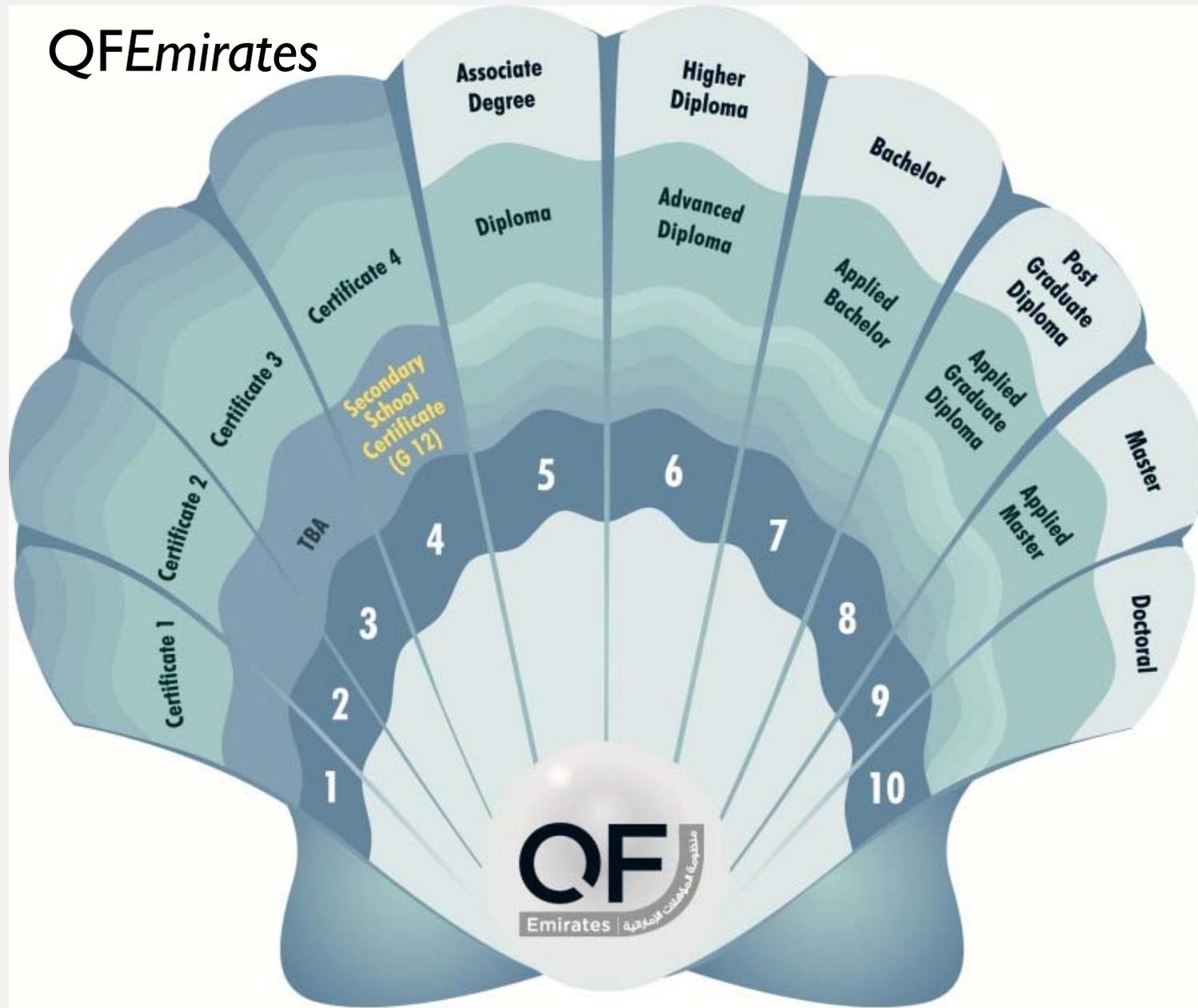
Higher education

Vocational education and training

General (secondary) education

GLOBAL CONCEPT OF NATIONAL QFS

Modern NQFs can…be described as *'instruments with a vision'* *questioning current education and training practices, and challenging existing professional and sectoral interests.*

Designing an NQF is thus something more than agreeing on a set of technical features ([for example] as a grid of levels and descriptors), *it is about creating a platform for cross-institutional and cross-sectoral dialogue and – eventually – mutual trust.*

Bjornavold & Coles (2009) '*The added value of national qualifications frameworks in implementing the EQF*' cited in
https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/m/720E67F5F1CC3E1DC125791A0038E688_Transnational%20qualifications%20frameworks.pdf

TRUST

To be of any value, a qualification must be trusted. Whether a certificate or diploma can be used for employment or further education *largely depends on the learning outcomes acquired by the individual* who has completed a programme and passed the required exams. *Systematic quality assurance arrangements underpin trust…*Qualifications frameworks aim to make it easier for individuals to use qualifications across institutional and national borders.This requires describing qualifications as learning outcomes. *Systematic quality assurance makes it possible to judge whether there is real value in the [qualification] presented by the candidate.*

HOW DO YOU TRUST A QUALIFICATION?

To understand how a qualification can be trusted it is important to look at the definition of qualification and identify the key elements that need to be quality assured. These are:

(a) the learning outcomes: the knowledge, skills and competences that the holder of a qualification should have;

(b) the assessment and validation process;

(c) the standards against which learning, assessment and validation have taken place.

QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE QUALIFICATIONS PROCESS

| Qualifications are developed | → | Qualifications are placed in the qualifications system | → | Assessment institutions are accredited | → | Qualification processes are quality assured | → | Qualifications are endorsed | → | Successful learners are awarded qualifications |
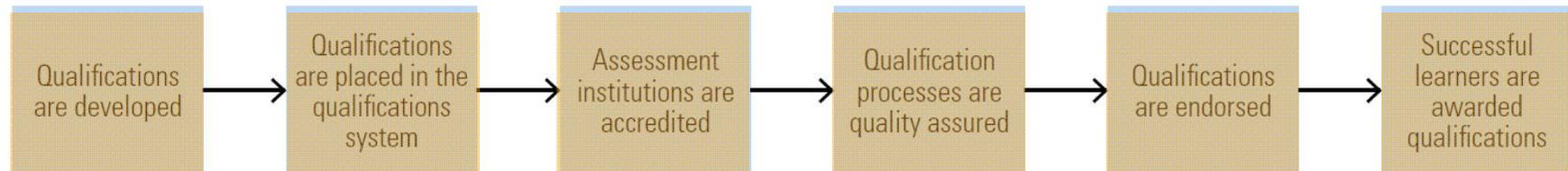
Source: Adapted from ETF (2016) and Bateman et al. (2016).

UNESCO Global inventory of regional and national qualifications frameworks 2017 p.87
http://uil.unesco.org/lifelong-learning/qualification-frameworks/global-inventory-regional-and-national-qualifications-0

VALUE AND COMPARABILITY

Examination results are social facts. Like bank notes they depend for their value on the status that is accorded to them within a social system… *all attempts to define 'equivalence' independently of the social setting in which they are created have failed**, and indeed are bound to fail.*

Two qualifications are comparable only to the extent that *there are people who are prepared to believe that they are comparable, and trust awarding institutions or bodies equally**.*

Allais (2010) The implementation and impact of National Qualifications Frameworks: Report of a study in 16 countries
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_emp/@ifp_skills/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_126589.pdf

What are the challenges facing the recognition of local and/or foreign qualifications in your country or context?

CHALLENGES

- A number of different bodies may be involved in recognition within a single jurisdiction
- Growth in micro credentials
- Recognition of delivery methods, e.g. online delivery
- Different quality assurance approaches and practices managed by different bodies; accreditation
- International reputation of higher education providers
- Qualifications as context-specific indicators of learning
- Language in which qualification was taken
- Divide between developed and developing worlds
- Fake degrees/degree mills
- Trust

CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY 1: AUSTRALIA

Recognition of qualifications, qualifications frameworks, shorter form credentials, and the role of quality assurance

CASE STUDY 1: AUSTRALIA

- What system does your country use to recognize qualifications? Are shorter form qualifications recognized? And, if so, how is this done?

- What are the challenges of recognizing shorter form qualifications?

- What systems could be put in place to quality assure shorter form qualifications so that they are "trusted" for inclusion in a qualifications framework?

- Is there a role for Quality Assurance agencies to develop a set of guiding principles (or tools) to assist recognition considerations of shorter form qualifications?

CASE STUDY 2:
CHINA- AUSTRALIA

Transnational Education qualifications

CASE STUDY 2: CHINA- AUSTRALIA

- Describe the transnational delivery activity undertaken by your country. What systems are in place to ensure that programs delivered by TNE are quality assured?

- How important are free trade agreements for the recognition and mobility of qualifications?

- What challenges does your country face in having TNE delivered qualifications recognized? If TNE programs are delivered online include this in your consideration.

- What could be the role of Quality Assurance agencies in developing a set of guiding principles (or tools) to assist recognition considerations of TNE delivered qualifications? Include consideration of programs delivered online.

- Do what extent can regional conventions support the recognition of TNE qualifications? To what extent can they support the recognition of different modes of delivery, e.g. online?

CASE STUDY 3: OMAN

Joined-up approaches to accreditation, implementing the qualifications framework and quality assurance

CASE STUDY 3: OMAN

- Which bodies are responsible for (1) accreditation/external quality assurance (in higher education) and (2) qualifications frameworks/recognition of qualifications in your country or a context that you are familiar with?

- How do these bodies liaise? Is there a joined-up approach?

- What mechanisms are in place to support the quality assurance of qualifications in your country or in a context you are familiar with?

- Are there clear pathways from vocational to higher education qualifications? Vice versa? What is the role of quality assurance in the different sectors?

CASE STUDY 4: UAE

Portability of qualifications and mobility of learners

CASE STUDY 4: UAE

- To what extent do you think the Sustainable Development Goals have the potential to drive change in terms of comparability and recognition of qualifications in your country or a context that you are familiar with?

- Are you familiar with challenges facing in-country recognition of qualifications, either earned in country or as a result of studying overseas? How can these be addressed?

- Do the different approaches to external quality assurance have an impact on recognition of qualifications from one educational context to another?

- To what extent can international or regional conventions support the recognition of qualifications, either within a single country or from one educational context to another?
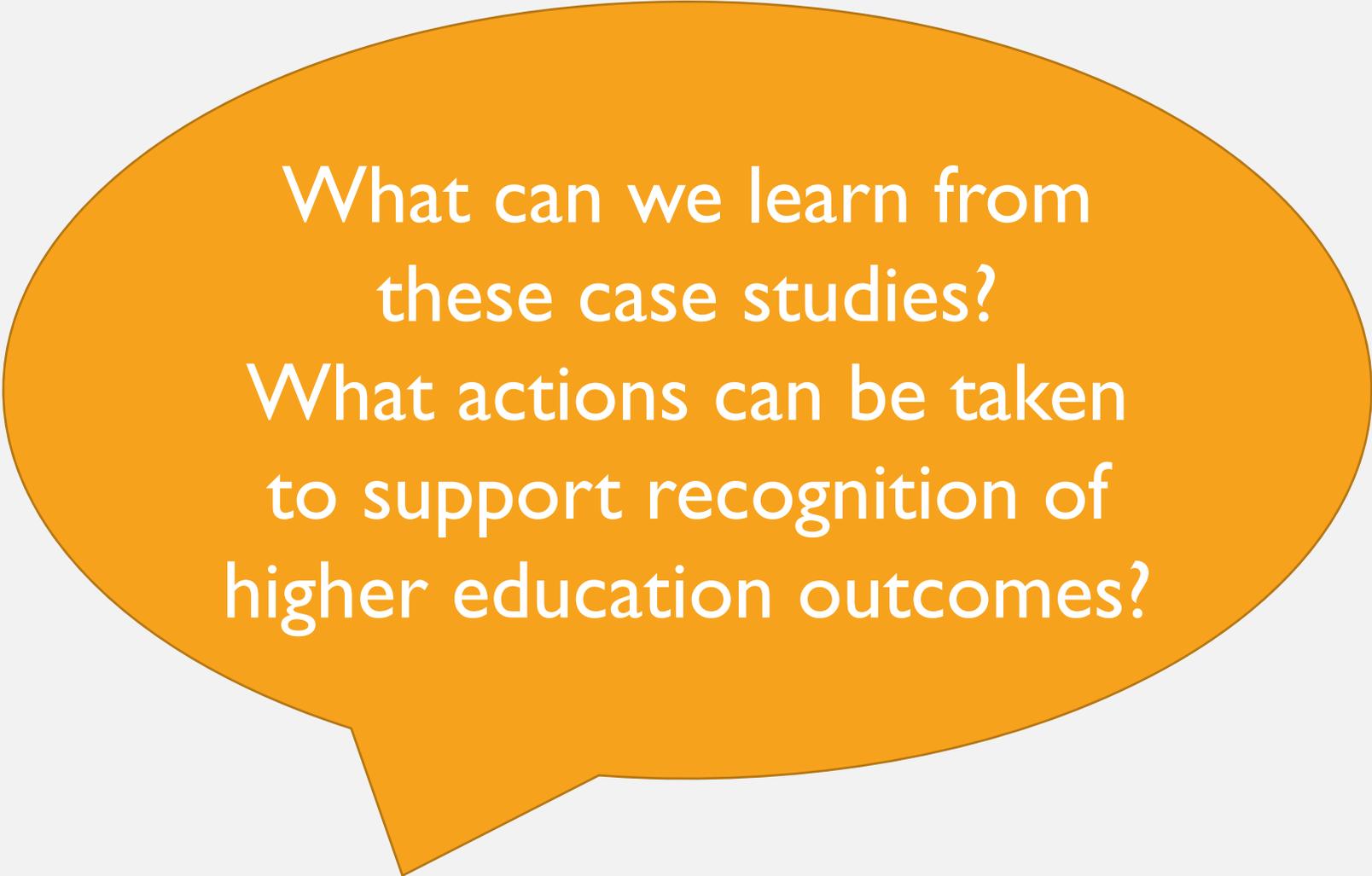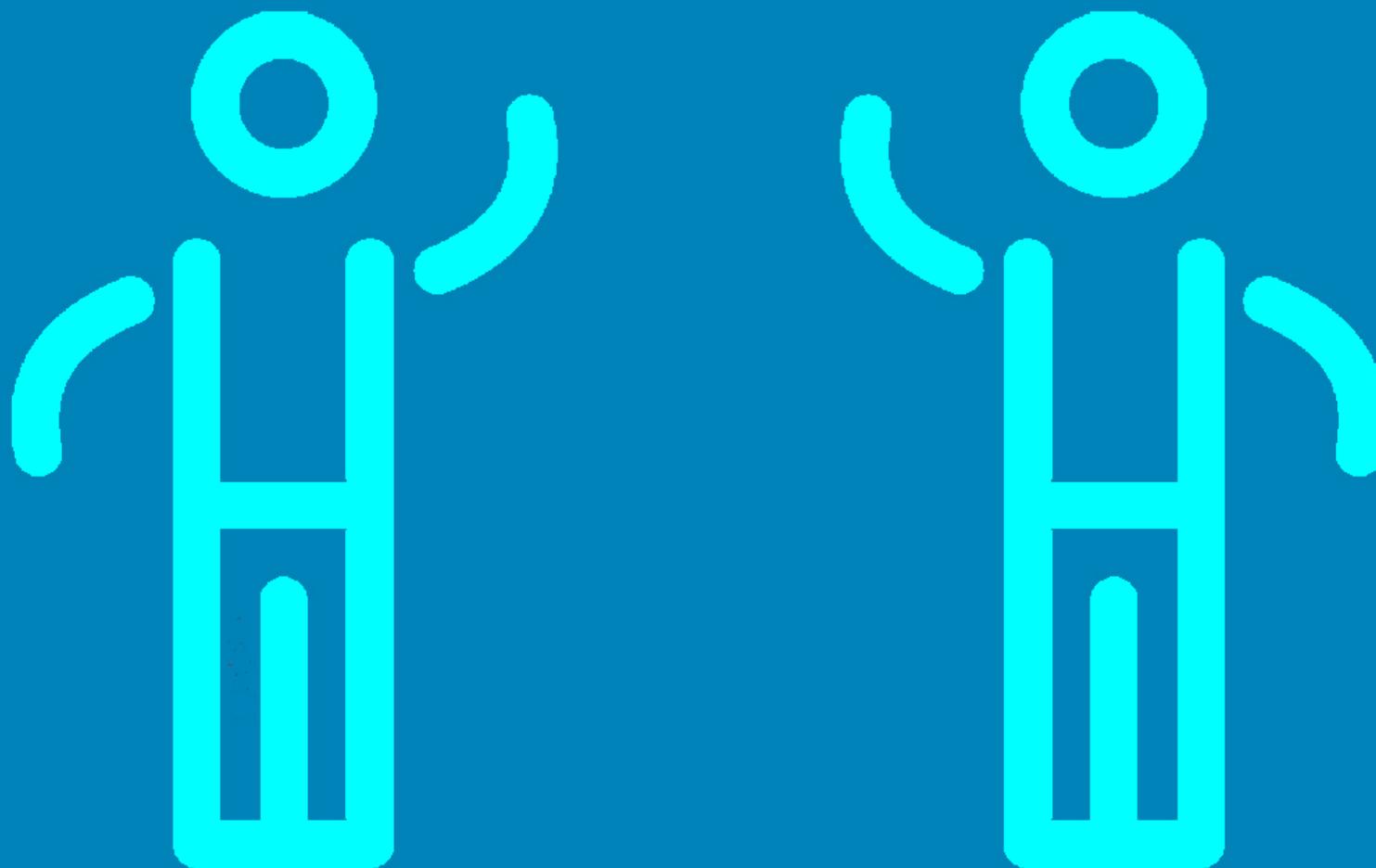
Find a Buddy

THANK YOU

- To Prof Ian Cumbus, Qualifications Framework Expert, UK

- To Margaret Cameron, Oman Qualifications Framework Project, Oman Academic Accreditation Authority, Oman

- To our workshop participants

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