

National Qualifications Frameworks: Building Bridges between Education and Training Systems?

Experiences from Selected African Countries

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Overview

1. Introduction

2. The Emergence of NQFs
3. The Views of International Agencies
4. NQFs in the SADC Region
5. Standards, Levels, Descriptors
6. Promoting Quality Assurance and Learning Throughout Life

Scope of Lifelong Learning

	Range	
	<i>from</i>	<i>to</i>
Level	Primary	Higher
Learner	Youth	Adult
Type	Formal	Non-Formal
Agency	Public	Private
Monitoring	Government	Private, None
Place	School, Training Institution	Workplace, Community, Home
Delivery pattern	Classroom	Open and Distance, E-learning, Media
Objective	Cultural, Social, Progression in Education	Skills, Employability, Transition to Work

The Traditional Delineation

- **General education**
 - Preparation for life in general
 - Progression within the education system
- **Technical and vocational education and training**
 - Preparation for particular occupations
 - Transition from education to work

A Critical Assessment

“... General Secondary Education seems to have been designed almost exclusively to prepare young people for higher education, though in reality only a small selection enter institutions of tertiary learning. On the other hand, Technical and Vocational Education and Training ... is seen as the domain of those others whose academic capabilities are deemed inferior. In such systems the acquisition of “knowledge” often remains distinct from the acquisition of “practical skills”. A secondary education system that maintains the distinction between the two streams must certainly fail to maximize the effectiveness of its graduates when they take their place in societies that increasingly require individuals to possess a combination of knowledge and practical and social skills.” *(UNESCO)*

The Social Dimension

- **Europe, end of 19th century:**
General education for the ruling class;
Vocational training for the ruled class
(Friedrich Engels)
- **South Africa, until 1994:**
Highly selective, racially fragmented
education and training system
(SAQA)

The Response

“... **broader framework** for qualifications
for lifelong learning
encompassing **general education as well
as vocational education and training ...**”

*Conference of European Ministers
Responsible for Higher Education
Bergen 2005*

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and Learning Throughout Life

(1) What is a National Qualifications Framework?

- A NQF is ...

*... the set of principles and guidelines by which records of **learner achievement** are registered to enable **national recognition** of acquired **skills and knowledge**, thereby encouraging **lifelong learning***

(SAQA)

(2) What is a National Qualifications Framework?

- A system of **credits** for **learning outcomes**.
- A learning outcome is a **capability** ... reflecting an **integration of knowledge and skill** which can be **understood, applied and transferred to different contexts**.
- The achievement of a qualification ... is **not dependent on attendance at particular courses**, but by a learner accumulating credit on .. learning outcomes defined by **full-time, part-time or distance learning**, by **work-based learning** or ... **assessment of prior learning**. (Samuels 2000)

Rationale for Qualification Frameworks

- The challenge of **diversification**:
 - Diversification of content
 - Adaptation of content to local needs
 - Diversification of learning patterns
- The challenge of **coherence**:
 - Articulation
 - Vertical and horizontal progression of learners
 - Coherent system for assessment and certification of learning achievements

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UNESCO Recommendation (1)

*Governments should consider ...
“establishing a **system of equivalencies**
whereby credit is given for completion of
any approved program, and **recognition**
is granted to educational and/or
professional qualifications and work
experience.”*



UNESCO Revised Recommendation on TVET (2001) para 13

UNESCO Recommendation (2)

*“National authorities should establish **criteria and standards** ... applying to all aspects of technical and vocational education, including, to the greatest extent possible, non-formal education ... **for all forms of recognition of achievement**”*



UNESCO Revised Recommendation on TVET (2001) para 15

International Labour Organization

*“Members should ... develop a **national qualifications framework** to facilitate **lifelong learning**, ... guide individuals in their choice of training and career, and facilitate the **recognition of prior learning and previously acquired skills, competencies and experience.**”*



ILO Recommendation 195
Concerning Human Resources Development:
Education, Training and Lifelong Learning (2004)
para 5

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The Southern African Development Community (SADC)



NQFs in the SADC Region

- Initially:
National examinations and accreditation systems for **vocational education and technical training**
- Perspective:
Foundations of a **regional** qualifications framework

SADC Protocol on Education and Training (1997)

Progress in NQF Development

Stage 0	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3a	Stage 3b	Stage 4
	Angola				
			Botswana		
D.R. Congo					
			Lesotho		
	Malawi				
				Mauritius	
		Mozambique			
					Namibia
					South Africa
		Swaziland			
	U.R. Tanzania				
		Zambia			
			Zimbabwe		

NQF Structure: South Africa



NQF Level	Band
8	Higher Education and Training (HET)
7	
6	
5	
4	Further Education and Training (FET)
3	
2	
1	General Education and Training (GET)

NQF Structure: Mauritius



Level	Primary / Secondary	TVET / Workplace	Tertiary
...
5	HSC / GCE 'A' BAC / IBAC	Certificate	...
4			
3	SC / GCE 'O'		
2			
1	Certificate of Primary Education		

NQF Structure: Namibia



NQF Level

10		Doctoral Degree
9		Masters Degree
8	Certificates	Bachelor Professional
7		Bachelor Degree
6	Diplomas	
5		
4		
3		
2		
1		

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NQF Level Descriptors: Namibia

Level	Descriptor
...	...
4	... theoretical concepts or in-depth applied knowledge and skills wide range of technical or scholastical skills ...
3	... some theoretical knowledge range of well-developed skills ...
2	... basic operational knowledge using readily available information ...
1	... narrow range of knowledge and technical skills ...

NQF Level Descriptors: South Africa

A learning programme leading to the award of a qualification or unit standards at NQF level 4 shall develop learners who demonstrate with regard to:

(a) applied competence

- ...
- ...
- ...

(b) autonomy of learning

- ...
- ...

NQF Level 4 (SAQA 2003:5-6)

An Integrated Approach



South Africa:

Highly unified scope, bridging “theory” (general education) and “application” (vocational education and training).



Namibia:

Comprehensive QF covering education and training; bridges between academic education and vocational training.



Mauritius:

Covering general academic as well as TVET; focus on harmonizing various patterns of vocational training.

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Quality of Lifelong Learning

A NQF acknowledges ...

- **Learning achievements**
rather than attendance of courses;
- **No matter where, how and when acquired:**
in formal or in informal settings, at school or at the workplace, in classes, via mass media, or through open and distance learning.


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The Paper

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- [Paper in Microsoft Word \(DOC\) format \(200 KB\)](#)
- [Slides in Adobe Acrobat \(PDF\) format \(to follow\)](#)

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References

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