

Adult education and training within the context of the South African NQF



Samuel Isaacs and James Keevy
7 November 2011



The South African NQF and the roles of SAQA and the Quality Councils



Adult education and training: international considerations



SAQA and adult education and training



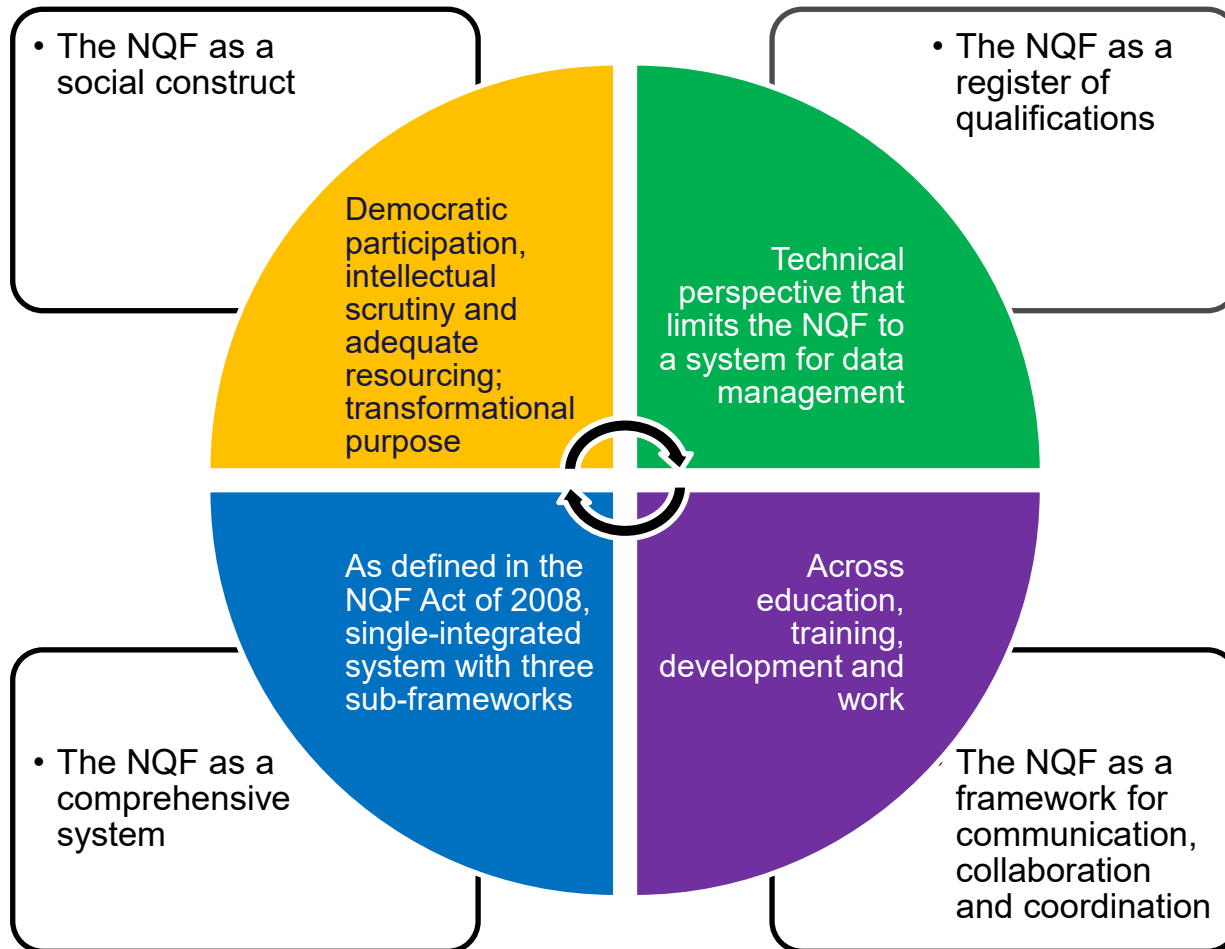
Implications for the work of the Task Team on Community Education Training Centres

Objectives of the South African NQF



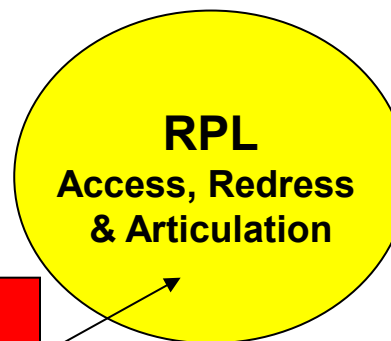
1. Create an integrated national framework for learning achievements
2. Facilitate access to and mobility and progression within education, training and career paths
3. Enhance the quality of education and training
4. Accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities
5. Contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation at large

Evolving understandings of the South African NQF

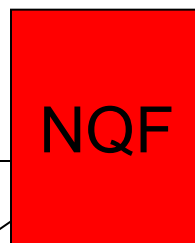


1. Delivery
to
Learners

2. Benefits
to
Society



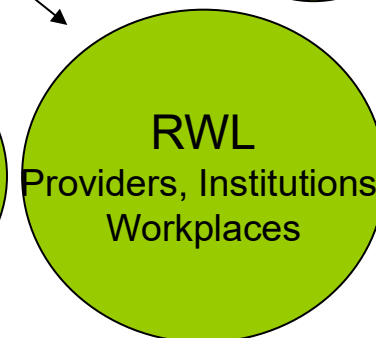
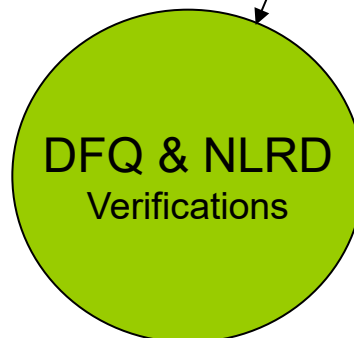
Political Will
Portfolio Committee
Support
and Resources



Bedrock Infrastructure



QCs



Bedrock Infrastructure

SAQA
Government Appointed Custodian

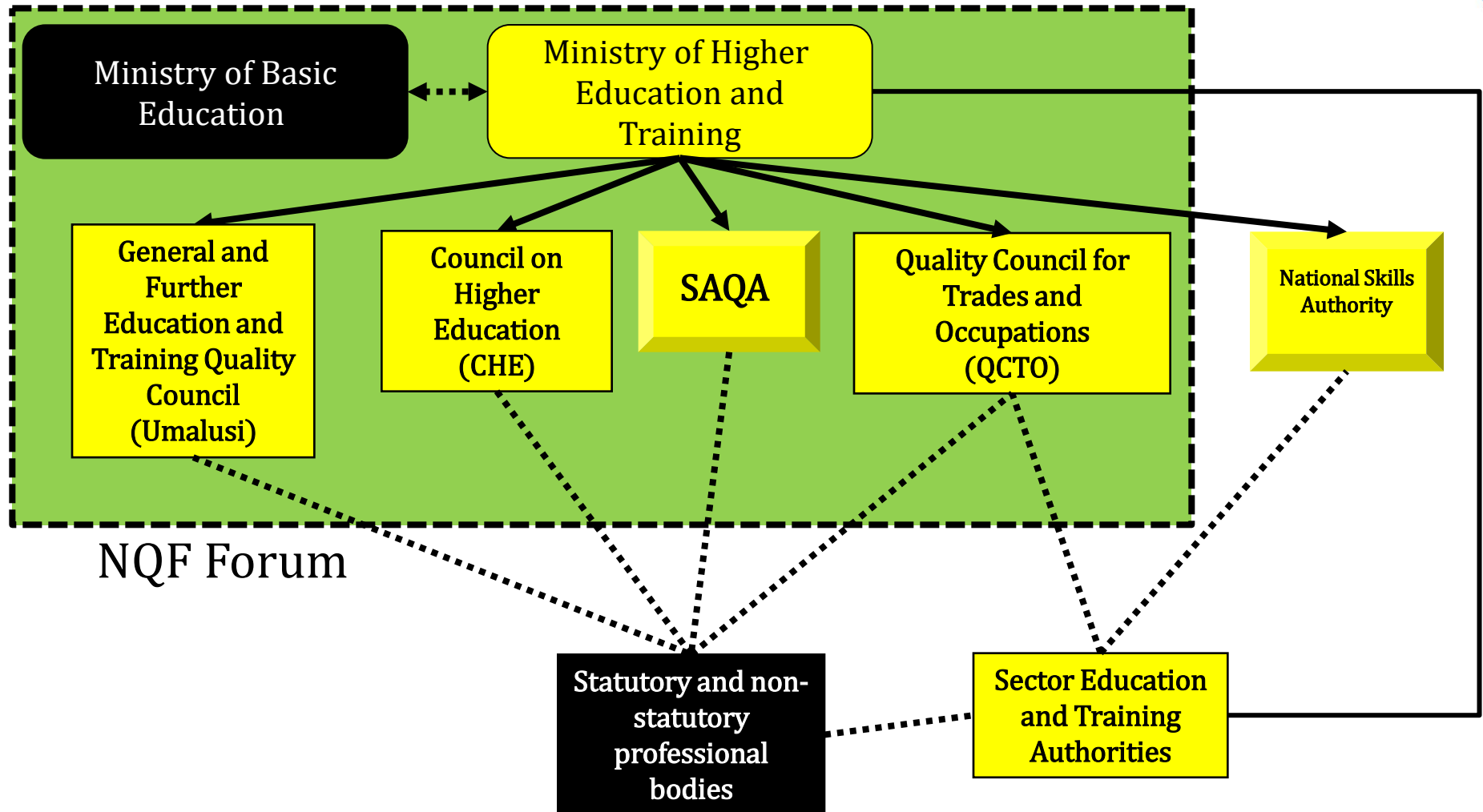
SAQA is the catalyst, facilitator of our qualifications framework for communication, coordination and collaboration across education training and development

The roles of SAQA & the Quality Councils



- Overall implementation framework for the NQF
- System of collaboration with the QCs
- NQF Implementation
 - Assessment, quality assurance, level descriptors, registration of qualifications, recognition of professional bodies, registration of professional designations...
- Foreign qualifications and advisory services
- Research
- National Learners' Records Database
- International collaboration
- NQF Advocacy
- Career advice services
- Verification of qualifications
- Collaborate with SAQA and the other QCs
- Develop and manage the sub-frameworks
- Advise the Minister on matters relating to sub-frameworks
- Consider and agree to level descriptors for the NQF
- Develop qualifications and recommend these to SAQA for registration
- Undertake the necessary quality assurance
- Maintain a database
- Conduct research
- Inform the public

Governance of the South African NQF



The NQF and adult education and training

- After more than 15 years of the development and implementation of the South African NQF there exists broad consensus in South Africa that an increased emphasis is needed on communication, coordination and collaboration across education, training, development and work.
- Our experience has also shown us many benefits of purposely **including adult learning within the NQF**; adult learning interpreted in its broadest sense, beyond basic literacy, as lifelong learning that takes place at any time, place and manner throughout the life of each citizen.
- Some of these **benefits** include:
 - Increased consistency, transparency and portability of qualifications for adult learners
 - Clarification of learning pathways available to adults
 - Gathering, analysis and interpretation of data on adult learners
 - External moderation and quality assurance of adult education and learning

Lessons and challenges

- While there have been several advantages of including adult education and learning within the South African NQF, some difficult **lessons have also been learnt**; lessons that may be of value to other countries considering the same route.
- These include:
 - The importance of mediating and interpreting standards through curriculum development and quality learning materials
 - The risk of placing an undue emphasis on formalising all learning, and in so doing, potentially devaluing non-formal and informal learning
 - The limitations of outcome statements as adequate proxies of the quality of learning



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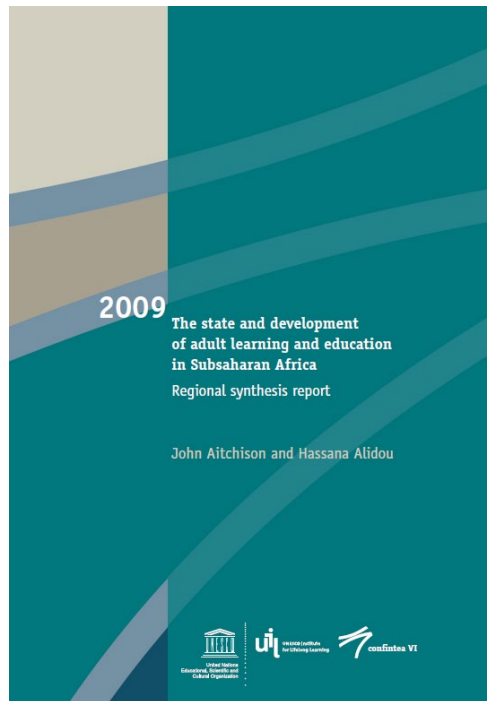


SAQA and adult education and training



Implications for the work of the Task Team on Community Education Training Centres

Adult education & training in Sub-Saharan Africa



- A NQF can be seen as an organising principle for both formal and non-formal education.
- In developing countries an NQF can be seen as the necessary framework to enable people with low levels of basic education to gain validation of what basic learning they have (formal or non-formal) and to go beyond it.
- Adult education needs to have systems for learning validation which are equivalent to those in systems of formal education, regardless of where and when the learning has occurred.
- Basic and non-formal education need to be included within the NQFs so that they can access the “ladders” and “bridges” which avert educational dead-ends. This requires articulation between the different levels and kinds of learning.

CONFINTEA VI Report on the state and development of adult education in Sub-Saharan Africa (2009)

Potential challenges for adult education and training

- The intellectual technology of NQFs is complicated and often mystifying
- The effort required to develop standards and courses and qualifications based upon them and to be registered as a provider is incredibly resource-intensive.
- Many unit standards have exit levels that are over-ambitious and become formidable and unachievable obstacles to further learning.
- Integration and moving between academic and vocational qualifications and between formal education and the world of work remain difficult.
- Not all adult learners want accreditation.
- The process of implementing RPL is proving to be complicated and cumbersome and more work must be done to render it “operational” on any meaningful scale.
- An NQF encourages the overwhelming dominance of a discourse of standards and certification

CONFINTEA VI Report on that state and development of adult education in Sub-Saharan Africa (2009)

Belem Framework for Action

1. The role and purpose of education in the country has not been underplayed
2. Policy domain has failed to recognise distinctive contribution of learning and education to broader economic development
3. The field of adult learning and education remains fragmented
4. Advocacy efforts of a number of forums is diluted
5. The frequent changes in leadership from the agencies and agencies is ministerial coordination and organisational coherence between education (formal) and education (non-formal)
6. With regard to quality assurance and accreditation both in-country and internationally, emphasis on skills and competences including non-formal and experiential learning
7. The gap between policy development and implementation in isolation, participation in the field and inservice education) and organisational support for educators.
8. Not enough far-sighted and adequate financial planning has been established
9. Although we are witnessing an increasing variety of adult learning and education programmes, the primary focus of such provision is now on vocational and professional education and training.
10. More integrated approaches to adult learning and education to address development in all its aspects (economic, sustainable, community and personal) are missing.
11. The lack of professionalisation and training opportunities for educators has had a detrimental impact on the quality of adult learning and education provision, as has the impoverished fabric of the learning environment, in terms of equipment, materials and curricula

Belem Framework for Action & NQFs

Policies and legislative measures for adult education need to be comprehensive, inclusive and integrated within a lifelong and life-wide learning perspective, based on sector-wide and inter-sectoral approaches, covering and linking all components of learning and education.

To these ends, we commit ourselves to:

developing or improving structures and mechanisms for the recognition, validation and accreditation of all forms of learning by establishing equivalency frameworks.



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Adult education and training: international considerations



SAQA and adult education and training



Implications for the work of the Task Team on Community Education Training Centres

SAQA and adult education and training

- Adult education is **not only literacy**
- **Policy solution** is needed in dealing with non-formal and informal learning
- Adult education policy must be **integrated with lifelong learning**
- An **implementing structure** for adult education is needed and must be properly capacitated
- **Monitoring mechanisms** need to be in place for adult education
- Existing **articulation routes** must be described and mechanisms found to improve and facilitate such routes. In some instances the articulation exists, but has not been implemented. E.g. the articulation options between the NC(V) and level 5 qualifications
- The **centrality of the QCTO** in the post-school system must be adequately acknowledged and supported
- The existing quality assurance model for FET colleges has proven inadequate and options should be explored how best to develop a **dedicated quality assurance regime** based on international best practice customised for the South African context
- The proposal for a **national institute** that focuses on research and curriculum development in the vocational sector is supported, although its extension into the realm of continuing education warrants more in-depth consideration

SAQA and adult education and training to date

- Promotion and recognition of the role of adult education and training since 1995
- Integrated approach has been favoured within the NQF
- Prioritisation of adult education in the national policy discourse
- Development and registration of qualifications for adult education practitioners
- Prioritisation of RPL as means to recognise non-formal and informal learning
- Simplification of the technical apparatus of the NQF
- Progress towards the recognition of part-qualifications and “short courses”
- Kha Ri Gude mass literacy campaign
 - Verification visits to 300 sites
 - Annual verification workshops (the next is in April 2012)
 - Uploading of learner achievements onto NLRD
 - SAQA has entered discussions to ensure that Umalusi takes this function on board as it is within its mandate

Current and new activities

- NQF and Career Advice Services (Flagship project of the Ministry of Higher Education and Training)
- Progress towards a Ministerial RPL Task Team
- Finalization of level descriptors
- Workings of the NQF Forum and CEO Committee to improve articulation and address systemic blockages
- Progress with the operationalisation of the QCTO
- Inclusion of NGO community in the SADC qualifications portal





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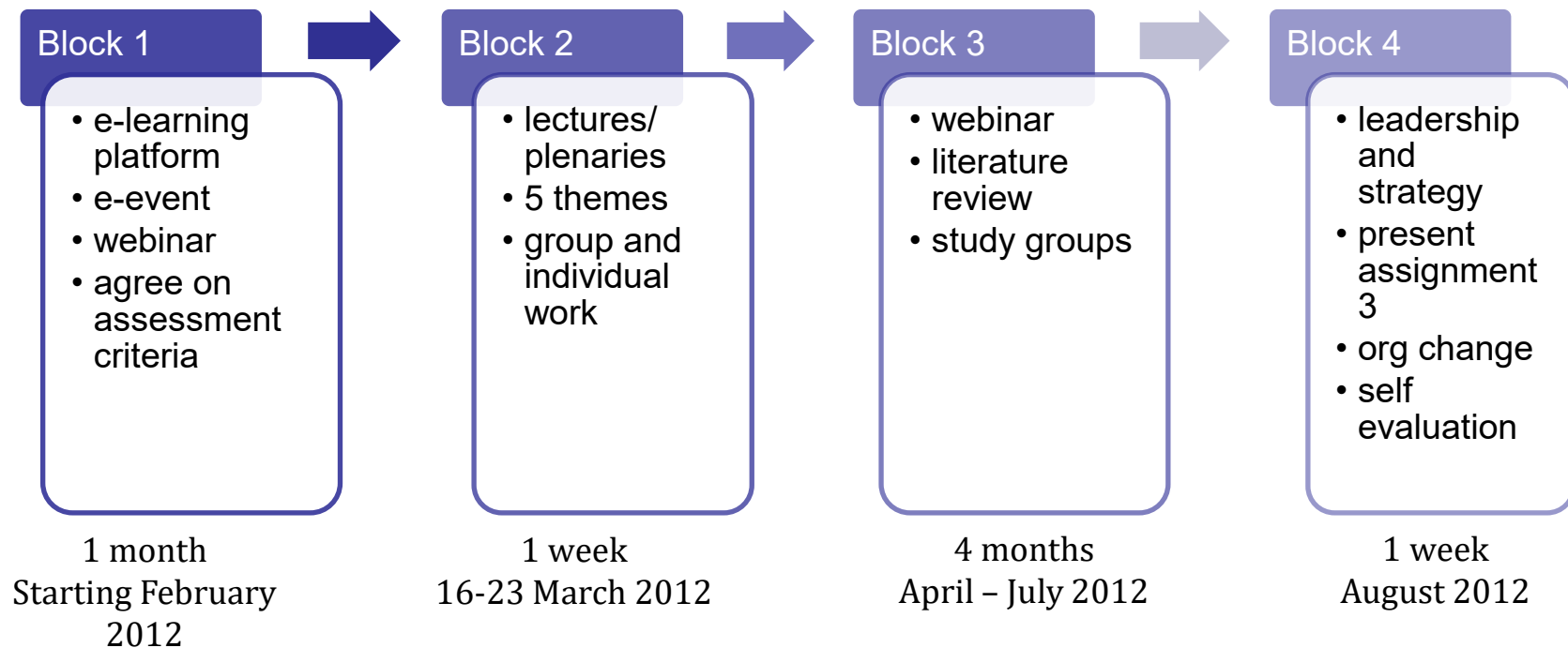
Implications for the work of the Task Team

1. As tool for communication, coordination and collaboration across education, training, development and work the **NQF is integral** to adult education and training
2. Adult education and training needs to be **included** within the NQF so that it can access the “ladders” and “bridges” which avert educational dead-ends
3. **Articulation** between different levels and kinds of learning must be described and mechanisms found to improve and facilitate such routes
4. NQFs also pose challenges to adult education and training – these **challenges** must be acknowledged and meaningfully addressed
5. **RPL** can (and must) be taken to scale
6. The **pathways** within the education and training system must be carefully considered to improve articulation and address blockages

Lifelong Learning and National Qualifications

Frameworks: Leaders for Learning

A University of Western Cape (UWC) Continuing Education course, in partnership with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)



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