This sculpture by Orlando de Almeida, which stands outside the Constitutional Court in Johannesburg, inspired SAQA's vision for the next three years. It is entitled Moving into Dance.

Contents

Editorial 2
Moving into Dance: SAQA's planning for the new NQF landscape 3
Education Minister appoints the Fourth SAQA Authority 4
Appreciation and encouragement from the Deputy Minister of Education 7
Brief overview of the draft NQF Bill 9
Performance quality audits for ETQAs: looking towards 2009 10
Establishing a national qualifications framework for Ethiopia 12
Qualifications Africa Conference 2007 13
Recognition of non-formal and informal learning 15
Establishing a transnational qualifications framework 16
Lots of apples for these teachers! 18
The Elgin Learning Foundation 19
World Aids Day Project 2007: making a difference 20
SAQA Exhibitions 24
Change is in the air … This edition of the SAQA Update focuses on the forthcoming changes to the NQF landscape. It will help the reader not only to understand but also prepare for these far reaching changes. The Ministers of Education and Labour got the ball rolling by issuing the Joint Policy Statement in October 2007 signalling that changes were to be introduced. A whole raft of legislation is in the process of being changed. The draft NQF bill was gazetted for public comment in February 2008. Consequential amendments are also being made to the GENFETQA Act and the Higher Education Act. Lastly, the Skills Development Act Amendment Bill has also been released. The most significant change is the introduction of three Quality Councils (QCs), one for general and further education, one for higher education and one for trades and occupations. What do these changes mean for you?

In Moving into Dance: SAQA’s planning for the new NQF landscape, Samuel Isaacs, executive officer of SAQA, draws inspiration from the superb sculpture created by Mozambican-born sculptor Orlando de Almeida which can be found outside the Constitutional Court in Johannesburg. The challenge of implementing the NQF objectives of access, quality, redress and development are as urgent today as they were with the inception of the SAQA Act in 1995. Samuel Isaacs sets the scene for the unfolding changes, which are discussed in the following articles.

The Education Minister appoints the Fourth SAQA Authority. This could not have happened at a more important time, as the Fourth Authority will have to engage thoroughly with the new legislation. Find out who the members of the Fourth Authority are. It was heartening to hear words of Appreciation and encouragement from Mr Enver Surty MP, Deputy Minister of Education. According to the Deputy Minister, “SAQA will have the opportunity to play the combined roles of midwife, godparent and mentor to the Quality Councils”. In order to prepare thoroughly for the new NQF landscape the New SAQA Board engaged in some serious strategic planning. Five strategic imperatives were adopted at this strategic planning workshop, which will guide SAQA into the future.

Carin Stoltz provides a Brief overview of the draft NQF bill for you. If you have not already read the NQF bill which was released for public comment in February 2008 then I would urge you to do so as soon as possible. It is available on the SAQA website (www.saqa.org.za).

While the ETQAs have been busy quality assuring education and training providers across the length and breadth of the country, who has been quality assuring the ETQAs? In Performance quality audits for ETQAs, Christo Basson gives a comprehensive overview of the performance auditing process and some of the challenges emerging in this process. SAQA and the German Q-Federation hosted an extremely successful 7th Qualifications Africa Conference 2007. Over 250 delegates gathered at Gallagher Estate in Midrand to debate and discuss the theme “Occupationally-directed qualifications within qualifications frameworks”. In particular, SAQA created a platform for rigorous debate among key stakeholders on the proposed Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO).

SAQA remains active in the international arena. This edition looks at three examples – Ethiopia, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Commonwealth. SAQA was invited by the Education Ministry to assist in Establishing a national qualifications framework for Ethiopia. In Recognition of non-formal and informal learning: visit by the OECD research team, the reader can find out more about a week-long visit by a research team from the OECD to investigate recognition of prior learning across a range of institutions in South Africa. South Africa was one of the few non-OECD countries to participate in this study, which spans 22 countries. Lastly, SAQA was involved in Establishing a transnational qualifications framework for the Virtual University of Small States of the Commonwealth.

In Lots of apples for these teachers, SAQA is assisting an NGO in the Western Cape in its work through the use of the NQF Support Link. SAQA has made a small contribution to the World Aids Day project by assisting the Boitumelo Community Centre in Soshanguve and the Mmalerato Place of Safety in Mamelodi.

Happy reading,

Stephen Sadie
Director: Strategic Support
Moving into Dance: SAQA’s planning for the new NQF landscape

Samuel Isaacs, Executive Officer

In 2007, with the six-year-old NQF review process finally showing definite signs of closure, SAQA entered a new era. Taking inspiration from the superb sculpture outside the Constitutional Court, Moving into Dance by the Mozambican-born sculptor Orlando de Almeida, the Authority outlined its future steps and moves. Its aim was to create a space where all the NQF partners can move, mostly in harmony, to deliver the NQF benefits of access, quality, redress and development within national integrated learning frameworks for all learners in South Africa.

Early in 2007, SAQA was already preparing for a new NQF landscape and developed a nine-month action plan. We focused on ways of positioning the NLRD, addressing quality assurance problems, establishing our research and development capacity and credibility and achieving shared meanings, understandings and strategies among key stakeholders. In this way SAQA was ready to respond to developments in the later part of 2007, when the Joint Policy Statement was issued by the Ministers of Education and Labour. SAQA was well positioned to make its submissions on the various proposed changes to legislation necessitated by the Joint Policy Statement.

Key challenges

At its Strategic Planning Workshop and subsequent meeting in February 2008, SAQA approved the “Strategic Imperatives 2008” which provide the focus for embracing the changes, challenges and opportunities of the unfolding NQF landscape.

One priority is to define and establish a meaningful role for SAQA in the new landscape. As the apex organisation in the new NQF, SAQA must play a significant evaluative role in standards setting and quality assurance. Other priorities are to create increased acknowledgement and support for the NLRD as the main education and training database; to expand the research and development directorate so SAQA can grow as an intellectual organisation providing leadership in all NQF matters; and to continue identifying systemic gaps and facilitating solutions.

SAQA is keenly aware of how important its relationship with its partners is. We will extend the shared meanings, understandings, purposes and strategies that already exist, and work with partners to reach clear agreement on how the transition to the new framework with its three Quality Councils will be achieved. Not least in this regard is ensuring adequate financial arrangements and the deployment of resources, both human and material. SAQA aims to maintain clear and targeted communication with all affected parties throughout the transition period.

Facing the future with confidence

Thanks to visionary leadership by the chairperson and members of the authority, and strategic leadership and management by SAQA staff, the authority is favourably positioned to deal with the challenges facing it. SAQA is much stronger now than in 2005; it has grown into a responsive, model statutory body that is internationally recognised.
The Fourth Authority

Education Minister appoints the Fourth SAQA Authority

Carin Stoltz, Deputy Director: Secretariat and Tumelo Modisane, Assistant Director: Information Services

The Education Minister, Naledi Pandor, recently appointed members of the Fourth SAQA Authority that will serve until 2010. This board will be responsible for implementing the far-reaching changes to SAQA resulting from the NQF Act, which is expected to come into effect on 1 April 2009.

The University of the Western Cape’s Professor Shirley Walters has been re-appointed Chairperson. The majority of board members are appointed by the Minister from a list of stakeholders in the fields of education and training who have been nominated.

Members of the SAQA Board 2008 - 2010:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation/Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professor PJ Ankiewicz</td>
<td>Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwyserunie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr J Arnesen</td>
<td>Organised Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr I Baatjes</td>
<td>Adult Basic Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr M Brown</td>
<td>Appointed co-opted member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr M Cele</td>
<td>South African Democratic Teachers’ Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr EW de Klerk</td>
<td>Organised Labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor RH du Pré</td>
<td>Higher Education South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr SBA Isaacs</td>
<td>SAQA Executive Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr P Lolwana</td>
<td>Minister’s discretionary appointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr AVR Mabena</td>
<td>Organised Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms MM Maboye</td>
<td>Organised Labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms G Magnus</td>
<td>National bodies representing lecturers and trainers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms RL Makhubu</td>
<td>National bodies representing lecturers and trainers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms BP Mncube</td>
<td>National Skills Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr DL Nkosi</td>
<td>Further Education and Training Colleges: represented by the South African College Principals’ Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor NA Ogude</td>
<td>South African Universities Vice-Chancellors’ Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr AW Paterson</td>
<td>Minister’s discretionary appointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr M Qhobela</td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms R Rajab</td>
<td>Colleges other than teachers’ and FET colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr A Ramgoolam</td>
<td>National Professional Teachers’ Organisation of South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms G Reddy</td>
<td>Early Childhood Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms E Thobejane</td>
<td>Department of Labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr M Toni</td>
<td>Special Education Needs Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor S Walter</td>
<td>Chairperson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr EAB Williams</td>
<td>Heads of Education Committee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Fourth Authority

Minister Pandor appointed Dr AW Paterson and Dr P Lolwana (Umalusi) as discretionary appointments, while SAQA Executive Officer Samuel Isaacs is an ex officio member. The new board held a strategic workshop on 18 and 19 February 2008.

At the official handover to the Fourth Authority, Deputy Minister of Education, ME Surty MP, pointed out the valuable continuity between the Fourth Authority and its predecessor, with Professor Walters’ re-appointment ensuring that the institutional memory is safeguarded. “At the same time we have a refreshing infusion of new members with a rich store of experience and insight … in essence the Fourth Authority will act as a bridge over troubled waters, ensuring that SAQA and the NQF pass safely from our exciting past to a no less exciting future,” he said.

Up to now, the broad mandate of the board has been to oversee the development and implementation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), to formulate policies and criteria for education and training standards and qualifications (standards setting) and to accredit bodies responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of such standards and qualifications (quality assurance). The board is also responsible for the control of the finances of the Authority.

However, this mandate will change once the new NQF structure is implemented. Quality assurance and standards setting will then fall under new bodies known as Qualifications and Quality Councils (QCs). QCs for General and Further Education and Training and Higher Education will be based on existing structures, Umalusi and the Council for Higher Education, which will report as before to the Minister of Education. A newly-created body to be known as the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO), which will report to the Minister of Labour, will be responsible for vocational training. SAQA will continue to function as the apex organisation for the
The Fourth Authority

development of the NQF, with particular responsibility for monitoring, analysis, research, advocacy and international liaison.

Meanwhile, following the end of the Third Board’s term, a farewell function was held at Birdwood Guesthouse to thank the members for their dedication.

“The Third SAQA Authority has given good leadership and has built an enormous amount of goodwill,” said Professor Walters in her speech of farewell. Looking back over the past three years, she spoke of how the board had lived its slogan, “Cultivating hope and imagination”, and continued, “The Third Authority came into a fragile organisation and is leaving a more confident SAQA behind.” Professor Walters expressed her confidence that the Fourth Authority would be able to take the organisation forward from a point of strength.

Samuel Isaacs, Executive Officer, added, “SAQA has the expertise and leadership to oversee the further development and implementation of the NQF in this next exciting phase.”

Members of the Fourth SAQA Authority

Appreciation and encouragement from Mr Enver Surty MP, Deputy Minister of Education

Carin Stoltz, Deputy Director: Secretariat

“SAQA will have the opportunity to play the combined roles of midwife, godparent and mentor to the Quality Councils”. This was the message delivered by the Deputy Minister of Education at the strategic planning session at Roodevallei Country Lodge on 18 February 2008.

The Deputy Minister identified the principal challenge faced by the Fourth South African Authority as that of ensuring collaboration, cooperation and ongoing conversation between the different Quality Councils, and ensuring the integration of the education and training system as a whole.

This was the first meeting between the Ministry and the full South African Qualifications Authority since the NQF review, and the Deputy Minister acknowledged the proactive leadership of the Third Authority in steering the SAQA boat during the final stages of the NQF Review. He expressed his appreciation of the positive and cooperative spirit with which the Authority had approached its work amid uncertainties, and gave credit to the Chairperson, the Authority and the Executive Officer and his team, for the fact that “SAQA remained on track, fulfilled its functions with honour and probity, and prepared in statesmanlike fashion for the changes to come”.

The Deputy Minister added, “We are intensely relieved that the government’s review of the NQF implementation has ended, that we have a new policy, and that draft legislation has been gazetted to bring in the new dispensation. The timing of the Fourth Authority could not be better. You are invited to engage thoroughly and professionally with the draft NQF bill gazetted for public comment, with the bills providing consequential amendments to the Higher Education Act and the GENFETQA Act, and with the forthcoming Bill to amend the Skills Development Act.”

Deputy Minister Surty borrowed the distinguished phrase of the president, staying SAQA was entering a phase of “business unusual”. He assured SAQA that its inputs to strengthening the Bill would be valued, and wished the Fourth Authority a productive and enjoyable term of office.

Deputy Minister of Education Mr Enver Surty responds to questions from the Board.
After the Deputy Minister’s encouraging words, the newly-appointed fourth SAQA authority immersed itself in a strategic planning session. The meeting thrashed out the implications and demands of the new NQF Bill and determined the strategic imperatives that result for SAQA. Discussions focused on the need to embrace the new challenges and to prepare for and implement them proactively.

Five strategic imperatives were established. The first was the need to have an impact on the legislation affecting SAQA – not only the Draft NQF Bill, but also proposed amendments to the Higher Education Act, the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act and the Skills Development Act Amendment Bill. The Executive Officer will champion this team.

The second strategic imperative focuses on managing the transition to the new landscape. This involves setting up an external transitional task team to identify and resolve critical cross-cutting issues with Umalusi, the CHE and the Departments of Education and Labour. Some of these issues are level descriptors and the criteria to be used for assigning qualifications to specific QCs. Within SAQA, an operational transitional task team will be set up under the Executive Officer Samuel Isaacs to support and advise staff on managing the change. This team is also tasked with ensuring adequate resources for two units that will become increasingly significant in SAQA – the National Learners’ Records Database and the Centre for the Evaluation of Foreign Qualifications.

Thirdly, an NQF advocacy and communications task team will be set up under the Director of Strategic Support, Stephen Sadie, to develop a communications strategy for explaining the new NQF to stakeholders and the general public. The fourth imperative centres on extending SAQA’s research and development capacity so it can credibly take the lead in debates on policy, legislation and conceptual issues. Prof Ben Parker will spearhead the development of a research programme on work and learning and ensure that advice offered to the Ministers is research-based.

The final imperative concerns advancing strategies to support lifelong learning, including the recognition of prior learning and credit accumulation and transfer. A programme of seminars, colloquia and other forums will be drawn up, and SAQA’s role in careers guidance and counselling will be explored.
Brief overview of the draft NQF Bill

Carin Stoltz, Deputy Director: Secretariat

“The NQF has won wide acceptance as the principal instrument through which national education and training qualifications are recognised and quality assured.” Thus reads the preamble of the NQF Bill 2008, which was published for public comment on Friday 15 February 2008.

The Bill intends repealing the SAQA Act of 1995 and provides for a ten-level National Qualifications Framework (NQF), the establishment of three Quality Councils (QCs), the role of SAQA and related matters.

The SAQA Board will look different under the new NQF Act, once it is passed. The Bill proposes that the board has only 12 members, as opposed to the current 29, and stipulates it should be based on expertise as opposed to the current constituency-based board. Members will be broadly representative of the education and training sectors and related interests, and must have thorough knowledge and understanding of education and training, in addition to known and attested commitment to the interests of education and training.

The Bill names Umalusi as the QC for General and Further Education and Training and the Council on Higher Education as the QC for Higher Education. It also refers to the proposed QC for Trades and Occupations (QCTO), which will be called into being by the amended Skills Development Act.

In terms of the Bill, the QCs will accept responsibility for generating qualifications and recommending them to SAQA for registration on the NQF, and for the quality assurance of qualifications in their respective ambits.

SAQA will retain responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the NQF and informing the public about the framework and its functions. In addition SAQA remains responsible for the registration of qualifications, and the recommendation of quality assurance framework policy to the Minister of Education.

SAQA will also have to facilitate a system of collaboration with the QCs, in order to achieve the objectives of the NQF; maintain the National Learners’ Records Database; conduct or commission research and publish investigations of importance to the development and implementation of the NQF; and collaborate with international counterparts on matters of mutual interest concerning national or regional qualifications frameworks. It will also retain its current function of providing an evaluation and advisory service for foreign qualifications.
ETQA Performance Audits

Performance quality audits for ETQAs: looking towards 2009

Christo Basson, Director: Quality Assurance and Development

Keeping 31 Education and Training Quality Assurance bodies (ETQAs) up to the mark demands substantial amounts of time as well as human and other resources. SAQA works in three-year quality audit cycles, and is unique in the world in its use of customised quality indicators for the process of performance quality audits.

First compliance, then performance

The first cycle of ETQA quality audits that SAQA conducted was completed in 2005. This cycle assessed how well each body complied with a set of specific criteria. The directorate then moved on to a three-year cycle of performance audits. Before starting the audits themselves, SAQA developed a set of quality indicators (based on the original criteria used between 2003 and 2005) to measure performance.

The first step in the process of the performance audit was a self-evaluation by each ETQA in which the body assesses its own continuing compliance with the set criteria. Those ETQAs that did not perform adequately in this exercise had to undergo another period of monitoring, and the rest went on to the next round in which they were performance-quality audited.

Those ETQAs whose performance was satisfactory will have their accreditation extended, and those whose audit revealed areas of underperformance will be required to produce a developmental plan showing how they will raise their performance in the relevant areas to acceptable levels.

SAQA has completed performance audits on 18 ETQAs to date and has four more scheduled before the end of the 2007-2008 financial year in March. The balance – 13 ETQAs – will be audited by 25 September 2008, thus completing the three-year cycle that began in 2005.

The scoring system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Compliance: all policies and procedures in place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Room for improvement: some evidence of performance indicators in place, but follow-through and monitoring of implementation is inconsistent and reactive rather than proactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Meets own performance targets: planning is in place to meet performance objectives; implementation is evaluated; data on improvement is available; the early stages of consistent improvement are evident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sustained continual improvement: improvement processes are used and continually evaluated to obtain good results and feed into trends of sustained improvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An understandable but misguided reaction

Nobody enjoys being audited, and organisations tend to react in the same way as individuals do. The more detailed and challenging the performance indicators, the higher the stress levels rise. SAQA’s unique scoring system meant that for the first time each ETQA was allocated a number reflecting its performance (see box), rather than a general statement that the ETQA was “compliant” or “not compliant”.

There were some interesting reactions to this rating system. Some ETQAs, showing an admirable desire for improvement, wanted to know how they could achieve the top score of 3. However, as the description of this rating makes clear, it can only be achieved when there is evidence of “sustained continual improvement” – something that must be measured over years and carefully documented. DQAD did not expect any ETQAs to achieve a 3 in this cycle.

A second common response to the rating was to “take it
personally” instead of seeing it as valuable information pointing the way to improvement and growth. Achieving the baseline score of 0 actually indicates that an ETQA has all its policies and procedures in place – in other words it is compliant. But some bodies lost sight of this and took anything less than a 3 as a “bad mark” that somehow had to be explained away. However, the point of the audits was not to allocate blame and scapegoat certain organisations or parts of these organisations, but to reveal where improvements were needed in the organisation overall.

The audit system perceives the organisation as a whole that relies on the effective functioning of all its parts, not as a series of disconnected units. If there are problems in one section, the entire organisation should be involved in analysing these problems and contributing to the solution. This means that the executive should use the feedback from an audit as positive input to help the organisation improve, and manage and co-ordinate ways of doing this. ETQAs that misuse audit results to allocate blame to particular sections or individuals miss the point of the audit completely.

The burning question

The landscape of quality assurance in education will change substantially with the implementation of the NQF Act and amendments to the Higher Education, Skills Development and General and Further Education and Training Acts. Responsibility for quality assurance will then lie with the three new Quality Councils (QCs): Umalusi, the Council for Higher Education and the new Quality Council for Trades and Occupations, which is to be set up under the Department of Labour. It is therefore not surprising that the question has been asked: why is SAQA continuing as before with its audits in the face of so much change?

The answer is simple. All ETQAs have been audited on the same basis, which measured the quality of their delivery in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and economy. When the time comes to hand over to the new QCs, they will all know exactly how they are performing in terms of implementing the objectives of the NQF (which remain unchanged under the new Act). Even if their responsibilities change and ETQAs are redesigned and re-organised, they will carry this knowledge of their level of performance into the new configuration.

Information generated by the 2008 audit cycle will also enable the new QCs to build on the excellence that ETQAs have already achieved, and at the same time be aware of pockets of underperformance. There is enormous potential for the QCs to benefit from the audits and share best practice in building their new structures. Although the confidentiality of the audits is strictly enforced, the Freedom of Information Act allows confidentiality to be waived in certain circumstances, such as the situation of the new QCs, where the information can legitimately contribute to establishing and/or improving existing systems.

SAQA’s role in the new system

The expertise built up at SAQA will hopefully not be allowed to go to waste. It is envisaged that after April 2009 SAQA will still play an evaluative role across and within the sub-frameworks of the NQF.

It is perceived that SAQA will look at quality across the QCs at a systemic level. SAQA will recommend a framework policy to the minister for quality assurance, after considering proposals by each QC, whereas the day-to-day managing and executive functions for quality assurance will rest with the QCs. It is further anticipated that SAQA will facilitate a system of collaboration to achieve the objectives of the NQF, as contemplated in the proposed Bill.
Establishing a national qualifications framework for Ethiopia

Dr James Keevy, Deputy Director: International Liaison

The Ethiopian government has recently initiated a new push towards creating qualifications frameworks conducive to economic and social development. The intention is to move Ethiopia towards a knowledge-based economy capable of sustainable economic growth, with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. This aim brings new challenges to the development of human resources.

The Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP) is designed to improve educational quality, relevance, efficiency and equity in Ethiopia, and expand access to education through the establishment of the Ethiopian National Qualifications Framework (ENQF). The ENQF’s function is to support the development of a comprehensive, integrated system of education encompassing all the education and training sectors.

At present, there are only very limited paths between the different education sectors, and transitions from non-formal learning environments to formal programmes are particularly difficult. Students who complete 10th Grade are assigned to different education tracks. They either go on to preparatory school (Grade 11 and 12) and then to university, or to technical and vocational education and training (TVET). Transferring between TVET and higher education is only possible to a very limited extent. With the ENQF, qualifications from each of the different educational sectors (namely higher education, general education and TVET) are to be made more comparable, thus creating the possibility for pathways between the different streams.

In December 2007 an ENQF taskforce was established to oversee the initial phases of the development of the ENQF. In Phase 1 an ENQF Consultative Document will be developed, as will a final ENQF Implementation Plan. Phase 2 will see creation of awareness and implementation of the ENQF.

The taskforce will consider how to rationalise the qualifications system and how to regulate national standards of knowledge, skills and wider competences by defining qualification levels with descriptors based on learning outcomes. It will also investigate a system for comparing qualifications by relating them to each other, in order to increase confidence in the national qualification system by individuals, learning providers and those recruiting for jobs and learning programmes.

After an exploratory meeting, SAQA was appointed in January 2008 to provide technical assistance to the ENQF taskforce through the Italian Contribution to the Education Sector Development Programme. Together with the taskforce, SAQA will hold discussions with all relevant stakeholders to ensure a common understanding of national qualifications frameworks. The discussions will also centre around identifying generic descriptors for each level based on learning outcomes, competences and credit ranges, and develop a consultative document for developing a National Qualifications Framework for Ethiopia.

A draft consultation document was discussed with senior Education Ministry officials at a workshop on 5 March 2008. Consultations with various stakeholder groupings (including industry, other ministries, professional bodies and regional representatives) have been held, and level descriptors and qualifications descriptors are being developed. A conference was held on 25 March 2008, and the consultation document is being completed and an implementation plan drawn up. The final documents were presented to the Ethiopian government on 29 April 2008 at its Annual Review Meeting.
Qualifications Africa Conference 2007

Jill Bishop, Assistant Director: Communications

Q-Africa 2007, which took place on 22 and 23 November 2007, had as its theme “Occupationally-directed qualifications within qualifications frameworks”. The conference was held at Gallagher Estate, Midrand. Some speakers came from various organisations in Germany concerned with qualifications, and delegates were welcomed by the German Ambassador to South Africa, His Excellency Dieter Haller.

SAQA Executive Officer Samuel Isaacs and Wolfgang Reuter, Executive Director of the German Q-Federation, then opened the first plenary session at which Cornelia Pieper, Vice-Chairperson of the German Parliament’s Committee on Education, Research and Technology Assessment, addressed the conference. The plenary session on the second day was addressed by Elizabeth Thobejane of the Department of Labour and Dr Peer Ederer from Germany.

There were 33 separate workshops over the two days, which covered topics as diverse as a Quality Assurance Framework for the occupations; artisan development; the role of CETA, INSETA, MQA and MERSETA in occupational qualifications; national and regional qualifications frameworks; developing engineering qualifications; European initiatives; recognition of foreign occupational qualifications; online courses; and the role of non-statutory bodies.

The conference took place as the review of the South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF) was being finalised, and as an intensive effort was being made to deal with skills shortages in the country through the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS), the Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA) and a series...
of other key initiatives. It was targeted at education and training providers, both private and public, employers, professional bodies, government bodies and agencies, international institutions and organised labour.

Q-Africa 2007 focused on how best to address a number of national challenges, including scarce and critical skills, through the development of occupationally-directed qualifications. The conference provided a vehicle for sharing new thinking on education and training, and a platform for significant debate on the development of qualifications frameworks.

Speakers’ Gallery

Elizabeth Thobejane, Executive Manager of the Department of Labour, spoke on the new QCTO. Dr Peer Ederer of Zeppelin University/GTZ, Germany, spoke on the importance of assessing human capital accurately in order to drive economic growth. Dr Ederer is Human Capital Director for the Lisbon Council, a leader in assessing human capital in European workplaces, which is supported by the education department of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. His presentation compared human capital utilisation in South Africa and selected OECD countries. Dr Ederer suggested that South African experts in human capital could work with the Lisbon Council in verifying, refining and expanding on the data sources that it currently uses.

The paper by Paul Burnand, Policy Consultant to the Sector Skills Development Agency of the United Kingdom, gave insight into the interaction between frameworks and networks used in the UK’s learning and skills ecosystem. A recent review called for an integrated system that generated economically viable skills to support social and economic goals – a system in which NQFs play an important role. In conclusion Burnand looked at ways in which Web 2.0 developments are influencing the interaction between producers and users. As more and more activity takes place online and detailed personal information becomes available (for example, desktop research, the potential of YouTube and sites like Facebook), organisations have a vast resource for assessing their impact, solving problems and refining products and services. This applies to learning and qualifications just as to other services.

From left: Wolfgang Reuter, Chief Executive Director of the German Q-Federation and Klaus Schloesser, President of Initiative Future.
Proposals for a revised approach to the development and management of occupational qualifications on the NQF is the title of the paper presented by Chris Vorwerk, GTZ Consultant to the Quality Council for Trade and Occupations task team, Department of Labour. The paper described how an occupational qualifications framework links to the labour market, the NQF, curricula, learning interventions and assessments. It then proposed a new model for the design of occupational qualifications that is based on clearly identified learning components that make up occupational competence.

A practical example of how professional qualifications have been developed was given by Prof Hu Hanrahan, Consultant on Standards and Procedures to the Engineering Council of SA. Hanrahan traced the development of engineering qualifications from the Industrial Revolution to the present, showing how standards setting and quality assurance have evolved. He put the case for having professional engineering qualifications falling under an NQF but leaving professional designations under the statutory regulation of the profession itself: “professions assess but do not train”.

Other speakers included Chris De Villiers, CEO of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries of Southern Africa; Dr Mark Pütz, Director of Research, Central Agency for Continuing Vocational Education and Training in Skilled Crafts; Shirley Steenekamp, ETQA Manager, Insurance Sector Education & Training Authority; and Theo Bhengu, Acting Deputy Executive Director of the Higher Education Quality Committee.

Recognition of non-formal and informal learning: visit by the OECD research team

Dr James Keevy, Deputy Director: International Liaison

A recent Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Education Committee report, The Role of National Qualifications Systems in Promoting Lifelong Learning, concluded that recognition of non-formal and informal learning, credit transfer, and qualifications frameworks are the three most important issues that require further study.

The OECD undertook to pursue the investigation of non-formal and informal learning. It hopes to provide guidance for policy-makers on generating effective, beneficial and equitable systems of recognising non-formal and informal learning, and to implement the ‘lifelong learning for all’ agenda.

In 2006 South Africa, represented by the South African Qualifications Authority, was invited to participate in this activity as a non-OECD country. SAQA prepared a draft report on the South African context and presented it at two meetings.

Follow-up visit by the OECD research team

In 2008 an OECD research team visited South Africa from 18 to 22 February to collect evidence and interact with key roleplayers. The team consisted of Dr Patrick Werquin (OECD and team leader), Dr Dennis Gunning (Wales) and Ms Joy Van Kleef (Canada).

After an in-depth discussion with the authors of the South Africa report, the team visited various RPL delivery sites across South Africa, accompanied by Dr James Keevy and Prof Ben Parker of SAQA. They held interviews, made site visits and visited focus groups at the following institutions:

- Tshwane University of Technology
- University of South Africa
- University of Johannesburg
- University of the Witwatersrand
- Prior Learning Centre
Connecting with Africa and the world

- Free State Higher Education Consortium (University of the Free State)
- University of the Western Cape
- University of Cape Town
- Cape Peninsula University of Technology

The tour ended with an interview with Dr Mignon Breier from the HSRC, who is regarded as a leading researcher of non-formal learning in the vocational sector.

The OECD team will send a draft country report to SAQA for comments. The final country report will be included in the comparative report covering all participating countries that is due for completion by the end of 2008.

The research team’s observations

- South Africa is well advanced compared to many other countries with regard to the development of RPL policy, although as in other countries there are specific barriers to RPL development and implementation.
- RPL implementation in South Africa relies heavily on ‘champions’ (individuals who have dedicated time and effort to this field). As implementation proceeds, reliance on these champions will have to be replaced with broader and more sustainable practices.
- The OECD initiative, and specifically the visit to South Africa, creates an opportunity for South Africa to focus attention on RPL and collaborate with other institutions to strengthen its implementation.

Establishing a transnational qualifications framework for the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth

Dr James Keevy, Deputy Director: International Liaison

At a meeting of Commonwealth Education Ministers in Halifax, Canada, in December 2000, the Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) was born. This collaborative network, which builds on the support of education ministers, was endorsed at the 15th Commonwealth Conference of Education Ministers in Edinburgh, Scotland in 2003.

Today, VUSSC is a growing network committed to the collaborative development of free content resources for education and training. There are currently 29 Commonwealth countries actively participating. VUSSC course materials are non-proprietary and readily adaptable to the specific context of each country, and can be used in the offering of credit-bearing qualifications as well as strengthening educational capacity and access in member countries. The focus is on the development of post-secondary, skills-related courses in areas such as tourism, entrepreneurship, use of information and communications technologies, life skills and disaster management.
The Commonwealth of Learning (CoL) facilitates the VUSSC initiative, with funding support from the government of Singapore, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation. In October 2007 the Commonwealth of Learning contracted SAQA to analyse available data on qualifications frameworks from VUSSC countries, and to develop a concept document as the basis for a proposed Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF).

The draft concept document was completed in March 2008, and senior officials from 20 small Commonwealth countries met in Singapore from 25 to 29 February 2008 to discuss it. The discussion workshop was facilitated by Joe Samuels and Dr James Keevy of SAQA.

At the workshop, senior officials re-affirmed the establishment of the VUSSC and recommended establishing a TQF which would act as a mapping instrument for the transnational classification of qualifications offered through the VUSSC. In addition, they agreed the TQF should aim to improve credit transfer and facilitate articulation arrangements between member countries. Level and qualification descriptors should be developed, as should transnational qualifications guidelines and quality assurance guidelines, based on national and (where applicable) regional qualifications criteria.

Officials also recommended establishing a TQF Management Committee consisting of expert representatives from the four regions (Africa, the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean, the Caribbean and the Pacific); setting up a TQF portal to include a relational database of qualifications, programmes and providers; and establishing monitoring and evaluation processes for the TQF.

Seed money should be secured for the first three years of the development of the TQF, and VUSSC course development workshops should include attention to qualifications development and quality assurance.

Based on these recommendations, SAQA is finalising the TQF concept document, which will be discussed in June 2008 at a meeting in London of key VUSSC resource people in each country, after which an implementation plan will be drawn up.

Senior officials from 20 small Commonwealth member countries and senior staff from the Commonwealth of Learning, UNESCO, and SAQA (The South African Qualifications Authority). SAQA was represented by Deputy Executive Officer Joe Samuels (second row from back, third from left) and Dr James Keevy (same row, second from right).
Lots of apples for these teachers! The Elgin Learning Foundation: “helping to change lives through education and service”

Jill Bishop, Assistant Director: Communications

A small NGO based in the apple-producing region of Grabouw in the Western Cape is living up to this vision statement in a big way. Established in 1995, the Elgin Learning Foundation (ELF) runs dynamic programmes in five different areas of activity – agriculture, adult basic education and training (ABET), rural primary education support, entrepreneurship and small business development, and health and community development.

Why such a wide range of projects? According to Mark Walker, director of ELF, it is important to consider and support the whole person. For example, he says, it is of little use just to teach someone to read, write and count – there must be systems in place for the newly-literate person to continue his or her formal learning. Likewise, someone who is unemployed or suffering from chronic illness cannot reach his or her full potential. ELF’s ultimate aim is to help people become “productive, independent citizens who can hold their own in a global society”.

This echoes one of the objectives of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF): “contributing to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation at large.”

Agriculture learners are trained in viticulture.

A learner chooses books from the mobile library that visits her school once a week.

ELF’s campaign to get youngsters waterborne has been so successful that they now hold galas.

This may seem a tall order for an organisation working in rural areas where schooling, health services and practical training programmes are scarce. Walker is undeterred: the Foundation has broken this task down into its fundamentals (hence the five areas of activity) and is tacking each one systematically.
Some of their achievements to date:

- recently accredited as an FET college with Umalusi
- providing agricultural training for over 3 000 semi-skilled farmers since 1995
- teaching hundreds of children to swim
- training hundreds of owners of small businesses like spaza shops, emerging farmers and other SMMEs
- providing ABET for thousands of people in the community who are at varying levels of literacy, helping many achieve their Grade 9 and Grade 12 certificates in the Further Education and Training band
- establishing healthcare services and several health promotion programmes, including those concerned with eradicating HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis
- setting up a rural primary school support project that now offers support to schools in mathematics, science, technology, music, water safety and computer literacy
- building a mobile library that makes weekly visits to support the outcomes-based curriculum and to promote reading literacy

In addition, ELF is one of a selected group of accredited training providers delivering training to 1 500 healthcare workers, who in turn deliver grassroots healthcare to thousands of chronically ill patients, especially those suffering from HIV/AIDS and TB.

With all it has achieved, there is still much the foundation wants to do. As a non-government and non-profit organisation, ELF relies on sponsors, organisations, government departments and individuals in order to survive and to continue their good work. But they are not waiting for handouts: they make and sell articles from apple wood – coasters, lamp stands, belt buckles, bangles, candle holders and more – and felt products like cushions, ottomans, bags, slippers and scarves. These are sold both nationally and internationally through ELF’s cooperative to the fashion and interior design professions. At the same time, workers at the cooperative are trained in running this type of operation.

Ntsiki Gumbe, Manager of Information Services at SAQA, and the project leader of the NQF Support Link visited ELF in February. Among the issues discussed with Walker and his team was the possibility of ELF staff being trained in NQF Support Link learning programmes. They were also interested in helping to roll out the NQF Support Link Learning programmes in the Western and Northern Cape provinces.

The Dutch Embassy visited the college and liked ELF’s innovative approach to development and education so much they funded the upskilling of the college’s staff (more than 90 per cent of whom are previously disadvantaged people). Some staff have attended postgraduate courses in Holland, and MDF was appointed by the Dutch government to do some in-house capacity building for facilitators and support staff. One of the needs addressed was staying abreast of SAQA’s developments and strengthening ELF’s partnership with SAQA.

Both adults and primary school learners have access to computer training through ELF’s initiatives.

• ELF is one of a selected group of accredited training providers delivering training to 1 500 healthcare workers, who in turn deliver grassroots healthcare to thousands of chronically ill patients, especially those suffering from HIV/AIDS and TB.

With all it has achieved, there is still much the foundation wants to do. As a non-government and non-profit organisation, ELF relies on sponsors, organisations, government departments and individuals in order to survive and to continue their good work. But they are not waiting for handouts: they make and sell articles from apple wood – coasters, lamp stands, belt buckles, bangles, candle holders and more – and felt products like cushions, ottomans, bags, slippers and scarves. These are sold both nationally and internationally through ELF’s cooperative to the fashion and interior design professions. At the same time, workers at the cooperative are trained in running this type of operation.

Ntsiki Gumbe, Manager of Information Services at SAQA, and the project leader of the NQF Support Link visited ELF in February. Among the issues discussed with Walker and his team was the possibility of ELF staff being trained in NQF Support Link learning programmes. They were also interested in helping to roll out the NQF Support Link Learning programmes in the Western and Northern Cape provinces.
Reaching out

World Aids Day project 2007: making a difference

Tumelo Modisane, Assistant Director: Information Systems

Each year on 1 December, SAQA joins the world in commemorating World Aids Day. The theme for 2007 was “Stop Aids; keep the promise – leadership.”

This year, the SAQA HIV/Aids task team decided to mark World Aids Day with something a little different in order to have a bigger impact. Rather than having organisations working with HIV and Aids come to SAQA, the team felt it would be more meaningful for SAQA employees to go to them. So they searched for an organisation that worked with people infected or affected by HIV and Aids, so that we could give its premises a facelift – and found two.

Boitumelo Community Centre in Soshanguve is registered with the Department of Social Development. It was established in 1999 to assist children who are HIV-positive, abused, abandoned or homeless. The Centre currently accommodates and cares for 19 children, whose ages range from a few months to 16 years. Mmalerato Place of Safety is situated in Mamelodi, and accommodates and cares for five HIV-positive, abandoned youngsters. It was established and registered in 2006.

The World Aids Day Project task team – Ernest Mashego, Cleo Radebe, Sebetseng Malebye, Hlumela Sondlo, Shandukani Manyaka, Ntsiki Gumbe, Tumelo Modisane and Emlyn Jordaan – deserves a special mention for their outstanding work. They spent many hours approaching sponsors, collecting and packing donations, arranging transport and mobilising staff members to donate items and volunteer their time on World Aids Day.

Children from Mmalerato Place of Safety are delighted with their party packs.
Our cup runneth over

Pretoria companies responded with great generosity to our call for donations. Newlands Spar and Pick ‘n Pay at Menlyn Retail Park offered vouchers to the value of between R200 and R300, and Woolworths at Newlands Shopping Centre also promised a contribution.

Newlands Garden Centre donated seedlings for the vegetable garden at Boitumelo Community Centre, and Nasou Via Afrika and Best Books offered books for the children. McDonalds Kolonade and McDonalds in Hamilton Street supplied 20 litres of juice each, and Menlyn Motor City Spur provided 30 burgers and chips.

SAQA collected 15 party packs, toys, clothes, two presents for each child, food, a mattress, blankets, curtains, crockery, kitchen equipment, paraffin lamps, stoves, a printer and a computer.

Gratitude abounding

On Saturday 1st December, the World Aids Day Project volunteers packed the donations into the SAQA bakkie
(adorned with Aids Awareness posters) and set off for Mamelodi at 08:30.

On our arrival in Mamelodi, drum majorettes from a local primary school welcomed us and led our convoy of vehicles through the streets to Mmalerato Place of Safety. The children, charming in their white Mmalerato Place of Safety T-shirts, burst into song in appreciation when they saw the boxes of donations.

While their day room was given a facelift with a fresh coat of pink paint from Jack’s Paint, some of the volunteers made their way across Pretoria to Boitumelo Community Centre. A choir made up of children from the home and from the community greeted us. Following a prayer of thanksgiving by an elder from the community, it was off to the back yard to extend the home’s vegetable garden. The recent rains made it easier for the volunteers to remove the weeds, dig over the soil and plant the seedlings we received from Newlands Garden Centre (see back page).

Elias Mashiane arrived amidst ululations and dancing in the SAQA bakkie filled with gifts, just as the work in the garden was completed. After the gifts were given out, and curtain rail put up in one of the bedrooms, the children sat down to the tasty Spur burgers and chips. One little girl kept asking “Is this burger for me, is it really for me?” Who would have thought that a simple thing such as a burger could give such immense joy? The volunteers came away from this World Aids Day project with more appreciation for all they have.
Enthusiastic SAQA gardeners at Boitumelo Community Centre, Soshanguve.

**SAQA volunteers**

Lineo Ramataboe-Henry
Christa Mogoaladi
Lettie Seoketsa
Tlangelani Mabaso
Matthews Phenya
Shirley Bogopa
Sebotseng Malebye
Nomasono Radebe
Sarah Monyaki
Ernest Mashego
Victor Booyisen
Gugu Ndlovu
Hlumela Sondlo
Shandukani Manyaka
Natina Mpahlwa

Nadina Coetzee
Ronald Mbungela
Themba Magasela
Romeo Selekeane
Jabu Mtsweni
Ntsiki Gumbe
Eric Khotsa
Emlyn Jordaan
Tumelo Modisane
Esther Manabile
Mapula Maseka
Mamotse Mangwane
Nonhlanhla Ngwenya
Japie Nkwanyana
Elias Mashiane
Lucas Setsholi
SAQA Exhibitions

So far this year SAQA has exhibited at the Sports and Recreation South Africa conference and exhibition at Kopanong Conference Centre on 12-14 February, the Science Unlimited exhibition at the Pretoria Showgrounds on 3-7 March, the Umalusi conference at Pretoria’s Innovation Hub on 10-14 March, the Shercon conference on occupational health and safety at the Birchwood Hotel on 15-17 April and the Youth Making a Difference careers exhibition, organised in conjunction with the Black Managers’ Forum, at the Eersterus Civic Centre on 18-19 April.

SAQA's stand at the SRSA conference at Kopanong attracted a lot of interest from delegates.

Visitors to the Shercon exhibition were offered plenty of material.

SAQA's striking stand at the Science Unlimited exhibition.

Learners at the Youth Making a Difference careers exhibition collecting information on SAQA.

Contact Information:

SAQA House, 1067 Arcadia Street, Hatfield 0083, Pretoria
PostNet Suite 248, Private Bag X06, Waterkloof 0145

Tel: +27 12 431 5000
Fax: +27 12 431 5147
E-mail: saqainfo@saqa.org.za

www.saqa.org.za