



Country: Switzerland
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<p>The case study, the story</p>	<p><i>Case study: Community interpreters</i> <i>Country: Switzerland</i></p> <p><i>Case started in 2005, still developing. This description concerns the period 2005-2008.</i></p>
<p>People</p> <p>VNFL-IFL candidate (s): who is s/he? His/her history (personal/ professional/ educational)? Aims and professional/ personal project? Why the VNFL-IFL?</p>	<p>The candidates</p> <p>An updated and complete list of certified interpreters is available on www.inter-pret.ch. 565 interpreters, 80% women, are included in the list (October 2008), but we should bear in mind that a part of them (difficult to estimate) are no more active in Community interpreting, having found other more stable working opportunities (obviously an indirect positive result of their qualification efforts). At the moment more than 80% of the interpreters are competent in translating German, while French (16%) and Italian (3%). Turkish and the different languages spoken in former Yugoslavia are dominating in the framework of interpreted languages. Nevertheless the system assures that translation services are available also for several minor languages, as clearly highlighted by the graph.</p> <p>Professional and biographical profiles of these candidates are extremely various, depending of migration patterns influencing nearly always their life histories. Normally they acquired an initial education, sometimes a high level one, in their countries of origin, finding it very difficult to have it recognised in Switzerland. Not rarely they tried to cope with difficulties showing personal and political commitment, in favour of social and professional integration of the communities to which they belong. Their voluntary engagement in interpreting very often has to be seen as a component of an advocacy role, aiming at giving voice to the members of their community.</p> <p>Some common patterns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – they built up their competences interlacing informal and non formal learning; moving from a variety of working experiences,

they shared day by day a common professional background as interpreters, building up new competences less influenced by mediation and advocacy.; practical field experience in this kind of interpreting services and proximity to the interpreted “culture” are fundamental requirements to enter the job, and of course we always find them in biographies of these persons.

- we frequently find, in their professional careers a mix between sectoral experiences and interpreting activities. Normally people offered their interpreting skills acting as volunteers in the same sector where they found a first professional integration in Switzerland (it’s often the case in the health and care sectors, where e.g. people holding a foreign medicine degree could be employed with nursing functions) or valuing their relational network, for example applying to “community leaders” - already active as interpreters - to obtain a first working opportunity through interpreting, hoping to be hired then in a stable position. In many cases the first step towards interpreting they made was visiting one of the courses organised since the 90’s for this purpose by local NGOs and associations.
- A migration background is also a fundamental feature characterising the candidates; often they were trying to gain recognition for their education and skills, finding many closed doors due to the mismatching between their profiles and the requirements imposed by career paths coherent with their expectations. In general a common pattern in many individual stories was the expectation of gaining social visibility and dignity in the hosting country through the formal validation of their prior skills and experiences.

AND/OR

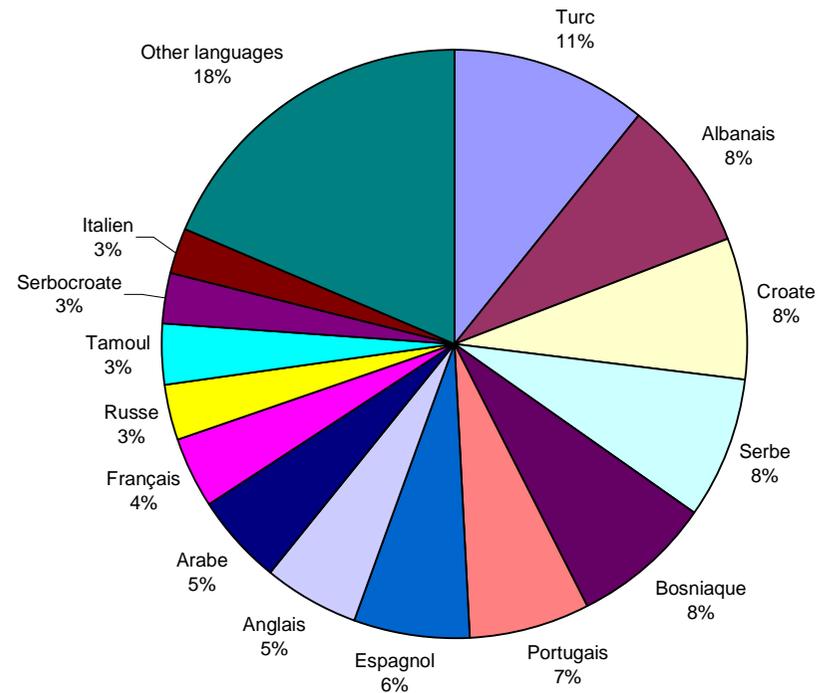
VNFL-IFL advisers/
staff: tutors:

AND/OR

The assessors/
evaluators: their
experience in VNFL-IFL,
willingness, role/
responsibilities in the
organisation/
institution?
Their relationship with
the advisers?_

The relationships/
interactions

What does the case
study show about the
interactions between
all the actors? Any
external actors showing
up in the case study?



More than 400 active intercultural interpreters applied in the start-up phase of the qualification system for a validation, thanks to the advertising campaign launched by INTERPRET and to the financial support assured by the Federal Authorities. We have precise information concerning the results of the first phase of application of the new procedure, that took place in 2005 / 2006, anticipating and accompanying the development of the ordinary qualification system. In 2005, 317 Community interpreters obtained certification through a VPL procedure, while about 40 obtained only a partial qualification (in 18 cases due to the lack of required language skills at level B2).

Assessors / Evaluators

The procedure implies the mobilisation of two different kinds of expertise, to verify linguistic competences on one side (when

not certified by recognised documents) and to assess intercultural communication competences as defined by the qualification profile on the other. The system provides some interesting solutions concerning the role played by the experts, their recruitment and the relationship between validation and certification. The experts are members of a Quality Commission, named by the umbrella association in charge of managing the system. The system avoids a rigid distinction between assessment and certification phases. Experts represent both intercultural heterogeneity, including first or second generation migrants, and specific professional expertise (nearly all the members of the Quality Commission are now certified intercultural interpreters). In addition, above all in the initial phase, they represented also associations and institutions demanding interpreting services and/or providing training in the same field. Experts perfectly master the qualification profile to be assessed, and therefore they are able to implement reliable criteria, standards, indicators in order to evaluate the candidates, assuring, as far as possible, equal treatment of candidates and homogeneity of the assessment procedures as a whole.

Language skills are assessed, when needed, by trained experts whose mother tongue is the one to be assessed (for interpreted languages). The assessment consists in a telephone interview. The scope of this assessment is limited to the verification of the possession of the minimum standard level of skill required by the certification. Linguistic competence is assessed taking into account the “communicative” skills of the candidates, and their capability in effectively bridging gaps occurring in interpreting situations.

To sum up:

Short story of the procedure

Interactions

The system encountered a good success thanks to the involvement and commitment of a complex partnership. As far as job market related issues are concerned INTERPRET certificate, as the new profile of *Community Interpreter with Advanced Federal Certificate of Higher Vocational Education and Training*, facilitated the association to promote, in cooperation with the Federal authorities and placement agencies, the use of professional interpreting services. Expectations arising from the supply side had also a function; the new certification offered since the beginning professional opportunities to many immigrants trying to enter the job market, giving value to their experiential background and their intercultural attitudes and competences. An important interaction occurred between the association and the Swiss Federation for Continuous Training (SVEB), providing experts engaged in the building up of the system, according to existing examples of modular qualification schemes (see for instance adult trainers) already developed by SVEB, including alternative qualification procedures based on VPL.

Value of the process and outcomes

For the initiator and the stakeholders:

The qualification system is now a reality; Interpret association gained visibility and appreciation, as well as interpreting services started to be developed in a more structured way in many Cantons, even if according to a progressive and slow path, due to

<p><u>The process</u></p> <p>How, what, when, ...? What happens, who sets the scene, ...What part takes the candidate in the process?</p> <p>AND/OR</p>	<p>financial constraints. The use of interpreting services, even if not officially financed by the Federal or Cantonal authorities, has been indirectly promoted by the certification and quality assurance system, as well as in the framework of some pilot projects and initiatives.</p> <p>For the target group:</p> <p>The majority of candidates encountered positive results, both during the validation process and afterwards, considering consequences and implications of their new qualification. Considering the process, positive outcomes regarded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the possibility of gaining more awareness of attitudes and professional behaviours assured by reflective tasks to be performed in the self-assessment process • increased self confidence, due to the positive response given by the experts in charge of delivering the “external” validation of experiences and skills. <p>As far as job and professional development opportunities are concerned, the effects are also generally evaluated in a positive way, although in many cases gaining a qualification didn’t result in a short term “<i>more and better jobs</i>” opportunities for the interpreters. The certification produced tangible results for the candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – allowing certified interpreters to maintain and enhance their professional status, also thanks to the role of collective placement Agencies, in negotiating mandates and working agreements with the clients (well defined working conditions and better salaries, if compared to the ones delivered to their colleagues not disposing of the same certification) – determining a global consolidation of personal and professional identities of the candidates in their new “visible” and appreciated role in the hosting country, with interesting spin-offs concerning careers and access to continuous vocational training. <p>How it worked: overview of the Case study</p> <p>The case study deals with a project, launched by INTERPRET Association, aiming at promoting community interpreting work from a merely voluntary basis to a professional activity. The project, financed by the Swiss Federal Office of Public Health, started in the late 90’s, and included the following steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1996/1999: the Federal Office of Public Health established a working group to analyse the need and the quality patterns of intercultural interpreting services in the Health and Care sectors in Switzerland; at the end of the study the new Association INTERPRET was founded by the participants of the working group (interpreters and institutions) • 1999/2001: comprehensive field research , highlighting the importance of the interpreters and the benefits that could be achieved by the formal recognition and certification of their functions • 2002: On behalf of INTERPRET, and with the support of the Swiss Federal Office of Public Health, a commission of experts and representatives of institutions and interpreters studied the feasibility of introducing a global qualification system. They drew up a professional profile for intercultural interpreters and mediators, as well as proposals for a training and quality assurance scheme. The study also included projections concerning the “market potential” of the new qualification and analyses of the needs of different user groups. The study underlined the need to promote formal
<p><u>Tools</u></p> <p>What are they, what</p>	

role do they have, who develop them? How are they used? How important are they?

recognition of competencies acquired by the interpreters in a non formal or informal way, alongside short training modules, also with the aim to open them a way into the Swiss system of professional qualification and development.

- **2004:** The Swiss Association for Adult Learning (SVEB), on a mandate by the Federal Office of Public Health, and in collaboration with experts of the field, developed the qualification and quality assurance scheme for intercultural interpreting, taking the findings of the INTERPRET study 2002 as a starting point. The scheme included:
 - the professional profile of intercultural interpreters, and a modular training curriculum
 - the definition of processes for the validation of prior learning
 - the definition of procedures for quality assurance (e.g. accreditation procedures for the training institutions)
- **2004-2005:** After having undergone the defined accreditation procedures, training institutions start the first training courses following the proposed curriculum. At the same time start of the central validation procedures for already active interpreters, through validation of prior formal, non formal or informal learning. (about 500 people applied initially, about 350 interpreters went through the whole procedure)
- **end of 2005:** start-up of the new financing system supporting Placement Agencies (*Vermittlungstelle*) aiming at promoting and assuring interpreting services; the system aimed at rationalising the sector, fostering the coordination of these Agencies at the local level, providing financial resources to Agencies recognised by the Swiss Federal Commission responsible for integration policies, aiming at promoting intercultural interpreting and providing services in the field, assuring the availability of professional interpreters to public and private bodies dealing with intercultural communication issues.

INTERPRET association and institutions agreed since the beginning of the planning phase with the idea of promoting both an ordinary qualification path, based on training modules, and an alternative one, based on validation. They considered the characteristics of the profile and of the interpreters, and above all the presence of a significant number of intercultural interpreters already active in the field, sufficiently qualified (after the completion of formal and non formal learning path) and ready to be certified. In this sense a positive role in promoting the road of validation, as a mainstream at least in the start up phase of the system, has been played both by INTERPRET and by the SVEB, who defined the design and supported the implementation of the new qualification scheme, transferring experiences accumulated in the planning and management of the Adult trainers modular qualification system. A wide consensus has been searched on the basis of a pragmatic and technical approach to the design of the system, helping to overcome the complexity of the network in charge of establishing profile and rules. Thanks to this bottom-up approach, the development of a RPLO based qualification path open to intercultural interpreters didn't have to cope with mistrust or political obstacles. The concept has been accepted by the stakeholders of the system as a reasonable choice.

Process and procedures

The procedure involves the following steps, implying the use of a precise range of tools, in preparing the dossier, collecting evidence, and passing the final assessment interview.

Phase 1 – preparation and self-assessment (recognition and documentation)

1.1 Qualification profile

Candidates dispose of a detailed *qualification profile* (available through the web), and they are asked to use it as a guide and a check list to self assess the possession of competences defining the professional role and identity of the intercultural interpreter. A good mastery of a national language (D, F, I) is therefore asked – more or less the B1 level recommended by the regulations to start the application, correctly understanding the above mentioned requirements expressed in terms of competences and learning outcomes (statements) (B2 is the minimum level to be achieved at the end of it).

Competences to be considered belong to 3 main areas:

- linguistic skills (European Framework – B2 – as an “average level, considering that also B1 competences in written language could be admitted, when at the opposite oral level in speaking and understanding should exceed a “pure” B2),
- managing intercultural dynamics affecting communication and mutual understanding,
- understanding of the peculiarities of local and foreign “systems” in which interpreters work (i.e. being able to translate in an understandable way a question / answer according to the different cultural and institutional frameworks of operators and clients)
- translation skills and skills related to discourse management
- knowledge of Swiss institutions and procedures in the health, social and educational sectors

1.2 Evidences

Once the candidate has positively self-assessed his/her competences, with reference to the qualification profile, he/she is asked to collect evidence of the competences. Evidence is collected in a dossier, and might consist of different types of documents and declarations: CV, certificates produced by clients and users, project work, other relevant documents concerning non formal training paths, test results, and so on. The procedure admits the possibility of taking into account all forms of learning and experience (independently of the work environment). Also narrative declarations referred to working experiences could be admitted and taken in charge by the experts to identify the mastery of specific competences.

1.3 The dossier

The following documents are compulsory components of the dossier:

- a personal CV including a list of documented training activities and information concerning direct or indirect experiences in dealing with migration and/or intercultural issues
- evidences of working experience as interpreter
- a reflective report (written according to a predefined format downloadable from the web) in which a complex interpreting situation is described and evaluated by the interpreter
- a standard informative dossier and a “glossary” providing evidences of the knowledge of fundamental facts and organisational structures of institutions in the health, social or educational sectors, as well as a solid competence in managing key information and terminology in the sector in which the candidate normally offers interpreting services

- evidence of having participated in group supervision (for at least 8 hours), in form of an attestation delivered by the supervisor

Phase 2 – Assessment (validation)

2.1 Assessment of linguistic skills

- **Formal certification (both languages):** a list of recognised certificates is provided on the web-site; it includes also the possibility to certify the competence through the possession of a school leaving certificate
- **Language test in the interpreting language:** phone interview, organised on behalf of an accredited centre: the candidate receives a photo, and the expert conducts a distant call interview starting from the photo and following defined guidelines and assessment standards
- **Language exam in the local language:** full-scale oral and written language examination, on the basis of the defined profile (ranging from B1 to C1 competencies in the various language skills)

2.2 Assessment of intercultural interpreting skills

In the assessment, competences referred to the 2 modules (see qualification profiles) are separately taken in account.

In general some key competences deserve special attention during the assessment, inspiring evaluation criteria and minimum standards to be achieved by the candidates.

- 1) Competence in identifying expectations, preoccupations and difficulties of both the operator and the client
- 2) Competence in reacting to communication difficulties
- 3) Awareness of the role (facilitating an effective communication)
- 4) appropriate use of interpreting techniques
- 5) Preparation strategies
- 6) Awareness of the limits of the role
- 7) Self evaluation with regard to the appropriateness and effectiveness of the interpreting process

Competences are evaluated analysing the dossier, especially the case description and evaluation. The interview also allows the experts to detect meta-competences, such as good active listening attitudes, and the capability to keep the right intercultural distance.

Phase 3 – Certification

The certification phase implies the production of a final validation report, written by the expert in charge of examining the dossier and interviewing the candidate, and the discussion of the report, including the appreciative evaluation proposed by the expert (acquired / not acquired), by the other members of the Quality Commission.

The decision, taken on the basis of the majority of votes, is afterwards officially communicated to the candidate. An appeal is always possible in the case of a negative decision, and in this case the dossier, supplemented with the comments of the recurrent, is handed over to another expert, who is asked to prepare a new evaluation, after a second interview, submitting the

results to the Commission in charge of examining appeals.

Candidates does not dispose of a specific guidance, information and accompaniment service. They are asked to elaborate their dossier valuing a “*tool-kit*” available on web, aiming at supporting them in collecting evidences, preparing their assessment. Lacking an institutionalised accompaniment, INTERPRET realised after the approval of the new qualification path a wide information campaign, fostering also the commitment of local associations and placement Agencies in stimulating the interest of interpreters, institutions.

SWOT

Strengths of VPL in the case study

- **the availability of a clear and detailed qualification profile**, including an effective description of competences to be assessed. Transparency of the requirements seems to be fundamental for the applicants. The bottom-up, participatory elaboration of the qualification profile and standards, and in addition the involvement of the same group of expert in the delicate implementation phase, allowed to build up a reliable procedure, reaching homogeneous standards of assessment;
- **the critical mass of dossiers treated in the start-up phase** created the conditions to verify and adjust the procedure and the tools, and to find step by step an homogeneity of judgement, refining criteria of analysis and above all setting up effective interviews to assess soft skills and the awareness of the candidates with regard to their professional role.
- **the use of articulated means of evaluation**: the written dossier, including evidence, is supplemented by an oral interview, reducing the risk of an over- or underestimation of competences resulting only on the basis of documents or the capability of the candidates to evaluate and describe their “*exposed attitudes*” and their theoretical background. In addition, the oral interview allows candidates disposing of a lower competence in written language to communicate and demonstrate their reflective attitudes and intercultural skills in a more flexible way
- **the flexibility of the procedure**, taking into account both formal and informal learning and experiences. Clever solutions have been found to limit the need of bringing “official” evidences, rarely available in case of voluntary work and informal working arrangements, allowing the candidates to “prove” competences through the dossier using written narrative declarations and evaluating interviews
- **the quality of the *on line* helping tools** (examples, forms and templates, ...) and above all the availability of a simple but effective *Guide* supporting the candidates in preparing their dossier and the assessment phase: the choice of skipping a structured preliminary information and guidance phase allowed the reduction of costs; **making the VPL way sustainable both for the institutions and the candidates** (after the initial promotional phase, when it was possible to apply for validation for free, registrations costs arose between 300 and 500 € for the 2 Modules + about 150 € (CHF 220.00 and CHF 260.00) for each language test, if necessary...).

Globally intended, the INTERPRET VPL procedure proved to be an effective and powerful “formative” mean, allowing the candidates not only to give the right value to their previous learning, but only to build up a more aware and solid capability in

	<p><i>managing their professional role. As far as a recognition and validation process always implies reflection on our own experiences, it represents a fundamental path to achieve competence in a proper sense, and to consolidate one's own professional identity.</i></p> <p><u>Opportunities of VPL in the case study</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further development of an actual market for interpreting services, allowing certified interpreters gain recognition, professional and social visibility • valuing formative implications of VPL, in order to better also training and formal qualification pathways <p><u>Weaknesses of VPL in the case study</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some obstacles have been provided by <i>the complexity of some deliverables and requirements to be accomplished</i>, above all for the candidates with informal learning paths; the elaboration of a reflective case study is not always an easy task, and also documenting a formal supervision could engender some problems; in general, as we have already highlighted, the level of mastery of written local languages needed to complete the dossier seems to be higher than the minimum standard level required for certification (B2) • the lack of an institutional accompaniment, despite the availability of the above mentioned tools, resulted in some misunderstandings, although in a very limited number of cases; <p><u>Threats of VPL in the case study</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how to give the right continuity to the system, when the critical mass of candidates decreases? • how to shelter the original “partnership spirit” between the stakeholders characterising the system since the planning phase; this spirit has to be always kept in mind, now that the qualification system should be considered fully established, in order to assure the consensus of the network representing different interests and expectations, necessary to promote Community interpreting services, investments in this field, updating of the needs, and not only the access to a formal qualification. • “Prudence” in turning voluntary work into a “market” service: we need to overcome an opportunistic approach to the growing need of “understanding” and effective communication in social, health or educational services (<i>we are glad to have professional interpreters, but who will pay for them?</i>); policies promoted today by the Confederation and by Regional / Cantonal Authorities seem to be promising, when more or less all the stakeholders actually realise that more and better investments in Community interpreting could bring, in the middle term, higher economic and social returns in the quality and effectiveness of the above mentioned services.
<p><u>The context</u></p> <p>In which sector is it taking place?</p>	<p>Initiator or organisation in charge</p> <p>The system has been planned, designed and implemented activating a very complex partnership. The initiator, and actually the body in charge of developing and managing the qualification scheme (validation and training), has been the INTERPRET Association (www.inter-pret.ch).</p>

In which organisation is it taking place?

The background to the case study/ a landscape of the case study

Target group:

- Community (Intercultural) interpreters; these interpreters often initiated their careers as volunteers, usually working in educational and social sectors, as well as in justice and health care; the certification system aims at professionalising them. They have to assure neutrality in translation but ensuring a more effective communication between local professionals (medicines, teachers, counsellors) and people belonging to migrant communities. Practical field experience in this kind of interpreting services and proximity to the interpreted “culture” are fundamental requirements to enter the job, and of course we always find them in biographies of these persons.

Aims for the organisation

To promote the use of professional interpreters in “*trialog*” situations in health and care, social and educational sectors

Aims for the target group

The candidates aimed in many cases at applying for the certificate, in order to achieve a better positioning in the job market (sometimes also to enter further training), and at the same time to consolidate their professional and social identity in the hosting country. They hoped to value their experiences emancipating from the “grey area” of voluntary work, or enhancing their condition of independent free lance collaborators (a frequent situation mainly in the legal sector, where interpreters are normally hired by the institutions for specific tasks, on an *ad hoc* basis).

The most important motivation for the candidates opting for the validation path, instead of participating in training modules, was the actual possibility of valuing experiences and prior learning opportunities following a procedure encouraged and above all totally financed by the Confederation (therefore completely free of costs for the applicants). Interpreters who entered the procedure during the first phase normally aimed at valuing formal and non formal learning outcomes achieved participating to one or several of the many different courses organised during the 90’s by NGOs active in cooperation and integration policies. At that moment they could make their informal learning visible, valuing competences acquired working in the field (usually they learned a lot “on the job”, experiencing their role and building up their competences thanks to their biographical intercultural background). The procedure was launched by supporting institutions considering this situation, in order to eliminate training redundancies and save money (financing RPLO individual paths costs less than financing collective courses), nevertheless avoiding a generalised acknowledgement of the attestations delivered by organisations offering courses.

What is the problem that has/had to be solved?

There was a clear need of improving the quality and the availability of **interpreting services** in health care, educational and social work sectors.

Generally speaking, interpreting services play a very important role in the above mentioned sectors, due to the considerable number of foreign “clients” of those institutions. In the 90’s studies and research highlighted the importance of establishing correct and effective communication between local institutions, foreign patients in health and care or migrant families and

children in education, to avoid misunderstandings and, last but not least, to reduce the costs and to improve the efficiency of health, educational and social services.

Interpreting was traditionally assured in these sectors by volunteers, such as mediators and sometimes “community leaders”, motivated by civil commitment, without a specific competence in interpreting. Lacking interpreting resources, communication was often assured activating non professional “self help” means, in extreme situations also asking the children to translate delicate medical diagnoses or feed-backs concerning scholastic behaviour to their parents. At the end of the 90’s, on the basis of information directly collected in hospitals, schools, social institutions, a study stressed the need for defining quality standards in this field, professionalizing interpreting services. The basis for defining a professional profile, and a qualification procedure, has therefore been created, offering at the same time a good professional opportunity to the large number of volunteers and mediators who were already active in this field.

Why is non-formal and informal learning accepted?

Taking into account the wide range of non formal and informal learning paths followed by the existing interpreters in building up their competences, the qualification procedure foresaw since the beginning the possibility of achieving the certification according two different modalities:

1. a formal modular training path;
2. a validation path, based on a RPLO procedure, specially thought for interpreters disposing of a longer experience.

Which other parties or stakeholders are involved?

In addition to the initiator, a fundamental role in promoting interpreting services and the qualification system as a whole has been played by:

- Training Centres, already offering courses, who aimed at accrediting their modules applying to INTERPRET
- Interpreters Placement Agencies (see the list on www.inter-pret.ch), established in the context of a joint initiative to foster interpreting services; these Agencies have been supported, in their start up phase, by the Federal Commission for Integration (EKA), aiming at making them able to act at the local level to assure interpreting services, promoting them, hiring certified Community interpreters, and placing them on the basis of mandates received by final users institutions (Hospitals, educational bodies, etc.).

Also the Swiss federation for Adult Education (SVEB) and the above mentioned Federal Authorities (Federal Office of Public Health, Federal Commission for Integration...) played an important role in planning and promoting the system, developing regulations and procedures (see further details)

Which laws & legal texts (e.g. collective agreements) are involved?

The general legal framework is provided by the Federal law for vocational education and training (2004), defining qualification systems and allowing to take in account informal and non formal learning (art 32 and 33). “Community interpreters” certification

system have been established a couple of years before the development of the Swiss national VA system actually in the piloting phase (see National Report). It represents a good example of how a qualification procedure normally finds, step by step, a place in the formal “certification” landscape of the country.

It follows a bottom-up approach. First of all, actors active on field define an emerging need (as we have already mentioned in the case of interpreting services, as well as in the case of Adult trainers, focused in another case study), designing a draft of what such a qualification should be. Then a bottom-up planning phase is launched, followed by a testing one, in which, for example, the new certificate could take the form of an “attestation” delivered by a private professional associations (in many cases these certifications are much appreciated by the job market, even when not officially recognised by the Federal Authorities at all!). Finally the Association that promoted the certificate could apply for the formal recognition of the title to the Swiss Federal Office for Vocational Training and Technology, the competent institution acknowledging Federal Certificates and Diplomas.

Any special agreements or measures involved (on national, sectoral, organisational levels)?

Interpret certificate is integrated from 2007 as a part of a Federal qualification in the framework of Swiss higher vocational qualifications. The full qualification is the Federal Certificate (Brevet Federal, Eidgenössischer Fachausweis): *Community Interpreter with Advanced Federal Certificate of Higher Vocational Education and Training*. To obtain this official acknowledgement, the qualification procedure has been improved, increasing the duration of the learning process, and adding some requirements to achieve the title.

The path approved by the Federal Office (see previous scheme) now allows intercultural interpreters to obtain a Federal Certificate, giving value to their *INTERPRET certificate* (and thus also giving value to prior learning), but in any case passing a final examination, after having presented a secondary school diploma (or an equivalent document), a certain amount of working experience as well as having participated in external supervision (more detailed information in *INTERPRET, Jahresbericht 2007*; downloadable from www.inter-pret.ch)