



The new NQF Act: streamlining the implementation of the NQF

Samuel Isaacs: Executive Officer



One of the first pieces of legislation to be enacted by our democratic government in 1995, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act, has been replaced by the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act which was signed into law in February 2009. This Act signals the next phase in the development of a maturing system, and aims to ensure a more streamlined and effective implementation of the NQF.

The NQF Act provides for a ten-level NQF, three coordinated qualifications sub-frameworks and the establishment of three Quality Councils (QCs), the role of SAQA and related matters.

The Quality Council for General and Further Education and Training (Umalusi) is responsible for the General and Further Education and Training sub-framework. The Higher Education sub-framework falls under the Quality Council for Higher

Education (Council on Higher Education or CHE), and the Trades and Occupations sub-framework is the responsibility of the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO).

The QCs will assume responsibility for important aspects of the NQF such as standards setting and quality assurance. SAQA will have an oversight role and will collaborate closely with the QCs.

As in the past, SAQA will continue to advance the objectives of the NQF. It will also oversee the ongoing development and implementation of the NQF and facilitate the coordination of the sub-frameworks. SAQA will also maintain the National Learners' Records Database (NLRD), conduct or commission research and publish investigations of importance to the development and implementation of the NQF.

SAQA also has the critical task of communicating the new NQF landscape to the general public, informing them about the new legislation and how it will affect them. A dedicated NQF Advocacy Task Team has been established to drive this initiative. SAQA will continue to collaborate with its international counterparts on all matters of mutual interest concerning qualifications frameworks.

The full impact of the changes will only be felt over time, as the key partners need to agree on transitional arrangements. Transitional arrangements will then be communicated singly or jointly by SAQA, the Department of Higher Education, the Department of Basic Education and the three QCs.

The NQF Act was officially implemented in 1 June 2009. The custodian of the Act is the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande.

Members of the public will reap the benefits of these changes when we, in the education, training and development sector, all work together and build our NQF so that it contributes to the economic and social development of the nation at large.



The NQF Advocacy Campaign

John Arnesen: Project Director: NQF Advocacy



Just on a year ago the SAQA Authority called for a task team to be formed to consider how to most effectively and efficiently advocate the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The NQF Advocacy Task Team's brief was to identify the target audiences, establish the key messages and make recommendations on how best to communicate the NQF to the identified markets.

A strong collaborative approach was considered essential, and for this reason the Task Team was formed from representatives of Umalusi, the CHE, SAQA and those leading the QCTO project. A key role of Task Team members was to regularly brief their principals on progress and to ensure that any feedback was incorporated into the plans.

In considering the scope of the project, the team focused first on the NQF as a brand. Creative agency Lesoba Difference was brought in to assist in developing the NQF brand values, brand promise and brand image.

Once the essence of the NQF brand had been distilled, the Task Team then began work on the advocacy campaign strategy. An integrated marketing communications approach was agreed on, which recognised that the multiple and very different target audiences needed different approaches. To maintain consistency, it was agreed that in addition to constantly re-affirming the NQF brand promise, a simple yet powerful message had to be evident in all communications. The Task Team finally adopted the theme 'genuine versus fake' as the 'golden thread' for all campaign interventions.

The new NQF Act was being finalised during these discussions, which meant the Task Team could ensure that the advocacy campaign aligned with the new Act and communicated all its objectives.



From left: Prof. Chika Sehoole, Joe Samuels and Samuel Isaacs at the 7 May presentation.

With its clear brief the team made great progress and soon reached agreement on the target audiences and campaign construct. With the assistance of the agency, this was converted into a full campaign proposal.

On 7 May 2009 the Task Team presented their work to leaders from the Department of Labour, the Department of Education, SAQA, CHE, Umalusi and the SETAs. The feedback was extremely positive. The campaign was also presented to the employees of CHE, Umalusi and SAQA, and all staff were encouraged to become NQF brand ambassadors.

Plans to roll out the campaign to the public are being finalised.



From left: John Arnesen, NQF Advocacy Project Director, Eugenie Rabe of Umalusi, Michelle Perrow of Lesoba Difference, Sam Isaacs of SAQA and Yuven Gounden of SAQA.



Back row, from left: Jill Bishop (SAQA), Victor Booysen (SAQA), Theo Bhengu (CHE), John Arnesen (SAQA), Mafu Rakometse (Umalusi), Eugenie Rabe (Umalusi), Sam Isaacs (SAQA Executive Officer).
Front row, from left: Deidré Beylis, Yuven Gounden (SAQA), Elizabeth Thobejane (Department of Labour), Ntsiki Gumbe (SAQA), Lebogang Molapise (Umalusi), Michelle Perrow (Lesoba Difference).
Absent: Kgomotso Legari (CHE), Joe Samuels (SAQA), Chika Sehoole (Department of Education).



NLRD Director assists UAE to set up its qualifications framework

Tumelo Modisane: Assistant Director: Information Services



The Director of the National Learners' Records Database (NLRD), Yvonne Shapiro, was in Abu Dhabi late last year to help the Emirate develop a database for its qualifications framework project.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is in the process of setting up its Qualifications Framework. The Qualifications Framework Project (QFP),

which was launched in January 2007 by the Board of Trustees of the Institute of Applied Technology, is expected to lead to the establishment of a Qualifications Authority. The Authority will serve as the custodian of the Qualifications Framework, which is the UAE's core of an integrated qualifications system.

"I gave a workshop on what the NLRD is and what it does, and on how the QFP could apply the concepts and methods that SAQA has used to develop and maintain the NLRD to their envisioned qualifications register and information system," says Ms Shapiro. "The workshop also included discussions on the South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF), and the role of the directorates at SAQA such as Standards Setting and Development and Quality Assurance and Development."

This visit to Abu Dhabi, the capital and largest city of the UAE, comes after members of the QFP came to South Africa and visited SAQA to find out more about the South African NQF.

Apart from the Qualifications Framework for the UAE, the QFP is working towards the development and implementation of instruments and mechanisms for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT), and international comparability.

As well as a qualifications register and information system, a new system of quality assured vocational awards is also on the cards for the UAE. To accomplish these objectives the QFP has acquired the services of national and international experts to set up the Qualifications Framework. Three South Africans, currently living in the UAE, form part of this team.

The proposed UAE Framework is a structure of 10 levels where each level is defined in terms of the learning outcomes required for the award of a qualification at that level. Learning outcomes are defined in terms of knowledge, skills, and aspects of competence – autonomy and responsibility, self-development, and role in context – which form the five strands of outcomes.

The proposed framework model is designed to provide a single structure through which all qualifications in use in the UAE (general education, higher education and vocational education

and training) can be described and classified, making it possible to define the relationships between qualifications.

The UAE is a constitutional federation of seven emirates: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain, Ras al-Khaimah and Fujairah. The federation was formally established on 2 December 1971.

The United Arab Emirates

The UAE occupies an area of 83 600 sq km along the south-eastern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. Qatar lies to the west, Saudi Arabia to the south and west, and Oman to the north and east. The capital, which is also the largest city of the federation, Abu Dhabi, is located in the Emirate of the same name.



Yvonne Shapiro with Faisal Abakeri (QFP Director), left, and Peter Rodrigues (QFP Advisor), in the Emirates Palace Hotel.



Yvonne Shapiro with Marilla Vorster, a South African working in Abu Dhabi.



New learnership intake in NLRD

Yvonne Shapiro: Director: NLRD



The Information Administrator Learnership offered by SAQA has been running successfully since 2003. So far 10 learners have earned the National Certificate in Datametrics awarded by Unisa.

In February we welcomed a new intake of learners, who will be the data capturers for the NLRD for the next two years. Some of the learners who graduated in 2008 helped with the handover to the new hands during February.

Four of the 2008 graduates have received permanent appointments as NLRD Clerks – Data Capturing. We wish Lati (Molatelelo) Tloubatla, Oupa Mpondo, Portia Manaiwa and Veronica Vuma happy and fulfilling careers at SAQA.



Back row from left: Nelson Chauke, Takatso Mofokeng, Koketso Phahle.
Front row from left: Joseph Molekwa, Gugu Cindi, Sipho Sotomela.

CEEQ becomes DFQEAS

Nadina Coetzee: Director: Foreign Qualifications Evaluation and Advisory Service



The National Qualifications Framework Act of 2008 mandates SAQA to offer an 'evaluation and advisory service' regarding foreign qualifications. In June 2008 the Authority established a separate directorate to fulfil this mandate, and Nadina Coetzee, formerly Deputy Director of the Centre for Evaluation of Educational Qualifications (CEEQ), was appointed as the new

Director on 1 January 2009. Nadina has worked in CEEQ since 1990, when she was appointed as an Assistant Researcher. In those days CEEQ was part of the HSRC, with Johan Muller as the manager. When he retired in 1999, Nadina took over as manager, a job she fulfils to this day.

In order to reflect the role of the new Directorate – rendering an evaluation and advisory service in addition to evaluating

foreign qualifications – it was also decided to change the name. The new name, 'Directorate of Foreign Qualifications Evaluation and Advisory Services (DFQEAS)' accurately expresses the Directorate's expanded role.

The DFQEAS continues to experience high work volumes, mainly because of the national policy of importing scarce skills and the political instability in Zimbabwe. The staff had to grow in order to handle additional tasks such the growth of the call centre, dedicated follow-up procedures and the administration of outsourcing. In 2008 there were 22 permanent staff members, and this has now expanded to 31, six of whom were redeployed from other SAQA directorates. These staff numbers are currently supplemented by two Contact Centre Support learners, whose contracts began in February 2009, six contract evaluators and 19 temporary administrative staff.



Joint Implementation Plans and SAQA

Dugmore Mphuthing: *Acting Director: Standards Setting and Development; Maire Kelly, Organising Field Coordinator, and Shakiera Malik, JIP Coordinator*



For the past few years SAQA has engaged in more than 25 Joint Implementation Plans (JIPs) – partnership agreements between SAQA and a stakeholder wherein the stakeholder often provides the funds for specific projects related to populating the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Examples of stakeholders are Sector Education and Training

Authorities (SETAs), government departments and the private sector. The Directorate of Standards Setting and Development (DSSD) coordinates the JIPs.

JIP projects include revising existing qualifications and/or unit standards, generating new qualifications and, where relevant, associated unit standards. They also involve field scoping workshops to identify the areas in which qualifications are needed, and roadshows across all nine provinces to introduce new concepts, hold consultations and advocate newly developed material.

What is SAQA's role in a JIP agreement?

Once a JIP has been signed and the JIP partner has met their commitments in terms of the agreement, DSSD manages the process. It analyses the requirements of the agreement and appoints a project team to meet the deliverables outlined in the JIP. The team is led, ex officio, by the Director: DSSD and includes the Deputy Director for DSSD, the relevant Organising Field Coordinator, one or more representatives of the JIP partner, the Logistics division of DSSD and the JIP coordination team. The team manages activities such as procurement; project management; meetings; preparation of progress and financial reports; and scoping exercises. It undertakes review and generation processes; organises task teams and plenary workshops (including the logistics associated with transport and accommodation); arranges venues; and provides the required documentation. Using this structure, SAQA has effectively delivered quality products within the stipulated time frames and budgets.

Some of SAQA's JIP achievements

Commonwealth of Learning:

SAQA facilitated the development and alignment of a National Qualification for End-User Computing to be used internationally through the Commonwealth of Learning.

Department of Education:

SAQA successfully revised the Further Education and Training Certificate (FETC) for Early Childhood Development (ECD), together with the Department of Education, in a process that included nationwide roadshows and consultative workshops.

This process will culminate in a Qualifications Information Pack (QIP) for all ECD providers to assist them in training within the ECD sector.

Department of Sport & Recreation:

In partnership with SAQA, the Department of Sport and Recreation – commonly referred to as Sport and Recreation South Africa (SRSA) – is developing standards to be used in coaching the various sporting codes. This will be a first for the sporting fraternity. Included in the JIP is the development of other much-needed qualifications and standards for various types of sport and recreation.

SETAs:

SRSA's method of developing qualifications and associated unit standards has proved so reliable that many SETAs have, on completion of one JIP, immediately engaged in another. The Services SETA is currently engaged in four JIPs with SAQA across several Organising Fields.

SAQA has just completed a third JIP with the Health and Welfare SETA (HWSETA), from which several qualifications – some with unit standards – have been generated and others reviewed and revised to ensure continuing fitness for purpose. SAQA also worked with HWSETA in organising a two-day workshop for more than 50 traditional healers, representing all the disciplines within traditional healing. The object of the workshop was to identify areas of traditional healing in which formal qualifications and/or unit standards could be developed. The Safety and Security SETA (SASSETA) has used this model to generate qualifications and standards for the various disciplines in this SETA, including the South African Air Force, the Department of Correctional Services and the South African Police Service.

Other successful JIPs with SETAs include those with Chemical Industries (CHIETA), Insurance (INSETA), Public Sector (PSETA), Local Government (LGSETA), Information Systems, Electronics and Telecommunication Technologies (ISETT), Transport (TETA), Wholesale and Retail (W&RSETA), Construction (CETA) and Forestry Industries (FIETA).

There are also JIPs with government departments such as Environmental Affairs, Home Affairs, the Association of Public Accounts Committee and the Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA – previously known as SAMDI). Among the private Higher Education institutions there is a JIP with City & Guilds.

As SAQA and all the roleplayers in the education and training sectors move into a period of change, SAQA will certainly look back on the JIP partnership model as an example of best practice and one we can all be proud of.



A day in the life of DSSD

Poloko Masuelele, Sebotseng Malebye and Dugmore Mphuthing



Brigadier-General Schalk Walters

A typical day at DSSD starts with reveille when our military wing, in the shape of Brigadier-General Schalk Walters (retired) and his partner in crime Major Graeme Stickells (also retired), arrives in the office around 06h30. These early birds prepare for the day by having coffee, then tackle telephone messages and call-backs and check the mailbox for enquiries. When Head of Logistics Madu van der Berg and the other birds arrive they find the fattest worms gone, but are welcomed by the aroma of fresh coffee from S & G's office.



Major Graeme Stickells

The Assistant Directors

Their day begins with critiquing qualifications and unit standards, preparing document packs for meetings or attending meetings to generate new qualifications and unit standards. Critiquing a qualification takes the whole day (assuming there are no ad hoc meetings to attend, telephones to answer and queries to respond to). Oh, don't forget generating Terms of Reference (ToR) for procuring consultants and meeting requests.



Madu van der Berg

At meetings, the ADs update the SGB/ Task team members on SAQA current affairs and give a capacity-building presentation to show team members what the processes are and what is expected of them.

The Logistics and Administrative staff

Madu van den Berg checks e-mails for attendance confirmations for meetings, queries and any other requests for Logistics and Events Management support from the Directorate. She signs off meeting requests and distributes meetings files to the admin clerks, checks and signs off claim forms, and tracks qualifications and unit standards from consultants, ADs and SGBs. The logistics team handles up to four meeting files a day, issuing invitations, booking venues, accommodation and flights, and sending confirmations to the members.

Admin staff relieve the receptionists at the DSSD and main enquiry desks, print, file, track daily submissions and compile meeting packs for the Consultative Panel, Qualifications and Standards Committee, Executive Committee or SAQA Authority

meetings. These packs range from one to four volumes (more than 1 000 pages).



Godfrey Rapoo

Meanwhile Godfrey Rapoo, the head of admin, sends out ToRs, draws up contracts, handles payment queries and makes payments (which involves getting signatures and sending the receipts to finance).

The Big Office

Acting Director Dugmore Mphuthing's office opens at 07h30 when the secretary, Shirley Bogopa, arrives to divert calls for screening, retrieve messages and give the Executive Management Meeting pack to the Director. She responds to e-mails and letters and organises events and meetings in the diary. She also attends scheduled and unscheduled meetings and prepares reports and articles for the Departments of Education and Labour, the SAQA Authority, the Executive Committee or the Qualifications and Standards Committee.



Dugmore Mphuthing



Shirley Bogopa

The managers hold meetings with stakeholders in the offices and boardrooms, chair panels, listen to gripes, go off-site for more meetings and presentations, approve leave and check on performance, manage spending and sustain morale.



Eddie Brown

On a normal day, a typical DSSD person has done it all. At 16h00 when the General says goodbye, we know that flexitime has kicked in and the work is done for the day. The early birds start leaving, waving cheerily as they pass Deputy Director Eddie Brown's door and then Dugmore's office – and go home to start preparing to do it all again tomorrow. But for the managers the day is not yet over ...



SAQA retains the Investors In People (IIP) standard

Carin Stoltz-Urban: Deputy Director: Secretariat



SAQA was assessed against the requirements of the Investors in People (IIP) Standard in November 2008 and passed the test with flying colours. This is a significant achievement, considering the imminent changes in the NQF landscape, and the uncertainty within which SAQA has had to function for the past number of years.

The IIP Standard provides a benchmark for organisations to test whether they are planning, implementing and reviewing their management practices. It assesses the culture of the organisation, communication with staff, involvement of staff in decision-making, and the level of staff satisfaction with management practices in the organisation in general. It also assesses the opportunities available to staff for growth and development.

In accordance with standard IIP practice, a representative sample of permanent staff was selected, reflecting SAQA's diversity in terms of seniority and position, directorates, employment status, gender and race. Confidential face-to-face interviews with the selected individuals were held, and the outcome of the assessment was based on the responses of both staff and management.

Liz Host, the IIP assessor, commented: "It was evident during the assessment that while the NQF landscape was still set to change quite drastically and impact on SAQA and its operations, the organisation had planned well for this, communicating clearly with staff and ensuring that the business of the day continued purposefully."

She added: "SAQA has utilised the Standard effectively as a tool for improvement. It has done so by implementing revisions to its leadership and management behaviours and styles, ensuring everyone was kept abreast of changes set to impact on the organisation. It also ensured that people understood the direction of the organisation, and continued to be developed to ensure that they could deliver to expectations."

Victor Booyesen, HR Director of SAQA, ascribes the successful outcome of the assessment to the collective approach by managers on implementing both broadbanding and the Performance and Development Management System. He says that the award is "direct recognition of the efforts of SAQA's management team to engender a culture of people development, performance and recognition".

SAQA remains committed to maintaining and improving its management practices, keeping staff informed and functioning as a true Investor In People.

The indicators used for the assessment

These fall under three main headings: PLAN, DO and REVIEW.

Plan

These indicators measure the extent to which there is a plan of action to develop the organisation and whether the planned development of people is aligned to these goals. They indicate whether there is a culture of equal opportunity and collegial support for improving performance, and whether needs for improving performance govern access to development opportunities. They also measure whether the organisation has defined the leadership, management and people development competencies of its managers and has communicated this information to all staff, so that everyone understands what is expected from managers.

Do

These indicators focus on how effectively managers manage people and their development; the ways in which the company recognises and values contributions; the degree of encouragement for initiative; and the degree to which people are included in decision-making at individual, team and organisational levels. Evidence is sought of how learning and development plans are managed and if the success of that learning is effectively evaluated. Induction for those new to the organisation, or to their roles, is also assessed.

Review

These indicators focus on the evaluation strategies in the organisation, including what the organisation has learned from evaluating and reviewing its practices and how it uses that information in planning for development. They highlight the organisation's successes in improving management and the continued improvement of planning processes, the implementation of those plans and the successful evaluation of their impact.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



European Association for International Education Conference

Amelia Vermaak: *Credentials Evaluator, Directorate of Foreign Qualifications Evaluation and Advisory Services*



The European Association for International Education (EAIE) held its 20th Annual Conference from 10 to 13 September 2008 in Antwerp, Belgium. It was one of the biggest EAIE Conferences ever, with 3 000 participants from all over the world, 90 different sessions, 32 workshops and four seminars. SAQA was represented by Amelia Vermaak and Tumi Moabelo

of the Directorate of Foreign Qualifications Evaluation and Advisory Services (DFQEAS).

The EAIE is a non-governmental, non-profit professional association of a number of professional groups with interests in various areas of international education. The conference is organised around five Special Interest Groups and nine Professional Sections, including one for Admissions Officers and Credential Evaluators (ACE).

Both Amelia and Tumi attended several workshops in the ACE section, which provides an international platform for the continued development of professionals. Tumi attended workshops on evaluating US qualifications and the evaluation of other foreign credentials.

Amelia attended workshops on:

- the Erasmus Mundus programme in Europe
- a guide to the design of degree mills
- how to identify and deal with fraudulent documents
- the impact of mutual recognition of accreditation and quality assurance on the internationalisation of higher education in Europe

Information on the Erasmus Mundus programme in Europe was especially valuable to DFQEAS in updating its resources with new information. Examples of what an awarded degree would look like were discussed.

The conference was also an excellent opportunity to collect up-to-date material on the systems and institutions of different countries. Amelia and Tumi brought back education profiles of Australia, Austria, Taiwan, Switzerland, Turkey and the Erasmus Mundus programme in Europe for the DFQEAS library.

Delegates made new contacts during lunch and tea breaks and at the ACE dinner. A useful piece of networking arose from discussions on developments in the South African educational system: SAQA's Yvonne Shapiro (Director: NLRD) and Herman de Leeuw of the Informatie Beheer Groep in the Netherlands signed an agreement on verifying the achievements of South African qualifications holders on the NLRD, and Yvonne has accepted Herman's invitation to be part of a panel on 'Empowering student

mobility: Digital Student Data Portability' at the EAIE conference, 'Connecting Continents', in Madrid in September 2009. SAQA was also added to the EAIE address list and will now receive news of developments from around the world.

One of the highlights of the conference was meeting Jim Frey from the US, a fellow credentials evaluator, who received the EAIE President's Award for Outstanding Service.



Tumi Moabelo with Herman de Leeuw (left) and Jim Frey.



Brussels delegates.



Perspectives on women, violence and learning

Jill Bishop: Assistant Director: Communications



Dr Jenny Horsman is the third speaker to visit South Africa to participate in SAQA's series of public lectures on important issues. Dr Horsman visited South Africa from 9–12 February and gave seminars in Pretoria, Durban and Cape Town. The seminars were co-sponsored by SAQA, the University of the Western Cape, the Durban University of Technology and the

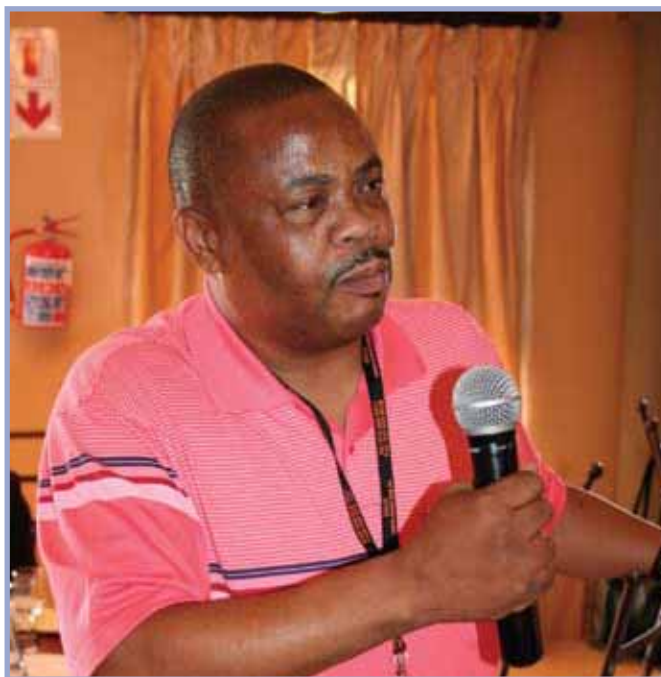
Insurance SETA, and attracted large audiences representing many different sectors of society.

Dr Horsman is a community-based literacy theorist, educator and researcher with two decades of experience in the adult literacy field in England, Sierra Leone and Canada. She is a founding member of the Spiral Community Resource Group, made up of community educators engaged in research and writing, curriculum development, training, workshops and facilitation. Her first book, *Something in my mind beside the everyday: women and literacy* was shortlisted for the Laura Jamieson prize. Her next book, *Too scared to learn: women, violence and education*, grew out of an extensive research study for which she interviewed counsellors and therapists, literacy learners and workers.

Dr Horsman lectures internationally on violence and learning, and is conducting ongoing research into practical classroom strategies for learning that takes the impacts of violence into account.



Dr Jenny Horsman.



Gregory Masondo explains the NAPTOSA project 'Children for Children' which is based on ubuntu training, showing how little things make a difference and that we can all do something.

Introducing Dr Horsman at the Pretoria seminar, SAQA Chairperson Professor Shirley Walters posed four questions:

Why women's learning? Why focus on women's learning in South Africa now? Are there potential dangers in focusing on women's learning? Who creates knowledge and whose knowledge counts? These and several other questions were touched on during Dr Horsman's seminar.

Violence is acknowledged as a historic legacy in South Africa. Dr Horsman defined violence as "any way we have of violating the identity and integrity of any human being", and it has a marked negative impact on people's capacity to learn.

Experiencing violence produces anxiety in the victim, and this shuts down the analytical, thinking part of the brain so essential to learning. The greater the trauma, the higher the level of anxiety; eventually, even pleasurable experiences may provoke anxiety in those who suffer violence. Trauma victims are exquisitely sensitive to feeling observed and judged by people such as supervisors, and this makes them even more anxious. Eventually, in order to escape the stress, people learn to 'tune out' – and their motivation and commitment to learning plummet.

The struggle to be 'present' in a learning situation is crucial. Often this manifests in the workplace as a disconnection from

others, attacking or belittling them in an attempt to feel safer and more in control. Violence destroys trust, so learners constantly test supervisors and instructors in order to avoid more betrayal. The slightest difficulty in the learning situation can make the learner feel useless, powerless and a failure. When this happens it is important to face the problem, acknowledge it and name it; ignoring it makes it worse.

However, given a supportive learning environment, even people living in violent situations can learn better. An instructor who is a reassuring presence in the learning situation helps learners to feel safe and grounded. It is vital to create a learning environment where no-one is shamed or humiliated. Even if the learners must remain in a violent life situation, the learning situation must offer a safe space where they can lay down their defences for a while. It is also helpful to such learners to be guided to an understanding of how violence is affecting them, and to realise they are not the only ones struggling to learn. Trainers, too, need to be aware of the impact of violence on learning.

Learning organisations need to change and to create communities of learning that recognise the legacy of each person affected by violence. Dr Horsman pointed out that this approach dovetailed well with SAQA's advocacy of lifelong learning and focusing on the whole person.



Liz Burroughs of Umalusi.



Joe Samuels, Deputy Executive Officer of SAQA, hands Nombuso Kamolane of the Vaal University of Technology a copy of Dr Horsman's book 'Too scared to learn', which she won in a lucky draw.



The European Qualifications Framework: International conference

James Keevy: Deputy Director: International Liaison



The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) held an international conference of the European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium on 29 and 30 January 2009. The conference was a collaboration between the office of the Director General for Education and Culture of the EU, the European Training Foundation (ETF), and the European Centre for the Development

of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP). Its aim was to improve the understanding of how the EQF relates to international developments in qualification frameworks beyond EU member states; highlight areas in which these developments may link together; and identify possible mechanisms for creating links.

Participants

Participation was through invitation only, and brought together 170 experts from 60 countries who have been working in the development of national and regional qualification frameworks. This included members of the EQF Advisory Group (responsible for overseeing the development of the EQF), representatives from partner countries covered by the ETF which are working on qualification frameworks, and representatives and experts from countries in Africa, South and North America and the Asia-Pacific region. The conference also involved international organisations such as International Development Banks and the International Labour Organisation.

SAQA was invited to speak on the developments and lessons learned in overseeing the development and implementation of the South African NQF, and on its involvement in developing the SADC regional qualifications framework. The SAQA Chairperson, Prof. Shirley Walters, presented a paper prepared jointly with the SAQA Executive Officer, Samuel Isaacs, which is available on the SAQA website.

The conference gave SAQA a unique opportunity to strengthen its relationships with key NQF partners internationally, and also to position the organisation as an experienced and leading agency at the cutting edge of NQF developments globally. A number of important international practitioners and experts attended the conference, including Dr Mike Coles (Qualifications and Curriculum Council England), Prof. Jack Keating (University of Melbourne), Dr Muriel Dunbar (ETF), Dr Stephanie Allais (ILO), Franz Gertze (Namibian Qualifications Authority), James Calleja (Malta Qualifications Council), Gordon Clarke (European Commission), Moira McKerracher (Scottish Qualifications Authority), Prof. David Raffe (University of Edinburgh) and Dr Patrick Werquin (OECD).

The four main sessions covered the purpose of the EQF; qualifications frameworks worldwide; qualifications frameworks as a basis for international cooperation; and qualifications frameworks in EU partner countries. The opening speeches made by members of European Parliament and the European Commission emphasised the effects of globalisation and increased geographical and professional migration. They suggested the EQF should be seen as a 'toolbox' through which Europe's competitiveness could be enhanced. Other key points included the need for increased transparency, and building mutual trust between stakeholders.

Dr Muriel Dunbar, director of the ETF, made the point that numerous countries across the world are working on qualifications frameworks, and need to share information and build capacity by learning from each other. Jens Bjornavold and Arjen Deij presented an overview of the EQF on behalf of the EQF Advisory Group.

The EQF comprises eight levels based on learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences) and a set of generic descriptors developed between 2004 and 2012. It is not a blueprint for other NQFs. Importantly for participants from outside the EU, the EQF has been developed primarily for European needs, although increased transparency and referencing beyond the EU would be beneficial.

Two examples of NQFs that are currently being referenced against the EQF are Ireland and New Zealand. SAQA, the United Arab Emirates (currently in talks with SAQA on the National Learners' Records Database (NLRD)) and Australia presented a brief overview of the development and implementation of their NQFs to date, while also referring to regional qualifications frameworks in SADC, the Gulf region and the Asia-Pacific region. Particularly well received was the South African emphasis on understanding NQFs as "works-in-progress ... which can contribute in a modest way to how a society manages the relations between education, training and work" with a need for a research-driven approach. Uruguay, Albania, Morocco, Canada, Namibia, Mexico and France also reported on the progress of their NQFs.

Jean-Marc Castejon, from the ETF, made a useful contribution to the broader debate by asking if qualifications matter in terms of development. He also noted that the outcomes-led approach has underplayed the importance of institutions, stressing that institutional capacity building must not be neglected.

Other key issues included:

- countries should be cautious about spending in education, which does not necessarily result in economic success

- institutional capacity building must not be neglected
- the benefits of an NQF should be measured on a macro- and micro-economic scale, as well as for the individual
- social marketing is important to ensure that the broader population is informed
- there is a general trend showing lack of involvement from labour partners
- it is important to develop communities of practice
- the purpose of NQFs must be made explicit
- NQFs must be able to cope with changing environments

The increased importance of transferring from one part of the world to another was emphasised by Pasi Sahlberg (ETF) in the conference report, as he quoted the popular Irish band U2: “we are one but we are not the same”.

Dr Dunbar suggested a number of actions through which the ETF can build on the success of the conference:

- A second global conference on qualifications frameworks will be held in two years' time.
- The ETF will coordinate periodic newsletters on qualifications frameworks.
- A virtual community will be set up to allow participants to continue their collaborations online.

- The ETF will develop an annual report on qualifications frameworks.
- Participation in international fora is required (such as the upcoming CONFINTEA conference in Mexico).
- Collaboration options will be explored, including research on the impact of NQFs and on career guidance and counselling.



Delegates at the ETF International Conference in Brussels.

Fourth Commonwealth Teacher Research Symposium

James Keevy: *Deputy Director: International Liaison*

SAQA was invited to participate in the Fourth Commonwealth Teacher Research Symposium, hosted by the National Education Association of the United States, in Washington DC from 18 to 20 March 2009. SAQA Deputy Executive Officer Joe Samuels and Dr James Keevy represented SAQA at this meeting of researchers, officials and representatives of regional and international organisations which is arranged annually by the Commonwealth Secretariat.

SAQA has conducted research into teacher qualifications in the Commonwealth, and Dr Keevy presented the initial findings at the symposium. Participants in the symposium agreed that evidence-based research on teachers must be used to influence teacher policy and practice. They also felt that high levels of teacher attrition in many countries globally has serious implications for the future of the teaching profession, and that traditional routes to teacher training and qualifications were failing. In addition, improved induction, mentoring and different modalities in teaching training must be explored to address attrition in the profession.

The impact of the current global financial and economic crisis and its implications for increased teacher mobility were also discussed. Participants felt that establishing an international task force on teachers, which would bring new perspectives on the profession to the table, would be a constructive move. One role the proposed task force could undertake is increased advocacy to support implementation of the Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol.

The symposium gave SAQA a unique opportunity to confirm its strong presence in the international qualifications arena, particularly teacher qualifications. SAQA's active presence in forums like this one has been noted by international agencies concerned with employment and skills development such as Unesco, the International Labour Organisation, Education International and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa.

The Fifth Commonwealth Teacher Research Symposium will be held in 2010, with SAQA one of the possible hosts.



The recognition of teacher qualifications in the Commonwealth

James Keevy: Deputy Director: International Liaison

SAQA was commissioned by the Commonwealth Secretariat in 2007 to conduct research on teacher qualifications in the 53 Commonwealth member states, leading to the development of a 'teacher qualifications comparability table'. SAQA was given this commission as a result of earlier work led by Prof. Wally Morrow and Dr James Keevy in 2006 and 2007.

Dr James Keevy of SAQA was the lead researcher for the project and was supported by Prof. Jonathan Jansen, who provided valuable input into the conceptualisation of the research. The Steering Committee on Teacher Qualifications and Professional Recognition met at Stoke Rochford Hall, Lincolnshire, United Kingdom on 8 April 2009 to review the research report on behalf of the Education Ministers of the Commonwealth. The Steering Committee recommended that the report be presented to Ministers at the 17th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers, which took place in Malaysia in June 2009.

The Steering Committee made four main recommendations. The first was that the comparability table should be used as a 'living document' which could be regularly updated and reviewed, possibly at every Commonwealth Education Ministers' conference, in order to make longitudinal and updated data

on teacher qualifications available to member states. They also recommended that the development of professional competency standards for Commonwealth teachers should be seriously considered.

Thirdly, the Committee felt that further research could be carried out on the blurring of the traditional divide between pre-service and in-service education and training, and on non-traditional pathways to qualified status. Finally, they recommended that teaching councils in the Commonwealth should be actively encouraged to collaborate wherever possible, to promote the professional status of teachers across the Commonwealth and to develop this status further.

The final research report was presented at the Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers and distributed to relevant officials in all 53 Commonwealth member states. Following earlier work done by SAQA in 2006 and 2007, as well as the work on the transnational qualifications framework developed by SAQA for the Commonwealth of Learning, SAQA is now well positioned to continue its active involvement in qualifications-related matters in the Commonwealth.

The stalwarts: ten years' service at SAQA

Jill Bishop: Assistant Director: Communications

SAQA began 13 years ago with the establishment of a Board, with Samuel Isaacs as Chairperson. When Samuel became the Executive Officer in 1997 David Adler took over as Acting Chairperson. He was succeeded by Dr Mokubung Nkomo in 2002. In 2004 Professor Shirley Walters became Chairperson.

Like Topsy, SAQA grew – to a total of 111 in 2007 – and as in most organisations the faces in the offices changed from time to time. SAQA now has a staff complement of 152, including temporary appointments and learners on learnerships.

But there is a solid core of people who obviously have loyalty (and stamina) in large doses – they have served SAQA for ten years! *Update* asked these stalwarts for their memories of the early days.



Samuel Isaacs

Samuel Isaacs is the founder Executive Officer of SAQA, a post he still holds, and has guided the institution from its inception. He was Chairperson from 1996 to 1997, when he became Executive Officer.



Joe Samuels

Deputy Executive Officer **Joe Samuels** has also been on SAQA's staff from the beginning. His first post was as Director of Framework Implementation. In 2005 Joe was appointed Deputy Executive Officer.



Mandlenkosi Ndukula

Mandlenkosi Ndukula's first day at SAQA was 1 March 1998, when he joined as an Assistant Director in the Directorate of Framework Implementation. He has also served as a SADTU shop steward. A highlight of his time at SAQA is the development of qualifications in Field 01, Agriculture and Nature Conservation, from when the Forestry Standards Generating Body (SGB) was registered in 1998. Mandla was also involved in processing qualifications submitted by the Nature Conservation SGB.



Madu van den Berg

Madu van den Berg moved to SAQA from the Department of Labour in January 1998, as secretary to Joe Samuels (who was then Director of Framework Implementation). She is now Events Coordinator for the Directorate: Standards Setting and development (DSSD). She remembers SAQA's first offices in the Department of Education building, moving to 'the White House' in Brooklyn and subsequently to the

current premises in Hatfield. In those early days there were only about 40 people on the staff, which meant that everyone knew everyone and there was a strong community feeling.



Rachel Monyamane

Rachel Monyamane started work at SAQA in September 1998 as a receptionist, moving to the Finance Directorate in 2005, where she handles the debtors file and sometimes helps out with other tasks. Her most vivid memory is of her time in Reception, when a Japanese client appeared before her bowing deeply. Unfortunately the man spoke no English, and Rachel struggled to find out what he wanted. The poor man

kept bowing deeply, which confused Rachel even more, and in desperation the two of them tried to communicate with hand gestures. Thankfully, they eventually found someone who could speak Japanese and the situation was resolved. SAQA has had international clients from the start!



Corina Bezuidenhout

Corina Bezuidenhout began working at SAQA in January 1999 as PA to Joe Samuels. Subsequently she served as PA to the Head of Standards Setting, Michael Cosser, then to the Director of DSSD, Dr Shamrita Bhikha. Corina is currently PA to Victor Booysen, HR Director, a job she has held since 2006. Her most vivid memory is the team-building exercise held at Dikololo in 1999. It was the first time she had participated in such an exercise, and

she remembers the cultural gulf between different groups of employees at the start of the workshop. But by the time it finished everyone was amazed at the strides that had been made and the bridges that had been built – a tradition that is still strong at SAQA.



Maire Kelly

Maire Kelly was the first Field Coordinator for Field 9, Health Science and Social Services – a position she still holds, which gives some indication of the wealth of experience to be found within SAQA. Maire started work in June 1998 on the very day that SAQA moved from its offices in the Department of Education to a converted house in Brooklyn ('the White House'). She recalls seeing a vast space filled with empty desks,

and wondering how they would ever get organised. "But by the time SAQA moved to Hatfield the offices were full to overflowing!" recalls Maire. She too has fond memories of the camaraderie and fun of those days with a small staff.



Bertha Mthethwa

Bertha Mthethwa joined SAQA as secretary to Samuel Isaacs in April 1998. After four years she became PA to the then Deputy Executive Officer, Anne Oberholzer, and subsequently to Joe Samuels when he took over the post in 2005.



Millicent Mabaso

Millicent Mabaso began working at SAQA in January 1998 as a logistics clerk, making travel arrangements for National Standards Body and SGB members. She subsequently became the receptionist at the office in Brooklyn where qualifications were registered, and when SAQA moved to Hatfield took on receptionist duties at DSSD. Millie is currently the receptionist for the HR Directorate.



International study groups visit SAQA

Chinese delegation



A delegation of officials involved in graduate education in the People's Republic of China visited SAQA on 12 February 2009. The delegates wished to strengthen their institution's capacity to conduct evaluation of international qualifications, including those from South Africa, by cooperating directly with SAQA. As part of the visit, the delegation explored the extent to which benchmarking between the South African and Chinese graduate systems could benefit both countries.

Members of the delegation:

- Wu Boda** *General Director of China Academic Degrees and Graduate Education Development Centre*
- Ma Micang** *Director: Department of International Cooperation and Exchange; Ministry of Education of People's Republic of China*
- Xu Weiquing** *Director: Division of Quality Supervision; General Office of China Academic Degrees & Graduate Education Development Centre*
- Ling Mengquan** *Director: Evaluation Department of China Academic Degrees & Graduate Education Development Centre*
- Li Hengjin** *Vice Director: Testing Department of China Academic Degrees & Graduate Education Development Centre*
- Chen Yongjun** *Programme Manager: Administrative Office of China Academic Degrees & Graduate Education Development Centre*

Nigerian delegation



Representatives of the Chartered Insurance Institute of Nigeria (CIIN) visited SAQA on 25 February 2009. Dr James Keevy gave an overview of the work done by SAQA, which was followed by a discussion on how SAQA's experience could be applied in Nigeria. The delegates were particularly interested in the relationship between professional bodies and service providers; SAQA's approach to evaluating foreign qualifications; and the implications of the NQF Act and its relevance to the Nigerian education system.

From left: Adeyemo Adejumo, President of the CIIN; Adegboya Adegpeba, Director-General of the CIIN; David Harper, CEO of the Insurance Institute of South Africa.

Vietnamese delegation



A delegation of educationalists from Vietnam visited SAQA on 4 March 2009. Delegates are investigating ways of dealing with the increasing demand for higher education as well as the need for better alignment of higher education to the demands of the labour market. They also wished to familiarise themselves with the South African NQF, investigate how the executive and consultative bodies act within the framework of SAQA and how they align with the organised business community.

Members of the delegation:

- Prof. Dr Pham Vu Luan** *Vice Minister of Education and Training – Head of Delegation*
- Dr Nguyen Ngoc Hung** *Deputy General Director of Department of International Cooperation*
- Dr Nguyen Thi Le Huong** *Deputy General Director of Department of Higher Education*
- Ms Nguyen Thu Nga** *General Director of Department of Culture and Ideology*
- Ms Nguyen Thi Thu Ha** *Officer: Department of Higher Education*
- Ms Nguyen Tien Dzung** *Officer: Department of International Cooperation*
- Ms Phan Thi Thanh Tam** *Deputy General Director of Department of Science and Education; Ministry of Planning and Investment*
- Mr Nguyen Truong Giang** *Team Leader of Culture and Society; Ministry of Finance*
- Mr Arjan Koeslag** *Profed Project Chief Technical Adviser: Profed Project Management Unit, Hanoi*
- Mr Joris Paulussen** *Senior Policy Advisor: Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences*



SAQA Exhibitions 2009

Kha Ri Gude

7 January, St George's Conference Centre, Midrand



This Department of Education initiative aims to provide people with basic literacy and numeracy skills. Here EO Sam Isaacs presents a Recognition of Service award to one of the facilitators.

Merseta Exhibition

26 – 27 February, Birchwood



NGF Support Link stand at the Merseta exhibition.

Science Unlimited

2 – 6 March, Tshwane Showgrounds



Learners at the SAQA stand.

SHERCON

20 – 22 May, Birchwood



Eric Khotsa of SAQA (left) chats to three visitors of the SAQA display.



The SAQA exhibition stand.



SAQA celebrates Nelson Mandela Day

The staff at SAQA decided to heed the call made by the Nelson Mandela Foundation and endorsed by the Cabinet, by doing something that would make a difference in the community on Mandela Day, 18 July 2009.

SAQA staff members decided to celebrate Nelson Mandela's life and legacy by promoting literacy and thus encouraging lifelong learning. They collected 334 books for children in orphanages and in homes for abandoned and street children in Pretoria.

On 17 July, SAQA held an internal event to celebrate Nelson Mandela Day. Mr Verne Harris, Head of the Centre of Memory: Nelson Mandela Foundation, addressed staff members.

On 18 July staff from SAQA and the Nelson Mandela Foundation visited four homes: Boitumelo Community Centre in Soshanguve, Mahube in Pretoria West, Tshwane Home of Hope in Sunnyside and Bophelong orphanage in Mamelodi. They distributed books and spent at least 67 minutes reading to and with the children, in recognition of the 67 years Nelson Mandela spent fighting against the evils of apartheid.

Two publishers, Maskew-Miller Longman and Best Books, joined SAQA in this initiative by donating books. Mr Reggie Mokotsi, the Gauteng Regional Manager of Maskew Miller-Longman, was on hand to see the books delivered to the homes.

Sunnyside Home of Hope

There were short talks from the Home's Manager, SAQA, The Nelson Mandela Foundation and Maskew Miller-Longman. Then the fun began: Charmaine Leboo from SAQA led the children in singing, especially praise songs for Nelson Mandela. The children enjoyed birthday cake and party packs and then settled down to read and chat with the visitors. The event was covered by SABC radio and the Pretoria News.



Reading with the children at Sunnyside Home of Hope.



An artist from the Nelson Mandela Foundation drew portraits of the children.



SAQA volunteers at Sunnyside Home of Hope.



Distributing books at Sunnyside Home of Hope.

The Boitumelo Community Centre in Soshanguve

The Centre is run by Ms Sophy Ncube, who looks after 20 children from less than a year old to 15. The volunteers from SAQA and the Nelson Mandela Foundation received a warm welcome from the children and the care-givers, and spent time reading with and to the children, working in the garden and teaching some of the children football skills. All the children received party packs and birthday cake.



Reading to the children at Boitumelo Community Centre.



Ntsiki Gumbe with some of the children at the Boitumelo Community Centre.



Ms Sophy Ncube (far right) and some of the children at the Boitumelo Community Centre.

Bophelong Orphanage

Momotse Mangwane of SAQA reports: "We spent our 67 minutes at Bophelong Orphanage with Mom Hilda and her eight kids between 3 and 16 (four boys and four girls). Patricia Tshehla from the South African Post Office (SAPO) joined us as we met the children, sang 'Happy Birthday' to Madiba and shared his birthday cake."

Mahube Home in Pretoria West

Ms Ntsiki Mohlana is the senior house mother at Mahube, and she and another house mother look after six children. The children, who were smartly clad in costumes, welcomed the SAQA volunteers by chanting, dancing and shouting with excitement. After celebrating Mandela's birthday the volunteers spent time reading, drawing and writing with the enthusiastic and excited children – in fact they had so much fun that they stayed for more than the planned 67 minutes.

Our Mandela Day celebrations were overwhelmingly successful thanks to SAQA staff, who worked tirelessly to bring joy to children who need support, and our partners, Maskew Miller-Longman, the Nelson Mandela Foundation and the SABC. SAQA's support for these homes is ongoing and we are building good relationships with the children and their caregivers.



This youngster couldn't wait to start a new book.



Some of the books donated by SAQA.



Toolkit: aligning learning programmes to the NQF

Tumelo Modisane: Assistant Director: Information Services

SAQA launched the first of the NQF Implementation Toolkit series, *NQF Alignment of Learning Programmes: A Step-by-step guide to how to align learning programmes to the NQF*, in November 2008, a product of the NQF Support Link.

Since its launch, the product has been well received by the market. The Implementation Toolkits do not duplicate the seven NQF Support Link modules, but serve as stand-alone resources for everyone involved in education, training and skills development.

While providing practical tools to assist users in the planning, progress, implementation and evaluation of learning and skills development, the Implementation Toolkits include step-by-step descriptions of processes, templates, flowcharts and practical guidelines. These will assist those working with the NQF to translate its intent and principles into learning programmes and processes.

“The NQF Implementation Toolkit series came about in response to market needs,” says Ntsiki Gumbe, Director: Strategic Support Unit. “We wanted to equip education and training practitioners with the necessary tools to ensure that their learning programmes are aligned to the NQF”

The information in the NQF Implementation Toolkits is provided in a user-friendly format to make it easy for users to access information and to customise the contents to suit their own needs.

“The Toolkits are written especially for individuals involved in outcomes-based learning and skills development processes in private and public training institutions/entities and in workplaces,” says Barbara Dale-Jones, general manager of eDegree, the publisher of the NQF Support Link Modules and the NQF Implementation Toolkits.

Those who would benefit from the NQF Implementation Toolkits include:

- human resource directors; training managers and practitioners in training institutions, companies, private and

- public organisations and non-profit organisations
- learning facilitators, trainers, instructors and lecturers
- programme developers and learning materials developers
- consultants in the field of learning and skills development
- skills development facilitators
- Further Education and Training of College staff involved in skills programmes and learnerships, and
- SETA, ETQA and Department of Labour staff who are responsible for skills development and learnerships, and the quality assurance of providers and learning programmes.

These Toolkits are available in hard copy booklets, which include the templates on CD-ROM.

For more information or to purchase the Toolkits contact:

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Participants at a workshop on the NQF Support Link.



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