

You Can't Forget the Person: An Interview with Deb Carr

Nan Travers, Credential As You Go, and Alan Mandell, SUNY Empire State University, USA

Deb Carr is an Australian-based consultant and independent researcher with extensive international experience in TVET policy, quality assurance, and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). She specializes in driving impactful changes in skills recognition for vulnerable groups.

Alan Mandell: Deb, thank you for doing this. We are doing a number of interviews with people who engage in this theme and this RPL/PLA/VPL work. We're really grateful that you are taking the time with us.

Deb Carr: My pleasure.

Nan Travers: More specifically, we are interested in diverse ways that people are responding to refugees, migrant workers, and displaced people by assessing prior learning to help people be recognized for what they know and can do for further education and/or employment. We know, Deb, that you've been doing work in this space for quite a while. And over the years, I've heard little bits and pieces, but I also realized that I don't have a full picture of what your work has been. So, we thought we would start off by asking you to talk about the work that you've been doing over the past years and give us some examples so there are ways that people can hear how things are working in action, including some of the struggles and some of the solutions.

Alan Mandell: Just to add one more element. When we began this journal about a dozen years ago, I think the relationship between PLA and social justice was at the heart of our thinking. And in this particular issue, our 9th, we are returning to that theme and to the connections between PLA work and trying to respond to the needs of populations that are often excluded. That's something of the larger philosophical context of why we're doing this issue and why we're so interested in speaking with you.

Deb Carr: Thank you both. I've just jotted down some ideas about what my experiences have been in terms of my consultancy, and also writing and interviewing other people in what I'm calling "skills recognition" because it's much broader than how we usually think about it. People like to pigeonhole recognition of prior learning (RPL) into a formal assessment process towards a part or full credential. My advocacy is for the person, as sometimes that credential path doesn't suit the person. That's why I'm labelling my expertise, passion, and advocacy around skills recognition, which is also my PhD focus. It is about recognition driven by the individual. Why do they want to be recognized and how is it most useful for them? And sometimes that might be a qualification, sometimes that might be a promotion, sometimes that might be a digital resume. It's really about making what a person can do and know, more visible for currency in their worlds--the

education world, the work world, and in their social and community world. These three recognitions in these three spaces are of value to all people but at different times and in different ways. That's why we've got to take that framing into account. When I say skills recognition, that's what I mean, not just the summative assessment process towards a qualification.

Alan Mandell: Sorry to interrupt, Deb, but I wanted to acknowledge the importance of the phrase "more visible." So interesting that you use that phrase.

Deb Carr: It's all about visibility. And sometimes it's about visibility to themselves as well, because when they go through the process, they become more aware of the extent of what they know and can do because it brings words to it and words are so powerful, even their own self-language. It's all about visibility for me, absolutely.

Nan Travers: We know you've worked with different countries in different capacities, and with UNESCO too. It would be helpful to have this background in terms of the kind of work that you've done with recognition.

Deb Carr: My work in skills recognition with refugees and migrants really started off with the UNESCO Global Guidelines for refugees and migrants. I was engaged by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), and my focus was Thailand. I worked with and studied the Thai Professional Qualification Institute (TPQI), a national skills recognition system. It's an assessment-only institute for professional qualifications serving mainly Thai citizens. They started reaching out to refugees and migrants from neighboring countries. After I completed the Thai country report, I was engaged to conduct a literature review on materials from across the globe on what works and what does not when recognizing skills and knowledge of migrants and refugees. This resulted in four pillars common in all literature that I wrote about in the recent special issue of PLAIO--that's enabling policy, assessment practice, awareness and pre- and post supports, and country system readiness. I've since evolved these pillars into a framework with 107 success factors.

Alan Mandell: Can I just stop you for one second if you don't mind, Deb, to ask you to talk a little about the Thailand experience? Am I right that many of the refugees there are from Myanmar?

Deb Carr: Yes, but importantly, they are not refugees that participate in the skills recognition program. They are mainly skilled migrants and work with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The program is called PROMISE¹, in which they say, "low skilled is not no skilled." It's a great phrase because recognizing the skills of cleaners, for example from Myanmar, allows them more agency in the workplace. They get better pay and when they can get a qualification on their return to Myanmar, they're able to access better jobs and that was the kind of circular skilled migration economy that they were trialing and they're still doing that now.

I also looked into the work that the ILO and the Government of the Republic of Korea are participating in, around the Regional Model Competency Standards (2006) which function as a regional reference point for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Member States that do not have well-developed national skills standards. However, the standards are still not being used to assess competency gained from

informal and non-formal learning. Many employers don't have the capacity to conduct skills assessment, but TPQI does. TPQI are experts in doing just that. They use the requirements of the ISO/IEC 17024 Standard as a standard to conduct assessment of competence. That's the International Organization for Standardization, and the 17024 is an international standard to conduct assessments for and certify competent people. They apply that standard for skills assessment and so they are experts at doing that and have arrangements where they will accredit.

Alan Mandell: So, some of these people are migrants?

Deb Carr: Yes, for certain projects such as the [IOM's PROMISE program](#). Through TPQI, employer organizations are able to co-assess their employees and sometimes these are migrants. They are doing that assessment work around workers along the Mekong River. Because the river goes through many different countries, it is economically efficient to have a single standard that goes across workplace skills across countries because it's one project and different countries. For me, a key enabler (and this is what I haven't seen before) is they have professional qualifications *inside* the national qualification framework. So that gives someone with a professional qualification a currency to move through qualifications, but its primary currency is in the workplace. I wrote about some of this work in my recent essay in the special issue of *PLAIO*, "[Measuring Democracy in Design for Migrant and Refugee Skills Recognition.](#)"

In terms of adult migrants and refugees in Thailand, outside targeted and internationally supported programs, I don't know how they can access the education system. I have a feeling that they cannot or that it is difficult and depends on their legal status. There is the adult learning sector, and there are some not-for-profit and religious organizations in northern Thailand conducting skills recognition, but there's never a formal outcome and they can't move away from that space.

Nan Travers: Are there other barriers that you have found?

Deb Carr: A barrier that a lot of countries have, including Thailand, is that migrants can only have *some* jobs. There's lots of jobs that migrants *cannot* have. The primary purpose is to protect the domestic labour market and ensure that citizens have access to certain jobs. For example, in Thailand, some people-facing work (such as tour guiding, shop attendance, haircutting or beauty treatment) is excluded. I think it's got to do with "look" –a cultural preference for locals in certain roles, particularly to preserve cultural authenticity for some roles such as traditional Thai massage, and, of course, language is an underlying reason for many restrictions. Many countries aim to protect lower skilled jobs for employment for their own citizens. This is why a migration system for a country will be designed to attract highly skilled workers, professionals, and those with specialized expertise that fills a genuine labour market gap. Prohibited occupation lists and the focus on skilled migration systems function as a significant barrier for refugees in Thailand (and in many countries) because refugees are typically not highly skilled. Noted, lack of work rights is the primary barrier for refugees, but these other barriers add elements of complexity.

Alan Mandell: That is so interesting to me, Deb. It seems so counter intuitive. Wouldn't one think that the kinds of positions that would be open to migrants would be people

on that *lower* skill level, and yet you are describing that they're excluded from those jobs because countries want their own people to have those positions.

Deb Carr: I did a course with the International Labour Organization and that was a trick question that I got wrong! I too was really surprised. Here in Australia, we've got a skilled migration strategy where we're targeting those high-skilled people. However, during COVID, seasonal workers were unable to return. These are the jobs that are out in regional and remote areas that our own people weren't doing and didn't want to do. As a country, and this is not unusual, we depend economically on our seasonal workers. And it's not just low skilled workers. There were some farmers talking on a popular country-radio broadcast chatting about how these seasonal workers that come back each year operate machinery worth a quarter of a million dollars. They don't want low skilled people. These are highly skilled people (categorized as low-skilled) who operate expensive machinery.

Nan Travers: And so, are there agreements with countries to solidify these strategies?

Deb Carr: Yes. They are called Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) and are very complex. Those in agreement begin to look into what jobs are open and what jobs are not. Australia has just signed a MRA with India, our first mutual recognition of qualifications. The countries did it with engineering in mind, but it's not limited to any particular occupation. It's just an open agreement between our skills ministry and their skills ministry that states we are going to recognize each other's training and qualifications.

Thailand has the most mature and biggest national skills assessment body that I know of in the world. They are a public organization that is overseen by the Office of the Prime Minister. They don't belong to the Skills Ministry or the Education Ministry and that allows them so much more movement. Sometimes one of the biggest barriers at the national policy level is getting the Skills Ministry, the Migration Ministry, and the Education Ministries talking and cooperating; sometimes they unknowingly work in opposition to each other. In Australia, we've got the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the Department of Education, and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (inclusive of the skills portfolio), and they don't talk to each other as much as they should!

Actually, I'm now working on a research report for Vietnam on the recognition of prior learning in Australia. Vietnam is interested in strengthening its RPL system and will use this report for policy formation, not that Australia has a perfect system! In this case, our DFAT is helping Vietnam gather intel to build its recognition system. This assistance is through DFAT; however, DFAT doesn't have the expertise because it's focused on migration--not education nor skills. It's not really in their wheelhouse. From my perspective, they do not recognize its potential beyond skilled migration. It's pretty silly, but it is an inhibitor not to have those three ministries collaborating. This is not a problem for TPQI operations, the public organization sits *above* that; they don't belong to any one ministry.

Alan Mandell: Deb, you also did work with huge projects in Saudi Arabia.

Deb Carr: These are the biggest national building projects happening in the world at this moment. They're just massive, giga-projects. The Kingdom needs skills, they need skilled people, millions of people. Employers weren't happy, they weren't getting the skills they needed. There was a system in place, more around employment services, which were crossing borders and bringing people in, and it wasn't working. They weren't getting the type of skills they needed nor the quality of skills that they needed. So, they wanted to invest in a quality-assured skills recognition system, so that they can be certain of the level and type of skills. What they decided to do is conduct skills assessment under a quality assurance framework in the migrant-sending country rather than in Saudi Arabia. That is terrific because one of the enablers for skills assessment for migrants is that the assessment instructions can then be in the language of the candidate, and the mentoring and support can also be in the candidate's language. Interestingly, this has been implemented in four countries and is planned for eight more. There's more than 70,000 people already assessed. There are 70 accredited assessment centers in India alone.

From my experience, I knew that the vocational, education and training, the VET sector, is the infrastructure that you want to mobilize because the VET sector is experienced with competency-based assessment, which is what you need.

Nan Travers: How are these assessments being done? What kinds of structures exist around them? When you're talking about people coming out of different kinds of learning situations how are they doing those assessments?

Deb Carr: They're not assessing learning, they're assessing skills. So, they have a written assessment and a practical assessment. And I think, I absolutely don't know, they'll also have an interview. I wish they would, but I don't think they do. It takes three hours. The quality assurance system for assessment practice that I built was around the principles of assessment and the rules of evidence, so that assessment is impartial, fair, and flexible. The practical assessments are designed and validated by industry experts. There's no academia at all. There may be some educational experts in the actual assessment centers because usually they're well-connected with vocational institutions. India is a great case study because they have four renditions of their national skills assessment program (quite apart from the Saudi scheme) now with the third version being digitized. Every person in India has a right to skills assessment and receive a payment to do it. Their system is digitized and quality assured. They know quality assurance very well.

Alan Mandell: Can I just go back to one question: What has to happen for the Saudis to accept the legitimacy of the skills assessment done in India or the other countries that will be doing the assessments? Why would they necessarily accept the results of this work?

Deb Carr: Because of the quality assurance framework we (I worked with Palladium Group) created. I established quality assurance at 3 levels, practice level that I just described (principles of assessment and rules of evidence); institution level; and regulator level. Each assessment center gets accredited with the program (the accrediting institute can be an in-country VET sector regulator or Saudi government) through Accreditation Standards and an Audit Program. They are accredited and

audited for their accreditation, the assessment centers are expected to maintain internal validation processes, and they must submit paperwork to become accredited. Much of this depends on the maturity of the VET sector of the country; for example, Egypt's VET sector is not terribly mature so assessment centers' accreditation might go straight to Saudi, and thus the Kingdom will be the regulators of those accreditation centers. However, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Thailand are much more advanced, and so the regulator might be the regulator of the VET sector within that country and then the Kingdom will work with the regulator there. All of this depends on country-to-country negotiations. The key is that the assessment centers themselves have to become accredited, and standards include the competencies of the assessors. All of this concerns how you internally govern impartiality. So, I also drafted standards for the regulators and a complete audit program. There's thus a process for these test centers, from initial accreditation through to self-accrediting, and the test centers move through that over the years as they mature in their practice of skills assessment.

Alan Mandell: If you're one of these centers in India, for example, that the Saudis have recognized, is that only used in India for the assessment of skills of people going to Saudi Arabia? Does the assessment have any currency within India itself?

Deb Carr: It depends. The majority of test centers are also accredited Training Centers (through the National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC) and deliver and assess Indian nationally recognized training. Does the outcome of assessment have currency within India itself? I'm not sure. The incentive for the test is to gain working rights in the Kingdom. It will be interesting to see if the outcome plus the experience gained from working in Saudi enables returning skilled migrants to acquire better jobs. I tried to build individual agency in it so that a credential that they receive as a result of success has currency with an employer other than in Saudi Arabia, but they didn't do that. I was even suggesting that this could be something like a microcredential that noted learning outcomes, competency outcomes in understandable language so that they can RPL into a qualification when they come back. However, they had their focus more around productivity than on agency for those coming back. These are very much country-to-country conversations. India and Thailand and other countries have brokered their own agreements.

Alan Mandell: I have another kind of contextual question: Are the situations you are describing about skilled migrants "temporary"? Are those workers in Saudi Arabia moving their families there? Are they there for a finite period of time, knowing they can go back to their home country?

Deb Carr: They are cyclical skilled migrants. Europe doesn't talk about it very much, but it's significant on this side of the world. Skilled migrants send home receipts so that their family can have a better life. The length of time is almost entirely determined by migrant workers' fixed-term employment contract (typically one to two years) and the associated residence permit. The ability to bring their family is contingent on their profession, salary, and visa status. Generally, certain professional categories and the highly skilled find it easier to secure a Family Residence Visa (SVP). The SVP is designed for skilled, semi-skilled, and technical trades that are not categorized as 'high-skilled,'

and their salaries usually do not meet the eligibility criteria and so, it is very unlikely workers can bring their families.

Nan Travers: Out of curiosity, is there a particular demographic that they're reaching out to?

Deb Carr: Recruitment is via various official channels. The process almost always begins in Saudi Arabia with an employer who wants to hire a migrant worker for a specific trade. The most common channel of recruitment is via the migrant-sending countries' employment service agencies. In some cases, an individual may know about the requirements and can directly visit the official SMP (Social Media Portal) International Portal and self-register and book a test at an accredited center. It's really interesting actually. Migrant-sending countries seek labour mobility agreements because the 'remittances' (this is the economic term for the money skilled migrants send back to their home country) are a crucial component of a country's gross domestic product (GDP) and play a vital role in poverty reduction and economic development. So, governments will establish and assist recruitment of participants.

However, when you see each nation 'advertising' the SVP, there are nuanced differences. For example, Pakistan doesn't have as strong a training system as India does, and Pakistan is participating (according to a government announcement of the program) because a next step might be that Saudi Arabia financially support the strengthening of training infrastructure in Pakistan.

Alan Mandell: So that's the reciprocity: the Saudis provide the training in Pakistan if Pakistan delivers a certain number of skilled workers to the Saudis.

Deb Carr: Yes. And then there's India. They see themselves as the global lead country for providing skills to the world. I guess you could see it as 'selling skills.' Why do they feel they can lead the globe in providing skills? Most Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries are experiencing an ageing population and skill shortages, but not India. Over 50% of its population is below the age of 25 and over 65% below the age of 35. They've got youth and they've invested billions and even trillions of dollars in their training system. They had a goal as part of India's National Education Policy 2020, that by 2025, at least 50% of learners in schools and universities will have engaged with the vocational education and training sector. And they're encouraging all countries to set up 'shop' in India to help build a skilled workforce. They are building a reputation for highly skilled professionals in key sectors. For example, in the UAE (United Arab Emirates), they are often recruited as bankers. They're also starting to gain a reputation in Australia as good engineers. Saudi Arabia is another 'client' that 'purchases' their skills.

Alan Mandell: What's complicated to me about this reciprocity is that if India gains a reputation for training these people wouldn't India itself need those skills and people with those skills to stay in India rather than go to Saudi Arabia?

Deb Carr: You mean brain drain? No, because the critical mass of India helps them avoid this phenomenon. I've also read recently, they are changing the narrative of 'brain drain' to 'brain circulation' because, amongst other benefits, skilled migrants act as a knowledge transfer bridge back to India, which has been a key factor in the growth of

India's own tech and services sectors. Brain drain is more critical in smaller countries. Here are two examples. Kiribati is a little Pacific Island Nation and they're using RPL to recognize community care givers—people who care for people in their homes because the island does not have care facilities for the aged. These people are being recruited for a program to come to Australia to look after our old people. Now you would think this is terrible. This is brain drain at its peak, especially because the population is so small. The program, funded by DFAT, aims to build capacity for Kiribati to have a trained aged-care workforce. These people come to Australia after being credited around 5 units towards their Certificate III in Individual Support and do additional formal learning while working at the same time. This program brings over families as well, not just individuals, and is highly supported in pre-departure orientation in terms of cultural preparedness and in-country support such as mental well-being and assistance in understanding employer expectations. I've read that there are plans to build an aged-care facility in Kiribati or a neighboring island to which they will have a ready workforce.

Alan Mandell: So they return having had the training and having the certification for their skill.

Deb Carr: Absolutely. Not only that, but they're looking at, and this is something that TPQI said as well, when they go back, sometimes they don't want to do the same job because the same job has less prestige and less money in their home country. So sometimes there's a strategy that's enacted where they become the teachers. That's exactly what TPQI has found out: cleaners they've credentialed are going back to their country and they don't want cleaning jobs so they're looking at ways to support teaching those skills.

In December 2024, the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) initiated a "Stakeholder Consultation for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Guidance Development." This initiative is specifically aimed at developing guidance on RPL in midwifery education to support the implementation of the ICM's Global Standards for Midwifery Education. ICM holds that RPL can reduce the global deficit in midwife numbers and increase access to midwives for women and newborns in underserved and marginalized communities. They think they may be able to establish a streamlined pathway for the 'almost qualified' using RPL. The 'almost qualified' may have relevant experience like traditional birth attendants or nurses to enter a formal midwifery program with advanced standing, effectively assisting to fill the global shortage in a more efficient way. These 'almost qualified' may be anywhere, including in refugee camps.

Alan Mandell: This second example seems to me to be especially powerful.

Nan Travers: Yes, agreed. This really opens up a whole set of questions around what occupations have a community-based learning and a skill development piece. Your "almost qualified" or "semi-qualified" idea really points to where there could be purposeful targeting, especially when you've got groups of people who are not being recognized and thinking about the kinds of skills that they have developed to a certain point and working with that as a strategy.

Deb Carr: It's really something like cohort, batch, or group RPL. And we do that when we're just looking at a homogeneous group, like defense or policing, or where you know that there's a very structured training competency framework. In effect, you're mapping the skills, using RPL to identify transferable skills—all those common competencies, and then you find the gaps and you train to those gaps. I've just completed a 200-page desk-top research report for the Victorian Skills Authority, here in Australia, and we have 10 Jobs and Skills Councils that have the responsibility for ensuring a skilled workforce across industry sectors, and they are calling it “occupational mapping.” They are effectively saying, ‘we've got a skill shortage and we're going to recruit workers from over there because they will have many of the skills we need.’ But it may be a problem because those people over ‘there’ may be in occupations that are also experiencing shortages. It's like a competition for skills and industry sectors are looking everywhere, and noticing this occupation over there, well, they *nearly* have all the skills we need. We'll bring them over here. It's great that the ICM have realized that mapping works.

Alan Mandell: I remember an example like this from Canada that was experiencing a nursing shortage. Even if you came to Canada as a registered nurse, the regulation was that you would have to begin your training from the very start. Their breakthrough was to be able to say: If we define the nurses training in terms of modules of learning with competencies, the training could be targeted to fill the gaps. It was a neat mixture of RPL and new learning.

Deb Carr: We've got a word for it in Australia. It's commonly known as “gap training.” I've recently become aware of a dynamic particularly experienced by migrants. What is happening is highly skilled migrants are being relegated to a lower qualification in the process of skills recognition for migrant work visas than their home-country experience and/or qualifications reflect. It's happening a lot more than I thought. Presumably because of the ease of assessment, in the visa-application process, they just assess the qualification, rather than the higher level of skills they have acquired from many years of working in the occupation. The result is that the skilled migrant ends up with two to three levels of the national qualification framework *lower*, and that makes a difference in the labor market as to what jobs they can access.

I think of a highly qualified pastry chef from India. He was working in a hotel in a global hotel chain at management level and very highly regarded. He went through our skills assessment and was awarded a Certificate III level. He's written a research article about it. It's really sad and demoralizing to read about his experience. He claims it's not an isolated event—it's a phenomenon that the Indian community talks about in Australia. Being relegated to a certificate III, our trade level, affects the jobs he can get, and he says, it also impacts on the social capital he possesses in his community.

Nan Travers: We see that a lot in the United States. We don't have the framework you are describing but the leveling exists. When I take Ubers, I often ask drivers about their birth country and what they did—those kinds of questions. And I would say 80% of our Uber drivers have high skills. I'll never forget a man who is a lawyer from Pakistan, but he can't be recognized in our country because if there's no political agreement, then there's no recognition. He can't be recognized for what he knows. He'd have to start all over again, just like those nurses.

I have a personal story of a man who had been a doctor in Iran who had to start over in his medical training and went to a community college here in the United States to become a radiological technician to work his way back through medical school when he was already a doctor. My mom needed a scan, and this man discovered five blood clots in her leg. She guessed that the reason he saw this was that he approached it differently from a typical technician, and he shared that he had previously been a medical doctor. My mom's doctor said that this "technician" saved her life by finding these clots. We so underestimate people who haven't come through our own system.

Alan Mandell: It's such a great example, Nan, and I'm so interested, Deb, in what you're describing to us about either explicit or tacit discrimination that exists in our systems of recognition or skills assessment. In effect, we're asking: How do patterns of ethnic discrimination or racial discrimination, or other sources of discrimination, impact, or at least come into tension with these systems of evaluation that we develop?

Deb Carr: I love that point about tacit discrimination or unconscious bias. There are many bigoted people. It's just horrible. But in terms of under-recognition, Nan, this is a little different to what I'm seeing. These people have gone through the recognition process, they have been 'recognized,' they have undergone a skills recognition assessment, and they've been under-recognized. Alan Ralph and others are talking about this and that's a focus of my PhD. I'm seeing the negative impact afterwards, seeing the ways in which people feel 'ripped off,' under-recognized in the assessment process. And this is a thing that impacts people and affects their sense of identity.

Nan Travers: What pops into my mind is that they're only partially visible.\

Deb Carr: Yes, totally agree. It's the system. It's when you put the system first rather than the individual. And so, we say that we've got a system, and this is what we do. We're going to plug you in here and we'll spit you out, there. It's not meeting the person where they're at. This is the difference between system-based RPL and learner or candidate-centric RPL. What do you, as an individual, want recognized and why? Let's see if we can have a look at all of you. As we said earlier, it's like our skills assessment for a visa; it's a system that just gets them the visa and at that point in time a Certificate III is what they need. But then they get here, and they go, oh, well, I don't want to be a cook in a pub; I want a different job that uses the level of skills I have. This is what can be framed as "meeting the person where they are."

I'm sometimes conflicted with what I do. When I see how countries compete for skills to boost their GDP, and how industry sectors poach skills from other sectors; Am I just seeing people as human capital? I think candidate-driven RPL is my compromise. Why does the person want to be recognized? What is going to empower them? A qualification, yes; or a skills passport, yes; or a right to work in a country. I mean this talk around digital badges and open badges and such, being a transparent way to make skills visible is great. But, not to replace a qualification, not yet. The people who think a qualification doesn't matter are those people who have one. What a person wants, whether it's for their social identity or to navigate social structures, including work and learning—if a qualification is going to help them do these things, then we should use RPL for that. How is what we do going to better the well-being of that person?

For me, it's about being candidate-centered; you can't forget the person.

Alan Mandell: Deb, thanks a million for this time together. We've really just begun.

Nan Travers: Thank you so much.

Deb Carr: Pleasure. Absolute pleasure. Cheerio!

¹ Example of the PROMISE <https://thailand.iom.int/news/over-4000-migrant-workers-thailand-benefit-iom-skills-development-training>.

About the Authors



Deb Carr

Bringing extensive international experience in TVET policy, quality assurance, and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Deb specialises in driving impactful changes in skills recognition for vulnerable groups. With a track record spanning UNESCO, government and private sector engagements, international skills recognition projects, and ISO certifications, Deb has shaped policies and frameworks globally. Her expertise in RPL systems and TVET technical design, mentoring and coaching, and research underscores a commitment to lifelong learning and inclusion. Adept at bridging academia and practice, Deb has contributed significantly to skills recognition and migration initiatives. Deb's passionate about leveraging RPL for social justice and labour market efficiency on any scale.

Nan Travers and **Alan Mandell** are members of the *PLAIO* editorial team