

The strategic importance of advocacy and communication about the NQF and SAQA was given renewed focus during the year under review. The objective was to ensure that through the wide range of advocacy and communication activities undertaken by SAQA, a deep and positive understanding of the NQF as envisaged by all its stakeholders is achieved. With limited resources efforts were made to focus, align and integrate advocacy and communication strategies. Both responsive and proactive advocacy and communication activities were reviewed with the aim to ensure that all interactions with SAQA are positive and value adding. As part of the review, a strategic cost effective review of the SAQA Brand was initiated. In addition, the process to establish a formal Stakeholder Satisfaction Index was also initiated. The value of these two new initiatives will emerge in the forthcoming financial year.

Stakeholder relations

During the strategic review it was identified that strong and positive relationships with SAQA's principals, partners and key stakeholders were essential to ensure continuous and effective progress toward the challenging objectives of the NQF. A "key account management" programme was introduced to provide the right focus and effort to deliver on this objective. In addition, and to this end, SAQA also participates in a range of communication forums with organisations such as the national and provincial Departments of Labour, the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), Umsobomvu Youth Fund (UYF), the national and provincial Departments of Education, Umalusi and the CHE.

Internal communication

A motivated and well-informed staff is the cornerstone of any successful organisation. SAQA recognises this and has identified staff as a key audience in terms of the advocacy and communication strategy. Staff is continually kept up to date on developments in SAQA through monthly information sessions (Farananis). Special workshops are held to introduce new developments and Learning Circles are encouraged. To support the staff, the SAQA Intranet was recently totally upgraded, making it more user-friendly and efficient in the dissemination of information.

Media relations

In addition to regular press releases being sent to the print media, several radio interviews aimed at creating awareness were conducted during the Q-Africa 2004 Conference. E-tv interviewed SAQA on "bogus" degrees and certificates that are for sale on the Internet, and on "one-day" MBA courses. The SABC 1's Take 5 programme interviewed SAQA to make an educational programme targeted at learners about institutions offering learning programmes that are not aligned to NQF qualifications.



Staff are kept informed during monthly Farananis



Joe Samuels' interview with Take 5

Communication and Information Services

During the year under review SAQA continued to provide and improve on the range of communication and information providing services it delivers to its clients, stakeholders and the NQF community. In this regard the following are of particular significance:

- **Resource and Information Centre**

The Resource and Information Centre is a primary source of information on SAQA and the NQF. It collects, manages and disseminates information about SAQA publications, unpublished documents and material published on the SAQA website.

As part of its contribution to building a learning nation, the Centre supports the research and information needs of staff, members of the Authority and its substructures. The Centre's collection and SAQA publications are marketed to universities, government departments and research institutes. The purpose is to encourage these stakeholders to utilise the Centre when conducting further research on aspects of education and training. As such, members of the public, researchers, learners, and government departments widely use the Centre as a reference library. This service has enabled these stakeholders to carry out their mandate of developing and implementing the NQF.

- **SAQA Website**

The SAQA website continues to be used as a vehicle to publicise SAQA's activities and achievements and to provide stakeholders and the public with information on SAQA and the NQF. The latest news and information is placed on the 'What's new' section on the homepage of the website. This is also sent directly to e-mail alert subscribers.

During the year under review, the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) page of the SAQA website was expanded. It provides more information such as the names and contact details of accrediting bodies. The RPL page provides information on education and training providers offering RPL assessment services and the learning areas/qualifications/unit standards for which RPL services are available. It also offers an opportunity to share best practices, new ideas and challenges that are experienced by those researching and implementing RPL.

In August 2004, a questionnaire was sent to 5 106 subscribers of the SAQA website e-mail alert. The purpose of the questionnaire was to solicit comments and suggestions on the website from the regular users and to gain feedback on factors such as ease of navigation, content, layout etc. The results of this survey indicated that 59% of the respondents visit the SAQA website weekly, while 29% visit it daily. The information usually sought is on qualifications, standards, news, and events. The results of the survey indicated that most subscribers are satisfied with the website, and also showed a positive response to meeting information needs of users in terms of; user-friendliness; navigation; content; accessibility; and layout.



N Gumbe (left front), L Zondo, E Kgomo, M Mudimu, S Stole, M Mangesi and A Wheeler (right front) celebrating Library week



HE T Brylle (left seated), M Nkomo, G Granville, R Tuck and Dr Schaff at the Q-Africa Conference Dinner



V Penxa as Director of Ceremonies at the Q-Africa Conference Dinner

• SAQA Publications

SAQA communicates progress, the status of activities and new developments to stakeholders by releasing publications at opportune times. These documents vary from papers presented at conferences to guidelines on SAQA-related fields of operation.

During the year under review, the following documents were published:

- *Three SAQA Bulletins;*
- *Three brochures on Recognition of Prior Learning, Short Courses and Skills Programmes, and Equitable Accreditation of Small-, Medium- and Micro Enterprise Providers of Education and Training;*
- *The NQF Impact Study Report Cycle 1;*
- *Criteria and Guidelines for the Implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning;*
- *Criteria and Guidelines for Short Courses and Skills Programmes;*
- *Guidelines on Equitable Accreditation of Small-, Medium- and Micro Enterprise Providers of Education and Training;*
- *The Monitoring Trends Emerging from SAQA’s monitoring of ETQAs between September 2002 to July 2003;*
- *Trends in Public Higher Education in South Africa 1992 to 2001; and*
- *A Quarterly SAQA Update Newsletter.*

• SAQA Events

A number of events were planned and implemented over the year to support the communication and advocacy strategy. Routinely, SAQA arranged launches and events to introduce new publications and services, and established stands at exhibitions at key conferences.

The most ambitious event in the year was the Qualification Africa (Q-Africa) 2004 Conference and Exhibition. Since 1999, SAQA has co-hosted the high profile German-South African Qualification Africa Conference on education, training and human resources development with the Q-Federation of Germany. The aim of the Conference is to provide the latest information, technological tools, and strategies to empower business leaders, human resource professionals, educators, and government decision-makers to tackle issues that face the education and training sector in the twenty-first century. The theme of the 2004 Conference, held from 14 to 16 September 2004 at Gallagher Estate, was *The Learning Revolution: Thinking and Doing Education and Training Anew*. The objectives of the conference were to explore and share ideas, and to provide delegates with real and tangible solutions through practical case studies, plenary sessions, and workshops on skills training and education.

The keynote speakers were Mr Membathisi Mdladlana, Minister of Labour; Mr Enver Surty, Deputy Minister of Education; Dr Chris Landsberg, Director of the Centre for Policy Studies; and Prof Wiseman Nkuhlu, Chairperson of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) Steering Committee and Executive Head of the Secretariat. Around 400 delegates from as far away as Botswana, Canada, Germany, Zambia and Zimbabwe, in addition to 43 exhibitors, attended the conference.



BOTA exhibits at the Q-Africa Conference



J Arnesen (left), E Brown and P Richards at the Q-Africa Conference



E Surty: Deputy Minister of Education (left) and S Isaacs at the Q-Africa Conference

On 14 September 2004 the Third prestigious Chairperson's Lecture entitled *Impact of the National Qualifications Framework after 10 years of Democracy*, was held. The keynote address was given by Professor Gary Granville from Ireland with responses by Professor Jonathan Jansen from the University of Pretoria and Mr Botshabelo Maja from the Department of Labour.

On 23 November 2004, we were privileged to have the Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, deliver the keynote address at the launch of SAQA's flagship publication *NLRD Report 1 Trends in Public Higher Education in South Africa 1992 to 2001*.

- **SAQA NQF Helpdesk**

SAQA, in accordance with the communication and advocacy strategy, established a dedicated helpdesk to respond to the many routine enquiries I received daily. The helpdesk has continued to improve its service and plans were initiated to integrate it into the overall front line response provided by SAQA.

- **NQF Support Link**

SAQA, while focussing on the need to continue to provide the above-mentioned information and communication services, also recognised the need for a much more effective and focused system to deliver deep understanding and sound knowledge about the NQF rapidly and efficiently to the education and training leadership community. As a result, SAQA, with the support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), initiated the development of the *NQF Support Link*. The *NQF Support Link* is a portfolio of practical, dynamic and proven NQF leadership learning resources offered on-line, in CD format and in print. During the year under review the *NQF Support Link* pilot was successfully finalised and in addition, the processes were established for full-scale implementation in 2005.

International Visitors

SAQA receives numerous requests from organisations outside the country to host foreign visitors. These visits create an opportunity to share experiences, knowledge, and information on various education and training issues. In the past year SAQA hosted visitors from the Botswana Tertiary Council, China, Malaysia, Zambia, and Algeria. SAQA held valuable discussions with the visitors regarding qualifications, unit standards design and generation, and registration procedures.



R Tuck, H Staschenuk, S Isaacs, W Dold and W Reuter at the Chairperson's lecture



A Oberholzer, J Jansen, B Maja and G Granville at the Chairperson's lecture



Deputy Minister E Surty (left), Minister Pandor and S Isaacs at the launch of NLRD Report 1